

5.0 FORESTRY

The forest industry is an important element in the future of the region. The abundant Crown Provincial Forests and private timber land holdings in the Plan Area provide the basis for the industry.

Much of the forest lands in the Plan Area are in the Cowichan Valley Demonstration Forest¹ and are maintained on a sustained yield basis involving good forest management practices. Although most of the first growth stands have long since been removed, the second growth trees are now in various stages of maturity. Trees can be equated to a long-term agricultural crop, which, instead of being harvested every year, are harvested on approximately an 80 year cycle. Due to the length of the growing season, abundance of rainfall, proximity to transportation routes and variety of species that may be grown, forest lands in the Plan Area are among the most productive in North America. In light of this, it is believed forest land should be protected for silviculture, in the same manner as the best agricultural lands are for agriculture.

In addition to the economic importance forests play in the regional economy, they also offer a variety of recreational and educational opportunities. In cooperation with private forestry land holders and the provincial government, public access should be permitted in forest areas for hiking, camping and other recreational endeavours. Furthermore, in order to expand the educational component of the Cowichan Valley Demonstration Forest program, participant members should be encouraged to establish interpretive nature walks, preserve representative stands of older trees and maintain a diversity of species in various stages of growth.

The forestry designation is used to indicate lands reserved exclusively for timber production and forest based recreation. This land use designation includes the tree covered slopes of Koksilah Ridge and the majority of land north of the Cowichan Valley highway. The area is

¹The Cowichan Valley Demonstration Forest concept was originally promoted by the Canadian Institute of Forestry. Today it extends from just outside Duncan to the west end of Lake Cowichan and includes the following participants: The Ministry of Forests, Pacific Forest Products, Timber West Forest Products, MacMillan Bloedel, the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, the Fish and Wildlife Branch, the Canadian Forest Service, C.V.R.D., and the B.C. Forest Museum.

characterized by second growth trees, steep slopes and thin soil horizons with many rock outcroppings. A large percentage of this land is under Crown ownership. The Vancouver Island Plantation Forest and the Cowichan Valley Demonstration Forest have been very successful in promoting awareness of the forest resources. The majority of Crown land is managed by the Ministry of Forests, although one large block of Crown land not under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forests, it is subject to Tree Farm Licence #46. Forest management and forest based recreation are the main activities that will occur on Forestry lands, although some mining activities seem probable.²

5.1 Policies: Forestry

POLICY 5.1.1

Except where otherwise provided in this Plan, forestry related uses shall be given priority on lands designated Forestry in the Plan map, however, the following subordinate uses may be permitted:

- a) mineral and aggregate extraction and processing;
- b) outdoor recreational activities, not involving permanent structures; and
- c) residential, agricultural and horticultural uses.

POLICY 5.1.2

Lands within the Forestry designation shall generally be zoned as F-1 (Primary Forestry), wherein the minimum parcel size is 80 hectares.

POLICY 5.1.3:

Notwithstanding Policy 5.1.2, those lands which are designated Forestry in the Plan map but are not suitable for forestry use due to poor forest growth capabilities or proximity to conflicting land uses may be zoned Secondary Forestry with an applicable minimum parcel size of 4.0 hectares, or Forestry/Residential with an applicable minimum parcel size of 3.5 hectares.

POLICY 5.1.4

Notwithstanding Policy 5.1.2, those lands which are designated Forestry, and are considered to have agricultural capability, may be included in the Agricultural Land Reserve, redesignated to Agricultural, and rezoned to A-1C (Agricultural Conversion Zone), with an applicable minimum parcel size of 8.0 hectares. Only those lands that are included in the ALR, through an application process, will be considered.

POLICY 5.1.5

Ministry of Forests crown land and private forest land holders governed under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* are encouraged to manage their lands so that they do not:

- i. Pose a threat to the quality of fresh water within the drainage system of the Cowichan, Koksilah or Chemainus Rivers;
- ii. Alter the aesthetic appeal and visual quality of the landscape;
- iii. Disturb areas of unique vegetation or wildlife habitat;
- iv. Make soil subject to erosion;
- v. Alter natural hydrologic regimes;
- vi. Increase the risk of slope destabilization.

²Where policies in this section relate to matters beyond the jurisdiction of the CVRD, they serve only as broad objectives to help guide senior governments in this decision making process.

POLICY 5.1.6

The Ministry of Forests and major forest companies shall be encouraged to protect the potential for outdoor recreation including wilderness recreation that exists in the natural woodlands of this area for continuous use by future generations in conjunction with the management of the forest. This would include controlled use of private logging roads and areas during non-operation periods for public recreational use where possible except during times of high and extreme fire hazard.

POLICY 5.1.7

The Provincial Government is encouraged to provide guidelines for the siting of forestry or mining related structures and buildings or the storage of machinery shall be located so as to minimize visual noise, environmental interference and traffic generation.

POLICY 5.1.8

Except as stated in Policy 5.1.4 the Regional Board shall not rezone the following types of lands from Forestry to any other zoning category:

- a) Lands currently within a Tree Farm Licence;
- b) Lands currently classified as private Managed Forest under the *Assessment Act*;
- c) Lands that were classified as private Managed Forest under the *Assessment Act* within 5 years of the date of application for rezoning of such lands; or
- d) Provincial Forest Land.

POLICY 5.1.9

Notwithstanding Policy 5.1.8 lands removed from the Provincial Forest designation for Provincial Park purposes may be zoned parks and institutional.

POLICY 5.1.10

- a) Land in the "Forestry" designation may be considered for rezoning to permit forestry related industrial purposes without a plan amendment where it would have no adverse impact on the surrounding lands uses;
- b) Within the area designated "Forestry" in this plan, the Regional Board may give consideration to the establishment of temporary logging camps, temporary camp employee accommodation and temporary small scale saw mill operations including the preparation of logs, fence posts, and firewood pursuant to the temporary use provision of the *Municipal Act* where such use may be demonstrated to have little or no effect on neighbouring residential uses or the natural environment;
- c) The Regional District may specify conditions respecting the issuance of a temporary use permit and may require the posting of a bond or other acceptable security (if deemed appropriate) so as to ensure compliance with the conditions of the permit.

POLICY 5.1.11

Where lands identified as environmentally sensitive in Section 3.1.1 fall within Forestry zoned lands, the Regional District will work with the Province and private landowners to protect ecological values to the highest extent possible.

POLICY 5.1.12

Wake Lake is classified as a lake with characteristics of a Labrador Tea/bog laurel/peatmoss bog, which is extremely rare in the coastal lowlands of southeast Vancouver Island. Numerous other marsh, shrub and treed swamp and upland forest occur around the lake. Wake Lake is the largest breeding ground within the CVRD for the Western Toad, a species in need of conservation, and the Red Legged Frog, a blue-listed species. The migratory routes of both amphibian species extend beyond Wake Lake, to adjacent forests, wetlands and the Cowichan River corridor. Therefore, notwithstanding policies 5.1.2 and 5.1.8, the Board may consider Primary Forestry lands within a 1000 metre radius of Wake Lake to be eligible for the Rural Residential/Forestry Conservation designation, noted in Policy 7.5 of this plan.

POLICY 5.1.13

An application for rezoning to Rural Residential/Forestry Conservation (RRFC) will be accompanied by an assessment of the land by a qualified professional, which identifies areas of high ecological value, and demonstrates the costs and benefits of developing resource based forestry lands for mixed private residential/public conservation uses. The CVRD Board will evaluate whether the conversion of the land to the RRFC designation supports the conservation goals noted in this Plan, as well as a regional conservation strategy, as developed. Nothing in this policy precludes expectations for amenities as part of a rezoning application package, as outlined in Section 7.11.

POLICY 5.1.14

Forestry lands will be increasingly important for the continued sequestration of carbon emissions in the Plan area, and the CVRD will strive to protect and enhance forestry lands in partnership with the provincial government and private landowners.

POLICY 5.1.15

Regardless of the land tenure and the important role of forestry to our community and economy, the Regional District will develop appropriate watershed drinking water plans where necessary and as resources permit, and will work with the appropriate agencies to implement. This will be increasingly important as a climate adaptation mechanism to protect long term water needs for developed communities.

POLICY 5.1.16

Given the uncertainties related to climate change impacts, consideration of urban wildfire interfaces should be considered, which take into account forestry objectives, biodiversity and public safety in a holistic and strategic way.