



MANAGED  
FOREST  
COUNCIL

## **2023 / 2024 CORPORATE PLAN**

**Effective April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Managed Forest Council (Council) was established in 2004 as an independent agency under the *Private Managed Forest Land Act* (the Act) with a mandate to regulate forest practices on private managed forest land (MF land). The Council consists of five members: two members appointed by the Minister of Forests (the Minister); two members elected by the owners of MF land; and a chair who is elected by the other four members. Council's operations are funded by an annual administration fee that Council levies on MF landowners. There is no government funding of the program.

Section 5 of the Act sets out the object of Council as follows:

### **Object of Council**

*The object of the council is to encourage forest management practices on private managed forest land, taking into account the social, environmental, and economic benefits of those practices.*

The Act provides a framework for private land to become MF land. This requires Council acceptance that a management commitment submitted by a landowner meets the requirements of the Act and regulations, and a decision by BC Assessment under the *Assessment Act* to classify the land as MF land. The Act also provides a mechanism for removal of MF land classification.

The Act specifies government's forest management objectives for MF land with respect to soil conservation, water quality, fish habitat, critical wildlife habitat and reforestation. The Act empowers Council and the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations consistent with these forest management objectives.

Council is empowered under the Act to apply various administrative remedies to ensure owners of MF land comply with the requirements of the Act and regulations.

The Council is required to submit an annual report to the Minister.

This Corporate Plan (the Plan) is a Council planning document that is updated each year to provide guidance on administrative and strategic activities important to the delivery of the MF program.

## II. STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR ACHIEVING MANDATE

To achieve Council's object under section 5 of the Act, Council has established the following Statement of Principles:

- (a) The Council will ensure the forest practice requirements it establishes in regulation address the government forest management objectives established in sections 12 to 16 of the Act.
- (b) Council will establish policies and guidelines respecting forest management requirements and make them publicly available.

- (c) Council will prepare field practices guidebooks and distribute them to owners of MF land to foster a consistent understanding of forest management practices requirements.
- (d) Council will conduct an inspection program to provide an ongoing assessment of MF owner compliance with regulatory requirements.
- (e) Council will ensure compliance with forest practice requirements of the Act and regulations, and where appropriate, take fair and equitable enforcement measures.
- (f) Council will conduct its affairs in relation to encouraging forest management practices in an open and transparent manner.

The implementation of these principles guides all Council operations.

### **III. COUNCIL GOALS & PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Each year Council develops a corporate plan and budget for operations to be carried out in the following fiscal year (April 1 - March 31). The corporate plan reflects Council's longer-term vision by setting out strategic initiatives for upcoming years.

Council, while meeting its legal mandate and statement of principles, will pursue the following goals and performance measures:

#### **1.0 Administrative Operations**

##### **1.1 Annual Administration Fee**

- To keep the annual administrative fee to the minimum amount to comprehensively and effectively meet its mandate.
- To invest accrued annual administration fees into guaranteed investment certificates to the benefit of Council and Owners.

##### **1.2 Program Entry and Exit**

- To process management commitment applications and amendments within 30 days except in extraordinary circumstances.

##### **1.3 Annual Financial Audit or Review Engagement**

- To ensure Council finances are audited annually by an independent auditor as soon as practicable after March 31 each year and to implement auditor recommendations, if any.

##### **1.4 Budget and Corporate Plan Monitoring**

- To ensure that progress of the Corporate Plan goals is reviewed against budget expenditures at least on a bi-monthly basis.

**Performance Measure # 1:** Program entry: provide timely processing of management commitments to facilitate owner planning and operations.

Performance Measure	2023 / 2024 Target	2024 / 2025 Proposed	2025 / 2026 Proposed
Days to process management commitment applications	30	30	30

Discussion: Timely decisions result in efficiencies for Council and landowners.

## 2.0 Field Operations (ensuring compliance)

### 2.1 Inspections

- To develop and implement an inspection program that delivers on Council's policy objective of inspecting each managed forest at least once every 5 years, using qualified inspectors.

### 2.2 Investigations

- To diligently investigate each potential non-compliance, using qualified investigators.

### 2.3 Consent Agreements, Determinations, and Reconsiderations

- Where appropriate, to enter into consent agreements with owners who may have contravened or continue to contravene a provision of the Act or regulations.
- To make compliance determinations in accordance with the Compliance Determinations Manual as soon as practicable after providing an opportunity to be heard.
- To provide a determination and rationale within 30 days of the completion of the opportunity to be heard process for investigations and reconsiderations.

### 2.4 Responding to Complaints and Inquiries

- To diligently pursue each complaint and inquiry to ascertain if a follow up inspection or investigation may be warranted and to respond to in a timely fashion.

**Performance Measure # 2:** Inspections: ensure ongoing compliance with Council policy of inspecting each MF in the program at least once every five years.

Performance Measure	2023 / 2024 Target	2024 / 2025 Proposed	2025 / 2026 Proposed
% of MFs inspected within past 5 years	95	95	95

Discussion: Council's inspection program focuses on the key environmental values set out in the Act. It is designed to ensure landowners are fulfilling the requirements of the Act and regulations, and the management practices set out in their management commitments.

### 3.0 Providing Policies, Procedures, Manuals and Interpretive Guidance

#### 3.1 Interpretation

- To periodically assess whether additional interpretive guidance is required or if existing guidance needs to be clarified.
- To work with owners' representatives on vetting any Council guidance before it is finalized.

### 4.0 Continuous Council Improvement

#### 4.1 Training of Council and Staff

- To ensure Council members and staff are well trained with respect to administrative law, governance, and compliance and enforcement matters.

#### 4.2 Clarifying Council Mandate

- To identify, develop and implement changes to the Act, regulations, and policy as part of continuous improvement in a way that MF owners are facilitated in making changes to their operations.

#### 4.3 Assessing Council Performance

- To review deliverables against those specified in the annual plan.
- To periodically review whether Council is performing in accordance with its strategic direction and statement of principles.
- To annually review the risk management framework and incorporate any necessary adjustments.
- To require Council members to report annually as to that member's compliance with Council's established code of conduct.

**Performance Measure # 3:** Council and staff training: provide training opportunities for Council and staff.

Performance Measure	2023 / 2024 Target	2024 / 2025 Proposed	2025 / 2026 Proposed
Training events per Council member	1	2	2

Discussion: Ongoing training is provided for Council and staff to stay relevant and informed with respect to technical advancements, administrative law and compliance and enforcement. A minimum 30 hours of professional development is required per year for forest professionals under the *Professional Governance Act*.

**Performance Measure # 4:** Assessing Council performance: support regular attendance at Council meetings to ensure the Council's statutory mandate is achieved.

Performance Measure	2023 / 2024 Target	2024 / 2025 Proposed	2025 / 2026 Proposed
Meeting attendance	90%	90%	90%

Discussion: Standards of Conduct for Council members are set out in the Governance Policy.

## 5.0 Extension and Promotion

### 5.1 Owners

- To work with owners to improve understanding of the regulatory framework.
- To work with owner representatives to ensure open communication and, where warranted, effective coordination on delivery of specific initiatives.

### 5.2 Local Government

- To engage with local government representatives and provide educational opportunities as they arise.
- To work with local governments on local issues involving MF land.
- To attend conferences and participate in workshops sponsored by local governments to promote Council's mandate and operations.
- To meet with local governments where there are significant amounts of private forest land to inform them of the regulatory protections in place for lands within the MF classification

### 5.3 Government Agencies

- To work with various government agencies with respect to specific incidents, regulatory initiatives, and inter-agency areas of interest.
- To work with lead ministry staff to ensure the minister is kept informed of any pending issues that may be of interest.

- To liaise with BC Assessment on an on-going basis to ensure there is an understanding of respective policies, procedures, and operational requirements.
- To meet with government agencies to reinforce an understanding of how the MF land program is a cost-effective way of promoting a higher level of forest management.

**Performance Measure # 5:** Promotion: engage with stakeholders to promote Council's regulation of forest management activities on MF land.

Performance Measure	2023 / 2024 Target	2024 / 2025 Proposed	2025 / 2026 Proposed
# of stakeholder engagements	10	10	10

Discussion: Engagements will include meeting with owners, local governments, government agencies and other stakeholders to improve understanding of the regulatory framework.

## 6.0 Potential Regulatory Reforms

### 6.1 Identifying and Implementing Potential Regulatory Reforms

- To review audits, inspections, investigations, determinations, slide reports and owners' annual declarations to ascertain if there are any regulatory gaps, redundancies or technical issues that need to be addressed.
- To seek input and review suggestions from outside agencies for potential legislative or regulatory changes not identified through internal review processes.
- To carefully consider the implications of any potential changes to the regulatory framework.
- To work with all affected parties on any potential regulatory amendment initiatives.
- To ensure staff and contractors are fully trained in any changes before they are implemented.

## 7.0 Preparation for Future Operations

### 7.1 Development of Next Corporate Plan and Initiatives

- To ensure the Corporate Plan is prepared through January - March each year.
- To schedule and plan initiatives that support the achievement of Council's mandate.



#### IV. STAKEHOLDERS

To provide context for the development of specific goals within the Corporate Plan, Council has identified its stakeholders and potential stakeholders, documented the relationships with these stakeholders, and specified the type of communication or interaction that is warranted.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Communication or Interaction</b>
Ministry of Forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry responsible for the Act</li> <li>Potential auditor</li> <li>Fellow regulatory agency: water, fish, wildlife, habitat management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide annual report</li> <li>Meet semi-annually to discuss initiatives</li> <li>On-going interaction to address issues as they arise</li> <li>Maintain dialogue on cross agency issues</li> </ul>
Ministry of Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fellow regulatory agency: water quality, species at risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain dialogue on cross agency issues</li> </ul>
Department of Fisheries and Oceans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fellow regulatory agency: anadromous fish and habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain dialogue on cross agency issues</li> </ul>
BC Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fellow regulatory agency: Assessment Act</li> <li>Interactions for lands entering and exiting the managed forest program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide annual reporting</li> <li>Coordinate entry and exit of land</li> <li>Coordinate regulatory reform</li> </ul>
Surveyor of Taxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fellow regulatory agency: collector of exit fees levied on rural properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculate exit fees and inform agency</li> </ul>
Local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactions respecting: bylaws, enforcement of Act and regulations, exit fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain dialogue on local operational issues</li> <li>Attend local meetings to share background of the program and answer inquiries</li> </ul>
Landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulated party</li> <li>Funding source</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure compliance</li> <li>Promote knowledge through policies, guidelines, brochures and training</li> </ul>
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational and individual or group expressions of forest management concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual, group or one-on-one educational or problem resolution sessions</li> </ul>
Private Forest Landowners Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many landowners are members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of program issues as they arise</li> <li>Attendance at PFLA AGM</li> </ul>

Council will periodically assess whether adjustments are required to ensure the desired level of communication and interaction is achieved with each identified stakeholder and if the need exists to identify additional stakeholders.

## **V. 2023 / 2024 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

Council identifies strategic initiatives consistent with its mandate to inform objectives and goals for future activities. The initiatives guide budget planning process in subsequent fiscal years.

### **Strategic Initiative 1: Risk Assessment Review**

The objective of risk assessment in the context of a MF is to evaluate both the potential for activities to negatively impact key public environmental values (hazard level) and the potential consequence should something go wrong.

Assessing risk enables better risk management and better planning. It identifies where higher levels of care may be required, and where ongoing maintenance or monitoring efforts should be particularly focused.

Council expects owners to complete appropriate risk assessments prior to the start of operations. The purpose of the risk assessment review is to confirm how and to what extent risk is assessed by owners. The risk assessment review is ongoing and is carried out in conjunction with Council's annual inspection program.

### **Strategic Initiative 2: Communication Strategy**

Council's communication strategy is to raise its profile with the various stakeholders to improve their understanding of the legislative framework and Council's role in regulating forest practices on MF land, to ensure open communication, and to address stakeholder specific issues and initiatives. Council will carry out the following:

- Contact local governments where there is significant MF land to provide opportunity and invitation for engagement in person or through web based meetings.
- Continue involvement in local government conventions and tradeshow.
- Continue active engagement with the private managed forest landowners association including participation in their annual conference.
- Provide newsletters and information update blog posts on Council website.
- Develop communications videos that will be available for presentations and on the Council website.
- Update display materials

### **Strategic Initiative 3: Policy and Procedure Review**

Council has several policies and procedures that guide its operations. Periodic review of the policies and procedures is important to ensure they continue to reflect legislation and current practices, and provide owners with the guidance needed for meeting administrative requirements and forest practice standards.

A policy and procedure review was initiated in 2022 and is planned for completion in 2024.

#### **Strategic Initiative 4: Potential Regulatory Amendments**

Regulatory review is an ongoing continuous improvement process. Inspections, investigations, determinations, and assessment of owner activity are used to identify potential regulatory gaps and issues that need to be addressed.

Council has identified potential regulatory amendments to the Act and the Council Regulation. Council will engage with stakeholders including the Ministry of Forests and determine the path forward over the next two years.

#### **IV. ASSESSING DELIVERY OF PAST OPERATIONS**

Council's 2023 / 2024 Corporate Plan contains a set of performance measures related to its stated strategies and goals.

Council will report on these performance measures in its 2023 / 2024 Annual Report to the Minister.

Date: November 14, 2023

Approved: Trevor Swan, Chair