



Drivable Wood Fibre Surfaces

Purpose

To address the use of wood fibre products as a surface material for accessing public land in Alberta.

Background

Wood fibre products are an alternative surface material for enabling access. Wood fibre refers to any mulched product made from natural woody material that can be compacted to create a driveable surface or equipment staging area. The product may be referred to as **engineered road wood fibre, wood fibre, wood residue or wood mulch**. Wood fibre is not sawdust.

Currently, temporary use of wood fibre has demonstrated that such access can be as feasible as other access-enabling products or techniques (e.g., mats, corduroy). As with these other products, conditions may be placed upon their use at time of approval to manage access.

This information letter does not supersede legislation, regulations, guidelines or conditions of approval.

Expectations/Procedures

1. Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) is open to receiving applications for dispositions to use wood fibre during the five year period from the date of signing of this information letter. Industry can apply for a disposition to use this surface product for temporary access only.

- SRD reserves the right to conditionally approve wood fibre use for an appropriate duration that will not exceed five years from the date of signing of this information letter.
- In five years, or as additional information becomes available, the use of wood fibre and conditions for its use will be re-evaluated by SRD, and modified as necessary.

2. Applications must clearly identify that a wood fibre surface is being proposed for access.
3. Source wood can be, but is not limited to, locally available brush piles set aside for burning, salvaged merchantable timber where appropriate compensation has been paid (Timber Damage Assessment) or nonmerchantable timber.

Source wood cannot come from habitat retention areas (as indicated through Annual Operating Plans), riparian areas, brush piles that have been established for habitat provision, construction lumber, treated wood or pallets.

4. No more than ten per cent of the chips by volume shall be comprised of aspen when used in the riparian zone or within 30 metres of any small or large permanent stream. Larger concentrations of aspen chips may be authorized subject to an approved monitoring program. The concentration of species within the mix shall be validated by an RPF or an RPFT.

5. Industry is expected to consult with the Energy Resources Conservation Board if use of this product is proposed on upstream oil and gas sites.
6. SRD is willing to support testing of wood fibre over a five year period to evaluate whether it is a viable surface material, and to determine if there are any adverse environmental effects (i.e., leachate, frost retention etc).

Industry may be asked to participate in a monitoring program to assess the impact of leachates from wood fibre on the ecosystem.

Additional Product Information

Additional information on wood fibre roads can be found at the following websites

- <http://www.wcpipeline.com/index.php/home>
- <http://www.feric.ca/en/?OBJECTID=13F9E580-E081-222F-A4BEC5B295C890FE>

Contacts

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Original Signed _____

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