

Preparing the Far North Land Use Strategy

An update and overview of path forward

Northern Ontario First Nations Environmental Conference 2015



Presentation Outline

- Why is a Far North Land Use Strategy being prepared?
- What steps have been taken to prepare the draft Strategy?
- What have we heard?
- What does the draft Strategy look like / what does it contain?
- What are the next steps and how are communities being engaged?



Background

- Many First Nation communities in the Far North are working with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) to prepare **community based land use plans**.
- The **Far North Land Use Strategy** will assist joint First Nation-Ontario planning teams who are preparing community based land use plans.
- The Strategy, once complete, will help joint planning teams consider broad-scale planning matters when preparing plans.
 - For example, it contains guidance on how to consider caribou, water, climate change and the need for roads and energy corridors.
- First Nations' knowledge and perspectives are important and integral in preparing the Strategy.
- Both community based land use planning and the Strategy align with the NOFNEC Conference Theme: "Protecting Values, Improving Lives"

Background Continued

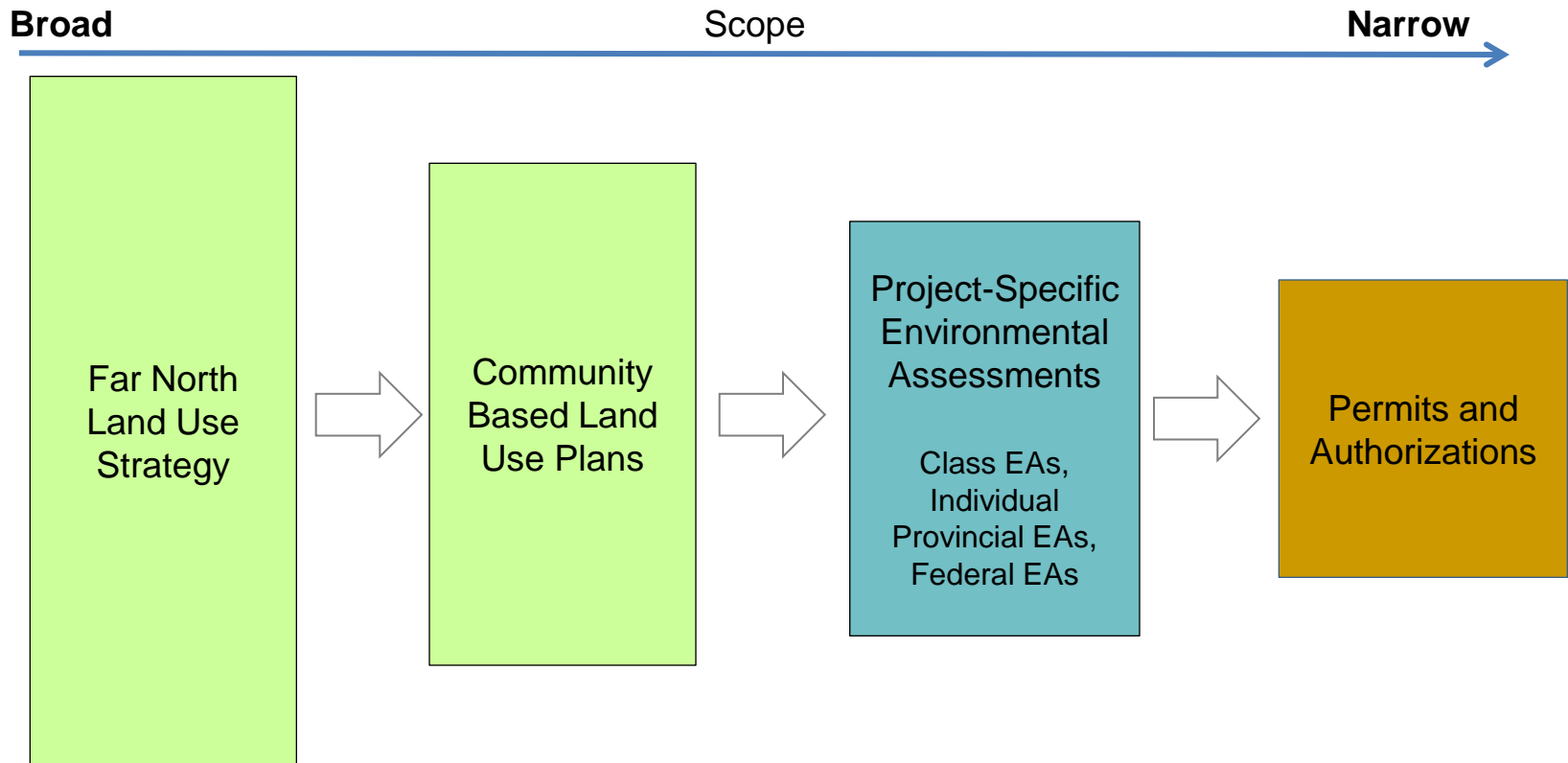


Under the Far North Act the Minister shall ensure that a strategy is prepared to assist in the preparation of land use plans in the Far North and to guide the integration of matters that are beyond the geographic scope of the planning area of each of those land use plans.

Section 8(1)

- Once in place, the Strategy must be taken into account by joint planning teams.
- Community based land use plans are the “decision-making” vehicle for land use planning in the Far North.

Scope of the Strategy, Planning and EA/Permitting Processes



What Steps Have Been Taken to Develop the Strategy?

- ✓ **Stage 1: “An Introduction to the Far North Land Use Strategy” (Complete)**
 - Explained the purpose of the Strategy and described the 4 stages to prepare it
 - Sent to each First Nation community in the Far North in December 2013
 - Was posted on the Environmental Registry on the Ontario government internet site

- ✓ **Stage 2: Discussion Paper (Complete)**
 - Invited input on the possible contents of the Strategy; suggested guidance that could be included in the Strategy
 - Was sent to each community in September 2014 and posted on the Environmental Registry
 - Input was sought during community meetings, Planning Together 3 and at a Stakeholders Workshop (in November 2014)

- ❖ **Stage 3: Draft Strategy**
 - Just released on the Environmental Registry September 29; will be posted until the end of December although opportunities for input will continue until February 2016
 - Prepared based on the input and comments received on the Discussion Paper
 - Currently being distributed to communities
 - Planning Together 4 provides the opportunity for input and discussion

- **Stage 4: Far North Land Use Strategy – Spring 2016**

First Nation Engagement Summary

- Reflecting First Nations' knowledge and perspectives in the Strategy is important.
- Engagement is ongoing. Activities to date include:
 - Planning Together 3 - Thunder Bay, May 2014
 - Letters and Materials to Chiefs and Planning Coordinators, including the Discussion Paper translated into Cree, Ojicree and Ojibway
 - Discussions at planning team meetings
 - Community meetings
 - Tribal Council Workshops
 - Env Registry posting and On-line Collaboration Tool
- Far North Branch has been working with a Joint First Nation-Ontario Working Group on communication and engagement opportunities including:
 - Elders workshop (July 2013)
 - Preparation of video series (now available)
 - Assisted at Planning Together III and Nov 2014 Stakeholder Workshop
 - Wawatay radio shows Dec 2014
- More information on MNRF plans for engagement on the draft Strategy is provided on slide 15.



Specific Input from Joint Working Group

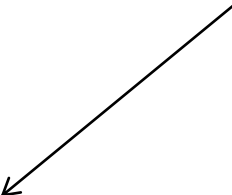
What we Heard	What we did
Indicated preference for “General Use Area” rather than renaming to “Integrated Management Area”	Retained General Use Area
Noted that communities often have their own names for areas that become designations in land use plans	Made note of this in Strategy, and indicated that land use designation names are not meant to replace these local names.
Indicated that there was little value in creating a “community-use” protected area category	Draft strategy does not include this category
Suggested not using the term “sub-geographies” to describe the areas of the Far North with similar characteristics	These are called simply “areas” in the draft Strategy

Specific Input from First Nations, Public, Stakeholders

What we Heard	What we did
MNRF should be clear that this document is being prepared by the government. It did not come from First Nations.	Noted this in Introduction, and noted that to extent possible it reflects what has been heard from First Nations during planning
Should include more emphasis on ATK	Worked this in throughout the draft Strategy
Needs increased emphasis on protection of globally significant ecosystems including peatlands.	Introduced a stewardship approach. Included new guidance re: protecting peatlands and discouraging commercial peat extraction
Needs to clearly guide how plans consider landscape-level matters	Added description of considering landscape-level matters as part of the Stewardship Approach; illustrated landscapes of relevance to planning in the Far North (watersheds, caribou ranges, etc.)
Strategy should include development thresholds and set out monitoring	Beyond the scope of the Strategy. Draft Strategy advises planning teams to consider the results of any environmental monitoring in current and future planning efforts
Agreement that the Strategy should include a vision	Vision and overarching principles included
Should include more detail on implementation of plans	Included information on the implementation approach that has been established for the four completed plans

What does the draft Strategy Look Like and Contain?

These are the parts of the Strategy that joint planning teams will need to take into account.



1. Introduction

2. Context

3. Vision, Objectives, Principles

4. Stewardship and Land Use Planning Designations

5. Guidance

6. Implementation

7. Supporting Information

Vision and Principles

MNRF worked with the Joint First Nation - MNRF Working Group to prepare this vision, drawing on input and ideas from the Planning Together 3 Workshop (Thunder Bay, May 2014). Draft principles have also been included in the Strategy – see Appendix 2. MNRF shared the vision and principles with communities in March 2015. Feedback was positive, so they have been included in the draft Strategy.

The vision for the outcome of land use planning in the Far North is:

A Far North that sustains us all in all ways. A Far North where:

- *The land, water, and life are healthy;*
- *The land and the people live well together, with prosperity;*
- *First Nation stewardship of lands, waters and life is honoured and respected;*
- *First Nations and Ontario share the responsibility to take care of the land, as envisioned by our treaties.*

Stewardship Approach

- Stewardship is about taking care of the land and its people. It is the responsibility that we all have—individuals, communities, companies, and governments—in managing and protecting the land’s natural and cultural wealth, both now and for future generations.
- In the Far North, stewardship is about conserving the unique geography and cultural landscape of the Far North, while also allowing its people to prosper through economic development.
- Joint planning teams aim to balance protection with economic development when making decisions about how land and water will be used into the future.

Example of Guidance: Infrastructure

- Aligns with “Protecting Values, Improving Lives” the Conference Theme
- Infrastructure is important to provide access to, and support for, communities and to realize economic development opportunities. Impacts of infrastructure development on the ecosystems need to be carefully considered and planned for.

Guidance

- Draw upon best available information and expertise anticipating infrastructure needs and proposals at the local and regional scales, including anticipating effects of climate change (e.g., the need to realign winter roads).
- In plans, provide land use designations that support anticipated infrastructure needs.
- Provide broad direction in plans for subsequent decision making regarding cultural and/or ecological values.
- Identify land use areas where infrastructure is desirable or where it should be limited or avoided, for example minimizing linear crossings of dedicated protected areas or waterways.
- In providing guidance related to access and other infrastructure corridors:
 - support the highest possible long-term benefit to the First Nation communities within and beyond the planning area, and enable economic development opportunities; and
 - support multiple access interests while minimizing the number and spatial extent (i.e. physical “footprint”) of roads and other infrastructure corridors, in an effort to minimize fragmentation of the landscape and cumulative effects.

Implementation

The Draft Strategy includes the following information about implementation of plans:

- Jointly approved land use plans provide a foundation for First Nations and Ontario to continue working together on shared interests and goals, with mutual respect and cooperation.
- Information sharing between communities, planners and MNRF field staff is an ongoing priority during the implementation phase.
- Joint implementation teams may be the preferred mechanism for working together to implement the land use plan, and is the model that has already been established for the four completed plans.
- Membership could consist of First Nation community members and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry staff. Other Ministry staff may also participate.
- Implementation topics and priorities would be jointly identified and determined, practical, and have realistic expectations of workload and resourcing. Joint implementation teams would be collaborative, work in good faith and build consensus at every opportunity.

Next Steps

- Environmental Registry posting September 29th to December 28, 2015
- Letters being sent to all Chiefs, land use planning coordinators and Tribal Councils
 - Draft is translated
- Planning Together 4
- Continue to engage communities (see details next slide) through the end of February 2016
- Continue to meet with Joint Working Group until final Strategy complete
- Consider opportunities for Stakeholder engagement
- Anticipate final Strategy – Spring 2016

Community Engagement on Draft

- In addition to Planning Together 4, MNRF will be discussing the draft Strategy with individual communities. We are focusing engagement as follows:

Stage of Planning	Approach to Engaging
Communities with Completed plans	Meet with joint implementation teams to discuss items of interest to communities at this stage (e.g., amending plans, land use designations, implementation)
Communities currently developing Draft Plans	Through regular planning meetings, test out relevant draft guidance by applying it in the planning process.
Communities preparing Terms of Reference	Through regular planning meetings, provide overview presentation on Strategy and highlight some key aspects of draft Strategy to get feedback on
Communities not currently engaged in planning	Will look for opportunities to engage; meetings upon request by community

- MNRF will also continue to participate in Tribal Council workshops

Provide your Input

- **Provide comments and thoughts on what you think about the draft Strategy through:**
 - Presentations like this
 - Upcoming Community and Tribal Council meetings
- **Provide written comments:**
 - Through Ontario's Environmental Registry (ER)
<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca>, enter Registry Number 012-0598
 - Online via the collaboration tool at www.ontario.ca/farnorth
 - By email to farnorthstrategy@ontario.ca
 - By fax to 705-235-1106
 - By mail or courier to:
 - Far North Branch OGC, 5520 Hwy 101 East, P.O. Bag 3020 South Porcupine, Ontario P0N 1H0

While the ER comment period closes on December 28, 2015, MNRF will continue to welcome written comments from First Nation communities through the end of February 2016.

For additional information or questions on the
Far North Land Use Strategy please contact:

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Where did the Suggested Guidance come from?

- Builds on experience to date in the development of jointly approved (First Nation – Ontario) community based land use plans
- Based on existing provincial policy and legislation on each of these planning matters
- Takes into account the objectives for land use planning in the Far North Act:
 - A significant role for First Nations in the planning
 - The protection of areas of cultural value, and protection of ecological systems by including at least 225,000 square kilometres of the Far North in an interconnected network of protected areas designated in community based land use plans.
 - The maintenance of biological diversity, ecological processes and ecological functions, including the storage and sequestration of carbon in the Far North.
 - Enabling sustainable economic development that benefits the First Nations.
- Draws on reports by the Far North Science Advisory Panel and the Far North Planning Advisory Council

Appendix 2: Draft Principles included in the Strategy

Land use decisions will be guided by the following principles:

Caring for the land.

The land, water and all life must be protected to enhance resilience to change and provide for the survival of present and future generations.

A Focus on Water.

Water is vital to all life. Protection of water sources, lakes, rivers and all water systems will be a priority in planning.

Sustainability.

Economic development opportunities should support and provide community social and economic benefits, while also sustaining the environment and culture and the needs of future generations.

Respect.

First Nations' relationship to, and customary stewardship of land and resources have shaped the land and will be respected. New livelihood activities will be harmonized with traditional activities and relationships to the land.

Collaboration among communities, and with provinces and territories.

Decisions are to be made in cooperation and collaboration across planning areas to consider broad-scale matters, and the interests of people beyond individual planning areas. This also includes collaboration, where appropriate, with other jurisdictions such as Nunavut, Manitoba and Quebec.

Informed Decision Making.

Decisions will draw upon the combined strengths of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and all information and science. The wisdom and perspectives of knowledge holders in the communities will guide the understanding of traditional knowledge. Subject matter experts will contribute to the interpretation of other forms of information, including science-based information.

Open and transparent processes.

Opportunities for engagement, within and beyond the community, with a variety of stakeholders, will help to ensure that a range of perspectives are considered.

Guiding Direction.

Planning will set direction for permitted land use activities, and guide the manner in which those activities should take place. Land Use Plans will provide direction for subsequent environmental assessment and permitting processes.

Responsive and Adaptive.

Planning is an ongoing process that needs to respond to changing biological, social, environmental and economic conditions and improved knowledge.

Consensus.

Building shared understandings and working toward agreement will strengthen outcomes and relationships.