



PRACTICUM PROJECT FIELD REPORT:
DEVELOPMENT OF A COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT ZONE FOR THE
GOLDEN TSA LAND WHICH BORDERS ON NATIONAL PARKS

prepared for
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SUMMARY

The Golden Forest Service must manage its Timber Supply Area in accordance with the Four Mountain Park Plan formulated for Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, and Yoho National Parks. The Golden TSA will be cooperatively managed so that timber harvesting and recreation will go on within its boundaries, and these activities will not interfere with those carried out in adjacent National Parks. Guidelines will be set to ensure the land will be used so that the social, economic, and environmental benefits produced are maximized. I helped to research and develop a management plan for the Golden TSA as my practicum project for completing Selkirk College's Wildland Recreation Technology Program. I obtained information from the Forest Service, Park Personnel, loggers and the like in order to write this report outlining a Cooperative Resource Management Plan between National Parks and the Forest Service. The Plan sets means to govern development of the Golden TSA land which borders on National Parks, and it will result in less resource use conflicts and benefit to all parties involved.

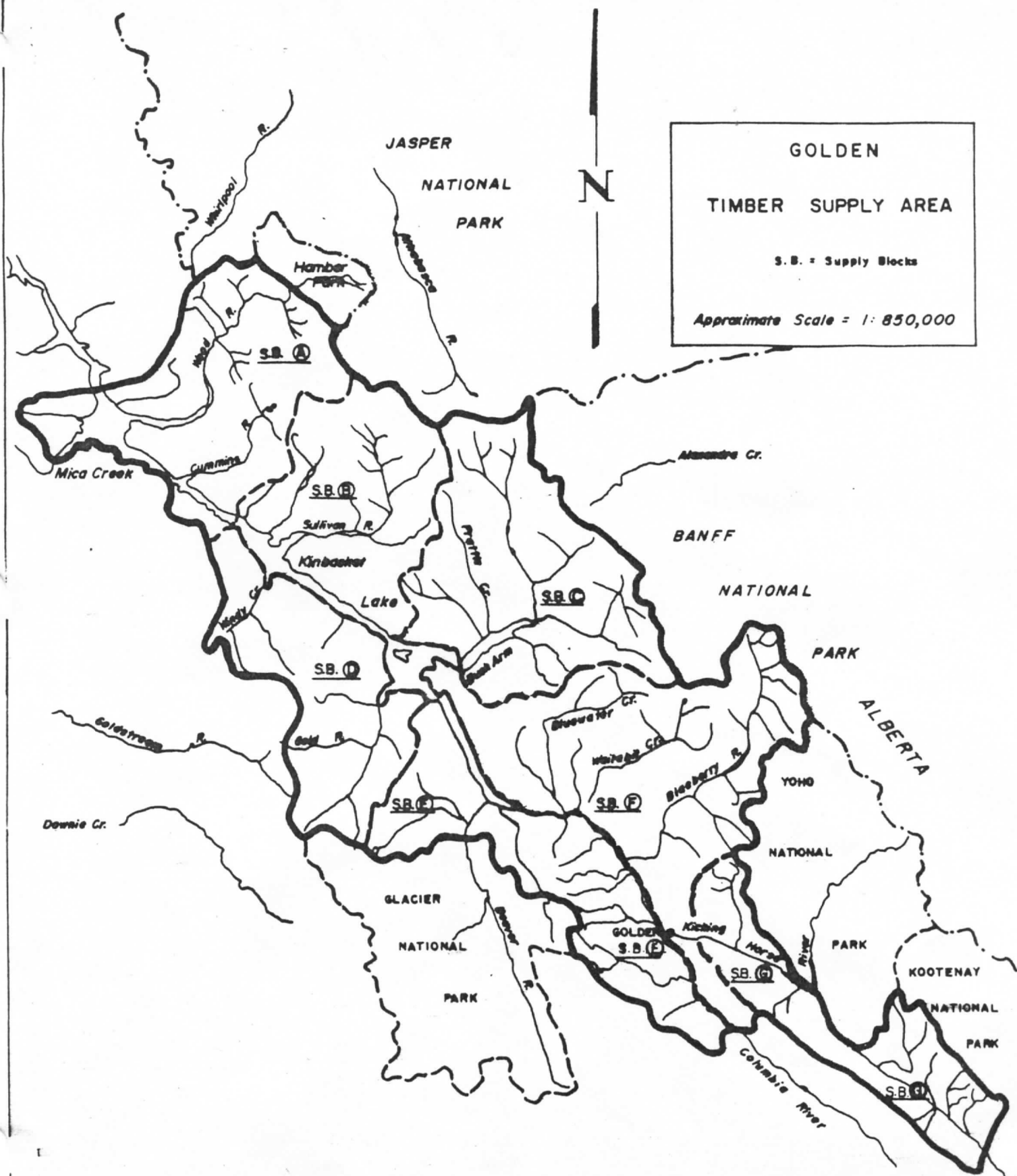


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INTRODUCTION

The Golden Timber Supply Area is the most northerly TSA in the Nelson Forest Region. It borders on the five National Parks of Kootenay, Yoho, Banff, and Jasper on the east, and Glacier on the west. Since the TSA shares common boundaries with the parks and provides some of the finest scenery in Canada, it is frequented by hikers, climbers, and skiers, as well as hunters and fishermen. Forestry is the main industry in Golden and the area has a total annual allowable cut (AAC) of 650 000 metres cubed (Price and Dunster, 1985).

Kootenay, Yoho, Banff and Jasper National Parks are presently finalizing their Four Mountain Parks Plan which will set recommendations and limitations for future park development and use. Management of the Golden TSA must make provisions for timber harvesting, recreation, access, and wildlife habitat protection, and in developing long-term planning for these activities, the Golden Forest Service must consider the policies outlined in the Four Mountain Parks Plan. Similarly, as the preservation and management of resources in Parks depend on habitats both within and adjacent to Park boundaries, cooperation between Parks and the Forest Service is necessary to ensure Parks achieves its mandate for resource protection.

My practicum project with Golden Forest Service involved my helping to initiate a cooperative management plan between the Golden TSA and the National Parks located on its boundary.

This paper will outline the major concerns of both the Golden Forest Service and the National Parks involved, and shall suggest guidelines to ensure that future development of the Golden TSA benefits all concerned.

1.0 Description of Objectives

The objectives of my practicum project were as follows:

a) Firstly, I wanted to learn about cutting permits and the long term timber management situation in the Golden Timber Supply Area. I consulted maps showing the Five Year Harvesting Proposal (of both small and large business) and noted where future cutblocks were located and when within the next five years they were to be logged. I also examined where access was to be located and noted its proximity to Park boundaries.

b) Next I visited harvested cutblocks in close proximity to Parks and observed their effects on the aesthetics and wildlife habitat of the area. My aim was to better understand what effect the cutblocks have on the environment.

c) Joint planning between the National Parks and the Forest Service is the key to successful formulation of a Five Year Development Plan for the Golden TSA. Thus, another of my objectives was to travel to the Parks

involved and discuss with them their proposals as to how land existing outside the Parks should be developed.

d) I strived to learn the proper use of a wealth of information throughout my practicum, including the Forest Landscape Handbook, Forest Cover Maps, the Four Mountain Parks Plan, and landscape and recreation inventories.

e) My major personal objective was to get out in the field, look at the resources present in the area, and develop a feel for how resources are managed to minimize land use conflicts and maximize compatible land management. My goal was to better understand how the Forest Service works, and how it goes about implementing a coordinated land management plan.

1.2 Location and Description of Study Area

The city of Golden is located in the southeast corner of British Columbia. The Golden TSA surrounds the city and is situated at the northern tip of the Nelson Forest District. The TSA boundaries coincide with those of the Golden Forest District, and border on Kootenay, Yoho, Banff, Jasper, and Glacier National Parks (see Key Map, page ii). The Golden TSA covers a 899 422 ha area and an estimated 33% of the land base is classified as pro-

ductive Crown forest land. Over 60% of the land base is classified as non-forest because it is rock, ice, snow, or water (Price and Dunster, 1985).

2.0 EXISTING MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The mandate of the Ministry of Forests "includes planning for the integrated use of the Crown's forest and range resources in consultation with other ministries and the private sector" (MOF Act, 1986).

Environment Canada's mandate is to "protect and preserve (National Parks) for the appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of present and future generations of Canadians and for other visitors" (Four Mountain Parks Plan, 1986). The Four Mountain Parks Plan also states that "in order to enhance resource protection, cooperative programs will be developed among the Parks and with other agencies that are responsible for managing adjacent lands." Thus, both the Forest Service and Parks have the same idea of cooperative land management in mind.

In order to practice cooperative management, all parties involved must be aware of the issues faced by each party individually. The following will outline the basic concerns of the Golden Forest Service, Evans Products Co. Ltd. (the major logging company), and the National Parks which border on the Golden Timber Supply Area.

2.1 Major Forest Service Concerns

2.1.1 Timber Harvesting Situation

Forestry is the main industry in Golden and accounts for an estimated 80% of the local economy. Following an analysis of timber on the Golden TSA, an annual allowable cut was set at 650 000 cubic metres. Studies show that there could be a timber shortage or falldown in 60 years time if basic forestry standards are not met. These standards include harvesting and reforesting steep slopes and areas of difficult access, and utilizing old growth hemlock to a greater extent.

To attain the AAC, roads into outlying areas of timber must be built. Future access roads are a problem as they create conflicts between user groups. They allow loggers and recreators into an area and can have detrimental effects on wildlife habitat and riparian zones.

Thus, issues faced by the Forest Service are to:

- denote areas for future cutblocks and access in order to sustain the AAC
- utilize old growth stands
- ensure proper reforestation
- resolve user conflicts that may arise
- preserve important or sensitive wildlife habitat areas.

2.1.2 Recreation Situation

Over sixty percent of the Golden TSA is classified as non-forest. It provides some of the most spectacular alpine scenery in Canada, and the Alpine Club of Canada has built huts in the area for their use.

Helicopter and backcountry skiing and snowmobiling are popular winter activities. Snowmobiling is concentrated around the Golden city area as forest access there is extensive.

There is great potential for water based activities such as canoeing and rafting, and the numerous trails in the area are well used by hikers and climbers alike.

Hunting and fishing are also carried out in the Golden TSA; thus, a viable fish and game population is important to attract recreation to the area.

Presently there are 23 recreation sites, 125 kilometres of summer hiking trails and 35 kilometres of winter trails on the Golden TSA. The Forest Service now faces the task of determining what facilities should be constructed to meet the increasing demand for recreation areas.

Little has been done to implement the plans for future-development for facilities for recreation. This is due to the lack of funding and manpower.

Any recreation development on the Golden TSA must

- be compatible with timber harvesting utilization of the area
- take into consideration the effect it will have on wildlife habitat (and be developed to have little or no effect)
- have no effect on the neighboring National Parks.

2.2 Major Logging Company Concerns

Evans Products Company Limited is the major logging company for the Golden TSA. This licensee has an annual allowable cut of 498 550 metres cubed which represents about 77% of the total cut (Price and Dunster, 1985). Don Thibodeau, the Development Superintendent at Evans, indicates that his company is willing to change the access, timing, or type of harvest if problem cutblock areas are identified early enough (at least two to three years before proposed harvesting). He suggests that problems could be avoided if:

- Evans Products Co. Ltd. knew Parks' strategy for singling out sensitive areas and was shown where these sensitive areas were
- advance notice (two to three years before harvest) indicating conflict areas was received by Evans from Parks (or other concerned parties)

- informal meetings were held so parties involved (Parks, Forest Service, Evans, etc.) could discuss issues.

2.3 Major National Park Concerns

There are five National Parks concerned with the future development of the Golden TSA. Jasper Park has been the least affected by any development to date, and was not contacted for input to this report due to time limitations. A meeting with Banff National Park could not be arranged, so BNP's specific concerns also could not be presented in this paper. The major issues of Yoho, Kootenay, and Glacier National Parks, however, will be outlined in the following section. It should be noted here that most of the National Park land bordering on the Golden TSA is classified as "Wilderness" according to the National Park Zoning System. This indicates that "limits are placed on the number of users allowed and no motorized access is permitted. (Wilderness areas) are managed in a way that disperses visitors, rather than concentrating them" (Four Mountain Parks Plan, 1986). Some areas of Banff, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks which border on the Golden TSA are zoned as "Special Preservation" areas where "access is strictly controlled and may be prohibited entirely (and) no motorized access or built facilities are permitted" (Four Mountain Parks

Plan, 1986). These zones are indicated on the maps included in the appendix located on page 23.

2.3.1 Kootenay National Parks Concerns

Kootenay National Park occupies a 1406 kilometres squared area which stretches in a north-south direction along the western side of the Continental Divide. It contains protected examples of the Rocky Mountains natural region.

The main issues brought up by Kootenay National Park are those of harvesting's effects on wildlife and access into the Park.

Kootenay is presently monitoring grizzly (via radio collars) along its west boundary. Populations of elk and sheep occur in the area as well. Parks feels that habitat for these animals should be managed somewhat similarly in and out of the Park, and that habitat (especially for elk, sheep, and grizzly) must be ensured for the future.

Dainard Creek wilderness area sees high back-country use in the Park, and although access through the opening in the "rock wall" is minimal at this time, access to the Park could greatly increase if roads into the area were built.

Roads could also bring hunters closer to the Park

boundaries (especially in the Wolverine Pass area) and this may cause conflicts between Park users and the hunters.

Aesthetics have not been greatly affected by harvesting near Kootenay National Park, but Parks suggest that landscape planning should be practiced to make the visual effects of cutblocks more subtle.

Thus the concerns of Kootenay National Park with regard to the development of land bordering on the Park are:

- wildlife habitat areas must not be harmed by any future development
- access into areas bordering on the Park must somehow be controlled (especially in the Dainard Creek area)
- aesthetics must be considered when determining cutblock boundaries.

2.3.2 Yoho National Parks Concerns

Yoho National Park projects the theme of "rock-walls and waterfalls" and is another of the five National Parks that contain examples of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region. Over 100 kilometres of Yoho Park's boundary borders on provincial lands, and again increased Park access, effects

on wildlife, and aesthetics are the major issues of concern related to further development of the area adjacent to the Park.

Yoho Park personnel indicate that hunters frequent the Ice River area, especially in the fall, and cutblocks in that vicinity could bring even more people closer to the Park boundary.

This influx of people so close to the Park could have detrimental effects to the Park itself.

Similarly, increased access roads into Ensign Creek and Collie Creek could cause problems, as there are sensitive wildlife areas in the Ensign Creek drainage and roads into Collie Creek could have negative effects on the Park users' wilderness experience.

Yoho is concerned with ensuring viable wildlife populations and feels this can only be accomplished if populations both in and out of the park are managed similarly.

Yoho Park also suggests that the public should be more aware of cooperative management planning along Park boundaries and encourages some sort of information dispensing outlining the processes involved.

Yoho National Park would also like to see landscape planning incorporated into the positioning of future cutblocks to make them less noticeable.

Thus, concerns Yoho National Park has regarding development outside of the Park boundary are:

- hunter and vehicular access must somehow be restricted into Ice River, Glenogle, Ensign, and Collie Creeks
- wildlife populations and habitat areas must be left unharmed by any development
- the experience of the visitor to Yoho National Park must not be negatively affected by development occurring outside of the Park
- aesthetics must be considered with regard to proposed cutblocks.

2.3.3 Glacier National Park Concerns

Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks cover a 1350 kilometre squared area. Glacier National Park is located on the southwest border of the Golden TSA and it also is concerned with issues which could result from future development just outside of its boundary.

Cutblocks have been proposed quite close to Glacier Park boundary, especially in the Beaver Creek and Bachelor Creek areas. Beaver Creek exhibits a sensitive riparian zone and the drainage itself is a major elk, moose, and deer migration and travel corridor. Access to the Park through Bachelor Creek is rugged, but there is concern

for grizzly and goats should hunters get near the Park boundary.

Snowmobile access close to the Park could also increase with future access roads and this may create garbage and noise problems and have a detrimental effect on wildlife.

Parks finds cutblocks near the boundary undesirable as the blocks generally have a negative effect on the aesthetics of the area. The cutblocks also can yield mechanical damage to Park trees located alongside the blocks. Glacier proposes that machinery restrictions be imposed on certain cutblocks to lessen environmental damage, and that regeneration of harvested areas near the park be done as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Glacier Park does realize that to not allow harvesting along Park boundaries is undesirable, as forest agencies must demonstrate to the public that logging can be accomplished with little or no effect on an area's ecosystem or aesthetics. As with the other parks, Glacier certainly encourages visual landscape management in proposing the site of future cutblocks.

Thus, the major proposals of Glacier National Park regarding future development of the Golden TSA can be summed up as follows:

- harvesting and development near riparian zones and wildlife travel corridors must leave the environment as undisturbed as possible
- hunter access close to Park boundaries must be limited (especially in Beaver and Bachelor Creek areas)
- visual-landscape management should be used to lessen the negative effect cutblocks can have on aesthetics
- snowmobile access to areas near the Park must be controlled
- areas adjacent to Parks should be harvested using methods which result in the least environmental damage and the fastest regeneration.

3.0 A COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT ZONE

As the previous section shows, National Parks and the Golden Forest service know of the need for integrated resource management between their agencies. They understand some type of coordinated planning process should be formulated for the area of the Golden TSA that borders on the Parks.

The idea of a "buffer zone" around National Parks has been talked about for years. But today we know that the concept of a protected strip of land surrounding Parks is not feasible. It would make bordering agencies leery that National Parks were extending their boundaries, and

it would be impossible to manage and legislate. Instead of a buffer, a Cooperative Management Zone should be considered. It would denote areas bordering on National Parks as zones where all persons affected by development of the area could voice their concerns and recommendations regarding the future of the site. It would alleviate conflicts between user groups and ensure cooperative resource planning and development. A positive attitude would develop between those involved as all would be working together toward a common goal.

3.1 Guidelines for Cooperative Land Management

Meetings between the Golden Forest Service and the bordering National Parks have shown unanimous approval for the concept of cooperative land management of the Golden TSA land which borders on the National Parks. The meetings also brought out practical suggestions to ensure the best use of the resources in the area.

The following is an outline of these suggestions and recommendations which should be used to guide future development of the Cooperative Management Zone between Golden TSA and the bordering National Parks:

a) Parks Attendance at Steering Committee Meetings-

The Golden TSA Steering Committee (which is made up of officials from the Fish and Wildlife

Branch, the Forest Service, the Forest Industry and any other interested parties) meets once a month to discuss issues related to the Golden TSA. The steering committee oversees the TSA Analysis Sub-committee which incorporates issues (such as aesthetics, wildlife habitat, etc.) into the proposed AAC. There is an agenda put out before the meetings showing the topics to be discussed. A representative from the National Parks should be encouraged to attend the Steering Committee meetings and voice concerns the Park may have regarding proposed development.

b) Parks Attendance at Pre-harvest Checks-

Pre-awards or pre-harvests are checks made by the Forest Service on areas proposed for harvest. A Forest Service representative goes out into the field and determines if characteristics of the road layout, harvesting method, regeneration method, etc. are compatible with the site. Representatives of a National Parks which are affected by the cutblock should be invited by the Forest Service to attend the pre-harvest. The representatives would get a firsthand look at the proposal and formulate ideas as to how it would affect the Park. Suggestions for change

in the proposal could be discussed before any harvesting occurs.

c) Vehicular (Hunting) Access Closure-

Roads in certain areas should be considered for posted "Vehicular Hunting Closure" or "Authorized Vehicles Only" regulations once they are no longer being used as harvesting access. This would reduce the amount of traffic into areas such as Ice River, Glenogle Creek, Ensign Creek, Collie Creek, Dainard Creek, Bachelor Creek and Beaver Creek. The result would be less stress on the wildlife populations and habitats in the closed areas.

d) Signs to Create Public Awareness-

Signs should be posted in the vicinity of the Parks to encourage the public to be careful not to harm the environment. The signs should warn people not to approach wildlife and to carry litter out with them. Signs could also stop snowmobilers and others from accidentally entering Parks by alerting the public to the Park boundaries.

Media along travel corridors could be installed to alert the public to the cooperative management process being implemented on the Park

boundaries. This would create public support of the project.

e) Landscape Analyses Must be Implemented-

A landscape analysis has been carried out on the major highways (mainly along the area south of the Kicking Horse River) to show the effect cut-blocks have on the area's aesthetics. This analysis should guide the geometry of future cut-blocks so that the visual effects of harvesting can be minimized. More landscape planning must be done and incorporated into proposed cutblocks (especially those blocks located on travel corridors and adjacent to Park boundaries).

f) Forwarding of the Twenty Year Timber Forecast-

The Forest Service is presently formulating a Twenty Year Timber Harvest Forecast paper. This paper should be forwarded to all the National Parks bordering on the Golden TSA for their perusal. The Parks can voice any concerns to the Forest Service well before development occurs.

g) All Changes Should be Forwarded-

All changes in proposed harvesting plans, road construction, prescribed burns, etc. must be

passed on to the National Parks as soon as the plans have been ratified.

h) Forest Industry Must be Alerted to Problem Areas

The member of the forest industry who is involved in harvesting the cutblocks (Evans Products Co. Ltd., for example) must be informed of problem areas well before (at least two years prior to) the harvest date. This will ensure that changes can be made in such things as harvesting schedule and method, road location, and geometry of the cutblock. Also, it is imperative that the person alerted to conflict areas is the person who can make the necessary changes in the harvest design.

i) Alternate Harvesting Methods-

On cutblocks adjacent to National Parks, methods of harvest which have the least effect on the environment and which lead toward faster regeneration should be considered. Perhaps restrictions should be imposed on the size and type of machinery used on these sites. Present regeneration statistics on similar sites should be referred to in order to determine how best to regenerate an area.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Golden Timber Supply Area borders on the National Parks which are formulating the Four Mountain Park Plan. The plan sets guidelines as to what activities will be promoted in the Parks. Management of the Golden TSA must take into account the Four Parks Plan, and the TSA must be managed to allow timber harvesting and recreation to occur compatibly over the area.

A Cooperative Management Zone should be established between the Golden Forest Service and Parks to ensure that harvesting and development of the land adjacent to Parks benefits all parties involved (including the environment). Guidelines have been set to initiate the planning process, and Parks and the Forest Service are eager to put their management strategy into effect.

This practicum project certainly helped me to learn more about how the Ministry of Forests and the Golden Forest Service works. I gained knowledge of harvesting proposals, effects of cutblocks on the environment, landscape planning, and Park and Forest Service policies. Most importantly I found that it takes a great deal of time and effort to put cooperative management planning into practice between agencies, but the process is necessary if our environment is to be used for the benefit of all concerned.

I appreciate the opportunity I had to work with the Forest Service and I know the learning experience was invaluable and the objectives of my practicum were met.

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APPENDIX A

Maps Showing Cutblocks Located Near Park Boundaries

APPENDIX B

Field Notes