



File: 97250-20/17067

February 1, 2018

VIA EMAIL

Dear Participants:

Re: Resolution of Complaint File 17067 - *Results and Strategies for Visuals in Atco Wood Products approved Forest Stewardship Plan*

This is the Forest Practices Board's closing letter for a complaint filed by a resident of Lardeau in the West Kootenay region of southeastern BC.

The Board received a complaint on November 24, 2017, alleging that the visual quality section in ATCO Wood Products (ATCO) approved forest stewardship plan (FSP) is not compliant with *Forest and Range Practices Act*¹ (FRPA) obligations and is not enforceable. The complaint is not about any of ATCO's field activities not meeting visual quality objectives after harvesting and road construction.

Background

FRPA requires most licensees harvesting Crown timber in BC to prepare FSPs, which are the only operational plans prepared by licensees for approval by government. The *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation*² (FPPR) identifies objectives set by government for visual quality and other resource values (soils, timber, wildlife, biodiversity, water, and cultural and heritage resources). Licensees must specify results and strategies in their FSP to meet the objectives set by government.

Government established visual quality objectives (VQOs) in 2005 and 2014 for ATCO's operating areas. VQOs reflect the amount of modification that can occur from specific viewpoints to meet a desired level of visual quality after harvesting and road construction. Government has an established procedure to assess viewsapes and assign visual quality objectives, based on the physical characteristics and social concern for the area. Compliance with VQOs can only be evaluated after harvesting and road construction activities are completed.

¹ http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/02069_01

² http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/14_2004

A Board investigator met with the complainant to clarify their concerns. The investigator also met with ATCO and the District Manager of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development in the Selkirk Natural Resource District to review the concern and the wording in the FSP. Both ATCO and the District Manager agreed that the wording in the FSP was not as clear as it should be and were open to suggestions on how to improve the wording.

The Board reviewed the wording and concluded that the result and strategy in the FSP did not commit ATCO to meet the visual quality objective after harvesting and road construction were completed. Once ATCO was made aware of the Board's findings, it immediately committed to amending the FSP to ensure that it clearly states that ATCO will meet the visual quality objectives following harvesting and road construction. The amendment will include the following wording:

"The holder of the FSP will meet the visual quality objectives (VQOs) after harvesting and road construction has occurred in the Arrow and Kootenay Lake FDU's. The VQOs are established by GAR Section 7 notices dated December 31, 2005 for the Arrow FDU, and March 7, 2014 for the Kootenay Lake FDU's."

Resolution

ATCO have committed to submitting an amendment to their FSP once they receive a copy of this letter, with wording that addresses the concerns identified in the investigation.

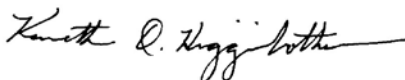
The Board is pleased with ATCO's cooperation and willingness to review and amend the visual quality result and strategy in its FSP, and is satisfied that the amendment addresses the complainant's concern. The complainant considers that this resolution is suitable.

This concludes the Board's involvement in this file. If you have any remaining questions or concerns, please contact Cam Leitch, RPF at 250 213-4728.

Yours sincerely,



Marlene Machmer
A/Chair



Ken Higginbotham
A/Chair



Norma Wilson
A/Chair