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## **Logging probe shows compliance, shortfalls**

SMITHERS – The Forest Practices Board has released the results of its investigation into a complaint about logging in the Lemieux and Gardner Creek watersheds, 30 kilometres southeast of Smithers.

A resident alleged that over-harvesting had dried up creeks and wells, and that logging proceeded without proper public consultation.

Board investigators examined recent harvesting, road construction and maintenance by three licence holders: BC Timber Sales (BCTS), Kyah Development Corporation (KDC) and the holder of woodlot licence W0104. Investigators assessed whether licensees met legal requirements for water management and public review.

All three licensees complied with requirements for public review. BCTS and KDC exceeded requirements by voluntarily sharing operational-planning information with stakeholders. BCTS and KDC also met all water-management requirements.

The holder of woodlot W0104 failed to meet requirements in two areas: it did not maintain natural surface drainage patterns after road building and could not show that it ensured its roads and drainage structures were not adversely affecting forest resources. Both issues contravene the Woodlot Licence Planning and Practices Regulation.

“The board is concerned about the woodlot licence holder’s insufficient oversight and inadequate road maintenance,” said Gerry Grant, vice-chair, Forest Practices Board. “Roads are typically the main source of sediment entering streams and best practices exist to minimize that risk.”

Investigators found the two watersheds have experienced significant disturbances from logging, private land use and a changing climate, however, no single factor is to blame for low seasonal flows.

“Protecting water values cannot be achieved by managing individual blocks or licences in isolation,” Grant said. “It demands a more wholistic, co-ordinated approach at the watershed level.”

This investigation is 1 of more than 40 reports the board has published in its 30 years that relate to how forest practices affect water resources.

“The Province, First Nations, forest licensees and private landowners all share responsibility for stewarding water resources. Working together is essential to effectively conserve or restore water values in B.C.,” Grant said.

The Lemieux and Gardner Creek watersheds are within the territories of the Witset First Nation, the Wet’suwet’en First Nation and the Office of the Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs. The board recognizes the importance of Indigenous Peoples’ historical relationship with the land and waters, which continues today.

### **Learn more:**

To read the full report, visit: <https://www.bcfpb.ca/release-publications/releases/>

### **Contact:**

Tanner Senko, Communications Manager

Forest Practices Board

[tanner.senko@bcfpb.ca](mailto:tanner.senko@bcfpb.ca)

Phone: 250-889-8211 / 1 800 994-5899