

Pic River Forest Management Unit  
2011-2016 Independent Forest Audit  
Management Unit Action Plan  
Status Report

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# Pic River Forest 2016 Independent Forest Audit Action Plan Status Report Submission Signature Page

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Pic River Forest 2016 Independent Forest Audit Action Plan Status  
Report Submission Approval Signature Page

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## Introduction

An Independent Forest Audit of the Pic River Forest Management Unit was conducted by ArborVitae Environmental Services Ltd. during 2016. The audit covered planning and implementation of forest management activities from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2016.

The Pic River Forest was formed through the amalgamation of the Black River Forest and the Pic River Ojibway Forest on April 1, 2013. This amalgamation followed bankruptcy and return of the Sustainable Forest Licence for the two previous management units to the Crown in January 2013. The Pic River Forest is currently managed by the Nawiinginiima Forest Management Corporation (NFMC), which is Ontario's first Local Forest Management Corporation. During the time of the Audit, NFMC operated under a Forest Resource Licence for the management unit. NFMC received a Sustainable Forest Licence for the Pic River Forest Management Unit June 19, 2017.

The Management Unit lies within both the Nipigon District of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's (MNRF) northwest region, and the Wawa District of MNRF's northeast region. Administration of the forest is delivered through the Wawa District MNRF office with support from the Nipigon District.

The IFA Report was accepted by the Forestry Futures Committee on February 22, 2017 and provided to MNRF Wawa District and Northeast Region on February 23, 2017. The report contained 13 recommendations, including two which were directed to corporate MNRF. This Action Plan Status Report addresses the 11 recommendations which were directed to district MNRF and or NFMC.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation #2:

The Wawa MNR District Manager shall continue to make efforts to support the growth of LCC membership and support the adoption of video-conferencing to link up LCC members in Terrace Bay and Manitowadge as well as MNR District staff.

#### **Action(s) Required:**

1. The District will discuss with the LCC participation/membership in the committee and seek solutions to identified barriers; this will include, where feasible the adoption of video-conferencing.

#### **Progress to Date:**

1. Complete - Three new members have joined the committee in the last 2 years. The meeting room is equipped with teleconference, which has been utilized to support members participation. Membership recruitment is a recurring agenda topic.

#### **Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:**

1. None

### Recommendation #3:

The planning team for the 2019 FMP for the combined Big Pic and Pic River Forests shall ensure that the 2019 FMP meets the requirements of the relevant FMPM with respect to the inclusion of a description of the historic forest condition.

#### **Action(s) Required:**

1. The 2019-2029 Plan Author, with the assistance of the planning team, will include a discussion of the historic forest condition consistent with the requirements of the 2009 FMPM.
2. Plan reviewers will ensure that the discussion of the historic forest condition is consistent with the requirements of the 2009 FMPM.

#### **Progress to Date:**

1. Complete (action has been addressed and no future tracking is required). The 2019 Pic Forest amalgamated forest management plan contains a section on the historic forest condition adhering to the requirements of the 2017 FMPM.
2. Complete (action has been addressed and no future tracking is required). The 2019 Pic Forest amalgamated forest management plan reviewers ensured a section on the historic forest condition adhering to the requirements of the 2017 FMPM was included in the plan.

#### **Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:**

None.

#### Recommendation #4:

The planning team for the 2019 FMP shall conduct an analysis to determine the current status of stands in the former degraded (DEG) forest unit and whether further action is required to manage these stands commensurate with the FMP objectives.

#### Action(s) Required:

1. The NFMC will conduct an analysis of the current condition of areas historically classified as degraded (DEG). The DEG forest unit was incorporated into the 2006 FMP, and only appears in the 2013 FMP as a silvicultural intensity in the planning inventory. The analysis will include a comparison of the DEG forest condition from the older FRI against the interpreted condition of the new eFRI. This analysis will determine if areas previously classified as DEG are substantially different or degraded enough that the DEG designation remains relevant.
2. The NFMC will present the analysis to the 2019 FMP planning team.
3. The 2019 planning team will consider the results of the analysis. These historic areas will either be tracked within the approved Pic Forest PCM or will be managed as a reintroduced degraded forest unit. The planning team will consider if specific FMP objectives and targets are required to manage the degraded forest unit.

#### Progress to Date:

1. Complete (action has been addressed and no future tracking is required). The NFMC completed an analysis of areas historically classified as degraded (DEG) and compared these to the current interpretation in the 2007 Forest Resource Inventory.
2. Complete (action has been addressed and no future tracking is required). The NFMC presented the analysis of the historic degraded forest stands to the 2019 Pic Forest Planning Team.
3. Complete and Ongoing (action has been addressed and no future tracking is required). The 2019 Pic Forest Planning team considered the analysis and determined that there was a requirement to implement a degraded silvicultural intensity in the 2019 Pic Forest Long Term Management Direction (LTMD). The historic Degraded (DEG) silvicultural intensity has been renamed as Low Productivity Degraded (LOWPD) in the 2019 LTMD. the 2019 FMP has an objective to reduce the area of LOWPD until no longer present on the forest.

#### Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:

1. None.
2. None
3. The treatment of Low Productivity Degraded (LOWPD) is planned to occur as part of regular operations. The Planning Forester is responsible to ensure treated LOWPD sites are appropriately reported in Management Unit Annual Reports. Annual Reports will document progression towards FMP objectives.



## Recommendation #6:

NFMC shall conduct timely reporting of natural regeneration areas.

### **Action(s) Required:**

1. NFMC shall conduct reporting of natural regeneration through Management Unit Annual Reports as per the requirements of the 2009 FMPM.

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Ongoing (has become part of regular business). NFMC is now continuously reporting natural regenerating areas through submission of Annual Reports, required per the 2017 FMPM. No future tracking is required.

### **Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:**

1. Inspection of Annual Reports will confirm the reporting of natural regenerating areas.

### Recommendation #7:

NFMC shall ensure that grader operators have received appropriate training so as to avoid the occurrence of wing-walls/false ditches.

#### **Action(s) Required:**

1. NFMC will provide grader operator training to NFMC compliance staff, contractors and contractor grader operators.
2. NFMC will regularly monitor road grading operations for all contractors.

#### **Progress to Date:**

1. Complete (action has been addressed and no future tracking is required). The NFMC provided grader operator/ supervisor training to all contractors on the management unit. Training is repeated annually at the NFMC annual spring compliance meeting.
2. Complete (action has been addressed and no future tracking is required). The NFMC regularly monitors road grading and maintenance activities for all contractors.

#### **Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:**

1. None
2. None

## Recommendation #8:

NFMC shall clear vegetation along road rights-of way that impede vision along its forest access roads, prioritizing roads that are in greatest use.

### **Action(s) Required:**

1. NFMC will review and identify which sections of roads (no. of kms) require vegetation clearing to improve line of sight.
2. Based on the results of the above review, NFMC will improve on the vegetation clearing program which is part of regular roads maintenance.

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Partially complete (progress has been made but not yet completed). NFMC has identified areas on the Pic River forest which require brushing. NFMC is continuing to monitor roads and index areas requiring brushing.
2. Partially complete and ongoing (progress has been made but not yet completed). NFMC has completed minor amounts of brushing/right-of-way clearing. NFMC has tendered larger right-of-way clearing projects but have not received acceptable bids.

### **Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:**

1. NFMC will continue to monitor roads and index areas requiring brushing and clearing. The Operations Manager is responsible for monitoring and indexing roads requiring brushing or clearing work. Road brushing and right-of-way clearing has become part of regular business.
2. NFMC will continue to tender brushing/right-of-way clearing projects to improve safety on management unit roads. The Operations Manager is responsible for issuing project tenders and oversight. The Planning Forester is responsible for ensuring the work is reported in Annual Reports. Road brushing and right-of-way clearing has become part of regular business.

## Recommendation #9:

NFMC shall complete the necessary remediation and maintenance operations at the Ice Creek bridge so as to address current environmental issues and avoid future ones.

### **Action(s) Required:**

1. NFMC will assess the Ice Creek bridge and determine actions required to address current environmental concerns.
2. NFMC will complete remediation work.
3. NFMC will monitor crossing to ensure further environmental issues are prevented.

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Complete and ongoing (Action had been addressed, has not yet been resolved). NFMC has assessed the Ice Creek bridge, confirmed the existence of potential environmental concerns, and determined actions to mitigate those concerns.
2. Partially complete (progress has been made but not yet completed). NFMC has implemented various methods to mitigate potential environmental concerns. These actions include seeding the area with grass and creating more diversion ditches to disperse water earlier and more often. These actions, while successful, have not totally eliminated potential environmental concerns related to erosion and sedimentation.
3. Partially complete (progress has been made but not yet completed). NFMC is monitoring the Ice Creek Bridge. More actions need to be implemented to ensure further environmental issues are prevented.

### **Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:**

1. NFMC will continue to assess the success of mitigative measures. The Operations Manager is responsible to ensure actions are implemented and track their success.
2. NFMC will continue to implement creative methods to eliminate environmental concerns. The Operations Manager is responsible to ensure actions are implemented and track their success. Successful mitigative measures are planned to be implemented by summer of 2019.
3. NFMC will continue to assess the success of mitigative measures and once implemented, monitor to ensure not future environmental concerns arise. The Operations Manager is responsible to ensure actions are implemented and track their success.

## Recommendation #10:

Wawa and Nipigon District MNR staff shall explore the implementation of approaches to more efficiently undertake organization responsibilities, including attendance at meetings, stakeholder outreach, and compliance and other in-field inspections.

### Action(s) Required:

1. An annual Wawa/Nipigon Districts start-up meeting to review the upcoming year's activities and assign/review responsibility. Openly discuss and document any efficiencies that can be implemented.
2. Have quarterly teleconference calls to review status of activities.
3. Annual joint in-field inspection(s) of harvest, access and renewal to ensure consistent approach between districts.

### Progress to Date:

1. Partially Complete - MNR staff Wawa and Nipigon staff participate in annual start-up meetings organized by NFMC. The Annual Compliance/JH&SC meetings are for compliance Inspectors and Foremen.
2. Partially complete – There is ongoing communications between Nipigon and Wawa District. Quarterly teleconference calls have not been arranged.
3. Not complete - The Forest Compliance Inspectors from both Wawa and Nipigon have done joint inspection with NFMC staff. Joint field inspections between Nipigon and Wawa Compliance Inspectors have not taken place.

### Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:

1. Based on the protocol developed for Recommendation #11, meetings will be scheduled accordingly.
2. Based on the protocol developed for Recommendation #11, calls will be scheduled. Any action items or decision/direction will be recorded.
3. Based on the protocol developed for Recommendation #11, annual joint in-field inspection(s) of harvest, access and renewal will be conducted to ensure consistent approach between districts. Inspections will be documented in FOIP.

## Recommendation #11:

The Wawa and Nipigon MNRF Districts shall develop a protocol or agreement which provides for the efficient organization of MNRF's management and administrative responsibilities on the Pic River Forest.

### **Action(s) Required:**

1. Inter-district protocol will be developed which provides clarity to both Wawa and Nipigon District Staff as to their respective responsibilities in the management and administration of the Forest.
2. Implement protocol.
3. Annual review of protocol, in conjunction with recommendation # 10 annual meeting.

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Partially complete - draft protocol has been developed.
2. Not complete.
3. Not complete.

### **Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:**

1. The protocol will be finalized by April 1st, 2020
2. Implement protocol in 2020-21 AWS as documented in the Annual Compliance Operational Plan.
3. A Wawa/Nipigon meeting will be scheduled by March 15th, 2021 to review protocol. The scheduling of an annual meeting will be organized.

## Recommendation #12:

NFMC shall assess the extent of mapping errors for the period 2011-2013 and take appropriate action to ensure that map data is corrected as required and included in the planning inventory for the next FMP (expected in 2019).

### **Action(s) Required:**

1. NFMC will assess the extent of mapping errors for the period of 2011-2013. Mapping errors will be identified and recorded.
2. NFMC will develop an Action Plan (strategy) to correct these errors.
3. Where forest management planning timelines permit NFMC will ensure the most accurate information is represented in the 2019 FMP planning inventory.

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Partially Complete and Ongoing (progress has been made but not yet completed, has become part of regular business). NFMC had digitally, and partially field assessed the extent of mapping errors for the 2011-2013 period.
2. Partially Complete and Ongoing (progress has been made but not yet completed, has become part of regular business). NFMC has developed an action plan were the mapping errors will be adjusted based on digital interpretation, and field verification.
3. Complete (action has been addressed; no future tracking required). Under the permissible timelines, NFMC used the most to-date information available for the 2019 FMP Planning Inventory.

### **Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:**

1. NFMC will continue to assess, verify, and adjust digital records of areas where activities occurred during the 2011-2013 period. The Planning Forester is responsible for documenting the adjustments in Annual Reports.
2. NFMC will continue to implement an action plant to adjust mapping errors based on digital interpretation, and field verification. The Planning Forester is responsible for documenting the adjustments in Annual Reports.
3. None.

### Recommendation #13:

The planning team for the 2019 FMP shall include realistic and measurable targets for all ecological indicators in the next FMP.

#### **Action(s) Required:**

1. NFMC will review and discuss 2019 FMP plan objectives and targets with the planning team and develop realistic measurable targets for all ecological indicators with the assistance of the Wildlife Task Team.

#### **Progress to Date:**

1. Complete (action has been addressed; no future tracking required). The Plan Author, with support of the 2019 Planning Team ensured that there are realistic and measurable targets for all ecological indicators included in the Forest Management Plans Targets and Objectives.

#### **Future Tracking Requirements for partially complete, ongoing, or not completed actions:**

1. None