

Cheekye Basin Harvest Areas Information Summary

For Squamish Community Forest Harvest Blocks MAS211, MAS208, MAS212, MAS217 and MAS218

For late 2023/early 2024, Squamish Community Forest is planning harvest areas in the Cheekye basin. The proposed harvest blocks are summarized in Table 1 and illustrated in the maps linked on the website (squamishcommunityforest.org). The harvest area is located south of the Cheekye River, southeast of Cat Lake and east of Alice Lake Park. The proposed blocks and associated roads are located within Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) Traditional Territory, and within the səilwətał (Tsilil-Waututh Nation) Consultation Area.

All the proposed harvest areas consist of second growth coniferous forest that is approximately 60-80 years old. The terrain is flat to moderately sloping, with some areas of short (<100m) steeper slopes. The main canopy trees consist of approximately 44% Douglas Fir, 10% Western Redcedar and 46% Western Hemlock, with heights of 30-40 meters and diameters at breast height of 40-70 centimetres. The existing forest stands are fragmented in areas with small openings and access trails that are a result of forest clearing previously carried out for the test pits and drill holes for geotechnical investigations for the Barrier Project.

Table 1. Harvest Block Summary

Block Name	Net Area (hectares)	Description	Harvest system	Harvest Status
MAS211	9.74	Cheekye Debris Barrier Project Footprint Clearing	Complete clearing	Proposed
Total Barrier Project Clearing	9.74			
MAS208	4.06	Squamish Community Forest Harvest	Retention	Proposed
MAS212	2.39	Squamish Community Forest Harvest	Retention	Proposed
MAS217	4.36	Squamish Community Forest Harvest	Retention	Proposed
MAS218	1.97	Squamish Community Forest Harvest	Retention	Proposed
Total Squamish Community Forest Harvest	12.79			

Almost half (about 43%) of the proposed harvest area (i.e. MAS 211) is being cleared for the construction footprint of the Cheekye Fan Debris Flow Barrier Project (the Barrier Project) being implemented by Squamish Sea to Sky Developments LP (SSSD).

Proposed block MAS211 is the clearing footprint required for the construction of the Cheekye Fan Debris Flow Barrier Project and the associated access roads. As the Barrier Project footprint is within the Squamish Community Forest (SQCF) tenure, planning is in process for SQCF contractors to complete the forest harvesting and clearing phases required for the Barrier Project.

Portions of MAS211 will be a permanently cleared area in which the Barrier Project will be constructed. Other areas of MAS211 will be temporarily cleared for Barrier construction purposes but will be rehabilitated and reforested following completion of construction.

The other blocks (MAS208, MAS212, MAS217 and MAS218 and associated roads) are proposed for harvest by the SQCF independent of the Barrier Project, will be managed as forestry cutblocks and will be replanted and managed to return to a forested condition.

The final shape/extent of the individual cutblocks/Barrier Project clearing footprint and road locations may change based on site operating conditions.

Some of the roads will be reconstructions of previously existing access trails created for geotechnical site investigations for the Barrier Project. The Cheekye Barrier Access Road (mapped as “proposed road”) will be subsequently used for the Barrier Project and will become a permanent road.

Harvesting Systems

A variety of harvesting systems will be applied. MAS 211 - the area needed for the Barrier project construction and operation footprint - will be entirely cleared. The other blocks (MAS208, MAS212, MAS217 and MAS218) will include areas of retention providing habitat values such as thermal and security cover and nesting trees. Small patch openings will be interspersed with areas of variable retention, with individual and small groups of mature trees to be retained. Trees identified during pre-harvest assessments as having high habitat values or wildlife features will be prioritized for retention.

Silviculture

Harvested areas that are not needed for the Debris Barrier construction and operation footprint will be reforested as promptly as possible after harvest completion. Areas of temporary infrastructure and clearing will be rehabilitated/reforested as soon as possible after they are no longer needed for construction of the Barrier Project. Areas cleared for and containing permanent Barrier Project infrastructure will not be reforested.

The species mix for reforestation will be developed by a Registered Professional Forester based on field assessments. Tree species for reforestation will likely consist of a mix of Douglas-fir and western redcedar. It is expected that the blocks will infill naturally with a low to moderate density of western hemlock regeneration. Fill plants will be completed if seedling survival or natural infill are found to be insufficient. Manual brushing of deciduous competition using power saws will be completed if necessary to ensure the regenerating stand becomes free growing as soon as possible.

Riparian and Aquatic Habitats

Aquatic and riparian features will be field assessed by Squamish Community Forest and appropriate management measures put in place to protect any riparian or aquatic values identified through assessments. A Registered Professional Forester will assess each riparian feature and prescribe appropriate management strategies to maintain quality and flow of water resources.

Wildlife/Species at Risk

While the proposed harvest areas support a variety of wildlife species, there are no legally designated areas for the protection of biodiversity and wildlife within the proposed Community Forest harvest blocks and roads. The proposed blocks are not within or adjacent to any areas identified as containing critical

habitat features necessary for the survival of any plant or animal species at risk, or for the winter survival of ungulate species.

A Registered Professional Forester will further assess the proposed timber harvest and road areas for important wildlife habitat features and prescribe site level management strategies for existing habitat values should they be identified (e.g., retention of wildlife trees).

Harvest areas not needed for permanent infrastructure for the Barrier Project will be rehabilitated and reforested. The reforested areas will provide early seral habitat values for a variety of wildlife species.

Cultural Designations

The proposed timber harvest areas in this referral are not located within or adjacent to any Cultural Management Areas or Squamish Nation Síyamín ta S̓kw̓wú7mesh (cultural sites) as identified within the Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan, nor within any Kwa kway̓ welh-aynexws (Wild Spirit Places).

X̓ay Temíxw Land Use Plan

Based on the Land Use Plan Map (First Draft May 22, 2001) for X̓ay Temíxw – Squamish Nation Traditional Territory Forest and Wilderness Land Use Study, as presented in the 2022 reproduction, the proposed harvest areas are located within the Forest Stewardship Zone, near the northwest edge of the Mamquam River Restoration Area.

Archaeological Potential

The Squamish Forest District Archaeological Overview Assessment (AOA)(Millenia Research 1997) ranks the area of the proposed blocks as primarily moderate and low for archaeological features. The more site-specific studies conducted for the Barrier Project assessed the area as having low archaeological potential.

Terrain Stability

Appropriate terrain stability assessments will be completed as required by a qualified professional. There have been no terrain stability concerns identified at the current time.

Visual Quality

The area of the blocks does not have any assigned Visual Quality Objectives. The blocks are expected to be partially visible to recreationists on the north side of the Cheekye River. Retention may be prescribed in some areas for ecological reasons and to reduce visual impact within the site. However, some areas must be entirely cleared for the purpose of the Barrier construction. A Visual Impact Assessment is not deemed required.

Wildfire

These blocks are located within the buffer zone for the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) as it is within two kilometres of the edge of structures located in the WUI (i.e. from the BC Parks office and Alice Lake campground facilities). Measures to mitigate post-harvest wildfire risk will include normal timber utilization combined with piling of woody debris for disposal, both at the roadsides and within the blocks.

Recreation

Recreation trails adjacent and/or closest to the proposed harvest areas include Dead End Loop, Mini Tracks, Rock n' Roll, Man Boobs and the northern portion of Bob McIntosh trail. Squamish Community Forest recognizes trails as an important value for the community. The Community Forest has been working

with SORCA to hear input from the mountain biking community and has developed mitigation measures to address potential impacts to the trails. These include the use of retention harvesting systems for all of the Community Forest blocks, in which between 5 and 50 trees per hectare will be retained as individuals and/or in patches. A 25m buffer is planned on Man Boobs, followed by a 25m wide zone of high retention.

Trail impact mitigations for the Cheekye Debris Barrier Project (including MAS211 clearing and road building) are outside the scope of Community Forest planning.

At least one week prior to start up, the Community Forest will inform the public/recreationists about the timing and location of road building and harvest activities, and identify public safety measures, including some temporary trail closures.