

Forest Certification



Fort St. John Pilot Project

As part of the Fort St. John Pilot Project (FSJPP) participants' commitment to sustainable forest management, regulatory compliance and independent forest certification, an audit team from KPMG Performance Registrar Inc. completed the following assessments of the FSJPP in July and October 2003:

- A registration assessment of the FSJPP Area to the Canadian Standards Association's standard for Sustainable Forest Management (CSA-SFM);
- An audit of the FSJPP Participants' compliance with the requirements specified in the *Fort St. John Pilot Project Regulation*; and
- A field assessment of Canadian Forest Product Ltd.'s (Canfor's) operations in the Fort St. John TSA as part of a company-wide periodic assessment of conformance with the requirements of the ISO 14001 standard for Environmental Management Systems (EMS).

The audit found that the FSJPP sustainable forest management (SFM) system meets the requirements of the CSA-SFM standard, and that there was a high level of compliance by FSJPP participants with the *Fort St. John Pilot Project Regulation*. In addition, Canfor's EMS continues to meet the requirements for ISO 14001 registration.

The combination of CSA-SFM and regulatory compliance assessments demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainable forest management, and is a significant achievement for the FSJPP participants. The combined assessment on the FSJPP Area applies to a defined forest area (DFA) of 4 152 048 hectares with an allowable annual harvest of 2 115 000 m³.

Background

- The FSJPP was implemented in 2001 as a pilot project for an improved regulatory framework for forest practices in the FSJ Timber Supply Area. The main components of the project include regulatory flexibility to facilitate adaptive approaches to forest management, landscape level planning through an SFM Plan, ongoing public involvement through a Public Advisory Group (PAG), and the adoption and implementation of certification systems as surrogates for the existing administrative process.
- The FSJPP participants include BC Timber Sales, Cameron River Logging Ltd., Canadian Forest Products Ltd., Slocan Forest Products Ltd., Louisiana-Pacific Canada Ltd. and Tembec Inc. All of the participants have consented in writing to take part in the pilot project, and be subject to the terms and conditions of the FSJPP Regulation.
- The CSA-SFM and ISO 14001 standards require regular audits by the registrar to assess ongoing conformance with the standards and the implementation of action plans related to previous assessments.
- The Fort St. John Pilot Project Regulation requires periodic independent audits of the Participants' compliance with the regulation.
- A team of three auditors conducted the CSA-SFM system and regulatory compliance assessments in July and October 2003. The team conducted interviews with Participants' staff, contractors and stakeholders, and examined SFM system, EMS and compliance records, monitoring information and public involvement records.



Findings – Fort St. John Pilot Project

- The assessment also included visits to 61 field sites to assess operational planning, harvesting, silviculture and road construction, maintenance and deactivation.

Noteworthy Comments

- The regulatory compliance audit found a high level of compliance with the Fort St. John Pilot Project Regulation by all participants. Those isolated cases of noncompliance that were identified by the participants or by the auditors were minor in nature and were not associated with significant environmental harm.
- Significant effort was expended by the public advisory group during the development process for the new SFM plan. As a result, the plan provides a strong starting point for the continual improvement process on the TSA.
- The audit found a high level of coordination between the participants and the oil and gas industry, leading to an overall reduction in the amount of road construction required to access timber.
- The participant’s focus on the use of low impact winter roads helped to further reduce the area of productive forest land occupied by forest roads.
- The road deactivation practices observed in the field were found to be effective and timely.
- Field review of a number of harvested areas located in close proximity to the Alaska Highway found that the visual quality impacts of forest harvesting had been well managed.
- Most areas are harvested during frozen soil conditions, resulting in reduced levels of soil disturbance.
- The participants have implemented an aggressive reforestation program, ensuring that harvested areas are reforested within required timeframes.

Minor Nonconformances

CSA-SFM:

- CSA SFM Element 1.2 (Species Diversity) requires indicators to “conserve species diversity by ensuring that habitats for the native species found in the defined forest area (DFA) are maintained through time”. However, current species at risk management strategies in the SFM plan are interim only, and are based solely on site-specific known occurrences. While the timeline for the implementation of more comprehensive strategies is short, until appropriate strategies are developed there remains an inconsistency with the intent of CSA SFM element 1.2.
- The SFM indicator for carbon uptake (mean annual increment) is not appropriate as it does not accurately reflect carbon uptake in younger stands.
- A review of BC Timber Sales action plans related to non-conformances for three harvest blocks indicated that while action plans were developed, there is no indication that follow-up inspections were completed as required.

CSA-SFM Registration Assessment	
Major nonconformances	0
Minor nonconformances	3
Opportunities for improvement	7

DEFINITIONS

Major nonconformances:

- Are pervasive or critical to the achievement of the EMS/SFM Objectives.

Minor nonconformances:

- Are isolated incidents that are non-critical to the achievement of the EMS/SFM Objectives.

All nonconformances require an action plan within 30 days and must be addressed by the operation.

Major nonconformances must be addressed immediately or registration cannot be achieved/ maintained.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Are not nonconformances or noncompliances but are comments on specific areas of the SFM or EMS where improvements can be made.

Opportunities for improvement

CSA-SFM:

- While the FSJPP participants appear to have committed to SFM effectiveness monitoring, the SFM Plan currently lacks a clearly documented effectiveness monitoring strategy.
- The SFM indicator relating to caribou does not address the issues of access and linear development, which are generally recognized as critical elements of managing caribou habitat. There remains an opportunity to reduce the site specific risks associated with caribou and access by improving understanding of key caribou use areas, and focusing coordinated development and access management efforts in these areas.
- Given the number of changes being made to the BC Timber Sales EMS and the existence of numerous action plans relating to the recent internal audit, it is likely that significant effort will need to be expended to ensure consistent implementation of the BCTS EMS on the ground.
- Field inspection of drainage control on existing road networks indicated generally good water management, with the isolated exception of one crossing with a number of deficiencies (an arch pipe installed by BCTS was undersized and encroached on the stream, and a ditch upslope of the stream drains directly into the stream).
- Although the current Slocan-LP OSB Corp. EMS is appropriate in scope given the nature of current activities, the EMS would need to be significantly expanded in scope prior to initiating field operations.
- Review of a sample of silviculture prescriptions, site level plans and other related documents indicated that overall these were clear and appropriate for the site. However, two minor administrative exceptions were noted: (1) the Canfor SPs for three harvest blocks each contain an internal inconsistency with respect to practices in the riparian management zone of S6 streams, and (2) the Canfor pre-work for one harvest block specifies an advanced regeneration objective that is different than the strategy proposed in the silviculture prescription.



Road deactivation practices observed during the audit were found to be effective and timely.

Activities in the Graham Landscape Unit are consistent with the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act, employing a sequential clustered harvesting pattern to minimize impacts on wildlife habitat.



Through KPMG PRI, KPMG’s Vancouver based forestry specialist group is accredited to register forest companies to ISO 14001, CSA-SFM and AF&PA SFI certification standards. The group is led by Mike Alexander and consists of a highly qualified team of professional foresters and industry experts.

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