

Martel Forest

2012- 2017 Independent Forest Audit

Management Unit Action Plan

**Status Report**

# Martel Forest 2012-2017 Independent Forest Audit

## Status Report Signature Page

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# **Martel Forest 2012–2017 Independent Forest Audit**

## **Status Report Approval Signature Page**

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Date: April 6, 2020

## **Introduction**

ArborVitae Environmental Services Ltd. conducted an Independent Forest Audit on the Martel Forest (SFL # 550390) for the period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2017. The Audit Action Plan was approved by the NER Regional Director on April 6, 2018 and documented planned actions to resolve 12 Findings which were made in the Audit Report.

Finding 2 and 12 were deemed to be Corporate MNRF responsibility and therefore not included in this Status Report.

Submission of this Status Report by the Chapleau MNRF District Manager is due April 6, 2020.

# Findings

## **Finding #1 a:**

**More effort and a wider range of approaches are required on the part of Chapleau District Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) to support the growth and retention of a diverse Local Citizens Committee (LCC).**

### **Action Required:**

1. The LCC Terms of Reference (TOR) will be reviewed to ensure proper or appropriate membership and work to recruit where necessary to support growth and diversification of the committee as per the Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM) Part A-Section 1.1.3- Line 6,7 Page A-15.

### **Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. Chapleau District MNRF - District Manager

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Completed.
  - The LCC Terms of Reference (TOR) was reviewed and updated prior to the preparation of the 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie Forest Management Plan.
  - The LCC meetings (March 12, 2018 and May 28, 2018) TOR was discussed and finalized during the May 28, 2018 meeting.
  - A detail review of the Martel LCC membership was completed by the Chapleau District MNRF at the Feb 27, 2017 LCC meeting and continued efforts were made reviewing action items at every LCC meetings. Outreach efforts included targeted inquiries with potential members as well as promotion by LCC members within the community.
  - The Chapleau MNRF District Manager appointed four new members from 2017 to date.
  - The LCC at the time of review was made up of representatives of six interest groups. With the efforts made by Chapleau District MNRF the size of the Martel LCC increased to nine members in mid 2019. Currently, there are seven members represented by seven affiliations (road-base tourism, anglers/hunters, hardwood users, local contractor, cottager, mineral sector and general public).

Records of the LCC meeting minutes and Terms of Reference are on file at the Chapleau District MNRF Office.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action ongoing – Future tracking required.
  - Efforts will be made on a continual basis to support growth and diversification of the committee.
  - LCC Terms of Reference will be reviewed at the stage of mid-plan checkup (as per the 2017 FMPM Part A-Section 1.1.3).

## **Finding #1 b:**

- a) **The Chapleau District MNRF has not provided sufficient opportunities to address the LCC's broader interests in forestry and forest management beyond planning and plan implementation.**

### **Action Required:**

1. Topics of interest will be a standing agenda item at each LCC meeting. The LCC will be asked to define what their broader interests are in forestry/forest management beyond planning and plan implementation.

### **Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. Chapleau District MNRF - Management Forester

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Completed. At the March 12, 2018 meeting the Chapleau District MNRF provided information of training opportunities for LCC members to ensure they are more informed on forest management planning and implementation. The LCC members were asked to identify what their broader interests are in forestry/forest management beyond planning and plan implementation. On the interest and request of the LCC, following presentation were made in different meetings:
  - March 12, 2018: MNRF Management Forester provided a presentation on Forest Management Planning Process and 2021-2031 Martel Forest Management Plan Preparation Process.
  - May 28, 2018: Corporate Social Responsibility Manager for Borden Gold Corp presented Borden Gold Corp, it's advanced exploration and approach to protect water quality and fisheries habitat.
  - Oct 9, 2018: MNRF's Regional Tenure Coordinator presented about Forest Management Unit (FMU) amalgamation process: Martel -Magpie FMP. At the same meeting MNRF's Regional Planning Forester presented Forest Management Planning Process and Scope of FMP planning process.
  - Dec 10, 2018: RYAM Chapleau Sawmill Capital Project Manager provided updates about the Chapleau Sawmill Capital Projects.
  - April 8, 2019: MNRF Regional Biologist presented application of a new guide (Boreal Landscape) that guides wildlife habitat management objectives in the forest management planning.
  - Oct 7, 2019: Martel-Magpie FMP Plan Author presented the Long-Term Management Direction along with the process of proposed management strategy and objective development.

Records of the LCC meeting minutes and presentations are on file at the Chapleau District MNRF Office.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action ongoing – Future tracking required. Efforts will be made on a continual basis to invite MNRF as well as outside experts/specialists to deliver presentations during the LCC meetings.



### **Finding #3:**

**Available information on the thermal status of many streams was inadequate for sufficient Area of Concern (AOC) planning, leading to many requests to extend the timing window for water crossing installations.**

#### **Action Required:**

1. As per regular on-going data collection regarding values and values updates, the District MNRF will collect and manage data that will result in more precise mapping of cold, cool, and warm waterways.

#### **Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. Northeast Region MNRF - Regional Terrestrial Ecosystem Science Specialist (involvement from Chapleau District MNRF, Science and Research Branch, and Regional Information and Analysis Unit).

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

1. Ongoing – The values collection database tracks planned projects and has been in place for the past three years. There have been targeted field efforts for brook trout (Coldwater indicator) in the Martel Forest in each of those years. This is largely time spent sampling stream segments (electrofishing).
  - 2018: 42 staff hours planned (3-person crew expected, 2 field days)
  - 2019: 120 staff hours planned (3-person crew expected, 5-6 field days)

#### **Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action ongoing – Future tracking required
  - 2020: 240 staff hours projected (3-person crew, 11 field days).
  - In addition to field work to verify specific stream segment occupancy, the Chapleau District MNRF has been working with other NER Districts to deploy thermal loggers in a variety of streams across the landscape. This data collection is in partnership with research scientists refining models that predict stream temperature (and likely brook trout presence). This is a tool/map product that will be available in the future to assist in targeting high likelihood areas for brook trout spawning allowing field investigations to be more efficient.

**Finding #4:**

**The Chapleau District MNRF has not maintained records of consultation with the LCC on all administrative amendments issued over the audit period, and has not formalized its approach with the LCC regarding the automatic categorization of specific types of amendments (e.g. Operational Road Boundary (ORB) adjustments and the addition of Aggregate Extraction Area (AEA)).**

**Action Required:**

1. A formal approach will be developed in consultation with the LCC to automatically categorize a pre-approved list of Amendments as Administrative.

**Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. Chapleau District MNRF - Management Forester

**Progress to Date:**

1. Completed. The Chapleau District MNRF has formalized its approach with the LCC regarding the automatic categorization of specific types of amendments. The MNRF and LCC has developed a list of types of amendments that would qualify as administrative and included in the LCC Terms of Reference that was finalized on May 28, 2018.

Records of the LCC meeting minutes and Terms of Reference are on file at the Chapleau District MNRF Office.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action completed – Future tracking not required.

**Finding #5:**

**RYAM Forest Management (formerly Tembec) did not monitor some winter water crossing installations and upgrade them where necessary in the following spring.**

**Action Required:**

1. RYAM Forest Management (RYAM) will remove the installed winter culvert W-615 and then assess the need for a permanent installation.
2. RYAM will track winter water crossing installations to ensure removal prior to spring freshet.

**Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. RYAM - Operations Superintendent
2. RYAM - Operations Superintendent

**Progress to Date:**

1. Completed – RYAM decommissioned the winter culvert W-615 on August 29, 2018 as reported in Forest Operations Inspection Program (FOIP) Report # 684504. The decision was made to stabilize the stream banks and not pursue the installation of a permanent water crossing.
2. Ongoing – As part of the annual monitoring and tracking, RYAM tracks the winter water crossing installations in the Start Up Notification spreadsheet submitted on a by-weekly basis to the MNRF and within submitted FOIP reports. RYAM meets weekly with both harvesting contractors. A re-occurring agenda topic is the review of winter water crossing installations and decommissioning strategies prior to spring freshet.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action completed – Future tracking not required.
2. Action ongoing – Annual tracking and monitoring efforts are ongoing to ensure winter water crossings installations are being removed prior to spring freshet.

**Finding #6 a:**

- a) Chapleau District MNRF's approach to approving slash pile burning operations is perceived as being so restrictive that RYAM did not conduct any slash pile burns on the Martel Forest during the audit period.**

**Action Required:**

1. Chapleau District MNRF and RYAM will work with Aviation, Forest Fire, and Emergency Services (AFFES) to determine which restrictions currently exists within the Low-Complexity Burning Protocol that limits RYAM from conducting slash pile burning operations.

**Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. Chapleau District MNRF - Management Forester & RYAM - Area Forester

**Progress to Date:**

1. Completed – A discussion between AFFES and RYAM took place, the Low-Complexity Burning Protocol was reviewed, and requirements explained to RYAM. Upon further evaluation, currently RYAM has no intent to pursue the burning of slash piles on the Martel Forest for reasons including timing, cost, resources, liability, smoke impact, and efficacy. However, RYAM will continue to make efforts to perform effective slash management as per its slash management strategy.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action ongoing – RYAM will continue to explore opportunities for slash management by implementing its current 2011-2021 Martel FMP and proposed updates to its 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie FMP slash management strategy.

## **Finding #6 b:**

### **b) RYAM is not minimizing the amount of productive area lost to roadside slash and unused wood.**

#### **Action Required:**

1. The Planning Superintendent will work with the Forest Information System Coordinator to estimate amount of area of roads, landings and slash.
2. If the amount of area of roads, landings and slash is considered above target, RYAM will review its slash management strategy and consider alternatives to reduce the amount of productive area lost.
3. RYAM will update the 2021-2031 Martel Forest Management Plan (FMP) objective and slash management strategy.

#### **Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. RYAM - Planning Superintendent & Forest Information System Coordinator
2. RYAM - Area Forester
3. RYAM - Planning Superintendent

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

1. Completed – As part of the Analysis Package for 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie FMP, (in development) RYAM assessed several years of harvest depletion data (2007 to 2017) to estimate the amount of productive forest area occupied by roads, landings and slash. There were 23,256 hectares of harvest area in the analysis. The results of the analysis indicated that 1.9% of the total depleted area were occupied by roads and 2.1% is assumed to be lost by slash and landings. This is consistent the rule of thumb in the *Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales* to keep the area of roads and landings to less than 4%.
2. Ongoing – RYAM will continue to verify its assumptions to ensure that its current practices are not exceeding established target. RYAM will review its current slash management strategy and determine if necessary, to include alternative strategies for reducing the amount of productive area lost by slash or other means.
3. Ongoing – An objective has been developed for the 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie FMP to address the loss of productive forest area, which includes, but is not limited to slash; *Develop and implement a strategy for the Martel-Magpie Forest to minimize loss of productive area, consistent with the direction provided in the Stand and Site Guide (<4% of areas lost to roads, landings and slash, combined)*. This strategy is in development and will be submitted as part the draft FMP submission in Summer 2020.

#### **Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action completed – Future tracking not required. For reference to the analysis conducted on estimating the amount of productive forest occupied by roads, landings and slash, refer to 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie FMP Analysis Package.

2. Action ongoing – Annual tracking of slash management efforts is ongoing and being reported annually within the Annual Report submission. Continued analyses will be conducted to verify RYAM's assumptions to ensure its current practices are not exceeding established target.
3. Action ongoing – A strategy to minimize the loss of productive forest area will be included in the 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie FMP.

## **Finding #7:**

### **Basic information about the tree improvement sites on the Martel Forest is not adequately documented in the FMP.**

#### **Action Required:**

1. RYAM will work with Northeast Seed Management Association (NESMA) to determine what tree improvement sites exist on the Martel Forest.
2. RYAM will work with the MNRF to ensure areas are appropriately mapped (i.e., on values maps or otherwise) or documented in the planning forest resource inventory.
3. RYAM will include sufficient background information on the tree improvement sites in the 2021-2031 Martel FMP.

#### **Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. RYAM - Planning Superintendent
2. RYAM - Planning Superintendent & Chapleau District MNRF - GIS Data Technician
3. RYAM - Planning Superintendent

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

1. Ongoing – RYAM is working with NESMA to produce a layer that identifies the tree improvement sites that currently exist on the Martel Forest.
2. Not completed – Once NESMA shares its tree improvement sites layer, RYAM will work with the MNRF to analyse the best method to appropriately map and incorporate this information.
3. Not completed – Background information on the tree improvement sites found within the Martel Forest will be included as part of the 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie Draft FMP submission in Summer 2020.

#### **Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action ongoing – Continue working with NESMA on generating a tree improvement sites layer.
2. Action ongoing – Once the layer is available, RYAM will work with the MNRF to appropriately map these values.
3. Action ongoing – The updated background information on tree improvement sites will be incorporated in the 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie FMP.

**Finding #8:**

**Chapleau District MNRF has not provided a comprehensive description of how it intends to implement its forest compliance monitoring efforts, as suggested in the Forest Compliance Handbook.**

**Action Required:**

1. The current block prioritization approach and monitoring efforts description will be added to the applicable AWS.

**Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. Chapleau District MNRF - Management Forester

**Progress to Date:**

1. Completed. The Martel Forest 2019-2020 Annual Work Schedule (AWS) text was revised to add the Chapleau District MNRF Forest Compliance Planning as suggested in the Forest Compliance Handbook. The revised text highlights MNRF's forest compliance planning details on how the Chapleau District establishes the level of its compliance monitoring effort for active operations on the Martel Forest. The forest compliance plan is part of the Chapleau District MNRF Annual Compliance Operations Plan (ACOP). The MNRF's compliance monitoring efforts and block prioritization approach for active operations will be included annually in the Martel Forest AWS.

Records of the block prioritization approach and monitoring efforts are on file at the Chapleau District MNRF Office and found within the Martel Forest AWS text.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action completed – Future tracking not required.



**Finding #9:****RYAM is not using FOIP properly to track operational issues.****Action Required:**

1. RYAM to utilize the MNRF online FOIP system for reporting and submitting operational issues when encountered.
2. RYAM to schedule two annual joint compliance meetings with Chapleau District MNRF to discuss operational issues.

**Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. RYAM - Operations Superintendent
2. RYAM - Operations Superintendent & Chapleau District MNRF - IRM Technical Specialist

**Progress to Date:**

1. Ongoing – RYAM increased its reporting and submission of operational issues in FOIP. Following the IFA, RYAM submitted nine operational issues in FOIP.
2. Ongoing – RYAM has worked closely with Chapleau District MNRF to schedule two annual joint compliance meetings annually.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action ongoing – RYAM will continue to work diligently as they encounter operational issues, they will be reported and submitted in FOIP as per its intent.
2. Action ongoing – RYAM will continue to work with Chapleau District MNRF to schedule the two annual joint compliance meetings as it is beneficial to both parties to have open dialogue on operational issues and related items.

## **Finding #10:**

**Northeast Region MNRF is not providing the technical support to allow forest managers to complete the determination of forest disturbances required for the Year 7 Annual Report.**

### **Action Required:**

1. Northeast Region MNRF will confirm which FMPs require the determination of forest disturbances analysis.
2. Northeast Region MNRF will investigate the alternatives of using the original program, other programs or the opportunity to create a new version of the NDPEGTool program/application in a current platform.
3. Northeast Region MNRF will provide a methodology to ensure that this analysis can be carried out and share the approach and/or tool with forest managers on the affected FMPs.

### **Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. Northeast Region MNRF - Forest Management Planning Specialist, Regional Planning Unit (RPU) Supervisor and Resources Information and Analysis Unit (RIAU) Supervisor
2. Northeast Region MNRF - Resources Information and Analysis Unit (RIAU) Supervisor
3. Northeast Region MNRF - Resources Information and Analysis Unit (RIAU) Supervisor

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Completed – Northeast Region MNRF RIAU have come up with an ArcGIS 10.x methodology (step-by-step document) which uses the current technology to run the same analysis as the NDPEG Tool.
2. Completed – Northeast Region MNRF RIAU have verified the new methodology by comparing the result with the old NDPEG tool run results.
3. Completed – Northeast Region MNRF RIAU used the methodology described above to deliver disturbance frequency analysis results to RYAM (Martel and Romeo Malette Forests).

### **Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action completed and ongoing – Northeast Region MNRF RIAU has and will provide the methodology to the Foresters and GIS professionals on the affected FMPs when requested.
2. Action completed and ongoing – Northeast Region MNRF RIAU has and will provide support if the Foresters or GIS professionals on the affected FMPs have difficulties following the methodology.
3. Action completed and ongoing – Northeast Region MNRF RIAU has and will provide the methodology to the Foresters and GIS professionals on the affected FMPs when requested.

## **Finding #11:**

**RYAM is not collecting the information required to enable assessment of the target of maintaining or reducing the road density on the forest.**

### **Action Required:**

1. RYAM to review existing road inventory and identify drivability status.
2. RYAM to determine internally what roads are available for abandonment and/or transfer.
3. RYAM to meet with Chapleau District MNRF to discuss road abandonment and/or transfer strategies.
4. RYAM to revisit the objectives related to road density when developing the 2021-2031 Martel FMP to ensure they are consistent with the access needs on the forest and planned decommissioning and/or abandonment strategies.

### **Organization and Position Responsible:**

1. RYAM - GIS Technician & Operations Superintendent
2. RYAM - Operations Superintendent & Area Forester
3. RYAM - Area Forester
4. RYAM - Planning Superintendent

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Not completed – RYAM will review its existing road inventory and identify drivability status as part of the 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie FMP development.
2. Not completed – Once the drivability status is completed, RYAM will determine what roads, if any are available for abandonment and/or transfer.
3. Not completed – RYAM will meet with MNRF to discuss road abandonment and or transfer strategies, if RYAM has the intention of pursuing these opportunities.
4. Not completed – RYAM will review and update FMP objectives related to road density in the 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie Draft FMP submission.

### **Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. Action ongoing – Continued analysis of drivability status of existing road inventory.
2. Action ongoing – Once the analysis is completed, RYAM will decide internally if there are roads to be transferred and/or abandoned.
3. Action ongoing – Continue discussions with the MNRF if RYAM pursues the intend of transferring and/or abandoning certain roads.
4. Action ongoing –The updated FMP objectives related to road density will be included in the 2021-2031 Martel-Magpie FMP.