

# REPORT Forest Certification



## BC Timber Sales Okanagan-Columbia Business Area SFI Certification Audit – April 2008

In February 2008, an audit team from KPMG Performance Registrar Inc. (KPMG PRI) carried out an SFI certification audit of the BC Timber Sales Okanagan-Columbia Business Area (Okanagan-Columbia BA) woodlands operations conducted in the Columbia Forest District against the requirements of the 2005 - 2009 edition of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) standard. An ISO 14001 surveillance audit was conducted at the same time. This Certification Summary Report provides an overview of the process and KPMG's SFI findings.



### Description of Okanagan-Columbia's Crown Land Forest Operations:

British Columbia (BC) Timber Sales is an autonomous organization within the Ministry of Forest and Range, with financial and operational independence from regional and district operations. This organization is comprised of 12 business areas across the province and supports the Ministry's goal of providing British Columbians with sustainable benefits from the commercial use of public forests. BC Timber Sales provides these benefits by planning, developing, and selling through auction a substantial and representative portion of the province's annual available timber volume. The bid prices received from auctioned timber drive the Market Pricing System for setting stumpage in coastal and interior operating areas of the province. The organization manages about 20% (16 million m<sup>3</sup>) of the provincial allowable annual cut (AAC).



The Okanagan-Columbia BA, situated in south central BC, encompasses the Okanagan Shuswap and Columbia Forest Districts. The scope of the audit covered Okanagan-Columbia BA's sustainable forest management planning and practices within the Columbia Forest District, which encompasses its operations in the Revelstoke Timber Supply Area (TSA), Golden TSA, Tree Farm Licence (TFL) 23, TFL 55 and TFL 56. The BA's sustainable forest management planning and practices within the Okanagan Shuswap Forest District was covered under a separate CSA Z809 certification audit, and as such is not reflected in this report.

Six statutes form the legal framework for forest management on Crown lands in B.C.: the Forest Act, the Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act, the Ministry of Forests Act, the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA), the Wildfire Act, and the Foresters Act. Numerous other provincial and federal acts, regulations, guidelines and policies also have implications for forestry operations on Crown lands. BC Timber Sales offices issue timber sale licences to successful bidders under the authority of the Forest Act. The AAC of each TSA is determined by the provincial chief forester, every 5 years, under authority of Section 8 of the Forest Act. The AAC allocated to Okanagan-Columbia BA in the two TSAs and three TFLs in the Columbia Forest District is 215,700 m<sup>3</sup>.



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FRPA and its regulations in particular set the requirements for planning, road building, logging, reforestation, and grazing. FRPA prescribes levels of protection for forest values including watersheds and wildlife habitat, and defines planning processes. BC Timber Sales has developed Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP) to meet the requirements of FRPA.

The Okanagan-Columbia BA has developed a Sustainable Forest Management Plan (SFMP) which describes how the operation will achieve the broad objectives of higher level plans, such as the Revelstoke and Kootenay-Boundary Land Use Plans, developed through public involvement processes. It also guides the development and content of other planning documents including the FSP. The SFMP reflects the bounds established by higher level plans and through the regulatory framework described above. The Okanagan-Columbia BA ensures that all lower-level plans it is responsible for developing (i.e., its FSP and all site level plans) are consistent with the commitments made in their SFMP.

Okanagan-Columbia BA crown land woodlands operations are managed from the timber sales office in Vernon, B.C. with one field team also located in an office in Revelstoke.

### Audit Objectives

The following audit objectives were included within the scope of the audit:

- An SFI certification audit to evaluate the operation’s conformance with the requirements of the 2005-2009 version of the SFI standard (Okanagan-Columbia BA’s operations within the Columbia Forest District).
- An ISO 14001 re-registration audit against the requirements of ISO 14001:2004 (Okanagan-Columbia BA’s operations over the entire Business Area).

### Audit Scope

The audit was conducted against the requirements of the 2005-2009 edition of the SFI standard, and incorporated an assessment against the SFI program objectives for:

- Land management (SFI objectives’ 1 – 7);
- Forestry research, science and technology (SFI objective 9);
- Training and education (SFI objective 10);
- Legal and regulatory compliance (SFI objective 11);
- Public and landowner involvement in the practice of sustainable forestry (SFI objective 12); and,
- Management review and continual improvement (SFI objective 13).

The scope of the 2008 SFI certification audit of the Okanagan-Columbia BA’s operations within the Columbia Forest District included all of the SFI objectives noted above. Fibre procurement activities were not included in the scope of the certification as BC Timber Sales functions solely as a provider of Crown timber to other wood suppliers.

#### Audit results

Major nonconformities	0
Minor nonconformities	2
Opportunities for improvement	2

#### Types of audit findings

##### Major nonconformities:

Are pervasive or critical to the achievement of the SFM Objectives.

Major nonconformities must be addressed immediately or registration cannot be achieved / maintained.

##### Minor nonconformities:

Are isolated incidents that are non-critical to the achievement of SFM Objectives.

All nonconformities (major and minor) require an action plan within 30 days and must be addressed by the operation.

##### Opportunities for improvement:

Are not nonconformities but are comments on specific areas of the SFM System where improvements can be made.

## Findings – BC Timber Sales Okanagan-Columbia BA SFI Certification Audit – March 2008

### The Audit

- *Audit Team* – The Revelstoke-based SFI certification and ISO 14001 re-registration audits of the BA’s operations in the Columbia Forest District was conducted by Michael Alexander, RPF, CEA(SFM), EMS(LA).
- *SFI Certification Audit/ISO 14001 Re-Registration Audit* – This SFI certification audit involved an on-site assessment of all elements of the Okanagan-Columbia BA’s SFI program within the Columbia Forest District in conjunction with a re-registration audit of the BA’s environmental management system to ISO 14001. The original ISO 14001 registration occurred in early 2005. The audit included visits to a number of field sites to evaluate the extent to which the operation’s forest management plans and practices conform to the requirements of the SFI standard.
- *Surveillance Audits* – Annual surveillance audits are conducted by the audit team to ensure that SFI requirements continue to be met.
- *SFI Program Representative* – Rein Kahlke, RPF served as Okanagan-Columbia BA’s SFI program representative during the audit.

### Use of Substitute Indicators

The audit was based on the indicators included in the 2005-2009 version of the SFI standard. No substitute indicators were used during the 2007 certification audit.

### Audit Conclusions

The audit found that:

- The operation’s B.C. woodlands operations meet the requirements of the 2005-2009 version of the SFI standard in all material respects. Non-conformities identified were minor in nature. As a result, a decision has been made to grant certification to the SFI standard for the next 5 years. Okanagan-Columbia BA’s SFI certification is valid until April 7, 2013.
- The operation’s EMS continues to be effectively implemented and the EMS meets the requirements of ISO 14001:2004 in all material respects. Nonconformities identified were minor in nature.

### Good Practices

During the course of the audit, a number of good practices were identified. The following list outlines some of the more notable examples of good practices that were observed by the audit team:

- The organization has developed an SFM plan and associated SFI implementation matrix and reporting requirements table to assist those with roles under the plan in delivering on the organization’s SFI objectives.
- The operational controls within the BCTS Environmental Management System (EMS) were found to be effectively implemented enabling BCTS to achieve its water quality protection objectives.



Both staff and licensee personnel (shown in photo) demonstrated a high level of awareness of applicable EMS, SFM and operational requirements.

## Findings – BC Timber Sales Okanagan-Columbia BA SFI Certification Audit – March 2008

- Visual quality objectives and scenic areas have been identified and operational plans are being developed and implemented to protect scenic values throughout the organization's operating areas.
- BC Timber Sales contributes to and participates in many research activities and programs designed to address issues related to the health, productivity and management of forest resources, including involvement with projects designed to address gaps in inventory information, wildlife and species at risk, watershed restoration and insects and disease management.
- A very high level of awareness of EMS, SFM and operational requirements was found during interviews with BC Timber Sales staff and Licensees' crews.
- The planning route card and cutblock and road due diligence checklist are excellent operational controls and communication tools for instilling due diligence, compliance and completeness in the harvest block and road planning exercise.

### Follow-up up on Open Nonconformities from Previous Assessments

At the time of this assessment there were no open nonconformities from previous audits that required closure.

### Areas of Nonconformity

Full conformance was found in relation to majority of the indicators included in the Okanagan-Columbia BA SFI audit protocol. 2 minor nonconformities were however identified with respect to SFI during the SFI certification audit, as follows:

- Performance Measure 4.1 requires the organization to have a program to promote biological diversity at the stand and landscape levels and in particular to deal with rare and endangered species and plant communities. While the operation has developed information on species at risk within the Business Area and provided training to staff and relevant contractors, development of the program is still in progress and the program has not yet been fully implemented for plants and plant communities.
- The organization's audit program under its EMS requires internal audits to be periodically conducted to determine whether its SFM system is being properly maintained and implemented. Some deficiencies were noted with the internal audit conducted in November 2007, including a limited field focus and an audit report that did not provide an overall audit conclusion on the effectiveness of SFM system implementation at the operation and whether the operation was in compliance overall.



EMS operational controls were found to be effectively implemented to promote achievement of water quality objectives.

## Findings – BC Timber Sales Okanagan-Columbia BA SFI Certification Audit – April 2008

### Opportunities for Improvement

The following 2 opportunities for improvement were identified during the SFI certification audit:

- The Business Area has no clear policy regarding the requirement for the documentation of training and retention of training records for truckers, mechanics and other casual Licensee personnel or subcontractors.
- One fire extinguisher was missing from a tidy tank pick up truck on an active harvest block in Revelstoke.

### Corrective Action Plans

Corrective action plans designed to address the root cause of the nonconformities identified during the audit have been developed by the Okanagan-Columbia BA and reviewed and approved by KPMG PRI. The next surveillance audit will include a follow-up assessment of these issues to confirm that the corrective action plans developed to address them have been implemented as required.



The field audit observed excellent examples of scenic values being protected through thoughtful planning and development.



Effective planning and operational practices overall have promoted a high level of achievement to the SFI indicators on the ground.

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