

Algonquin Park Forest

2017 IFA

**Status Report**

# Algonquin Park Forest 2017 Independent Forest Audit

## Status Report Signature Page

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# Introduction

In October 2017 an Independent Forest Audit (IFA) was conducted on the Algonquin Park Forest for the period April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2017. Integration Branch was notified of the Forestry Futures Committee's acceptance of the report as being final on February 1, 2018. A Management Unit Action Plan was approved June 21, 2018.

This Status Report describes the status of the actions detailed in the 2018 Algonquin Park Forest IFA Action Plan. 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. In keeping with the 2017 Action Plan, this status report addresses the status of the 5 management unit findings only. The other 5 findings will be addressed separately through regular corporate MNRF planning and policy review cycle. The Status Report is due June 22, 2020.

## Findings

### **Finding #1:**

The LCC Terms of Reference is missing some of the elements required by the FMPM.

### **Action Required:**

1. Algonquin Park MNRF Local Citizens Committee (LCC) Terms of Reference will be reviewed to ensure compliance with the requirements of the 2017 Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM), Section 2.2.4. The review will include, but will not be limited to, operational procedures, roles and responsibilities.

### **Progress to Date:**

1. Complete The Terms of Reference was reviewed and updated to meet all requirements in the 2017 FMPM, specifically operational procedures, roles and responsibilities. The LCC Chairman signed the updated Terms of Reference in May 2019 and a copy has been provided to all members of the LCC.

### **Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. None.

### **Finding #4:**

The on-going level of values collection by MNRF in the Algonquin Forest appears to be below that in neighboring Districts and not consistent with the mandate for managing ecological integrity in the Park, as expressed in the Algonquin Park Management Plan and related MNRF commitments.

**Action Required:**

1. Ontario Parks and MNRF Southern Region will undertake an objective review of values collection needs in Algonquin Park in comparison to values collection efforts undertaken in districts in the Region.
2. If any shortcomings are identified, a project plan will be developed to address them.
3. Ontario Parks and MNRF Southern Region will ensure sufficient system and staffing support is in place to meet MNRFs commitment of providing relevant values information for the preparation of the upcoming FMP.

**Progress to Date:**

1. Complete As of October 22, 2018, Ontario Parks was formally transferred from MNRF to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). This resulted in MNRF forest management responsibilities in Algonquin Park Forest being assumed by Pembroke District MNRF.
2. Complete Value collection needs in Algonquin Park are now risk ranked in a Park context and resourced at a similar level as adjacent districts.
3. Complete Values information for FMP preparation has been and continues to be provided by the MNRF Pembroke District GIS technician in conjunction with Southern Region GIS staff.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. None
2. None
3. None

**Finding #5:**

The APMP is highly prescriptive in some places and the science, or more broadly, general conditions have changed to make some of such direction obsolete.

**Action Required:**

1. During the next examination of the Algonquin Park Management Plan forestry direction contained within will be considered for currency and applicability. The entire Park Management Plan will be examined at that time to determine if a revised Park Management Plan is warranted.

**Progress to Date:**

1. Complete An examination of the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan has not occurred to date. Examination of the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan is dependent on a number of factors therefore the timeline is uncertain. As mentioned in Finding 4, Ontario Parks has now joined MECP. MECP staff will inform MNRF staff when this examination is to occur.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. None

**Finding #7:**

Non-conformances with the direction of FMPM Appendix VII (Operational Standards for Forestry Aggregate Pits) were identified during the audit at two aggregate pits.

**Action Required:**

1. AFA will undertake an assessment of the extent to which the aggregate pit issues viewed during the audit represent isolated or systemic problems, including forest operations inspection results over the audit term.
2. If systemic problems are identified a corrective action plan will be developed and implemented by AFA.

**Progress to Date:**

1. Complete. An assessment of the extent to which the aggregate pit issues viewed during the audit represent isolated or systemic problems was completed. A total of 115 pit operations were reported during the IFA term. Six issues were identified in FOIP, all of which were rectified and closed except for one that was assigned a non-compliance status. Other audit results were also examined and no non-conformances related to aggregate operations were recorded during the IFA term.
2. Complete. Systemic problems have not been identified. Corrective action plan not required.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. None.
2. None.

**Finding #8:**

During the audit, certain planted sites were viewed with intensive competition and resultant high levels of mortality of planted stock.

**Action Required:**

1. AFA will summarize survival plot data to determine the extent to which mortality issues viewed during the audit exist. This summary will include the impact of SAR restrictions on plantation survival.
2. If systemic problems are identified a corrective action plan will be developed and implemented by AFA.
3. Continue to implement best practices on competitive sites, where not restricted by species at risk (SAR) AOCs.

**Progress to Date:**

1. Complete. Five years of AFA plantation survival plot (PSP) data has been summarized (2010-2015). Results were compiled for (a) all plots, (b) non-SAR affected plots and for (c) PSP's specifically affected by SAR AOC prescriptions. A total of 7,070 trees were measured; 5,473 in non-SAR areas and 1,597 in SAR areas. Overall survival of tree seedlings two years post-plant was 82.7%, with 62.6% of those classified as healthy and 20.1% classified as poor. For plots not affected by SAR AOC prescriptions overall survival was 83.4%, with 61.8% classified as healthy and 21.6% classified as poor. For plots affected by SAR AOC prescriptions overall survival was 80.3% (3.1% less), with 65.2% classified as healthy (3.5% more) and 15% classified as poor (6.6% less). Therefore, while overall survival was slightly less in SAR affected areas, the surviving trees were classified as healthier. There appears to be no significant differences in overall plantation survival between non-SAR plots and SAR plots. Based on the information summarized here it is felt that overall plantation survival is within acceptable limits for all plots and within SAR affected plots. Survival rates are consistent with other available regional plantation survival information.
2. Complete. Systematic problems with plantation survival are not apparent based on this sample.
3. Complete. Best practices continue to be implemented where possible.

**Future Tracking Requirements:**

1. None.
2. None.
3. None