

# UPDATE Forest Certification



## Fort St. John Pilot Project – 2010 Surveillance Audit August 2010

### 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 approximately 4.1 million hectares with an allowable annual harvest of 2.1 million m<sup>3</sup>. 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 following assessments of the FSJPP in August 2010:

- A surveillance audit of the FSJPP DFA to the Canadian Standards Association's standard for Sustainable Forest Management (CSA-SFM);
- Field assessments of FSJPP participants' operations in the Fort St. John TSA; and
- Field assessments of Canfor's operations in the Fort St. John TSA as part of a Corporate-wide surveillance audit to the ISO 14001 standard for Environmental Management Systems (EMS).



### 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 requires regular audits by an independent, third party 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 – the lead auditor is a Professional Geoscientist, and the second team member a Registered Professional Biologist, and a Certified Environmental Auditor (SFM).
- **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. The team also conducted a field assessment of 19 sites to assess operational planning, harvesting, silviculture and road construction, maintenance and deactivation.

### Audit Conclusions

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 Forest Management System (FMS) continues to be effectively implemented and supportive of its Corporate CSA-SFM registration. As a result, a decision has been made by the audit team to continue the CSA-SFM certification. Continued CSA-SFM registration demonstrates an ongoing commitment to sustainable forest management and is a significant achievement for the FSJPP participants. The FSJPP participants' CSA-SFM certification is valid until February 5, 2012 subject to continued conformance with the standard.

### Good Practices

During the course of the surveillance audit, a number of good practices were identified. The following list outlines some of the more notable examples of good practices that were observed by the audit team:

- Thorough review of proposed changes to SFM strategies and indicators at PAG meetings.
- Logging Contractors had good documentation on-site including pre-works, Site Level Plans and training records and demonstrated a workable understanding of SFM requirements.
- Noteworthy management and operational practices around small streams and Non-Classified Drainages including crossings, boundary location and retention of streamside vegetation, were observed during the field audit.

### Follow-up on Findings from Previous Audits

At the time of this assessment there were two open non-conformities from previous audits. The audit team reviewed the field implementation of the action plans developed by Fort St John Pilot Project to address these issues, and found that they had been effectively implemented.

### New Areas of Nonconformity

Full conformity was found in relation to the majority of the CSA-SFM and ISO 14001 elements included within the scope of our audit. However, our audit identified 2 minor nonconformities in relation to CSA-SFM elements 7.5.2 (Corrective and Preventative Action) and 7.6 (Management Review) as follows:

- Review of the BCTS Incident Tracking System for FSJPP showed weaknesses in the identification of root causes, progress details, due dates, status and effectiveness of corrective/preventive actions.
- The audit found that while BCTS is one of the 2 organizations with operational responsibilities within the DFA, the management review did not include involvement by BCTS management.

### Audit Results

Major nonconformities	0
Minor nonconformities	2
Opportunities for improvement	2

### Types of audit findings

#### Major non-conformances:

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

Major non-conformances must be addressed immediately or certification cannot be achieved / maintained.

#### Minor non-conformances:

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

All non-conformances 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 non-conformances but are comments on specific areas of the SFM System where improvements can be made.



Action plans to address these findings have been received from the FSJPP participants and approved by KPMG PRI.

### New Opportunities for Improvement

Two opportunities for improvement were identified during the 2010 CSA-SFM surveillance audit, including:

- In general, the field audit determined that contractors are aware of their roles and responsibilities in achieving conformance with the SFM policy and SFM requirements, including emergency preparedness and response requirements. However, in an isolated case, a loader operator did not have a map or Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan in his machine and did not know or have immediate access to the specific emergency response numbers.
- Site plans for two blocks field inspected were found to contain wording about harvesting during winter in order, in one case, to minimize surficial disturbance of lichen for caribou and, in the other, to preserve an identified archaeological site. Assessments of the sites were carried out to decide whether the activities could be carried out in the summer and still meet the intent of the plans in avoiding unnecessary ground disturbance. Both assessments determined that summer harvesting could occur and harvesting occurred on this basis. While the field inspections concluded that these assessments were accurate, there remains a mismatch between the wording of the plans and the practices that occurred. As a result, there is an opportunity to improve the content of plans to ensure that they correctly describe the expected practices.

### Corrective Action Plans

Corrective action plans designed to address the root cause(s) of the non-conformities identified during the audit have been developed by the Fort St John Pilot Project and reviewed and approved by KPMG PRI. The next audit will include a follow-up assessment of these issues to confirm that the corrective action plans developed to address them have been implemented as required.



Dispersed retention of understorey conifers are routinely grouped with deciduous trees.

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