



Audit of Burns Lake Specialty Wood Finds Problems

VICTORIA – A report released today concludes that Burns Lake Specialty Wood complied with most requirements of the Forest and Range Practices Act, but failed to comply with Wildfire Act requirements to assess and reduce fire hazards after logging.

The audit examined forest planning and practices carried out between September 2011 and October 2013, near Burns Lake. The company harvested 90,000 cubic metres of timber from eight cutblocks. Problems found included planting the incorrect type of tree seedlings in some locations, failing to carry out commitments to prevent the spread of invasive plants, and failing to assess and remove slash and debris that pose fire hazards.

“What’s concerning to the board is that the company did not meet its obligations to assess and reduce fire hazards under the Wildfire Act,” said board chair Tim Ryan. “Combine that with the fact they are operating in forests heavily damaged by mountain pine beetle, and the increased fire risk that resulted is a significant problem.”

“All forest licence holders have obligations to comply with provincial forestry legislation. There are training materials and guidance documents readily available to assist them with understanding the obligations that come with the right to harvest trees on public land,” Ryan added.

The board acknowledges that the company has abated the fire hazards on most of the cutblocks since the audit and is requesting that they report to the board on the completion of the remainder of the abatement obligations by the end of January.

The Forest Practices Board is B.C.’s independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices, reporting its findings and recommendations directly to the public and government. The board audits forest and range practices on public lands and appropriateness of government enforcement. It can also make recommendations for improvement to practices and legislation.

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