

Nipissing Forest Independent Forest Audit 2025

April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2025



Prepared by
Caliber Forestry Consulting Co.
December 9, 2025

King's Printer for Ontario, 2025



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1.0 Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an Independent Forest Audit of the Nipissing Forest conducted by Caliber Forestry Consulting Incorporated. The audit followed the risk-based approach as outlined in the 2025 Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol. The audit included a review of documentation and records, field assessments, and opportunities for First Nation communities, Métis communities, the public, and stakeholder input.

The Independent Forest Audit for the Nipissing Forest covered a nine-year period of April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2025. The Nipissing Forest is managed under Sustainable Forest Licence #542053 by Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc. The Forest is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources North Bay District in the Northeast Region. The Nipissing Local Citizens Committee provides advise to the District Manager in regards to the Nipissing Forest.

Overall, the audit team concludes that the Nipissing Forest is being managed in compliance with legislative and policy requirements and in a manner consistent with the principles of sustainable forest management. Despite challenges arising from market downturns, an inventory that lacks useful detail, and pandemic-related disruptions, the licensee and the Ministry have maintained a professional, collaborative, and adaptive approach to forest management. Four findings were identified: insufficient clarity in the 2019 plan regarding shared road and bridge responsibilities between the Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc. and the Ministry of Natural Resources; red pine commercial thinning is not optimized; the absence of an Annual Compliance Operations Plan and limited compliance monitoring by the Ministry of Natural Resources North Bay District and inconsistencies in regeneration monitoring. A best management practice was also recognized for Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc.'s exemplary use of adaptive management and improvement projects, including a series of Forestry Futures Trust initiatives focused on stand improvement in developing stands, and remediation, and renewal following natural disturbances.

Planning and consultation requirements were generally met, harvest levels remained below targets due to weak markets, and renewal success was high with well-managed silvicultural treatments and reduced herbicide use. The forest continues to demonstrate sustainability, with renewal exceeding harvest over the long term and ecological conditions maintained within the natural range of variation. In conclusion, the audit finds that the management of the Nipissing Forest during the period 2016–2025 was generally in compliance with the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and its associated manuals, and the forest continues to be managed sustainably to ensure its long-term health, productivity, and diversity

The auditors found that the Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc. with support from shareholders and Ministry of Natural Resources North Bay District staff are a dedicated, professional team. The Nipissing Local Citizens Committee is established, and meetings are held to discuss the necessary elements. The forest is being managed consistent with the Forest Management Plan and with regard for the sustainability of the forest.

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Janet Lane, R.P.F., Lead Auditor

Seal

2.0 Table of Findings and Best Practices

Concluding Statement
Overall, the audit team concludes that the management of the Nipissing Forest was in accordance with the legislation, regulations, and policies that were in effect during the period covered by the audit, and the Sustainable Forest Licence was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and the Sustainable Forest Licence held by Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc. The forest is being managed consistent with the principles of sustainable forest management, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol.
FINDINGS
Finding #1: Clear assignment of road and infrastructure duties, along with effective maintenance planning, is needed for the Nipissing Forest
Finding #2: Commercial thinning of red pine in Nipissing Forest is not fully optimized.
Finding #3: Ministry of Natural Resources district does not have an effective monitoring program in accordance with Ministry of Natural Resources manuals, policies and procedures.
Finding #4: The Sustainable Forest Licence and Ministry of Natural Resources are not reporting consistent regeneration monitoring results.
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
Best Management Practice #1 Adaptive management and improvement projects have exceeded basic requirements to enhance the forest resource.

Table 1. Findings and Best Practice

3.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings of an Independent Forest Audit of the Nipissing Forest (NF) by Caliber Forestry Consulting Inc. The audit followed the risk-based approach as outlined in the 2025 Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol (IFAPP).¹

The Nipissing Forest (NF) is administered and managed by Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc. (NFRM) under a Sustainable Forest License (SFL). NFRM operates under a shareholder agreement between Rayonier A.M. Canada Industries Inc., Georgia Pacific North Woods LP, Goulard Lumber, R. Fryer Forest Products Ltd and Hec Clouthier & Sons.

The forest is situated in the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Northeast Region. The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) North Bay District is responsible for the administration and are the primary contacts for planning, reporting and communications with the SFL holder. The Nipissing Local Citizens Committee (NLCC) advises the District Manager on matters pertaining to the NF.

The audit scope includes:

- Three-year implementation of the Nipissing Forest Management Plan (FMP) 2009-2019 Phase II (Years 8, 9, & 10)
- Development of Nipissing FMP 2019-2029
- Six-year implementation of Nipissing FMP 2019-2029 (Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6)

The audit involved examining documentation and records, conducting field assessments in September 15-19, 2025, and interviewing stakeholders.

3.1 Audit Process

Independent Forest Audits (IFAs) are a requirement of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA)². All SFLs and Crown Management Units must be audited once every ten to twelve years by an independent auditor. The IFAPP was used as the guiding document to assess if the forest is meeting the requirements of Ontario Regulation 319/20 made under the CFSA. The auditees include the forest manager and applicable MNR Districts, Region, and corporate organizations.

The procedures and criteria for the delivery of the IFA are specified in the 2025 IFAPP. The audit assesses the auditees' compliance with the approved forest management plans, Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM) and the CFSA in conducting forest management planning, operations, monitoring, and reporting activities. The audit assesses the effectiveness of forest management activities in meeting the management objectives in the applicable forest management plan. The field audit assesses whether

1

OMNR. 2025. *Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol*, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/independent-forest-audit-process-and-protocol>. 94pp.

2

Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994, S.O. 1994, c. 25

actual results are comparable with planned results, whether approved prescriptions were followed, and whether forest operations were accurately reported.

The auditors reviewed audit criteria (Appendix A of the IFAPP), previous findings, and background documents to determine, via risk assessment, if the upcoming audit would require extra time or resources. The assessment highlighted major risks: achieving harvest objectives, ensuring road access and monitoring, adhering to annual reporting standards, and fulfilling action-plan commitments. Issues were noted with MNR's silviculture monitoring and a shortage of staff for adequate compliance checks. As a result of the assessment, more audit work was needed than originally planned. In addition, a significant microburst in June 2025 affected the audit selection and increased the time requirement for the field audit.

The audit report outlines non-conformances as well as best management practices. Findings of non-conformances are observations by the audit team where requirements were not fully met or where a significant lack of effectiveness in forest management activities was identified. Best management practices are recognized when auditees' actions go beyond the legal requirements and result in positive outcomes for the forest and communities. IFA findings of non-conformances are addressed by the auditees in an action plan and the progress towards the completion of these actions will be reported in the Annual Reports (ARs) for the Forest Management Unit (FMU). Details on the audit plan and processes are provided in Appendix 4.

Caliber Forestry Consulting conducted the field audit in September 2025, utilizing a three-person on-site team. The auditors consisted of three professional foresters with substantial forestry experience. Appendix 6 contains the qualifications for Janet Lane RPF, Peter Nitschke RPF, and Liz Cobb RPF.

3.2 Management Unit Description

The Nipissing Forest is situated on Anishinaabek Nation land under the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850, near North Bay and bordering the Algonquin territories to the east and south. It lies adjacent to six Indigenous communities—Antoine Algonquin, Dokis, Mattawa/North Bay Algonquin, Temagami/Teme-Agauma-Anishnabai, Nipissing, and Wolf Lake First Nations—as well as two Métis councils, Mattawa and North Bay.

The NF area has undergone several amalgamations. From 1980 to 1990, it was four Crown Management Units (CMUs) in the North Bay District: Wasi, Mattawan, Tomiko, and Verner. In 1990, these were consolidated into three CMUs: Ottawa River, Sturgeon River, and Nipissing. By 1994, the district was unified into one CMU, later designated the Nipissing Forest with the signing of the sustainable forest licence in 1996.

The Forest covers 11,469 square kilometres in the southeast of the Northeast Region and has within its borders about 86,000 residents. North Bay, with a population of 56,000, serves as a main supply and communications hub for northeastern Ontario and is central to several smaller surrounding communities.

The Forest is composed of just over a million hectares. Patent lands and other ownership make up 26% of the forest with the balance being Crown managed land. The Crown managed lands include 70,001 ha in parks, protected areas and conservation reserves and 774,029 ha is Crown managed area available for forest management.

Crown managed area includes non forested, unproductive and protection forest types. Accordingly, a net production area of 555,051 hectares is designated for forest management activities.



Figure 1 Nipissing Forest Map, Source: NF 2023 Annual Report (AR)

The Nipissing Forest provides significant economic benefits through its forestry sector, contributing to the regional and provincial economy. This includes direct employment in logging, wood processing, and related industries, as well as indirect economic activity generated by expenditures from these businesses and their employees. The forest also supports the bioeconomy, producing renewable energy sources and bioproducts.

The Nipissing Forest contains a diverse and productive mix of forest types, characteristic of the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence Region, reflecting its transitional position between northern conifer forests and southern hardwood systems. Tolerant hardwoods—including sugar maple, yellow birch, beech, and hemlock—form the largest component of the forest and are generally maintained under selection and uniform shelterwood systems, resulting in multi-layered, uneven-aged stand structures. White and red pine forests occupy well-drained uplands and are managed primarily through shelterwood and seed-tree systems to restore and maintain pine representation diminished by historical harvesting. Mixedwood and upland spruce–fir types occur widely across the unit and typically support even-aged structures shaped by past disturbance and clearcut silviculture. Early successional white birch and poplar forest stands contribute additional structural variety. Lowland conifer and lowland mixedwood stands dominated by black spruce, cedar, tamarack, and associated species occupy poorly drained sites and exhibit simpler, slower-growing stand structures. Collectively, these forest types create a mosaic of structural conditions ranging from complex, uneven-aged hardwood systems to

simpler, even-aged conifer and mixedwood stands. Approximately 90% of the Crown-managed land base is classified as productive forest, with the remaining non-productive areas (primarily muskeg, brush, and rock) interspersed across the landscape. This diversity in forest composition and structure provides a resilient ecological foundation and supports a wide range of forest management, wildlife habitat, and cultural values across the Nipissing Forest³.

The forest composition is illustrated in Figure 3. Summary data from Forest Explorer. The data indicates that the majority of the forest is mature or late successional. The forest age here refers to the overstory age. This age class distribution is common in the Great Lakes – St Lawrence Forest region where uniform shelterwood and selection silviculture systems are commonly used for mid-tolerant species and the age is not reset to young until the final removal. White pine stands were extensively harvested from the 1930s to the 1970s without significant consideration of the species' silvics. This has affected the management of white pine within a shelterwood system. Additionally, the area now contains higher proportions of intolerant species such as poplar and white birch.



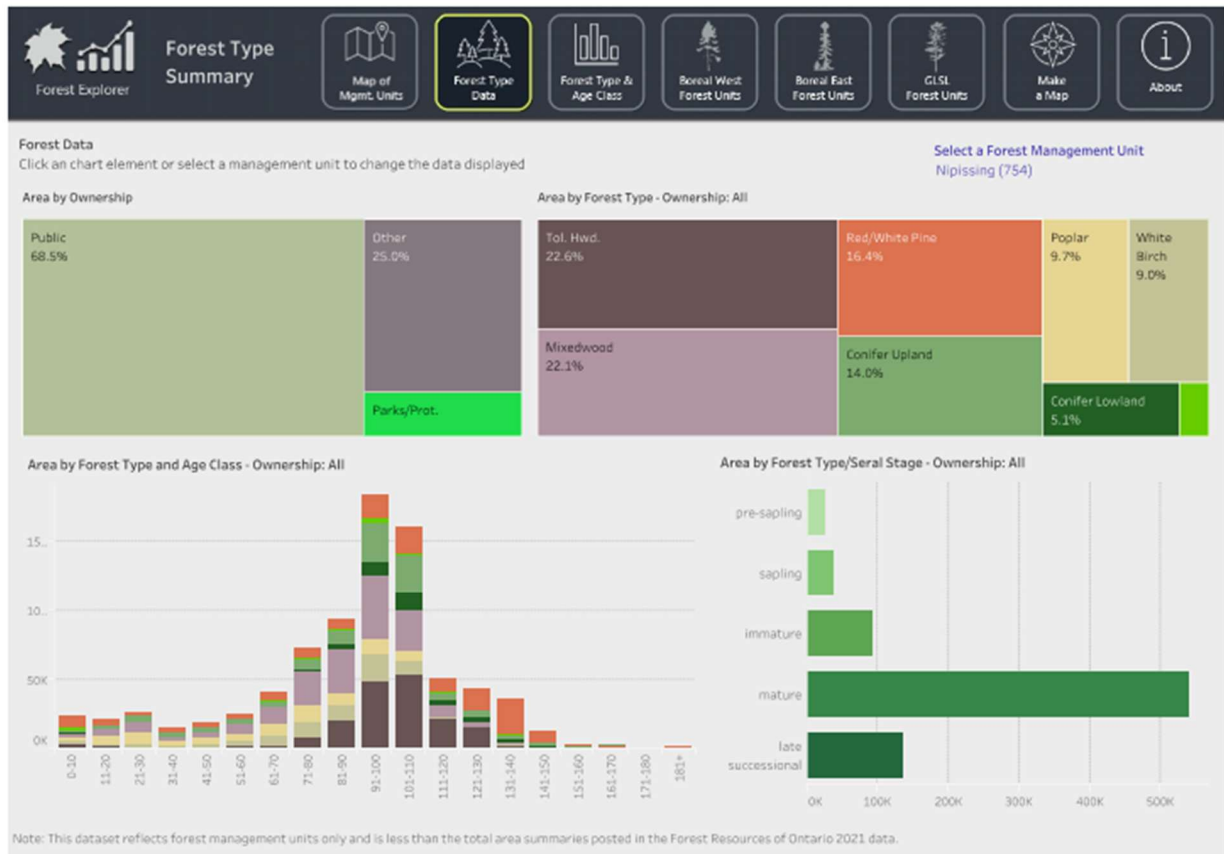
Figure 2. A hardwood forest example

The current age class distribution creates challenges for wood supply and habitat, especially moving forward. Recruiting mature stands is particularly difficult for white pine forests. The Nipissing Forest has less mature and old growth white pine than identified in the Forest Management Guide for Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Landscapes⁴ (Table A5). This situation creates conflicting goals since both wood supply and mature forest conservation rely on forests of similar ages.

³ 2019 Forest Management Plan for Nipissing Forest, https://nrp.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online?language=en_US

⁴ <https://www.ontario.ca/page/forest-management-great-lakes-and-st-lawrence-landscapes>

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⁵Figure 3. Summary of NF forest composition, Source: Forest Explorer

The occurrence of Species at Risk (SAR) within the forest has increased. In the 2016 Independent Forest Audit (IFA)⁶, sixteen SAR were identified as associated within the NF. In the 2019 Forest Management Plan (FMP)⁷ (page 19), this figure rose to forty-seven listed SAR. The presence of these species presents additional challenges for forest management and operational activities.

⁵ https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/larlo/viz/FE_Forests/DB_PFT

⁶ <https://files.ontario.ca/mnrf-ifa-2-2016-d/mnrf-nipissing-ifa-final-report-2016-en-2021-05-05.pdf>

⁷ https://nrp.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online?language=en_US

4.0 Audit Findings

Regulatory Requirement A: Compliance

The process of forest management planning, implementation and monitoring must be conducted in an open and consultative fashion. The auditors looked for evidence that there was involvement by First Nations and Métis communities, the local citizens committees, and other parties with an interest in the operations of the management unit.

A.1.1 First Nations and Métis communities' involvement and consultation.

Consultation for the forest management plan production followed the requirements in the 2017 FMPM. An Aboriginal Working Group was formed for the 2019 FMP. In addition, six first nations communities as well as the Métis Nation of Ontario had representatives on the FMP planning team. First Nations communities were present at the desired forest and benefits meetings held to set objectives for the FMP. Two specific plan objectives around economic opportunities for Indigenous communities and social and educational benefits were included in the plan. Indications are that the NFRM and the MNR have maintained open communications with Indigenous communities throughout the planning process and implementation of operations.

The plan has implemented strategic management zones that are considerate of the negotiations for the Algonquin Land Claim and Temagami Lands Set Aside (LSA) that are ongoing.

Antoine Algonquin Community Services Corporation, Dokis Bay Indian Corporation, Madadjwan Economic Development Corporation, and Nbisiiing Forestry Inc. are First Nations independent forest operators on the NF. One independent licensee is a member of an indigenous community and has First Nations employees. This licensee also is a contractor for a shareholder company and two First Nations communities.

The FMPM (2024) requires that each community be contacted during the annual work schedule (AWS) development and before approval of the AWS. This process was followed. All notices regarding aerial herbicide applications have been followed. The MNR and NF state that they uphold an open-door policy, encouraging contributions regarding values and First Nations and Métis information throughout the implementation of the plan.

A.1.2 Local Citizens' Committee

The auditor reviewed the terms of reference, meeting minutes and interviewed members of the Nipissing Local Citizens' Committee (NLCC). One NLCC member was present on the field portion of the audit.

The NLCC has a broad membership with varying interests and represents the interests of the community well. They appear to be an engaged group. The NLCC terms of reference is in place and has been recently reviewed January 2025. It contains all the requirements as specified in the FMPM 2024.

The NLCC is very active and meets every month except July and August. The designated NLCC planning team member attended the open houses and was available for discussions on AOC development where necessary (e.g. canoe routes).

A.1.3 Public Consultation

The MNR keeps an extensive contact list, and posts notifications about forest management plans, annual work schedules, aerial herbicide use, and burning across various media. The most recent notification for herbicide application was done in conjunction with an adjacent forest. The map did not indicate treatment areas which resulted in a flurry of concerns from the public.

Communications are good with other forest users. Resource based tourism operators, cottagers, trappers, and the local snowmachine club are kept informed of the forest operations on an ongoing basis.

A.2 Issue resolution

In the 2019-2029 FMP there were no issues addressed through the issue resolution process.

A.3 Plan production activities

The Planning Team's Terms of Reference and Project Plan comprehensively address all necessary components. The identification of potential issues is thorough and relevant. Roles and responsibilities are clearly understood among team members. Throughout the planning phase, the Terms remained unchanged.

The Forest Resource Inventory (FRI) was submitted on March 3, 2016, two years later than scheduled. This delay was noted as a finding in the 2016 IFA. As a result, there was limited time available for verification prior to the commencement of planning. This made plan production more complex. Delays noted in the Terms of Reference meant limited time to prepare the new inventory, which postponed milestones and plan approval. Although the plan was not approved until May 20, 2020, no extension or contingency plan was required. Operations were halted on April 1, 2019, and resumed after plan approval. Despite these challenges, the team remained productive and cooperative.

The expedited inventory led to inaccuracies in estimating the area suitable for red pine thinning, resulting in a reduced amount of commercial thinning included in the Forest Management Plan. Red pine precommercial thinning and plantations less than eight hectares were not brought forward from the last inventory and thus not made available for commercial thinning. **(Finding #2)**

Complaints from forest managers about the quality and timeliness of FRI deliveries are common. This is a large and complex program feeding more than one MNR business area. While holistic approaches to projects such as this have benefits, the implications of late or poor-quality information can have significant impacts on communities and businesses that rely on forest harvest. Given the relative certainty associated with FMP planning schedules provincially, more effort to meet deadlines for this regulated activity is needed.

The long-term projection of forest and habitat conditions is dependent on quality information as a starting point coupled with a good understanding of stand dynamics. Since the provincial growth and yield cooperative closed, PGP remeasurement efforts have declined significantly. Consideration should be given to investing strategically in a growth and yield program.

The MNR is responsible for providing base and values data for plan development. Historically there are two spatial datasets that have caused the SFL additional burden in time and effort to make useable in creating planning inventory products.

1. The Ownership layer consists of multiple parts that when put together provides the complete package needed to identify separate tenures within the forest inventory. Each part has a separate custodian, responsible for its edits and maintenance. Unfortunately, when all the parts are unioned together, it creates an unacceptable product that requires additional work from the SFL to ensure the final product is correct and appropriate.
2. Spatial stream datasets include Aquatic Resource Area for thermal regimes and Ontario Hydrologic Network for permanency. During forest management planning, these two layers are combined, and using a model developed by the MNR, creates a stream layer that contain sensitivity classifications needed for area of concern (AOC) development for the FMP. Throughout the ten-year planning term, stream updates are submitted by the SFL as values updates to the MNR. These updates are not always incorporated into appropriate stream layers and important field verifications are lost.

While the plan was ultimately approved later than planned, the Planning Team did a good job of recovering time lost through late FRI delivery.

A comparison of scheduled (per Project Plan) vs actual achievement of significant milestones is provided below:

Stage	Project Plan	Actual	Difference (days)
TOR Approval	2016-10-01	2016-11-28	58
Checkpoint1	2016-10-31	2016-12-12	42
Checkpoint2	2016-11-30	2017-05-31	182
Checkpoint3	2017-01-31	2017-10-30	272
Checkpoint4	2017-04-28	2018-01-17	264
Checkpoint5	2017-08-30	2018-01-24	147
Checkpoint6	2017-12-01	2018-04-28	148
Information Center 1	2018-01-31	2018-05-06	95
Information Center 2	2018-08-31	2018-10-26	56
Inspection of Plan	2018-12-07	2019-02-25	80
Plan Approval	2019-04-01	2019-05-20	49

Table 2. FMP checkpoints and FMP progress

The Steering Committee did not have to resolve any issues, and no formal issue resolution was requested.

A.4: Assess the proper development of the FMP

The 2019 FMP is clearly written, concise (145 pages), and addresses all FMP requirements. The 15-member planning team include representatives from six from local First Nation communities and the Métis Nation of Ontario.

In total, 43 amendments have been submitted for review during the audit period, five of which were classed as Minor. The rest (38) were classed as Administrative. Of these, four required consultations with local communities, and took an average of 63 days to be

approved. For the other 34 Administrative amendments, an average of 30 days was required.

There were no exceptions to the silviculture guide and AOCs prescriptions are not exceptions to a forest management guide. Prescriptions developed by the planning team, and those derived from other planning processes or negotiations included the consideration of alternatives despite them not being required.

The current annual work schedule (AWS) was approved on March 13, 2025, and included all required content. Discussions with the auditees did not indicate any issues with previous AWS submission and approval.

Regulatory Requirement B: Meeting FMP Objectives

B.1 Areas of concern (AOC)

The field audit reviewed a selection of AOCs that were both planned and implemented during the audit period. Planned AOC locations were compared on plan maps with actual harvest boundaries as shown on depletion maps and observed in the field. The prescriptions, conditions applied, and operational results corresponded to the specified locations and operational requirements detailed in the FMP and AWS, reflecting current site conditions.

Tree markers, in addition to confirming stand condition and selecting trees to extract, are instrumental in identifying values, such as stick nests.

The field audit documented shore harvesting activities, which were carried out according to prescribed standards. Cut to shoreline for beaver habitat enhancement was carried out with no impact to water feature and showcased excellent collaboration between MNR, SFL and the Métis community. Shoreline protection objectives were addressed while maintaining conditions comparable to natural disturbances along the shoreline.

Water crossings were constructed effectively, utilizing riprap at culvert locations to prevent sedimentation. Harvest operations were executed with care. There is a productive and open exchange of updated values between the MNR and SFL.

B.2 Access

The FMP contains all the required documentation for road planning, development, maintenance, and decommissioning. However, there are some shortcomings in the clarity of the intent and the implementation of the requirements. The 2019 FMP does not clearly discuss the responsibilities for shared roads. The SFL crossings are not clearly identified as the responsibility of the SFL in the water crossing inventory as required in the 2017 FMPM 1.1.8.10.

Currently, the Nipissing Forest is generally well accessed by roads. Most of the allocations use a series of existing roads of all classifications (primary, branch and operational) for access. Table FMP-18 lists the existing primary and branch roads, as well as the operational road networks. This table also identifies whether the road is the SFL's responsibility or shared responsibility with the SFL and the MNR, with MNR being the lead agency. Responsibility includes the monitoring of road conditions and addressing potential or existing environmental hazards on the roads. The bridges

however do not have an ownership assigned in the spatial data. In addition, the Crown Land Bridge Management Guidelines (2008) guiding principles (1.4.2.) states that the Ownership of a bridge belongs to the party who originally purchased and installed the bridge or the party to whom the bridge has been transferred. Responsibility for ongoing care of a bridge, and where applicable, its eventual removal rests with the bridge owner. The bridge ownership and responsibilities should be documented in the FMP for clarity.

The auditors met with a representative of a shareholder of NFRM and major forest operator on the NF. The representative expressed concern about a 55-meter bridge over the Temagami River on the Baie Jeanne Road. The road is the responsibility of NFRM, but the bridge is owned by the MNR and the responsibility of the MNR as it was constructed in the 1980s as per the Crown Land Bridge Management Guideline, 2008⁸

An inspection by the MNR (report NORB008) was completed in November of 2020 indicating work was needed within the next 5 years. The MNR restricted heavy traffic on the bridge in 2023 providing little notice to NFRM that the restriction would be in place and causing an unfair increase in cost to the contractor that had just set up operations that relied on the bridge access. The immediate repairs to the bridge were subsequently done by the forest operator causing delays and costly worker shortages. The closing of WX270 to heavy traffic added an unnecessarily financial burden to the forest industry.



Figure 4. Temagami Bridge

The FMP does not clearly discuss the responsibilities for shared roads and MNR bridges in the FMP. The Supplemental Documentation has many entries in the final list of required alterations that focus on specific roads. It appears that the planning team did not fully address the shared roads and MNR crossing responsibilities. There is no documentation of an agreement between the MNR and SFL regarding the shared roads or the infrastructure owned by the MNR.

Finding #1: Clear assignment of road and infrastructure duties, along with effective maintenance planning, is needed for the Nipissing Forest.

The field audit reviewed roads, water crossings, aggregate pits, and decommissioning. Most operations complied with standards, monitoring was effective, and water crossings and a decommissioned bridge were completed successfully.

⁸ https://www.abiriv.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Operating_Manuals/Crown_Land_Bridge_Guidelines_Feb_2008.pdf

Of the 23 pits examined most aggregate pits were consistent with requirements in the FMPM. However, one aggregate pit was found too close to the road and one recently used pit was left with face not at natural angle of repose. All other pits were in good condition and well rehabilitated. This does not appear to be a systemic issue.



Figure 5. A well installed culvert.

The NF in 2023 had a total of 531.3 km of primary and 133.9 km of branch roads on the forest, this is low for a forest of this size however a public road network supports the forest access. Road maintenance has been consistent from year to year on the forest as most roads receive maintenance each year as illustrated in Figure 6. The field audit found that road maintenance was sufficient to maintain forest access. All roads traveled had appropriate signage.

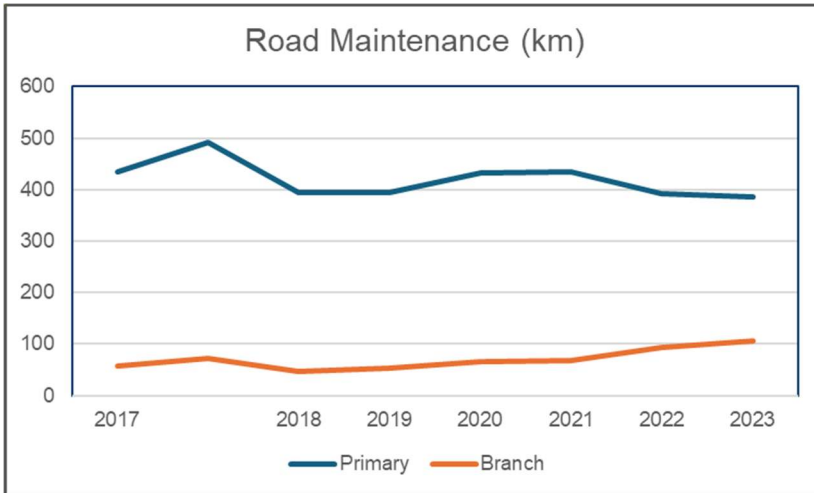


Figure 6. Road maintenance reported in annual reports.

B.3 Harvest

The field audit examined a sample of the harvest planned and implemented during the scope of the audit. During the scope of the audit, 21,994 ha were reported as harvested. This is about 32% of the annualized available area in the 2019-2029 NF FMP.

Year	Actual Volume*	FMP Annual Planned Volume	% of Planned Volume	Regular Area	FMP Planned Area	% of Planned Area	Bridging Area
2024/25*	NA	663,117	NA		8,471		0
2023/24	212,851	663,117	32%	2,637	8,471	31%	0

2022/23	210,716	663,117	32%	2,463	8,471	29%	34
2021/22	248,460	663,117	37%	2,729	8,471	32%	109
2020/21	212,124	663,117	32%	2,623	8,471	31%	181
2019/20	310,472	663,117	47%	2,886	8,471	34%	93
2018/19	247,835	744,020	33%	2,868	9,103	32%	0
2017/18	244,975	744,020	33%	2,541	9,103	28%	0
2016/17	303,881	744,020	41%	3,247	9,103	36%	0

Table 3. Harvest area and volume, Source: Forest Explorer

Planned harvest locations were reviewed using plan maps and verified against actual harvest boundaries on depletion maps as well as through on-site field inspections. The majority of harvest areas demonstrated appropriate wildlife tree retention, and no site disturbance was observed.

Bridging operations occurred during the audit period. The Forest Management Plan specified 2,347 hectares for bridging harvest area, and about 417 hectares of these designated areas were harvested in this timeframe. Each annual report contains a summary of bridging activities.

The harvesting activities complied with the conditions for regular operations as outlined in the FMP. The cut-to-shore technique was implemented effectively to emulate natural disturbance, resulting in favourable outcomes. Minimal damage was recorded to residual trees.

As summarized in figure 7, the area was harvested using the uniform shelterwood, clearcut, selection and seed tree silviculture systems. Some red pine commercial thinning contributed to the harvest area and volume.

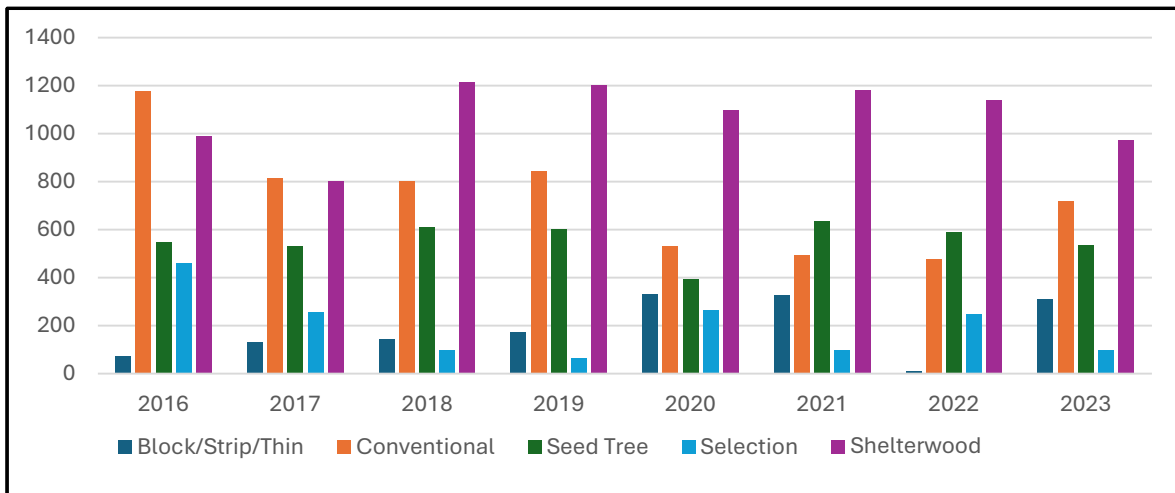


Figure 7. Harvest by silviculture system, Source: Forest Explorer

More commercial thinning of red pine could be done. The amount identified in the FMP was derived from the planning inventory which only identified red pine stands greater than four to eight hectares in size. Many intensively managed small red pine stands were not brought forward in the planning inventory due to the rush to get planning

started. Since the area harvested by forest unit cannot exceed the available harvest area in the plan, additional area cannot be added for red pine commercial thinning within the timeframe of the plan. This situation does not allow for appropriate amounts of thinning needed to optimize growth and development of high-quality red pine stems. This has led to a finding.

Finding #2: Commercial thinning of red pine in Nipissing Forest is not fully optimized.

A utilization strategy was amended into the 2019-2029 FMP to address limited pulpwood markets and manage balsam fir presence. This approach aligns with the Northeast Region Creating Forest Operations Opportunities in Low Market Conditions Strategy (2020). Major utilization issues mainly involved white/red pine and balsam fir pulp. Low Market Conditions Strategy (LMCS) was reported as implemented on 1,760 hectares in the first five years of the plan implementation. White/red pine was usually topped for sawlogs (15-22 cm), leaving pulpwood in the field, while balsam fir was either left standing or cut down. The resulting strategy of avoiding patches of smaller wood as residual patches and felling balsam fir to reduce seeding is being implemented. The undersized felled trees are being distributed and excessive wildlife tree retention on some sites were noted but not enough to impede renewal. The strategy is effective in allowing harvest of marketable products while providing wildlife habitat and allowing smaller patches to continue to grow.

There was a total of 229.6 hectares of salvage within the scope of the audit. The salvage was as a result of a fire in the Hand Lake area in 2018 as well as a spruce budworm outbreak (salvaged 2020 -2022) and a wind event in 2021. In the spring of 2025, a significant wind event affected a large portion of the northeast corner of the NF and is currently being harvested.

There are ongoing concerns regarding unauthorised occupations (UO) of Crown land, including challenges related to worksite safety, road usage, and necessary accommodations. Limited action has been taken by the MNR to address these issues. This is a multifaceted Public Lands Act legal issue with social and economic implications. Currently, forest policy does not specify a process for resolving these matters. In fall 2022, the SFL provided a summary of UOs that influenced forest operations, which was included in an SFL/MNR District Meeting agenda. During the meeting, the MNR District described the process: posting, evaluating for traditional rights factors, and, if not applicable, proceeding with removal under the Public Lands Act. The SFL agreed to this process at that time, acknowledging that it is time-consuming and it is not aligned fully with operational requirements for forest management.

Overall, harvest operations on the NF were determined to be in accordance with the operational conditions outlined in the FMP. Actual harvest levels remain significantly below planned targets due to ongoing market challenges faced by the industry.

B.4 Renewal

There is a robust renewal program on the NF. The annual reports indicate that renewal activities are site-specific. Renewal practices are closely aligned with harvest operations; site preparation typically occurs soon after harvesting, and tree planting or seeding is generally completed within two years of harvest completion.

The proportion of areas site prepared for renewal is consistent with the plan. Although the plan expected that mechanical site preparation would be used in most areas, ground application of chemicals has actually become the most common method. (See Table 4.) The strategy for low market utilization has led to more debris remaining after harvest, which reduces the effectiveness of mechanical site preparation. The main tools for mechanical preparation are the bracke spot scarifier and anchor chains. Slightly less aerial chemical applications have been used for site preparation than planned.

Site Preparation	2019 - 2029 FMP	2019-2023 Actual
Chemical aerial	26%	23%
Chemical ground	15%	40%
Mechanical	59%	37%

Table 4. Site preparation planned and actual, Source: Forest Explorer and SFL (2024)

The silviculture system employed is dependent on the conditions encountered on the ground during operational planning. While the 2019- 2029 FMP forecast that clear cut would be the dominant silviculture system, the majority of sites operated were more conducive to uniform shelterwood renewal. (See Table 5) This differs from the 2009-2019 FMP implementation where more clearcut silviculture system was used than uniform shelterwood and partial harvest systems were used. (See Table 6)

Renewal Method	Total Hectares Planned	% Target	Actual Hectares	% Actual
Artificial Regeneration				
Tree Planting	15,320	22%	2,252	16%
Seeding	408	1%	362	3%
Natural Regeneration				
Clear cut	23,208	34%	3,408	24%
Seed Tree	1,975	3%	1,817	13%
HARP/HARO/CLAAG	2,955	4%		
Uniform Shelterwood	19,176	28%	5,596	39%
Selection	6,033	9%	771	5%
Total	69,074		14,206	

Table 5. Renewal activity on the NF 2019-2024 compared to planned Source: 2019 FMP and summary of activities to date.

Renewal Method	FMP-17 Annual Target	%	Annual Hectares Treated	%
Artificial Regeneration				
Tree Planting	2133	24%	540	16%

Seeding	44	<1%	99	3%
Natural Regeneration				
Clear cut	2702	30%	1426	42%
Seed Tree				
HARP/HARO/CLAAG				
Uniform Shelterwood	2189	24%	1175	35%
Selection	1872	21%	159	5%

Table 6. Annual renewal activity on the NF 2009-2019 compared to planned, Source: 2018 Ten Year AR

The planted areas exhibited strong survival rates and jack pine seeding sites demonstrate consistent establishment and uniform distribution.

NFRM has proactively incorporated research findings into white pine establishment and management practices. They are currently experimenting with planting Cayuga and Scugog white pine varieties to respond to climate change and potential increases in growth.

Occasionally, legacy (pre SFL) white pine and red pine seed cuts did not reach their intended targets, resulting in final removal cuts that were mixedwood. White pine seed tree cuts have been converted to red pine where appropriate.



Figure 8. White pine seed tree

Renewal treatments are determined by specific site conditions, and the renewal plan is adjusted accordingly when circumstances do not support the originally proposed actions.

B.5 Tending and protection

Manual tending, chemical aerial tending, ground chemical tending, thinning, pruning and improvement cuts have all been used on the NF.

The auditors received emails from many members of the public regarding opposition to the use of herbicides to tend the forest. The auditors found that the herbicide was judiciously applied only to stands that required treatment. The application of herbicides is recognised as an effective technique in plantation management to promote successful forest regeneration. All herbicides were applied according to the label and by qualified contractors in accordance with the CFSA and the Pesticides Act.

Herbicides were aerially applied to 12,999 hectares (1,444 ha per year) during the audit, this is less than the NF 2019-2029 FMP plan of 2,005 hectares per year. The use of

herbicides in tending treatments for white pine management is a critical component in achieving management success. The MNR and SFL should work together to provide public education on the careful and judicial use of herbicide that is being used in forest management and the importance in ensuring white pine is maintained across the landscape. Ground air blast and ground manual backpack spraying, although not planned, was done on the forest to areas where aerial spray was not an option.

While the 2019 NF FMP estimated that 2,172 hectares of manual tending would be undertaken only 357 ha has been completed during the audit scope. Less precommercial thinning was done but more improvement cuts were done than planned. The Forestry Futures Trust has been effectively used to fund over 30 stand improvement projects. The audit team interviewed the NFRM regarding forest renewal and were impressed with the application of tending and vegetation management techniques that were informed from local research efforts. NFRM aggressively sought out projects to improve the forest. Stand improvement and remediation projects were developed into Forestry Futures Trust projects.

Best Management Practice #1: Adaptive management and improvement projects have exceeded basic requirements to enhance the forest resource.

B.6 Renewal support

Renewal support includes seed collection, seedling production and tree improvement activities. The tree improvement activities on the NF centre around progeny test and seed orchard maintenance and management. These activities are guided by a NESMA (Northeast Seed Management Association), a cooperative which provides technical guidance and operational support. The species involved are those that are planted for commercial purposes (jack pine, white pine, and black spruce).

The seedlings are grown locally and show strong survival rates, as seen during field inspections of planted areas. No seedlings from local orchards have been planted, so the program's impact remains unrealized. While the CFSA does not require the use of improved seed, the wisdom of continuing to invest in the program which is not providing benefits is questionable, and NFRM should carefully consider its options.

The tree seed inventory is accurate and up to date. Seed is stored at a local facility. Supplies are in balance with seed needs, and cover all species planted. White and red spruce seed is declining in viability, and both are a priority to refresh. Finding qualified seed collectors is becoming challenging. Seed deployment is consistent with CFSA policy.

The FMP (page 100, lines 5-8) includes climate change considerations, which are being guided by the Forest Gene Conservation Association (FGCA).⁹ Strategies for seed deployment for five species are under development.

B.7 Assessment of FMP Objectives

In Appendix 2, the objectives for the two NF FMPs are assessed. The NF 2009-2019 FMP objectives were evaluated in the enhanced 2018-2019 AR. Several objective

⁹ <https://fgca.net/species-conservation/native-species-learn/north/>

targets were not achieved as a result of reduced harvest levels; however, sustainability remains unaffected in light of current economic and industry developments. Two objectives could not be assessed as they lacked defined measurements or documented data, making evaluation impossible.

Overall, the 2009-2019 objectives were mostly met. Some of the objectives were measured at the long-term management direction (LTMD) stage of plan development. Landscape patterns are difficult to meet in the ten-year plan time frame. These are meant to be moved towards over the longer term.

The objective (objective 6) to restore white pine uniform shelterwood and red pine forest units from white pine seed tree, mixedwood and off-site poplar and white birch was not fully achieved. This was an ambitious objective, and significant progress was made. Road access, site conditions and effective natural regeneration were cited as reasons for slightly lower white pine seed tree and red pine renewal.

Objective 24 was to increase intensive management. While the objective to treat 30% of stands intensively fell short by 2%, it was a significant increase from previous plans.

Objective 25 was to increase the silviculture success to the intended forest unit. While considerable progress had been achieved in enhancing success levels, success rates remained below target. Efforts toward achieving the established targets include refined site preparation and planting methods, implementation of more effective vegetation management strategies, and expanded monitoring activities. The improvements made in prescribing future forest unit direction and refining treatments will not be evident in the success results until these stands are ready for renewal assessment. The results for the 2019 AR and the 2020 AR indicated that silviculture success was increasing with rates of 47% and 52% respectively. This is not a concern as assessed in the field.

Market factors influenced the extent to which objective 28 was met, which aimed to provide a sustainable, continuous, and predictable wood supply from the forest that would align with the current recognized industrial demand. External market conditions beyond the control of the forest manager have contributed to reduced harvest levels in the forest. While the harvest was lower than the target, all demand for forest products from the NF were satisfied.

The NF 2019-2029 FMP objectives met the requirements in the FMPM in effect during the writing of the FMP. However, some of the objectives are not assessed and summarized within the FMP table. (FMP-10). The table should offer a clear evaluation of any objectives that can be assessed when submitting the plan.

Objective 3 to plant 150,000 red pine is not on track as only 20,500 seedlings have been planted in the first five years of plan implementation. A significant increase in planting red pine is needed to achieve this objective.

Objective 6 is to provide a sustainable, continuous, and predictable wood supply that will meet, as closely as possible, or exceed the current recognized industrial demand of the Forest. The industrial demand for forest products is decreasing with the closure of the Espanola pulp mill. The actual harvested volume and area target is below planned

levels. This will not impact the ecological sustainability of the forest but does impact the economic and social aspects.

Regulatory Requirement C: Planned Versus Actual

C.1 Annual Reports

The annual reports (ARs) contain all required information, with consistent structure and tables each year for easy access. The reports were concisely written with all the requirements of the FMPM and FIM.

However, NFRM did not submit all reports on or before November 15th as 2022-2023 AR was not submitted until November 23. Annual reports were not able to be approved in a timely manner as the AR for 2016- 2017 was dated June 21, 2018, and the AR for 2017-2018 was dated September 23, 2019. The MNR did supply their review of the AR reports after 2019. A finding in the 2016 IFA was that the SFL and MNR must meet AR submission deadlines. While submission is getting better this still needs improvement.

The information demonstrates that a monitoring and reporting program is established and adequately supports the achievement of FMP objectives, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of forest operations. The reports provide an accurate account of the activities conducted and offer a reliable assessment of progress toward stated goals. Progress on actions from the action plan developed under the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol (IFAPP) is not detailed in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 annual reports. The reports reference the 2019 status report as IFAs prior to 2018 were required to track progress according to the requirements in place when their respective action plans were prepared.

C.2 Enhanced Annual Reports

During the scope of the audit one enhanced AR was produced. The 2018-2019 AR is the tenth and final annual report submitted by NFRM for the 2009-2019 FMP. The 2023-2024 annual report would have been an enhanced five-year report under the 2019 FMPM but because of the changes in the 2024 FMPM it defers the analysis until year six.

The 2018-2019 AR text summarizes the implementation of the 2009 – 2019 FMP harvest renewal, tending and monitoring. The harvest and subsequently the renewal is about half of the planned amount. The annual report clearly explains reasons for any changes or differences between the planned and actual treatments. The report found that the SFL has notably improved its silviculture program over the past decade. Regeneration in the Nipissing Forest is progressing well, though many areas from recent and earlier plans still require surveys.

The annual report reviewed progress toward disturbance goals. Lower harvest levels reduced the ability to achieve planned patterns, but 2018 forest fires helped offset some shortfalls, especially in large patches (1,000-5,000 ha). The overall assessment remains reasonable.

The text is very thorough in its discussion of the renewal and tending activities undertaken during the plan implementation and the effectiveness of the treatments. The associated annual report tables are referenced for clarification and support the analysis.

The report analyzed the forest unit appropriateness and included a discussion on inventory improvements for the 2019 FMP. Model assumptions were updated and refined to better reflect the forest condition, past yield, and natural disturbance rates. Modeling inputs like the post renewal forest succession were revised based on achievement data.

The enhanced AR provided an assessment of the objectives and information to inform the LTMD. Adaptive management has mitigated the economic and social impact of flow market conditions. An assessment of the FMP progress was also in the seven-year annual report. This evaluation underpinned the revised LTMD for the subsequent planning period by integrating updated assumptions concerning renewal effectiveness, succession, natural disturbance cycles, and a risk appraisal of diminished market conditions and fiber utilization.

The enhanced annual report summarized recommendations for future planning included maintaining consistency across forest units, ensuring that harvest targets are met to achieve multiple objectives, and actively pursuing opportunities to expand fibre markets. It is advised to reassess the areas allocated for uniform shelterwood, as site inspections may reveal many locations to be unsuitable. Additionally, assumptions regarding natural disturbances should be increased to reflect the heightened risk of wind and fire events resulting from climate change.

C.3 District compliance planning and associated monitoring

A review of the MNR District Compliance Plans showed that no production or documentation of MNR Annual Compliance Operations Plans have been completed since 2015.

Within the audit period (2016-2024) MNR completed a total of 97 Forest Operations Inspection Reports (FOIP). 94 FOIP In Compliance and three FOIP were Not in Compliance. One of the Not in Compliance MNR reports from 2022 remains as Pending and is 371 days overdue.

There appears to be limited involvement from MNR staff with forest management activities as a whole. This may be the result of high staff turnover and few certified compliance inspectors within the district. Furthermore, MNR compliance inspectors should possess Level 2 Tree marking qualifications when evaluating adherence to shelterwood or selection harvests. Currently, limited reporting is observed, and field presence during operations remains minimal. With no ACOP, priorities and targets are not being identified or carried out.

Finding #3: MNR does not have an effective monitoring program in accordance with MNR manuals, policies and procedures.

MNR did complete silviculture effectiveness monitoring on establishment blocks for six out of the eight years; two years were missed due to the COVID restrictions. This is commendable. The survey results of the MNR did not match the results of the SFL as they are using a different methodology and the plot locations are not consistent.

(Finding #4)

C.4 SFL holder compliance planning and associated monitoring

FMP Compliance Plan, annual plans, and FOIP reports were reviewed. Sound compliance plans and strategies are included within FMP. Industry has submitted 666 FOIP Reports during the scope of the audit. Of the reports, 659 were “In Compliance”, two were “Not in Compliance”, and five were listed as “Pending”. One Inspection (701583) was delayed for 371 days as the industry is not in agreement with the Not in Compliance determination. The SFL compliance plan was effectively developed and implemented in line with the FMP, FMPM, and FIM requirements.

C.5 Compliance responsibilities delivered by qualified overlapping licensees

The Company appears to carry out the majority of compliance inspections with one Licensee Inspector providing supplementary reporting. A review of compliance history indicates that this is fulfilling the requirements of the SFL Compliance Plan.

C.6 Silviculture standards and assessment program

Sound silviculture ground rules (SGRs) are identified within the FMP with good descriptions of monitoring methodology. The SFL has a well-established monitoring program. The FMP describes a system of prescription confirmation, planting quality assessments, site preparation or scarification surveys, temporary sample plots, establishment surveys, ocular shelterwood assessments as well as tending quality assessments. Uniform seed tree silviculture system quality is assessed at the tree marking stage.

NFRM uses the Site Occupancy Index Silvicultural Treatment Assessment and Reporting System (SO-iSTARS) and calibrated ground ocular measures to assess silviculture success. The auditors are concerned about the number of ocular surveys in the FMP. These rely on experienced staff, so succession planning is essential as foresters retire. The MNR used the SO-iSTARS until recently but is now using the Regeneration Assessment Program (RAP) methods to confirm the SFL reported results.

NFRM and MNR do not get consistent results as noted in Table 7. High variability of the forest sites, inconsistent stratification, and differing survey methods has created differences in survey results between MNR and SFL. This is a systemic issue across the GLSL forest region. Confirming a methodology and auditing the plot with the same methodology would be a more appropriate check.

Year	Ha Surveyed	Ha Not FTG	MNR Results
2023	3590	137	3 of 4 blocks did not agree on stocking and species comp
2022	2822	178	9 of 10 blocks did not agree on stocking and species comp
2021	2769	779	7 of 10 blocks did not agree with SFL call
2020	3364	49	COVID
2019	3519	70	COVID
2018	4126	0	2 of 4 blocks had different stocking
2017	3216	759	3 of 4 blocks did not agree on stocking and species comp
2016	2909	353	1 of 3 did not agree with species comp

Table 7. NFRM and MNR silviculture monitoring results, Source: MNR

SGRs set regeneration standards and benchmarks, but shelterwood and selection systems are not well integrated in current boreal procedures. The GLSL needs clear guidelines for monitoring these systems. The 2016 NF IFA highlighted inconsistent free-to-grow results; an action plan addressed this until MNR updated its assessment methods. Currently, MNR policy lacks a process to resolve such discrepancies.

Finding #4: The Sustainable Forest Licence and Ministry of Natural Resources are not reporting consistent regeneration monitoring results.

In addition to regulated monitoring, the NF uses temporary sample plots (TSP). The plots have provided the basis for evaluating planting quality, stock quality, the presence of blister rust, ingress, levels of competition, browse damage, and the effectiveness of treatments. As of 2023, NF has established 550 TSP. The TSP data is analysed every three to five years to examine survival and growth trends. The TSP information has been used to refine silviculture prescriptions.

The auditors used the Silviculture Obligations Assessment (SOA) tool to review the SFL's progress in completing silviculture assessments. Figure 9 shows that while areas are declared natural or treated within a few years of harvest, renewal monitoring is not completed until decades after harvest. This is expected in a forest with a mixture of silviculture systems. The time between the regeneration cut and the final removal cut of the PWUS forest units can be as long as 20-40 years depending on the number of cuts and site condition. Hardwood stands managed under single tree selection are considered perpetually established as long as the management standards are met.

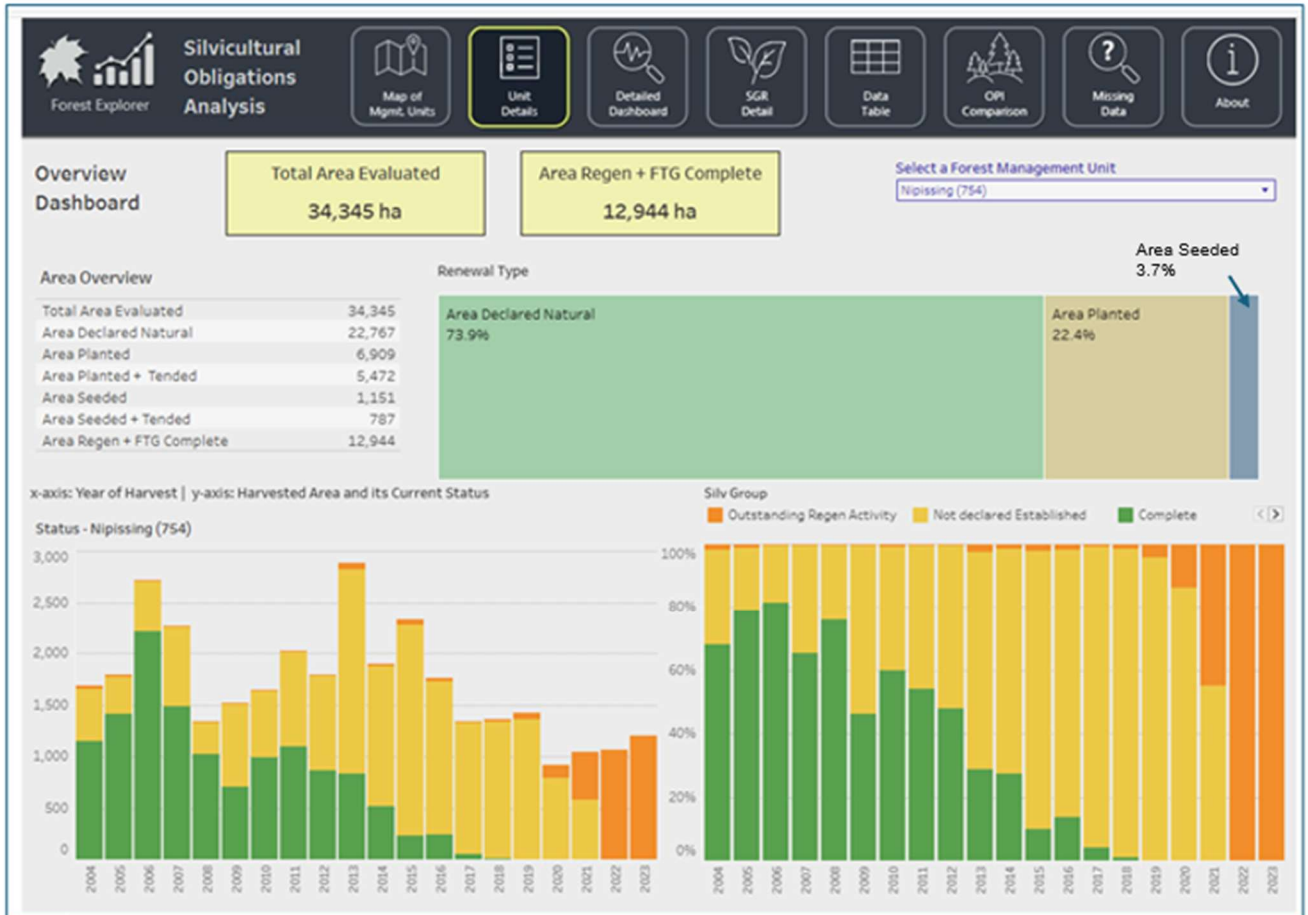


Figure 9. Silviculture monitoring of harvested areas, Source: Silviculture Obligations Analysis

Prescriptions are developed by a registered professional forester using data collected during a pre-harvest stand assessment, the stands are marked by a certified tree marker, tree marking audits are done to ensure that the prescription was followed, and a compliance survey is done to ensure that harvesting is done following Conditions on Regular Operations.

Regulatory Requirement D: Action plan

D.1 Action plan development

The 2016 NF IFA action plans were completed and documented in the respective annual reports. The Audit Action Plan for findings directed to the SFL and MNR district was approved by the Regional Director on February 27, 2017, with documented planned actions. The 2016 Corporate action plan status report does document the required Corporate MNR actions for the NF 2016 IFA.

D.2 Reporting on progress towards completion of actions

The 2019 status report is included on the Ontario IFA webpage¹⁰ for 2016 IFAs for the NF. The action plan status was duly reported as required in both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 Annual Reports. The last annual report does not report action plan status, citing changes to the FMPM. The auditors reviewed action plans and status reports during risk assessment development and included procedures in the audit plan to verify these actions achieved the intended results.

While the actions were completed within the action plan. Action plans have not effectively addressed two 2016 IFA findings. While actions were taken to improve silviculture monitoring consistencies the survey method used by the MNR changed again and has resulted in ongoing inconsistency. In addition, two annual reports were not submitted by November 15th as required.

The 2016 IFA corporate action status (October 2021) is on the MNR website and confirms all actions have been initiated. Precut hardwood inc. and Columbia Forest Products have been removed from Appendix E of the SFL. The SFL has been extended as recommended. However, ongoing progress for the improvement of timely delivery of the FRI is not available as progress reports have not been available since the 2021 update.

Regulatory Requirement E: Licence

E.1 Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL)

A Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL) in Ontario is a long-term license that grants a company exclusive rights to harvest timber in a defined Crown forest area for up to 20 years. The license holder is responsible for preparing forest management plans, conducting forest operations, reforestation after harvesting, monitoring compliance, and providing reports to the government. These licences are crucial for managing Ontario's forests sustainably, ensuring long-term health and productivity while allowing for economic use. Compliance with contractual obligations is documented in Appendix 3

As illustrated in Figure 10, the NF supplies a variety of forest products manufacturers. There has been a significant reduction in utilization with the closure of the Espanola pulp mill in 2023. Sawmill consumption while variable over the years has not significantly declined.

¹⁰ <https://www.ontario.ca/page/independent-forest-audits>

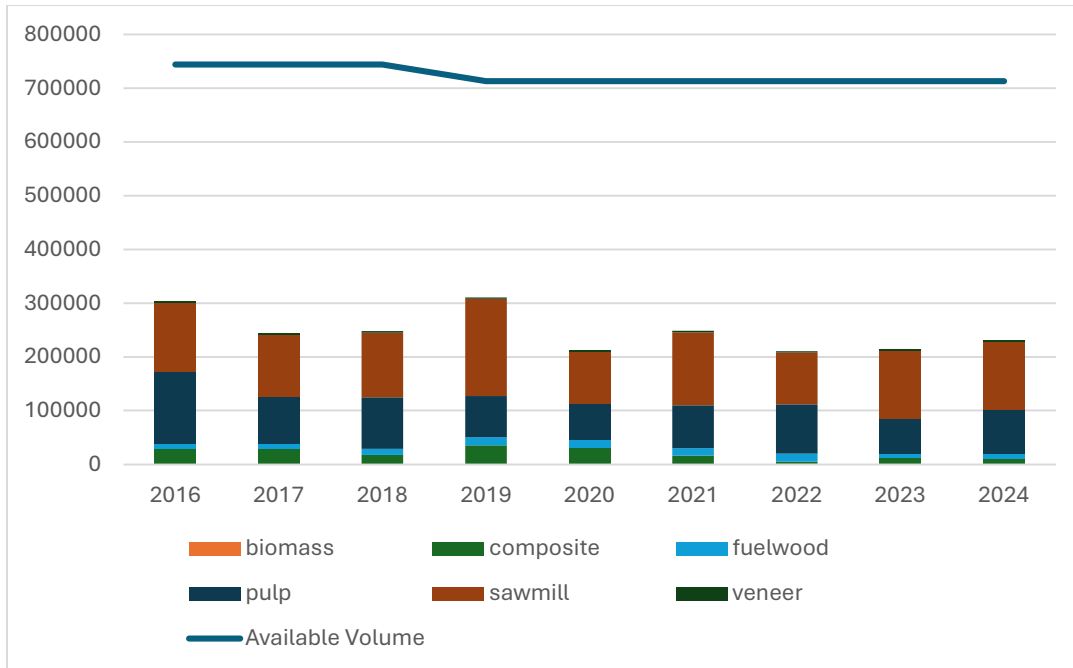


Figure 10. Delivered product volumes, Source Forest Explorer.

Utilization of the forest resource is one of the key measures of achieving the objectives in the forest management plan. The landscape patterns rely on harvesting according to the plan as much as possible. This reduced demand for pulp wood has affected the NF ability to harvest to plan and to maintain the Forest Renewal Trust (FRT) minimum balance. The FRT balance was not met for two of the nine years being audited. For these years the SFL had frequent meetings with the MNR, discussing the strategies in place to ensure the minimum balance would be maintained. The SFL was above the minimum balance on March 31st, 2025.

E.2 Ontario Crown Timber Charges payments

Arrears are amounts that have been invoiced but remain unpaid and uncollected. The summary of arrears as of March 31st each year was provided to the auditors. The summary indicated that the arrears from year to year is small and consistent with a normal billing and payment cycle.

E.3 FRT eligible silviculture work

The review of 2023-2024 Nipissing Forest Renewal Trust silviculture expenditures found some invoices lacked eligible work details, noted a few treatment area discrepancies, and identified minor reporting errors. The field audit confirmed that areas were treated as stated, with field sampling validating reported and mapped activities.

All annual Forest Renewal Charge Analyses reviewed during the audit period were found reasonable and received yearly approval from the MNR.

E.4 SFL conclusion in final audit report

Overall, the audit team concludes that the management of the Nipissing Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations, and policies that were in effect during the period covered by the audit, and the Crown Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and the sustainable forest licence held by Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc.. The forest is being managed consistent with the principles of sustainable forest management, as assessed through the IFAPP.

Regulatory Requirement F: Sustainability

F.1 Determination of sustainability

The 2018-2019 enhanced annual report was produced for the NF 2009-2019 FMP, and the 2023-2024 AR provide some trend information for the 2019-2029 FMP.

Low utilization was identified in the 2018-2019 enhanced annual report as having the greatest need for improvement. The utilization has decreased since the enhanced AR as evidenced in figure 10. The low utilization issue is primarily market-related, and largely dictated by regional and global demand, trade negotiations, and competition.

Reduced harvest levels have limited regeneration area. Regeneration monitoring measures treatment success from past renewal methods. Current techniques in assigning silviculture systems and implementing tending should have a positive influence on future renewal success. Renewal success assumptions were updated for the 2019-2029 forest management plan.

Forest diversity was evaluated based on composition, age, and landscape patterns. Trends were identified by comparing the initial plan for the 2009-2019 NF FMP with data used in preparing the 2019 FMP. Due to differences in inventory summaries, comparing forest composition and age poses challenges. Additionally, the classification of forest units in the inventory does not consistently match actual conditions for hardwood and pine shelterwood areas. The shelterwood and selection forest units rely on stand structure and quality attributes that are absent from the inventory, which leads to some misclassification of certain areas. This was documented in the current FMP.

The 2018-2019 NF AR does make recommendations for FMP improvement and has evaluated the progress on the action plan from the past 2016 IFA. The components of the action plan that pertain to objective achievement and sustainability have been implemented. The analysis included a recognition of the new landscape and stand and site guide impacts.

The information included in the enhanced AR is consistent with the audit findings.

F.2 Monitoring indicators of forest sustainability

The indicators of sustainability in the NF 2019- 2029 FMP are in place. A compliance program is fully described, the silviculture assessment program as described in the plan is being implemented and the appropriate data is being fully reported in the annual reports each year.

NFRM has a mature data collection system that includes additional silviculture monitoring. Regenerated sites are monitored regularly.

F.3 Assessment of long-term trends

Activities on the forest are reported through regular annual reports. Enhanced annual reports summarize the progress towards plan implementation. A tool developed by the MNR called the Forest Explorer amalgamates spatial data from annual reports to provide a clear current snapshot of the progress. Significant trends and consistency with annual report data have been assessed.

Forest Condition

There are a few complications when comparing the forest condition through time. The new inventory contained new attributes and age estimations. The change in forest unit definitions to the standard regional forest units has clouded the comparison. One noted forest condition that has affected the implementation of the FMP is the tracking of smaller stands of red pine that would benefit from commercial thinning. The information was available for the plan but was not updated due to a time crunch in plan production.

Harvest

The planned harvest is 8,471 hectares per year. This is significantly more than the current harvest level illustrated in Figure 11. The harvest area summary includes bridging areas. Bridging areas are those areas where operations are started in one plan and finished in the next plan. The bridging areas are accounted for in the plan in which they were initiated.

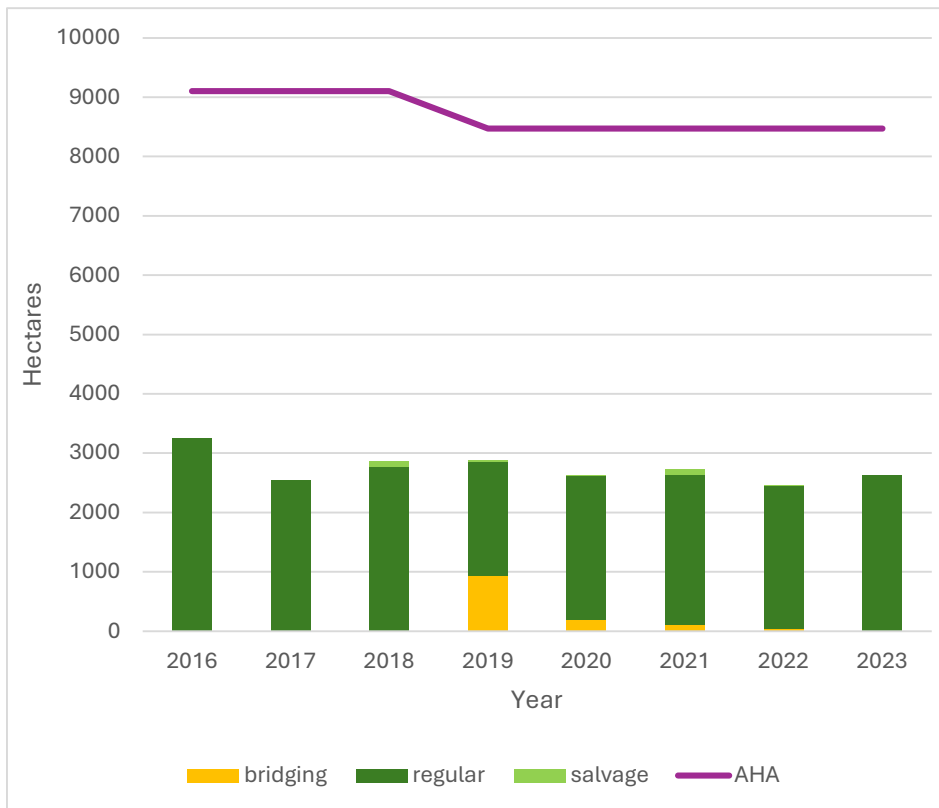


Figure 11. Area harvested by year, Source Forest Explorer

Site preparation

Various types of site preparation were used during the scope of the audit. Most recently aerial chemical, chemical ground, backpack chemical and mechanical site preparation have been used. Figure 12 summarizes the amount and type of site preparation employed during the scope of the audit.

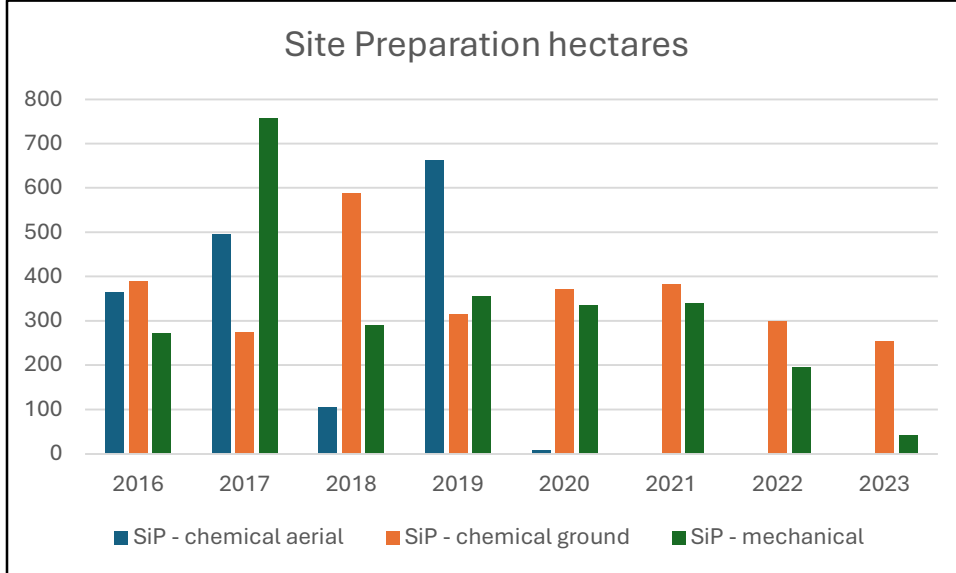


Figure 12. Site preparation summary, Source Forest Explorer

Site preparation choice depended on the forest type and planned renewal. The FMP-17 indicated a plan of 1,776 hectares of mechanical, 793 hectares of aerial chemical site prep and 442 hectares of ground chemical site prep annually. Even with actual harvest reduced to a third of what was planned, the total volume of SP is still lower than would normally be expected.. Mechanical site preparation is well below expectation. However, the results in the field did not show an impact on seedling survival or growth.

Renewal

As summarized in Table 4 and Table 5 the actual forest renewal is not consistent with the 2019-2029 NF FMP planned renewal from FMP-17. Clear cut natural and planting is lower than planned while uniform shelterwood and seed tree systems have been applied more frequently. However, the trend overall as shown in figure 13 indicates the renewal is as much or exceeding planned percent for the past three plans. Renewal activities varied by the amount and forest type harvested according to the silviculture ground rules.

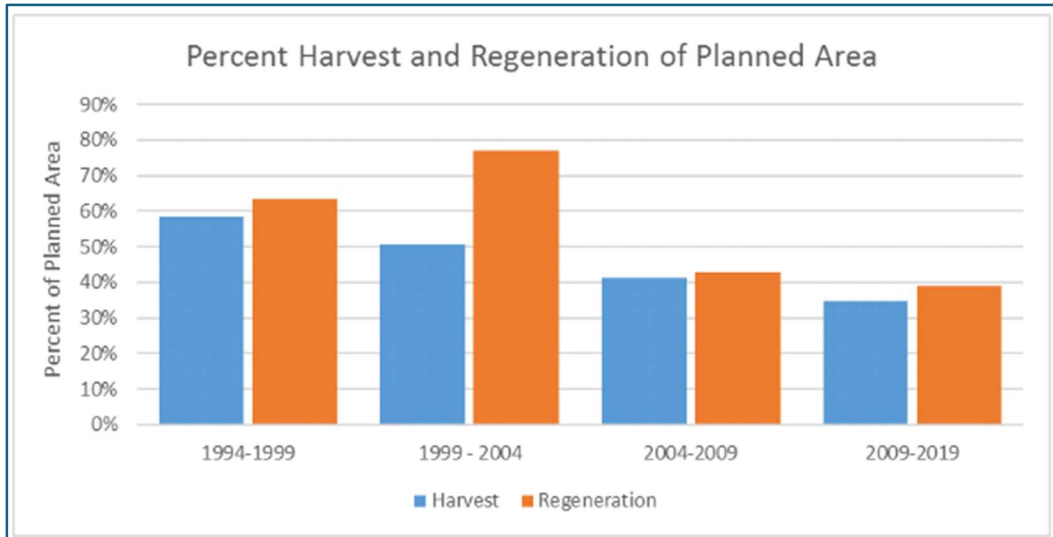


Figure 13. Percent harvest and renewal for the past three plans, Source 2018-2019 AR

Tending

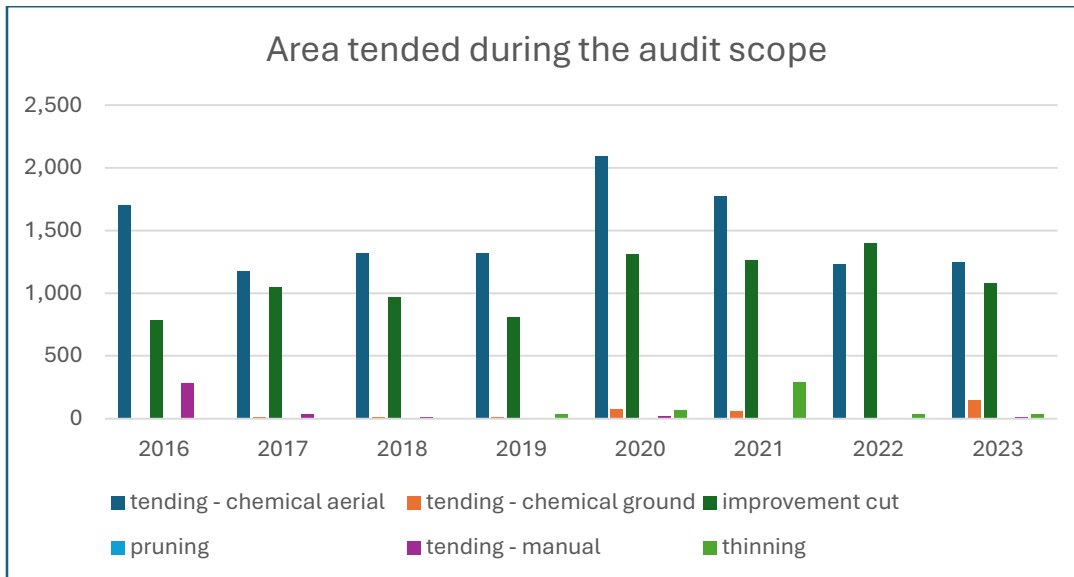


Figure 14. Area tended during the audit scope, Source Forest Explorer

The plan FMP-17 projected that 2,005 hectares would be tended with aerial chemical tending, 25 hectares with ground chemical tending, and 217 hectares would be manually tended per year. Tending is consistent with the planned level considering the reduction in harvest area. The trend is illustrated in Figure 15. NFRM has consistently done improvement cuts to improve the future forest conditions.

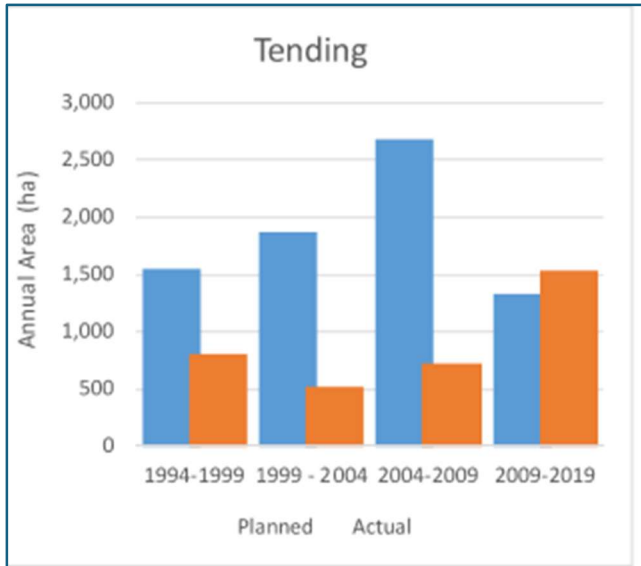


Figure 15. Tending areas renewal for the past three plans, Source 2018-2019 AR

Regeneration monitoring

The auditors used the Silviculture Obligations Assessment (SOA) tool to examine the SFL progress towards completion of silviculture assessment. The SOA tool indicated that a high percentage of areas harvested were treated. Approximately 30% of area that has not received silviculture monitoring is shelterwood harvest areas that are continuously monitored but not reported as completed for decades.

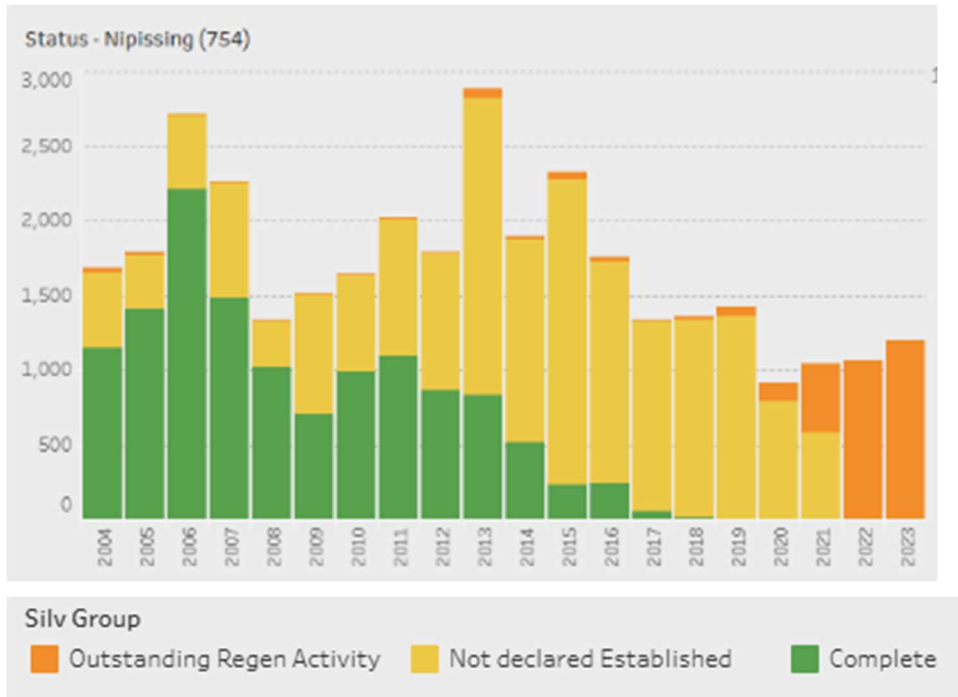


Figure 16. Graph of area harvested, renewed, and assessment complete by harvest year, Source Silviculture Obligation Analysis

F.4 Conclusions regarding sustainability of the forest

Overall, the audit team concludes that the management of the Nipissing Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations, and policies that were in effect during the period covered by the audit, and the Crown Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and the forest resource licence held by Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc.. The forest is being managed consistent with the principles of sustainable forest management, as assessed through the IFAPP.

Appendix 1
Findings and Best Practices

Independent Forest Audit – Record of Finding

Finding #1

Regulatory Requirement B:

Audit Criterion B.2: Access

Procedure:

1. Review and assess in the field the implementation of approved access activities. Include the following:

- Assess whether the planned maintenance and monitoring program for roads and water crossings was implemented as planned and whether it was effective in determining any environmental or public safety concerns.

Background Information and Summary of Evidence:

The 2019 FMP does not clearly discuss the responsibilities for shared roads and identify SFL owned bridges, as required in the 2017 FMPM 1.1.8.10. The Supplemental Documentation has many entries in the final list of required alterations that focus on specific roads. It appears that the planning team did not fully address the shared roads and identify MNR crossing responsibilities. The spatial information does indicate road responsibility but not crossing responsibility. The road and infrastructure responsibility should be more clearly defined in the FMP.

The auditors met with a representative of a shareholder of Nipissing Forest Resource Management and major forest operator on the Nipissing Forest. The representative expressed concern about water crossing WX270 which is a 55-meter bridge over the Temagami River on the Baie Jeanne Road. The Baie Jeanne Road is identified in the approved FMP as an SFL responsible road in table FMP-18. The original bridge was constructed in the 1940s, the current structure was constructed in 1983, according to MNR records, with repairs occurring throughout the years. Any forest management prior to 1996 was completed under the Crown. The bridge is owned by the MNR and the responsibility of the MNR as it was constructed in the 1980s as per the Crown Land Bridge Management Guideline, 2008.

An inspection by the MNR (report NORB008) was completed in November of 2020 indicating work was needed within the next 5 years. The MNR restricted heavy traffic on the bridge in 2023 providing little notice to NFRM that the restriction would be in place and causing an unfair increase in cost to the contractor that had just set up operations that relied on the bridge access. The immediate repairs to the bridge were subsequently done by the forest operator causing delays and costly worker shortages. The closing of WX270 to heavy traffic added an unnecessarily financial burden to the forest industry.

Following a review of the FMP documentation, as well as an assessment of the requirements and conditions at water crossing WX270, the auditors determine that the shared roads and infrastructure under MNR ownership have not been adequately planned for ongoing repair and maintenance. MNR, the licensee, and SFL should have discussed cost-sharing for bridge improvements when the report was received, allowing the district to seek extra regional funding for capital projects and the

SFL to adjust harvest schedules.

In 2003 a provincial MNR and Industry task team was formed to address roads responsibilities and the complexity around them. They produced the report “Forest Roads and Water Crossings Initiative- Task team Report.” (FRWCI) This report recommends that obligations and liabilities are clearly documented. It further recommends that the forest industry and MNR work together so this is not an ongoing issue. In addition, the Crown Land Bridge Management Guidelines (2008) guiding principles (1.4.2.) states that the Ownership of a bridge belongs to the party who originally purchased and installed the bridge or the party to whom the bridge has been transferred. Responsibility for ongoing care of a bridge, and where applicable, its eventual removal rests with the bridge owner.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The Nipissing Forest would benefit from responsibilities being clearly assigned to each road and water crossing in the forest management plan spatial datasets. The road and crossing responsibilities should be clearly documented in the FMP or through a memorandum of understanding. The Forest Roads and Water Crossings Initiative- Task Team Report (2003) is recommended as a starting point for this endeavour.

Finding #1:

Clear assignment of road and infrastructure duties, along with effective maintenance planning, is needed for the Nipissing Forest.

Independent Forest Audit – Record of Finding

Finding #2

Regulatory Requirement B: Meeting FMP Objectives

Audit Criterion B.5: Tending and Protection

Direction:

This audit criterion addresses tending and protection operations outside of AOCs. Tending and protection operations must be conducted in compliance with all laws and regulations including the CFSA, approved activities of the FMP including SGRs, AWS, and FOPs.

Procedure:

Review and assess in the field the implementation of approved tending and protection operations

Background Information and Summary of Evidence:

The amount of red pine commercial thinning has been limited by the planning process. The FMP identifies 2,493 hectares of red pine commercial thinning. Commercial thinning is an intermediate harvest in immature stands, where trees have reached merchantable size, and all or part of the felled trees are extracted for useful products.

Small red pine plantations, less than four to eight hectares in size, have been lumped into larger stands containing other species during the Forest Resource Inventory photo interpretation. Since the area harvested by forest unit cannot exceed the available area in the plan, additional areas cannot be added for red pine commercial thinning. This resulted in an underestimation of intensively managed red pine stands and does not allow for appropriate amounts of thinning needed to optimize growth and development of high-quality red pine stands.

Stand thinning is a silviculture tool that provides optimal spacing for continued optimal growth. Several thinnings are needed in a developing red pine plantation, precommercial and commercial. The Nipissing Forest has had a lot of investment over the years in thinning and preparing red pine stands for optimal growth. This investment will be lost if stands are not commercially thinned but allowed to stagnate.

As per FMPM 2024, Part A, Section 1.2.4.5, if applicable, a silvicultural option for commercial thinning will be identified and represented in the model. This aligns with CFSA 29(1) "A forest resource licence that authorizes the harvesting of forest resources is subject to the condition that the amount of forest resources harvested shall not exceed the amount described as available for harvesting in the applicable forest management plan. While most silviculture treatments are not limited within a forest management plan, commercial thinning is treated as a harvest disturbance rather than a silviculture treatment.

The 2019 FMP for the Nipissing Forest does contain SGRs for commercial thinning of red pine. Unfortunately, all potential red pine stands were not identified in the planning inventory, and the commercial thinning is limited by the amount identified as available in the Forest Management Plan.

Discussion and Conclusion:

Red pine plantations require multiple thinnings throughout their life cycle to promote growth and development. Commercial thinning is identified within existing Silviculture Ground Rules in the forest management plan which enables it to be done but commercial thinning is limited by the available harvest area identified in the plan. Past investment in precommercial thinning has created the conditions to commercially thin red pine. However, commercial thinning is treated, in policy, as a harvest disturbance rather than a silviculture treatment and is limited in the forest management plan.

Finding #2: Commercial thinning of red pine in Nipissing Forest is not fully optimized.

Independent Forest Audit – Record of Finding

Finding #3

Regulatory Requirement C: Planned vs Actual

Audit Criterion C.3: District compliance planning and associated monitoring

Direction:

Review and assess whether an MNR compliance program has been developed and implemented to effectively monitor program compliance in accordance with MNR manuals, policies, and procedures.

MNR Districts shall prepare District Compliance Plans that include monitoring and auditing forest operations and dealing with the results of compliance inspections conducted by auditees. This is separate from the Ten-year Compliance Strategy (Plan). The Forest Compliance Handbook includes direction to MNR staff for compliance inspections and reporting. A description of the MNR district program for auditing forest operations and conducting forest operations inspections is included in the FMP text.

Procedure:

Review the MNR District Compliance Plans in place during the audit period to determine how forest management activities were to be monitored for compliance by MNR and assess whether the actual level of the overall monitoring program was in accordance with the FMP and whether it was appropriate based on evidence gathered through analysis of related audit criteria, including field audits.

Determine whether the MNR District submitted the MNR’s compliance information into FOIP and whether they supplied the FOIP information to the FM in accordance with requirements, including timelines specified in MNR procedures and the Forest Compliance Handbook.

Background Information and Summary of Evidence:

The North Bay Ministry of Natural Resources District Office has not completed an Annual Compliance Operations Planning (ACOP) document since 2015. A summary of 94 completed Forest Operations Inspections Reports submitted by the MNR during the audit period is noted below.

Year	#FOIPs submitted
2016/2017	32
2017/2018	25
2018/2019	6
2019/2020	12
2020/2021	4
2021/2022	2
2022/2023	8
2023/2024	7
2024/2025	1

Submitted reports include 47 harvest, 9 renewal, 1 maintenance and 37 access. A review of the “pending” status during the audit period revealed one FOIP report that is 371 days overdue as of the audit date.

The results of the MNR silviculture effectiveness monitoring are noted below in **Finding #5**.

Discussion and Conclusion:

There appears to be limited involvement from MNR staff with forest management activities as a whole. This may be the result of high staff turnover and few certified compliance inspectors within the district. Few reports are being completed, and minimal presence is confirmed in the field during operations. With no ACOP, priorities and targets are not being identified or carried out. MNR does not have an Annual Compliance Operation Plan in place.

Finding #3: MNR does not have an effective monitoring program in accordance with MNR manuals, policies and procedures.

Independent Forest Audit – Record of Finding

Finding #4

Regulatory Requirement C: Planned versus actual

Audit Criterion C.6.: Silviculture standards and assessment program

Direction:

Review and assess whether an effective program exists to assess the status of regeneration in accordance with the applicable FMPM, FIM, and FOSM. The entire cycle from SGRs, FOPs, tree marking audits, field operations, regeneration assessment surveys to FRI update must be assessed. Methodologies used in assessing regeneration and verifying results are documented in the FMP.

Procedure:

Assess whether the FM's management unit assessment program is sufficient and is being used to provide the required silviculture effectiveness monitoring information. Compare MNR District silviculture monitoring results (where they may exist) with those of the SFL. Evaluate and explain any differences in results.

Background Information and Summary of Evidence:

Sound silviculture ground rules (SGRs) are identified within the FMP with good descriptions of monitoring methodology. The SFL has a well-established monitoring program. The FMP describes a system of prescription confirmation, planting quality assessments, site preparation or scarification surveys, temporary sample plots, establishment surveys, ocular shelterwood assessments as well as tending quality assessments. Uniform seed tree silviculture system quality is assessed at the tree marking stage.

MNR did complete silviculture effectiveness monitoring on establishment blocks for six out of the eight years; only two years were missed due to the COVID restrictions. This is commendable. The survey results of the MNR did not match the results of the SFL.

NFRM uses the Site Occupancy Index Silvicultural Treatment Assessment and Reporting System (SO-iSTARS) and Calibrated Ground Ocular Measure to assess silviculture success. While there is a concern with the amount of ocular surveys identified within the FMP, it is completed with experienced staff, and it will be important to ensure this continues when experienced foresters retire. The MNR used the SO-iSTARS until recently but is now using the Regeneration Assessment Program (RAP) methods to confirm the SFL reported results.

The 2016 IFA had the following finding: finding #6 To provide a reliable assessment of the free-to-grow condition, the District MNRF and NFRM must jointly implement a sampling procedure and protocol for FTG surveys and Core Task 1 SEM monitoring that resolves data discrepancies and variability.

Actions were put in place to address the finding including a task team, agreement on consistent survey methods and follow-up meetings to discuss discrepancies. However, with the MNR changing survey assessment methods, the same variances have returned.

Year	Status
2016/2017	1 of 3 blocks with different results compared to SFL
2017/2018	3 of 4 blocks with different results compared to SFL
2018/2019	1 of 4 blocks with different results compared to SFL
2019/2020	No MNR SEM Survey Completed due to COVID
2020/2021	No MNR SEM Survey Completed due to COVID
2021/2022	7 of 10 blocks with different results compared to SFL
2022/2023	9 of 10 blocks with different results compared to SFL
2023/2024	4 of 4 blocks with different results compared to SFL
2024/2025	5 of 7 blocks with different results compared to SFL

The variability of sites, along with inconsistent survey methods and competition rules, has resulted in discrepancies between MNR and SFL survey outcomes. Relying on repeated surveys to achieve identical results is not a robust audit approach. A uniform survey methodology, conducted by experienced and qualified surveyors, as well as consistent stratification and compilation of data, is essential for reliable reporting. Plot-level auditing offers a more suitable means of verification. It is important that the forest industry and the MNR establish consensus on survey protocols and allowable variance to effectively confirm successful forest renewal efforts. The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Forest region exhibits significant diversity, with numerous species often coexisting within single stand boundaries, making duplicate survey outcomes rare. Employing different methodologies (such as RAP versus SOI-Stars) or stratifications further reduces consistency. Auditing existing SFL plots provides greater statistical reliability and fosters positive collaboration between the MNR and SFL. Methods such as standardizing renewal monitoring procedures, conducting plot-by-plot audits, joint surveying, and certifying surveyors have all contributed to enhancing confidence in monitoring results.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The renewal monitoring program is outlined in the Forest Management Plan. However, Ministry of Natural Resources surveys of areas reported as free to grow have not produced results consistent with the reported data. Resolving these differences is necessary to ensure reliable survey outcomes and confirm that management objectives are achieved. Silvicultural monitoring needs a clearly defined policy to mitigate discrepancies and ensure data is captured consistently for reporting.

Finding #4: The Sustainable Forest Licence and Ministry of Natural Resources are not reporting consistent regeneration monitoring results.

**Independent Forest Audit – Record of Finding
Best Management Practise #1**

Regulatory Requirement B: Meeting FMP Objectives

Audit Criterion B.5: Tending

Direction:

This audit criterion addresses tending and protection operations outside of AOCs. Tending and protection operations must be conducted in compliance with all laws and regulations including the CFSA, approved activities of the FMP including SGRs, AWS, and FOPs.

Procedure:

Review and assess in the field the implementation of approved tending and protection operations. Include the following:

- Assess whether the tending and protection treatments were consistent with the FOP; the FOP was consistent with the SGRs; the FOP was certified by an R.P.F., and actual operations were appropriate and effective for the actual site conditions encountered

Background Information and Summary of Evidence:

The audit team interviewed the NFRM regarding forest renewal and were impressed with the application of tending and vegetation management techniques that were informed from local research efforts.

The Nipissing Forest Resources Management aggressively sought out projects to improve the forest. Stand improvement and remediation projects were developed into Forestry Futures projects. Natural disturbances were renewed in a timely manner.

Forestry Futures projects are consistently used to improve forest conditions. The SFL has been successful in the following projects from 2016 to 2025.

Stand Improvement

923-1-R42 (Stand Improvement - removal of non-crop species from PWUS, 3 years),

897-1-R40 (Stand improvement in hardwood stands, year 3 years),

924-1-R42 (Revitalization of PW/OR shelterwoods, 2 years),

956-1-R46 (Stand Improvement in White Pine Shelterwood Stands)

957-1-R46 (Stand Improvement in Degraded Hardwood and Conifer Stands)

983-1-R48 (Red pine plantation thinning)

997-2-R49 (Renewing the Forest after Wildfire NOR070)

998-2-R49 (Block 193 Salvage - Tend and Fill Plant)

1009-1-R50 (Manual Stand Improvement in Natural and Planted Conifer)

1010-1-R50 (Tending Previous FFT Projects)

1012-1-R50 (Tending Old Salvage Areas)

1059-2-R52 (Tending Artificial Regeneration Following Wildfire NOR062)

1058-1-R52 (Manual Stand Improvement in Natural and Planted Conifer)

1185-1-R57 (Thinning of Unmarketable Red Pine Plantations)

1188-1-R58 (Tend Previous FFT Projects)

1189-1-R58 (Manual Stand Improvement in Natural and Artificial Conifer)

1190-1-R58 (Red Pine Pre-Commercial Thinning)

1193-1-R58 (Concurrent Stand Improvement in Degraded Conifer and Hardwood Stands)

1131-2-R54 (Red Pine Plantation Thinning)

1132-2-R54 (Tending Natural Regeneration Following Wildfire NOR062)

1140-1-R54 (Thinning of Unmarketable Red Pine Plantation)

1151-1-R55 (Tending Previous FFT projects)
1152-1-R55 (Manual Stand Improvement in Natural and Planted Conifer)
1133-1-R54 (Stand Improvement in Future Red Oak Stands
Remediation)
895-2-R40 (2006 Windstorm, 3 years)
972-2-R47 (Renewing the Forest after Wildfire NOR062)
925-1-R42 (Remediation of degraded PWUS, 3 years)
1011-1-R50 (Remediation of Degraded White Pine Shelterwood Stands
1068-3-R52 (Controlling Beech in a Degraded Red Oak site)
1067-1-R52 (Stand Improvement in Degraded Hardwood and Conifer Stands)
1060-2-R52 (Block 193 Salvage - Start Over)
1150-1-R55 (Restoration of Degraded White Pine Shelterwood Stands)
Covid Related Expenses on the 2020 tree plant.
Covid Related Expenses on the 2021 tree plant

The staff were very knowledgeable about the treatments applied and described the next potential treatments.

Discussion and Conclusion: Renewal is conducted through planned processes, adaptive management, and ongoing monitoring. Research has been used to inform and modify treatments for improved outcomes. Forestry Futures Trust funding has been used to supplement renewal trust funding where possible to undertake projects to improve the forest.

Best Management Practice #1: Adaptive management and improvement projects have exceeded basic requirements to enhance the forest resource.

Independent Forest Audit – Concluding Statement

Several factors complicated forest management during the audit scope, including an inventory with reduced detail, reduced wood demand, and COVID protocols that restricted travel, reduced training, and disrupted projects. Despite these complications the SFL has made significant improvements in renewal and stand maintenance through adopting and applying findings from applicable research.

The audit team concludes that the management of the Nipissing Forest was generally in compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies that were in effect during the period covered by the audit, and the Forest was managed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Sustainable Forest Licence held by Nipissing Forest Resource Management. The forest is being managed consistent with the principles of sustainable forest management, as assessed through the Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol.

Appendix 2
 Management Objectives Table
Management Objective/Assessment
 2009-2019 Nipissing Forest Management Plan as assessed in
 the 2018-2019 Year Ten AR.

Indicator	Auditors Assessment	Auditor Comments
1. Move toward a distribution of disturbances that more closely resembles the expected natural disturbance landscape pattern. a. Frequency of disturbance size	Partially Achieved	While this was planned to be achieved. The large and medium disturbance frequency was not quite met. There was movement towards the disturbance pattern desired. This is not a sustainability concern.
1 b. Area distribution of forest disturbance (harvest and natural) area.	Achieved	All of the disturbance class targets have been met when comparing the area distribution across the landscape to the natural disturbance template.
1 c. Frequency distribution of planned clearcut areas. Target $\geq 90\%$ of planned clearcut area less than 260 ha	Achieved	A total of 206 clearcuts were planned for Phase 1. Of these, there are 21 greater than 260 ha.
1 d. Forest interior, as measured as a percent of Crown productive forest land base made up of deer wintering areas.	Not assessed	Target $\geq 79,672$ ha (8.4%) by plan end (T2). Not assessed in the AR table and not explained in the text. Target was 15% of crown and private land base.
2. Increase the frequency of old growth area occurring in larger patch sizes	Achieved	Both targets of having patches of 50-500 ha and > 500 ha patches were achieved.
3. With consideration given to the current landscape, ensure that an even distribution across the forest of old growth stands, and old aged stands is allowed to occur.	Achieved	A more even distribution was achieved.
4. To maintain the area of forest cover types that would occur naturally on the Nipissing Forest, similar to the expected natural landscape dynamics, with consideration of the pre-settlement forest condition.	Achieved	Assessed at LTMD, the desired and target cover levels were met.
5. Provide Red and White Pine Forest area not less than 1995 levels, consistent with the Conservation Strategy for Old Growth Red and White Pine Forests Ecosystems in Ontario, 1996.	Achieved	At plan end (2019) the level of white and red pine on the forest is expected to be 111,449 hectares. (112,478 ha) $\geq 79,671$ ha LTMD 2019. – 119,000 ha

Indicator	Auditors Assessment	Auditor Comments
6. Restore to the PWUS or PR forest unit, a proportion of all harvested area in the white pine seed tree, mixedwood and offsite poplar and white birch forest units.	Partially Achieved	Although at this time, the proportions of intensive treatment are below two of four targets; they represent a dramatic increase from the previous plan and have progressed significantly towards the targets. This is not a concern.
7. Move towards a more natural age class distribution for each forest unit over the entire forest in mature and old aged condition, similar to that of a natural forest dynamic.	Achieved	Assessed as met at LTMD.
8. Maintain or increase the mid-tolerant hardwood component in stands with suitable conditions.	Achieved	White birch was increased significantly but was relatively very low to start with. The longer-term changes resulting from how these stands regenerate can be re-assessed after FTG.
9. For the mixed conifer lowland forest unit (MCL), ensure that the proportion of spruce and cedar remain relatively similar for the forest unit as a whole	Achieved	There has been limited harvest of MCL and there has been some renewal and classification changes.
10. Protect and maintain genetic diversity of tree species, including species at the northern end of the range on the Nipissing Forest (i.e. black cherry, red oak, beech, white ash, burr oak, elm, silver maple, red spruce, green ash, basswood and natural red pine stands)	Achieved	In 2019, the assessment of the presence of tree species used a new inventory which made the comparison difficult. Most species exceeded 2009 levels. This is considered as being met.
11. To achieve wildlife habitat levels similar to the natural condition for forest dependent provincially and locally featured species on the Nipissing Forest	Achieved	Determined as met at LTMD.
12. To provide early successional forest over 100-year term.	Achieved	Determined as met at LTMD.
13. To achieve wildlife habitat levels similar to the natural condition for forest dependent wildlife species at risk with known occurrence on the Nipissing Forest.	Achieved	All species at risk targets were met for all terms in the planning horizon
14. Create and maintain a landscape that ensures the long-term sustainability of preferred, red-shouldered hawk habitat on the Nipissing Forest as modeled.	Achieved	All species at risk targets were met for all terms in the planning horizon

Indicator	Auditors Assessment	Auditor Comments
15. Create and maintain the white-tailed deer critical thermal cover condition in the Loring Deer Yard core area to ensure the long-term sustainability of this condition on the Nipissing Forest.	Achieved	Determined as met at LTMD.
16. Create and maintain suitable white-tailed deer summer habitat on the landscape to ensure the long-term sustainability of this condition on the Nipissing Forest.	Achieved	Determined as met at LTMD.
17. Create and maintain a landscape that ensures the long-term sustainability of Pileated woodpecker feeding, nesting and roosting habitat on the Nipissing Forest as modeled.	Achieved	Determined as met at LTMD.
18. Create and maintain a landscape that ensures the long-term sustainability of suitable moose summer and winter habitat on the Nipissing Forest as projected.	Achieved	Determined as met at LTMD.
19. Maintain the health of the forest under changing climate conditions.	Achieved	The white pine progeny trials were pruned twice. No wood movement has occurred across regulated forest health quarantine areas. Limited salvage has been done. 3 FFT projects were undertaken for spruce budworm, white pine shelterwood, and a fire renewal.
20. Measure carbon emissions changes in the forest influenced by harvest operations.	Achieved	At LTMD, an analysis on the natural benchmark compared to managed run performed using FORCARB- ON
21. Protect critical sites for any wildlife species including vulnerable, threatened, endangered or species of special consideration known to occur on the Nipissing Forest.	Achieved	No non-compliances recorded to date with respect to the protection of critical sites for any wildlife species
22. Increase the amount of early successional shoreline forest habitat	Achieved	Target achieved. The prescription has been applied on 11 blocks.
23. Evaluate changes to the road density indicator in the short term, in order to set realistic targets in future objective setting. Encourage the maintenance or decrease of present road density in remote Enhanced Management Areas	Achieved	Road density, excluding parks / reserves (managed Crown Forest) is maintained within 10% of the plan start density and is currently 0.15 km/km ²

Indicator	Auditors Assessment	Auditor Comments
24. Conduct intensive forest management activities on the Nipissing Forest, to support timber quality and mill demand.	Partially Achieved	Of a total 17,428 ha harvested in clearcut forest units, 28% was treated intensively. This is slightly less than the target of 30%, and a significant increase over the 13.4% from the previous plan period of 2004 to 2008. This is not a concern.
25. Ensure silvicultural activities create the desired future forest condition or successful regeneration in the areas harvested on the Nipissing Forest.	Partially Achieved	Significant progress has been made in increasing the level of success; however, success rates were below targets when assessed after 7 years: 26.2% Silviculture Success, and 82.2% Regeneration Success (AR-13 total in the 10-Year & Annual Report). Assessment after 10 years shows significant progress has been made in further increasing the level of success, while significant areas are pending with assessments to be completed in the future. This is not a concern as assessed in the field.
26. Ensure land use direction is being followed in enhanced management areas as well as adjacent to parks and conservation areas.	Achieved	No instances of non-compliances reported to date with respect to ensuring the land use direction is being followed in enhanced management areas as well as adjacent to parks and conservation areas.
27. Respect the presence of resource-based tourism as well as other commercial businesses on the Nipissing Forest	Achieved	RSAs were respected. One instance occurred and was documented in the annual report text. They met their target.
28. Provide a sustainable, continuous and predictable wood supply from the Forest that will meet, as closely as possible and for as long as possible, the current recognized industrial demand of the forest.	Partially Achieved	While the planned harvest was above the target of at least 50% of the previous plan, the harvest completion was well below the planned level. Markets and factors not in the control of the forest manager are at play. The mills received the supply they needed. This is not a concern.
29. Protect cultural heritage values within the Nipissing Forest	Achieved	No non-compliances recorded to date with respect to the protection of cultural heritage values within the Nipissing Forest.
30. Minimize the potential impact of forest operations on recreati	Achieved	No instances of non-compliance reported to date withresp

Indicator	Auditors Assessment	Auditor Comments
on areas that are identified on the values map		ect to protection of water quality of known sources of drinking water.
31. Protect water quality of known sources of drinking water	Achieved	No instances of non-compliance were found during the plan term.
32. Minimize the amount of productive forest land negatively impacted, causing site damage and loss of forest productivity.	Achieved	No instances of non-compliance were found during the plan term.
33. Protect water quality and fish habitat within watercourses and water bodies affected by forest Management.	Achieved	One non-compliance reported of damage to areas surrounding fish habitat. This is within target level.
34. Maintain the area of Managed Crown Productive Forest available for timber production at the highest possible level and minimizing conversion of Crown Forest area to non-forest land.	Achieved	The SFL estimated that less than 1500 ha were converted to roads and landings (0.3%) which is less than the 1% target.
35. First Nations and Aboriginal Communities are involved in forest management both during the development of the forest management plan and also with the implementation of the plan	Achieved	Participation in Land Claim process, aboriginal working group sessions and special consultation with various First Nation communities have kept a high level of consultation active on the Nipissing Forest.
36. First Nations and Aboriginal Communities will benefit economically through partnerships, employment opportunities and new business relationships.	Achieved	NFRM has agreements in place with four of the five First Nation communities.
37. First Nations and Aboriginal Communities will continue to benefit from forest management through educational and social opportunities.	Achieved	NFRM has agreements in place with four of the five First Nation communities.
38. To facilitate opportunities for the harvesting of non-timber forest products on the Nipissing Forest.	Achieved	The most notable is the local harvesting of Chaga on the Forest. NFRMs spring training sessions regularly make forest workers aware of NTFPs on the Forest, through education, illustration and methods of communicating these findings to NFRM staff.
39. To reduce and eventually eliminate the use of herbicides used in forest management on the Nipissing Forest.	Achieved	The Herbicide Use Policy was developed, including a decision matrix for rationalization of herbicide use, benchmark to measure current trends in order to set future reductions, and specifics of

Indicator	Auditors Assessment	Auditor Comments
		participation in research and new technologies.
40. To encourage support of the Local Citizens Committee in the development of the FMP for the Nipissing Forest.	Achieved	Support for the final FMP approval was assessed at Final Plan Submission stage of the FMP, and the target was achieved.
41. Maintain and increase the level of compliance on the forest.	Achieved	NFRM has reduced the instances of non-compliances on the Forest from over 10% of inspections to less than 1% of inspections.
42. Volume of fuelwood made more readily available to general public.	Achieved	A fuel wood area was amended into the FMP. Over 5,000 m ³ were reported as harvested.

Appendix 2
Management Objective/Assessment
2019-2029 Nipissing Forest Management Plan

Indicator	Auditors Assessment	Auditor Comments
1. Move towards the predicted range of natural variation for landscape structure and composition.	Achieved	Assessed at LTMD, this indicator had movement towards for most mature and old metrics. The landscape guide old growth and managed available forest units' direction was met.
2. Move towards the predicted range of natural variation for young, mature and old forest landscape pattern.	Achieved	Assessed at LTMD, generally moving towards desirable levels at the LTMD stage.
3. Increase the area of stands that contain red spruce on the Nipissing Forest.	Not on track	Area of stands with a Sr component $\geq 10\%$ (include newly planted areas). Note: eFRI did not delineate any. Use Blyth cruise data to map natural stands, and regen layer and Gurd stands for planted area. Target is 150,000 Sr planted on 100 ha over 10 years. At the five-year enhanced annual report only 20,500 seedlings had been planted.
4. To provide habitat for moose populations on the Nipissing Forest.	Achieved	The target of having 10-15% of the forest in moose emphasis areas was met at LTMD.
5. To maintain habitat for forest-related species at risk.	On track	Compliance with AOCs and annual spring training.
6. Provide a sustainable, continuous, and predictable wood supply that will meet, as closely as possible, or exceed the current recognized industrial demand of the Forest.	Achieved & below target	The planned area and volume have been met. The actual harvested volume and area target (75%) is below planned levels.
7. Indigenous Communities will benefit economically through partnerships, employment opportunities, and business relationships.	On track	During LTMD, the Temagami LSA is designated as a distinct management zone and portrayed on FMP maps; AOO parcels are designated as managed or withdrawn as determined during consultation. Specific management direction can be applied to individual areas separately from the general land base
8. Indigenous Communities will continue to benefit from forest management through educational and social opportunities.	On track	To be documented in the year six AR

Indicator	Auditors Assessment	Auditor Comments
9. Provide a balance of accessible and remote areas in the Nipissing Forest, within the context of land-use plan designations.	On track	Kilometres of primary and secondary SFL roads per square kilometre of managed Crown Forest (parks and reserves excluded). Maintain 0.14 km/km ² (Year 7 AR) *Kilometres of all SFL forest access roads (primary, secondary, operational) per square kilometre within remote access EMAs. Decrease 0.18 km/km ² (Year 7 AR).
10. Ensure silvicultural activities create the expected future forest conditions on the Nipissing Forest.	On track	+/-5% of modelled succession is achieved for intensive treatments, +/-10% for extensive and basic treatments.
11. Manage a balanced silviculture program to sustain a dependable wood supply and promote a natural range of habitat conditions.	On track	30% of clearcuts available allocated area managed with intensive silviculture treatment packages. 28% at year 5
12. a Continue to develop a vegetation management program that judiciously uses herbicides. necessary and promotes the use of prescribed fire and other vegetation management alternatives	On track	Maintain or decrease areas treated with chem and increase alternatives benchmark Chem site prep 10.8%, Mech site prep 5.2% Chem tending 44%
12. b Maintain or decrease chemical use	Not assessed	
12 c. Establishment of a demonstration area of herbicide treatments and alternatives.	Not on track	Established within the first 2 years of the FMP with subsequent treatments as Required. 1 area, approximately 5 to 10 ha in size.
12 d. Area of high complexity prescribed burns.	On track	At least 1 prescribed burn every 5 years.
13. Ensure values are adequately protected on the Nipissing Forest	On track	Percent of forest operation inspections in non-compliance, by activity and remedy type. Target is 0
14. Minimize negative impacts on forest productivity, soil, and water resources.	On track	Compliance with management practices that prevent, minimize or mitigate site damage (% of inspections in non-compliance, by remedy type). Target is 0
15. Protect water quality and fish habitat within watercourses and water bodies affected by forest management.	On track	Compliance with management practices that protect water quality and fish habitat (% of inspections in non-compliance, by remedy type) target 1 in 7 years

Indicator	Auditors Assessment	Auditor Comments
16 a. Improve the resilience of the Nipissing Forest to possible effects of climate change. Establish white pine seed production area from climate-appropriate seed zone (FGCA recommendation: Cayuga site, Zones 37, 38 one seed production area	On track	Planting of 3000 white pine from Cayuga and Scugog sources. All others from approved seed zones. Zones 32, 34, 35, 36, & 38 have been planted
16 b. Tree seedlings planted from seed zones that are south (projected climate-appropriate zones) of traditional zones in Nipissing Forest.	On track	Target -Supplement seed sources with up to 10% seed from additional recommended climate-appropriate zones. Red pine, white spruce and white pine from southern seed zones have been planted on the NF.
17. Maintain or increase the abundance of tree species of special interest (at the northern end of their natural range).	Not assessed	The data was not available to the auditors.
18. Promote suitable habitat and browse in and around Stratum Deer Yards.	Not assessed	The data was not available to the auditors
19. Provide opportunities for personal fuelwood collection that are located in proximity to communities on the Nipissing Forest.	Not assessed	The data was not available to the auditors
20. Provide opportunities for First Nation and Métis communities in the development of the Forest Management Plan.	Achieved	Opportunities were provided for involvement of First Nation and Métis communities in plan development including, but not limited to, participation on the planning team, Aboriginal Working Group, community meetings, development of the Aboriginal Values Information Report, and development of AOCs for the protection of indigenous values.
21. Encourage support of the Local Citizens Committee in the development of the FMP for the Nipissing Forest.	Achieved	LCC's self-evaluation of its effectiveness in plan development; Desired Forest and Benefits Meeting Report.
22. Mitigate the impact of invasive species on the Nipissing Forest.	On track	NFRM has not had any issues with compliance with quarantine zones. Spring operations training - education with contractors, equipment movement (seeds), etc. is ongoing..

Appendix 3

Compliance with contractual obligations

Licence condition	Licence holder performance
Payment of Forestry Futures and Ontario Crown charges	All Forestry Futures and Ontario Crown charges have been paid.
Wood supply commitments, sharing arrangements, special conditions	The SFL has met all wood supply agreements and commitments.
Preparation of FMP, AWS and reports; abiding by the FMP and all other requirements of the FMPM and CFSA	All reports have been prepared. Most activities abide by the FMP. ARs are not consistently submitted before November 15 th .
Conduct inventories, surveys, tests and studies; provision and collection of information in accordance with the FIM and in the case of the Agreement in accordance with the Algonquin Forestry Authority Act	NFRM has contributed to the inventory updates as required. The MNR have completed wildlife and values updates as required.
Wasteful practices not to be committed	The SFL abided by the requirements. A LMCS has been implemented and conditions followed. No wasteful practises were evident.
Natural disturbance and salvage SFL conditions must be followed	Salvage has been done on a limited basis. A recent wind event is currently being salvaged. All conditions were followed.
Protection of the licence area from pest damage, participation in pest control programs	Limited pest protection has been done. Some pruning for white pine bister rust. While spruce budworm is affecting significant areas no spray is being planned.
Withdrawals from licence area	No significant withdrawals were noted
Action plan and progress towards the completion of actions as reported in annual reports or status reports prepared under previous versions of the IFAPP	The Status Report was completed as per the 2017 IFAPP.
Payment of forest renewal charges to the Forest Renewal Fund (FRT)	All FRT payments were made as required.
FRT eligible silviculture work	All payments made from the FRT was for eligible work as listed in the SFL
FRT forest renewal charge analysis	The renewal charge analysis was completed annually.
FRT account minimum balance	The minimum balance (\$1,440,100) was not met on March 31 st of 2022-2023 and

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	2023-2024. The minimum balance was met on March 31 st , 2025.
Silviculture standards and assessment program	The silviculture standards are documented in the FMP and reported in the ARs.
First Nations and Métis opportunities	First Nations communities are active in forest operations and management.
Preparation of compliance plan	NFRM Compliance plans have been prepared.
Internal compliance prevention/education program	NFRM trains its contractors and staff annually to reiterate the standards and disseminate any new information.
Compliance inspections and reporting; compliance with compliance plan	Compliance inspections and reports are current and adequate for most activities.
SFL forestry operations on mining claims	No conflict with mining claims is documented.

Appendix 4 Audit Process

The Crown Forest Sustainability Act, through Ontario Regulation 319/20, requires that each management unit in Ontario be audited at least once every ten to twelve years. The audits are conducted by independent audit firms selected through a competitive bidding process. Both the forest manager and the MNR are audited. The Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol provide guidance in meeting the requirements of Ontario Regulation 319/20 made under the CFSA.

The IFA consisted of the following elements:

Risk Assessment: A risk assessment was completed in July 2025 to determine whether there were any aspects of the forest that would require extra effort. The risk assessment was based on a review of the 2016 IFA action plans and status reports and the additional information provided by the auditees and interviews with the advisory committees and initial discussions with First Nations and Métis Communities. The Risk assessment report was submitted to the Forestry Futures Trust and MNR Divisional Support Branch for review and approval. The risk assessment revealed that action plans to address findings from the 2016 IFA should be examined to verify that annual reports are submitted on time and silviculture monitoring by the SFL and MNR yield consistent results.

Audit Plan: An audit plan describing the schedule of audit activities, audit team members, audit participants and the auditing methods was prepared and submitted to NFRM, MNR North Bay District, MNR Northeast Region Office, the MNR Divisional Support Branch, the Forestry Futures Trust Committee and the advisory committees in July 2025. The audit plan was presented to the auditees and Forestry Futures Committee and provided to the NLCC as well as First Nations and Métis Communities that requested it.

Field Site Selection: NFRM provided digital information on the activities within the scope of the audit period. The lead auditor randomly selected more than a 10% sample of each activity and regeneration survey reported to the MNR. Sites were selected in accordance with the guidance provided in IFAAP. The field sample was reviewed by the NFRM and MNR district. Due to a significant wind event in the spring of 2025, major alterations to the site selection were necessary. NFRM provided a revised site selection after extensive work.

Field Audit: The site audit was conducted the week of September 14th, 2025. The auditors were divided into three teams for the truck audit for three days and one team member conducted the aerial reconnaissance of silviculture surveys and inaccessible sites for one day with a representative from the SFL. The field audit achieved a minimum of 10% sample of activities that occurred during the audit period and the silvicultural surveys submitted. A sample of the areas invoiced in the Forest Renewal Trust Specified Procedures Report was included to verify work was performed.

IFA Field Sampling Intensity on the Nipissing Forest

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Activity	Total ha 2016-2025	Sample selected ha	%
Harvest - Block/Strip/Thin	1,953	198.8	10.2%
Harvest - Conventional	7,837	758	9.7%
Harvest - Seed Tree	4,794	589	12.3%
Harvest - Selection	2,132	270	12.6%
Site Prep - mechanical	2,710	499	18.4%
Site Prep - chemical-aerial	13,084	1508	11.5%
Site Prep - chemical ground	588	134	24.0%
Tree Planting	4,321	454	10.5%
Seeding	684	94	13.7%
Natural Regeneration	6,621	657	10%
Scarification	274	33	13%
Seed tree	2,946	347	11.8%
Selection	2,132	227	10.7%
Manual Tending	357	135	37.7%
Chemical Tending Air	13,084	1,508	11.5%
Chemical Tending Ground	558	134	24%
Thinning	465	24	5%
Pruning	4	0.0	0.0%
Improvement cut	9,831	1,137	11.5%
Regeneration assessment (FTG and Est)	28,763	3,711	12.9%
	Total # or KM	Sample # or KM	
Road Construction	82.3	Red Pine Road (7.6 km, Reed's Road 5 km)	15.3%
Water Crossings New	87	12 - ERN-09-160 (bridge), one box, one arch, 9 culverts	13.8%
Water Crossing Decom	1	WX152 (Bridge)	10.0%
Aggregate Pits - open	96	10	10.4%
Aggregate pits - closed	129	13	10.1%

This selection includes the following sample of the silviculture activities that were charged to the Forest Renewal Trust in the 2023-2024 fiscal year and assessed as a Specified Procedures portion of the IFA.

Activity	2023 hectares	Sample selected hectares	%
Site Prep - mechanical	42	14.5	34.6%
Site Prep - chemical-aerial	19	18.5	99.1%
Site Prep - chemical ground	254	38	15.1%
Tree Planting	309	76.0	24.6%
Natural Regeneration	525	73.5	14.0%
Seed Tree	31	3.7	12.0%
Manual Tending	9	5.5	60.7%
Chemical Tending Air	1,245	135	10.8%
Chemical Tending Ground	149	88	60%
Thinning	36	24	65.7%
Improvement cut	1,078	122	11.3%
Regeneration assessment (FTG and Est)	3,453	502	14.5%

The closing meeting was held on October 2, 2025.

The field audit covered a random sample of operations during the audit period as visiting all operations is not practical. Individual sites are selected to represent an activity but all associated activities that occurred on the site are assessed and reported in the sample table above. The audit team inspected the area of concern prescription application, forestry aggregate pits, bridges, water crossing installations and water crossing removals.

Summary of Opinions and Input to the Audit Team

Public Consultation

A notification about the audit was published in the North Bay Nugget (in both English and French), Anishinabek News, Mattawa Recorder, and The Bay Today. The public was invited to contact the auditors with questions or comments regarding forest management on the Nipissing Forest. The MNR posted a notice on Facebook and X. Several responses expressed a concern with using herbicide for forest tending.

The North Bay MNR District Manager received feedback from the NLCC concerning the Nipissing Forest: Auditors spoke with the NLCC and gave an introductory presentation prior to the field audit. The NLCC had no concerns with the forest operations on the Nipissing Forest.

First Nations and Métis Communities

A contact list of First Nations and Métis Communities was supplied by the MNR District Resource Liaison Specialist. All communities were emailed regarding the opportunity to provide feedback to the auditors. Two First Nations communities and one Métis

responded and were able to accompany the field audit. Two communities requested the audit plan, a presentation of the findings and the audit report.

Licensees, Contractors and Commitment Holders

All wood supply commitment holders were emailed and two responded. There were no concerns regarding access to wood supply. One forest operator was concerned about a bridge restriction on an MNR owned bridge. The auditors examined the concern and the responsibilities of bridge owners. This led to **Finding #1**.

Auditees (MNR and SFL)

MNR District, Region and Divisional Support Branch staff participated in all aspects of the audit, including the field audit and interviews. Several follow up meetings were held with applicable staff to clarify draft audit findings.

NFRM representatives participated in all aspects of the audit including providing key information, field audit organization, and interviews.

Appendix 5
List of Acronyms

AOC	Area of Concern
ACOP	Annual Compliance Operations Plan
AR	Annual Report
AWS	Annual Work Schedule
BLG	Boreal Landscape Guide
B.Sc.F.	Bachelor of Science in Forestry
CFSA	Crown Forest Sustainability Act
CP	Contingency Plan
CMU	Crown management Unit
CRO	Conditions on Regular Operations
FRI	Forest Resource Inventory
FFTC	Forestry Futures Trust Committee
FIM	Forest Information Manual
FMP	Forest Management Plan
FMPM	Forest Management Planning Manual
FMU	Forest Management Unit
FOIP	Forest Operations Information Program
FOP	Forest Operations Prescription
FRT	Forest Renewal Trust
FTG	Free-to-grow
FU	Forest Unit
Ha	Hectare
IFA	Independent Forest Audit
IFAPP	Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol
KM	Kilometre
LMCS	Low Market Conditions Strategy
LTMD	Long-Term Management Direction
LSA	Land Set Aside
MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources
M ³	Cubic Meters
M.Sc. F.	Master of Science in Forestry
MU	Management Unit
NF	Nipissing Forest
NFRM	Nipissing Forest Resource Management
NLCC	Nipissing Local Citizen Committee
NRIP	Natural Resources Information Portal
RAP	Regeneration Assessment Program
R.P.F.	Registered Professional Forester
SAR	Species at Risk
SFL	Sustainable Forest Licence
SGR	Silvicultural Ground Rule
SO-iSTARS	Site Occupancy Index Silvicultural Treatment Assessment and Reporting System
TSP	Temporary sample plots
UO	Unauthorized Occupation

Appendix 6
Audit Team Members and Qualifications

Name	Role	Responsibility	Credentials
Janet Lane, R.P.F.	Lead Auditor Public Participation including First Nations & LCC Participation in Forest Management Planning. Field Audit Harvest, Access and Renewal Assessment of Achievement of Forest Management Objectives	Audit Management and Coordination Liaison with forest manager, MNR & FFTC. Review documentation and practices related to forest management Planning and public participation. Review the function of RMAC and NRAC. Review and inspect harvest and silvicultural practises Determination of Objective Achievement Determination of Sustainability	B.Sc.F. 3 years auditing
Peter Nitschke R.P.F.	Forest Management Planning Harvest and Silviculture Auditor	Review Forest Management Plan production and review and inspect harvest and silviculture practices Review of operational compliance to AOC implementation Determination of Sustainability	M.Sc. F. 1 year auditing
Liz Cobb, R.P.F.	Forest Compliance Monitoring Harvest and Silviculture Auditor	Review and inspect the documentation related to contractual compliance. Review and inspect AOC documentation and practices Review of operational compliance to AOC implementation Review of the planning and delivery of the operational compliance program Review and inspect harvest and silvicultural practises Aerial sampling of renewal success Determination of Sustainability	Forestry Technician Diploma Level 2 Provincial Certified Tree Marker Level 2 Provincial Certified Compliance Inspector