

Pineland Forest

2012 - 2017 Independent Forest Audit

Management Unit Action Plan

Status Report

Pineland Forest 2012-2017 Independent Forest Audit

Status Report Signature Page

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Introduction

ArborVitae Environmental Services Ltd. conducted an Independent Forest Audit on the Pineland Forest (SFL # 550816) for the period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2017. The IFA Report was accepted by the Forestry Futures Committee on February 14, 2018 and provided to EACOM, MNRF Chapleau District and Northeast Region on February 15, 2018. The report contained 9 findings, including 1 which was directed to corporate MNRF, and 8 which were directed to EACOM and MNRF Chapleau District.

The Audit Action Plan was approved by the NER Regional Director on May 9, 2018. Submission of this Status Report by the Chapleau MNRF District Manager is due May 9, 2020.

This Action Plan addresses all 8 findings. Finding 9 was deemed to be Corporate MNRF responsibility and therefore not included in this Status Report.

Findings

Finding #1:

There is a lack of training opportunities and materials for both new and existing LCC members.

Action Required:

1. New LCC members will receive onboarding training packages upon acceptance to the Local Citizen's Committee.
2. Training will be a standing agenda item at each LCC meeting. The agenda item will be to provide training or to discuss ideas for training topics.

Progress to Date:

1. Ongoing. There has been no new LCC members recruited to the Pineland LCC since the approval of the 2012-2017 Independent Forest Audit Action Plan. The existing members were provided with the following information packages at the start of the 2021-2031 Pineland FMP planning process:
 - An introduction brochure of the MNRF, Help Shape the Future of Our Forest get involve in Ontario's Forest Management Planning Process, published in 2012 was distributed to the members at the Jan 16, 2018 meeting.
 - The 2021 Pineland Forest Management Planning (FMP) process was presented at the January 16th, 2018 meeting and the presentation slides were distributed to the members.

The presentation also included the following: the committee's involvement, roles and responsibilities in FMP planning process as described in the Forest Management Planning Manual; LCC Forestry Training that include identifying knowledge gaps, planning & Operational and standing agenda item of the LCC meeting.

- Records of the LCC meeting minutes and presentations as well as email communication with the LCC members are on file at the Chapleau District MNRF Office.
2. Completed. Forestry training has been established as a standing agenda item at each LCC meeting. At the January 16, 2018 meeting the Chapleau District MNRF Forester discussed training opportunities to ensure LCC members are more informed on the broader context of forest management planning.

The LCC members were asked to identify what their broader interests are in forestry/forest management. LCC members suggested some topics such as, climate change, forest compliance 101 including topics related to forest management planning.

Based on the interest and request of the committee members, presentations on several topics were made. Some examples can be stated below:

- January 16, 2018: Forestry training gaps were discussed at the LCC meeting and an Action Item was generated to organize meeting to further discuss training gaps and develop training plan. It was decided to have forestry training as a standing agenda item at each meeting.
- November 27, 2018: MNRF Forester and Plan Author presented an overview of the 2021-2031 Pineland Forest Management Planning process, timelines and scope of Forest Management Planning.
- May 7, 2019: MNRF Forester and Plan Author provided Desired Forest and Benefit Meeting pre-briefing.
- May 7, 2019: MNRF NER Regional Planning Biologist presented the application of Boreal Landscape Guide and an overall of wildlife habitat on the Pineland Forest.
- June 5, 2019: Desired Forest and Benefit Meeting was conducted. Presentations were made by MNRF Regional Planning Forester, Regional Planning Biologist and Plan Author. Topics included overview of management objective categories related to silviculture, social and economic, forest diversity and provision of forest cover.
- February 24, 2020: The Plan Author presented the Long-Term Management Direction along with the process for developing the proposed management strategy and management objectives.
- 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. Chapleau District MNRF will ensure new LCC members will receive onboarding training packages upon acceptance to the Local Citizen’s Committee.
2. Action Ongoing - Efforts will be made on a continual basis to invite subject matter experts and/ or specialists to deliver presentations during the LCC meetings as requested.

Finding #2:

The Chapleau District MNRF has not maintained records of consultation with the LCC on all 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. ORB adjustments and the addition of AEAs).

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.

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 discussed on March 13, 2018 and finalized on November 27, 2018 meeting.

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. However, the list of the Administrative Amendments may be updated during any revisions of LCC Terms of Reference.

Finding #3:

There is no protocol in place between the MNRF Chapleau District Manager and the Pineland and the Timmins local citizens committees.

Action Required:

1. A protocol will be developed between Chapleau and Timmins Districts which documents how the Pineland and Timmins LCCs will be involved during Forest Management planning and Implementation.

Progress to Date:

1. Ongoing:
 - Discussions between Chapleau and Timmins Districts occurred in 2018 with the onset of planning for the 2021 Pineland Forest Management Plan. These discussions included participation of the Timmins LCC in the development of the 2021 Pineland Forest Management Plan. The Timmins LCC was approached to determine if there was interest in having a representative on the planning team.
 - Efforts have been made to ensure that the Timmins LCC is engaged during the development of the 2021 Pineland Forest Management plan and informed of plan implementation. These efforts include:
 - The 2021 Pineland Forest Management Planning team has a representative from the Timmins LCC (including an alternative) in addition to the representation provided by the Pineland LCC.
 - The MNRF Regional Planning Forester/Regional Planning Biologist provided a Desired Forest and Benefits pre-brief to the Timmins LCC.
 - June 5, 2019: Desired Forest and Benefit Meeting was conducted. Presentations were made by MNRF Regional Planning Forester, Regional Planning Biologist and Plan Author. Topics included overview of management objective categories related to silviculture, social and economic, forest diversity and provision of forest cover. Members of the Timmins LCC were in attendance.
 - June 28, 2019: A questionnaire sheet and a summary of the Desired Forest and Benefits Meeting were provided to all members, should they have additional comments for the planning team to consider. None were received.
 - The Plan Author presented the 2021 Pineland Forest Long-Term Management Direction at the February 25, 2020 planning team meeting, in which the Timmins LCC representative was in attendance. The presentation was distributed via email to all LCC members on April 27, 2020 with an invitation to provide comments, questions or concerns. None have been received. The LCC has expressed interest in making the presentation available on their public facing website.
 - The Timmins LCC follow an Approved Terms of Reference which outlines their purpose in Forest Management Planning and plan implementation. Although they primarily provide advice towards the Romeo Malette Forest; they may provide support to adjacent LCCs in the development and implementation of Forest Management

Plans within the Timmins District administrative area. Their level of participation is described in the Pineland Planning Team Terms of Reference.

- Monthly: The Timmins LCC meet on a monthly basis, with the exception of July, August and December. District staff provide regular updates regarding the development of the 2021 Pineland Forest Management Plan, including progress towards checkpoints and key messages from planning or task team meetings. This is demonstrated in the Timmins District *FMP / AWS Forestry Update* documentation.
- Monthly: At their monthly meetings, District staff provide regular updates regarding the implementation of the 2011 Forest Management Plan, as demonstrated in the Timmins District *FMP / AWS Forestry Update*. This includes amendment, revision or change to operations requests made to the MNR. Timmins District staff provide the opportunity to review the Annual Work Schedules and Annual Reports either by presenting them on behalf of the SFL or making them available electronically. The 2018 and 2019 Annual Work Schedules were presented to the LCC by District staff.
- Records of the planning meeting minutes, LCC Meeting minutes and 2021 Pineland Forest Management Plan Terms of Reference/Project Plan are on file at the Chapleau and Timmins District MNR Offices.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Action Ongoing – MNR Timmins District and Chapleau District will develop a formalized inter-district protocol that will document the efforts regarding how the Pineland and Timmins LCCs have been and will continue be involved during Forest Management planning and implementation.

Finding #4:

The actual harvest level has been well below the planned level in 2011 FMP period to date, which if it continues, is likely to limit the degree of achievement of 2011 FMP objectives and targets.

Action Required:

1. Development of the Pineland Forest 2021-2031 FMP:
 - a. Under the 2017 FMP, SFLs are required to complete a risk assessment for the proposed Long-Term Management Direction. The assessment will identify risks associated with the implementation of the LTMD. When identifying risks, the planning team will consider access limitations, recommendations identified in independent forest audits, and the year 7 and 10 management unit Annual Reports. The risk assessment will include an investigation of recent wood utilization (e.g., last 10 years) and other

identified risks, and an evaluation of the potential implications on the achievement of management objectives”.

- b. During the development of the Pineland Forest 2021 FMP, the planning team will be required to consider the use of strategic management zones (SMZs). The establishment of strategic management zones is expected to offer spatial context when completing forest estate modeling. Zones may be established to highlight areas within the forest where operability may be limited due to terrain, distance to markets and/or processing facilities for hardwood species, access restrictions, harvest seasonality, etc.

Progress to Date:

1) Complete:

- a. The Risk Assessment is summarized in section 6.11 of the Analysis Package, Pineland Forest 2021-2031 FMP.
- b. Refer to section 3.2 in the Analysis Package, Pineland Forest 2021-2031 FMP, for a summary of SMZs identified by the Planning Team. Refer to section 6.8.1 in the Analysis Package for more information regarding SMZs as well as a Spatial Assessment.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. None.

Finding #5:

During the audit period, there was inconsistent effectiveness of sites treated with the herbicide Vision Max, that included varying degrees of damage and mortality to planted jack pine.

Action Required:

1. EACOM will formally document the ongoing investigation into the cause(s) of crop tree damage arising from the application of chemical aerial herbicide and the remedial actions taken to date.
2. Based on the results from the investigation, EACOM will, where feasible, take further remedial action.
3. EACOM will formally report on the investigation and remedial actions taken to address the crop tree damage arising from the application of chemical aerial herbicide in the Year 7 Annual Report, and possibly the Year 10 Annual Report, if needed.

Progress to Date:

1. Complete/Ongoing – EACOM has been investigating inconsistencies with the aerial tending program collectively on both the Pineland and Spanish Forest since 2006. Inconsistencies with the aerial tending program were first observed on the Spanish Forest in 2004. A similar finding was identified during the 2016 IFA on the Spanish Forest. Refer to year seven or eight Annual Report for the Spanish Forest for more details regarding the investigation and remedial actions taken to address aerial tending inconsistencies on the Spanish Forest. A summary of the investigation and actions completed to date will be included with the 2019-20 and 2020-2021 Annual Reports for the Pineland Forest.
2. Complete – A summary of actions taken to date on the Pineland Forest are summarized below:
 - 2017-2019:
 - Switched from disc-core nozzles to Accuflo nozzles.
 - Reduced the chemical rate of VisionMax from 5.0L/ha to 2.0L/ha.
 - Increased the total mix volume from 25L/ha to 35L/ha
 - Multiple site visits conducted with Chemical Supplier to review post-spray results.
 - 2020:
 - Eliminate the use of VisionMax on the Pineland Forest.
 - Conduct a trial using Timberline Silviculture Herbicide.
3. The investigation was ongoing at the time the Year 7 Annual Report was prepared. A summary of the actions completed to date will be included with the Year 9 and 10 Annual Report.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. EACOM will continue monitoring results of the aerial tending program.
2. EACOM will continue monitoring results of the aerial tending program.
3. Year 9 and 10 Annual Report.

Finding #6:

The washout on the branch road off Goose Range North Road (Audit Stop P14-738) is a safety hazard.

Action Required:

1. At a minimum, a sign will be posted before the washout.

Progress to Date:

1. Complete – A sign was posted before the washout. A berm was also created at this location. See photo below.



Future Tracking Requirements:

1. None

Finding #7:

Road maintenance may be threatened by the absence of a mutually-agreeable mechanism to control nuisance beaver.

Action Required:

1. A task team will be assembled.
2. Task team to document protocols that are currently being used on the Forest and develop a series of options and/or strategies, and benchmarks for the Pineland Forest.
3. Task team to complete an analysis of the advantages and disadvantage of each approach.
4. Task team to formalize a mutually agreeable protocol for Nuisance Beaver Management.
5. Task team to examine results of the protocol following the first year of implementation.

Progress to Date:

1. Completed. A task team was developed for the same recommendation on the Spanish forest (2010-2016 IFA). Since most participants (excluding Sudbury District) are on both the Pineland and Spanish Forests; we have utilized the efforts made by the existing task team.
2. Ongoing – As noted, the same protocols and strategies that have been discussed on the Spanish Forest will also apply to the Pineland Forest.
3. Ongoing – Utilizing the efforts that we have made on the Spanish forest which included the assessment of a variety of both strategic and operational approaches.
4. To be completed.
5. To be completed.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. None required.
2. Finalized Nuisance Beaver Management Protocol, June 2021
3. Finalized Nuisance Beaver Management Protocol, June 2021
4. Finalized Nuisance Beaver Management Protocol, June 2021
5. Minutes from meetings, revised protocol document and changes, if required, reflected in FMP, AWS, September 2021 Insert future tracking requirements for second action required (if necessary).

Finding #8:

The Trend Analysis did not meet key requirements identified in the FMPPM related to making recommendations for improvements in management of the forest.

Action Required:

1. EACOM will follow FMPPM requirements when preparing the Year 7 and 10 Annual Report/Trend Analysis.

Progress to Date:

1. Ongoing – EACOM completed the Year 7 Annual Report following the guidelines for the Year 5 Annual Report in the 2017 Forest Management Planning Manual. The Annual Report included an assessment, analysis, and review of implementation of the first 7 years of the FMP and identified significant events that have affected the achievement of objectives in the FMP. The 2017-2018 Annual Report (Year 7) was reviewed with and accepted by the MNRF. The Year 10 Annual Report/Trend Analysis will be completed in 2021.

Future Tracking Requirements:

1. Year 10 Annual Report.