



File: 97250-20/090891

June 26, 2009

Dear Participants:

Re: Completion of Investigation- File 090891 / Fauquier Salvage

On May 13, 2009, the complainant filed a complaint about several forest practices near Kootenay District lot 8095, located by the town of Fauquier.

To help everyone try to resolve these issues Board staff examined the site and discussed the forest practices issues with the participants. Each of the participants stated that they had a better understanding of the purpose of the salvage harvesting; the requirements and obligations in the licence to cut; and had an opportunity to observe and discuss the current conditions of the landings, trails and road.

As a result of those discussions I believe there is a better understanding of the issues raised in the complaint and as such, I consider this investigation complete.

To aid in any future discussions you may have, the following is my understanding of the issues discussed.

Live trees

The complainant was concerned that live trees were being harvested which would not be considered salvage. The licensee has a *Forestry Licence to Cut*. The licence specifies what tree species can be harvested. As well, the trees must be in danger of being lost, damaged or destroyed. Healthy trees of any species can be harvested if they are interspersed with the dead, dying or damaged trees. As well, healthy trees can also be harvested to provide access to the dead, dying or damaged trees.

The Ministry of Forests and Range staff and the licensee explained that in this case, the area contains cedar infected with Armillaria root rot, and Douglas fir attacked by fir bark beetle. Board staff identified both on the site. Trees attacked still are alive but are considered in danger of being lost, and when harvested often still contain live branches. The licensee was harvesting these trees.

I also note that while the licensee may select trees to harvest at their discretion (as long as they abide by the terms of the licence), that the licensee requested and received advice from ministry staff.

Amount of skid trails

The complainants observed that there is a network of trails throughout the area and questioned whether this was excessive.

The licensee explained that they have located trails to minimize the amount of trails needed to access the timber. As well, he located the trails to minimize any impact on the road right of way. Ministry staff stated that the amount of trails was appropriate in their view and they had discussed the location of salvage harvesting with the licensee. Board staff examined some of the trails and concluded that they were in good condition and did not contain excessive soil disturbance or rutting.

Slash accumulation

The amount of slash found along the road right-of-way was also discussed. The complainant was concerned with excessive amounts of slash never being cleaned up.

The licence requires that upon completion of operations, landing debris cannot be within five metres of standing trees unless authorised by the Forest Officer. The licence stipulates that unusable material such as limbs, tops and firm-wood rejects shall be piled and burned or the material is to be lopped and scattered in the bush.

Along the road, old landings did not contain any slash that Board staff considered to be a fire hazard. Staff also noted that the licensee limbs and tops the trees at the stump site which reduces the slash accumulations on the landings.

At the one active landing there was some slash and debris. Once the operations are complete the accumulated slash will have to be scattered; or piled and burned unless the Ministry directs otherwise. Burning of slash piles is usually done in the fall or winter.

Road maintenance

The complainant stated that in the past year there were no substantial issues with the road but there had been in the past. The complainant pays to have the road maintained and did not want the road compromised by logging.

The licensee explained that he located his skid trails so that he does not use the road right-of-way for logging or skidding. Further, his logging trucks lift the logs from the landing which eliminates the skidders driving through the ditches in order to pile the logs close to the road for pick up. The licensee also avoids hauling when the conditions are too wet.

The Licence to Cut requires the licensee to repair all damage to the road and right-of-way as a result of his operations. The level of repairs or maintenance has to be to the satisfaction of the ministry.

In closing, the Board would like to thank all the participants for their cooperation in the investigation. If you have any remaining questions or concerns, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bruce Fraser".

Bruce Fraser, PhD
Chair

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bcc: File Copy
Chrono Copy
Investigator

Proofed by: _____ Rob T. _____

Comments:

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