

Review of the 2023-2028 Tactical Integrated Forest Management Plan

Context

The James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment (JBACE) has the mandate to review and comment on forest management plans for the territory covered by Section 22 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA), before they are approved by the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts (MRNF). Accordingly, the JBACE reviewed the tactical plans for integrated forest development (In French: Plans d'aménagement forestier intégrés tactiques or PAFITs) for the period 2023-2028 and retained the services of *Le groupe CAF* to assist it in this mandate.

Le groupe CAF's review of the plans takes into account the adapted forestry regime under the Agreement Concerning a New Relationship Between le Gouvernement du Québec and the Crees of Québec (also referred to as the Paix des Braves) as well as the forestry provisions of the Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory between the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and the Gouvernement du Québec.

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The review focuses on two parameters, namely, the protection of wildlife resources and access to such resources.¹

¹ The full text of Appendix 1 of the call for tenders for the review of the 2023-2028 tactical plans for integrated forest development (*Appel d'offre pour l'Examen des plans d'aménagement forestier intégrés tactiques – Période 2023-2028*), which discusses the parameters in more detail, appears in Appendix 1 of this report.

Three (3) additional elements are part of the review: consideration of climate change, the new format of the PAFITs and follow-up on the recommendations and opportunities for improvement of the CCEBJ that were communicated to the MFFP following the review of the PAFITs 2018-2023

Examination parameters

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EXAMINATION PARAMETER 1

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Ensure the implementation of a planning process that supports and respects Cree wildlife harvesting rights and activities by protecting the Territory's wildlife resources and the habitats that support them.

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EXAMINATION PARAMETER 2

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Ensure the implementation of a planning process that accounts for and supports the Crees' continued access to and use of the Territory.

COMPLEMENTARY ELEMENTS TO THE REVIEW

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Consideration of climate change

The JBACE considers that climate change issues must be part of forest planning and management.

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New format of the PAFITs

The MFFP will use a revamped format for the 2023-2028 PAFITs. The documents will be divided into four modules. Only one of these modules will be subject to official consultation and review by the JBACE.

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Access to and consultation on all necessary information is requisite for JBACE reviews.

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Tracking of previous recommendations and opportunities for improvement

The JBACE completed its review of the 2018-2023 PAFITs in April 2020. The recommendations and opportunities for improvement that were formulated at the time merit follow-up. The implementation of recommendations and opportunities for improvement that were not retained for the 2018-2023 PAFITs and were 'pushed back' to the 2023-2028 PAFITs, for example, will be tracked over the course of this review.

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Scope of the review

Cree concerns and needs can be taken into consideration at various levels. Since PAFITs are strategic planning exercises, the consideration given to Cree concerns and needs must also be examined on a strategic level. Some issues may not be addressed in the PAFIT, but be considered during operational planning. It is important to make this distinction when reviewing the PAFITs.

Similarly, we hold that a need or concern may be taken into account, but not necessarily be addressed favourably. And, where a decision is made not to act on a need or concern, whether in whole or in part, we expect the reason for that decision to be clearly explained.

Lastly, it is important to mention that PAFITs are reviewed taking a constructive approach with a view to continuous improvement in the planning process.

We have chosen to divide the recommendations into two categories: recommendations and opportunities for improvement. A recommendation is made when a substantive issue is raised and we believe that changes will better address Cree needs and concerns.

An opportunity for improvement is raised when we observe a potential improvement to the PAFIT. Most often, these are clarifications that could be made for better understanding, but which do not affect the consideration of wildlife or land access concerns as such.

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Summary of recommendations

The review of the 2023-2028 Tactical Integrated Forest Management Plan (commonly and hereafter referred to by their French acronym, "PAFIT" ('Plans d'Aménagement Forestier Intégré Tactique') is a continuation of the previous review (2018-2023). We do not repeat all of the observations made at that time. We focus on what appears to be new, significant and of a contributing nature.

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We present the recommendations and opportunities for improvement made in this report. The numbering is sequential and does not reflect differing degrees of the importance of the latter.

Theme: Consultation process for PAFIT

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Recommendation # 1

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In collaboration with the concerned parties, review the production calendar of the PAFIT to bolster stakeholder participation in a timely manner.

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The JBACE would like to discuss the matter in greater detail with the MRNF.

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Opportunity for improvement # 1

We believe that the accompanying documents (modules 1 to 3) should also be made available for consultation, even if the content is often factual rather than strategic in nature.

Strategies, policies and decisions, whether provincial or regional in scope, certainly have an impact on regional activity.

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Here, it is not to put into question policies, strategies or other elements that have already been the subject of consultation, but to have the opportunity to comment on their implementation.

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Theme: Area of management units and concordance between tables

Recommendation #2

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We understand that the calculation made serves as a reference according to the subject being treated. The total area of a management unit is a reference that must be unique.

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We recommend that this reference be made and, if necessary, that it be noted in a footnote what is and is not included in a table.

The Analysis of the Issues document, on page 36, footnote 2, is a good example of relevant and accurate information.

Theme: The territory and its occupants (module 2)

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Opportunity for Improvement #2

<u>Page 4, paragraph 3</u>: The text suggests that the JBNQA is a problem. The JBACE is of the opinion that it should refer to "problems with the regarding the forest management" which is more accurate.

We propose the following wording: "The implementation of the JBNQA highlighted a number of problems regarding forest management", (...).

<u>Page 10, paragraph 2</u>: The text suggests that the Governance Agreement is an element of implementation of the Paix des Braves. The JBACE believes that these are two separate things, but that the Paix des Braves has certainly created a favourable dynamic.

We propose the following wording: "In light of the dynamic created under the Paix des Braves (...)."

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<u>Page 54</u>, <u>paragraph 2</u>: The text implies that all wood affected by a natural disturbance will be recovered. This depends on the extent of the disturbance, the quality of the wood and economic considerations.

We propose the following wording: "Special management plans ensure some recovery of these woods."

Theme: Consideration of culturally important species

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Recommendation #3:

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Given the uniqueness of Lake Sturgeon, we recommend:

- That it be included as an issue in tables 1 and 2 of the PAFIT;
- That it be the subject of a specific protection plan developed in collaboration with the communities concerned.

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Opportunity for Improvement #3:

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Assess the appropriateness of updating the terms and conditions for wildlife sites of interest. The document "Sites fauniques d'intérêt (SFI) – Région du Nord-du-Québec (R10)" dates from 2012.

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Opportunity for Improvement # 4:

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In Table 2 of the PAFITs, include the Mixedwood Stands Management Strategy as part of the solution and associate it with moose.

Theme: Taking into account the perspectives, concerns and harmonization measures formulated by tallyman, Cree users of the territory and consultation organizations

Recommendation #4:

Recommendation 3 in the report "Review of the PAFIT 2018-2023".

Implement, jointly with the Crees, a process for disseminating monitoring results by:

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- Explaining all the follow-ups that are carried out, how they are done, and what are the indicators;
- Determining which of the monitoring or indicators are of interest to the Cree:
- Determining when, how and to whom monitoring results should be transferred;
- Jointly developing the dissemination format (tables, map, or text) according to the target clientele.

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Opportunity for Improvement # 5:

Opportunity for improvement 11 in the report "Review of the PAFIT 2018-2023".

Produce an accessible version of the statistical tables of traplines. These are portraits that are interesting for tallyman but are currently too complex.

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Theme: Access to the territory

Recommendation # 5:

Recommendation 4 in the report "Review of the PAFIT 2018-2023".

The access road management plan is the only answer to the issues of access to the territory to PAFIT. As the development of this one is currently underway, it is relevant to identify interim measures that can be put in place as soon as possible.

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Opportunity for Improvement # 6:

Opportunity for improvement 13 in the report "Review of the PAFIT 2018-2023".

Conduct an evaluation of the road closure process to determine if time savings can be achieved at certain stages.