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The Pas' Forest Practices Get Clean Bill

VICTORIA –The Pas Lumber Company Ltd. is carrying out good forest practices in the Fort St. James and Prince George forest districts, the Forest Practices Board reported today.

The audit looked at The Pas' operations on Forest Licence A18171. About 80 percent of the company's operations are within the Prince George forest district and 20 percent in the Fort St. James forest district. The Prince George operations are centred near the community of Bear Lake, 50 kilometres north of Prince George. The Fort St. James operations are centred east of Fort St. James and around Witch Lake. The Pas' operations on that land complied with the Forest Practices Code in all significant respects.

“Overall, this is a good audit result,” said acting board chair Liz Osborn. “There was one minor problem with firefighting tools, but The Pas addressed it right away. The only reason we raise the issue here is because the board has seen this in a number of audits recently, and we are concerned about the risk to public safety if fire tools aren't available or working at a logging site – particularly as we enter forest fire season.”

The board also encourages government to speed up landscape-level planning to ensure that larger cutblocks - which are appropriate for the forest types the Pas operate in - take the overall forest landscape into account, and promote harvesting patterns that reflect the way nature would clear the forest. For most of the audit area, no landscape-level analysis was done to factor biodiversity values into cutblock size. Government has primary responsibility for landscape-level planning, so this issue is not considered a non-compliance on the part of The Pas. In light of the continued beetle outbreaks in the

Prince George timber supply area, it's important that this level of planning takes place.

The audit area was selected randomly and not on the basis of location or level of performance. The board audited The Pas' operational planning; timber harvesting; road construction, maintenance and deactivation; silviculture; and fire protection practices for compliance with the code, for the period from Sept. 1, 2001 to Sept. 18, 2002.

The Forest Practices Board is an independent public watchdog that publishes reports about compliance with forest-practices legislation and the achievement of its intent. The board's main roles are:

- Auditing forest practices of government and licence holders on public lands.
- Auditing government enforcement of the code.
- Investigating public complaints.
- Undertaking special investigations of code-related forestry issues.
- Participating in administrative reviews and appeals.
- Providing reports on board activities, findings and recommendations.

Jacqueline Waldorf
Communications
Forest Practices Board
Phone: 250 356-1586 / 1 800 994-5899

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