

**What We Heard:**

**Feedback on the  
Dawson Forest Resources  
Management Plan  
Annual Allowable Cut  
Determination**

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Government of Yukon



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**Contents**

Introduction ..... 4

Consultation process ..... 5

Public and Stakeholder Consultation ..... 5

First Nations Consultation ..... 6

Engagement Results..... 7

Public and Stakeholder Consultation ..... 7

What We Heard..... 7

Discussion..... 10

What's next? ..... 11

## Introduction

The Government of Yukon's Forest Management Branch and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's Department of Natural Resources, Land and Resources Branch have been working to complete an annual allowable cut determination for public land within the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan area. The Forest Management Branch initiated consultation on the annual allowable cut determination on public land as per Section 28 of the Forest Resources Act. The consultation was held between January 15, 2020 and February 13, 2020.

We asked Yukoners with an interest in forest management in the Dawson Forest Resource Management Plan area to provide their views on the annual allowable cut determination. This report summarizes the responses to the information posted publicly and input from public engagement events that were held.

### *About the Annual Allowable Cut Determination*

The annual allowable cut is the maximum amount of live timber that can be harvested annually within the Dawson forest resources management planning area.

In 2013, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Government of Yukon made a commitment to undertake a timber supply analysis to support an annual allowable cut determination under the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan Implementation Memorandum of Understanding. The completion of a timber supply analysis is a key component and the first step toward conducting an annual allowable cut determination. In June 2016, a Timber Supply Analysis Technical Committee ("the Committee") was formed to lead the timber supply analysis process. Members of the Committee included representatives from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government, Dawson District Renewable Resources Council and Government of Yukon (Forest Management Branch and Environment Yukon).

A timber supply analysis is a technical evaluation of how much live timber is available for harvest in consideration of factors that influence the land base, including the short and long-term effects of current forest management practices. The analysis helps determine how much timber can be harvested sustainably by estimating the timber supply each year. The timber supply analysis forms the basis of the annual allowable cut determination, combined with other socio-economic factors including public, stakeholder and First Nations input.

Public engagement during the timber supply analysis process was completed prior to the current engagement. Public notices, news releases, targeted stakeholder letters and a public meeting were organized in early 2018 to gather input into the draft timber supply analysis report. The meeting on March 1, 2018 was attended by 30 people.



The timber supply analysis report was then finalized by the Committee and ensured an objective and transparent process in order to support the annual allowable cut determination. One recommendation coming out of the timber supply analysis process was that the next timber supply analysis, data and modelling assumptions for mining activities be revisited for greater accuracy, and reflect any changing policies or management practices related to salvage and reclamation of timber during mining. These issues were also raised during the public open house and again during the most recent annual allowable cut consultation.

This “What We Heard” document provides a summary of the annual allowable cut consultation, and summarizes the input we received. This information will be included in the annual allowable cut determination to be undertaken by the Director of the Forest Management Branch for public land within the Dawson Forest Resource Management Plan area. The “What’s Next?” section outlines how the determination process will move forward.

## **Consultation process**

### **Public and Stakeholder Consultation**

#### *Online Engagement*

An information package containing two reports was available for review online at [engageyukon.ca](http://engageyukon.ca) for 30 days. Both newspaper and social media ads were released, directing the public to the [engageyukon.ca](http://engageyukon.ca) website to view the documents. Provided online were the following:

1. Timber Supply Analysis Report – This report provides a summary of the “Base Case” harvest and various scenarios or sensitivities that may influence the sustainable timber supply.
2. Data Package - This report provides an account of the land base, data, management practices and assumptions used in the timber supply analysis.
3. A Summary document was also provided as a plain language supplement to the Timber Supply Analysis Report and the Data Package.

The public, industry and stakeholders were invited to email, call or provide comments in person on the information provided.

### *Open Office Hours*

In addition to the publicly posted information pieces, six days of open office hours were held in Dawson City at the Compliance, Monitoring and Inspections office from January 21 to 23, 2020 and again from February 4 to February 6. During this time, the public were invited to drop in and view the timber supply analysis information in person, look at overview maps or discuss any questions related to the annual allowable cut process with staff from Forest Management Branch.

### **First Nations Consultation**

#### *Consultation with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun*

During the engagement period Forest Management Branch consulted with representatives from First Nations. On January 15, 2020, Forest Management Branch sent letters to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun whose traditional territories are overlapping with the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan boundary. This was completed in accordance with the Contiguous Boundary as outlined in the Sharing Accord between the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and the Tr'ondëk Hwëchin. The letters asked First Nations to make formal representations on the relevant information, or any other concerns that they propose be considered to the Director of the Forest Management Branch prior to the determination of the annual allowable cut on public lands.

#### *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Citizens Meeting*

A meeting was also held for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens at the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Hall on February 5 at 5:30 p.m. where a presentation on the annual allowable cut determination was given by the Forest Management Branch.



## Engagement Results

### Public and Stakeholder Consultation

#### *Online Engagement and Open Office Hours*

The annual allowable cut public consultation follows up on several years of public engagement related to the timber supply analysis process. The public, local industry stakeholders and First Nations actively participated in the review of the draft timber supply analysis report that provides the foundation for the annual allowable cut determination.

The response to the public engagement for the annual allowable cut was low. The invite to attend the open office hours resulted in one person dropping in, and one phone call. The choice to have open office hours as opposed to a public open house was due primarily to perceived recent engagement fatigue in the Dawson area. Providing options for drop in office hours allowed for people to have a larger time frame with which to view the information in person and provide comments. Two written letters were received from interested parties and stakeholders via email, who reviewed the information provided online.

### What We Heard

#### *Public Consultation*

Public comments received on the annual allowable cut determination largely focused on management practices that affected the timber supply analysis and the subsequent base case harvest flow scenario;

- Ensure management practices are sound regarding riparian buffers, erosion, harvesting practices, access development and decommissioning. Ensure that these practices are reviewed.
- Salvage and utilization of timber from other industrial uses are not recognized under the annual allowable cut, and management practices should encourage innovative uses for this timber.

#### *Stakeholder Consultation*

The final report base case scenario demonstrated that the land base could support 68,000 cubic metres of timber harvesting per year within the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan area over a ten year period, specifically within the Forest Resource Management Zone. This number serves as a starting point for the determination of the annual allowable cut.

The various sensitivity analyses provided in the timber supply analysis, coupled with legislative direction, socio-economic factors and stakeholder input will influence the level of harvest deemed sustainable for the region.

- It was acknowledged by stakeholders that the timber supply analysis was completed with a high degree of care and competence as undertaken, and that it provided a sufficient base from which to begin the annual allowable cut determination in the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan area.
- The timber supply analysis provided a base case scenario with a number of sensitivity analyses for the volume of timber that could be sustainably harvested each year in the region. The sensitivity analysis around proximity to major road networks showed a high amount of variance around the given base case timber supply volume, and is therefore a primary influence on the economics of timber harvesting operations. It was suggested that the available volume of timber harvested per year within the 12.5 km buffer from primary roads should be prioritized for consideration of the annual allowable cut determination.
- Future timber supply planning for both green conifer and deciduous species needs to account for potential growth in the market, whether it be biofuels, sawmills or fuelwood.
- Future analyses and sensitivity runs could include a regeneration delay sensitivity scenario in relation to timber supply.

There were also comments received regarding forest management practices. These practices influence the modelling assumptions in the timber supply analysis. Input recommended that forest management practices be taken into consideration when the timber supply analysis is next reviewed:

- Reforestation practices need to be prioritized in future.
- Innovative solutions should be found to increase the use of salvaged timber from other industries.
- Ensure management practices are sound regarding riparian buffers, erosion, harvesting practices and access development.
- Businesses are looking for longer term tenure options on a regulatory level.



## *First Nations Consultation*

We received written responses from First Nations that supported the annual allowable cut determination, giving appropriate thought and consideration to a number of priorities within their Traditional Territory. While the timber supply analysis base case scenario suggests the land base can support 68,000 cubic metres of timber harvest per year, the determination will be influenced by relevant timber supply sensitivity analyses, socio-economic factors, legislation and stakeholder input. There were four people who attended the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens meeting on February 5, 2020.

## *What We Heard*

- Ensure that the determination of the annual allowable cut is in line with the principles of regional land use planning, and is set at a level that allows for the maintenance of intact forest ecosystems within culturally sensitive areas and key wildlife areas.
- The influence of climate change should be acknowledged in the annual allowable cut determination, and using the various sensitivity analyses performed may best inform a cautious approach to the determination.
- Provide for flexibility in the length of the review period for the annual allowable cut determination (currently five years).
- It is recognized that the annual allowable cut determination allows for industry growth, such as biomass, for example, without over-allocating green timber resources.
- The annual allowable cut determination recognizes Chapter 17 of the Umbrella Final Agreement, providing citizens with the right to harvest forest resources on public land for purposes incidental to the exercise of their traditional pursuits and to the practice of their traditional customs.

Not directly related to the annual allowable cut decision, some comments were received around management practices influencing the timber supply analysis:

- Ensure that management practices around wetlands and riparian buffers are adequate, or are reviewed in order to protect key habitats.
- Reforestation is managed and incorporated appropriately to ensure a future timber supply.

- Salvage of timber related to industrial and government projects uses was a concern, as it is not attributable to the annual allowable cut, For example: placer mining, forest fire fuel management or other large scale industrial projects.

## Discussion

Overall, there is support for the annual allowable cut determination from members of the public, stakeholders and First Nations governments who provided input. The Committee completed a thorough process of the analysis and technical work that provided the basis for the annual allowable cut decision. The Committee recommended that Government of Yukon and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in continue to work together throughout the implementation of the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan to improve any uncertainties in management practices, land use or natural disturbance regimes in the timber supply analysis process during the next review period. Through these engagement processes, it has been demonstrated that forest management planning has generally had broad-based support in the Dawson region.

The feedback that we have received has five clear themes:

- The base case of 68,000 cubic metres of timber harvest per year should be moderated and informed by the sensitivity analyses performed, which reflect the socio-economic and conservation realities from network infrastructure influencing timber haul distances to climate change.
- Allow for future timber supply to meet the potential for a growing industry while balancing conservation of intact forest ecosystems and other cultural and social benefits.
- Future timber supply analyses should continually improve and evolve, ensuring sound forest management practices and principles of regional land use planning are incorporated.
- Look for ways to improve incorporating industrial salvage of timber into the timber supply analysis modelling process.
- Ensure a broad range of public, stakeholder and First Nations interests are represented and accounted for in the timber supply analysis and annual allowable cut determination processes.



## **What's next?**

Following public consultation, the Directors of the Government of Yukon's Forest Management Branch and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's Natural Resources Department will review the input received. A rationale document will be prepared by the Forest Management Branch, taking into consideration the timber supply analysis, public input and several other factors as required by the *Forest Resources Act*. The rationale document will provide the annual allowable cut determination on public lands within the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan area. Tr'ondëk Hwëchin may undertake an annual allowable cut decision on Settlement Lands within the plan area at their discretion as set out in Chapter 17 of the Tr'ondëk Hwëchin Final Agreement.