



Forest  
Practices  
Board

# *Audit Process and Woodlot Trends*

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**The independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices in British Columbia.**

- Steps in a Board Audit
- Recent Audit Findings and Trends
- Examples of Good and Not So Good Practices

## Steps in a Board Audit:

Audits are usually full scope (planning, harvest, roads, silviculture and protection) for compliance with FRPA and WA. There are 4 main phases.

- **Planning and Preparation**
- **Fieldwork**
- **Analysis**
- **Reporting**

## Planning and Preparation: Notification

- About 5 weeks before we plan to start an audit, you will receive a phone call from the Director of Audits – formally notifying you that your licence has been selected for an audit!
- You will be asked for the name of a “key contact” – who do you want handling the audit from your end?
- Audit period will be identified – usually 2 years

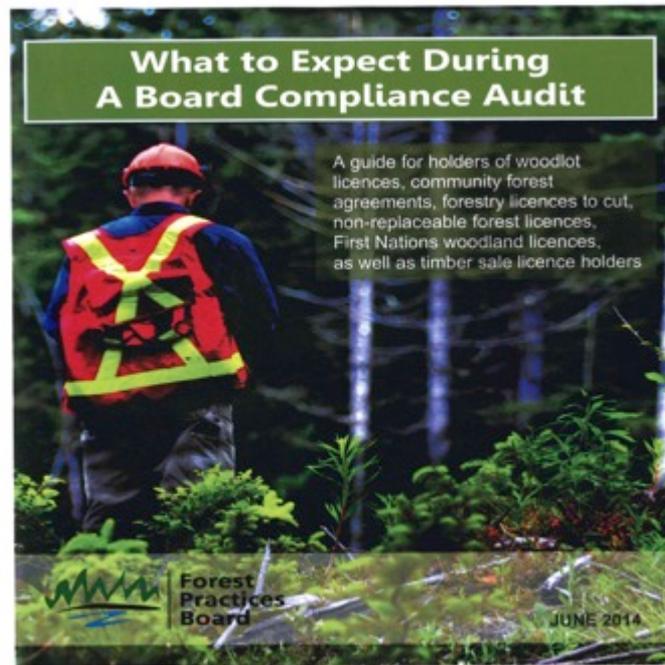
## Planning and Preparation: Information Gathering

- Once we have a key contact, our lead auditor will start gathering audit information
  - Cutblocks harvested
  - Roads constructed, maintained or deactivated
  - List of bridges
  - Silviculture activities and obligations
  - Protection activities and obligations

## Key Documentation Items

- ✓ Woodlot Licence and Management Plans
- ✓ Guidance from government agencies, plan approvals or exemptions from obligations or AAC
- ✓ Site plans and operational maps
- ✓ Road and bridge designs and certifications
- ✓ Silviculture records such as surveys, and planting, treatment and seedlot information
- ✓ Fire hazard assessments
- ✓ Activity notices of commencement to the ministry
- ✓ SOPs for best management practices
- ✓ Record of any inspections
- ✓ Annual reporting (RESULTS) is up to date

The Board created a document to help woodlot licensees prepare for an audit. It is available on our website [www.fpb.gov.bc.ca](http://www.fpb.gov.bc.ca)



## Field Work

- The audit team – 2 to 4 people, usually spend 1 to 2 days in the field.
- The length of time spent on the ground is based on the size of the operation and the number of issues noted.
- Will usually look at your entire woodlot.

## Planning and Reporting Review

- Does the WLP meet the requirements of the WLPPR?
  - Does it meet content requirements?
  - Are R&S measureable and verifiable?
  - FN referrals are complete?
- Does annual reporting meet WLPPR requirements?
  - Is it submitted on time?
  - Have milestones been reported?
  - Does it meet RISS standards?
  - Does reported information match field conditions?

## Analysis

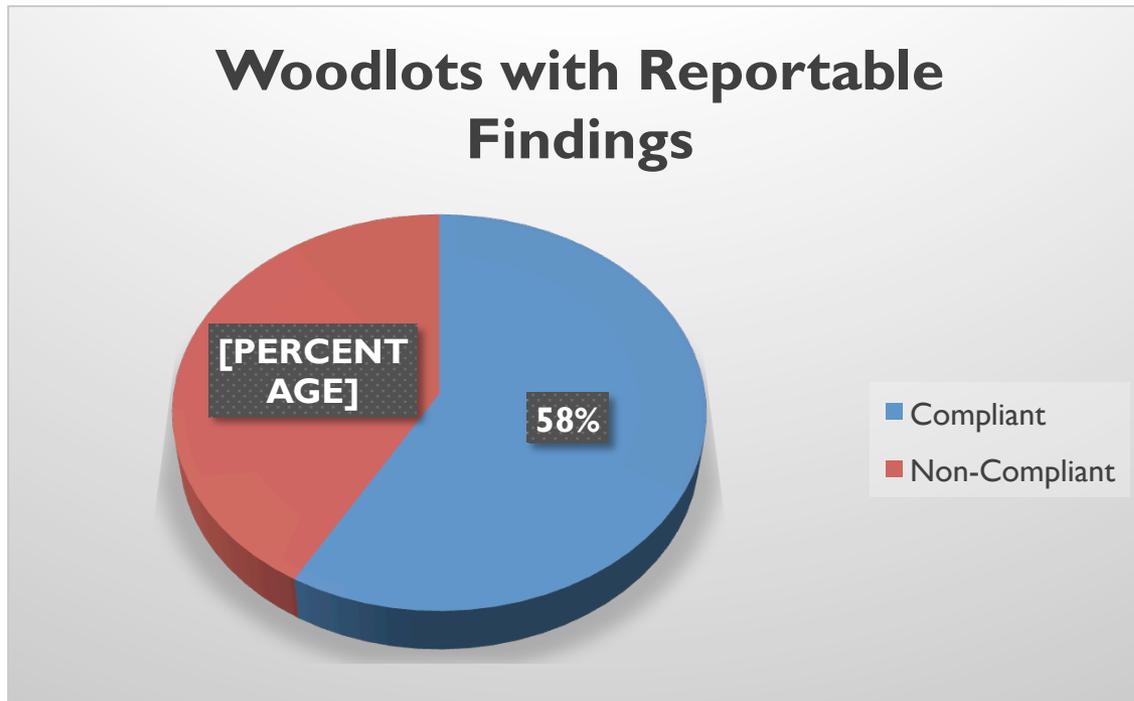
- Analysis and interpretation of information.
- Completion of an Exit Package.
- If there are potential findings, the Board will discuss these issues with the auditee. This is called an exit meeting and it can either be a phone call or a face to face meeting

## Reporting

- After the exit meeting, a draft report is completed
- Auditee reviews the draft report,
- Adjustments may be made
- If there are potential issues, the auditee gets an opportunity for representations
- Finally, the auditee is provided a report, then it is publicly released.

# Findings from 2011 to 2015

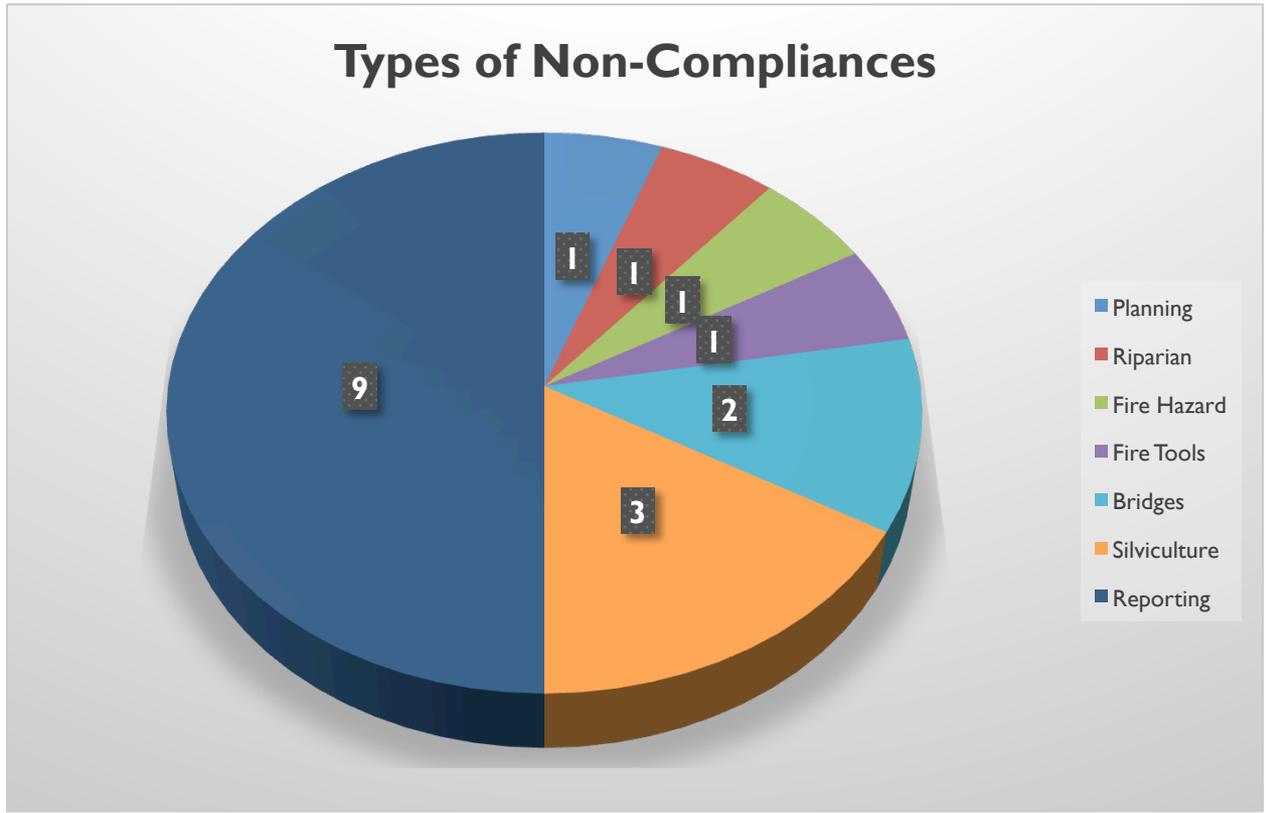
24 woodlots audited, 10 had reportable findings



- Reportable findings included 12 SNCs and 6 ARIs

# Findings from 2011 to 2015

Distribution of finding types – 18 findings.



One of the key things we look at during an audit is riparian management both during harvesting as well as during road and bridge construction.

We want to see how the streams are being managed?

Here is an example of a lack of riparian management.

The RRZ has been logged for a 40m length of the stream.



Practice Example – Non-compliant

An example of good riparian management.

This stream is machine buffered with good vegetation retention.



Practice Example - Compliant

Silviculture is another important practice we assess  
Here is a nicely regenerated stand that meets  
stocking standards.

But not only do we want to see this – we need to  
ensure the correct seedlings were used on the site.



Practice Example - Compliant

Here is a poorly regenerated stand that does not meet stocking standards at regeneration delay – foreground an ridge had no trees.

RESULTS information did not reflect the condition of this stand – no surveys, forest cover or regen delay.



Practice Example – Non-Compliant

The control of invasive plants is another important practice we assess.

- Are they monitored?
- Are they reported to an invasive plant committee when encountered?
- Have exposed soils been seeded to limit further establishment?
- Is the seed mix appropriate – ecologically sound and does not contain other invasive plants – use forage mix?



Practice Example - Compliant

Roads are another key feature of interest.

Here is a well constructed and maintained road in very difficult terrain.



Practice Example - Compliant

Here is an example of a Road prism failure – road was only 3-4 years old, built improperly resulting in large tension cracks with a high probability of continued failure.

No ditching or water management was noted. So once again, don't forget about the water.



Road Maintenance – failure of a road prism. Road under permit but considered a wilderness road. Still utilized by public. No warning signs and failure of the culvert below introduced sediment into an S4 fish stream.

Board would have like to see some flagging around this hole and a plan in place to fix this issue.



Road Construction – legislation states you must maintain natural drainage patterns both during and after construction.

That didn't happen here! Road construction created a new outlet to this pond.



Practice Example – Non-Compliant

The resulting sedimentation flowed down the “road” into the brush and into a fish stream.



Practice Example – Non-Compliant

When we assess harvesting practices, we also assess soil disturbance levels.

Here is an example of Harvesting with dispersed retention. Good adherence to plan and acceptable soil disturbance levels.



And here is a harvesting example of “what not to do!” Very high levels of site disturbance within a cutblock. An example of not using the right tool for the job – here an operator did not adhere to the site plan and used a skidder when cable harvesting was prescribed.



Practice Example – Non-Compliant

More very high levels of site disturbance within a cutblock.

The good thing was they saw the mess they were making in this wet soil, so they pulled out and came back when it was dry to finish logging and rehabilitate this block.



Practice Example – Non-Compliant

A good example where, on sensitive soils, the logger used designated skid trails and rehabilitated the trails after harvesting.



Practice Example - Compliant

Trespass is another harvesting issue that comes up once in awhile.

One of the pieces of legislation we audit to is the *Wildfire Act*.

We check whether adequate fire tools are on site and that operators adhere to fire restrictions.



And whether a fire suppression system is ready to be used should a fire occur. In this case because the tank is empty and the nearest water supply is over 2 km away – the suppression system is not adequate.



We also check whether fire hazard assessment and abatement obligations have been fulfilled.

An example of slash burning in progress.



An example where slash burning is a few years overdue and now, due to slash decomposition, it will be difficult to get a good burn and there is a high risk to damaging the adjacent timber if burned and planting has been delayed by several years.



One of most prevalent issues in audits – is bridges.

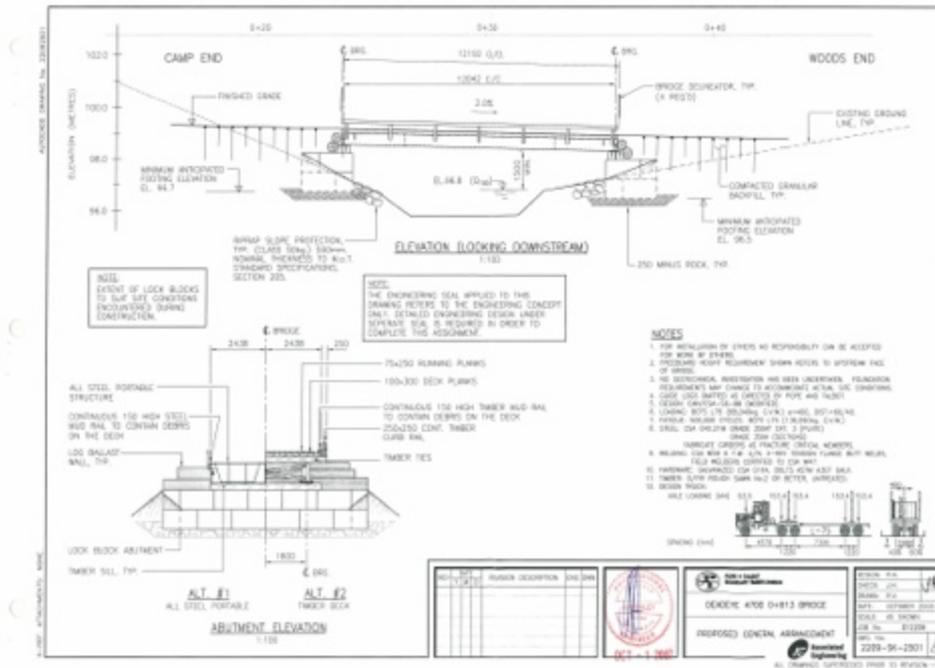
Here is an example of a well constructed bridge.



Practice Example - Compliant

Some of the things we look for when auditing a bridge is if there is a site plan, bridge design, as built inspection?

Here is an example of a well designed “General Arrangement Plan”. As auditors, prior to going out to the field we ask for copies of such plans and correspondence. This generally gives us a better idea of what to expect.



Practice Example - Compliant

However, here is the finished product of the previous plan.

- 12m steel portable. Licensee claimed the ground was too frozen to properly excavate to establish a base for the substructure
- Bearing on un-compacted, loose soil and randomly placed logs.
- Rounds used to prop up downstream side on panel as it was settling.



Practice Example – Non-Compliant

And sometimes there are no plans!

This is a poorly constructed bridge - Bridge located at the bottom of a hill, on a curve and there are no guard rails. Superstructure was not lashed or pinned properly to the foundations. No consideration for unbalanced loads or off-centre driving.

The auditee said they were building a culvert so didn't need a plan. However, this is over 6 metres, therefore a bridge.



Practice Example – Non-Compliant

- As a licensee, you are taking on the responsibility of properly managing a public asset, according to the laws of the Province.
- Do the right things on the ground and you will have no concerns when you get that call informing you that your licence has been selected for a Board audit.



Remember – Signs Don't Always Work!



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