



Western  
Forest  
Products Inc.

DEFINING A HIGHER  
STANDARD™



**CAN/CSA Z809-2016 External Assessment Report Summary**  
**36 Month Maintenance Assessment of Western Forest Products Inc. North Island Forest**  
**Operation and Stillwater Forest Operation**  
**Report Date: February 17, 2021**

Western Forest Products Inc. (“WFP”) underwent a 36-month Maintenance Assessment of their Sustainable Forest Management (“SFM”) system to the CAN/CSA Z809-2016 Sustainable Forest Management Standard on October 1-2 and 5-8, 2020 with a closing meeting held on October 14, 2020. The Assessment was conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (“PwC”) with the scope being the Defined Forest Area for the North Island and Stillwater Forest Operations as well as at the WFP Timberlands Corporate Office located in Campbell River, BC. These two sites formed the 2020 sample for this multisite registration. Due to travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19 the office portion of the assessment (October 1-2) was completed remotely using the Google Meets/Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform. During the following week (October 5-8) the Assessment Team consisting of James Lucas, RPF, EMS (LA), Sean Pledger, FIT, EMS (LA) and Larry McCulloch, RPF, conducted field reviews of the Forest Management program on the Mainland Coast operating area. The WFP SFM representatives were Will Sloan, RFT and Sarah Germain, RPF

In total the assessment team spent 4 days completing office reviews and 8 days on field assessments. Activities assessed at Stillwater Forest Operation included the following forest management activities: planning (documentation review and interviews), harvesting (5 active sites and 4 completed sites), road construction/maintenance (2 active sites) and planting/ silviculture (4 completed sites) plus a site visit to sections of the Sunshine Coast Trail.

Activities assessed at North Island Forest Operation included the following forest management activities: planning (documentation review and interviews), harvesting (6 active sites and 7 completed site), road construction/maintenance (2 active sites and 3 completed sites) and planting/silviculture (3 completed sites) plus a visit to a WFP maintained recreation site and a Critical Habitat reserve buffer for a fish species listed under the Species at Risk Act. In some cases, single field sites reviewed had multiple activities occurring and/or completed activities which have been included in the summary of sampled sites. The WFP Timberlands Corporate Office was also assessed for corporate requirements related to the multisite registration and SFM indicators managed by corporate staff. Interviewees included 14 WFP staff, 5 contractors and 2 WFP logging crews working on the DFAs and 3 members of the Stillwater Public Advisory Group. Two government officials from the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development Compliance and Enforcement Branch were interviewed during this audit and WFP’s compliance record for the Stillwater and North Island Forest Operation was reviewed.

The objective of the Assessment was to confirm the management system complies with the applicable elements of the Standard; to confirm the organization continues to comply with its own SFM policies and

procedures; to confirm the management system is suitable and effective for the organization; and to confirm the management system enables the client to achieve its own SFM objectives.

The scope of the CSA Z809 certification is as follows: The multisite forest management processes, including planning, harvesting, road construction, silviculture and transportation of logs managed through the Timberlands Corporate and the timberland offices<sup>1</sup> managing the Defined Forest Areas (DFA) of North Island, Mid-Island, Englewood, Port Alberni (TFL44 General Partner Inc. (as the general partner of and for the sole benefit of TFL44 Limited Partnership)) and Stillwater. The Defined Forest Areas within scope are: Tree Farm License TFL6, Managed Forests MF29, MF31, MF61, Forest License FL A94737, T0860, T0592 at WFP’s North Island Forest Operation; TFL 37 at Englewood Forest Operation, TFL 39 Block 2 at WFP’s Mid-Island Forest Operation; TFL 44 at TFL44 General Partner Inc. (as the general partner of and for the sole benefit of TFL44 Limited Partnership), and TFL 39 Block 1 at WFP’s Stillwater Forest Operation. A total of 827,434 hectares are included in WFP’s CSA SFM forest area with an annual allowable cut of 4,427,864 m<sup>3</sup>.

Requirements assessed included the scope of the North Island and Stillwater Forest Operations 2020 Sustainable Forest Management Plan which includes 2019 SFM indicator performance versus targets.

### SFM REQUIREMENTS ASSESSED

Defined Forest Area (DFA) – North Island Forest Operation (NIFO), Stillwater Forest Operation (STO) and Timberlands Corporate Office (Office Review)

<b>Elements Audited</b>	<b>Indicators Reviewed</b>	<b>Office/Field</b>
<u>Element 1.1</u> – Ecosystem Diversity	<u>1.1.2</u> – Forest Area by Type or Species Composition <u>1.1.4</u> : Within-stand Structural Retention	Office/Field Office/Field
<u>Element 1.2</u> – Species Diversity	<u>1.2.2</u> : Habitat Protection for Selected Focal Species <u>1.2.4</u> : Percent of area within Deer Winter Range (STO)	Office/Field Office/Field
<u>Element 1.3</u> – Genetic Diversity	<u>1.3.1</u> – Genetic Diversity	Office
<u>Element 1.4</u> – Protected Areas and Sites of Special Biological, Geological, Heritage or Cultural Significance	<u>1.4.1</u> : Protection of Sites of Special Significance <u>1.4.3</u> : Protection of identified karst features (VINWAG) <u>2.1.5</u> : High Windfall Risk Edges Treated (VINWAG)	Office/Field Office/Field Office/Field
<u>Element 2.1</u> – Forest Ecosystem Condition and Productivity	<u>2.1.2</u> : Regeneration Comprised of Native Species <u>2.1.3</u> : Additions and Deletions to the Forest Area <u>2.1.5</u> : High Windfall Risk Edges Treated (VINWAG) <u>2.1.5</u> : Forest health implemented strategies (STO) <u>2.1.6</u> : Land withdrawn from forestry uses (VINWAG) <u>2.1.6</u> : Area treated with herbicide for brush control (STO)	Office/Field Office Office/Field Office Office Office/Field
<u>Element 3.1</u> – Soil Quality and Quantity	<u>3.1.1</u> : Level of Soil Disturbance <u>3.1.2</u> : Level of Downed Woody Debris	Office/Field Office/Field
<u>Element 3.2</u> – Water Quality and Quantity	<u>3.2.1</u> : Watershed Area with Recent Replacing Disturbance <u>3.2-3</u> : Annual number of EMBC reported spills (Stillwater)	Office/Field Office
<u>Element 5.1</u> – Timber and Non-Timber Benefits	<u>5.1.1</u> : Diversity of Timber and Non-Timber Resources Produced in the DFA <u>5.1.2</u> : Respectful Communications with Economic Stakeholders to Integrate Non-Timber Resources <u>5.1.3</u> : Projected percent changes in AAC (VINWAG) <u>5.1.4</u> : Cooperation with forest dependent groups to strengthen and diversify the local economy (VINWAG)	Office Office Office Office

<u>Element 5.2</u> – Communities and Sustainability	<u>5.2.2</u> : Level of Participation and Support in Training and Skills Development	Office
	<u>5.2.4</u> : CAG is informed of corporate policy, program changes and initiatives in a timely manner (STO)	Office
	<u>5.2.5</u> : Opportunity for local suppliers, contractors and consultants (VINWAG)	Office
	<u>5.2.5</u> : % of Field Reviews completed where harvesting is planned along the Sunshine Coast trail (Stillwater)	Office
	<u>5.2.6</u> : Number of educational outreach opportunities (STO)	Office
	<u>5.2.7</u> : Educational outreach (VINWAG)	Office
	<u>Element 6.1</u> – Fair and Effective Decision-Making	<u>6.1.3</u> : Public Concerns <u>6.1.4</u> Number of VINWAG meetings (VINWAG)
<u>Element 6.2</u> - Safety	<u>6.2.1</u> : Co-operation with Workers to Improve Safety Standards and Procedures	Office
	<u>6.2.3</u> : Cooperation with other forest-dependent businesses, forest users, and the local community (STO)	Office
<u>Element 7.1</u> – Aboriginal and Treaty Rights	<u>7.1.1</u> : Understanding the Nature of Aboriginal Title and Rights	Office
	<u>7.2.3</u> : Management & Protection of Culturally Important Sites	Office/Field
	<u>7.2.4</u> : Level of Aboriginal participation in the forest economy (VINWAG)	Office/Field
<u>Element 7.2</u> – Respect for Aboriginal Forest Values, Knowledge and Uses	<u>7.2.3</u> : Management and/or Protection of Culturally Important Practices and Activities	Office/Field

### Previous Nonconformity Update

Previous assessment results were reviewed, and the one Minor Nonconformity open from the 2019 audit was addressed and closed.

All other previous nonconformities have been closed.

### Results of the 2020 Assessment

There were 3 Minor Nonconformities identified. Western has reviewed and accepted each Minor Nonconformity and have provided action plans to address the findings. These action plans have been accepted by PwC and will be reviewed during the 2021 Re-certification Assessment.

480-A3-NC-01: In general, the level of stream protection found during field assessments was adequate and met the Harvest Instructions; however, for multiple units, stream protection and clean out did not meet the Harvest Instructions.

480-A3-NC-02: Under the Western Forest Strategy, WFP has made commitments to maintain forest structure including retention targets for various Western Forest Stewardship Zones. For 2019, on an overall basis, WFP did meet its retention targets for all WFS Zones; however, for the Port McNeill and Quatsino Sound Operations, the Divisions fell short of meeting their Variance for the Target for the Enhanced Windy Zone.

480-A3-NC-03: WFP uses the Incident Tracking System (ITS) within Cengea to document and track compliance issues and action plans across its operations. For the Stillwater, Port McNeill/Quatsino and

Mainland Coast Operations a query of open ITS records (Post Harvest, Final Road) were reviewed and it was unclear whether any identified follow up issues were entered into ITS and when and if they were completed and closed out in a timely manner.

There were 5 Opportunities for Improvement identified:

480-A3-OFI-01: In general, the quality of road construction and maintenance observed during the Assessment was good. On harvest Unit 43-421 an approved spoil site was located within approximately 40 meters of an adjacent S-5 stream buffer and was showing evidence of erosion towards the block edge/stream buffer. WFP could consider reviewing the site and carry out any required mitigation measures.

480-A3-OFI-02: In general, WFP is promptly reforesting harvest blocks and meeting goals for reforestation success in the SFMP. For some areas in Stillwater, it was noted that there were areas which piles had not been burned (due to insufficient venting or conditions) and in Holberg, where not burning piles was only done in areas with sufficient fire hazard (Unit 52-697). WFP may wish to consider whether these issues could lead to reduced stocking levels over time and if some action should be taken to burn the piles or use another strategy (e.g. dispersal) to address the issue.

480-A3-OFI-03: In general, the level of stream identification was conservative and any observed water channels were generally defaulted to S-6 streams. For one harvest unit in Holberg, 41-779, it did appear that there was an S-6 that was not correctly identified. WFP may wish to review this feature to determine its status and potentially clean it out if needed.

480-A3-OFI-04: For Indicator 1.4.1 – Protection of Sites of Special Significance at Stillwater, WFP has consistently met the Target and Variance since 2008. The results; however, show that for the past 12 years there have been no archaeological features identified and no management plans put in place to protect these features. In light of the lack of features and management plans, SFO may wish to consider reviewing this Indicator and Target to see if there is a more meaningful way to demonstrate how SFO is meeting this objective.

480-A3-OFI-05: In general, harvest unit design was not deemed to be an issue from observations during the Assessment. For one harvest unit 51-723, in the Holberg operation, it might be worth considering reviewing the unit engineering on site. At the end of a spur on road B655X, an area of wet ground was properly identified and flagged out by the feller buncher operator but this riparian protection ended up stranding felled timber on the other side of the wet gully. In light of this feature, the whole area could have been excluded from the unit to better protect what was indicated as a “Special Management” area on the amended map.

### **Good Management Practices**

The following good management practices were noted:

- The use of Lidar to determine levels of forest influence and distribution (Version 2) and for Visual Impact pre-assessments is a good way to reduce reworks when planning harvest units in visually sensitive areas.
- WFP has contributed significantly and involvement in species at risk committees is exemplary.

- WFP has been in proactive in looking for WHA's and MAMU habitat.
- The TFL 44 Limited Partnership between the Huu-ay-aht First Nations and WFP demonstrates a commitment to working with Indigenous partners in the forest industry.
- WFP's broadcast fertilization program may lead to updated Growth & Yield curves which could be applied to enhance the Provincial Timber Supply Review process.
- Tagging and GPS marking all leave trees is a good way to ensure prescribed retention is tracked and maintained on site.
- On harvest unit STF 056, the harvesting operator observed a portion of the block was too wet for his machine, stopped work, and opted to have a hand faller work in that area.
- WFP's Landscape Data Blocks program incorporates Lidar and other GIS data to identify likely road and boundary locations across their operating area.
- Good protection of special features was observed during the field audit, including the Sunshine Coast Trail, bear dens and cultural features.
- WFP works with FLNRORD to maintain recreation sites across their operating area.
- WFP's program of wind firming continues to be effective in mitigating windthrow impacts.
- The public advisory group in the Stillwater DFA continues to be well supported and has had a wide variety of presentations in meetings and the field to support education of the group.

### **Conclusion of the Assessment**

Western Forest Products Inc. continues to be registered to the CAN/CSA Z809-2016 Sustainable Forest Management Standard. All of the applicable requirements of the standard were considered to be adequately implemented. The current certification was issued on August 31, 2018 and will expire on May 14, 2022. The next audit will be scheduled for June 2020. For further information on the WFPs SFM system please view the WFP website

(<https://www.westernforest.com/responsibility/environment/certification/>) or contact Will Sloan, at [wsloan@westernforest.com](mailto:wsloan@westernforest.com).