

# **SAPAWE FOREST**

**2012 INDEPENDENT FOREST AUDIT**

**MANAGEMENT UNIT ACTION PLAN**

## **Status Report**

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# Status Report Signature Page

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# Introduction

In August 2012, an Independent Forest Audit (IFA) was conducted on the Sapawe Forest by Arbex Forest Resource Consultants Ltd. for the period April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2012. Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Forests Branch was notified of the Forestry Futures Committee's acceptance of the report as being final on January 3, 2013. The action plan was approved February 1, 2013.

As of June 24, 2014 the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR or OMNR) has been renamed to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). All components of this report that were taken directly from the original approved action plan (recommendations and action plans) refer to the OMNR, while all components produced specifically for this status report (progress to date and future tracking) refer to the MNRF.

This status report is required to be submitted by February 1, 2015. The status report includes the original approved actions for each of the recommendations from the Management Unit Action Plan. The progress to date of each action is listed below the actions required. Future tracking is shown for any actions not yet completed. Those recommendations directed at corporate MNRF (Recommendation #4) will be addressed in the separate 2012 Provincial Status Report.

## Recommendations

### Principle 2: Public Participation and Aboriginal Involvement

#### **Recommendation #1:**

The OMNR District must ensure that an amendment is made to the 2010 FMP concerning the Sky Lake Road as directed by the District Manager's Issue Resolution Decision.

#### ***Action(s) required:***

1. MNR and Rainy Lake Tribal Resource Management Inc. will meet with the Resource Based Tourism Operators that are directly affected by the Sky Lake Road timing restriction amendment.
2. Rainy Lake Tribal Resource Management Inc. will submit the amendment to the MNR for review and approval. MNR will assist in the draft of the amendment as required as outlined in the District Manager's Issue Resolution Decision.

***Progress to date:***

1. **Completed.** The MNRF and Rainy Lake Tribal Resource Management Inc. (RLTRMI) met with the Resource Based Tourism Operators (RBTOs) on April 5, 2013 regarding the submission of an amendment to define additional hunting timing restrictions for use of roads in the Sky Road area. It was determined at that meeting that the RBTOs were satisfied with the timing restrictions currently in place (no access from May 1 to September 30) to protect their tourism values in the 2010 FMP. However, they did express concern for the planned signage and access control strategies for roads in the Sky Road area. To address these concerns, RLTRMI submitted an administrative amendment on April 30, 2013 to defer harvesting of the Sky Road blocks from Term 1 (2010-2015) to Term 2 (2015-2020) to allow for more time to consult and discuss the RBTO's access concerns in the Sky Lake area. The amendment was approved by MNRF on May 2, 2013. All parties agreed that the appropriate signage and access control strategies could be negotiated during the Phase II planning process and documented in the Phase II road use management strategies for the Sky Road area. This was a new issue and had nothing to do with the timing as outlined in the Issue Resolution Decision letter.
2. **Completed.** As per the outcome of the meeting associated with Action #1, the Remote Based Tourism Operators expressed their satisfaction with the timing restrictions that were already documented in the 2010 FMP, therefore, there was no need for an amendment as outlined in the District Manager's Issue Resolution Decision.

**Principle 4: Plan Assessment and Implementation**

**Recommendation #2:**

The OMNR District must ensure that tending treatments are effective, are conducted in a timely manner, and where needed are implemented at multiple times during the development of the stand. The backlog in area requiring treatment must also be addressed.

***Action(s) required:***

1. A total of 4000 hectares were identified as backlog area and aerial tended with herbicide during the 2012 Annual Work Schedule operations.
2. The need to use a combination of both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters during spray operations or just a fixed-wing aircraft will be assessed in conjunction with adjacent forest units to ensure the program is completed in a timely manner. During 2012, RLTRMI planned to use the aircraft combination during the aerial spraying of 4000 hectares of backlog area, identified in action # 1, in order to successfully complete all areas without total dependence on helicopters. However, the fixed-wing aircraft completed the entire spray program in a timely manner with excellent coverage. This approach worked well and will continue to be assessed as a viable option for timely spray interventions in the future.

3. As a good silvicultural practice to enhance plantation survival, newly established plantations that require herbicide tending will be scheduled for aerial herbicide operations, when planning allows, one year after establishment.
4. Plantations that are identified as requiring an herbicide treatment will be scheduled for aerial tending one year after identification.
5. Herbicide tending results will be assessed the year after application to assess the effectiveness of the herbicide application.
6. Areas with unsatisfactory herbicide spray results will be promptly added to the Annual Work Schedules to ensure a timely and effective tending intervention.

***Progress to date:***

1. **Completed.** As stated in approved action plan.
2. **Completed.** Completed in 2012 as stated in approved action plan. Annual analysis of the appropriate combination of aircraft (rotary and fixed wing aircraft) was undertaken during the planning stage of the spray programs in 2013 and 2014. For both years, based on the size of the programs and aircraft availability, the analysis resulted in the use of rotor-wing aircraft to complete the programs in a timely matter.
3. **Completed.** To date, commencing with the 2013/14 AWS, 1,818 hectares of newly established plantations have been identified as requiring aerial tending one year after identification. A total of 353 hectares of area planted in 2012 was tended in 2013 and 2014, 709 hectares of area planted in 2013 have been tended in 2014 and 25 hectares are scheduled for tending in 2015. A total of 731 hectares of area planted in 2014 are scheduled for release in 2015.
4. **Completed.** Out of the 374 hectares of 2012 plantations, 353 hectares (94%) were identified as requiring aerial tending one year after identification and were sprayed in 2013 and 2014. All 734 hectares of area planted in 2013 were deemed to require tending. To date, 709 hectares were sprayed in 2014 and 25 hectares are scheduled for tending in 2015. A total of 731 hectares of area planted in 2014 (100% of the area planted) are scheduled for release in 2015.
5. **Partially Completed.** In the 2013 and 2014 field seasons, approximately 3,500 hectares of the 4,000 hectares tended in 2012 and all 709 hectares sprayed in 2013 hectares were surveyed for re-treatment of herbicide by the Renewal Forester.
6. **Partially Completed.** A total of 152 hectares requiring re-treatment with herbicide were treated in 2014. Surveys from the 2012 and 2013 spray seasons indicate there are sites where herbicide effectiveness was not maximally effective and these sites will require additional treatment to achieve the desired future forest unit at FTG. The retreatment priority of these areas is relatively low as; 1) crop tree survival is not being imminently threatened by competing species, and 2) the only objective of a re-treatment would be to shift the composition from a conifer-dominated condition (with scattered hardwoods) to a pure conifer condition.

***Future tracking requirements:***

5. Sites that have not been surveyed for herbicide efficacy from 2012 aerial tending program (approximately 500 hectares), due to poor access, are anticipated to be surveyed in the next two to three field seasons. All of the area needing to be surveyed from the 2012 aerial tending program is of FTG age; these sites will be surveyed using aerial imagery or during scheduled FTG assessments. Deadline: September 15, 2017 beginning in 2015. Organization and position responsible: Rainy Lake Tribal Resource Management Inc., Renewal Forester (lead), General Manager. Method of tracking progress: Survey records.

All areas treated with herbicide one year post-treatment during the growing season will be surveyed to assess whether the objectives of the tending treatment (i.e., competition control) have been met. Deadline: September 15, annually beginning in 2015. Organization and position responsible: Rainy Lake Tribal Resource Management Inc., Renewal Forester (lead), General Manager. Method of tracking progress: Survey records.

6. Future areas identified where the herbicide tending treatment as unsatisfactory will be promptly added to the AWS and tended to ensure a timely and effective tending intervention. Deadline: January 1, annually. Organization and position responsible: Rainy Lake Tribal Resource Management Inc., Renewal Forester (lead), General Manager. Method of tracking progress: Annual Work Schedules and Annual Reports.

## **Principle 8: Contractual Obligations**

### **Recommendation #3:**

The OMNR District Manager must ensure that the Action Plan and Action Plan Status Report responding to IFA Recommendations are completed within the specified timeframe.

### ***Action(s) required:***

1. MNR Fort Frances District, Rainy Lake Tribal Resource Management Inc., NW Region and Forest Branch will develop an Action Plan production and review schedule beginning with the Draft Final Report to ensure the Action Plan is submitted prior to the deadline.
2. MNR Fort Frances District, Rainy Lake Tribal Resource Management Inc. and the NW Region will develop a Status Report production and review schedule prior to the deadline and develop, review, and submit the Status Report according to this schedule.

### ***Progress to date:***

1. **Completed.** As noted in the approved action plan.

2. **Completed.** The Northwest Region MNRF sent a proposed status report production and review schedule to MNRF Fort Frances District and RLTRMI on January 6, 2015 that identified specific due dates for the development, review, and submission of the status report. The MNRF Regional Planning Forester also produced a report template for the district and RLTRMI on January 6, 2015. District MNRF and RLTRMI completed their respective portions of the report which were reviewed by the Regional Planning Forester on January 20, 2015. The status report was submitted by the Fort Frances MNRF District Manager as noted on the signature page.