

LAC SEUL FOREST
2011- 2017 INDEPENDENT FOREST AUDIT
MANAGEMENT UNIT ACTION PLAN
Status Report

Lac Seul Forest 2017 Independent Forest Audit

Status Report Signature Page

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Introduction

In 2017, an Independent Forest Audit (IFA) was conducted on the Lac Seul Forest by Merin Forest Management for the period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2017. The final audit report was accepted by Forestry Futures Committee on December 22, 2017th and submitted to the Regional Director February 22nd, 2018. It was approved by the Regional Director on March 20th, 2018.

This status report is required to be submitted by February 22nd, 2020. The status report includes the original approved actions for findings from the Management Unit Action Plan. The progress to date is listed below the actions required. Future tracking is shown for any actions not yet completed.

Findings # 4 and #12 were tasked to Corporate MNRF for consideration as part of the regular Corporate MNRF work planning and policy review cycle.

Findings

Finding #1:

Access restriction signage on the Lac Seul Forest is ineffective and/or missing.

Action Required:

1. Sioux Lookout District Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) will enhance/update the existing sign inventory and monitoring schedule with respect to access restriction signs on the Lac Seul Forest, to ensure that all signs are in place, are legible and maintained to be effective.
2. Sioux Lookout District MNRF will phase out the future use of and replace all existing locations that have chloroplast access restriction signs.
3. Sioux Lookout District MNRF will determine where signs can be erected at locations where decommissioning activities have occurred that may pose a public safety risk. This is in response to a deficiency that was suggested by the auditors on the Wind road where berms exist before a removed bridge and no sign was present. These signs will be added to the inventory.

Progress to Date:

1. Complete.
2. Complete.
3. On Going.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Not required.
2. Not required.
3. Sign to be installed spring 2020, roads monitoring, inventory and inspection records

Finding #2:

The use of acronyms use in public forest management presentations and documents is a barrier to understanding and full participation by the public.

Action Required:

1. Sioux Lookout District MNRF will share a list of acronyms frequently used in presentations to the LCC and members of the public and share them with the Local Citizen Committee (LCC) members and incorporate the list into the LCC Terms of Reference.

2. Sioux Lookout District MNRF will adhere to the Ontario Public Service Content Style Guide for written and verbal communication with public with respect to abbreviations and acronyms.

Progress to Date:

1. Complete.
2. Complete.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Not required.
2. Not required.

Finding #3:

Sioux Lookout District Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has not met a commitment to complete a review of the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas (CLUPA) policy report for the area south of the caribou line on the Lac Seul Forest.

Action Required:

1. Sioux Lookout District MNRF will complete a review of CLUPA policy G2515, for the area outside of the Range Management Policy in Support of Woodland Caribou Conservation and Recovery (2014). This review will primarily look at existing values or uses that are currently being addressed through other land use direction and ensure that the suite of permitted uses is consistent with the outcomes of the review.

Progress to Date:

1. Not complete. The Review has not been completed for G2515 as priorities have shifted in in the district since the audit was approved as well as the vacancy management issues. Initial work was completed upfront to get Regional Director approval for the scope and scale of the review (Jan 2016). An initial internal scan of the potential values and stakeholders of the review was determined.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Future IFA audit findings and reports

Finding #5:

Forest Operations Prescription (FOP) changes are not certified by a Registered Professional Forester (R.P.F.) in a manner that is consistent with the Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM).

Action(s) required:

1. ORC Silviculture Forester (Lead) and ORC Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist will prepare a spreadsheet and maps of the Silviculture Ground Rules (SGR)/FOP changes and ensure the changes are certified by a registered professional forester each year.
2. ORC Silviculture Forester (Lead) and ORC Planning and Development Forester will ensure that the record of SGR/FOP changes information is maintained by completing and certifying each year. The spatial data layer of SGR/FOP changes will be submitted in the corresponding fiscal year Annual Report, as per the 2009 and 2017 Forest Management Planning Manuals, and Forest Information Manual Technical Specifications.

Progress to Date:

1. Complete.
2. Complete.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Not required.
2. Not required.

Finding #6:

There were errors and omissions in the Phase II Area of Concern prescriptions for some wildlife species.

Action(s) required:

1. ORC Planning Forester (Lead) and Planning and Development Forester (Lead) will submit an amendment request to include the area of concern prescriptions as required for the FMP-10 and FMP-19 tables for bat hibernacula, active great blue heron colonies, great horned owl stick nests, barred owl stick nests, and rivers and streams with a moderate or high potential sensitivity to operations.

Progress to Date:

1. Complete.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Not Required.

Finding #7:

The wildlife tree retention requirements specified in CRO-10 (Condition on Regular Operations) in the Phase II plan for the Lac Seul Forest have not been met on all sites.

Action(s) required:

1. Obishikokaang Resources - Operations Forester to determine which harvesting operator was responsible for CRO-10 Wildlife Tree deficient sites and further investigate why there was a deficiency in wildlife tree retention.
2. Obishikokaang Resources – Compliance Forester to conduct additional compliance inspections on contractor areas with deficient sites.
3. As a priority, MNRF will add wildlife tree retention, as per CRO-10, into the annual compliance operations plan (ACOP).

Progress to Date:

1. Complete. Refresh of Wildlife Tree Retention done for all contractors fall 2017 and annually at fall and spring meetings.
2. Complete.
3. Complete. FOIP inspections since the IFA have not identified operational issues with wildlife tree retention.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Not required.
2. Not required.
3. Not required.

Finding #8:

Not enough consideration is given to natural ingress on some sites.

Action(s) required:

1. ORC Planning Forester (Lead) and ORC Silviculture Forester will review and summarize the Forest Units/ Ecosites and species compositions having the highest potential for natural ingress and consider incorporating these findings into the next Ten-Year FMP (2021-31 FMP).

2. Field verification of FOPs (i.e.; Post Harvest Silviculture Prescription Survey) will provide more information for the consideration of natural ingress of conifer and hardwood species.
 - a. This consideration will be implemented through evaluating Pre-Harvest Forest Units/ Ecosites and species compositions, from Forest Resource Inventory (FRI), when verifying/ changing renewal treatment prescriptions.
 - b. Further consideration will include season, or month of harvest, on harvested blocks prior to Silviculture field staff verifying/ refining renewal treatment prescriptions.

Progress to Date:

1. Ongoing. Actively taking into account natural ingress in regard to silviculture planning within the next Ten-Year FMP.
2. Ongoing. Integrated into field operations.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Will be included in silviculture planning within next Ten-Year FMP (2021-31).
2. FOP verification records, AWS FOP revisions and amendment records, Annual Work Schedules and Annual Reports. FOIP inspection reports, FRI adjustments/revisions. FMP and SGR amendments revisions.

Finding #9:

Road grading practices on the Lac Seul Forest do not consistently meet the Environmental Guidelines for Access Roads and Water Crossings.

Action(s) required:

1. The company will communicate best management practices and environmental benefits of proper grading (including to reduce or eliminate formation of false ditches) and to minimize environmental impacts from grading. This will be done through a series of meetings which will be scheduled with all contractors and licensees.
2. Ongoing monitoring of grading practices will be concurrent with operations. Where required in the FMP/AWS FOIP reports will be submitted.

Progress to Date:

1. Complete. All grader operators sent to FP Innovations grader course hosted by Domtar in June 2018.
2. Ongoing. Concurrent with field operations.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Complete.
2. Roads Monitoring and inspection records, FOIP inspection reports, future IFA findings and reports. Future Annual Work Schedules and Annual Reports.

Finding #10:

Active gravel pits do not consistently meet the requirements for forestry aggregate pits as outlined in the Forest Management Planning Manual. Road grading practices on the Lac Seul Forest do not consistently meet the Environmental Guidelines for Access Roads and Water Crossings.

Action(s) required:

1. ORC – Operations (Lead) and Compliance Forester to ensure any necessary work required to the two pits (Pit 594L and Pit 1306 L) that did not meet the FMPM requirements are corrected and FOIP inspections to be completed.

2. Compliance Forester will review the Operational Standards for Forestry Aggregate Pits as per the FMPM (appendix 21), AOC prescriptions, CRO's, and ORC Standard Procedures Document ORD-2PR_81017 with operators during the annual spring meeting where sign off block maps are exchanged with licensees and contractors.

Progress to Date:

1. Complete. Compliance reports submitted – Pit 0595L (Nov. 28, 2018) and Pit 1306L (Dec. 18, 2018).
2. Ongoing. Contractors completed forestry aggregate pit training. Review of AOCs/CROs and Standard Procedures done annual with contractors during annual spring meetings and block maps sign off.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Not required.
2. Company operator training and standard procedures review records, annual spring meeting agendas, minutes and attendance records, Future IFA findings and reports, roads monitoring program inspection records, FOIP inspection reports, company environmental management systems (EMS) operator booklet (if available or deletes if no EMS in place)

Finding #11:

The analysis of trends and achievements in the IFA-required Trends Analysis report was cursory, and some conclusions were not supported by data.

Action(s) required:

1. ORC Planning Forester (Lead) will provide further clarification and improve the three sections that the auditors had concerns with as noted above.
2. ORC Planning and Development Forester and MNRF will undertake a review of the final (October 10, 2017 version) Year 10-Annual Report/Trends Analysis Report as part of the 2017-2018 Year-10 Annual Report which is due November 15, 2018.

Progress to Date:

1. Complete.
2. Ongoing. Published Year 7 enhanced AR submitted on 2019-05-23. Year 10 AR approximately 2 years away from approval.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Not required.
2. Future annual reports, trend analyses; future IFA findings and reports.