



File: FOR-16290-20/Lasqueti Island

September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Attention: Stakeholders within Lasqueti Island area

**RE: Initiation of Consultation on Proposed Visual Quality Objectives on Lasqueti Island**

Over the coming months, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (the Ministry), proposes to amend currently established visual quality objectives (VQOs) on Lasqueti Island through a new Government Action Regulation (GAR) order. The Ministry has developed proposed VQOs following recent information gathering that has resulted in improvements to the accuracy of Visual Landscape Inventory (VLI) data. The ministry invites you to review and comment on these proposed VQO changes.

The Government of British Columbia is entrusted with managing visual impacts on Crown forest land in collaboration with First Nations, agreement holders, the public and stakeholders. VQOs are established and managed through GAR orders and GAR order amendments to guide forest management activities under the *Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA)*. Section 1.1 of the *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation* under *FRPA*, defines five classes of VQOs: Preservation, Retention, Partial Retention, Modification, and Maximum Modification.

The proposed VQO changes, based on improved VLI data included consideration of the following information:

- Existing visual condition: the present level of landscape alteration caused by human activity;
- Visual absorption capacity: the landscape's ability to absorb alteration while maintaining its visual integrity;
- Biophysical rating: attributes that form the landscape and support biophysical diversity;
- Viewing condition: viewing distance, frequency of viewers, duration, and angle;
- Viewer rating: the number of viewers and viewer expectations or concerns; and
- Visual sensitivity class: the overall sensitivity of the forest landscape to visual alteration.

Should the proposed VQOs on Lasqueti Island be approved, the changes would result in an additional 16 hectares (ha) of Preservation-classified area, an additional 1,233 ha of Retention-classified area, and an additional 343 ha of Partial Retention-classified area compared to the currently established VQOs.

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*Stakeholders within Lasqueti Island area*

In September 2020, advertisements will be run in two local newspapers: the *Powell River Peak* and the *Alberni Valley News*; and additionally, in the *Island Gazette*, a regional newspaper. Maps and shapefiles showing the currently established VQOs, designated viewpoints and proposed VQOs for Lasqueti Island can be found at the following FTP site: [Lasqueti FTP](#). All written comments will be documented and considered. A summary of comments received will be kept on file and available upon request. I am seeking your review and comment within the next 60 calendar days to ensure all relevant information is available to support the decision-making process.

In addition to consulting with stakeholders, the Ministry will also be consulting directly with potentially impacted First Nations and agreement holders and will be seeking input through the government's Engagement [website](#) in the coming weeks.

The Ministry invites you to visit and explore our recently re-designed Visual Resource Management [website](#), which provides a broad array of guidance documents and support tools. Current GAR Ministerial Orders for B.C.'s natural resource districts can be also found on our ministry's [website](#).

We recognise the importance of visual quality to your community and are looking forward to hearing your perspectives on the proposed changes. This information can be shared with others that may have an interest in this process. Please e-mail any comments or concerns to [Graham.Wells@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Graham.Wells@gov.bc.ca) or I can be reached by phone at (250) 736-6888.

Sincerely,



Graham Wells  
Senior Licensed Authorizations Officer,  
South Island Natural Resource District