

What is this audit about?

The Board conducted a full-scope compliance audit of forest licence A93987 and Community Forest Agreements K5Q and K2T held by Valemount Community Forest Company Ltd. within the Prince George Natural Resource District. All activities carried out between July 1, 2021 and July 28, 2023 were subject to audit. These activities included:

- Timber harvesting
- Road and major structure construction, maintenance and deactivation
- Silviculture obligations
- Wildfire protection
- Associated planning

What did the Board find?

The licensee complied with most requirements under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and *Wildfire Act*. However, this audit identifies five significant non-compliances related to:

- Bridge construction and maintenance
- Fire protection
- Fire hazard assessment and abatement
- Harvest reporting

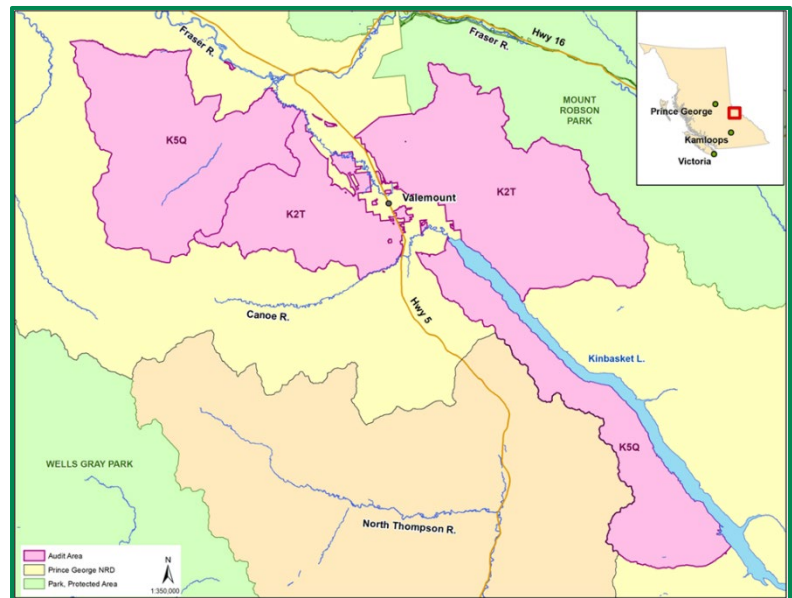


Figure 1. Map of the audit area

Key Takeaways

Bridge Construction and Maintenance

Bridge construction and maintenance issues continue to persist in the forestry sector. The *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation* (FPPR) requires licensees to address structural bridge defects, ensure bridges they construct are structurally sound and safe for industrial use, and retain proper documentation.

- Engaging with qualified professionals can help licensees ensure bridges are safe and structurally sound.
- Reviewing the [practices and guidelines for forest professionals](#) will help licensees understand when and how to meet bridge construction and maintenance requirements.

Fire Hazard Assessment, Abatement and Fire Protection

It is critically important that forest operators take precautions when abating fire hazards, especially in high-risk areas. For example, the *Wildfire Regulation* requires licensees to establish a fuel break before burning debris piles for hazard abatement.

- Creating fuel breaks around slash piles prior to abatement helps prevent fire from spreading uncontrollably and/or damaging forest resources.
- Tree felling and processing are considered high-risk activities. Licensees should ensure their on-site fire suppression systems and fire tools are fully functional.

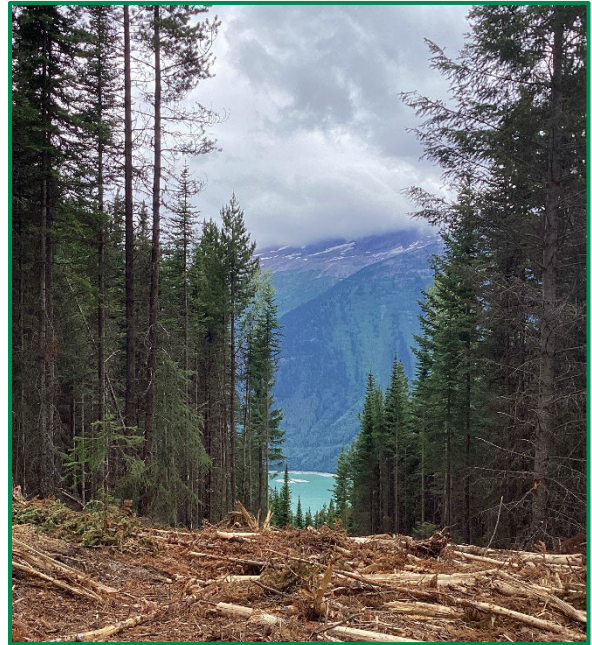


Figure 2. A commercial thinning cutblock facing southwest, toward Kinbasket Lake

Wildlife Tree Retention Areas

Establishing and reporting Wildlife Tree Retention Areas (WTRAs) helps ensure enough trees are set aside and protected to provide long-term wildlife habitat.

- Commercial thinning meets the definition of 'harvest' in the FPPR, and these types of cutblocks are required to establish WTRAs.

Conclusion

The level of non-compliance found in this audit does not give the Board confidence that the licensee is adequately managing for legally required stewardship values.

Acknowledgement

Simpcw First Nation and Tsq'escen First Nation (formerly the Canim Lake Band) have been stewards of this land since time immemorial. The Forest Practices Board recognizes their deep connection with the land that continues to this day. Valemount Community Forest Community Ltd. is committed to working with these Nations to preserve their interests on the landbase.