

WHISKEY JACK FOREST
2014 INDEPENDENT FOREST AUDIT
MANAGEMENT UNIT ACTION PLAN

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Introduction

The final audit report was accepted by Forestry Futures Committee on January 6, 2015 for the Independent Forest Audit (IFA) of the Whiskey Jack Forest conducted by Arbex Forest Resource Consultants Ltd. for the period April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2014.

The Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol requires a Management Unit Action Plan be prepared in response to the audit recommendations. For each recommendation this action plan provides a description of the actions required, the organization and position responsible, timelines for each of the action items, as well as the method of tracking progress for each action.

Guiding Principles 1, 2, and 5 have not been addressed in this action plan as there was no recommendation associated to them. Recommendation # 2 was directed at Corporate Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) and will therefore be addressed in the Provincial Action plan.

Principle 3: Forest Management Planning

Recommendation #1:

The MNRF Regional Director must immediately complete an assessment on the validity of the 2012 Forest Management Plan (FMP) objectives and long term management direction (LTMD). This assessment must be available for the Plan Author's Year Three Annual Report determination as to whether the LTMD is valid for the second five year plan term. If the determination is that the LTMD (and its associated plan objectives) are no longer valid a new FMP must be prepared in accordance with 2009 Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM) requirements for unscheduled plan renewal. In developing the FMP, MNRF should apportion the Annual Harvest Area to operational zones (working circles) which explicitly consider the probability of forest operations within the designed zones through time.

Action(s) required:

- 1) An assessment on the validity of the 2012 FMP objectives and LTMD will be completed for use in the Plan Author's year three 2014-2015 Annual Report determination of whether the LTMD remains valid, the LTMD remains substantially valid but requires minor adjustments, or whether the LTMD is no longer valid and an early plan renewal is required.
- 2) The MNRF Regional Director will review the year three Annual Report and the MNRF District Manager's recommendation on endorsement and make a decision on acceptance of the recommendation and endorse the Annual Report. The endorsement enables the planning of operations for the second five year term to proceed or early plan renewal to proceed which would include consideration of how to address the probability of operations occurring as referred to in the audit recommendation.

Organization and position responsible:

- 1) Assessment - MNRF Northwest Region, Regional Planning Forester; Year three Annual Report - MNRF Kenora District, Plan Author.
- 2) MNRF Northwest Region, Regional Director.

Deadline date:

- 1) Assessment September 15, 2015; 2014-15 year three Annual Report due November 15, 2015, MNR review due December 15, 2015, if necessary revised report due by February 15, 2016, submission to NWR Regional Director by February 21, 2016.
- 2) Endorsement by March 1, 2016.

Method of tracking progress:

- 1) Assessment on validity of LTMD and date provided to Plan Author; 2014-2015 Annual Report.
- 2) 2014-15 Annual Report submission, review, recommendation on endorsement, decision on acceptance of the recommendation, and Regional Director endorsement. Forest Information Portal records of Annual Report submission, review and acceptance

Principle 4: Plan Assessment and Implementation

Recommendation #3:

- a) Kenora MNRF must implement an effective tending program to ensure that the renewal of conifer forest units is consistent with the planned future forest condition.
- b) Kenora MNRF must assess conifer sites renewed by artificial regeneration during the last two management terms (2004-2014) to assess the requirement for tending treatment.

Action(s) required:

- a) MNRF Kenora District has had an ongoing issue implementing an effective tending program on the Whiskey Jack Forest due to outward pressures from the public to ban the use of herbicides, therefore limiting the ability to ensure that the renewal of conifer forest units is consistent with the planned future forest condition.

The MNRF Kenora District will continue to develop and promote an aerial tending program but will also explore alternate tools and techniques to vegetation management such as manual tending or other chemical treatment option (i.e. air blast treatments, chemical site preparation). If alternate measures are feasible and contactors available, these will be scheduled for inclusion in the 2015/16 Annual Work Schedule and subsequent Annual Work Schedule. Future Annual Work Schedule and Annual Reports will discuss the scheduled and actual treatment type and area affected.

- b) As part of the 2004-2009 IFA Action Plan, the MNRF Kenora District performed a comprehensive review of areas artificially regenerated during the 2004-2009 FMP, as a result no areas were identified for tending and two areas were retreated and are currently being monitored. The MNRF Kenora District assumed control of the Whiskey Jack Forest in the fall of 2010. As part of the silviculture program the district established an intensive monitoring program of areas artificially regenerated, which includes the potential for tending or release from competition. To date tending has been required on 75 hectares of plantation and there are approximately 150 ha of area scheduled for aerial tending in 2015.

MNRF Kenora District will continue to monitor areas artificially regenerated in the last two management terms (2004-2014) to ensure that areas that require tending treatments are included in future Annual Work Schedules.

Organization and position responsible:

- a) MNRF Kenora District, Management Forester.
- b) MNRF Kenora District, Management Forester.

Deadline date:

- a) March 31, 2015 and ongoing annually.
- b) Ongoing immediately.

Method of tracking progress:

- a) Annual Work Schedule and Annual Reports
- b) Status Report, YR 3 Annual Report or any new enhanced reporting requirements in FMPM.

Principle 6: Monitoring

Recommendation #4:

The MNRF District Manager must ensure that forest operations compliance inspectors enforce all aspects of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and Forest Management Plan in a manner consistent with the regulations for forest operations.

Action(s) required:

- 1) MNRF Kenora District risk based approach to forest compliance is consistent with the 2014 Forest Compliance Handbook. As a Crown Forest the MNRF is fully responsible for compliance on the forest and performs inspections on all operations. As part of the Annual Compliance Plan a risk analysis is prepared for each harvest block which ranks each harvest block based on complexity, type and timing of operation, and operator compliance history and ranks the harvest blocks that have the greatest potential for having compliance issue(s). MNRF forest compliance inspectors will then utilize this table to determine the intensity of inspections for each harvest area. The MNRF Kenora District will discuss the risk ranking with the Forest Resource License (FRL) holders during the Pre-Work (Harvest) and sign off meeting.
- 2) A protocol will be developed and implemented to facilitate better communication of operational status notification with its FRL holders and contractors. The importance of status notifications and FRL holder obligations under the Terms and Conditions of their

licence for operational status notifications will be added to the Pre-Work sign-of sheet and will be stressed with FRL holders.

3) Any instances of operational issues documented in the Forest Operations Information Program that are deemed to be not in compliance, will comply with the policy and procedures for remedy determination that is consistent with part VI of the 2014 Forest Compliance Handbook.

4) MNRF Kenora District will discuss with FRL holders, the auditors observation for instances of lax supervision and their obligations under the Terms and Conditions of their licence. This discussion will be done during the annual compliance and operations meeting and will be discussed during the Pre-Work sign off meeting for each FRL holder.

Organization and position responsible:

- 1) MNRF Kenora District, Integrated Resource Management Technical Specialist.
- 2) MNRF Kenora District, Integrated Resource Management Technical Specialist.
- 3) MNRF Kenora District, Integrated Resource Management Technical Specialist.
- 4) MNRF Kenora District, Integrated Resource Management Technical Specialist.

Deadline date:

April 1, 2015 and ongoing annually.

Method of tracking progress:

- 1) Annual Work Schedule, Compliance Plan and Pre-Work sign-off sheets.
- 2) Annual Work Schedule, Compliance Plan and Pre-Work sign-off sheets.
- 3) Forest Operations Information Program, Annual Report
- 4) Annual Work Schedule, Compliance Plan and Pre-Work sign-off sheets.

Recommendation #5:

- a) The MNRF District Manager must ensure that all FMPM requirements for the preparation and submission of Annual Reports are met.
- b) The MNRF Kenora District Manager must ensure that the deficiencies in the 2008-2009 Ten Year AR identified in Recommendation # 20 of the 2009 IFA are addressed.
- c) The Kenora MNRF must improve its managerial oversight of its contracted service provider(s) and /or its own staff in the preparation of Annual Reports to ensure the completeness and accuracy of information reported.

Action(s) required:

a) The MNRF Kenora District Manager will ensure that the 2012-2013 Annual Report, and annually thereafter will be prepared and submitted as per FIM and FMPM timing, content and formatting requirements.

b) The MNRF Kenora District Manager will ensure that deficiencies noted in the 2009 IFA regarding the 2008-2009 Year Ten Annual Report will be addressed in accordance with Forest Information Manual (FIM) and FMPM timing, content and formatting requirements.

c) A lead individual will be assigned to coordinate the preparation of the annual report to ensure accuracy and completeness of the product as well as provide oversight if annual report production is completed by a contracted service provider.

Organization and position responsible:

a) MNRF Kenora District, Management Forester and in collaboration with MNRF Northwest Region, Regional Planning Forester.

b) MNRF Kenora District, Management Forester.

c) MNRF Kenora District, Management Forester.

Deadline date:

a) Submit 2012/13 prior to the submission of the YR 3 Annual Report due on November 15, 2015. Subsequent annual reports will be submitted as per FIM and FMPM timing, content and formatting requirements.

b) June 30, 2015.

c) September 15, 2015.

Method of tracking progress:

a) Annual Reports as submitted; Forest Information Portal records of Annual Report submission, review and acceptance.

b) Annual Report as submitted; Forest Information Portal records of Annual Report submission, review and acceptance.

c) Internal records

Recommendation #6

a) The Kenora MNRF must address the backlog in the area requiring Free to Grow (FTG) survey (~18,000 ha) and design and implement a program which facilitates the timely verification of FTG inventory records assembled over the past two audit terms (in particular reference to areas designated as conifer forest units).

Action(s) required:

a) The MNRF Kenora District assumed control of the Whiskey Jack Forest in the fall of 2010. At this time there was 25,000 hectares of area that was not declared Free to Grow and has reduced this backlog to approximately 18,000 ha. The district is committed to reducing the back log as quickly as possible. However, the majority of area remaining is remote and very costly to perform intensive ground surveys. A combination of aerial ocular and aerial photography interpretation will be utilized to survey the remaining area.

The MNRF Kenora District has been working with KBM Resources Group in the use of large scale three dimensional aerial photography for free to grow photo interpretation. To date approximately 4,800 hectares of area has been interpreted with excellent results and another 7,500 hectares of area is planned for 2015. The district will prepare a schedule of free to grow surveys that eliminates the backlog prior to the submission of the new Forest Resources Inventory in 2018.

Organization and position responsible:

1) MNRF Kenora District, Integrated Resource Management Technical Specialist.

Deadline date:

a) December 31, 2016.

Method of tracking progress:

a) Annual Reports, Status Report, schedule of FTG surveys.

Principle 8: Contractual Obligations

Recommendation #7:

The MNRF District Manager must ensure 1) that the Action Plan is prepared in accordance with the schedule specified in the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol and 2) that at all Action Plan items are effectively addressed within appropriate timelines.

Action(s) required:

1. A schedule will be determined for the production and review of the Action Plan to ensure the action plan submitted within 2 months of acceptance of the audit report by Forestry Futures Committee. The schedule will be implemented.

2. MNRF Kenora District, Resources Management Supervisor will regularly meet on a quarterly basis to ensure that the Action Plan is implemented as approved.

Organization and position responsible:

1. MNRF Kenora District, Resources Management Supervisor and MNRF Northwest Region, Regional Planning Forester.

2. MNRF Kenora District, Resources Management Supervisor.

Deadline date:

1. February 15, 2015.

2. Initial meeting to discuss development be completed by December 16, 2014. Final submission of action plan due March 7, 2015. Quarterly meetings beginning April 1, 2015.

Method of tracking progress:

1. Record of internal schedule. Date action plan submitted.

2. Records of meetings/discussions. Submission of the Action Plan.