

DRAFT

**MOUNT MYE
TIMBER HARVESTING PLAN**

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

**Prepared for review:
April 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 Mount Mye THP identifies a new fuelwood harvesting opportunity that has not been previously used in the region. The area is part of the historic Faro Burn of 1969 but was never developed due to location and lack of access.

The THP identifies a fuelwood harvesting area that lies near the height of land and where the original stand of old growth spruce contained high volumes of large diameter timber. Some of this timber is still standing and even though it has been 40 years since the burn, the majority of the timber is still sound. It is estimated that 5,000 m³ of timber could be salvaged.

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).

This THP requires road development which will trigger a Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment through the local Development Office in Watson Lake for public review prior to the issuance of harvesting tenures.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Forest Management Branch (FMB) initiated an informal review of Forest Planning Areas during the summer of 2008. 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 May 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.

This ecoregion lies within the Stewart, Macmillan, and Pelly plateaus and the southern foothills of the Selwyn Mountains. The terrain includes rolling uplands, small mountain groups, and nearly level tablelands dissected by deeply cut, generally broad, U-shaped valleys. The Tintina Trench, a straight, steep-sided valley 5–22 km wide, traverses the ecoregion from southeast to northwest. The mean annual temperature for the area is approximately -4°C with a summer mean of 10.5°C and a winter mean of -20°C. Mean annual precipitation ranges from 300 mm in the major valleys up to 600 mm in the mountains to the northeast.

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, whereas alpine vegetation consists of mountain avens, dwarf willow, birch, ericaceous shrubs, graminoid species, and mosses. 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 lies in close proximity to Faro in the Blind Creek drainage which flows southerly into the Pelly River.

1.3 Socio-Economic Considerations

Faro - The people of Faro are now focused on practical economic development opportunities to guide the community.

Faro residents practice forest resource harvesting to support subsistence lifestyles and utilize timber as a domestic and commercial heating source.

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 Faro. 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 planning area covers a large portion in the northern section of the Traditional Territories of the Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena. The planning area does not include any Traditional Territory overlap with other First Nations.

The Faro Fire of 1967 has been used by local woodcutters since the fire occurred 40 years ago. Accessible areas along major roads continue to be used for personal needs but the supply of suitable salvage wood has become limited forcing wood cutters into other areas.

The THP will establish operational goals and help to coordinate the salvage of remaining material in the burn.

Refer to Appendix A and B for location details.

2.1 Ecosystem and Stand Composition

Area 1 is located on an eastern facing aspect on a gently sloped basin near the top of Mount Mye. The previous stand of timber was located on a very productive site with spruce trees in the 40-50cm diameter range and 30+ meters tall. A small number of killed stems remain standing, indicating the soundness of the wood. The majority of the stems have blown down but remain slightly elevated off the ground which has reduced the impact of decay and a large proportion of the timber is still sound.

Soils are a fine to medium textured brunizol in the upper horizons which get coarser at depth. The mossy organic mat was reduced in the fire and has been replaced by partially decomposed deciduous leaf litter.

Area 2 sits on a lower bench below the Blind Creek Mine Road with similar site characteristics.

2.2 Wildlife

There are a number of wildlife species in the area, including moose, bear, caribou, sheep and furbearers that are important for sustenance, cultural and recreational opportunities. General wildlife provisions contained in the Timber Harvest Planning and Operating Guidebook, 1999 (THPOG) will provide protection for identified habitat. The THPOG is due to be replaced by a suite of Best Management Practices under the new legislation. When introduced, new guidelines and standards will replace the THPOG provisions.

The Mount Mye sheep viewing area, on the south facing slope, is noted as critical winter habitat for Fannin Sheep that congregate in the area over the winter months. The proposed Mount Mye fuelwood area is located well away from the critical habitat but does cover lands used by the sheep as a travel corridor in the spring and fall. Operations will be restricted to DOE prescribed operating windows to meet sheep management criteria. One positive aspect of the proposed salvage will be the clearing of much of the windthrow making it easier for the sheep to travel through the area, (DOE, pers comm.).

2.3 Biodiversity

The 1967 fire, a natural occurrence, is prevalent in this boreal natural disturbance zone.

Existing and proposed development will impact a small percentage of the burn area and salvage will focus on the larger diameter timber, both standing and down. The area has re-vegetated naturally to primarily a dispersed aspen type with minor stocking of white spruce.

Harvesting operations will be required to protect all coniferous regeneration, while allowing the incidental take of some deciduous stems during access development.

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

There is one non-classified drain that flows through the THP. There is no defined channel within in the operating area. Blind Creek, a fish bearing water is almost 1 km down slope from Area 1 and more than 200 m down slope from Area 2, so is well buffered from potential impacts.

2.5 Recreation and Visual Impact

The south facing side of Mount Mye is identified as critical winter range for Fannin Sheep and is tied to an important community event that occurs during spring, the Crane and Sheep Festival, where visitors can view sheep and the Sandhill Crane Migration, which passes through Faro.

The THP area is well removed physically from the sheep area and will not be operational during spring break-up when the festival occurs.

Visually, the harvesting of dead and down timber in the THP will impact neither recreational nor visual resources in this area.

2.6 Cultural Heritage and Archeological Sites

Elevated heritage resource potential exists near the eastern boundary of Unit 2 overlooking Blind Creek. A surface heritage assessment is suggested and will be performed prior to any timber harvesting in this area.

Ross River Dena Council provided comments on the area during consultation and expressed no concerns with the location and plans as proposed.

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

A copy of this draft THP will be available for review by trapper concession holders, outfitters and guides operating in the Ross River and Faro area. The majority of trapping concessions in the area are group concessions 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 will be addressed in the final THP.

2.8 Other

The THP is within the Municipal Boundary of the town of Faro. No concerns have been identified in regards to timber harvesting in this area.

3.0 Harvesting Section

Applicants for timber harvesting licences and permits will be required to submit plans outlining site specific information, harvesting layout and road construction and indicate 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 Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act, the project will need to be submitted to the Designated Office in Watson Lake for review.

3.1 Area and Volume Summary

The aerially mapped operating unit shown in Appendix B, THP map, indicates the approximate area where easily accessible salvageable volumes exist. It does not preclude harvesting in other burned areas of the THP based on applications and site plans submitted for licences. In this sense the volumes shown in Table 1 are not restrictive and should be considered a conservative estimate.

Table 1: Area and Volume Summary

Operating Unit	Est. Total Area (ha)	Est. Vol/ha	Total Volume (m3)	Harvest Restrictions
Mount Mye	50	100	5,000	Wet ground conditions and operating windows

3.2 Harvest Scheduling and Season

This THP is anticipated to provide general guidance for forest harvesting and salvage of forest resources for at least the next 5 years, which could extend longer depending on total harvesting per year.

It is anticipated that harvesting will be scheduled for summer through the fall when operators will be able to supply clients with fuelwood for the following winter. Ground conditions and soils will not restrict access during this operating window.

Harvest operations will not occur during periods when there is a chance of compaction and rutting due to wet soil conditions.

Winter operations are not a consideration due to the possible impact on Fannin Sheep and the high snow levels experienced in the area.

4.0 Access Management

Proposed access development requires construction of 1.5 km of new road from the existing Blind Creek Mine Road or other old exploration trails located on the top of Mount Mye. The road from the Blind Creek Road to the south has eroded in several sections and is not considered usable without major work.

New construction will minimize disturbance with narrow single lane (4m wide) roads. Grubbing material from construction will be saved and re-spread across the road running surface upon completion of operations, decommissioning and closure of the road. Site disturbance for access development will not exceed 7% of the gross harvesting area.

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

Formal monitoring plans identified at this time include the administrative 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

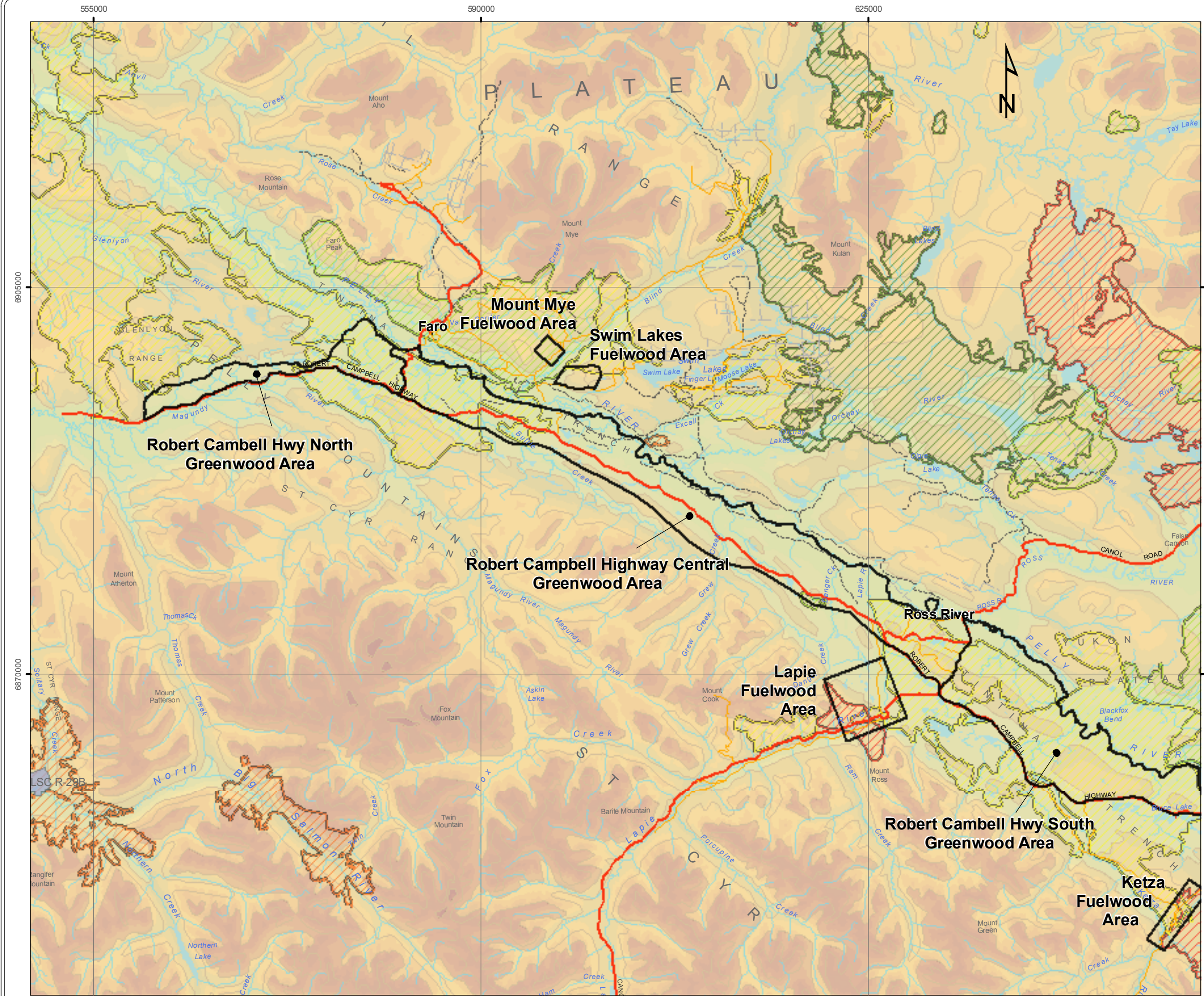
FRR – Forest Resources Regulation

THP – Timber Harvest Plan

YESAA – Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act.

Appendix A

Faro-Ross River Overview Map 1



Faro & Ross River THP Overview - Map 1



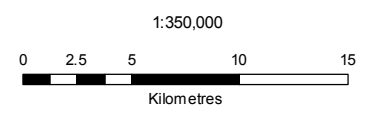
Legend

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

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

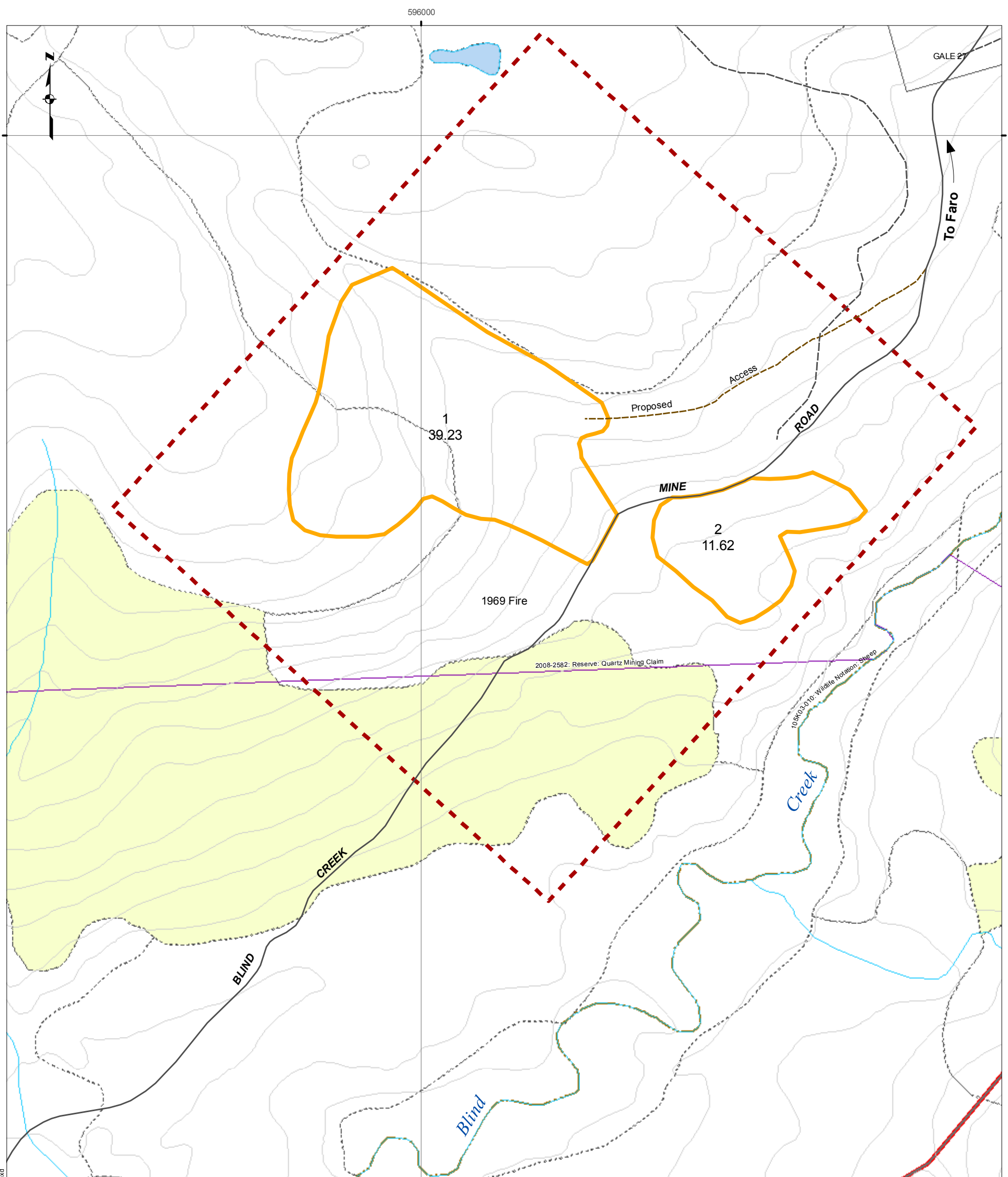
Digital Data Sources
 1:250,000 National Topographic Database (NTDB) features downloaded from spatial data warehouse - www.geogratis.gc.ca. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, Department of Natural Resources. All rights reserved.

Digital Elevation Models (30 metre and 90 metre) provided by Yukon Government Geomatics spatial data warehouse - www.geomaticsyukon.ca.



Appendix B

1:10,000 Mount Mye THP



J:\Operations\Forest_Harvest\Project\Kaskai\Faro\MXD\MountMye_FuelWood_Area_20110110.mxd

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

- 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 10, 2011
 Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 8

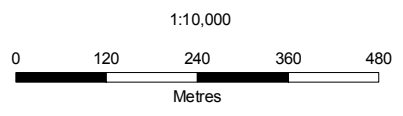
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Digital Data Sources

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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.



**Timber Harvest Plan Area
Faro - Ross River**

Mount Mye

