Forest Practices Board

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
Dec. 1, 2026

Audit finds gap in Interfor's fire-hazard abatement

Fuel break requirements to protect forest resources were not met during pile burning

CASTLEGAR –

Summary

- *Auditors reviewed planning, harvesting, roads and bridges, silviculture and wildfire protection*
- *The audit identified one significant non-compliance and three areas requiring improvement*
- *The board recognized Interfor's work to reduce the effects of harvesting on steep slopes*

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A Forest Practices Board audit of Interfor Corporation's Tree Farm Licence 3 found sound road construction and maintenance alongside a significant non-compliance with fire-hazard-abatement practices.

The audit examined forestry activities in the West Kootenays from June 1, 2023, to June 13, 2025.

Auditors found significant non-compliance with fuel break requirements. Pile burning damaged or killed standing trees in 6 of 11 cutblocks reviewed, including along the edges of wildlife tree-retention areas.

Required fire-hazard assessments were also late or missing in 22 of 41 cases reviewed. The assessments consider the fuel left after harvesting and the risk of a fire starting or spreading.

Interfor reduced fire hazards on time at all but one site where it was due. All eight active sites inspected by auditors met fire-preparedness requirements. Other areas requiring improvement involved road site plans and providing advance notification to government.

"Reducing fire hazards and protecting wildlife habitat are both part of responsible forest stewardship," said Meggin Messenger, chair of the board. "Planning how wildfire risk will be managed is an opportunity to ensure care for the forest continues after the last load of timber leaves the site."

Road construction, maintenance and deactivation were completed to a high standard, and inspected bridges and major culverts were sound and safe for industrial use.

The board also recognized Interfor's work to improve winch-assisted harvesting, which uses cables to help machinery operate on steep slopes. The company assessed 89 harvested cutblocks and used the findings to develop guidance aimed at protecting soils and reducing landslide risk.

The audit took place within the territories of the Ktunaxa Nation Council, whose member Nations include ʔaq'am First Nation, ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation, yaqan nuʔkiy First Nation and Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛ'it First Nation, in addition to the Adams Lake Indian Band, Okanagan Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Neskonlith Indian Band, Shuswap Band, Sinixt-Lakes Tribe of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Skwlāx te Secwepemcúl̓ecw, Upper Nicola Band and Westbank First Nation. The board recognizes the importance of their historical relationship with the land that continues to this day.

Learn More:

- To read the full report, visit: https://www.bcfpb.ca/release-publications/releases/ARC276-Interfor-TFL3

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