

**2008 Independent Forest Audit
Annual Provincial Action Plan**

**Dryden Forest
Kenora Forest
Nighthawk Forest
Ottawa Valley Forest
White River Forest**

April 1, 2003 – March 31, 2008

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

**2008 IFA Annual Provincial Action Plan
Submission Page**

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**2008 IFA Annual Provincial Action Plan
Approval Page**

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INTRODUCTION

Independent forest audits were conducted on five Forest Management Units in Ontario in 2008 covering the period from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2008. These included the Dryden, Kenora, Nighthawk, Ottawa Valley and White River Forests. The audits were undertaken according to the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol (IFAPP) which meets the requirements of the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* (CFSA) and the conditions of *MNR's Class Environmental Assessment for Forest Management in Ontario* (2003) as amended. It also meets the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 160/04* made under the CFSA (governing Independent Forest Audits).

This action plan is the first to address the MNR corporate/regional recommendations in a separate document as outlined in Appendix E – Action Plans and Status Reports of the 2008-2009 IFAPP. The action plan includes the responses to thirteen recommendations organized according to principles listed in the IFAPP including the action(s) required, the organization and position responsible, the deadline date, and a method of tracking progress. Two principles, namely commitment and plan assessment and implementation, did not have any corporate or regional recommendations and are therefore not included in this document. The status of progress towards completing the action plan will be referenced in the Provincial Annual Reports on Forest Management starting with the 2008/2009 report.

Annual Provincial Action Plans must be submitted for MNR endorsement and approval within two months of receipt of the last final audit report for the year, unless otherwise directed by the Minister. For 2008 audits, the last final audit report for the year was received by Forest Management Branch on May 26, 2009. Therefore, this Annual Provincial Action Plan is due for submission on July 26, 2009.

The approved Annual Provincial Action Plan is available to the public through MNR's public website once the audit reports have been tabled in the Legislature.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Principle 2: Public Consultation and Aboriginal Involvement

KENORA FOREST RECOMMENDATION #1:

Within the next 12 months, Corporate OMNR should formally meet with Aboriginal leaders in Northwestern Region to discuss;

- **The scope of Ontario's forest management planning program and what it can and cannot be expected to accomplish.**
- **The scope of responsibilities of SFL holders and the local OMNR in the development of forest management plans.**
- **The reasons for the limited participation of Aboriginal communities in the formal forest management planning program.**
- **Potential opportunities to resolve some of the identified issues.**

Actions required:

1. MNR Northwest Region will continue to incorporate the matters referred to in the audit recommendation as part of ongoing efforts to improve our relationship with Aboriginal communities and organizations, including discussions MNR has in support of the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between Treaty 3, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

Organization & position responsible:

1. Policy/Liaison Officer, MNR Northwest Region (lead); Regional Director, MNR Northwest Region.

Deadline date:

1. Ongoing.

Method of tracking progress:

1. Provincial Annual Reports on Forest Management.

WHITE RIVER RECOMMENDATION #2:

Corporate MNR is to provide sufficient funding to enable the Wawa District LCCs to continue operations during all phases of FMP development and implementation.

Actions required:

1. MNR, Northeast Region will continue to work with Wawa District to identify and provide funding for Local Citizens Committees (LCC's), and will consider sufficient funding to enable the Wawa LCC's to continue operations during all phases of FMP development and implementation. The amount will depend on the number of forest management plans in preparation and recognition of other financial pressures.

Organization and position responsible:

1. Regional Forest Resources Supervisor, MNR Northeast Region (lead); Planning Manager, MNR Northeast Region.

Deadline date:

1. Annually as part of MNR's budget planning process.

Method of tracking progress:

1. The results of the budget allocation process and accomplishments achieved will be tracked through the Regional Business Unit on an annual basis.

Principle 3: Forest Management Planning

WHITE RIVER RECOMMENDATION #6:

Corporate MNR is to review and revise the hardwood volume commitments on the WRF at an appropriate juncture.

Actions required:

1. Review of hardwood commitments for which the White River Forest is referenced, will be initiated by the MNR based on core business requirements, current issues, priorities and capacity. During each commitment review, the commitment holder will be required to prepare a report summarizing volumes of wood made available to the company from the commitment supply area, the volume of wood the company actually utilized from the supply area, the reasons for any discrepancies, issues and concerns (if appropriate) and any other information the MNR deems relevant to the review. Applicable SFL holders will also be given the opportunity to comment on the issues experienced and anticipated regarding the implementation of the commitment for their forest. The MNR will discuss the report with the commitment holder, consider any other relevant information, summarize its findings and propose a response.
2. The need to amend, revoke and/or extend/renew a commitment will be considered, based upon the result of each review.

Organization and position responsible:

- 1 & 2. Forest Industry Liaison Officer, Wood Allocation and Measurement Section, Industry Relations Branch, MNR (lead), will be responsible for coordinating reviews with assistance and participation from the appropriate District (Management Forester), commitment holder, and SFL holder staff.

Deadline date:

- 1 & 2. The MNR will initiate new commitment reviews based on core business requirements and current issues, priorities and capacity.

Method of tracking progress:

- 1 & 2. Provincial Annual Reports on Forest Management.

WHITE RIVER RECOMMENDATION #7:

Corporate MNR is to ensure that adequate funding for values collection is made available more frequently to maintain currency of information used in values protection.

Actions required:

1. MNR completed a review of the approach to allocating values collection targets and funding as per the *Forest Process Streamlining Task Force Report Implementation Plan* in June 2006, prior to the audit. The revised approach to collect and utilize up-to-date values information will be implemented in FMP planning by MNR Northeast Region.
2. Continue to improve the consistency of funding for annual values collection projects and maintenance of current values information.

Organization and position responsible:

1 & 2. Regional Forest Resources Supervisor, MNR Northeast Region (lead).

Deadline date:

1. Completed for fiscal years 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10.
2. Ongoing.

Method of tracking progress:

1. Documentation of funds allocated to Wawa District for values collection.
2. Continuation of tracking of funds allocated for values collection and maintenance of current values information.

DRYDEN FOREST RECOMMENDATION #3

Corporate MNR must review the FRI and FMP cycles to ensure they are properly synchronized.

Refer to Ottawa Valley Recommendation #2 below.

OTTAWA VALLEY FOREST RECOMMENDATION #2

Corporate MNR must review the FRI and FMP cycles to ensure they are properly synchronized to meet the planning needs of OVFI and Pembroke District MNR.

Actions required:

1. Forest Management Planning Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR will arrange a meeting with Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment Section, Science and Information Branch, MNR, to review and align the Forest Management Plan (FMP) and Forest Resource Inventory (FRI) schedules for the Province.
2. A schedule of FMP production and the “best fit” new FRI availability will be produced for each FMP in the province including the Ottawa Valley Forest so that planning needs can be met.

Organization and position responsible:

- 1 & 2. Manager, Forest Management Planning Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR (lead); Manager, Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment Section, Science and Information Branch, MNR.

Deadline dates:

1. Meeting will be arranged by September 30, 2009.
2. Production of a schedule will be completed by December 31, 2009.

Method of tracking progress:

1. Minutes of meeting between Forest Management Planning Section and Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment Section.
2. Production of an aligned FMP and FRI schedule which meets management planning needs of the Province.

OTTAWA VALLEY FOREST RECOMMENDATION #3

Corporate MNR must review the use of contingency areas and NDPEG and either update the FMPM or the NDPEG such that the use of contingency area is more clearly defined and consistent in both documents.

Actions required/taken:

1. Forest Management Branch reviewed the 2004 *Forest Management Planning Manual* (FMPM) and the use of contingency areas in relation to the *Forest Management Guide for Natural Disturbance Pattern Emulation* (NDPEG).
2. The current draft 2009 FMPM clarifies the use of contingency areas in relation to NDPEG. The stipulation in the 2004 FMPM that only “unforeseen” events would allow for the use of contingency areas, has been removed from the draft 2009 FMPM. Should these changes not go forward; other mechanisms will be considered to address the concern in the recommendation.

Organization and position responsible:

- 1 & 2. Manager, Forest Management Planning Section, Forest management Branch, MNR (lead).

Deadline date:

1. Completed June, 2009.
2. September, 2009.

Method of tracking progress:

- 1 & 2. 2009 FMPM.

Principle 5: System Support

OTTAWA VALLEY FOREST RECOMMENDATION #5

Corporate MNR must review the funding formula for SFL administration at the provincial level to ensure the correct balance of private and public funding as well as in-kind support is being provided to SFL holders to properly administer the forest management program on behalf of the Crown.

Actions required:

1. MNR is in the process of conducting a review of Ontario's forest tenure and pricing systems, exploring options to improve their design.

Organization and position responsible:

1. Project Director, Tenure and Pricing Review Project, Forests Division, MNR (lead).

Deadline date:

1. First Phase by approximately June 2010.

Method of tracking progress:

1. Provincial Annual Reports on Forest Management.

OTTAWA VALLEY FOREST RECOMMENDATION #6

Corporate MNR must review its document control process for its website postings.

Actions required/taken:

1. MNR Forest Management Branch reviewed the circumstances that led to the differences between tables AR-12 and AR-13 on MNR's website and tables AR-12 and AR-13 in the management unit annual reports. It was determined that both data sets were derived from the Forest Operations Information Program (FOIP) but were collated at different points in time. Since FOIP is a dynamic, real-time database, any report generated from FOIP (as utilized in tables AR-12 and AR-13) represents data at a specific point in time. Updates to FOIP were captured through the annual report submission and review process, but these updates were not captured in the compliance information presented on MNR's website.
2. MNR Forest Management Branch reviewed the mechanism for making compliance information available to the public during the development of the 2009 *Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM)* and the 2009 *Forest Information Manual (FIM)*. The current drafts of the 2009 FMPM and the 2009 FIM identifies that the management unit annual reports be available to the public on the MNR website. If it is determined that these changes to the manuals will be made, this measure will utilize only the finalized management unit annual reports as submitted through the Forest Information Portal and eliminate the requirement for a separate posting of compliance information. Should these changes not go forward, other mechanisms will be considered to address the concern in the recommendation.

Organization and position responsible:

1. Coordinator, Forest Operations Compliance, Forest Evaluation and Standards Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR (lead).
2. Manager, Forest Management Planning Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR (lead-FMPM); Coordinator, Forest Information and Reporting, Forest Evaluation and Standards Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR (lead-FIM).

Deadline date:

1. Completed April 30, 2009.
2. September, 2009.

Method of tracking progress:

1. Provincial Annual Reports on Forest Management.
2. 2009 FMPM, 2009 FIM, and Provincial Annual Reports on Forest Management.

Principle 6: Monitoring

DRYDEN FOREST RECOMMENDATION #16

Corporate MNR must review its document control process for its website postings of its annual report tables AR-12 and AR-13.

Refer to Principle 5 System Support Ottawa Valley Forest Recommendation # 6 above.

OTTAWA VALLEY FOREST RECOMMENDATION #7

MNR Region and /or Corporate MNR must take steps to resolve the long standing controversy over the implementation of the compliance program in the Pembroke District.

Action required:

1. MNR Southern Region will organize a compliance training session where all staff involved in compliance in Pembroke District, including inspectors, district compliance committee members, District Manager and OVF staff are required to attend. Forest Evaluation and Standards Section, Forest Management Branch will be asked to assist and provide the program perspective. The objective will be for everyone to hear the same messages and discuss and resolve problematic situations.
2. Forest Evaluation and Standards Section, Forest Management Branch will ensure that the Senior Forestry Advisor, MNR Southern Region, is invited to all compliance training sessions held in Southern Region to hear the direction provided by main office staff and the reaction, interpretation and discussion around the direction.
3. MNR Southern Region will review the status of controversy in Pembroke District within one year of holding the joint training session as identified in #1.

Organization and position responsible:

1. Regional Director, Southern Region, MNR (lead) and District Manager, Pembroke District, MNR; Coordinator, Forest Operations Compliance, Forest Evaluation and Standards Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR.
2. Coordinator, Forest Operations Compliance, Forest Evaluation and Standards Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR.
3. Regional Director, Southern Region, MNR.

Deadline date:

1. March 31, 2010.
2. March 31, 2010 (or when sessions are organized).
3. March 31, 2011.

Method of tracking progress:

1. Documentation of training records.
2. Documentation of training sessions held in Southern Region.

3. Documentation of interviews with district and OVF staff.

DRYDEN FOREST RECOMMENDATION #15

Corporate MNR must consider an independent review of forest effects monitoring programs.

Actions required:

1. All forest management guides must be reviewed every five years. This includes reviewing the results of relevant and appropriate monitoring programs (e.g. effects and effectiveness monitoring programs). When guides are reviewed and revised, the results of effects and effectiveness monitoring research projects conducted by scientists at the Centre for Northern Forest Ecosystem Research (CNFER) and other locations are used to prepare new forest management guides. The *Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales* (Stand and Site Guide) and the *Forest Management Guide for Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Landscapes* are two recent examples of guides that have incorporated recent monitoring and research knowledge. These guides are approved to be released in 2009. The *Forest Management Guide for Boreal Landscapes* is expected to be released in 2010.

New guides are developed by interdisciplinary teams led by MNR staff, but including representatives of the forest industry and other stakeholder groups. The Provincial Forest Technical Committee (PFTC), a public advisory committee to MNR, provides scientific and technical input to and reviews the draft versions of the guides. This input includes committee members' independent interpretation of results from relevant effectiveness and effects monitoring programs. Other sources of advice on the interpretation of past monitoring programs are external scientific advisors and members of the public.

Finally, each new guide must include a description of MNR's approach to monitoring the effectiveness of the direction in the new document. Like the operational direction in the guide itself, this approach is the subject of debate and input from the development team, the PFTC, and other external experts.

Individual science projects, including those focussed on effects and effectiveness monitoring, are the subject of periodic reviews. Project-specific review panels are created, comprised of external scientists and experts from academia, other jurisdictions, and other research organizations; users of the research results, such as policy developers, the forest industry, and other non-government stakeholders; and colleagues.

2. Results of the guide effectiveness monitoring studies, effects monitoring studies and other environmental assessment related conditions are listed in the Annual Reports on Forest Management which are available on the internet.

Organization and position responsible:

1. Supervisor, Guides Unit, Forest Policy Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR.
2. Manager, Forest Evaluation and Standards Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR.

Deadline date:

1. Approval of the *Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales* and *Forest Management Guide for Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Landscapes*, 2009; Approval of the *Forest Management Guide for Boreal Landscapes*, 2010.
2. Reported annually.

Method of tracking progress:

1. Approved *Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales*, and *Forest Management Guide for Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Landscapes* and *Forest Management Guide for Boreal Landscapes*.
2. Provincial Annual Reports on Forest Management.

Principle 7: Achievement of Management Objectives and Forest Sustainability

WHITE RIVER RECOMMENDATION #14:

Corporate MNR is to evaluate and re-consider how it requires licensees to track and report on sustainability.

Actions required:

1. The 2004 FMPM is being reviewed and updated in 2009. The current draft 2009 FMPM used new science and the *Forest Management Guide for Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Landscapes* to further modify and update the criteria and indicators of sustainability. Should these changes not go forward; other mechanisms will be considered to address the concern in the recommendation.
2. The current draft 2009 FMPM includes a requirement for the year 7 and 10 annual reports in the forest management plan to provide the trend analysis information which was previously provided through the IFA process. This trend analysis information provides for the analysis and discussion of forest sustainability.

Organization and position responsible:

1 & 2. Manager, Forest Management Planning Section, Forest Management Branch, MNR (lead).

Deadline date:

1 & 2. September, 2009.

Method of tracking progress:

1 & 2. 2009 FMPM.