

What We Heard:

Feedback on the Draft Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan

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For more information about the Draft Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan, please contact:

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Introduction

The draft Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan was created as a result of two years of work with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN), local residents and stakeholders including the Alsek Renewable Resources Council and the Yukon Wood Products Association.

The planning area is located south of the community of Haines Junction, along the Haines Highway. The timber harvest plan covers approximately 11,596 hectares of largely spruce forest, including numerous spruce beetle killed trees. The Quill Creek timber harvest planning area is within the Traditional Territory of the Champagne Aishihik First Nations, east of the Kluane National Park boundary and a large block of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Settlement Land. The south, east, and north boundaries are defined by the Kathleen River and Dezadeash River.

The purpose of the Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan is to set the framework for commercial harvesting activities within the Quill Creek harvest area, create economic opportunities for other harvesting activities, reduce the wildfire risk to the south of Haines Junction, and support the supply of firewood to communities throughout Yukon. This timber harvest plan includes mapping of previously harvested areas and all harvest areas proposed for the next 10 or more years.

The purpose of the public engagement was to seek feedback from Yukoners in regards to timber harvesting in the Quill Creek area, with emphasis on whether the draft timber harvest plan meets the needs of the people in the Kluane region and provides a balanced approach for the management and use of forests in the area. This report summarizes the input received.

Public Engagement Process

Forest values survey and Engage Yukon online survey

The Forest Management Branch undertook forest value surveys at the CAFN General Assembly on July 20, 2019. Surveys were also available for pickup at the Haines Junction Compliance, Monitoring and Inspection office and the Forest Management Branch in Whitehorse from July 20, 2019 to August 30, 2019. 17 surveys with 14 comments were received and compiled.

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics hosted an online survey between November 13, 2019 and December 13, 2019. 11 surveys with 14 comments were completed and compiled.

Open houses and community gatherings

Two open houses were held in Haines Junction. The Forest Management Branch held an open house on November 5, 2019 that was specific to the draft Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan, and the Renewable Resource Council hosted a multi-agency open house on December 12, 2019.

The Forest Management Branch also had an information booth at the CAFN General Assembly on July 20, 2019.

Forest Values Survey Results

Survey respondents were asked questions regarding forest use and forest resources in the Quill Creek area, respondents were provided with a maps for reference. Response numbers are indicated in parenthesis.

Do you use the forests in this area? Please check all that apply:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ Trapping (3) | ☐ Skiing/Snowshoeing (5) |
| ☐ Hunting (12) | ☐ Photography (6) |
| ☐ Hiking (5) | ☐ Commercial tourism (1) |
| ☐ Biking (4) | ☐ Motorsports (2) |
| ☐ Camping (9) | ☐ Other: Air Quality (1) |

Have you harvested forest resources in this area? Please check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Fuel wood (6) | ☐ Mushrooms (6) |
| ☐ Saw logs (1) | ☐ Berries (11) |
| ☐ Timber for crafts/traditional goods (2) | ☐ Other: Medicinal Plants; Fishing (2) |

Have previous timber harvesting activities affected your use of the area or resources? If so, please specify:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ No (7) | ☐ Yes (4) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|

Respondents said that previous timber harvesting activities had affected use of the area and resources by:

- Increasing access (1)
- Relocating trapping areas (1)
- Positively affecting use (2)

General Comments

Respondents had the option to provide additional general comments. Several themes that emerged from comments are:

- Supports forest management and timber harvesting that is good for the local economy (5)
- Use Forest Resource Roads to increase access for recreation (4)
- Separate motorized and non-motorized activity in the Quill Creek area (1)
- Fuel Abatement needs to occur in the Quill Creek area (1)
- Timber harvesting in the area would impact CAFN hunting and trapping (1)
- Reserve green trees, that act as a carbon sink, from harvesting (1)
- Fish in the Kathleen river need to be protected (1)

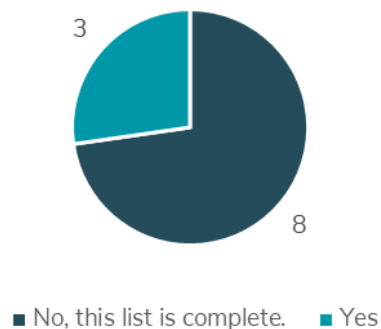
Online Survey Results

Part 1: Non-Timber Forest Values

The Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan discusses non-timber forest values within the Quill Creek area including:

- wildlife and biodiversity
- trapping and hunting
- visual aesthetics
- non-timber forest products (e.g mushrooms, berries and medicinal plants)
- recreational use (e.g camping, biking, skiing and hiking)

Q1. Are there any other non-timber forest values in the Quill Creek area that should be added to this list?



What other non-timber forest values in the Quill Creek area should be added to the list?

There were 11 survey responses and three comments regarding non-timber forest values. One comment was deleted because it was unclear or not related to the question. Survey respondents felt the following non-timber forest values should be included:

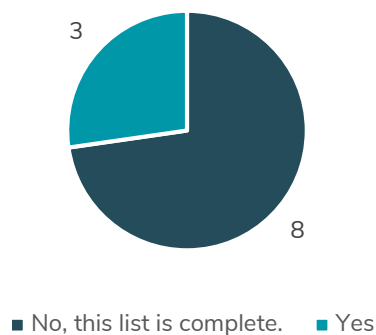
- Bird watching and fishing
- Climate change considerations such as climate resilience and carbon storage

Part 2: Timber Harvesting

The draft timber harvest plan discusses specific considerations for timber harvesting including:

- forest health
- fuel abatement and fire risk
- soil conservation and hydrology
- visual quality
- wildlife, biodiversity and sensitive habitats
- heritage resources
- permafrost.

Q2. Are there any other specific considerations for timber harvesting that should be added to this list?



What other specific considerations for timber harvesting should be added to the list?

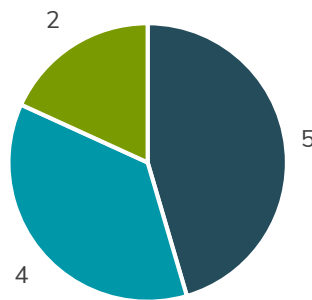
There were 11 survey responses and three comments regarding non-timber forest values. One comment was deleted because it was unclear or not related to the question. Survey respondents felt the following should be considered for timber harvesting:

- Climate change considerations such as climate resilience and carbon storage
- Impact on existing infrastructure such as bridges and roads
- Fuel abatement opportunities to protect Haines Junction

Part 3: Access Management

Forest Management Branch has direction from higher level plans to use existing access where feasible. We have previously heard concerns regarding shared use of existing roads with recreational users and residents.

Q3. Where there is concern over shared use of public roads do you feel (please select one):



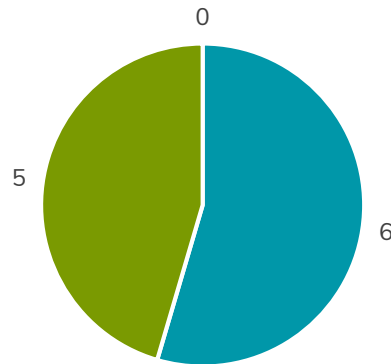
- ☐ a) that new controlled access should be constructed to avoid user conflict
- ☒ b) that no new roads or trails should be constructed and existing public access should have shared use regardless of potential user conflict
- ☐ c) that there are alternative solutions

What alternative solutions exists where there is concern over shared use of public roads?

Two comments were deleted because it was unclear or not related to the question.

During an earlier forest values assessment for the Quill Creek area, Forest Management Branch received several comments that some of the proposed forest resources roads should be left partially open to allow for recreational use.

Q4. Do you feel that (please select one):



- a) all of the roads should be left partially open for recreational use once timber harvesting is complete;
- b) roads that do not conflict with wildlife management objectives, trapping or other values should be left partially open for recreational use; or
- c) all of the new roads should be fully closed once timber harvesting is complete.

Part 4: General Comments

Has any previous timber harvesting in the Quill Creek area affected your use of the area? If so, please specify.

- No (2)
- Yes (1)

A respondent felt previous timber harvesting negatively affected the visual aesthetics of the area.

Please describe any issues or concerns you have with the plan that you feel are not included or addressed.

- Disagreement with the plan and process (1)
- How timber harvesting supports the local economy (1)
- Concerns regarding access management (1)
- Concerns regarding wild fire and fuel abatement (1)
- Protection of dead standing trees for bird habitat (1)

Responses from the public meetings and online feedback:

The draft Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan open house had 22 attendees. The Alsek Renewable Resource Council open house had about 90 attendees in total and about 25 visitors at the

Forest Management booth. Three major themes emerged from the public meetings and online feedback.

Commercial and Personal Use Forest Activity

- Many open house attendees supported the activities outlined in the plan.
- Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan is vital for the commercial harvesting industry in Haines Junction.
- Central processing area reduces heavy traffic on Forest Resources Roads
- Fuel abatement prescriptions limit cut to length operators from harvesting in Quill Creek.
- Timing of harvest tender should be prioritized for fuel abatement
- Processing inside the harvest block protects soils and encourages regeneration

Fuel Abatement and Wildfire

- Opportunities for timber harvesting to support fuel abatement
- Protect the local community of Haines Junction from wildfire
- More than timber harvesting needs to be done for fuel abatement
- Concern regarding operators and forest fire ignition

Access Management

- Limit long-term access to remote areas
- Prioritize road decommissioning once harvest is complete
- Minimize traffic near residences
- Look for recreation opportunities on Forest Resources Roads
- Concerns regarding recreation access to Quill Creek and ad hoc camping on Forest Resources Roads

Respondent Demographics:

100% of respondents were individuals. Respondents resided in Haines Junction or surrounding area (6), Ibex Valley (1) and Whitehorse (4).

Observation and Error:

Survey:

- The draft Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan is a technical document. We believe that there may have been more respondents had a shorter summary of the draft timber harvest plan been provided to the public.

Public Consultation:

- The language used in planning should be accessible to any member of the public.
- It can be challenging to get members of the public out to public meetings and events, especially when considering the timing of other engagements and events in the community. Different advertising and promotional efforts should be used prior to public engagement sessions in the future.

Discussion:

Overall, there appears to be support for the plan from members of the public. The feedback that we have received has three clear themes:

- Wildland fire management and fuel abatement is important in the Quill Creek area.
- Access management needs to balance limiting additional access into remote areas with preceding recreation uses of the area.
- Timber harvesting is important for the local economy.

What's next?

Following public consultation, the Government of Yukon will submit the draft Quill Creek Timber Harvest Plan for YESAB Executive Committee screening where the public will have additional opportunities for comment. The Government of Yukon will then make a decision on whether to approve the plan.