



Section 3: Natural Resources

The use of the lands for agriculture, forestry and aggregate extraction shapes the community's values and provides employment, recreational and economic benefits. These land uses are profiled below. It is recognized that certain matters considered in this section are beyond the jurisdiction of the RDN. The objectives and policies relating to these matters are intended to serve as indicators of community preference and assist senior levels of government in planning and decision-making.



Agriculture

Throughout the public consultation process, residents have expressed two goals for agriculture:

1. To ensure that residents and government understand that the terms 'agriculture' and 'rural' are not interchangeable. The former refers to a business, the latter to a chosen way of life. That is: Rural is a *lifestyle*...Agriculture is an essential *life support*.
2. To increase the local farmers' ability to provide the food supply to area residents. A target of 50% of the local market (from Nanoose Bay to Bowser) has been established.

The objectives and policies of this Plan are intended to support these goals and assist the agricultural industry in becoming increasingly profitable, competitive and economically viable.

Approximately 20 % of the Plan Area is designated as within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) under the provincial *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. This Plan recognizes the Agricultural Land Commission as the primary agency responsible for protecting the ALR and supports the mandate and regulations of the Agricultural Land Commission. Lands within the ALR are illustrated on Map No. 2.

Objectives

1. Protect the agricultural land base for present and future food production or other agricultural uses.
2. Encourage sustainable and environmentally sound farming practices.

General Policies

1. Encourage the involvement of the farm community in preparation of the OCP and zoning bylaws.
2. Improve access water for agriculture and to allow for adequate drainage of the land base.
3. Encourage soil conservation practices to reduce environmental impact on soils and watercourses.
4. Encourage compliance of Electoral Area 'F' farmers with *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* and the *Strengthening Farming in BC- A Guide to Implementation of the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*.

Future Impact Policies

1. Future higher density and intensity land uses shall be directed to Village Centres and within the Rural Separation Boundaries to reduce development pressures on agricultural lands.



Forests

Forest lands in Electoral Area 'F' are predominately privately owned. These lands are subject to the *Forest Lands Reserve Act* and are designated as within the Forest Land Reserve (FLR). In addition, the Ministry of Forests has jurisdiction over land use in Provincial Forests and harvest on any Crown Lands. There are some parcels of land within the FLR that are Crown Land within the Provincial Forest. Use of these lands is regulated by the *Forest Practices Code of BC Act*. Harvesting on any Crown land requires authority from the Ministry under the *Forests Act* and Private Forest Lands Agreements. This Plan recognizes the jurisdiction of the Forest Land Commission (FLC) and supports the mandate and regulations of the FLC. Lands within the Forest Land Reserve are illustrated on Map No. 2.

Objectives

1. Recognize the economic importance of a sustainable forest industry to the Plan Area.
2. Support the public's use of forested lands for recreational enjoyment.
3. Minimize the impact of residential settlements on forested lands, and minimize the impact of forestry activities on residential settlements.

General Policies

1. FLR lands may only be used for uses specified under Section 13(2) of the *Forest Land Reserve Act*.

Future Impact Policies

1. All FLC application referrals received by the RDN shall be referred to the RDN Board for comment. The comments of the Board shall be forwarded to the FLC as part of the RDN's review.



Aggregates and Mineral Resources¹

The management of mineral resources falls primarily under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Energy and Mines. In addition, approval from the Agricultural Land Commission is required prior to conducting extraction activities pursuant to the *Soils Conservation Act* on ALR lands. However, processing activities are recognized as being subject to this OCP, zoning and other potential local government regulations.

The location of gravel resources shown on Map No. 5 is limited to existing, active gravel pit operations, which are known to provide some potential for future extraction activities.

Objectives

1. Protect known resources from development that would render the resource unviable or inaccessible.
2. Minimize the conflicts between extraction activities and adjacent land uses.

General Policies

¹ Bylaw No. 1152.05, adopted December 4, 2018

1. The Ministry of Energy and Mines shall be encouraged to consider this OCP and the zoning bylaw in its review of applications for permits, and to refer proposals for lands in Area 'F' to the RDN.
2. The Ministry shall be encouraged to make information available to residents and consider residents' comments prior to decision making on any application, and give consideration to the impact of the development on ground and surface water, other land uses, traffic, noise and visual intrusion.

Future Impact Policies²

1. Any sorting or processing of aggregates shall be subject to the policies of this OCP, shall only occur on an appropriately zoned site, and shall minimize potential adverse impacts on the community.

² Bylaw No 1152.05. adopted December 4, 2018