

Independent Forest Audit

Ottawa Valley Forest

2018 IFA

Action Plan

Ottawa Valley Forest, April 2019

2019 Action Plan Submission Signature Page

Prepared By:

Original signed: April 11, 2019

Date:

Nick Gooderham R.P.F.
General Manager
Ottawa Valley Forest Inc.

Original signed: April 8, 2019

Date:

Hassan Mohamed R.P.F.
Regional Operations Forester
MNRF Regional Resources Section

Reviewed By:

Original signed: April 11, 2019

Date:

Nick Gooderham R.P.F.
General Manager
Ottawa Valley Forest Inc.

Submitted By:

Original signed: April 17, 2019

Date:

Randy McLaren
A/District Manager
MNRF Pembroke District

Approved By:

Original signed: April 23, 2019

Date:

Sharon Rew
Regional Director

The original signed version of this page is retained at the MNRF Regional Office and SFL office.

Table of Contents

- 2019 Action Plan Submission Signature Page 2
- Table of Contents 3
- Introduction 4
- 2019 IFA Findings 4
 - Finding #1: 4
 - Finding #2: 5
 - Finding #3: 5
 - Finding #4: 5
 - Finding #5: 6
 - Finding #6: 6
 - Finding #7: 7
 - Finding #8: 8
 - Finding #9: 8
 - Finding #10: 9
 - Finding #11: 10
 - Finding #12: 10
 - Finding #13.1: 11
 - Finding #13.2: 12
 - Finding #13.3: 12
 - Finding #14: 13
 - Finding #15: 13
 - Finding #16: 14
 - Finding #17: 14
 - Finding #18: 15
 - Finding #19: 15

Introduction

In September 2018 an Independent Forest Audit (IFA) was conducted on the Ottawa Valley Forest for the period April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2018. The Forestry Futures Trust Committee accepted the final audit report on January 14, 2019. The 2018 Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol (IFAPP) requires a Management Unit Action Plan be prepared in response to the audit findings. A Management Unit Action Plan is due to be submitted by the District Manager by April 14, 2019.

The final audit report for the Ottawa Valley Forest included findings and a conclusion to extend the licence. A total of 19 findings were noted for the management unit. For each management unit audit finding, the action plan outlines the actions required, responsibility, timelines, and method of tracking progress of actions. Based on the cause analysis on the 2018 IFA findings, findings #2, 3, 13.2, 15 (partial), 16, 17, 18 and 19 have been assessed to be the responsibility of Corporate MNRF level and will be considered as part of the regular corporate work planning and policy review cycle.

The audit team concludes that management of the Ottawa Valley 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 #542529 held by Ottawa Valley Forest Inc. The forest is being managed consistently with the principles of sustainable forest management, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol.

2019 IFA Findings

Finding #1:

Harvest operations proceeded on high potential cultural heritage sites before a values assessment was undertaken.

Action Required:

1. Update Algonquins Of Ontario (AOO) on blocks scheduled for harvest at AWS time.
2. Ottawa Valley Forest Inc. (OVFI) to confirm priority blocks for values identification.
3. OVFI to provide the proper protection as per Section 8.2.2.2 of the current FMP and the 2021 FMP.
4. OVFI to meet with AOO to develop a standard operating procedure and include a communication plan.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. -4. OVFI General Manager.

Deadline Date:

1. February-March annually.
2. April-May annually.
3. Annually as required.
4. May 2020.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Meeting minutes.
2. Block list.
3. Final Block FOP map.
4. Final SOP document.

Finding #2:

The quality of the recently-developed Forest Resource Inventory is insufficient for use in forest management planning.

Action Required:

1. An analysis was undertaken for this finding and it was deemed Corporate. Corporate or policy finding will be considered as part of the regular corporate MNRF planning and policy review cycle.

Finding #3:

The rights and obligations of MNRF regarding review, comment and requesting or requiring changes to FOPs are not definitively articulated in existing Forest Management Planning Direction (i.e. the FMPM or the FIM).

Action Required:

1. An analysis was undertaken for this finding and it was deemed Corporate. Corporate or policy finding will be considered as part of the regular corporate MNRF planning and policy review cycle.

Finding #4:

The pine shelterwood prescriptions in the Phase II plan contain some contradictory, or at best ambiguous, direction.

Action Required:

1. The Silviculture Ground Rules (SGR) in the 2021-2031 Ottawa Valley FMP will be revised and updated with the direction in the Forest Management Guide to Silviculture in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence and Boreal Forests of Ontario.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. MNRF Regional Resources Section Regional Planning Forester (Lead), OVFI Plan Author, MNRF Pembroke District Management Forester.

Deadline Date:

1. April 1, 2021.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Approved 2021 FMP.

Finding #5:

OVFI has not been fully meeting the annual reporting requirements related to the SGR Update/Change layer information product in Annual Report submissions.

Action Required:

1. OVFI to seek training and direction on the purpose and intent of the SGR change layer.
2. Once direction/training has been provided OVFI will submit the layer as directed.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. OVFI Silviculture Forester.
2. OVFI Silviculture Forester.

Deadline Date:

1. September 30, 2019.
2. By November 15th annually.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Date and time of training documented.
2. Annual Report submission files.

Finding #6:

Effective and timely updates to changes in values are not being achieved.

Action Required:

1. MNRF Pembroke and OVFI will work together to come up with a plan to address the current values backlog.
2. MNRF Pembroke and OVFI will work together to find efficiencies in updating values while maintaining consistency with the direction in FIM.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. MNRF Pembroke Resources Management Supervisor, OVFI General Manager (Lead) and GIS Technician.
2. MNRF Pembroke GIS Data Technician (Lead) and OVFI GIS Technician.

Deadline Date:

1. April 15, 2019.
2. September 1, 2019.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Plan documentation.
2. Process documentation as an appendix of the AWS.

Finding #7:

MNRF did not deal appropriately with two amendment requests and one AWS revision request.

Action Required:

1. After the Amendment/Revision package has been reviewed by MNRF Pembroke staff and passed on to the supervisor for review and approval, the MNRF file lead will schedule a reminder to follow up with the supervisor/manager to determine outcome or further action.
2. The MNRF file lead will go into the FI Portal Task List monthly and ensure there are no outstanding items awaiting an official response.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. MNRF Pembroke Management Forester
2. MNRF Pembroke Management Forester

Deadline Date:

1. Effective with the next amendment/revision
2. Effective with signing of the action plan.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Document the reminders
2. FI Portal Task List.

Finding #8:

The high number of AWS revisions, particularly related to water crossings is problematic for both the MNRF and OVFI.

Action Required:

1. Develop procedures to reduce the administrative burden and simplify the water crossing application process.
2. Amend the 2011-2021 FMP with the requirements of the MNRF/DFO Protocol for the Review and Approval of Forestry Water Crossings and implement the new water crossing protocol.
3. All previously submitted water crossings will be retained in AWS-1 until they are confirmed to be installed or moved to AWS-2 for future decommissioning. Previously approved water crossings that have not been constructed, will be carried forward to the next AWS and remain approved if structure type, construction conditions or locations do not change. The process will be revisited in two years, with the goal of reviewing the efficacy of the Tables in that format, and further efficiencies can be discussed at that time.
4. OVFI will work with the operators to encourage more preplanning of water crossings so they can be included in the AWS a year in advance if possible.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. MNRF Pembroke Resource Management Supervisor and OVFI General Manager (Lead).
2. OVFI Plan Author.
3. OVFI Operations Forester (Lead), MNRF Pembroke Management Biologist.
4. OVFI Operations Forester (Lead)

Deadline Date:

1. May 31, 2019
2. April 30, 2019
3. April 30, 2019
4. November 30, 2019

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Procedure document.
2. Approved amendment.
3. Table AWS-1 will contain multiple years of water crossing submissions.
4. Number of crossings approved with the AWS should increase over time.

Finding #9:

In several harvest blocks, the levels of residuals being retained on site by the overlapping licensees do not meet the post-harvest specifications and stand renewal objectives outlined in the forest operations prescriptions.

Action Required:

1. OVFI will continue to stress tree retention requirements at spring operator workshops.
2. Site visits will occur to areas where the appropriate numbers of trees have been retained to provide operators with a visual reference.
3. Simplify residuals direction in FOPs.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. OVFI Senior Compliance Tech.
2. OVFI Senior Compliance Tech.
3. OVFI Operations Forester.

Deadline Date:

1. Effective with the signing of the action plan.
2. Effective with the signing of the action plan.
3. Effective with the signing of the action plan.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Workshop agendas and notes.
2. Site visit notes.
3. FOP documents.

Finding #10:

Roadside vegetation impairs visibility on a number of forest roads and creates safety hazards.

Action Required:

1. OVFI will review CORLAP-15 to determine if the current ROW width restrictions are appropriate to maintaining public safety.
2. OVFI will identify locations with sightline issues and if any are determined to be a safety hazard a plan to remediate the areas will be developed.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. OVFI Plan Author.
2. OVFI Operations Forester.

Deadline Date:

1. Effective with the signing of the action plan.
2. September 1, 2019.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Amendment of CORLAP-15 if required.
2. Location documentation and remediation plan.

Finding #11:

Aspects of the deer CRO are not being implemented.

Action Required:

1. The requirements for Deer Winter area from the Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales will be incorporated in the 2021 FMP.
2. MNRF Southern Region will provide training to OVFI Operators/Tree Markers on both the landscape and stand level requirements for Critical Thermal Cover required during forest operations.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. MNRF Regional Resources Section Regional Planning Biologist (Lead), OVFI Plan Author, MNRF Pembroke District Management Biologist.
2. MNRF Regional Resources Section Regional Planning Biologist (Lead), OVFI Operation Forester, MNRF Pembroke District Management Biologist.

Deadline Date:

1. April 1, 2021.
2. April 1, 2022.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Approved 2021 FMP.
2. Training Records.

Finding #12:

Forest management planning and compliance interpretations are not being implemented in an optimally effective manner.

Action Required:

1. Scope out policy training requirements for MNRF Pembroke and OVFI staff (i.e. AWS, Compliance, Roles and Responsibilities, etc.)
2. Implement training to MNRF Pembroke and OVFI staff.
3. Amend complex FMP direction to simplify (CRO, CORLAPs, Phase 2 Silvicultural direction, etc.).
4. MNRF Pembroke and OVFI will hold formal and informal meetings and discussions to stay current on interpretations related to the FMP and forest compliance.
5. Continue to ensure MNRF Pembroke meet with OVFI or Licensee compliance inspectors in all cases of compliance issues.
6. Facilitate opportunities to work on relationship i.e. joint inspections/site visits, joint training opportunities.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. MNRF Pembroke Resources Management Supervisor and OVFI GM (Lead).

2. MNRF Pembroke Resources Management Supervisor (Lead) and OVFI GM.
3. OVFI Plan Author.
4. MNRF Pembroke District Manager (Lead) and OVFI GM
5. MNRF Pembroke District Manager and OVFI GM (Lead)
6. MNRF Pembroke Resources Management Supervisor and OVFI GM (Lead) and OVFI Senior Compliance Tech.

Deadline Date:

1. April 2020.
2. September 2020.
3. April 2020.
4. August 2020.
5. Effective with the signing of the action plan.
6. Effective with the signing of the action plan

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. List of training requirements.
2. Training attendees list.
3. Amendment documents.
4. Meeting minutes/notes.
5. Meeting notes
6. Documentation of joint inspections/visits.

Finding #13.1:

MNRF Pembroke District staff have not been maintaining and updating the FOIP database, particularly remedy outcomes, in a timely fashion.

Action Required:

1. Explore options to obtain training for MNRF Pembroke District Supervisors which clearly outlines their roles and responsibilities and have a contact who supervisors can reach out to with any FOIP related questions.
2. District to explore feasibility of assigning FOIP administrative authority from Resources Management Supervisor to an alternate position to maintain and update the FOIP database.
3. Use of electronic calendars to serve as a reminder to check FOIP at a predetermined appropriate interval for required updating and maintenance.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. MNRF Pembroke Resources Management Supervisor (Lead) and Resources Planning Supervisor.
2. MNRF Pembroke Resources Management Supervisor
3. MNRF Pembroke Resources Management Supervisor

Deadline Date:

1. 1-3. April 2020.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. District training records.
2. FOIP.
3. FOIP and outlook calendar.

Finding #13.2:

District forest compliance staff have not had up-to-date training in the use of the FOIP system.

Action Required:

1. An analysis was undertaken for this finding and it was deemed Corporate. Corporate or policy finding will be considered as part of the regular corporate MNRF planning and policy review cycle.

Finding #13.3:

The MNRF Pembroke District forest compliance program lacks direction that clearly describes the roles and responsibilities of staff in implementing the District program.

Action Required:

1. MNRF Pembroke District will explore opportunities to provide District Compliance staff with training to keep staff informed of their roles and responsibilities at the District level.
2. MNRF Pembroke District will explore opportunity to include a text document to accompany ACOP.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. MNRF Pembroke Resources Management Supervisor (Lead), Forestry Technical Specialist & IRM Technical Specialist.
2. MNRF Pembroke District IRM Technical Specialist.

Deadline Date:

1. Effective with the signing of the action plan.
2. April 2020.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. MNRF Pembroke District training records.
2. 2020 ACOP.

Finding #14:

The skid trails up the esker in Block 286 are not compliant with the direction in the FMP and neither the FOPs nor the block release package nor the compliance program recognized the issue.

Action Required:

1. Emphasis will be placed on site protection at future spring operator and compliance workshops.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. OVFI, Senior Compliance Tech.

Deadline Date:

1. May 2019, ongoing annually.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. Workshop meeting agenda and notes.

Finding #15:

Recommendation #11 of the 2013 IFA has not been addressed.

Ottawa Valley Forest Recommendation #11

Corporate, Regional, and MNRF Pembroke District, in cooperation with Ottawa Valley Forest Inc., shall take appropriate action, including the services of outside parties, to address the longstanding compliance monitoring working relationship that has challenged the Ottawa Valley Forest for over ten years. Progress assessments shall be undertaken regularly until the issue is considered to be resolved by senior staff of MNRF and Ottawa Valley Forest Inc.

Action Required:

1. An analysis was undertaken for this finding and part of it dealing with the Provincial Action Plan was deemed Corporate. Corporate or policy finding will be considered as part of the regular corporate MNRF planning and policy review cycle.
2. MNRF/OVFI will hold formal and informal meetings and discussions to stay current on interpretations related to the FMP and forest compliance. This proactive/collaborative approach should reduce and potentially eliminate all disagreements with respect to compliance interpretations.
3. An assessment of the Management Unit forest compliance monitoring program will be undertaken by District Manager MNRF and OVFI GM.
4. The outcome of the assessment will be used to develop a standard operating procedure by District Manager MNRF and OVFI GM to foster more positive and

constructive approach toward identifying and correcting non-compliant performance.

Organization and Position Responsible:

1. N/A.
2. MNRF Pembroke District Manager (Lead) and OVFI GM
3. MNRF Pembroke District Manager (Lead), Resource Management Supervisor and OVFI GM.
4. MNRF Pembroke District Manager, Resource Management Supervisor (Lead), and OVFI GM.

Deadline Date:

1. N/A.
2. Ongoing.
3. April 2020.
4. April 2021.

Method of Tracking Progress:

1. N/A.
2. Meeting minutes.
3. Assessment documentation.
4. Standard Operating Procedure.

Finding #16:

The OVFI GM does not have access to important financial information regarding Crown payments for timber harvested on the forest management unit.

Action Required:

1. An analysis was undertaken for this finding and it was deemed Corporate. Corporate or policy finding will be considered as part of the regular corporate MNRF planning and policy review cycle.

Finding #17:

Corporate MNRF did not meet its obligation to produce the provincial status report for the 2013 IFAs according to the schedule in the IFAPP.

Action Required:

1. An analysis was undertaken for this finding and it was deemed Corporate. Corporate or policy finding will be considered as part of the regular corporate MNRF planning and policy review cycle.

Finding #18:

There are no performance standards or guidance from MNRF regarding what is required to meet Section 20 of the SFL document.

Action Required:

1. An analysis was undertaken for this finding and it was deemed Corporate. Corporate or policy finding will be considered as part of the regular corporate MNRF planning and policy review cycle.

Finding #19:

Section 16 of the SFL has been addressed by OVFI and is no longer necessary in its current form.

Action Required:

1. An analysis was undertaken for this finding and it was deemed Corporate. Corporate or policy finding will be considered as part of the regular corporate MNRF planning and policy review cycle.