



**Forest  
Practices  
Board**

## **Audit of Forest Planning and Practices**

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*Peace Natural Resource District  
Woodlot Licences W0604, W1780, W1781 and W1950*

**FPB/ARC/228**

June 2019

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# Introduction

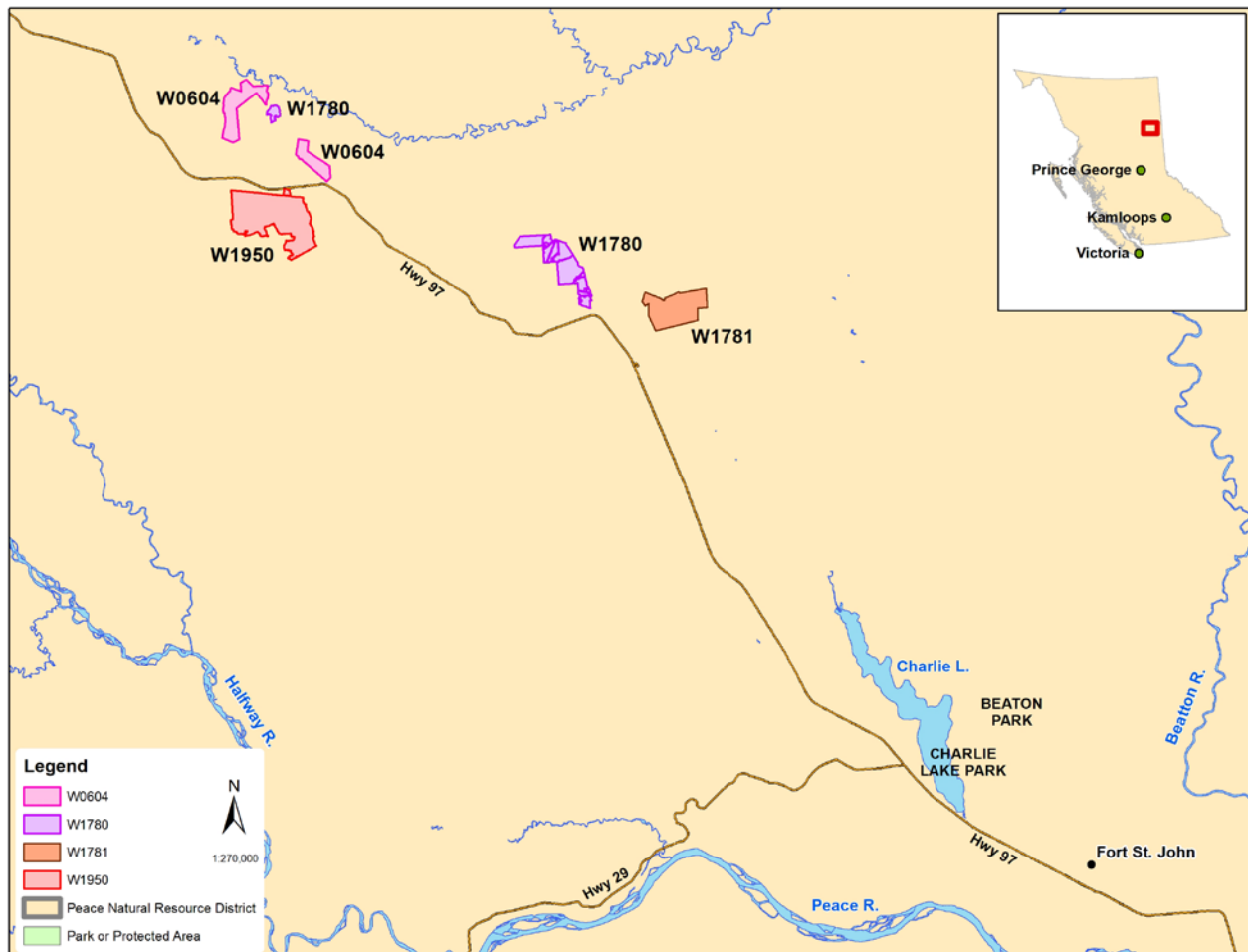
The Forest Practices Board is the public's watchdog for sound forest practices in British Columbia. One of the Board's roles is to audit the practices of the forest industry to ensure compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.

As part of the Forest Practices Board's 2018 compliance audit program, the Board randomly selected the Peace Natural Resource District as the location for a full scope compliance audit. Within the district, the Board selected five woodlot licences for audit: W0604, W1780, W1781, W1950 and W2101.

The individual woodlot licences were selected based on highest volume of timber harvested between September 2016 and September 2018. Selection also focused on diversity of tenure holders, for example if two licences were held by the same family, only the licence with the highest volume was selected for audit. Selection was not based on past performance.

This report explains what the Board audited and the findings for woodlots W0604, W1780, W1781 and W1950. The location of these woodlots is shown on the the location map below. Results for woodlot W2101 are reported separately. Detailed information about the Board's compliance audit process is provided in Appendix 1.

**Map of the Audit Area**



# Audit Results – Woodlot Licence W0604

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## Background

Woodlot licence W0604, awarded in 1986, is held by Shauneen Gibbons, who purchased it in 2011. The woodlot is located approximately 70 kilometres north of Fort St. John. The woodlot contains 715 hectares of Crown land and has an allowable annual cut of 2143 cubic metres per year. During the two-year audit period, the licensee harvested about 14 200 cubic metres of timber. The level of harvest is over the allowable annual cut, as the licensee chose to salvage spruce blowdown and pay the required penalty.

## Audit Approach and Scope

This was a full scope compliance audit with a two-year timeframe. All activities carried out on W0604 between September 1, 2016, and September 17, 2018, were subject to audit. This included all harvesting, road, silviculture, fire protection activities and associated planning.

Auditors assessed these activities for compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and applicable regulations, in particular the *Woodlot Licence Planning and Practices Regulation (WLPPR)*. Auditors' work involved interviewing the woodlot licensee, reviewing the woodlot licence plan, assessing silviculture records and field visits. Sites were accessed by side-by-sides provided by the licensee.

The standards and procedures used to carry out this audit are set out in the Board's *Compliance Audit Reference Manual, Version 7.1, July 2016*.

Two forest professionals and a chartered professional accountant made up the audit team. The audit team was in the field on September 17, 2018.

## Planning and Practices Examined and Findings

The following describes the activities and obligations audited and the findings.

### Operational Planning

The approved woodlot licence plan (WLP) covers the period 2010 to 2020 and the licensee must meet the requirements for activities and obligations contained in its WLP. The audit team evaluated the WLP through office reviews and fieldwork to ensure that it accurately identified site conditions.

The licensee adopted the one cutting permit approach,<sup>1</sup> which does not require the licensee to spatially identify road and cutblock configurations. The licensee created a map to show recent harvesting and road construction within the audit period.

Auditors found that the WLP was consistent with legal requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> The "one cutting permit" concept is that there is only one cutting permit for an entire woodlot licence. This has the added advantage of lower administration and data storage costs because the licensee submits final cutblock boundaries once rather than the more common practice where proposed cutblock boundaries are submitted at the outset and subsequent amendments submitted before a final cutblock boundary is realized.

## **Timber Harvesting**

The licensee harvested timber from three cutblocks during the audit period. The total harvested area was 39.1 hectares in size and auditors visited all three cutblocks. The licensee logged the blocks in winter and auditors noted minimal soil disturbance. There was one non-fish-bearing (S6) stream in one of the cutblocks and the licensee avoided disturbing the stream channel and retained adequate riparian vegetation.

Auditors had no concerns with timber harvesting.

## **Road Construction, Maintenance and Deactivation**

The licensee constructed 2.7 kilometres and maintained 3.7 kilometres of road during the audit period. Auditors examined all the roads. The licensee did not deactivate any roads or install or maintain any bridges during the audit period.

The licensee constructed winter road on gentle terrain with one stream crossing. The stream is a non-classified drainage (NCD)<sup>2</sup> and the licensee used snow fill to cross the creek. The stream banks and vegetation show minimal disturbance from the winter crossing. The road maintenance was also for a winter road and the running surfaces were stable.

The auditors did not identify any issues with road construction or maintenance.

## **Silviculture Activities and Obligations**

Within the audit period, the licensee planted three cutblocks, brushed four cutblocks, declared regeneration obligations met on seven cutblocks and free-growing obligations met on two cutblocks. Auditors examined all the planted cutblocks, one brushed block, three cutblocks with regeneration due and both cutblocks where free growing was due.

Auditors did not identify any concerns with the planting, brushing, regeneration or free-growing obligations. Regenerating stands appeared stocked and were showing good health and vigour.

Annual reporting was completed within the required timeframe for recent activities and milestone declarations.

## **Fire Protection Activities**

Auditors did not inspect fire tools since there were no active operations during the audit field work.

The licensee had three cutblocks with hazard assessment obligations due during the audit period. The licensee completed fire hazard assessments and had piled the logging debris in anticipation of burning. At the time of the field assessment, abatement had not yet been completed, but was within the allowable time period to complete burning activities.

The auditors did not identify any concerns with fire protection activities.

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<sup>2</sup> Non-classified drainages are an ephemeral or intermittent watercourse having a continuous defined channel that is less than 100 metres in length and does not contain fish, or does not flow directly into a stream or lake that is known to contain fish or does not flow directly into a domestic water intake.

## Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the operational planning, timber harvesting, road construction and maintenance, silviculture, and fire protection activities carried out under woodlot licence W0604, held by Shauneen Gibbons, between September 1, 2016, and September 17, 2018, complied in all significant respects with the requirements of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and related regulations, as of September 2018. There is no opinion provided for road deactivation.

In reference to compliance, the term “in all significant respects” recognizes that there may be minor instances of non-compliance that either may not be detected by the audit, or that are detected but not considered worthy of inclusion in the audit report.

The *Audit Approach and Scope* and the *Planning and Practices Examined* sections of this report describe the basis of the audit work performed in reaching the above conclusion. The audit was conducted in accordance with the auditing standards of the Forest Practices Board, including adherence to the auditor independence standards and the ethical requirements, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour. Such an audit includes examining sufficient forest planning and practices to support an overall evaluation of compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.



Christopher R. Mosher CPA, CA, EP(CEA)  
Director, Audits

Victoria, British Columbia  
May 22, 2019

# Audit Results – Woodlot Licence W1780

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## Background

Woodlot licence W1780, awarded in 1999, is held by Northland Timber Ltd. The woodlot is located approximately 50 kilometres north of Fort St. John. The woodlot contains 598 hectares of Crown land and has an allowable annual cut of 1542 cubic metres per year. During the two-year audit period, the licensee harvested about 11 500 cubic metres of timber. The high level of harvest is due to salvage harvesting from the Beatton Airport Road fire in 2016, which burned almost the entire woodlot. A cut control limit exemption for 24 000 cubic metres was approved in July 2016 for the period of May 1, 2014, to April 30, 2019.

## Audit Approach and Scope

This was a full scope compliance audit with a two-year timeframe. All activities carried out on W1780 between September 1, 2016, and September 21, 2018, were subject to audit. This included all harvesting, road, silviculture, fire protection activities and associated planning.

Auditors assessed these activities for compliance with FRPA, the *Wildfire Act* and applicable regulations, in particular the *Woodlot Licence Planning and Practices Regulation* (WLPPR). Auditors' work involved interviewing the woodlot licensee, reviewing the woodlot licence plan, assessing silviculture records and field visits. Sites were accessed by truck.

The standards and procedures used to carry out this audit are set out in the Board's *Compliance Audit Reference Manual, Version 7.1, July 2016*.

Two forest professionals and a chartered professional accountant made up the audit team. The audit team was in the field on September 21, 2018.

## Planning and Practices Examined and Findings

The following describes the activities and obligations audited and the findings.

### Operational Planning

The approved woodlot licence plan (WLP) covers the period 2009 to 2018 and the licensee must meet the requirements for activities and obligations contained in its WLP. The audit team evaluated the WLP through office reviews and fieldwork to ensure that it accurately identified site conditions. The WLP expired on December 31, 2018, and all salvage harvesting from the 2016 wildfire has been completed.

The licensee adopted the one cutting permit approach,<sup>3</sup> which does not require the licensee to spatially identify road and cutblock configurations.

Auditors found that the WLP was consistent with legal requirements.

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<sup>3</sup> The "one cutting permit" concept is that there is only one cutting permit for an entire woodlot licence. This has the added advantage of lower administration and data storage costs because the licensee submits final cutblock boundaries once rather than the more common practice where proposed cutblock boundaries are submitted at the outset and subsequent amendments submitted before a final cutblock boundary is realized.

## **Timber Harvesting**

The licensee harvested timber from three cutblocks during the audit period. The total harvested area was 78.2 hectares in size and auditors visited all three cutblocks. The licensee logged the blocks in winter and auditors noted minimal soil disturbance. There was one non fish-bearing (S6) stream in one of the cutblocks and the licensee avoided disturbing the stream channel and retained adequate riparian vegetation.

Auditors had no concerns with timber harvesting.

## **Road Construction, Maintenance and Deactivation**

The licensee constructed 1.3 kilometres and maintained 2.5 kilometres of road during the audit period. Auditors examined 1.0 kilometre of the constructed road and 1.7 kilometres of the maintained road. The licensee did not deactivate any roads or install or maintain any bridges during the audit period.

The licensee constructed winter road on flat terrain with no stream crossings. The road maintenance included both winter and all-season roads.

The auditors did not identify any issues with road construction or maintenance.

## **Silviculture Activities and Obligations**

Within the audit period, the licensee had free-growing obligations due on four cutblocks. All four cutblocks were burned in the 2016 fire. At the time of the field visit, none of the recent harvest blocks had been planted.

There has been no reporting completed since the 2016 fire. The recently harvested blocks were completed in 2016, however, the cutting permit is open until July 2020, so reporting is not yet due.

## **Fire Protection Activities**

Auditors did not inspect fire tools since there were no active operations during the audit field work.

The licensee had three cutblocks with hazard-assessment obligations due during the audit period. The licensee completed fire hazard assessments and had piled the logging debris in anticipation of burning. At the time of the field assessment, abatement had not yet been completed but was within the allowable time period to complete burning activities.

The auditors did not identify any concerns with fire protection activities.



## Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the operational planning, timber harvesting, road construction and maintenance, silviculture, and fire protection activities carried out under woodlot licence W1780, held by Northland Timber Ltd., between September 1, 2016, and September 21, 2018, complied in all significant respects with the requirements of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and related regulations, as of October 2017. There is no opinion provided for road deactivation.

In reference to compliance, the term “in all significant respects” recognizes that there may be minor instances of non-compliance that either may not be detected by the audit, or that are detected but not considered worthy of inclusion in the audit report.

The *Audit Approach and Scope* and the *Planning and Practices Examined* sections of this report describe the basis of the audit work performed in reaching the above conclusion. The audit was conducted in accordance with the auditing standards of the Forest Practices Board, including adherence to the auditor independence standards and the ethical requirements, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour. Such an audit includes examining sufficient forest planning and practices to support an overall evaluation of compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.



Christopher R. Mosher CPA, CA, EP(CEA)  
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May 22, 2019

# Audit Results – Woodlot Licence W1781

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## Background

Woodlot licence W1781, awarded in 1999, is held by Glynnis Maundrell. The woodlot is located approximately 50 kilometres north of Fort St. John. The woodlot contains 599 hectares of Crown land and has an allowable annual cut of 1523 cubic metres per year. During the two-year audit period, the licensee harvested about 56 500 cubic metres of timber. The high level of harvest is due to salvage harvesting from the Beatton Airport Road fire in 2016, which burned almost the entire woodlot. A cut control limit exemption for 108 800 cubic metres was approved in September 2016 for the period of May 1, 2015, to April 30, 2020.

## Audit Approach and Scope

This was a full scope compliance audit with a two-year timeframe. All activities carried out on W1781 between September 1, 2016, and September 19, 2018, were subject to audit. This included all harvesting, road, silviculture, fire protection activities and associated planning.

Auditors assessed these activities for compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and applicable regulations, in particular the *Woodlot Licence Planning and Practices Regulation (WLPPR)*. Auditors' work involved interviewing the woodlot licensee, reviewing the woodlot licence plan, assessing silviculture records and field visits. Sites were accessed by truck.

The standards and procedures used to carry out this audit are set out in the Board's *Compliance Audit Reference Manual, Version 7.1, July 2016*.

Two forest professionals and a chartered professional accountant made up the audit team. The audit team was in the field on September 19, 2018.

## Planning and Practices Examined and Findings

The following describes the activities and obligations audited and the findings.

### Operational Planning

The approved woodlot licence plan (WLP) covers the period 2008 to 2018 and the licensee must meet the requirements for activities and obligations contained in its WLP. The audit team evaluated the WLP through office reviews and fieldwork to ensure that it accurately identified site conditions. The WLP expired on August 7, 2018, and all salvage from the 2016 fire has been completed.

The licensee adopted the one cutting permit approach,<sup>4</sup> which does not require the licensee to spatially identify road and cutblock configurations.

Auditors found that the WLP was consistent with legal requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> The "one cutting permit" concept is that there is only one cutting permit for an entire woodlot licence. This has the added advantage of lower administration and data storage costs because the licensee submits final cutblock boundaries once rather than the more common practice where proposed cutblock boundaries are submitted at the outset and subsequent amendments submitted before a final cutblock boundary is realized.

## **Timber Harvesting**

The licensee harvested timber from nine cutblocks during the audit period. The total harvested area was 273.3 hectares in size and auditors visited seven cutblocks. The blocks were logged in winter and auditors noted minimal soil disturbance. There were two non-fish-bearing (S6) streams within the cutblocks, one fish bearing (S6) stream located between two of the cutblocks, and one fish bearing (S4) stream within one cutblock. The licensee protected the streams by retaining adequate vegetation along the streams, maintaining natural drainage patterns at stream crossings and ensuring machine traffic did not disturb the stream banks.

Auditors had no concerns with timber harvesting.

## **Road Construction, Maintenance and Deactivation**

The licensee constructed 7.3 kilometres and maintained 3 kilometres of road during the audit period. Auditors examined 5.5 kilometres of the constructed road and 2 kilometres of the maintained road. The licensee did not deactivate any roads or install or maintain any bridges during the audit period.

The licensee constructed both all-season and winter roads on flat and slightly sloping terrain with two crossings of non-fish-bearing streams (S6) and two crossings of fish bearing (S4) streams. The road maintenance consisted of winter road on flat ground requiring little active maintenance.

The auditors did not identify any issues with road construction or maintenance.

## **Silviculture Activities and Obligations**

Within the audit period, the licensee site prepared seven blocks and planted nine blocks. One block had the regeneration milestone due and one block had the free-growing milestone due.

The two blocks with milestones due were burned in the 2016 fire. The recently salvaged blocks had mounding treatments in wetter areas and were planted with a mix of spruce and pine. Reporting was completed for the recently harvested blocks.

## **Fire Protection Activities**

Auditors did not inspect fire tools since there were no active operations during the audit field work.

The licensee had nine cutblocks with hazard-assessment obligations due during the audit period. The licensee completed a fire hazard assessment for the cutblocks and had piled the logging debris in anticipation of burning. At the time of the field assessment, six of the seven sampled cutblocks had been piled and burned. The seventh cutblock was piled and within the allowable time period to complete burning activities.

The auditors did not identify any concerns with fire protection activities.

## Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the operational planning, timber harvesting, road construction and maintenance, silviculture and fire protection activities carried out under woodlot licence W1781, held by Glynnis Maundrell, between September 1, 2016, and September 19, 2018, complied in all significant respects with the requirements of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and related regulations, as of October 2017. There is no opinion provided for road deactivation.

In reference to compliance, the term “in all significant respects” recognizes that there may be minor instances of non-compliance that either may not be detected by the audit, or that are detected but not considered worthy of inclusion in the audit report.

The *Audit Approach and Scope* and the *Planning and Practices Examined* sections of this report describe the basis of the audit work performed in reaching the above conclusion. The audit was conducted in accordance with the auditing standards of the Forest Practices Board, including adherence to the auditor independence standards and the ethical requirements, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour. Such an audit includes examining sufficient forest planning and practices to support an overall evaluation of compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.



Christopher R. Mosher CPA, CA, EP(CEA)  
Director, Audits

Victoria, British Columbia  
May 22, 2019

# Audit Results – Woodlot Licence W1950

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## Background

Woodlot licence W1950, awarded in 2010, is held by Martin Zacharias. The woodlot contains 1203 hectares of Crown land and has an allowable annual cut of 4483 cubic metres per year. The woodlot is located approximately 70 kilometres north of Fort St. John. During the two-year audit period, the licensee harvested about 25 600 cubic metres of timber. The level of harvest is above the allowable annual cut due to an oil and gas development of approximately 40 hectares over the woodlot. The site was cleared under the woodlot harvesting authority and the penalties were paid for excess harvesting.

## Audit Approach and Scope

This was a full scope compliance audit with a two-year timeframe. All activities carried out on W1950 between September 1, 2016, and September 18, 2018, were subject to audit. This included all harvesting, road, silviculture, fire protection activities and associated planning.

Auditors assessed these activities for compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and applicable regulations, in particular the *Woodlot Licence Planning and Practices Regulation (WLPPR)*. Auditors' work involved interviewing the woodlot licensee, reviewing the woodlot licence plan, assessing silviculture records and field visits. Sites were accessed by truck.

The standards and procedures used to carry out this audit are set out in the Board's *Compliance Audit Reference Manual, Version 7.1, July 2016*.

Two forest professionals and a chartered professional accountant made up the audit team. The audit team was in the field on September 18, 2018.

## Planning and Practices Examined and Findings

The following describes the activities and obligations audited and the findings.

### Operational Planning

The approved woodlot licence plan (WLP) covers the period 2011 to 2021 and the licensee must meet the requirements for activities and obligations contained in its WLP. The audit team evaluated the WLP through office reviews and fieldwork to ensure that it accurately identified site conditions.

The licensee adopted the one cutting permit approach,<sup>5</sup> which does not require the licensee to spatially identify road and cutblock configurations.

Auditors found that the WLP was consistent with legal requirements.

### Timber Harvesting

The licensee harvested timber from two cutblocks during the audit period. One cutblock was 73.4 hectares in size and the other cutblock was 30 hectares in size.

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<sup>5</sup> The "one cutting permit" concept is that there is only one cutting permit for an entire woodlot licence. This has the added advantage of lower administration and data storage costs because the licensee submits final cutblock boundaries once rather than the more common practice where proposed cutblock boundaries are submitted at the outset and subsequent amendments submitted before a final cutblock boundary is realized.

The blocks were summer logged and auditors found that soil disturbance was minimized and well below the limits defined by regulation. There was one fish bearing (S4) stream in a cutblock and the licensee protected the stream by retaining adequate vegetation along the stream, maintaining natural drainage patterns at stream crossings, and ensuring machine traffic did not disturb the stream banks. Both blocks had areas within visual quality objectives (modification and partial retention) and the viewpoint was the Alaska highway. Both blocks were designed to be screened from the highway and met the visual quality objectives.

The auditors did not have any concerns with harvesting activities.

### **Road Construction, Maintenance and Deactivation**

The licensee constructed four kilometres and maintained three kilometres of road during the audit period. Auditors examined all of the constructed road and one kilometre of maintained road. The licensee did not deactivate any roads or install or maintain any bridges during the audit period.

The licensee constructed summer road for harvesting. Natural drainage patterns were maintained with adequate ditches and cross ditches and the culverts have been removed. The maintained roads were winter roads on flat ground and had minimal soil disturbance.

The auditors did not identify any issues with road construction or maintenance.

### **Silviculture Activities and Obligations**

Within the audit period, the licensee planted four cutblocks and declared regeneration obligations met on three cutblocks. Auditors examined all the planted cutblocks and two cutblocks where regeneration was declared.

Regenerating stands appeared stocked and showed good health and vigour even with a deciduous tree component to the stand. Auditors did not identify any concerns with the planting or regeneration obligations.

Reporting was completed for activities and regeneration declarations.

### **Fire Protection Activities**

Auditors did not inspect fire tools since there were no active operations during the audit field work.

The licensee had two cutblocks with hazard assessment obligations due and three cutblocks with abatement due during the audit period. The licensee had completed fire hazard assessments and had abated the hazard by piling and burning logging debris.

The auditors did not identify any concerns with fire protection activities.

## Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the operational planning, timber harvesting, road construction and maintenance, silviculture and fire protection activities carried out under woodlot licence W1950, held by Martin Zacharias, between September 1, 2016, and September 18, 2018, complied in all significant respects with the requirements of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and related regulations, as of October 2017. There is no opinion provided for road deactivation.

In reference to compliance, the term “in all significant respects” recognizes that there may be minor instances of non-compliance that either may not be detected by the audit, or that are detected but not considered worthy of inclusion in the audit report.

The *Audit Approach and Scope* and the *Planning and Practices Examined* sections of this report describe the basis of the audit work performed in reaching the above conclusion. The audit was conducted in accordance with the auditing standards of the Forest Practices Board, including adherence to the auditor independence standards and the ethical requirements, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour. Such an audit includes examining sufficient forest planning and practices to support an overall evaluation of compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.



Christopher R. Mosher CPA, CA, EP(CEA)  
Director, Audits

Victoria, British Columbia  
May 22, 2019

# Appendix 1: Forest Practices Board Compliance Audit Process

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## Background

The Forest Practices Board conducts audits of government and agreement-holders under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA), section 122, and the *Wildfire Act*. Compliance audits examine forest or range planning and practices to determine whether or not they meet FRPA and / or *Wildfire Act* requirements. The Board conducts about 10 compliance audits annually. Most of these are audits of agreement holders. The Board also audits the government's BC Timber Sales Program (BCTS).

## Selection of auditees

To begin with, auditors randomly select an area of the Province, such as a natural resource district. Then the auditors review the forest resources, geographic features, operating conditions and other factors in the area selected. These are considered in conjunction with Board strategic priorities (updated annually), and the type of audit is determined. At this stage, auditors choose the auditee(s) that best suits the selected risk and priorities. The audit selections are not based on past performance.

For example, in 2016, the Board randomly selected the Dawson Creek portion of the Peace Natural Resource District as a location for an audit. After assessing the activities within the area, it was noted that there were two community forest agreements that had not yet been audited by the Board. As the Board strives to audit an array of licence types and sizes each year, these two community forest agreements were selected for audit.

For BCTS audits, a district or timber supply area within 2 of the 12 business areas in the province are selected randomly for audit. Only those areas that have not been audited by the Board in the past five years are eligible for selection.

## Audit Standards

The audits are conducted in accordance with auditing standards developed by the Board. These standards include adherence to the auditor independence standards and the ethical requirements, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour and are consistent with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. The standards for compliance audits are described in the Board's *Compliance Audit Reference Manual*.

## Audit Process

### Conducting the Audit

Once the Board randomly selects an area or district and determines the scope of audit to be conducted and the licensee(s) to be audited, all activities carried out during the period subject to audit are identified (such as harvesting or replanting and road construction or deactivation activities). Items that make up each forest activity are referred to as a population. For example, all sites harvested form the timber harvesting population and all road sections constructed form the road construction population.



A separate sample is then selected for each population (e.g., the cutblocks selected for auditing timber harvesting). Within each population, more audit effort (i.e., more audit sampling) is allocated to areas where the risk of non-compliance is greater. For smaller audits, the sample will include the full population.

Auditors' work includes interviewing licensee staff, reviewing applicable plans, assessing features from helicopters and measuring specific features like riparian reserve zone width using ground procedures. The audit teams generally spend three to five days in the field.

## Evaluating the Results

The Board recognizes that compliance with the requirements of FRPA and the *Wildfire Act* is more a matter of degree than absolute adherence. Determining compliance, and assessing the significance of non-compliance, requires the exercise of professional judgment within the direction provided by the Board.

The audit team, composed of professionals and technical experts, first determines whether forest practices comply with legal requirements. For those practices considered to not be in compliance, the audit team then evaluates the significance of the non-compliance, based on a number of criteria, including the magnitude of the event, the frequency of its occurrence and the severity of the consequences.

Auditors categorize their findings into the following levels of compliance:

**Compliance** – where the auditor finds that practices meet FRPA and *Wildfire Act* requirements.

**Unsound Practice** – where the auditor identifies a significant practice that, although in compliance with FRPA or the *Wildfire Act*, is not considered to be sound management.

**Not significant non-compliance** – where the auditor, upon reaching a non-compliance conclusion, determines that one or more non-compliance event(s) is not significant and not generally worthy of reporting. However, in certain circumstances, these events may be reported as an area requiring improvement.

**Significant non-compliance** – where the auditor determines a non-compliance event(s) or condition(s) is, or has the potential to be, significant and is considered worthy of reporting.

**Significant breach** – where the auditor finds that significant harm has occurred, or is beginning to occur, to persons or the environment as a result of one or more non-compliance event(s).

If a significant breach of the legislation has occurred, the auditor is required by the *Forest Practices Board Regulation* to immediately advise the Board, the party being audited, and the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

## Reporting

Based on the above evaluation, the auditor then prepares a draft audit report. The party being audited is given a copy of the draft report for review and comment before it is submitted to the Board.

The Board reviews the draft report and determines if the audit findings may adversely affect any party or person. If so, the party or person must be given an opportunity to make representations before the Board decides the matter and issues a final report. The representations allow parties that may potentially be adversely affected to present their views to the Board.

The Board reviews representations from parties that may potentially be adversely affected, makes any necessary changes to the report, and decides if recommendations are warranted. The report is then finalized and released: first to the auditee and then to the public and government seven days later.



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