

UPDATE Forest Certification



Fort St. John Pilot Project – 2008 Surveillance Audit September 2008

Background

The Fort St. John Pilot Project (FSJPP) area encompasses the Fort St. John Timber Supply Area (TSA) in the Peace region of northeast BC. 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 2,062,805 m³. As part of the commitment to sustainable forest management and forest certification made by the FSJPP participants, an audit team from KPMG Performance Registrar Inc. completed the second surveillance assessment of the FSJPP CAN/CSA Z809:2002 SFM system in August and September 2008. This surveillance assessment entailed:

- A surveillance assessment of the FSJPP DFA to the Canadian Standards Association's standard for Sustainable Forest Management (CSA-SFM); and
- Field assessments of Canfor's and BCTS Peace-Liard Business Area operations in the Fort St. John TSA.

The audit found that the Sustainable Forest Management System (SFM) in use on the FSJPP continues to meet the CSA-SFM standard. In addition, the Canfor and BCTS environmental management systems continue to be effectively implemented and supportive of the CSA-SFM registration. Continued CSA-SFM registration demonstrates an ongoing commitment to sustainable forest management, and is a significant achievement for the FSJPP participants.

The Audit

- **Background** – The FSJPP was implemented across the Fort St. John TSA in 2001 as a pilot project for an improved regulatory framework for forest practices. 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., Dunne-Za Ventures LP, Louisiana-Pacific Canada Ltd. and Tembec Inc. However, all field operations are conducted by Canfor and BC Timber Sales. 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 standard require regular audits by the registrar to assess ongoing conformance with the standards and the implementation of action plans related to previous assessments. In addition, the *Fort St. John Pilot Project Regulation* requires periodic independent audits of the Participants' compliance with the regulation.





- **Audit Team** – The audit was conducted by a two person audit team consisting of two BC registered professional foresters. The audit team leader is a certified environmental auditor and EMS lead auditor and the second team member is an EMS lead auditor.
- **Field Audit** – The team conducted interviews with Participant staff and contractors and examined EMS, CSA-SFM and compliance records, monitoring information and public involvement records, including completed questionnaires to solicit Public Advisory Group (PAG) and First Nation representatives’ knowledge of and level of satisfaction with the public participation process. The team also conducted a field assessment of 25 sites to assess operational planning, harvesting, silviculture, camps and road construction, maintenance and deactivation.

Noteworthy Comments

- Detail in the JAMC Meeting Minutes demonstrating ongoing efforts to engage First Nations in forest management issues on the DFA.
- CFP & BCTS block files as reviewed were very detailed and the block histories, particularly silviculture activities, were well documented.
- Detail contained in the 2008 CFP Management Review Meeting Minutes.
- Good example of shelter wood logging to promote mixed-wood stands observed (CP 272, Blk. 5003 - CFP).
- Overall high level of implementation of FMS/EMS and harvest prescriptions for active & completed CFP and BCTS harvest units observed during field audit.
- Continued effective use of herbicides to minimize competition to target stand and achievement of Free Growing objectives at the earliest date possible (CFP).
- Herbicide Contractor interviewed (Summit) was very knowledgeable of operational and permit requirements (CFP).
- Locating Wildlife Tree Patches on block boundaries thereby reducing possibility for wind-throw (CFP & BCTS).

Key Areas of Nonconformity

- The 2008 surveillance audit did not identify any non-conformities with respect to the CAN/CSA Z809:202 standard.

Key Opportunities for Improvement

- Review of the WQEE rating and the surveyor's comments and qualitative rating (High, Medium, or Low) revealed crossings where the WQEE ratings of High and Medium did not correspond to the surveyors rating and comments.

CSA-SFM Re-Registration Assessment and ISO 14001 Periodic Assessment

Major nonconformities	0
Minor nonconformities	0
Opportunities for improvement	4

Types of audit findings

Major nonconformities:

Are pervasive or critical to the achievement of the SFM Objectives.

Major nonconformities must be addressed immediately or certification cannot be achieved / maintained.

Minor nonconformities:

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

All nonconformities require the development of a corrective action plan within 30 days of the audit, which must be fully implemented by the operation within 3 months.

Opportunities for Improvement:

Are not nonconformities but are comments on specific areas of the SFM System where improvements can be made.



- While the FSJPP SFMP Annual Report is an effective tool for communicating SFM performance however trend data for applicable SFM indicators could enhance its effectiveness.
- A review of the 2008 CFP Ft. St. John internal audit report indicated that the audit method was restricted to a review of documents and interviews pertaining to CSA Z809 and CoC and did not include a field component, thus limiting the overall effectiveness of the process.
- The field review of BCTS 2008 planting block (AS 63403) revealed significant concerns with planting quality (“j” roots; seedlings planted at 45 degrees to vertical orientation; planting too shallow). While the BCTS planting quality survey for this block had documented the poor quality of the work discussion with the BCTS representatives revealed that this was not the only block where quality issues with this contractor were of concern.



Wildlife values are enhanced by leaving debris piles and stubbing trees to provide cavity nester habitat.

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