

## BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

**DATE:** January 9, 2024  
**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Forests  
**ISSUE:** BC Timber Sales Partial Harvesting Program Update

### BACKGROUND:

- BC Timber Sales (BCTS) has developed a program to incorporate the use of partial harvesting and commercial thinning in Timber Sale Licences (TSLs). This program supports sustainable forest management and provides pricing points to the market pricing system, as per the BCTS mandate.
- As part of this program, BCTS developed a Partial Harvest Guidance Document which is actively being used by BCTS staff. This document has also been shared with staff in the Ministry of Forests who are involved in partial harvesting and commercial thinning.
- To support the broader use of partial harvesting in the forest industry, the Guidance Document has been shared externally to industry professionals and the contractors who are working with Office of the Chief Forester staff to update the Silvicultural Systems Handbook.
- An overarching BCTS Partial Harvest Strategy is being finalized by BCTS Provincial Operations staff. This Strategy provides principles that guide the use of partial harvesting and commercial thinning by BCTS business areas.
- Most BCTS business areas are developing, have advertised, or have successfully sold at least one partial harvest TSL.
- The Prince George business area is actively developing a commercial thinning TSL. They are finalizing a Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) amendment to include commercial thinning stocking standards to support commercial thinning TSLs.
- The three BCTS coastal business areas are currently looking for candidate stands to develop commercial thinning TSLs. These TSLs are needed to generate pricing points for commercial thinning for the Coast Appraisal Manual.

### DISCUSSION:

BCTS is working to increase the use of partial harvesting and commercial thinning, both within BCTS operations and in the broader forest sector. BCTS is incorporating partial harvesting and commercial thinning through the development and implementation of TSLs, while the pricing point data generated through these TSLs promotes the use of these regimes across the BC forest sector.

Partial harvesting and commercial thinning can maintain midterm timber supply and support the achievement of BCTS goals while supporting the forest industry and the provincial economy. These techniques can allow BCTS licence holders to operate in constrained areas that may otherwise be unavailable for harvest under a clearcut regime. They support the recommendations of the Old

Growth Strategic Review, maintain biodiversity and wildlife habitat, address forest health concerns, support visual quality objectives and maintain social license. These regimes also support BCTS' certification with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Business areas will begin reporting on partial harvest and commercial thinning activities as part of the annual SFI management review process starting in 2024.

BCTS Provincial Operations staff are continuing to support the business areas through regular updates to the Guidance Document, hosting Community of Practice meetings, facilitating training sessions, and maintaining a partnership with FP Innovations. Provincial Operations staff are currently working with FP Innovations to develop in-person partial harvesting and commercial thinning workshops to provide staff with hands-on training and experience.

While there are remaining challenges to implementing partial harvesting and commercial thinning, BCTS staff are actively working to address these. This includes participating in working groups with the broader Ministry and industry professionals, developing internal training opportunities and resources, and attending the upcoming Silviculture Innovation Program Knowledge Summit hosted by the Bulkley Valley Research Centre.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

- Not applicable.

**SUMMARY:**

Sustainable forest management is one of BCTS' overarching principles and is reflected in how BCTS conducts business. As part of the strategy to achieve sustainable stewardship of BC's forests, BCTS incorporates the use of partial harvesting and commercial thinning systems in TSLs throughout BC. BCTS staff have received training and guidance through the BCTS Partial Harvest Guidance Document, Partial Harvest Community of Practice, and other training opportunities, and are now working to develop, advertise and sell partial harvest TSLs. One business area in the interior is developing their first commercial thinning TSL, while coastal business areas are analysing candidate commercial thinning stands. Partial harvest and commercial thinning TSLs provide pricing points to the market pricing system, maintain midterm timber supply, and support a resilient forest sector in BC. While barriers to partial harvesting and commercial thinning remain, BCTS is at the forefront of work being undertaken to address these challenges.

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**REVIEWED BY:**

	Initials	Date
DM	RM	January 19, 2024
Assoc DM	EOD	January 24, 2024
ADM	MS	January 12, 2024
ED BCTS	AP	January 12, 2024
Program Dir.	LS	January 12, 2024
Senior Mgr.	GCR	January 10, 2024