Forest Practices Board

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
July 5, 2012

Campbell River audit finds compliance problems with timber sales program

VICTORIA – An audit of BC Timber Sales' (BCTS) Strait of Georgia Business Area has found several instances of non-compliance with provincial forestry legislation by timber sale licence holders and BCTS operating within the Campbell River area. Only one of 24 timber sale licensees had no problems noted with its operations.

"While the auditors did not find evidence of significant environmental harm at the time, these practices increase the risk of damage to resources and the environment occurring," said board chair Al Gorley.

Auditors found instances where fish habitat was not being adequately protected because of sediment introduced into fish streams as well as a failure to maintain the natural drainage patterns of several small streams. Other problems noted include not adhering to professionally developed plans, and not having an adequate fire suppression system on site during extreme fire hazard conditions.

"Individually, each of these instances might not be considered serious; but taken together, and given the number in total, the board considers them to be significant," Gorley said. "The board has conducted well over 100 compliance audits since 1996, including more than 20 audits of BCTS operations, and typically finds very few problems —this is an exception."

The report notes that BCTS has committed to taking action to address the board's concerns.

The BCTS operating areas audited include Gold River on the west coast of Vancouver Island, Sayward on the east, and Mainland areas across from Campbell River.

The Forest Practices Board is B.C.'s independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices, reporting its findings and recommendations directly to the public and government. The board audits forest and range practices on public lands and appropriateness of government enforcement. It can also make recommendations for improvement to practices and legislation.

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More information can be obtained by contacting:
Helen Davies, Communications
Forest Practices Board
Phone: 250 213-4708 / 1 800 994-5899

BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

File: 9710-20/2010-11

December 18, 2012

Forest Practices Board
PO Box 9905
Stn Prov Gov't
Victoria, BC V8W 9R1

Attn: Al Gorley, Chair

Dear Sir:

Re: BCTS response to Forest Practices Board recommendation in July 2012 audit report, *Forestry Audit: BC Timber Sales and Timber Sale Licence Holders, Strait of Georgia Business Area, Campbell River District*

In response to the Forest Practices Board's (Board) request of July 2012, please accept this letter as our follow-up report that describes our assessment of the potential environmental risk and our determination of remediation/ monitoring requirements to manage environmental risks resulting from timber sale operations that were field audited by the Board in 2010. Please note, we have focussed our review on the blocks that were identified by the Board as having significant findings.

Of the fifteen blocks identified with significant findings, we have concluded that five of the blocks have very low residual risk and therefore requires no remediation or monitoring. Ten blocks require remediation work or monitoring. We have complete remediation work (deactivation) on six of the ten blocks. These works were primarily focussed on improving water control and road prism stability. We are continuing to monitor/assess five TSLs. The following table outlines the blocks where work has been completed and where monitoring and/or further assessment is required.

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
BC Timber Sales
Strait of Georgia Business Area
Location:
370 South Dogwood Street
Campbell River
Mailing Address:
370 South Dogwood Street
Campbell River, BC V9W 6Y7
Tel: (250) 286-9300
Fax: (250) 286-9420

TSL – Block	Field Team – TSL Location	Works Completed	Comments - residual risk, planned work
A68274 - C1CF	FT 1 - Mohun	Cross ditched and barricaded	Low risk, work complete
A78127 – Z32	FT 1 - Horseshoe	Road fill slope pulled back and barricaded	Low risk, work complete
A78128 – Z24	FT 1 - Horseshoe	Cross ditched and barricaded	Low risk, work complete
A80233-48118	FT 1 - Naka		High risk, connector road and bridge crossing is location of concern, site is currently stable, full assessment of long term risk/required remediation is planned for spring 2013.
A80233 - 48219	FT 1 - Naka		Low risk - pull back perched material, install barricade at same time as work on A80233 - 48118
A82032 - 38501	FT 2 - Dean	Pulled back unstable fill and install cross ditches and barricaded	Low risk, work complete
A82034 - 38254	FT 2 - Elliot	Pulled back fill slope, lined ditch with rock to control erosion, re-established barricade.	Moderate risk - Monitor steep cut slope and deactivation measures near switchback for erosion and maintenance of natural drainage patterns.
A82035 – C2FA	FT 2 - Greensea	None required	Low risk – monitor water control measures and consider upgrading deactivation if required when machinery back in this isolated Sonora Island location.
A82150 – C3K4	FT 2 - Boulder		Low risk – area currently blocked by two natural slides, access to be restored in 2013, outstanding work includes removal of a large metal pipe,

TSL – Block	Field Team – TSL Location	Works Completed	Comments - residual risk, planned work
			pull back of unstable fill and installation of cross ditches and a barricade
A82762 – C3JZ	FT 2 - Akan	Pulled back unstable fill, installed cross ditches and barricaded	Low risk – work complete

In total, the actual cost to do the above work and the estimated cost to complete the final assessments and monitoring is approximately $17, 200.

There are two aspects of the legislation that Strait of Georgia (SoG) appears to have a significantly different interpretation than the Board – we will be seeking clarification of this through our ministry channels. The Board determined that seven of the 24 TSLs audited were not maintaining natural drainage patterns as required under Section 39(1) of the Forest Planning and Practises Regulation (FPPR). Our assessment determined that one of the TSLs was not maintaining natural drainage patterns. It appeared to SoG that some of the audit opinions were based on speculation that culverts had not been installed by the Licensees. However, this was not the case. At the time of the audit, most of the roads had been deactivated and culverts removed. We acknowledge that some of the cross ditches were not dug as deeply as they should have been but they were installed and they were handling the water that was flowing. We could not see evidence that water was actually being diverted from one water course or drainage area to another neighbouring water course or drainage area. We certainly acknowledge the critical need to avoid diverting water onto unconditioned slopes or into drainage paths other than the natural path. With one exception, we could not see evidence of this type of diversion happening.

The other aspect of the legislation that we will be seeking interpretation of is Section 55(1) and (2) of the FPPR. Section 55(1) requires a person who builds a temporary access structure (TAS) to protection the stream channel and bank. It appeared to SoG that the Board was applying this aspect of the regulation to machine crossings of a stream where a TAS was not constructed or installed. In our view, the crossings in question did not warrant construction of a TAS, so in our opinion this aspect of the regulation did not apply. The impact to the stream channels and banks was immaterial in our observation. With respect to Section 55(2), we observed crossings where the licensee walked equipment over streams that had naturally occurring debris at the point of the crossing. It appeared that the Board felt this material formed a TAS and should be removed. Our opinion is that the natural debris does not need to be removed in this case, unless the material was moved in such a manner that the natural drainage pattern would be affected. We did not observe this to be the case in any of the examples we saw.

I recognise that these examples are difficult to assess without looking at the specific examples in the field. Had our two-way communication and working relationship been more effective

during the field audit, we could potentially have clarified these aspects at that time. We will seek clarification with these pieces of regulation and will make the right decisions going forward.

I trust this letter adequately addresses the Board's recommendation. If the Board has any questions or requires more information, please contact me at 250-286-9337.

Yours truly,



Don Hudson, RPF
Timber Sales Manager

pc: Mike Falkiner, Executive Director, BC Timber Sales

Forest Practices Board

File: 97150-20/2010-11

January 22, 2013

VIA EMAIL

Don Hudson
Timber Sales Manager
Strait of Georgia Business Area
370 South Dogwood Street
Campbell River, B.C. V9W 6Y7

Dear Don Hudson:

Re: BCTS-CR Response to Recommendation

Thank you for your letter dated December 18, 2012 in response to the Board's recommendation from our July 2012 publicly released audit report.

The Board is encouraged to hear that BCTS-CR has completed the assessment of the fifteen blocks indentified with significant findings and that BCTS-CR has completed remediation work on six blocks and are continuing to monitor/assess five TSL's.

Board staff have reviewed your submission and find that it has addressed the Board's recommendation.

I accept this response as having addressed the Board's recommendation and now consider this file to be closed.

Thank you and your staff for your co-operation throughout the audit.

Yours sincerely,

R.A. (Al) Gorley, RPF
Chair

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