

Whitehorse & Southern Lakes five-year wood supply update



The Whitehorse and Southern Lakes district is home to most of Yukon's population and the communities of Whitehorse, Marsh Lake, Carcross and Tagish. Planning in this district is complex, involving three First Nations, the City of Whitehorse, two renewable resource councils and a wide range of environmental, cultural and recreational values. It is a diverse and active planning area with high demand, multiple land uses and significant cultural and ecological values.

Historically, this district has a low timber harvest. However, with updated timber harvest plans and significant harvesting on the Whitehorse fuel break the district is becoming an important contributor to wood supply. Ongoing collaboration with First Nations, communities and industry will help us develop a stable supply over the long term.

What's happening in the district

Most commercial harvesters based in Whitehorse travel into neighbouring districts to harvest. In Whitehorse, harvesting is primarily occurring for fuel abatement, with some greenwood and fuel wood harvest in timber harvest plans in the district.

There are new timber harvest plans in place and other plans in development. There is also harvesting occurring through fuel abatement contracts on the South Klondike project. The district is planning new personal-use fuelwood areas

A new log yard has been established to support the storage and drying of green wood. As fuel abatement harvesting expands, and as wood is brought in from other districts, log yards will help improve access to seasoned fuel wood and biomass.

Current wood supply snapshot

- **Forest Resources Management Plan:** Yes (2020)
- **Active Timber Harvest Plans:** 3 - Little Fox Lake, Marsh Lake, Lubbock Valley
- **Available Timber:** Approximately 10,000 cubic metres
- **Planned Timber Harvest Plans:** 3 - Copper Haul Road Fuel Abatement, Braeburn, Lewes Marsh/Sawmill Road
- **Community Wildfire Protection Plan:** Whitehorse Fuel Break
- **Personal Use Fuel Wood Areas:** 56 areas, 31,900 hectares
- **Primary Wood Use:** Fuel wood, sawlogs and biomass for the region.
- **Active Commercial Harvesters:** 3 major operators, 6 smaller scale operators
- **Average Annual Harvest:** 10,000 cubic metres fuel abatement, 500 cubic metres fuel wood, 500 cubic metres sawlog

Partnerships and Industry

Local operators often rely on fuel abatement projects or FireSmart contracts. With limited deadwood in the district, operators are focused on harvesting greenwood.

A working group, composed of Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Government of Yukon, oversees implementation of the forest resources management plan. There is also a memorandum of understanding with Carcross/Tagish First Nation relevant to forestry planning within their Traditional Territory.

Long-term wood supply outlook

The district faces challenges due to a shortage of accessible deadwood and limited recent wildfire activity. While there is currently significant harvesting on the fuel break, this is not considered a long-term wood supply. Identifying new areas for harvesting is challenging due to the complexity of governments, land use and values in the district. Concerns from residents and zoning regulations shape decisions about where forestry development can occur. As the city is the largest user of firewood in the territory, log yards are important for a stable wood supply.

Biomass demand is expected to grow in the district, and large volumes from fuel abatement projects and commercial greenwood harvesting can help meet that need. Continued collaboration with First Nations and the implementation working group will support development of new harvest areas.



About the district

The Whitehorse and Southern Lakes district spans 1.5 million hectares in the headwaters of the Yukon River. It includes the communities of Whitehorse, Marsh Lake, Carcross and Tagish, and lies within the Traditional Territories of Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

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Contact Forest Management Branch at forestry@yukon.ca or 867-456-3999 for the most current information.