

Independent Forest Audit

Provincial Action Plan

2016

Algoma Forest (2011-2016)
French Severn Forest (2011-2016)
Gordon Cosens Forest (2010-2016)
Lake Nipigon Forest (2011-2016)
Magpie Forest (2011-2016)
Mazinaw Lanark Forest (2009-2016)
Nipissing Forest (2011-2016)
Pic River Forest (2011-2016)
Spanish Forest (2010-2016)
Sudbury Forest (2011-2016)
Temagami Forest (2011-2016)
Timiskaming Forest (2009-2016)

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry



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Introduction

Independent Forest Audits (IFAs) were conducted on the following twelve Forest Management Units (FMUs) in Ontario in 2016, for the years described:

- **Algoma Forest (2011-2016)**
- **French Severn Forest (2011-2016)**
- **Gordon Cosens Forest (2010-2016)**
- **Lake Nipigon Forest (2011-2016)**
- **Magpie Forest (2011-2016)**
- **Mazinaw Lanark Forest (2009-2016)**
- **Nipissing Forest (2011-2016)**
- **Pic River Forest (2011-2016)**
- **Spanish Forest (2010-2016)**
- **Sudbury Forest (2011-2016)**
- **Temagami Forest (2011-2016)**
- **Timiskaming Forest (2009-2016)**

The audits were undertaken according to the 2016 Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol (IFAPP) which meets the requirements of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) and Declaration Order MNR-75 - MNRF's environmental assessment requirements for forest management on Crown lands in Ontario - Condition 36. It also meets the requirements of Ontario Regulation 160/04 made under the CFSA (governing Independent Forest Audits).

This action plan was developed based on the requirements of the 2016 IFAPP. The action plan addresses the 42 IFA recommendations directed to corporate and regional MNRF. Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL) extension recommendations are provided at the end of this action plan.

Provincial action plans must be submitted annually for MNRF approval within two months of receipt of the last final audit report for the year, unless otherwise directed by the Minister. For 2016 audits, the last final audit report for the year was accepted by the Forestry Futures Trust Committee on March 29, 2017. Although the provincial action plan was due in 2017, the efforts outlined in this action plan were underway and the Ministry was responding in a practical way to the recommendations provided by auditors immediately following the submission of the audit reports.

The approved provincial action plan will be made available through the government's public website once the audit reports are tabled in the Legislature.

The progress towards implementing this action plan will be reported in a separate status report submitted two years following approval of this action plan.

Recommendations

Principle 1: Commitment

Algoma Forest Recommendation #20:

All levels of MNRF shall solicit input from operational staff within its organization and forest industry staff regarding opportunities to improve transformation and program delivery including addressing staffing levels, work loads, and efficient allocation of resources. MNRF shall provide information on the input received, and the manner in which the solicited input will be used.

Action Required:

Complete at time of action plan preparation. Through MNRFs continued implementation of the 2013 Transformation exercise, comments and suggestions have been collected. This information has been and will be taken into consideration when the Ministry reviews its BPI (Business Process Improvement) products and structure. A number of staff engagement sessions have occurred across Regional Operations Division (ROD) since transformation occurred to solicit input and provide feedback regarding the BPI initiative. At this time, the Ministry has gone through numerous exercises including Training Review and Assessment Project (TRAP) which are geared to the training and development of new and existing staff as it relates to specific positions within the Ministry and how to best execute their duties.

Organization and Position responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Regional Directors; Regional Operations Division, Integration Branch, Program Coordination Section, Manager.

Deadline Date:

On-going bases (continued improvement)

Method of Tracking Process:

Updates through ROD's InsideOPS intranet site.

Pic River Forest Recommendation #1:

Corporate MNRF shall ensure that Wawa District's full-time forester staff complement per forest management by the District falls within the range experienced in other Districts within the Northeast Region.

And

Magpie Forest Recommendation #1:

Corporate MNRF shall provide Wawa District MNRF the resources needed to meet all management obligations on the Magpie Forest.

Action Required:

1. The District Manager will meet with the Wawa Local Employee Relations Committee (LERC) to develop a staffing solution and discuss proposed solution with the Regional Director.
2. If the solution is supported by both the Regional Director and LERC, the District manager will implement it as soon as possible.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. and 2. Regional Operations Division, Northeast Region, Wawa District, Manager.

Deadline Date:

1. December 31, 2017 – District Manager has met with the LERC and has come up with solution to hire more foresters.
2. May 31, 2019 – to date no additional permanent foresters have been hired due to fiscal constraints.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Meeting Minutes.
2. Staffing Solution Implementation.

Principle 2: Public Consultation and Aboriginal Involvement

Gordon Cosens Forest Recommendation #1:

The MNRF Crown Forests and lands Policy Branch must discuss with the MOECC appropriate ways to ensure decision on Forest Management Plan IEA requests occur within agreed timelines.

And

Spanish Forest Recommendation #1:

Corporate MNRF should engage the MOECC to discuss actions that would help with the rendering of a MOECC decision on Forest Management Plan IEA requests within agreed (normal) timelines.

And

Temagami Forest Recommendation #1:

To review the causes and take appropriate action for the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change delay of the Individual Environmental Assessment decision.

Action Required:

Complete at time of action plan preparation. MNRF has raised this issue with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), including during the recent Declaration Order amendment process which resulted in the issuance of Declaration Order MNR-75 in 2015. During that process, the condition for “Requests for Individual Environmental Assessments” was amended. It continues to direct MECP to “make best efforts” to decide on requests within 45 days of the receipt of all required information from MNRF and the requester.

Ensuring MECP has all the information required to render a decision has been one of the challenges in rendering timely decisions. MNRF continues to work closely with MECP during IEA request reviews to ensure MNRF provides timely responses to MECP’s information requests. MNRF ensures IEA request reviews are coordinated and supported by key staff. The amended condition also includes provisions intended to improve the understanding of information required to be submitted by the IEA requesters and improve communications between the parties.

No Further Action Required.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Policy Branch, Forest Legislation and Planning Section, Manager.

No Future Tracking Required.

Mazinaw Lanark Forest Recommendation #2:

Corporate and District MNRF shall ensure that the test provided in the FMPM is used to determine which Aboriginal communities are eligible to receive and offer of customized consultation under Section A Part 4.

Action Required:

The action listed below should be considered in concert with the 2016 Management Unit IFA Action Plan response to this recommendation approved by the Regional Director on Aug 9, 2017.

The 2011-2021 Mazinaw-Lanark Forest Management Plan (FMP) was prepared in accordance with the 2009 Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM). The 2009 FMPM required the District Manager to contact each Aboriginal community at least 6 months prior to the commencement of the formal public consultation

process for the preparation of the FMP to invite communities, in or adjacent to the management unit, whose interests or traditional uses may be affected by the preparation and implementation of the FMP, to discuss the development of a consultation approach for forest management planning with the community.

In August 2015 MNRF's Environmental Assessment Requirements for Forest Management on Crown Lands in Ontario (i.e., Declaration Order MNR-75) were approved by Lieutenant Governor in Council (LGIC). Declaration Order MNR-75 required MNRF to revise the FMPM in accordance with Section 68 of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act to reflect the requirements of the Order (i.e., Condition 61). Condition 9 of MNR-75 required the revised FMPM to include criteria that MNRF District Managers are required to consider when determining whether an Aboriginal community is an Aboriginal community in or adjacent to a management unit.

In July 2017 a revised FMPM was approved by LGIC and included several additional requirements for First Nation and Métis community involvement and consultation in forest management planning. The 2017 FMPM was revised to include the following (Part A, Section 3.1.1):

For each community that Ontario understands as having established or credibly asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights and is located in Ontario, the MNRF district manager will consider the following criteria when determining whether the community is a First Nation or Métis community in or adjacent to a management unit:

- whether the community's established or credibly asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights may be adversely impacted by forest activities, governed by this manual, in the management unit.
- whether the community has traditional uses that may be affected by forest activities, governed by this manual, in the management unit.
- whether the community has a local governance body or reserve in or near the management unit.
- whether the community has expressed interest in forest management planning or forest operations specific to the management unit.

Also, the MNRF District Manager will contact each First Nation and Métis community at least nine months prior to the commencement of the formal public consultation process for the preparation of the forest management plan to inform the community of the opportunities to be involved in the preparation and implementation of the FMP, including the opportunity to develop a customized consultation approach (Part A, Section 3.4).

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Southern Region, Bancroft District Manager
(Lead);

Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Branch, Forest Legislation and Planning Section, Manager.

No Future Tracking Required

French Severn Forest Recommendation #2

Corporate MNRF to provide sufficient resources to the position of Resource Liaison Specialist to better and more consistently engage the Aboriginal communities it is supposed to serve.

Action Required:

1. Southern Region and Parry Sound District will explore staffing options to ensure that MNRF's legislated responsibilities are addressed.
2. Parry Sound District will engage with the Aboriginal communities in the 2018 AWS.
3. Parry Sound District will engage with the Aboriginal communities in the 2019-2029 French Severn Forest Management Plan.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. Regional Operations Division, Regional Resources Section, Supervisor; Southern Region, and District Manager, Parry Sound (Lead).
2. and 3. Regional Operations Division, Southern Region, Parry Sound District Manager.

Deadline Date:

1. December 2018.
2. April 1, 2018.
3. April 1, 2019.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Records of discussion.
2. Approved AWS.
3. Approved 2019-2029 French Severn Forest Management Plan.

Magpie Forest Recommendation #2:

Corporate MNRF shall consider a means to reflect progress on a community-by-community basis for each of the six points included in the negotiations targets of Declaration Order MNR-75 condition 56.

And

Sudbury Forest Recommendation #1:

The audit team recommends Corporate MNRF report annually on a community-by-community basis for each of the six points included in the negotiations targets outlined in condition 56 of Declaration Order MNR-75.

And

Temagami Forest Recommendation #2:

To report annually on a community-by-community basis for each of the six points included in the negotiations targets outlined in condition 56 of Declaration Order MNR-75.

Action Required:

MNRF has changed the manner in which it collects information at the District level with respect to the implementation of the condition. District managers are now required to specifically indicate in their reporting whether they were able to address each of the six points (sub-clauses) of the condition in the negotiations that were undertaken with each community in the management unit. They are also asked to report on any other topics for which negotiations may have occurred.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Policy Division, Forest Legislation and Planning Section, Manager.

Deadline Date:

Complete at time of action plan preparation.

No Future Tracking Required.

Principle 3: Forest Management Planning

Timiskaming Forest Recommendation #3:

Corporate MNRF shall review the species at risk observation data submission process to ensure that the information is promptly updated in the Land Information Ontario database that is used for planning.

Action Required:

The Northeast Resources Information and Analysis Unit (RIAU) has reviewed this issue with the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC), who is the custodian of this information. NHIC acknowledges that a technical issue in LIO meant that lengthy delays existed between data submission and availability of data in the LIO warehouse. This problem has been resolved as of January 2018.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Northeast Region, Regional Services Section, Regional Information and Analysis Unit, GIS Systems and Data Specialist.

Deadline Date:

Complete at time of action plan preparation.

No Future Tracking Required.**Nipissing Forest Recommendation #1:**

The MNRF Science and Information Branch must ensure the timely delivery of FRI products and the implementation of appropriate quality control protocols in order to facilitate the incorporation of the most current and accurate forest resource information in forest management plans.

And

Gordon Cosens Forest Recommendation #2:

The MNRF Science and Research Branch must ensure the timely delivery of FRI products and implement appropriate quality control protocols to facilitate the incorporation of the current forest resource information in forest management plans.

Action Required:

1. The FRI program will work closely with the Provincial Forest Inventory Advisory Committee and local planning teams to achieve all delivery targets as outlined in the 2017 – 2026 production schedule.
2. The FRI Program continually improved quality control protocols throughout the 2006 – 2016 production schedule and will continue to refine those processes throughout the 2017 – 2026 production schedule.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. and 2. Provincial Services Division, Science and Research Branch, Natural Resources Information Section – Forest Resources Inventory Coordinator

Deadline Date:

1. FRI production schedule to be finalized by December 31, 2018.
2. Throughout 2017-2026 production schedule.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Monthly status reports.
2. Continued consultation with Provincial Forest Inventory Advisory Committee.

Nipissing Forest Recommendation #2:

Corporate MNRF should amend the FMPM Forestry Aggregate Pit closure and rehabilitation requirements to better reflect the operational and access requirements

associated with forest management realities in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Forest Region.

Action Required:

Complete at time of action plan preparation.

The forestry aggregate pit requirements related to closure and rehabilitation in the FMPM were reviewed during the preparation of the FMPM, 2017. Current requirements reflect a balance between streamlining of requirements while continuing to meet Aggregate Resources Act requirements. As noted in the audit report, there are opportunities for forest managers to pursue other permits where forestry aggregate pit requirements outlined in the FMPM are not operationally feasible.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Policy Branch, Forest Legislation and Planning Section, Manager.

No Future Tracking Required.

Algoma Forest Recommendation #7:

Corporate MNRF shall fulfill its commitment to develop a strategy for managing the discontinuous range and southern coastal Lake Superior populations. MNRF shall also provide appropriate assistance to planning teams in incorporating the strategy into future FMPs.

And

Pic River Forest Recommendation #5:

Corporate MNRF shall fulfill its commitment to develop a management strategy for discontinuous woodland caribou range to enhance connectivity between the northern continuous range and southern coastal Lake Superior populations. MNRF shall also provide appropriate assistance to planning teams for incorporating the strategy into future FMPs.

Action Required:

MECP is considering all input received, as well as the best-available science, social and economic information to inform the development of a management approach specific to the Lake Superior Coast Range and Discontinuous Distribution. MNRF will incorporate any outcomes that pertain to forestry into-FMP training, once available.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Integration Branch, Program Coordination Section, Program Support Unit, Sr. Program Advisor – Forestry, in consultation with Regional FMP Specialists.

Deadline Date:

Following approval of any forestry management approach, start with training messages, subsequent rounds of FMP training and ongoing.

Method of Tracking Progress:

Documented FMP training messages.

Algoma Forest Recommendation #8:

Corporate MNRF shall review the requirements of the CROs related to nests and nesting birds to ensure they are in compliance with the Migratory Birds Convention Act. If necessary, MNRF shall provide direction in the revision of the CRO to bring them into alignment with the requirements of the Act.

Action Required:

During revision of the *Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales* (Stand and Site Guide), MNRF will review/revise direction in Section 4.2.2.8 to ensure consistency with the Migratory Birds Convention Act and the associated framework developed by Environment Canada.

The 5-year review of the Stand and Site Guide included the following relevant recommendations:

- Revisit setback distances; consider the need to have additional classes (potentially to address some of the larger-bodied birds such as swans, geese, and cranes) and the potential value of using more formal AOCs (similar to stick-nesting birds), at least for some of the larger-bodied species such as the trumpeter swan.
- Provide additional BMPs to minimize the risk of incidental take of bird nests following the new framework provided by Environment Canada.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Policy Branch, Forest Guides and Silvicultural Section, Manager.

Deadline Date:

The estimated timeline for a revised Stand and Site Guide is 2020.

Method of Tracking Progress:

Completion of the revised Stand and Site Guide.

Mazinaw Lanark Forest Recommendation #6:

Corporate and Regional MNRF shall inform Mazinaw Lanark Forest Inc. (MLFI) how they can make their operations comply with the ESA through the FMP, as an instrument of the ESA (section 18).

Action Required:

1. The 2017 FMPM enables an FMP to be recognized to 'have the same effect as' an overall benefit permit issued under the ESA where applicable, provided policy requirements are met. Southern Region will work with MLFI in the development of the 2021-2031 Mazinaw Lanark Forest to ensure the requirements of the ESA that specifically addresses Section 18 is implemented consistently as identified in FMPM (Part B, Figure B-4).
2. On July 1, 2017, a revised Forest Management Planning Manual came into effect that includes language to enable a forest management plan to be recognized as having the same effect as an overall benefit permit issued under the ESA, where applicable, provided policy requirements are met. The Forest Management Planning Manual provides direction for planning teams if they are using the enabling provisions.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. Regional Operations Division, Southern Regional Forest Management Planning Specialist.
2. Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Policy branch, Forest Legislation and Policy Section, Manager.

Deadline Date:

1. April 1, 2021.
2. Complete at time of action plan preparation.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Approved 2021-2031 Mazinaw Lanark Forest Management Plan.
2. None required.

Sudbury Forest Recommendation #2:

The audit team recommends Corporate MNRF develop a long-term management approach for seed orchards, including Lumsden Township and complete its review of seed management policy and genetics strategy in the province.

And

Mazinaw Lanark Forest Recommendation #11:

Corporate MNRF shall support the development of a long-term management approach for the Taylor Lake seed orchard and complete its review of policy to manage seed and stock movement in the province.

Action Required:

1. In January, 2017, the MNRF recognized the important role the three regional forest genetics management associations play in managing the Province's genetic assets and in providing high quality seed to forest managers. The Minister approved enhanced funding under the Forestry Futures Trust for a Forest Genetics Resource Management (FGRM) purpose for a five year period ending March 31, 2022. This will support the regional genetics associations in managing Ontario's forest genetic assets, ensuring genetic diversity is conserved and by developing approaches that are adapted to future growing environments. The funding eligibility criteria include tree improvement and management of seed orchards.
2. Regional Operations Division (ROD), Integration Branch has hired a Senior Program Advisor, Biodiversity whose position has an emphasis on forest genetics and climate change. This position is the lead contact for the regional associations and Regional Operations Division offices.
3. Along with these administrative changes the Crown Forest and Lands Policy Branch (CFLPB) is leading a collaborative policy discussion with ROD and the Forest Genetics Research staff in Science and Research Branch. Revised text has been included in the Forest Operations and Silviculture Manual (FOSM 2017) to enable policies on the broader subject matter of forest genetic resource management. The initial focus of policy development is an update of the existing Seed Zone Policy. FOSM (2017) made the existing directive a policy which is broadly applicable within MNRF and to partners delivering forest management programs. To support future strategic policy development, MNRF has completed jurisdictional scans on the broader forest genetics policies and strategic direction.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. and 3. Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Policy Branch, Forest Guides and Silviculture Section, Manager.
2. Regional Operations Division, Integration Branch, Program Coordination Section, Manager.

Deadline Date:

1. and 3. Complete at time of action plan preparation.
2. N/A.

No Future Tracking Required.**Temagami Forest Recommendation #4:**

Corporate MNRF to develop clear procedures for the development of Conditions on Regular Operations (CROs) in Forest Management Plans and provide that direction/training to Planning Teams.

Action Required:

Training on the *Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales* (Stand and Site Guide) is provided to FMP Teams during the Proposed Operations (or Operational Planning) FMP training sessions. This includes specific reference to CROs and how planning teams are to use the flexibility provided by the Stand and Site Guide in the development of their Forest Management Unit (FMU)-specific CROs. More emphasis will be placed on this topic in upcoming Operational Planning FMP training sessions, starting with Operational Planning for 2020 FMP teams in the Fall 2018.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Integration Branch, Program Coordination Section, Program Support Unit, Sr. Program Advisor – Forestry, in consultation with Regional FMP Specialists.

Deadline Date:

Starting with Operational Planning for 2020 FMP teams in the Fall 2018

Method of Tracking Progress:

Documented FMP training messages.

Principle 4: Plan Assessment and Implementation

Algoma Forest Recommendation #18:

Corporate MNRF shall develop a policy regarding appropriate use of signage at watercrossings that includes direction on use of signage to address liability issues. If such a policy already exists, MNRF shall inform relevant staff throughout the organization of its existence.

Action Required:

1. Develop operational sign manual providing guidance on signage requirements for roads and crossings on Crown land that are administered under the provisions of the Public Lands Act (PLA) and the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA)
2. Ensure MNRF staff are aware of the guidance developed.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. and 2. Regional Operations Division, Northeast Region, Initiatives Coordinator.

Deadline Date:

1. March 31, 2019.
2. October 31, 2019.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Sign manual will be completed and posted on ROD's InsideOPS intranet [site](#) for staff

2. Staff will be made aware of guidance document and it will be included in upcoming training sessions.

French Severn Forest Recommendation #6:

Corporate MNRF to set Beech Bark Disease (BBD) as a high priority for research, monitoring and policy development in Ontario.

Action Required:

MNRF's Forest health monitoring and research programs established a set of plots in 2010 to monitor the progression of BBD and its effects. Additionally, our researchers are conducting a collaborative study with industry on BBD in the GLSL (French Severn and Bancroft-Minden SFLs) to assess regeneration implications and opportunities for managing forest, including silvicultural alternatives for increasing diversity and productivity of invasive Beech Bark disease effected sites. This research investigates pre/post-harvest silviculture (tending, spraying, site preparation) effects on regeneration success of beech & other species and includes linkages with the G&Y program. Products will inform Silviculture, Stand & Site, and Great Lakes St. Lawrence Landscape guides, as well as industry BMPs.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Provincial Services Division, Science and Research Branch, Forest Research and Monitoring Section, Manager.

Deadline Date:

Research project initiated 2016-2017 fiscal.

Method of Tracking Progress:

Integrated Science Action Plan reporting tool – annually updated.

Temagami Forest Recommendation #7:

To test stakeholder-engaged structured decision making (S-E SDM) tools and Active Adaptive Management (AAM) as part of the upcoming forest management planning process.

Action Required:

Ensure 2017 updated Forest Management Planning Manual is followed regarding stakeholder engagement and consultation as well as adaptive management.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, ROD 2019 Temagami Forest Management Planning Team, Regional Planning Forester.

Deadline Date:

Completed at time of action plan development.

Method of Tracking Progress:

Approved Forest Management plan – public consultation summary.

Principle 5: System Support

Mazinaw Lanark Forest Recommendation #12:

Corporate MNRF shall develop and implement approaches to increase the retention of staff and promote staffing stability in the District-level of the organization and/or find other ways to restore the effectiveness and functionality of the organization.

Action Required:

Southern Region and Bancroft District will explore staffing options to ensure that MNRF's legislated responsibilities are addressed.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Southern Region, Regional Resources Section, Supervisor; Regional Operations Division, Southern Region, Bancroft District Manager (Lead).

Deadline Date:

December 2018.

Method of Tracking Progress:

Records of discussion.

Principle 6: Monitoring

Timiskaming Forest Recommendation #7:

Corporate MNRF shall provide training to staff involved with compliance monitoring on the proper use of its Forest Operations Inspection Program (FOIP) software application.

Action Required:

ROD Integration Branch has initiated a review of the Forest Compliance Program. MNRF will ensure that this includes an evaluation of the need for FOIP software application training.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Integration Branch, Program Coordination Section, Manager, in consultation with Regional Resources Managers.

Deadline Date:

The Forest Compliance Program review is expected to be complete in 2020.

Method of Tracking Progress:

Documented minutes/notes from review and evaluation process.

Timiskaming Forest Recommendation #9:

Corporate MNRF and Regional staff shall develop a clear set of instructions, supplementary to the 2009 Forest Management Planning Manual that explains to the plan authors how to properly complete Table AR-10 (Summary of harvest and Regeneration Trends). These instructions should be developed in time to enable Timiskaming Forest Alliance Inc. to complete an accurate version of the table to be included in its Year 7 Annual report due in 2018.

Action Required:

A clear set of instructions was developed by the MNRF Provincial Silviculture Program Specialist and provided to the Temiskaming Forest Manager (First Resource Management Group) on October 19, 2017.

In 2017 the Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM), Forest Information Manual (FIM) and the Forest Operations and Silviculture Manual (FOSM) were revised to incorporate the direction of the Minister's decisions made in the SEI. This includes changes to the MNRF review, acceptance, and reporting of regeneration status as well as tables related to the assessment of regeneration.

No Further Action Required.

No Future Tracking Required.

Gordon Cosens Forest Recommendation #6:

The MNRF Crown Forests and lands Policy Branch and the Regional Operations Division must complete a review of its field sampling protocol(s) and data compilation procedures for SEM FTG survey audits (Core Task 1) to address local sampling variances and provide for more consistent and comparable estimates of the FTG condition between industry FTG surveys and MNRF FTG audits.

And

Sudbury Forest Recommendation #6:

The audit team recommends that the Crown Forest and Lands Policy Branch of MNRF advise Regional Operations Division MNRF as to whether the Sudbury District should jointly develop an SEM audit and evaluation methodology with VFM that uses consistent measurement and sample design features, in advance of the 2020-2030 FMP.

Action Required:

1. In January 2016 the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry made decisions through the Silvicultural Enhancement Initiative (SEI) which responded to the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario report in 2011 that made a number of recommendations pertaining to silviculture policy for MNRF to address.

In 2017 the Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM), Forest Information Manual (FIM) and the Forest Operations and Silviculture Manual (FOSM) were revised to incorporate the direction of the Minister's decisions made in the SEI.

2. Move to the Silvicultural Enhancement Initiative (SEI) which reviews and makes improvements to Ontario's silviculture policies which include planning, monitoring, and silviculture funding.
3. MNRF should post a decision Notice to the Environment Registry to describe improvement to silviculture policies such as Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM), Forest Information Manual (FIM), and Forest Operations and Silviculture Manual (FOSM) to support implementation of the decision.

MNRF should create a Technical Documentation for silviculture assessments.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. ,2., 3., and 4. Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Policy Branch, Forest Guides and Silviculture Section, Manager.

Deadline Date:

1. The direction for these associated policies will be required to be met starting with Forest Management Plans approved in 2019.
2. Resolved. SEI was initiated in 2012.
3. Resolved. MNRF posted a Decision Note to the Environment Registry (012-0913) in January 2016).
4. 2019.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. ,2., 3. No further action required.
4. Gordon Cosens Forest 2020-2030 Forest Management Plan (FMP).

Algoma Forest Recommendation #22:

Regional or corporate MNRF compliance staff shall work with all certified Clergue (including overlapping licensees) and District MNRF compliance inspectors active on the Algoma Forest to review Part VI in the Forest Compliance Handbook (remedies and Enforcement) and Procedure 07 03 05, particularly the sections dealing with non-compliance identification and the operational issue management process, to ensure that the intent of the system is clearly understood and applied appropriately by industry and MNRF compliance inspectors on the Algoma Forest.

Action Required:

1. ROD Integration Branch has initiated a review of the Forest Compliance Program. MNRF will ensure that this includes an evaluation of forest compliance training needs for both MNRF and the forest industry.
2. Refer to the 2016 Algoma Forest IFA Management Unit Action Plan and Action Plan Status Report for further actions.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. Regional Operations Division, Integration Branch, Program Coordination Section, Manager, in consultation with Regional Resources Managers.
2. Regional Operations Division, Northeast Region, Sault Ste. Marie District, Manager.

Deadline Date:

1. The Forest Compliance Program review is expected to be complete in 2020.
2. N/A.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Documented minutes/notes from review and evaluation process.
2. No further tracking required.

Algoma Forest Recommendation #23:

Corporate MNRF shall investigate whether a cause can be identified for the discrepancies between the compliance statistics reported in the 2014-15 AR-6 and those reported by FOIP. If necessary the Company shall update Table AR-6 in the 2014-15 AR with corrected compliance information.

Action Required:

ROD Northeast Region has worked with the Company to determine whether a cause can be identified for the discrepancies noted above; the cause has not been determined, however, the company was able to revise the Table AR-6 and submit a revised table to the MNRF through the FIPortal.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Northeast Region, Regional Forest Operations Specialist and Clergue Forest Management Company, Management Forester.

Deadline Date:

Complete at time of action plan development.

Method of Tracking Progress:

Revised Table AR-6 in the 2014-15 Annual Report.

Principle 8: Contractual Obligations

Nipissing Forest Recommendation #6:

Corporate MNRF should remove the wood supply commitments to Precut hardwood inc. and Columbia Forest Products from Appendix E of the SFL.

Action Required:

1. Notification of companies: The companies have been notified that the commitments are no longer valid, as has the SFL holder. Columbia Forest Products has re-commenced operations and has requested renewal of their commitment. The process to amend the SFL to remove Precut and record final outcome of the Columbia commitment will be undertaken.
2. Amend SFL.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. and 2. Forest Industry Division, Operations Branch, Timber Allocation and Licensing Section, Manager.

Deadline Date:

1. and 2. March 31, 2021.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. and 2. SFL Review Process.

Algoma Forest Recommendation #25:

Clergue Forest Management Inc. (CFMI) in consultation with MNRF Regional Operations Division shall develop and implement a plan using realistic estimates of harvest volumes, to bring the Forest Renewal Trust account up to the minimum balance within a specified period of time.

Action Required:

This recommendation has been addressed in the 2016 Algoma Forest IFA Action Plan and Status Report.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Northeast Region, Regional Forestry Operations Specialist in conjunction with Clergue Forest Management Inc.

Deadline Date:

Refer to 2016 Algoma Forest IFA Action Plan and Status Report.

Method of Tracking Progress:

Refer to 2016 Algoma Forest IFA Action Plan and Status Report.

Algoma Forest Recommendation #26:

MNRF Regional Operations Division and Corporate MNRF, in consultation with Clergue shall undertake a review of the silvicultural requirements on the Algoma Forest to determine if the current minimum balance is appropriate.

Action Required:

1. MNRF revised FOSM in 2017 and enabled the creation of additional forest trust policies.
2. MNRF is developing a Forest Renewal Trust policy. Supporting procedures will be developed where necessary. As part of developing this policy MNRF will review and analyze the silvicultural investment required for all Forests (including the Algoma). This policy will further describe the provisions for addressing silviculture obligations on management units where the licensee is insolvent and the licence has been returned to the MNRF, and describe how minimum balances will be realigned to better reflect recent renewal activity on individual management units. Stakeholders are being provided opportunities for input.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Policy Branch, Forest Guides and Silviculture Section, Senior Policy Advisor.
2. Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Policy Branch, Forest Guides and Silviculture Section, Senior Policy Advisor.

Deadline Date:

1. No further action required.
2. Fall 2018.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. FOSM 2017.
2. Publication of Forest Renewal Trust Policy.

Algoma Forest Recommendation #27:

Corporate MNRF shall determine the extent to which Clergue should be relieved of the obligation to repay outstanding monies owed to the Algoma Forest FRT due to the bankruptcy of St. Mary's Paper.

Action Required:

1. MNRF will review internal records to determine if the SFL or the bankrupt entity owes the outstanding charges to the FRT account.
2. MNRF will determine dollar value if bankrupt entity is determined to owe the outstanding charges.
3. MNRF will inform Forestry Futures Committee that Clergue Forest Management Inc. is eligible to apply to the Forestry Futures Trust Fund for silviculture project

funding under the insolvency purpose if the bankrupt entity is determined to owe the Forest Renewal Trust Fund.

4. The Forestry Futures Committee will consider application when Clergue Forest Management Inc. makes application to the Forestry Futures Trust Fund. Furthermore, it will be noted that the silviculture project work does not have to be carried out on the same hectares as those that generated the outstanding funds obligation.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. ,2., 3., and 4. Forest Industry Division, Forest Tenure and Economics Branch, Forest Business Services Coordinator.

Deadline Date:

1. ,2., 3., and 4. Resolved.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. ,2., 3., and 4. Forestry Futures Trust Fund applications (approved in March 2017).

Algoma Forest Recommendation #28:

Clergue and the Regional MNRF shall submit the status report for this audit within 2 years of the approval of the action plan.

Action Required:

This recommendation has been addressed in the 2016 Algoma Forest IFA Action Plan and Status Report.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Regional Operations Division, Northeast Region, Regional Forestry Operations Specialist.

Deadline Date:

Complete at time of action plan development.

Method of Tracking Progress:

Approved 2016 Algoma Forest IFA Action Plan and Status Report.

Mazinaw Lanark Forest Recommendation #18:

Corporate MNRF shall ensure work with the Company to review the special conditions on the SFL and consider revising or removing unnecessary and out-dated requirements.

Action Required:

1. Action completed. SFL Amendment – Mazinaw-Lanark Completed Nov 24, 2016.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. Forestry Industry Division, Operations Branch, Timber Allocation and Licensing Section, Manager.

No Further Action Required.

Magpie Forest Recommendation #17:

For time-sensitive recommendations, Corporate MNRF shall act as soon as possible to ensure compliance with applicable timelines.

Action Required:

1. As a result of the IFA Modernization Project, there is no longer a requirement for IFA Provincial Action Plans and Status Reports for findings deemed of a “corporate” nature. Following the cause analysis undertaken for each finding in the IFA final report, MNRF will track which findings deemed of a “corporate” nature are time sensitive and will follow-up with the appropriate MNRF section.
2. MNRF will develop a tracking mechanism to track findings deemed of a corporate nature.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. and 2. Regional Operations Division, Integration Branch, Program Coordination Section, Sr Program Advisor – Forestry and Policy Division, Forest Sustainability and Information Section, Manager.

Deadline Date:

1. Starting with the 2017 IFAs and ongoing.
2. Fall, 2018.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. and 2. Crown Forests and Lands Policy Branch IFA Finding tracking database.

Lake Nipigon Forest Recommendation #10:

The Forest Industry Division of MNRF must split the current “Available Wood Report” for the Lake Nipigon Forest into two separate reports; one for the Armstrong portion and the other for the Lake Nipigon East portion. The “split” reports should identify what volumes are committed and/or included in the Provincial Wood Supply Competition offer.

Action Required:

It is through forest management planning, which is undertaken at the management unit level, that the available harvest areas and the associated planned harvest volumes are determined. Commitments are made by the Minister based upon the available volume in the applicable FMP(s). As neither the Armstrong Area nor the Lake Nipigon East are currently a stand-alone management unit with its own FMP,

there is no associated Planned Harvest Volume and the Ministry is not in a position to make a commitment in accordance with the CFSA from either area (i.e., the Ministry is not able to formally split the commitment at this time).

Until circumstances change, MNRF will continue to produce a single Available Wood Report for the current Lake Nipigon Forest Management Unit. If the current Management Unit is reconfigured and stand-alone FMPs are produced for the Armstrong Area and the Lake Nipigon East, the Ministry will work with all affected parties to amend supply agreements or wood supply offers, and adjust the Available Wood Report accordingly.

No Further Action Required.

Lake Nipigon Forest Recommendation #11:

Corporate MNRF will review the “*Forestry Workers Lien for Wages Act*” with respect to its ability to ensure full utilization (delivery to processing facility) of harvested wood before the fibre is degraded to the point of being un-merchantable.

Action Required:

MNRF has reviewed Recommendation #11. The purpose of the *Forestry Workers Lien for Wages Act* (FWLWA) is to protect the wages of forestry workers engaged in the harvest of forest resources. Its purpose is not to ensure full utilization of harvested wood before the fibre is degraded to the point of being un-merchantable. MNRF will not be undertaking a review of the FWLFA at this time. MNRF will continue to use the tools available under the CFSA to support timely utilization of harvested fibre.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Forest Industry Division, Forest Tenure and Economics Branch, Forest Economics Section, Manager; Forest Industry Division, Operations Branch, Timber Allocation & Licensing Section, Manager.

No further action required.

Lake Nipigon Forest Recommendation #12:

Corporate MNRF will return the \$900,000 transferred from the Lake Nipigon Forest Renewal Trust Fund to enable Lake Nipigon Forest Management Inc. to address outstanding silviculture liabilities and meet their contractual obligations in the SFL (S.11.1(d)).

Action Required:

No action will be taken or is required by the Crown. In 2008 \$900,000 was legally transferred under Article 5.01 of the Forest Renewal Trust Agreement. This

permitted a transfer for adjacent units held by the same SFL holder. At the time both the Lake Nipigon and the Armstrong Management Units were managed by Cascades Canada Inc. Upon completion of the transfer of funds to the Armstrong account, both the Lake Nipigon and Armstrong balances met the minimum balance requirements. After the transfer date (fund transfer) as per the SFL requirements it is up to the companies to meet the minimum balance by annually calculating the funds required to complete the planned renewal work.

Organization and Position Responsible:

Policy Division, Crown Forests and Lands Policy Branch, Forest Guides and Silviculture Section, Manager.

No Further Action Required.

SFL Licences

Licence Extension

This section describes the licence extension recommendations made by the applicable auditors in 2016. The Magpie Forest is managed by the Crown and is therefore not included in the list below. The Pic River Forest currently does not have a Sustainable Forest Licence and there is a recommendation for MNRF to issue one.

Timiskaming Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team concludes that management of the Timiskaming Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the term covered by the audit, and the Timiskaming Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Sustainable Forest Licence held by Timiskaming Forest Alliance Inc. Forest sustainability is being achieved, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol. The audit team recommends the Minister extend the term of Sustainable Forest Licence #542247 for a further five years.

Nipissing Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team concluded that forest sustainability as assessed through the 2016 Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol is being achieved. The audit team recommends the Minister extend the term of the Sustainable Forest Licence # 542053 for a further five years.

Gordon Cosens Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team further concluded that forest sustainability as assessed through the 2016 Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol is being achieved. The audit team recommends the Minister extend the term of the Sustainable Forest Licence # 550039 for a further five years.

Spanish Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team concludes that management of the Spanish Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the term covered by the audit, and the Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Sustainable Forest Licence held by EACOM. Forest sustainability as assessed through the 2016 Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol is being achieved. The audit team recommends the Minister extend the term of the Sustainable Forest Licence # 542391 for a further five years.

Algoma Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team concludes that, with critical exceptions noted below, management of the Algoma Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the term covered by the audit, and the Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Sustainable Forest Licence held by Clergue Forest Management Inc. Forest sustainability is being achieved, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol. The critical exceptions relate to management of roads and water crossings, maintenance of the minimum balance in the FRT account and implementation of an effective compliance monitoring program. Therefore, the audit team recommends the Minister extend the term of the Sustainable Forest Licence 542257 for a further five years, only upon confirmation (through the Action Plan Status Report) that the following recommendation have been successfully addressed: Recommendations #16, #17, #21, and #25.

Pic River Forest Recommendation on Licence Issuance

The audit team concludes that management of the Pic River Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the term covered by the audit, and the Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Forest Resource Licences held by Nawiinginoiima Forest Management Corp. Forest sustainability is being achieved, as assessed through the IFAPP. The audit team recommends that the Minister issue a Sustainable Forest Licence to NFMC with a term of twenty years.

Mazinaw Lanark Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team concludes that management of the Mazinaw-Lanark Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the term covered by the audit, and the Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Sustainable Forest Licence held by Mazinaw-Lanark Forest Inc. Forest sustainability is being achieved, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol. The audit team recommends the Minister extend the term of Sustainable Forest Licence 542621 for a further five years.

French Severn Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team concludes that management of the French-Severn Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the term covered by the audit, and the Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Sustainable Forest Licence held by Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc. Forest sustainability is being achieved, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol. The audit team recommends the Minister extend the term of Sustainable Forest Licence #542411 for a further five years.

Sudbury Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team concludes that management of the Sudbury Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the term covered by the audit, and the Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Sustainable Forest Licence held by Vermillion Forest Management Company Limited. Forest sustainability is being achieved, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol. The audit team recommends the Minister extend the term of Sustainable Forest Licence 542442 for a further five years.

Temagami Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team concludes that, with the critical exceptions noted below, management of the Temagami Management Unit was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the term covered by the audit, and the MNRF met its legal obligations. Forest sustainability is being achieved, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol. The critical exceptions are as follows:

- Failure to follow through on two recommendations from the previous IFA related to the consistency of silvicultural effectiveness monitoring reporting and overly prescriptive Annual Work Schedules.
- Inadequate area surveyed for Free to Grow as part of a Silvicultural Effectives Monitoring program.

Therefore, the audit team recommends that the following conditions need to be satisfied to bring the Temagami Management Unit into general compliance:

- Recommendation #3 District MNRF to review the Conditions on Regular Operations developed by the planning team and to ensure the AWS is consistent with the FMP during the development and implementation of the 2019 FMP.
- Recommendation #9: District MNRF to develop and execute a plan to eliminate the backlog of forest renewal areas that have not been surveyed for FTG status.

Lake Nipigon Forest Recommendation on Licence Extension

The audit team concludes that management of the Lake Nipigon Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the term covered by the audit, and the Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Sustainable Forest Licence held by LNFMI. Forest sustainability is being achieved, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol. The audit team recommends the Minister extend the term of Sustainable Forest Licence 550412 for a further five years.

Licence Review

MNRF will undertake a review of the Sustainable Forest Licences (SFLs) to ensure the terms and conditions of the licence have been achieved by the licensee. The following outlines the planned details of this review program.

2016 SFL Licence Reviews

Actions:

1. A review of the applicable SFLs for the above forests will be conducted to ensure the licensees have complied with the terms and conditions of the licence. As part of the review, IFA recommendations will be considered in accordance with Section 9 of the SFL.
2. Results of the reviews will be evaluated and if satisfactory, will be advanced to the Minister for his/her consideration.

Organization & position responsible:

1. and 2. Forest Industry Division, Operations Branch, Timber Allocation and Licensing Section, Manager.

Deadline date:

1. Timiskaming: Review complete. A recommendation on licence extension will be advanced for the Minister's consideration after Indigenous consultation has been completed and the Lieutenant Governor in Council approves.
2. Nipissing: Review complete. A recommendation on licence extension will be advanced for the Minister's consideration after Indigenous consultation has been completed and the Lieutenant Governor in Council approves.
3. Gordon Cosens: Partially complete. The review is in progress.
4. Spanish: Review complete. A recommendation on licence extension will be advanced for the Minister's consideration after Indigenous consultation has been completed and the Lieutenant Governor in Council approves.
5. Algoma: Review complete. The licence was extended to March 31, 2031 in August of 2019.
6. Pic River: NA – Crown Unit. (Note: SFL granted to NFMC June 19, 2017)
7. Mazinaw – Lanark: Review complete. The licence was extended to March 31, 2032 in October of 2016.
8. French Severn: Review complete. The licence was extended to March 31, 2033 in November of 2016.
9. Sudbury: Review complete. The licence was extended to March 31, 2038 in April of 2018.
10. Temagami: NA – Crown Unit

11. Lake Nipigon: Review complete. A recommendation on licence extension will be advanced for the Minister's consideration after Indigenous consultation has been completed and the Lieutenant Governor in Council approves.

Method of tracking progress:

Review completed. Briefing material forwarded to the Minister if review satisfactory.