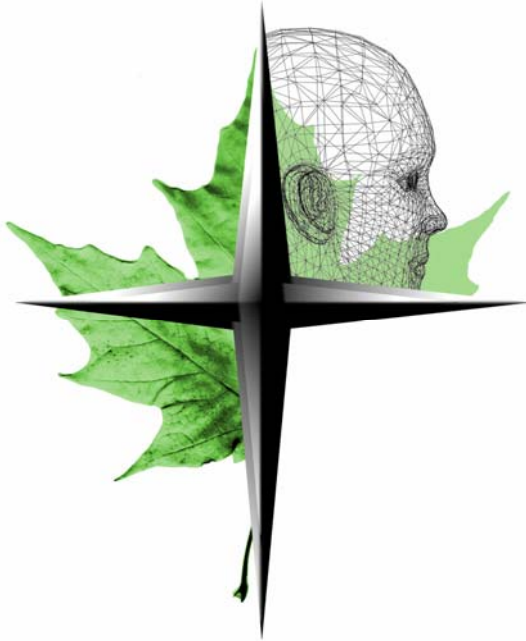


C A S E S T U D Y

F O R E S T P L A N N I N G W I T H R E M S O F T[®]

Arbex Consulting builds Integrated Resource Management Plan that accommodates aboriginal sacred sites and more



For centuries, the Algonquins of Barriere Lake (ABL) – have lived in the forests of Quebec and even today, the First Nations community survives on a largely subsistence economy deriving much of their food, medicine and livelihood from the land.

But by the early 90s the community felt forestry activities carried out on forests in their traditional homelands were threatening their traditional way of life and indeed, the long-term sustainability of their community.

After what was sometimes a bitter conflict with forestry companies and others, a deal was reached between the Algonquin people and the Governments of Quebec and Canada which sets out to ensure the protection and continuation of ABL traditional activities and way of life in an overall forest management context.

Called the Trilateral Agreement, the deal is thought to be the first of its kind in North America and will see the creation of a 20-year Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) that harmonizes forestry operations with environmental concerns and sustainable development and accommodates traditional indigenous culture and activities.

Of particular interest to the Algonquins is the protection of special sites – which range from medicine plant gathering areas to traditional hunting grounds and burial sites.

There are 36 forestry companies operating in the 10,920 km² Trilateral Agreement Territory so reconciling land use is a complex undertaking but participants in the agreement are moving towards the creation of a viable long-term management plan. “This is an important pilot project because it puts sustainable development into practice and it blends traditional ways and wisdom of life of Aboriginal people with modern development processes while protecting those traditional ways,” said Bruce Byford, a consulting forester and president of Arbex Forest Resource Consultants Ltd.



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“The spatial linkages (map outputs) available through Spatial Woodstock and Stanley have been extremely useful in demonstrating to the Algonquin representatives the distribution and timing of planned harvest operations.”

Based in Oxford Mills, Ontario, Byford has been working with the Algonquin nation to help develop the 20-year Integrated Resource Management Plans.

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Although the development of an IRMP to address the entire Trilateral Territory was initially intended, it was determined that the development of individual IRMPs for smaller Traditional Management Areas (TMAs) within the agreement territory would be a more manageable undertaking considering the size of the TAT and the diversity of ecosystems and resource uses occurring throughout.

Over the past two years, Mr. Byford, working with a planning team comprised of advisors from the First Nation and the Province, has been using Remsoft Spatial Planning System to develop computer model(s) to predict future wood supply under various management scenarios. The team has devised five resource management scenarios for each of the seven TMAs.

“Remsoft’s software offered the versatility to model the various resource management strategies under multiple scenarios and constraints and predicts explicitly the impacts of each strategy on areas deemed by the Algonquins to be culturally significant, on wildlife habitat supply etc,” Mr. Byford explains.

“The spatial linkages (map outputs) available through Spatial Woodstock and Stanley have been extremely useful in demonstrating to the Algonquin representatives the distribution and timing of planned harvest operations. And the software was readily adaptable to the Provincial Forest Inventory System in Quebec.”

Mr. Byford – who quickly learned to use the software with the help of a Remsoft training course – says he is excited by the communications capabilities that Stanley, Remsoft’s scheduling and mapping software, affords him and he anticipates using it extensively to communicate plans to stakeholders in the next phase of the project – which entails making recommendations for implementing the IRMP.

“I know now that there will be some people who say wood supply levels aren’t attainable or a plan is not viable because riparian zones are too large or the Algonquin are protecting too many sites, so harvesting activities are economically infeasible. But I will be able to use Stanley to demonstrate the various management scenarios. This will result in a more informed decision making process.”

For more information about the Algonquins of Barriere Lake Trilateral Agreement, please visit <http://www.barrierelake.ca>.

