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Ver 12 September 2019

FSC Forest Management Certification

Reassessment
Report for:

Burns Lake Community Forest (BLCF)

in
Burns Lake, British Columbia
Canada

Report Finalized:	November 9, 2020
Audit Dates:	September 22-24, 2020
Audit Team:	Nicholas Reynolds, M. SFM team leader James Hallworth, RPF auditor
Type of certificate:	Single FMU
Certificate code:	NC-FM/CoC- 001758
Certificate issue/expiry:	December 31, 2020 December 30, 2025
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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of an independent certification audit conducted by a team of specialists representing Preferred by Nature. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate the ecological, economic and social performance of Burns Lake Community Forest (BLCF) forest management as defined by the Principles and Criteria established by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC®).

This report contains various sections of information and findings and several annexes. Sections 1-4 of the report will become public information about the forest management operation and may be distributed by Preferred by Nature or the FSC to interested parties. The remainder of the annexes are confidential, to be reviewed only by authorized Preferred by Nature and FSC personnel bound by confidentiality agreements. A copy of the public summary of this report can be obtained on the FSC website at <http://info.fsc.org/>.

Dispute resolution: If Preferred by Nature clients encounter organisations or individuals having concerns or comments about Preferred by Nature and our services, these parties are strongly encouraged to contact relevant Preferred by Nature regional office. Formal complaints and concerns should be sent in writing.

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Standard Conversions

1 mbf = 2.4 m³
1 cord = 3.6 m³
100 tons hardwood = 97 m³
100 tons = 101 m³
1 acre = 0.404687 hectares

1. AUDIT CONCLUSIONS

1.1 Audit Recommendation and certification decision

Based on Organisation's conformance with certification requirements, the following recommendation is made:

- Certification approved:
- Upon acceptance of NCR(s) issued below

- Certification not approved:

Additional comments, including issues identified as controversial or hard to evaluate and explanation of the conclusion reached:

1.2 New Non-conformity Reports (NCRs)

Note: NCRs describe evidences of Organisation non-conformities identified during audits. NCRs include defined timelines for the Organisation to demonstrate conformity. MAJOR NCRs issued during assessments/reassessments shall be closed prior to issuance of certificate. MAJOR NCRs issued during anual audits shall be closed within timeline or result in suspension.

- Check if no NCR(s) have been issued

NCR: 7.1.14/20	NC Classification: minor
Standard & Requirement:	Forest Stewardship Council Regional Certification Standards for British Columbia - Main Standards (2005) section 7.1.14
Report Section:	Annex I, Indicator 7.1.14
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<u>Requirement:</u> The management plan contains provisions for rare, threatened, and endangered species (See also Criterion 6.2).	
<u>Finding:</u>	

The Organization has demonstrated that measures are in place for the protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species (as per indicator 6.2.2 of this Standard). Examples of this include listing species and ecosystems within their Safety and Environmental Handbook, including operating procedures for when encountering these species in the field. Interviews confirmed staff awareness and examples of consulting wildlife experts to confirm species sightings or habitat suitability and that these findings are incorporated into operational planning to ensure these values are maintained. While the 2017 Environmental Values Report contains a series of management practices or measures recommended for each of these focal species, as a third-party report there is no provision that these measures have been formally adopted by the Organization. The recently approved FMP, and supporting FSP, do not provide clear provisions, such as objectives or strategies, for all the rare, threatened, and endangered species found within and being managed for by the BLCF.

Evidence:

Forest Management Plan #4

Forest Stewardship Plan

Safety and Environmental Handbook (2020)

Interviews

Environmental Values Report (Keystone, 2017)

Preliminary Grizzly Habitat Assessment Letter (Environmental Dynamics Inc., September 22, 2020)

<p>Corrective action request:</p>	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
<p>Timeline for Conformance:</p>	<p>Within 12 months from report draft date Due date: 2021-10-19</p>
<p>NCR Evaluation Type</p>	<p>On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Evidence Provided by Organisation:</p>	<p>PENDING</p>
<p>Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:</p>	<p>PENDING</p>
<p>NCR Status:</p>	<p>OPEN</p>
<p>Comments (optional):</p>	

NCR: 8.5.1/20	NC Classification: minor
Standard & Requirement:	Forest Stewardship Council Regional Certification Standards for British Columbia - Main Standards (2005) section 8.5.1
Report Section:	Annex I, Indicator 8.5.1
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<p>Requirement: A regular summary is compiled of the results of monitoring. The summary is made available to interested parties.</p> <p>Finding: A variety of monitoring results are available in different formats. The back of the monitoring plan includes a summary of some monitoring results (although had not been updated since 2019's annual audit). The annual report provides summaries of the monitoring of financial records. Other summaries, including on harvest yields or silviculture records can be made available by requesting customized reports from the Phoenix database. However, the results, particularly of the monitoring indicators outlined within the monitoring plan and management plan, or those listed in Criterion 8.2, were not updated in a readily accessible summarized format.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> Phoenix connect database Timber supply report (Forsite, 2019) BLCF Monitoring plan (2019) 2019 Annual Report Harvest Billings System data Silviculture surveys Interviews</p>	
Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	<p>Within 12 months from report draft date Due date: 2021-10-19</p>
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	PENDING

Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING
NCR Status:	OPEN
Comments (optional):	

1.3 Observations

Note: Observations are issued for the early stages of a problem which does not of itself constitute a non-conformance, but which the auditor considers may lead to a future non-conformance if not addressed by the organization; observations may lead to direct non-conformances if not addressed.

No observations

OBS: 2.2.2/20	Standard & Requirement:	Forest Stewardship Council Regional Certification Standards for British Columbia - Main Standards (2005) Indicator 2.2.2
	Report Section	Annex 1
Description of findings leading to observation:	<p>Requirement: The manager: a) obtains free and informed consent from local rights holders to any portion of the management plan that affects their rights and resources</p> <p>Finding: The audit team notes that the draft 2020 Access Management Plan states that the Organization will obtain resource users 'opinions' about pre and post-harvest operations, however the standard requires their consent where any portion of the management plan affects their rights and resources. The FME should ensure consent is obtained through consultation with local rights holders. This is an observation as it is noted by the audit team that this product is continuously being updated with stakeholder input.</p>	
Observation:	FME should ensure continued conformance with Indicator 2.2.2	

OBS: 4.4.2/20	Standard & Requirement:	Forest Stewardship Council Regional Certification Standards for British Columbia - Main Standards (2005) Indicator 4.4.2
	Report Section	Annex 1
Description of findings leading to observation:	<p>Requirement: Directly affected persons are provided with information used in making management decisions in a manner that allows them to understand potential impacts on their rights or interests, including reasonable technical or expert interpretation as required.</p> <p>Finding: Several affected stakeholders have indicated that notification systems could be improved to understand potential impacts and be more meaningfully involved in decisions affecting them. This is classed as an observation as the audit team verified that there are several public engagement events including annual open houses, together with specific groups and certain rights holders having the opportunity for specific consultation meetings with the FME. The audit team encourages the FME to continue to improve methods to have affected stakeholders understand the potential impacts of forest management operations.</p>	
Observation:	FME should ensure continued conformance with Indicator 4.4.2.	

OBS: 6.5.8/20	Standard & Requirement:	Forest Stewardship Council Regional Certification Standards for British Columbia - Main Standards (2005) Indicator 6.5.8
	Report Section	Annex 1
Description of findings leading to observation:	<p>Requirement: The manager employs measures to control increases in peak flow resulting from management activities, including in snowmelt-dominated watersheds, maintaining weighted equivalent clearcut area (ECA) to less than 25%, <u>unless recommended otherwise by a publicly available hydrologic assessment.</u></p> <p>Finding: The 5-year plan exceeds the Equivalent Clearcut Area (ECA) 25% threshold for 2 lake watersheds, Decker and Maxan lakes. Analysis has been done on ECA and other environmental impacts, but these assessments have not been considered as part of a full hydrologic assessment for these watersheds for the ECA of over 25% to be justified. This is classed as an observation as ECA has been calculated, with the majority of</p>	

	the Maxan lake and Decker lake watersheds being outside of the certificate area combined with limited operations planned within these watersheds within the the next 5-year period.
Observation:	FME should ensure continued conformance with Indicator 6.5.8.

1.4 Conformance with Applicable Non-conformity Reports (NCRs)

Note: this section indicates the Organisation's actions to comply with NCRs that have been issued during or since the last audit. Failure to comply with a minor NCR results in the NCR being upgraded to major; the specified follow-up action is required by the Organization or involuntary suspension will take place.

Status Categories	Explanation
CLOSED	Operation has successfully met the NCR
OPEN	Operation has either not met or has partially met the NCR

Check if N/A (there are no open NCRs to review)

NCR: 4.2.1/19	NC Classification: minor
Standard & Requirement:	Forest Stewardship Council Regional Certification Standards for British Columbia - Main Standards (2005) section 4.2.1
Report Section:	Appendix II, Indicator 4.2.1
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<p><u>Requirement:</u> The manager develops and implements a safety program (for all forest workers) to meet or exceed occupational health and safety regulations. The program includes: assessing new forest practices for hazards and developing/communicating appropriate safety measures in relation to them.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u> Safety issues at the 4.8km steel bridge crossing on Guyishton road includes missing delineators and safety curbs. This same issue was noted as an Observation 4.2.1/18 during the last annual surveillance audit. Similar deficiencies were noted within the recent Bridge Inspection Report (file 1938-356-04) by DWB Consulting Ltd. The inspection reports include other crossings that requires attention to similar safety measures (Mackenzie rd 4.6km, Tibbets connector road 7.6km, Spur rd. 9.9km, etc.). As a result of these findings this Observation has been upgraded to a Minor NCR (4.2.1/19).</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u></p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visit • Bridge Inspection Reports • Interviews with staff 	
Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	Within 12 months from report finalization date
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	<p>BLCOMFOR Bridge and Culvert Inspection List 2019; Bridge and Culvert Inspection Reports; Delineators invoice Site visits including Guyiston road crossing 4.8km and Tibbets connector road crossing 7.6km FM and forest worker interviews</p>
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	<p>The audit team reviewed inspection reports and maps identifying water crossings. Interviews and site visits confirmed that the Organization has assessed water crossings and is currently implementing safety measures. This includes crossing decommissioning, new installation, and replacement of delineators. An informal monitoring procedure is in place to continually inspect water crossings including after heavy rain events. Field inspections found compliance on all sites visited.</p>
NCR Status:	CLOSED
Comments (optional):	

NCR: 6.1.3/19	NC Classification: minor
Standard & Requirement:	Forest Stewardship Council Regional Certification Standards for British Columbia - Main Standards (2005) section 6.1.3
Report Section:	Appendix II, Indicator 6.1.3
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<p><u>Requirement:</u> As part of the operational management planning process for landscapes and/or watersheds in which road-building or timber harvesting is proposed over the next five years, inventories, assessments and/or information databases of ecosystem characteristics, resources and environmental values are completed and/or assembled (see</p>	

FSC BC Guidance on Inventory for further information). The inventory information should include information covering the following topics at a minimum:

...g) where access-sensitive species or their habitats are present (e.g., grizzly bears, ungulate winter range), assessments to determine measures for the protection of those species and habitats.

Finding:

The 2018 *Burns Lake HCVF Review* (K.Price) provides a recommendation from a qualified specialist to overlay road networks with Grizzly bear suitability/capability habitat mapping and to use road density as a supplemental indicator to evaluate population stability (*Cummulative Effects Framework, Interim Assessment Protocol for Grizzly Bear in British Columbia, 2017*). Grizzly bear populations have been identified as at risk across the southern Omineca (overlapping the BLCF FMU) by the Omineca ESI Risk Assessment. Habitat ratings in the BLCF FMU for Grizzly were developed for spring feeding (FD-P) and growing feeding (FD-G) sites that could be used for habitat assessments (*Environmental Values within the Burns Lake Community Forest, 2017*).

Despite these recommendations and the issue of managing access-sensitive species being raised in NCR 6.3.12/18, an assessment to determine measures for the protection of Grizzly and their habitats have not been completed. A specific assessment was completed of developmental impacts to the Grizzly Bear Management Area (122 ha) related to section 7(2) FPPR notice (*5-year Harvest Sequence Planning report, Forsite, 2018*), however a broader FMU-scale assessment, as recommended by the 2018 *Burns Lake HCVF Review*, and highlighted by the Omineca ESI Risk Assessment (draft *Burns Lake Community Forest Access Management Plan, 2019*) was not completed.

Interviews with staff indicated that such an analysis is being scheduled in the near future but was not completed during the audit period.

Evidence:

- 2018 *Burns Lake HCVF Review* (K.Price)
- *Cummulative Effects Framework*
- *Interim Assessment Protocol for Grizzly Bear in British Columbia, 2017*
- *Environmental Values within the Burns Lake Community Forest, 2017*
- *Draft Burns Lake Community Forest Access Management Plan, 2019*
- staff interviews.

Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	Within 12 months from report finalization date
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	<p>Forest Access Management Plan (BLCF, 2020)</p> <p>Grizzly Assumptions Maximum Rating by Ecosystem Unit mapping (BLCF, 2020)</p>

	<p>Environmental Values within the Burns Lake Community Forest (Keystone Wildlife Research Ltd, 2017)</p> <p>Cummulative Effects Framework, Interim Assessment Protocol for Grizzly Bear in British Columbia (BC Gov, 2017)</p> <p>Preliminary Grizzly Habitat Assessment Letter (Environmental Dynamics Inc., September 22, 2020)</p> <p>Staff interviews</p> <p>Field review (road decommissioning)</p>
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	<p>The BLCF has since conducted road density analyses at a watershed scale to compare with a road density risk threshold of 0.6km/ha (as listed with in BC's <i>Cumulative Effects Framework</i>, and BLCF's <i>Access Management Plan</i>). Mapping was conducted to identify maximum or high-value habitats (e.g. spring forage, growing forage), as defined through BLCF's <i>Environmental Values</i> report. Staff interviews and cross-referencing with the <i>Access Management Plan</i> (AMP) indicate that Grizzly habitat is a <i>sensitive area</i> or <i>value</i> and that it, along with watershed-scale road densities, are considered when prioritizing road decommissioning. Field reviews confirmed active implementation of the AMP including road decommissioning and bridge removal. Additionally, a preliminary biological consultant's report confirmed that work was underway to assess the suitability of the current Grizzly Management Areas identified. As a result, the requirements for this Criterion have been met.</p>
NCR Status:	CLOSED
Comments (optional):	

1.5 Summary of evaluation findings per criteria

PRINCIPLE 1: Compliance with law and FSC Principles					
Criterion 1.1 Respect for national and local laws and administrative requirements					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The Forest Manager (FM) has links to all applicable legislation available on-line. There are no major compliance issues with the forest management. The manager and staff interviewed had sufficient knowledge of legal requirements applicable to their work. The organization is in conformance with this Criterion				
Criterion 1.2 Payment of legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	

Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	All fees are paid and up to date. The audit team was able to access the documentation concerning the fees and taxes. The organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 1.3 Respect for provisions of international agreements					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The Organization maintains a hyperlink listing of the binding international agreements and demonstrates familiarity with those aspects of the agreements that are relevant to their operations. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 1.4 Conflicts between laws and regulations, and the FSC P&C					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	There have been no situations where the managers compliance with the law precludes compliance with the GSC-BC Regional Standards. The Organization is in conformance with this criterion.				
Criterion 1.5 Protection of forests from illegal activities					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	Interviews with Organization staff, Government personnel and other stakeholders confirmed that no illegal activities were reported on the FMU during the audit period. The Organization has an informal procedure for all the staff to declare occurrences of illegal activities. The Organization is in conformance with this indicator.				
Criterion 1.6 Demonstration of a long-term commitment to the FSC P&C					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The Organization maintains a written commitment to adhere to the FSC BC Regional Standards signed off by a senior authority (General Manager) and is available to download publicly on their website. The adherence to FSC Principles is also stated in most official correspondence. The Organizations Management Plan (#3, May18, 2016) and the recently approved Management Plan 4 (approved Sep03, 2020) detail the forest areas over which the manager has responsibility. The Organization is in conformance with this criterion.				
PRINCIPLE 2: Tenure and use rights and responsibilities					
Criterion 2.1 Demonstration of land tenure and forest use rights					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The Organization has an official agreement with the Crown to use the Forest on the community forest (Tenure CFA K1A). The documentation is clear and kept on file by the Organization. The agreement is renewable. The Organization is in conformance with this criterion.				

Criterion 2.2 Local communities' legal or customary tenure or use rights					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The past Forest Management Plan (#3, 2016) and current Plan (#4, 2019) clearly articulate the legal license for the 25-year renewable area-based tenure (Community Forest Agreement K1A). The CFA license (renewed in 2014) provides the legal description of the lands and rights in the area. The manager maintains a database of stakeholders which includes Indigenous communities. The Organization is in conformance with this criterion.				
Criterion 2.3 Disputes over tenure claims and use rights					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The Organization has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with local First Nation groups and has been in consultation with them regarding their tenure and use rights. The audit team notes that the draft 2020 Access Management Plan states that the Organization will obtain resource users 'opinions' about pre and post-harvest operations, however the standard requires their consent where any portion of the management plan affects their rights and resources. OBS 2.2.2/20 has been issued regarding obtaining consent from local rights holders. The Organization is in conformance with this indicator.				
PRINCIPLE 3: Indigenous peoples' rights					
Criterion 3.1 Indigenous peoples' control of forest management					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The findings from previous audits and assessments remain valid. Through management partnerships as well defined and customized engagement processes and responsive management Indigenous peoples have delegated some responsibility while maintaining a defined level of control over forest management on their lands and territories. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 3.2 Maintenance of indigenous peoples' resources or tenure rights					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The findings from previous audits and assessments remain valid. Through implementation of strategies to maintain High Conservation Value Forest (e.g. intact reserve corridors, riparian buffers etc.), application of innovative silviculture systems within sensitive areas (e.g. partial harvest, select harvest) a commitment to restoration (e.g. prescribed fire, salvage logging), and ongoing and open communications with First Nations, the forest management activities do not threaten or diminish the resource or tenure rights of Indigenous peoples.				
Criterion 3.3 Protection of sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples					

Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The findings from previous audits and assessments remain valid. Through a strategy of avoidance and buffers and informed through systematic consultations, the Organization identifies and protects sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 3.4 Compensation of indigenous peoples for the application of their traditional knowledge					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The findings from previous audits and assessments remain valid. Where applicable, traditional knowledge such as locations of Cultural Management Areas (e.g. heritage or culturally sensitive sites) are shared and used through the First Nations role as a managing partner for the BLCF, or through the implementation of Engagement Frameworks. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
PRINCIPLE 4: Community relations and workers rights					
Criterion 4.1 Employment, training, and other services for local communities					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The Organization provides opportunities for employment, training, and other services to local communities. All the workers interviewed were from the region in BC. Documentation was provided to demonstrate local employment efforts. Training is provided as needed. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 4.2 Compliance with health and safety regulations					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The Organizations safety and emergency response protocols are detailed within the Safety and Environmental Handbook. Interviews confirmed that forest workers are systematically informed of health and safety risks through pre-work meetings. Incident reporting log and preventative measures logs are maintained by the Organization. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 4.3 Workers' rights to organize and negotiate with employers					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The employees and contractors interviewed confirmed that the forest manager has not obstructed their rights to organize. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 4.4 Social impact evaluations and consultation					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding	The Organization's communications strategy (Burns Lake Community Forest Corporation community engagement strategy report- 2016) is				

<i>(strength/weakness)</i>	still relevant. Documents, including letters of support from a range of community organizations, tenure right holders and forest users indicate a wide range of support. Through annual public events and an 'open door' policy at the BLCF office, there remain clear opportunities for ongoing public participation in management planning. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.
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Criterion 4.5 Resolution of grievances and settlement of compensation claims

Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
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Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	There were no records or evidence of grievances against the Organization regarding loss of damage due to forestry activities. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.
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PRINCIPLE 5: Benefits from the forest

Criterion 5.1 Economic viability taking full environmental, social, and operational costs into account

Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
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Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	Benchmarks for investment and operational decisions are based on financial and timber supply analysis conducted in 2017 and 2019. Financial viability is determined through budgeting, on an annual basis. The FMP and supporting documentation also demonstrate how environmental and social costs have been considered, the Mountain Pine Beetle Mitigation Plan and subsequent FMP 4 identifying impacts and measures to offset them. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.
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Criterion 5.2 Optimal use and local processing of forest products

Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
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Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The Organizations wood production goes to local processing facilities. This was confirmed through interviews and documentation. The audit team was able to confirm that there is no temporal or spatial high grading and that optimal value is captured for its production. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.
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Criterion 5.3 Waste minimization and avoidance of damage to forest resources

Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
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Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The Organization has procedures in place to quantify the quantity of waste left on the harvesting sites. The audit team was able to confirm that there is no avoidable excessive waste during the field visit. The use of the word avoidable stems from the Mountain Pine beetle's epidemic damages that are creating an abnormal amount of waste wood on the FMU. There are opportunities for firewood harvesters to pick through waste piles and selected areas. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.
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Criterion 5.4 Forest management and the local economy

Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
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Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The FMP contains objectives to develop harvesting and marketing strategies, including a deciduous AAC and expansion on new market opportunities for sawlogs, bioenergy fibre, and pulp logs. It also outlines strategy for botanical forest products (e.g. fungi), contains visual quality objectives and supports recreational trails and access. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 5.5 Maintenance of the value of forest services and resources					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	Identification of impacts of forest management practices on ecosystem services are documented in the FMP and FSP, with protection or enhancement measures being planned and implemented. Namely: -Soil protection -Water, fish, wildlife, and biodiversity within riparian areas -Visual quality management -Traditional use of the forest The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 5.6 Harvest levels					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The AAC calculations presented to the audit team included the objectives and strategies of the management plan. The analysis of the sustainable harvest rate is comprehensive and is using the best available information, as outlined with the 2017 Timber Supply Analysis Report, updated in 2019 (With a 7 Generations View). The AAC calculations included an analysis of the variability and uncertainty of the assumptions and projections. The AAC was adjusted in 2015 to respond to Mountain Pine Beetle that led to an accelerated short-term harvest level that reflects primarily dead tree salvage. However, it should be noted that the analysis supporting BLCF's current AAC is predicated on future management practices rather than current practices. These future practices include altered merchantability and utilization standards and minimum harvesting criteria not currently observed and will need to be monitored to ensure the rate of harvest can be sustained. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
PRINCIPLE 6: Environmental impact					
Criterion 6.1 Environmental impacts evaluation					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The findings from the previous audits and assessments remain valid. The manager employs considerable resources towards updating inventories and assessments of those values with the greatest environmental consequences (e.g. fire hazard, forest health, hydrology, wildlife habitat), and uses these inventories throughout multiple scales from tactical to operational planning to evaluate and mitigate negative environmental effects or support ecological restoration. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				

Criterion 6.2 Protection of rare, threatened and endangered species					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The findings from the previous audits and assessments remain valid. The Organization demonstrates that safeguards are in place to protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats, through formally recognized conservation zones or deliberate avoidance of sensitive habitats. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 6.3 Maintenance of ecological functions and values					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The findings from the previous audits and assessments remain valid. Forest regeneration, through a mix of artificial regeneration and natural regeneration, in concert with silviculture systems like shelterwood, clearcuts with reserves, and seed tree retention has underscored forest regeneration. Active salvage from fire and mountain pine beetle, and now ecological restoration through the use of fire, while actively tracking forest growth and regeneration further strengthens the Organizations conformance with this indicator.				
Criterion 6.4 Protection of representative samples of existing ecosystems					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The findings from the previous audits and assessments remain valid. The suite of reserve networks and harvest deferral areas to protect representative samples of existing ecosystems are well defined and mapped. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 6.5 Protection against damage to soils, residual forest and water resources during operations					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The Organization has standard operating procedures and guidelines in place to: control erosion; minimize forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all other mechanical disturbances; and protect water resources. LIDAR data and Predictive Ecosystem Mapping (PEM) have allowed BLCF to identify inoperable areas and where to take additional precautionary measures (i.e. steep slopes) to control erosion. Risk assessment is conducted of aquatic ecosystems – from the planning process to site plan surveys and on-site inspections. The Organization is found to be in conformance with this criterion.				
Criterion 6.6 Chemical pest management					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The Organization does not use pesticides and sourced seedlings are also grown without pesticide use. The Organization is in conformance with this criterion.				

Criterion 6.7 Use and disposal of chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The Organization provides a Safety and Environmental Handbook (2020) to its forest workers and employees which outlines chemical use and spill procedures. The Organization is in conformance with this criterion.				
Criterion 6.8 Use of biological control agents and genetically modified organisms					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	No biological control agents and GMO are used. The Organization is in conformance with this criterion.				
Criterion 6.9 The use of exotic species					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	No exotics species, including the grass used for erosion control, are being introduced on the BLCF. A review of the seed grass mix confirmed the content did not include exotic species. The Organization is in conformance with this criterion.				
Criterion 6.10 Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The only case of conversion on the BLCF is for recreational use, i.e. mountain bike trails. Right now, this converted area does not exceed 5% of the timber harvesting land base of the management unit. The Organization is in conformance with this criterion.				
PRINCIPLE 7: Management plan					
Criterion 7.1 Management plan requirements					
Conformance		Non conformance	X	NCR #(s)	7.1.14/20
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The Organizations updated Forest Management Plan #4, and supporting documents, which notably include the Forest Stewardship Plan, Timber Supply report, and linkages to tactical level planning documents, such as the Landscape Fire Management Plan, provides evidence for conformance with the requirements of most of this Criterion. However, a lack of clear management plan objectives for several rare, threatened or endangered species has led to a minor NCR 7.1.14/20				
Criterion 7.2 Management plan revision					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The Organization has recently revised the management plan incorporating findings of monitoring, principally responding to forest inventory changes due to Mountain Pine Beetle and wildfire risks. The				

	revised plan is a clear response to changing environmental social and economic circumstances and as a result the Organization is in compliance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 7.3 Training and supervision of forest workers					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The organization continues to provide adequate training and supervision of forest workers to ensure the proper implementation of the management plan. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 7.4 Public availability of the management plan elements					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The Organization makes publicly available summary information of the management plan both online and in readily accessible formats at their centrally located office. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
PRINCIPLE 8: Monitoring and evaluation					
Criterion 8.1 Frequency, intensity and consistency of monitoring					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The findings from the previous audits and assessments remain valid. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 8.2 Research and data collection for monitoring					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The findings from previous annual audits remain valid. The Organization continues to conduct research and collect data to monitor criterion requirements a)-e). The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 8.3 Chain of custody					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The findings from the previous audits and assessments remain valid. Through adherence to both a Chain-of-Custody policy and legal requirements for tracing products from their origin through timber marks, the Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 8.4 Incorporation of monitoring results into the management plan					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The Organizations updated management plan is linked to tactical and operational planning that is directly informed by the results of				

	monitoring changes in forest composition. As a result the Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 8.5 Publicly available summary of monitoring					
Conformance		Non conformance	X	NCR #(s)	8.5.1/20
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	A variety of monitoring results are available in different formats. The back of the monitoring plan includes a summary of some monitoring results (although had not been updated since 2019's annual audit). The annual report provides summaries of the monitoring of financial records. Other summaries, including on harvest yields or silviculture records can be made available by requesting customized reports from the Phoenix database. However, the results, particularly of the monitoring indicators outlined within the monitoring plan and management plan, or those listed in Criterion 8.2, were not updated in a readily accessible summarized format. Minor NCR 8.5.1/20 is issued.				
PRINCIPLE 9: High Conservation Value Forests					
Criterion 9.1 Evaluation to determine high conservation value attributes					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The findings from the previous audits and assessments remain valid. The 2017 HCVF Assessment remains relevant to the current operations. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
Criterion 9.2 Consultation process					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The findings from the previous audits and assessments remain valid. As identified in previous annual audits, the manager has consulted directly with affected persons, qualified specialists, and First Nations on the identification of HCVF conservation values. Consultation is ongoing, through public open houses/information sessions, web-based platforms (e.g. facebook), and regular outreach through engagement framework agreements with First Nations. Consultation has been emphasized within visual quality management area and recreation areas as they interface with wildfire management near communities.				
Criterion 9.3 Measures to maintain and enhance high conservation value attributes					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	The findings from the previous audits and assessments remain valid. The management plan and its supporting documentation includes specific measures such as avoidance, buffers, prescribed fire, partial harvest and selection harvesting that ensures the maintenance and/or enhancement of conservation values. The Organization is in conformance with this indicator.				
Criterion 9.4 Monitoring to assess effectiveness					

Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	The Organization conducts monitoring, both before and after forest management activities, to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the conservation attributes. The Organization is in conformance with this Criterion.				
PRINCIPLE 10: Plantations					
Criterion 10.1 Statement of objectives in the management plan					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	BLCF does not manage any plantations as defined by FSC. This principle is currently not applicable.				
Criterion 10.2 Plantation design and layout					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	BLCF does not manage any plantations as defined by FSC. This principle is currently not applicable.				
Criterion 10.3 Diversity in composition					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	BLCF does not manage any plantations as defined by FSC. This principle is currently not applicable.				
Criterion 10.4 Species selection					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	BLCF does not manage any plantations as defined by FSC. This principle is currently not applicable.				
Criterion 10.5 Restoration of natural forest					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	BLCF does not manage any plantations as defined by FSC. This principle is currently not applicable.				
Criterion 10.6 Impacts on soil and water					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)	BLCF does not manage any plantations as defined by FSC. This principle is currently not applicable.				
Criterion 10.7 Pests and diseases					

Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	BLCF does not manage any plantations as defined by FSC. This principle is currently not applicable.				
Criterion 10.8 Monitoring of impacts, species testing and tenure rights					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	BLCF does not manage any plantations as defined by FSC. This principle is currently not applicable.				
Criterion 10.9 Plantations established in areas converted from natural forests after November 1994					
Conformance	X	Non conformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i>	BLCF does not manage any plantations as defined by FSC. This principle is currently not applicable.				

1.6 Stakeholder consultation

1.6.1 Stakeholder consultation process

The purpose of the stakeholder consultation strategy for this reassessment was to ensure that the public is aware of and informed about the reassessment process and its objectives. Broad public notification of reassessment was made by Preferred by Nature on August 7, 2020. This notice was emailed to Preferred by Nature's stakeholder list and was posted on the FSC Canada and Preferred by Nature websites.

A more targeted approach was then used by the audit team, selecting stakeholders using a comprehensive database provided by the client and past stakeholder consultation records. Engagement with stakeholders consisted of email, interviews and telephone correspondence. Members of the key local stakeholder groups were contacted by telephone and interviews were conducted. BLCF has a diverse list of groups that use the forest for their activities. 54 local stakeholder groups were contacted to gather evidence on conformance with the FSC standards evaluated during this audit".

Stakeholder Type (NGO, government bodies, local inhabitant, contractor etc.)	Stakeholders Notified (X)	Stakeholders consulted directly or provided input (#)
Government Agencies/Regulators	☒	6
National/Regional Recreation Organizations	☒	2
Indigenous Peoples	☒	4
Local Communities/Representatives	☒	1
Local resource users (trappers, hunt & fish clubs, etc.)	☒	2
Local businesses	☒	1
Forest Owner or Manager	☒	2
Buyers	☒	1
Contractors	☒	3

1.6.2 Stakeholder comments

The table below summarizes the issues identified by the audit team with a brief discussion of each based upon specific interview and/or public meeting comments.

Principle/Subject Area	Stakeholder comment	Preferred by Nature response
P1: FSC Commitment and Legal Compliance	No comments received.	No response needed.
P2: Tenure & Use Rights & Responsibilities	No comments received.	No response needed.

<p>P3 – Indigenous Peoples’ Rights</p>	<p>An Indigenous community representative commended BLCF for open communication and engagement in the development of the Management Plan.</p> <p>An Indigenous community representative identified concerns regarding limits to accessing procurement opportunities.</p> <p>An Indigenous community representative indicated that there is an interest in Indigenous ownership instead of just partnership.</p>	<p>No response needed</p> <p>This concern has applicability to Principle 4. Where disputes might arise, the Organization has provided access to a resolution process to address the dispute. See auditor comments below.</p> <p>This is an option that is being explored by all parties (including by current ownership of the BLCF) and one that requires considerable time with dialogue and information exchange. The past management decisions to increase profit sharing equitably to all partners shows recognition and respect, and an ability for the Organization to engage and work effectively with Indigenous partners.</p>
<p>P4: Community Relations & Workers’ Rights</p>	<p>Several affected stakeholders have indicated that notification systems could be improved to understand potential impacts and be more meaningfully involved in decisions affecting them. Some stakeholders were not aware of recent forest management documents or decisions and some stakeholders commented that a more proactive approach could be used.</p>	<p>These comments are associated with criterion 4.4 of the standard regarding stakeholder consultation. The auditor confirmed with interview of the certificate holder and review of notification correspondences and associated plan and map products that notifications to all directly affected stakeholders are sent regularly, the FM also keeping an updated stakeholder list. Annual open houses regarding forest operations also ensure that local stakeholders are aware of forest management and able to comment. Consultation meetings are held with a variety of groups. However, OBS 4.4.2/20 has been issued due to this as the organization’s notification and consultative system could be improved based on these comments.</p>

	<p>An organization commented that there needs to be more contracts offered to local businesses.</p>	<p>The auditor explored this topic as it relates to indicator 4.1.1 of the standard. The FME was interviewed regarding their contracting policies. BLCF has a contract bidding and award policy which states that procurement of goods and/or services shall give preference to local suppliers/contractors where expertise, cost and value are comparable. BLCF uses a 'select' list to award contracts to prequalified contractors. Contractors on this list are based on several factors including reliability, previous work, being local, and if they are an Indigenous contractor. Inclusion on this list is advertised annually, however contractors can also directly contact the FM if interested in being on this select list. The auditor reviewed the current select list and also a list of contractors for 2019-2020. It was confirmed that most contractors used were local, particularly those involved with forest operations. The organization continues to be in conformance with the requirements of the Standard.</p>
<p>P5: Benefits from the Forest</p>	<p>A stakeholder indicated concern regarding the sustainable rate of harvest in the recent AAC approval.</p>	<p>The auditor reviewed the AAC, FMP 4 and the timber supply analysis and found it within sustainable levels over the long-term, the auditor determining it met FSC's criteria of a sustainable rate under criterion 5.6. The auditor does note that future practices proposed in FMP 4 include altered merchantability, utilization standards and minimum harvesting criteria which are not currently implemented. The implementation of these practices will need to be monitored to ensure the current AAC is sustainable.</p>
<p>P6: Environmental Impact</p>	<p>A local resource specialist commended the BLCF for their innovative approach to managing</p>	<p>No response needed.</p>

	habitat for old growth dependent species.	
P7: Management Plan	No comments received.	No response needed.
P8: Monitoring & Assessment	No comments received.	No response needed.
P9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forest	No comments received.	No response needed.
P10: Plantations	No comments received.	No response needed.

2. AUDIT PROCESS

2.1 Certification Standard Used

Standards Used:	<p>Forest Stewardship Council Regional Certification Standards for British Columbia – Main Standards https://ca.fsc.org/preview.bc-standard.a-829.pdf</p> <p>Chain of Custody Standard for FM https://www.Preferred by Nature.org/library/standard/Preferred by Nature-chain-custody-standard-forest-management-enterprises</p> <p>FSC and Rainforest Alliance trademarks use https://fsc.org/en/document-centre/documents/resource/225</p>
Local Adaptation: (if applicable)	Not applicable

2.2 External peer review

Not required for reassessments per FSC-STD-20-007.

2.3 Audit Team and accompanying persons

Name	Role and qualifications
Nicholas Reynolds M.SFM	Nick is a Registered Professional Forester who has worked with government, industry, academia and First Nations over the last 20 years. Some of his work has included wildlife biology, Growth and Yield establishment and re-measurement, silviculture, forest ecology research, land use planning and teaching. He chaired of the Joint Technical Team for the implementation of the Haida Gwaii Strategic Land Use Agreement, which helped set the legal parameters for protected area management and Ecosystem Based Management for the Haida Nation. Work has also included leading Timber Supply Reviews and forest carbon offset projects. Nick has consulted for Provincial, Territorial and Federal governments in forest policy. He has a Masters in Sustainable Forest Management and is a Lead Auditor in FSC forest management and Lead Auditor for Chain of Custody auditing with Preferred by Nature.
James Hallworth RPF	James is a Forestry Specialist for Preferred by Nature and a Registered Professional Forester in Ontario with over 5 years of experience in forest and resource management. After his Master's degree in Environmental Assessment, James has worked in a variety of positions within the forestry and environmental sectors.

	Past work experiences include the development and implementation of forest management plans as a district forester for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in Northern Ontario, forest resource inventory, timber cruising and plan development within Ontario, plus assisting with several conservation projects globally including within the UK, China, India and the USA.
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2.4 Audit Overview

Note: The table below provides an overview of the audit scope and auditors. See standard checklist annex for specific details on people interviewed and audit findings per site audited.

Date(s)	Site(s)	Main activities	Auditor(s)
August 7th, 2020	Remotely	Stakeholder notification	Preferred by Nature
August 17th, 2020	Remotely	Preparatory call	Nick Reynolds (NR) James Hallworth (JH)
September 22, 2020	On-site	Opening meeting and start of on-site audit	NR, JH
September 23-24, 2020	On-site	On-site audit (field visits, interviews, stakeholders, etc.)	NR, JH
October 1, 2020	On-site	Closing meeting and end of on-site audit	NR, JH
Total LOE for audit: 9.50 days = days for preparation, on-site audit, site visits, stakeholder consultation and follow-up			

2.5 Audit Background

2.5.1 Changes in FMEs' forest management and associated effects on conformance to standard requirements

There have been no substantive changes in the FME's management system since the last audit. Of note, the Organization's Forest Management Plan #4 (FMP), including an updated Allowable Annual Cut, was approved by the Provincial Government in September of 2020. While the new AAC initiates a formal transition away from salvaging dead pine resulting from the Mountain Pine Beetle, the organization still foresees the continuation of salvage harvesting over the next 5 years, with a particular focus on mitigating risks from wildfire through the implementation of their Landscape Fire Management plan.

Has the management system changed since the previous evaluation?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, briefly review the changes:	
Have there been any complaints, disputes, or allegations of non-conformity with the standards raised against the Organisation during the audit period:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, reference standard and criteria where corresponding findings are found in report:	

2.6 Description of Overall Audit Process

The audit team visited the Burns Lake Community Forest office between September 22-24. The field visit included interviews with Indigenous community representatives, government agents, resource users and BLCF staff. The audit team visited a variety of forest management sites, including stream crossings, active harvesting, treated fire abatement sites, road decommissioning works and bridge removals. Eleven separate sites were included, providing samples of various silviculture methods (e.g. clearcuts, partial cuts, selective harvesting).

2.6.1 Changes to the certificate scope

There have been no changes in the number of FMUs or certified area since the last audit period.

Number of hectares added:	0
Number of hectares removed:	0
Number of FMUs (properties) added (if applicable):	0
Number of FMUs (properties) removed (if applicable):	0
Total hectares in the certificate:	92,304.00

Number of FMUs (properties) in the certificate:	1
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2.6.2 Sampling and FMUs selected for evaluation

FSC sampling rules were used to select the forest management units (FMUs) to be visited this audit. If applicable, FMUs are divided into subsets based on property size and whether they are new to the group. Small properties are less than 1,000 ha, medium properties are 1,000-10,000 ha, and large properties are >10,000 ha.

Sampling is summarized in the table here:

Description of Subset	# FMUs in subset	Minimum # FMUs to visit	Actual # FMUs visited	Notes/Comments
FMU above 10,000 ha	1	1	1	Burns Lake Community Forest (92,304.00 ha)

Note: FSC sampling formulas from FSC-STD-20-007 v3.0 (Forest management evaluations) were used to determine minimum FMUs to visit.¹

Sample FMU selection was based on extent of recent activity, type of activity and also sought to include a diversity of forest managers and at least one FMU that had never been audited (see table below).

FMU Name	Rationale for Selection
Burns Lake Community Forest	Only FMU in certificate scope

2.6.3 List of management aspects reviewed by audit team

Type of site	Sites visited	Type of site	Sites visited
Road construction	X	Illegal settlement	
Soil drainage	X	Bridges/stream crossing	X
Workshop	X	Chemical storage	
Tree nursery		Wetland	X
Planned Harvest site	X	Steep slope/erosion	
Ongoing Harvest site	X	Riparian zone	X

¹ Sampling formulas (y is #FMUs; x is minimum FMUs to sample)
 FMUs >10,000 hectares: new FMUs (x=y); existing FMUs (x=0.8*y)
 FMUs >1,001-10,000 hectares: new FMUs (x=0.3*y); existing FMUs (x=0.2*y)
 FMUs <1,000 hectares: new FMUs (x=0.6*√y); existing FMUs (x=0.3*√y)
 Multiple FMU: new FMUs (x=0.8*√y); existing FMUs (x=(0.8*√y)/2)

Completed logging	X	Planting	
Soil scarification	X	Direct seeding	X
Planting site	X	Weed control	
Felling by harvester	X	Natural regeneration	X
Felling by forest worker		Endangered species	
Skidding/Forwarding	X	Wildlife management	X
Clearfelling/Clearcut	X	Nature Reserve	
Shelterwood management	X	Key Biotope	
Selective felling	X	Special management area	X
Sanitation cutting	X	Historical site	
Pre-commercial thinning	X	Recreational site	X
Commercial thinning		Buffer zone	X
Logging camp		Local community	X

2.6.4 Review of FME Documentation and required records

A. All certificate types

Required Records	Reviewed
Complaints received by FME from stakeholders, actions taken, follow up communication	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: No complaints led to investigate formal dispute resolution procedures.	
Accident records	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: No major accidents were recorded during the audit period.	
Training records	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Training records were reviewed.	
Operational plan(s) for next twelve months	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: 5- year development plans were reviewed.	
Inventory records	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Inventory records were reviewed during the audit (e.g. forest inventory maps, silviculture survey records)	
Harvesting records	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Harvest Billings System data was reviewed.	

3. COMPANY DETAILS

3.1 Client specific background information

Ownership and land tenure description (legal and customary)						
<p>In April 2005, Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd. was awarded a 25-year Community Forest Agreement (designated K1A), the first of its kind in the province. This Agreement was revised and renewed on October 1, 2014 for a further 25 years. The BLCF is managed by Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd., which is 100% owned by Comfor Management Services Ltd. (CMSL). The CFA K1A Agreements is an area-based tenure (92,276 hectares) which gives forestry rights within this area. Community forest agreements are for a term of 25-99 years and are replaceable every 10 years.</p> <p>Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd. is governed by a six-member BOD. CMSL is governed by the same BOD and also provides accounting and administrative support to Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd.</p> <p>The CMSL BOD includes three reserved seats: one each to Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation, Wet'suwet'en First Nation, and the Office of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs. The other three board members are chosen from the community-at-large and appointed by the Village of Burns Lake. The Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation, the Wet'suwet'en First Nation and the Office of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs are actively involved in the BLCF. The Office of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs was one of the original signatories with the Village of Burns Lake on the Community Forest Pilot Agreement and both the Wet'suwet'en First Nation and Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation contributed tenure to the Community Forest.</p> <p>The BLCF Board of Directors (BOD) approved the business case for FSC certification and BLCF was awarded FSC certification effective December 31, 2017</p>						
Legislative and government regulatory context						
<p>The Community Forest is within the traditional territory of the Wet'suwet'en and Carrier Nations. The Office of the Wet'suwet'en (Hereditary Chiefs), Wet'suwet'en First Nation and Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation are actively involved in the Community Forest and BLCF also engages with six other First Nations:</p> <table border="0"><tr><td>Lake Babine Nation</td><td>Skin Tyee Band</td></tr><tr><td>Stellat'en First Nation</td><td>Nee Tahi Buhn Band</td></tr><tr><td>Yekooche First Nation</td><td>Nadleh Whut'en First Nation</td></tr></table> <p>The Community Forest Agreement K1A is under the British Columbia <i>Forest Act</i> and required under the <i>Forest and Range Practices Act</i> (FRPA) to work to achieve specific objectives outlined which include the Higher Level Plan (North) <i>Lakes Sustainable Resource Management Plan</i> Objectives. This is governed by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.</p>	Lake Babine Nation	Skin Tyee Band	Stellat'en First Nation	Nee Tahi Buhn Band	Yekooche First Nation	Nadleh Whut'en First Nation
Lake Babine Nation	Skin Tyee Band					
Stellat'en First Nation	Nee Tahi Buhn Band					
Yekooche First Nation	Nadleh Whut'en First Nation					
Environmental Context						
<p>The Burns Lake Community Forest is with in the boundary of the Lakes Timber Supply Area, within the Nadina Forest District in the Village of Burns Lake. The Chinook</p>						

Community Forest and Cheslata Community Forest are adjacent and a number of large Forest Companies, West Fraser and Hampton have rights to cut within lands adjacent in the Lakes TSA portions. There are a number of local recreation organizations (Mountain Bike Park, Cross-country Ski Trails, Recreation Trails/Sites, and campsites;) that operate within the Community Forest Boundaries.

Socioeconomic Context

In the Community Forest Agreement, Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd. agrees to provide each of the Village of Burns Lake, Wet’suwet’en First Nation and the Ts’íl Kaz Koh First Nation, 18% of the after-tax net profit. BLCF equally distributes after tax profits to the shareholder and partners. In addition, 50% of net profits above a net profit margin of 5% is also distributed to the shareholder and partners. This 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 distribution is equivalent to approximately 75% of after-tax annual profits to the shareholders and partners. On an annual basis, supported by CMSL policies, BOD has the discretion to further distribute 10% of gross profits to community groups. Operations, profit-sharing, and community donations are funded through the proceeds of log sales. High priority is placed on sales to local facilities at fair market value.

Currently, community values continue to reflect protecting and enhancing the rural and outdoor lifestyle, but they are now tempered by:

- Protecting the Community from wildfire
- Protecting local employment
- Maintaining community economic stability
- Ensuring the Community Forest is actively managed for the values and products desired by the community
- Addressing climate change
- Addressing and incorporating long standing First Nations concerns

Workers

Number of workers including employees, part-time and seasonal workers:

Total workers	enter number workers (provide detail below)	
Local employees	enter number Male	enter number Female
Non - Local employees	enter number Male	enter number Female
Number of serious accidents (past 12 month period)		
Number of fatalities (past 12 month period)		

3.2 Certificate Scope

3.2.1 Description

Reporting period:	Previous 12 month period	Dates	
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A. Scope of Forest Area	
Type of certificate: single FMU	SLIMF Certificate: not applicable
New FMUs added since previous evaluation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If Multi-FMU Certificate: List of new FMUs added to the certificate scope:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A (do not complete sections below)			
FMU Name/Description	Area	Forest Type	Location Latitude/Longitude ²
	ha		
	ha		
	ha		

If Group Certificate: Updated of FMU and group member list provided in ANNEX VI
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

B. FSC Product categories included in the FM/CoC scope			
www.info.fsc.org			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (do not complete sections below)			
	Level 1	Level 2	Species
<input type="checkbox"/>	W1 Rough wood	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	W2 Wood charcoal		
<input type="checkbox"/>	W3 Wood in chips or particles	W3.1 Wood chips	
<input type="checkbox"/>	W5 Solid wood (sawn, chipped, sliced or peeled)	W5.1 Flitches and boules	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non Wood Forest Products N1 Barks		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other		

² The center point of a contiguous FMU or group of dispersed properties that together comprise a FMU in latitude and longitude decimal degrees with a maximum of 5 decimals.

C. Forest Area Classification			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (do not complete sections below)			
1. Total certified area (land base)			ha
2. Total forested area			ha
3. Total production forest area (where harvesting occurs)		ha	
4. Total non-productive forest area (no harvesting)		ha	
4.a Protected forest area (strict reserves)	ha		
4.b Areas protected from timber harvesting and managed only for NTFPs or services	ha		
4.c Remaining non-productive forest (other uses)	ha		
5. Total non-forested area (<i>e.g., water bodies, wetlands, fields, rocky outcrops, etc.</i>)			ha
Forest zone		DROP-DOWN MENU	
Certified Area (ha) under Forest Type			
Natural			
Semi-Natural			
Plantation			
Stream sides and water bodies (Linear Kilometers)			

D. High Conservation Values identified via formal HCV assessment by the FME and respective areas			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (do not complete section below)			
Code	HCV TYPES	Description:	Area (ha)
HCV1	Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia).		
HCV2	Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.		
HCV3	Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.		

HCV4	Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control).		
HCV5	Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).		
HCV6	Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).		
Number of sites significant to indigenous people and communities			

E. Pesticide Use		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FME does not use pesticides (if checked, do not complete below).		
FME has valid FSC derogation for use of a highly hazardous pesticide	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A (no-highly hazardous pesticide used)	
FSC highly hazardous pesticides used in last calendar year		
Name	Quantity	# of ha treated
Non FSC highly hazardous pesticides used in last calendar year		
Name	Quantity	# of ha treated

F. List of overlapping forest tenure holders	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FME has no overlapping forest tenure holders in scope or no changes since previous audit	
Overlapping forest tenure holders participating to certificate:	
Name of holder AND Description (ex. area limited, annual, 1-year agreement, etc.)	Allocation (ex. 1000 m ³ of spruce)

Other overlapping forest tenure holders:	
Name of holder AND Description (ex. area limited, annual, 1-year agreement, etc.)	Allocation (ex. 1000 m ³ of spruce)
<p>Note: All FSC requirements are applicable to participating overlapping tenure holders. As for overlapping forest tenure holders who chose not to participate in the certification process, they may not make claims regarding the FSC-certified status of the wood harvested from the forest.</p>	

3.2.2 Excision of areas from the scope of certificate

A. Applicability of FSC partial certification		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All forest land owned or managed by the FME is included in the scope of the certificate.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	FME owns and/or has management involvement in other forest land/properties (forest management units) not included in the scope of this certificate. If yes, complete sections below in this table.	
Explanation for exclusion of these zones:		
Control measures to prevent contamination of material coming from the FSC certified area:		
Other Forest Area	Location (Name, Coordinates)	Size (ha)

B. Applicability of FSC excision policy (FSC-POL-20-003)
<p>Important: Excisions and removals from the certified area must be documented below during each audit.</p>

What are area excisions from the certified area?

Requirements of FSC Excision Policy (FSC-POL-20-003) Sections 1.2, 2.2, 3.2 are applicable.

Applicable when the certificate holder decides to isolate/separate an area from the certified area because this area cannot meet the FSC requirements for reasons either within or beyond its control. Possible examples of excisions: nurseries, areas within the FMU that are influenced / affected by activities from other users that result in non-compliance with FSC requirements (ex. Oil and gas, powerline ROWs, commercial gravel, etc.).

What area removals from the certified area?

Requirements of FSC Excision Policy (FSC-POL-20-003) Sections 1.1, 2.1, 3.1 are applicable.

Applicable generally when an area of the certified area is changing tenure type or property. This is considered a removal from the certified area. Possible examples of removals from the certified area: sale of area; conversion of forest to a non-forest area, in cases such as governmental disposition of lands to be converted for development of an infrastructure.



Past excisions or removals from the certified area

Check this box and complete sections 2 and 3 below and document conformance to FSC-POL-20-003 if in the past years, any area of the certified area has been:

- Excised and its excision proposal evaluated during an audit; **AND/OR**
- Removed by another entity (ex. government)



New or potential excisions and removals from the certified area

Check this box and complete sections 1,2 and 3 of below and document conformance to FSC-POL-20-003 if any area of the certified area under evaluation:

- Is proposed to be excised from the certified area; **AND/OR**
- Is being removed from the certified area.



Not applicable

The organization has not excised or removed areas from the certified area or does not plan to do so before their next audit.

1. Rationale for new excision of area from the certified area

Finding:

2. Findings explaining conformance against requirements of FSC-POL-20-003

Finding:

2019 audit: Description of project: East-west corridor for the Coastal Gas Link through southern sections of BLCF (244.6 ha). The trees harvested within the Coastal Gas Link are being administered under a Master Licence to Cut permit that is not administered by the

FME manager. Ownership rights to this volume of wood has already been transferred therefore there is no risk of contamination or third-party sales of FSC materials.

3. Details of control measures implemented to prevent contamination of FSC certified wood from the certified area with the wood that cannot be certified from the excised/removed forest areas.

Finding:

2019 audit: Coastal Gas Link has a Master Licence to Cut Permit from the Government of BC for their disposition licence. The licence is being administered by Coastal Gas Link, including plans for harvesting. An agreement between Burns Lake Community Forest and Coastal Gas Link stipulates terms for the compensation for the loss of access to resources/timber along the 244 hectare right-of-way corridor, and absolves the Burns Lake Community Forest from any liability/responsibility for the timber harvested from this area or silvicultural responsibilities. As such, the timber harvested from the proposed excised site will not be harvested by BLCF and not carry any FSC claims.

4. FSC PUBLIC SUMMARY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Main objectives of the forest management are:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report	
Primary priority:	income from harvesting and sales of roundwood
Secondary priority:	prod. of firewood and other material for self
Other priorities:	; ;
Forest composition:	
Description of Silvicultural system(s) used:	
using small clearcut areas (<5 ha)	
using small clearcut areas (<5 ha)	
using small clearcut areas (<5 ha)	
using small clearcut areas (<5 ha)	
2. Silvicultural system	Forest under this management (ha)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report	
a. Even aged management	
Clearcut (clearcut size range Click here to enter text.)	
Shelterwood	
b. Uneven aged management	
Individual tree selection	
Group selection (group harvested of less than 1 ha in size)	
c. Other types of management (specify) Click here to enter text.	
3. Forest Operations	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report	
3.1 Harvest methods and equipment used:	
3.2 Estimate of maximum sustainable yield for main commercial species:	
3.3 Explanation of the assumptions (e.g. silvicultural) upon which estimates are based and reference to the source of data (e.g. inventory data, permanent sample plots, yield tables) upon which estimates are based upon.	

3.4 FME organizational structure and management responsibilities from senior management to operational level (how is management organized, who controls and takes decisions, use of contractors, provisions for training, etc.).

3.5 Structure of forest management units (division of forest area into manageable units etc.).

3.6 Monitoring procedures (including yield of all forest products harvested, growth rates, regeneration, and forest condition, composition/changes in flora and fauna, environmental and social impacts of forest management, costs, productivity and efficiency of forest management).

3.7 Management strategies for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.

3.8 Environmental safeguards implemented, e.g. buffer zones for streams, riparian areas, seasonal operation, chemical storage, etc.

Other Sections may be added by the FME