

DRAFT

**MARJORIE LAKE
TIMBER HARVESTING PLAN**

**FOREST MANAGEMENT BRANCH
ENERGY MINES AND RESOURCES
YUKON GOVERNMENT**

**Prepared for review:
May 2011**

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Executive Summary

This Timber Harvesting Plan (THP) has been prepared to meet the requirements of the new Forest Resources Act (FRA) and implementation of the legislation on January 31, 2011.

Under the new legislation a THP is required prior to the issuance of any timber harvesting licence or forest resources permit > 25 m³. (FRA, Section 29(4)(ii).)

The Marjorie Lake THP identifies fuelwood harvesting opportunities in one of several areas where fuelwood harvesting has occurred historically in the Region.

The THP identifies roughly 65 hectares of operable ground with an estimated salvageable volume of 3,200 m³.

The THP sets targeted operating goals for the assessment of forest harvesting applications so that cumulative effects of multiple licences can be addressed.

All applicants for timber harvesting will be required to meet the submission requirements of the new legislation (FRA, Sec19(1)). The applications for harvesting licences require notification to the affected First Nation and public in the area of the application. The First Nation and public may make representations to the Branch Director on the application for a period of no less than 30 days. (FRA, Section 18)

Applications that trigger a Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment require submission to the local Development Office in Watson Lake for public review prior to issuance.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Forest Management Branch (FMB) initiated an informal review of Forest Planning Areas during the summer of 2009. Contact was made with the local Natural Resource Officer, members of the Ross River Dena Council and Faro Town Council to gauge interest and determine historical use of forest resources at the local level.

During April of 2010, FMB contacted local wood cutters in both Faro and Ross River to review preferred harvesting areas and weigh future plans for business development in order to determine the size and scope of local harvesting to be included in the planning.

A follow up meeting was held with the Ross River Dena Council on April 13th, to provide information related to the new legislation that was being developed and the requirements for planning under the new Forest Resources Act. Discussions included a review of the overview maps with historical and new areas that were proposed for harvesting.

Maps of proposed harvesting areas were sent to Yukon Heritage, Archeology Branch and to Yukon Department of Environment with a request for comment and identification of values that may be impacted within the proposed harvest zones.

In May of 2010, a letter of notification was sent to Chief Jack Caesar of the Ross River Dena Council, informing the council that ground reconnaissance would be initiated in the immediate future and contact names were provided for any questions and inquiries.

In late June 2010, an FMB forestry team conducted ground and aerial reconnaissance of the proposed operating units to map areas, review potential or existing access, estimate volumes and perform ecological assessments of vegetation and soils and to note any potential conflicts or seasonal concerns that would restrict development.

On November 18, 2010, draft maps of the proposed fuelwood harvesting were presented at a regular meeting of the Ross River Dena Council. Comments from council and suggestions for further discussions with other stakeholders were noted and have been included.

This draft of the THP has been prepared from information collected to date from conversations and meetings as well as the field reconnaissance. Notification is provided to the public, First Nation and other stakeholders for review and comment. Submissions received during the review period will be considered in the text of the final THP expected in June 2011.

1.2 Eco-region and Drainages

The Planning Area lies within the Boreal Cordilleran Ecozone, primarily in the Yukon Plateau-North Ecoregion. Along the western boundary it transitions to the Pelly Mountains Ecoregion.

Northern boreal forests exist at elevations up to 1500 m above sea level. White spruce in a matrix of dwarf willow, birch, ericaceous shrubs, and, occasionally, lodgepole pine forms extensive open forests, particularly in the northwestern portion of the ecoregion. Black spruce, scrub willow, birch, and mosses are found on poorly drained sites. Alpine fir and lodgepole pine occur in higher subalpine sections. Extensive discontinuous permafrost with a medium ice content is widespread decreasing to sporadic discontinuous permafrost along the southwestern edge of the region.

The THP area is about 30 km from Ross River in the Ross River drainage which flows southerly into the Pelly River.

1.3 Socio-Economic Considerations

This THP will allow the local fuelwood harvesting to continue under the new legislative regime in support of those who use and supply product for these identified purposes.

However small an impact this may currently be, economic development and diversification is a goal of Ross River. With support for planning and sustainable forest resource use, the opportunity to develop a larger economic base in forest management is presented.

2.0 Planning Area Identification

The Marjorie Lake unit is located 30 km north of the Ross River ferry along the North Canal Road. The area was burned in 1994 and the area to the west of the Canal Road has seen some salvage harvesting due to the existing access points into Marjorie Lake.

The proposed unit is to the east of the North Canal Road. Some harvesting has been attempted but the trail into the stand followed some wet ground and appears to have been abandoned. Relocation and construction of two roads into the unit on drier ground would provide access into the identified area of 65 ha which has an estimated salvageable volume of 3200 m³.

Access into the area from Ross River is governed by the ferry crossing. During the winter the ferry does not operate and the North Canal road is not maintained. Operations will be suitable to dry summer conditions. Site specific concerns will be addressed during the application process and preparation of Site Plans.

During consultation with RRDC, it was suggested that the area west of the N. Canal Road, within the burn and which has been previously accessed, be included in the THP where there is still salvageable timber.

Refer to Appendix A and B for location details.

2.1 Ecosystem and Stand Composition

The existing stand is in early seral stage development following the fire disturbance of 1994.

Ground cover consists of grasses, herbs and forbs with brush and tree cover of willows, aspen and minor amounts of white and black spruce.

The unit is on gently rolling topography over unsorted glacial deposits. Surface soil layers are fine to medium textured with increasing coarse fragments at depth.

2.2 Wildlife

No wildlife concerns were identified by Environment Yukon or RRDC during consultation on the development of the THP. The area is used by forest species that prefer regenerating forest stands.

2.3 Biodiversity

The 1994 fire, a natural occurrence, is prevalent in this boreal natural disturbance zone. Since the fire disturbance the area has reverted to early seral stage vegetative cover.

Existing and proposed development will impact less than 1% of the burn area and salvage will focus on the larger diameter timber, both standing and down. Typically small diameter stems, tops and branches will be left on site as coarse woody debris.

Harvesting of green timber will not be permitted and regeneration, where established, will be protected during operations.

With natural processes dominating the majority of the burn area and the relatively small scale of salvage, biodiversity in the area should not be negatively impacted.

2.4 Riparian and Water Resources

Marjorie Lake is a productive fishing area and all streams and smaller lakes surrounding the THP are considered as fish habitat.

A small lake to the south west of the proposed operating unit will be buffered with a Riparian Management Zone in accordance with the management standards outlined in the Timber Harvesting Planning and Operating Guidebook, (THPOG, 99) or future standards in place at the time of licence application.

No other water or riparian resources are within proximity to the proposed harvesting unit.

2.5 Recreation and Visual Impact

The N. Canol Road is a known tourist route and Marjorie Lake is a known recreational area for locals.

The visual landscape has been impacted as a result of the fire. Marjorie Lake has an unburned buffer along the south shore screening any operations from view. New growth and fire skips containing mature timber along the N Canol Road will screen operations from travelers. In time the removal of dead standing timber will enhance the view along this travel corridor.

The salvage of timber in this area will not impact recreational or visual values on the landscape.

2.6 Cultural Heritage and Archeological Sites

No known Heritage Resource potential exists in the vicinity of the Marjorie Lake THP, (YG Heritage Overview, 2010).

During forest operations any previously unknown heritage or archeological artifacts found or unearthed shall require the operator to cease operations in the vicinity of the find and report the find to the Natural Resource Officer and Yukon Heritage Branch for assessment.

2.7 Traditional Land Users

The THP is located within the Ross River group concession trap-line held by families of the Ross River Dena.

This THP does not hinder or take away First Nation rights as outlined in Section 43 of the *Forest Resources Regulation*.

Comments received as a result of the review of this draft THP will be addressed in the final THP.

2.8 Other

There are no higher level land use plans in the THP area and no other issues of concern related to forest resources use have been identified at this time. Information and issues brought forward during the planning and review process will be addressed in the final documents.

3.0 Harvesting Section

Applicants for timber harvesting licences and permits will be required to submit plans and maps outlining harvesting layout and road construction, products and any manufacturing details, seasonal constraints and how the goals and standards of this THP are being met.

Each licence application will be referred to the Ross River Dena Council and the public for 30 day review and comment. If the project requires a screening under YESAA, the project will need to be submitted to the Designated Office in Watson Lake for assessment.

3.1 Area and Volume Summary

The aurally mapped operating unit is just under 65 hectares, outlined in orange on the THP map, indicates the approximate area where salvageable volumes of timber exist. An estimate of about 50m³ /ha, of salvageable timber, indicates a potential volume of 3200 m³ within the THP.

3.2 Harvest Scheduling and Season

Access in the winter for commercial operations is not possible due to the closure of the ferry during freeze-up and lack of maintenance on the N Canol.

Site specific concerns will be addressed during the application process and preparation of Site Plans. The area is suitable for operations during dry summer conditions.

4.0 Access Management

Access development will minimize disturbance with narrow single lane (4m wide) roads. Grubbing material from construction as well as harvesting debris will be saved and re-spread across the road running surface upon completion of operations, decommissioning and closure of the road. Site disturbance allowed for road development shall be less than 7% of the gross operating area of the harvest area.

Currently two separate roads are proposed providing pick-up access into the operating area. Access logging is anticipated using small equipment (4X4, quad) on non-stumped trails and will be allowed to provide access to the Operating Unit boundary from the established road.

Roads may be gated to restrict access during the defined operational period.

All users of Forest Resource Roads constructed under this THP will be required to have a Forest Resource Road Permit, (FRR Section 60(2)).

5.0 Monitoring Plan

Monitoring plans identified at this time include the administrative post harvest stocking surveys and review of operations to licence terms and conditions.

There is no research or scientific activity proposed for the monitoring and development of a formal adaptive management strategy for this THP.

6.0 References and Acronyms

Timber Harvest Planning and Operating Guidebook, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1999. (THPOG)

Heritage Resources Overview Assessment Reports, Yukon Tourism and Culture, Heritage Resources Unit, Christian Thomas, 2010.

FMB – Forest Management Branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Yukon Government.

FRA – Forest Resources Act

FRR – Forest Resources Regulation

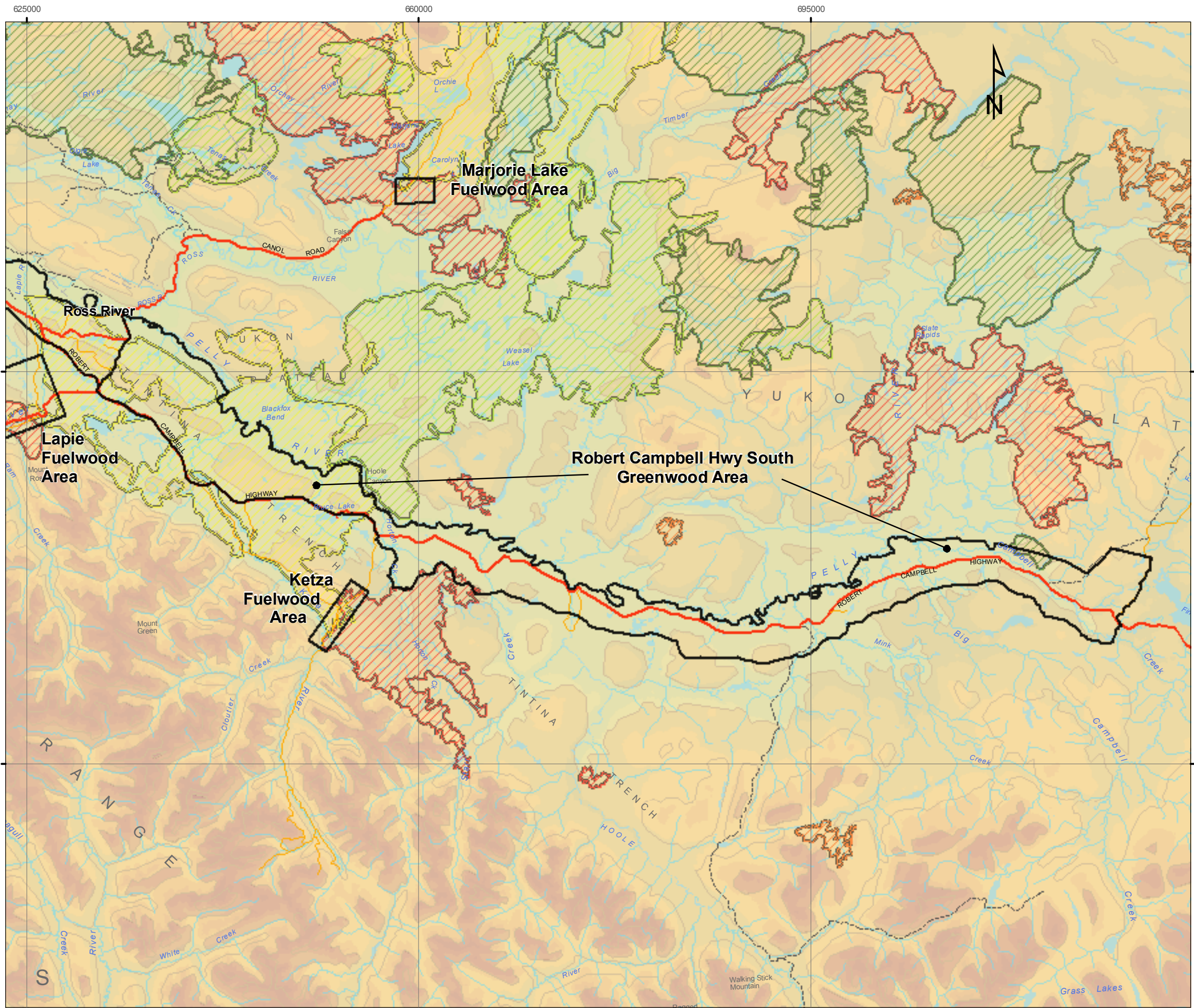
RRDC – Ross River Dena Council

THP – Timber Harvest Plan

YESAA – Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act.

Appendix A

Faro – Ross River THP Overview Map 2



Faro & Ross River THP Overview - Map 2

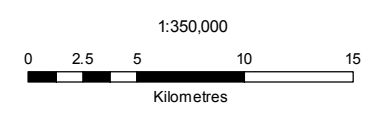


Legend

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Timber Harvest Plan Areas | Fire History |
| Road | Decade |
| Limited-use road | 1940 |
| Trail | 1950 |
| Cut line | 1960 |
| FN Settlement Land | 1970 |
| A - Surface and Subsurface Rights | 1980 |
| B - Subsurface Rights | 1990 |
| FS - Fee Simple | 2000 |

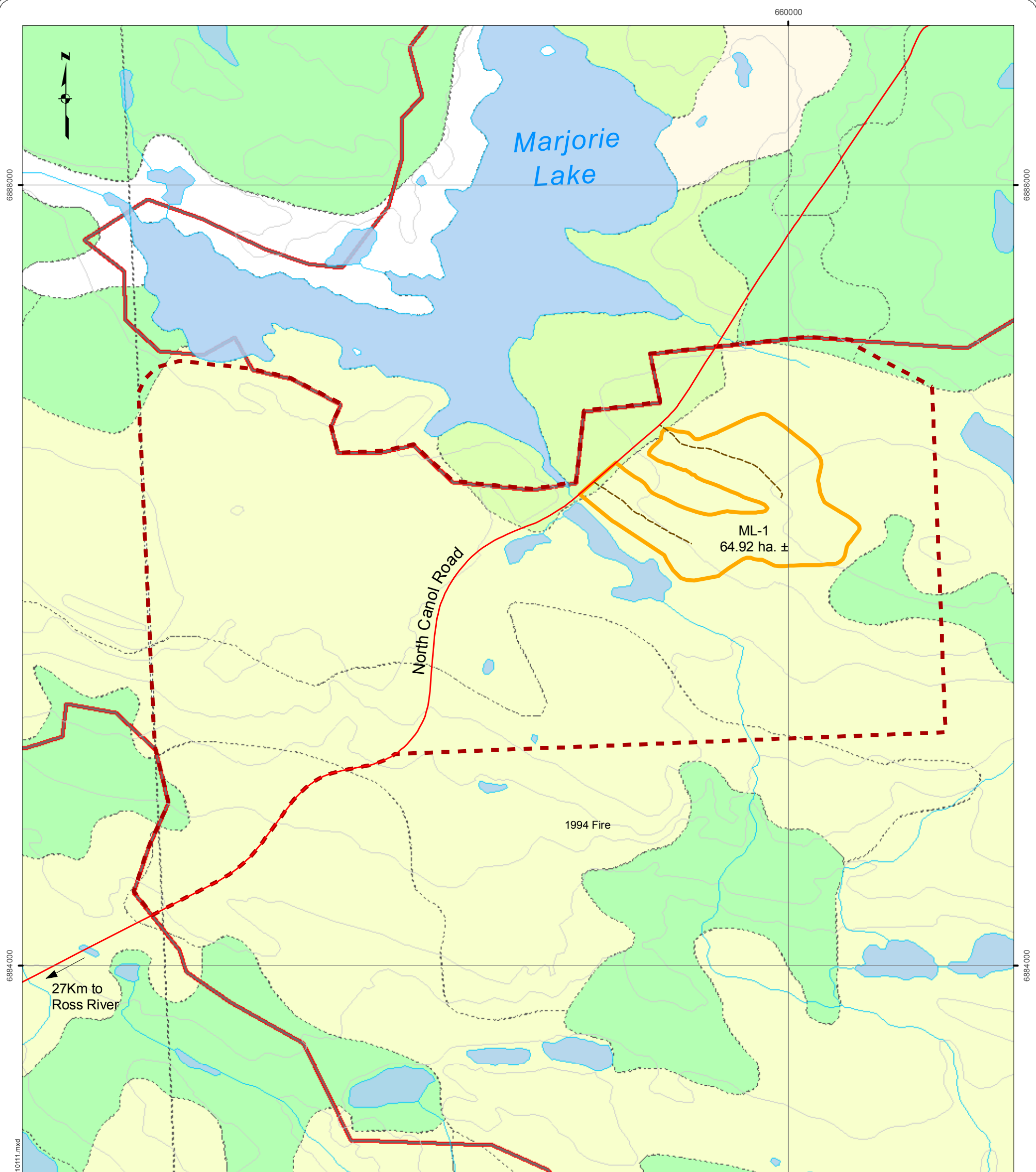
Date: 11 August, 2010
 Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 8
 Contact Information: Greg Cowman, Area Forester, 456-3805

Digital Data Sources
 1:250,000 National Topographic Database (NTDB) features downloaded from spatial data warehouse - www.geogratis.gc.ca. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, Department of Natural Resources. All rights reserved.
 Digital Elevation Models (30 metre and 90 metre) provided by Yukon Government Geomatics spatial data warehouse - www.geomaticsyukon.ca.



Appendix B

1:20,000 Marjorie Lake THP Map



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- Project Specific Features**
- × Permanent Sampling Plots
 -Harvest Blocks
 -Proposed Access Route
 -Timber Harvest Plan Area
 -Existing Access Routes
 -Fire History
- Administrative Features**
-Surveyed Parcel
 -Agriculture Tenure
 -Land Disposition
 -Notations
- First Nation Settlement Lands**
-Category A
 -Category B
 -Fee Simple
- Forest Openings**
-Patch Cut
 -Partial Cut
 -Patch Cut with Retention
 -Landing
 -Island

- Forest Cover**
-Non Forested
 -White Spruce
 -Lodgepole Pine
 -Alpine Fir
 -Black Spruce
 -Balsam Poplar
 -Trembling Aspen
 -White Birch
 -Larch
- Area Forester: Greg Cowman
 Contact: 456-3805
 Date: January 11, 2011
 Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 8
- Digital Data Sources
- 1:50,000 Canvec features downloaded from spatial data warehouse - www.geogratis.gc.ca. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, Department of Natural Resources. All rights reserved.
- Original map design by EDI Environmental Dynamics Inc. Fall 2009.
- Digital Elevation Models (30 metre and 90 metre) provided by Yukon Government Geomatics spatial data warehouse - www.geomaticsyukon.ca.

