
HABITAT AND MANAGEMENT

WEYERHAEUSER'S NEW 20 YEAR FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROJECT INTO SECOND YEAR

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Development of a new 20 Year Forest Management Plan by Weyerhaeuser Canada's Saskatchewan Division, a \$6-million project which started more than a year ago, continues toward an October 1997 deadline.

A forest management plan provides direction for managing the forest resources in a Forest Management Licence Agreement (FMLA) area. The 20 Year Forest Management Plan is the long-term plan that describes overall forest management objectives and strategies, the forest land base, forest harvesting practices, forest renewal, road requirements, environmental protection practices and requirements of the users of the forest.

In November 1995, Weyerhaeuser Canada's Saskatchewan Timberlands started the development of a new 20 Year Forest Management Plan for its 5-million hectare FMLA area. This plan is being developed earlier than required by law. However, changes in the way Weyerhaeuser manages its forest resources in this province make a new

20 Year Plan necessary. One change which has been developing rapidly over the past few years is a shift from a focus on managing only the timber resource to considering all forest resource values and uses.

In addition, the approach to future forest management activities will likely be based on ecological differences in the land, such as soils, landforms and climates, which make one area different from another. The Ecoregions of Saskatchewan map provides the framework for planning in this area. Weyerhaeuser has identified 12 distinct ecological management units on its lease area. And, unlike Weyerhaeuser's current 20 Year Plan, the new 20 Year Plan will deal with the impact on both water and land. Finally, public involvement is greatly increased in the development of this new forest management plan. This is to ensure that people who are affected by Weyerhaeuser's harvesting activities have a chance to provide their advice and comments so Weyerhaeuser's foresters can make better business decisions.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the new 20 Year Plan

is also now required by Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management. The EIA must address: sustainable management of all resources; use of an integrated resource management approach; and, whether biodiversity and ecosystem processes are maintained. More than a dozen different fields are being studied in the EIA — climate; geology; hydrology; site classification; archeology; current and traditional land use; socio-economics; aquatics; soils; vegetation; wildlife; riparian areas; and the impact of fires, insects, disease and parasites. Golder Associates Ltd. is the prime environmental consultant for the EIA. Golder Associates is working with other consulting firms as well as the Saskatchewan Research Council and university scientists and with computer modelling programs.

The studies themselves are based on looking at three distinct types of forest: that which was disturbed by nature (fire, disease or insects); disturbed by man (harvesting); not recently disturbed. By understanding the impacts of both natural and man-made disturbances on an area in the forest, Weyerhaeuser foresters hope to devise forest management techniques which more closely reflect natural impacts and ecological processes. The EIA studies are being carried out in all the main ecological units in the Weyerhaeuser FMLA area.

Some of the studies started last fall and winter while the rest took place in the spring and summer of 1996. During fall and winter 1996-97 the data is being analyzed and computer models based on the study data are being developed.

Public involvement is being encouraged in a number of ways. Last

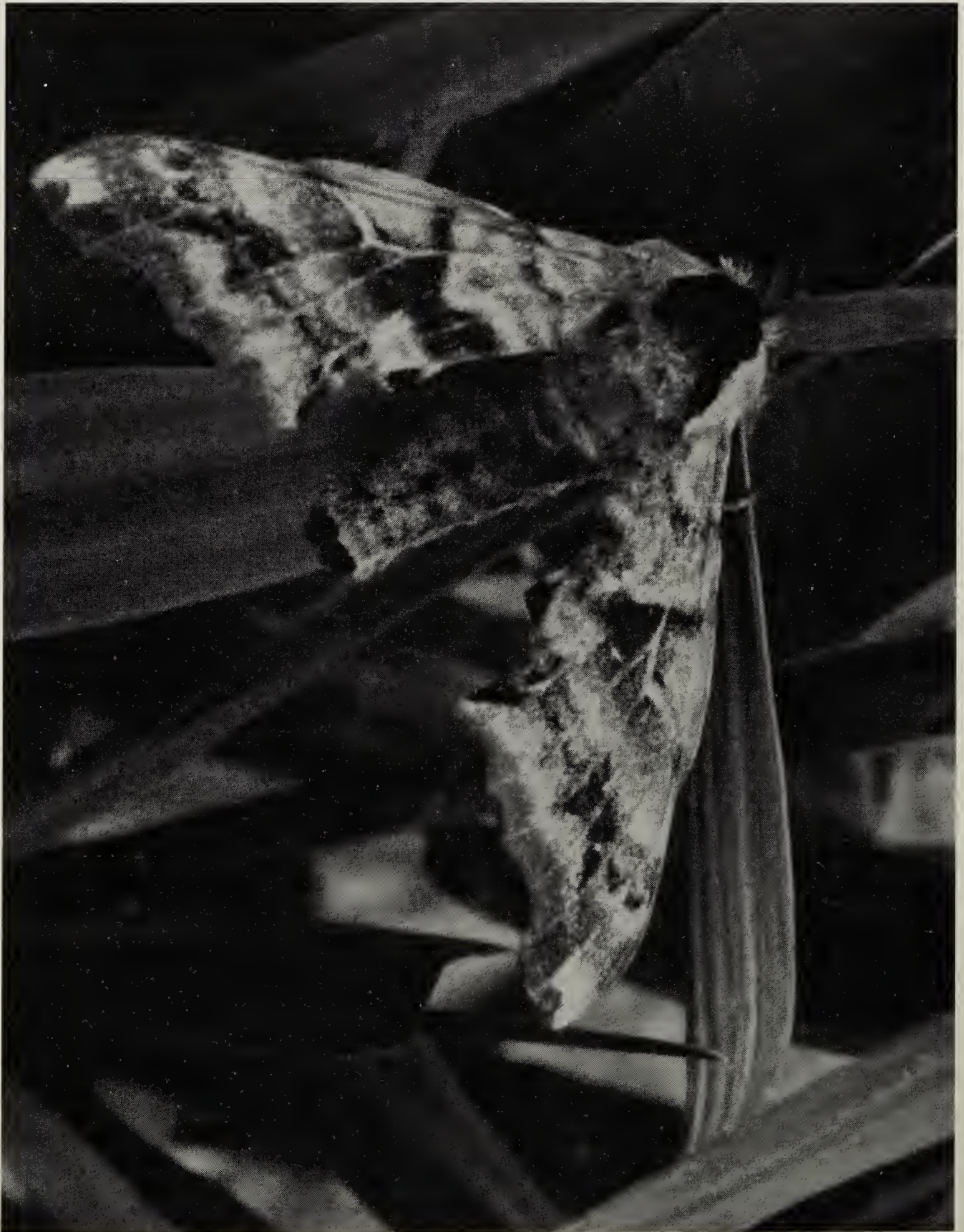
spring and summer, meetings were held with stakeholders throughout Weyerhaeuser's FMLA area. The Annual Operating Plan display meetings in May also provided an opportunity for public contact. As well, groups with a special interest in forest operations were invited to take part in a May workshop focusing on the EIA. That was followed by an August tour of field studies and forest operations. A number of articles and publications, including two issues of a newsletter devoted to the 20 Year Forest Management Plan/EIA, have also been used to try to raise people's awareness of the new forest management plan being developed by Weyerhaeuser. Public understanding and awareness was also the goal of a television advertising campaign and a new forest issues brochure distributed across the province in November.

While Golder Associates conducted most of the field studies, the Strategic Support Team of Saskatchewan Timberlands is directing Weyerhaeuser's efforts in the development of the new forest management plan. Weyerhaeuser's role includes doing the site classification, mapping of land uses, carrying out insect and disease studies, developing forest management strategies and taking charge of the public involvement initiatives.

Now, the timberlands focus has shifted toward the drafting of the 20 Year Forest Management Plan. The "baseline" findings of the EIA and input from public and reviewers will be applied during the development of a draft 20 Year Forest Management Plan. The public will continue to be involved in the process by reviewing the initial plan and study results before a revised plan is finally submitted.

Completion of the plan and operating guideline documents is scheduled for the start of the summer of 1997. The 20 Year Forest Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) — which is the document created from the Environmental Impact Assessment — are to

be presented to Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management during the fall of 1997. It is expected any public review of the completed EIS conducted by SERM would take place in early 1998 and be followed by a decision on approval of the new 20 Year Forest Management Plan.



Cerisy's Sphinx Moth

Wayne C. Harris