



File: 97250-20/080816

February 19, 2009

Dear Participants:

Re: Report on - File 080816 / Wardner Woodlot

As you are aware, the complainant submitted a complaint to the Forest Practices Board on October 31, 2008 regarding forest practices on Woodlot 429. The Board has investigated and this is its report.

The complainant identified several concerns with practices on the woodlot:

1. that the woodlot licensee was leaving large debris piles in the woodlot;
2. that there were water control issues on some roads; and
3. that there was considerable debris left on the ground following logging in the woodlot.

Board staff visited the woodlot on November 17, 2008. Also in attendance were the complainant and Ministry of Forests and Range (MFR) staff from the Rocky Mountain Forest District. The following are the Board's observations and findings.

The field visit confirmed some of the complainant's assertions. The most substantial issue is the numerous large slash piles seen in several locations around the woodlot. The piles appeared to be old and had been added to over the years. The most recent debris seemed to be at least two years old consistent with information from the forest district that the most recent cutting permit expired in 2006. Under section 7 of the *Wildfire Act* the licensee has an obligation to assess and abate a fire hazard. The Board understands that the MFR will address the issue with the licensee.

The second concern involved the access road through the woodlot where two sites were observed with water pooling on and beside the road. One of these sites was a seepage with slowly flowing water. There was no culvert; however, an unused culvert was lying beside the road nearby. The other site on the same road did not appear to have flowing water but was a low spot where water was collecting. There was no apparent environmental damage at either site.

The Board understands that, in response to the field investigation, the MFR staff have inspected the sites and determined that no enforcement action is required. The Board accepts this

response but notes that the licensee is still responsible for maintaining natural drainage patterns and should examine the road where the water is collecting.

The third concern was that there was a lot of debris in some harvested areas. the complainant identified an area where he felt there was an unreasonable amount of debris left on the ground. While there was debris, much of it appeared to be the result of windthrow after harvesting. The amount of debris was similar to that in adjacent unharvested stands and would likely not cause a silvicultural problem. In conclusion, neither the Board staff nor the MFR staff felt that any action was required regarding the concern about the amount of debris left behind after logging.

In closing, the Board would like to thank all the participants for their cooperation in the investigation. The issue of the slash piles was substantiated by the Board's investigation. In response, the MFR intends to address the slash pile issue with the licensee. The Board accepts this response as adequate in the circumstances.

I hope that the Board's involvement has been helpful. If you have any remaining questions or concerns, please contact me. In addition, we would appreciate any feedback you can provide to help us improve our investigation process. If you are willing to provide us with comments, please complete our questionnaire, which can be found on the Board's website at: <http://www.fpb.gov.bc.ca/forms.aspx?ekfrm=2896>.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce Fraser, PhD
Chair