

2024 Managed Forest Inspection Program

November 2024

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BACKGROUND

The Managed Forest Council (Council) is the independent provincial agency responsible for administering British Columbia's *Private Managed Forest Land Act* (Act) and the Managed Forest Program, which includes protection of key environmental values on private managed forest land.

One of Council's functions is to carry out inspections and enforce forest practices standards in accordance with regulations. A key component is the annual inspection program that provides ongoing assessment of owners' compliance with the private managed forest land legislation.

Council has a policy to inspect all managed forests at least once every five years, as well as to inspect new managed forests within three years of entrance to the program. Managed forests may be inspected on a more frequent basis where potential environmental risk has been identified, such as higher levels of operations in proximity to drinking water intakes or fish habitat.

Inspections are carried out by a team of forest professionals who are knowledgeable of forest practices and the relevant legislation. Potential non-compliances identified by inspectors are followed up with further field review and investigation where warranted.

Inspectors assess performance with multiple regulatory requirements in five main categories: harvesting, road construction, road maintenance, road deactivation, and reforestation. Inspectors found no potential compliance issues with respect to the identified regulatory requirements.

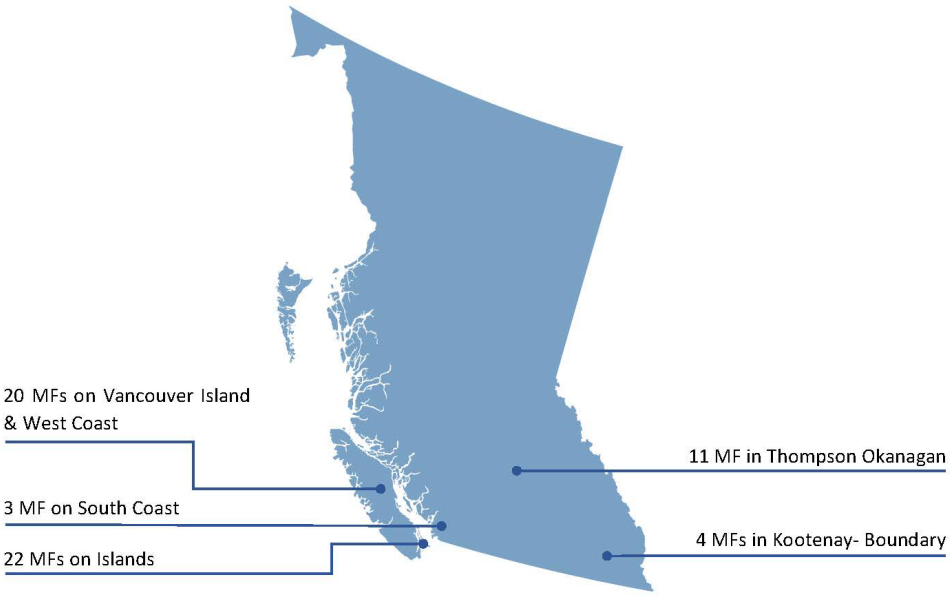
There are 287 managed forests in the program, encompassing 803,875 hectares across the province: Approximately 78% of the land is on Vancouver Island & south coast; 20% is in the Kootenay-Boundary region; and the remainder is spread across BC.

Location & Size

Of the 60 managed forest properties inspected in 2024, 45 managed forests are located on the coast and 15 are in the interior as follows:

Coast	
Vancouver Island & West Coast	20
Gulf & Discovery Islands	22
South Coast	3

Interior	
Kootenay- Boundary	4
Thompson Okanagan	11



The inspection sample encompassed 21**%** of forests in the program. The inspection program continues to meet the objective of inspecting all managed forests at least once every five years. The sample included seven managed forests that are new to the program since 2021.



The inspected managed forests ranged from large properties with industrial owners to small family-owned properties. Inspected managed forest median size is 58 hectares.

INSPECTION APPROACH

The Private Managed Forest Land Council Regulation (Council Regulation) provides clear requirements for owners, contractors, employees and agents with respect to the management objectives in the Act for soil conservation, water quality, fish habitat, reforestation, and critical wildlife habitat. The inspection form is designed for inspectors to identify forest activities that have taken place, and to document whether the activities have been carried out in compliance with the Council Regulation. Inspectors also noted opportunities for improvement with respect to field practices where applicable.

Inspections focused on activities that had taken place since the previous managed forest inspection, as well as on current and ongoing obligations such as reforestation and road maintenance.

For the larger managed forests with active operations, samples of harvesting, road building, road maintenance, road deactivation, and reforestation were selected for field review. Emphasis was placed on areas where multiple activities had been carried out and where there were streams or other resource values or risk factors present.

The inspection process begins with a document review including management commitments, annual declarations, and previous inspection reports. Inspectors discuss the inspection process with the owners before the inspection and are available for questions and comments both during and after inspections.

Inspectors carry out field inspections following the document review. Owners or their representatives are encouraged to accompany the inspectors in the field. A managed forest inspection summary report is provided to each owner following the inspection.

The 2024 field inspection component took place between May and September.

Inspections focused on the following:

Activity	Focus of Council Regulation
Harvesting	• minimize loss of productive land to roads and logging trails (s. 13, 14) • protect water quality and fish habitat (s. 14.1, 15) • retain appropriate trees and understory vegetation adjacent to streams (s. 27, 28, 29, 30)
Road Construction	• protect and mitigate disturbance to stream channels and banks (s. 16, 17) • maintain natural drainage patterns (s. 18) • revegetate exposed soils after construction (s. 19)
Road Maintenance	• maintain natural drainage patterns (s. 18) • maintain road prism and clearing width (s. 21) • maintain proper functioning of drainage systems (s. 21)
Road Deactivation	• revegetate exposed soils after deactivation (s. 19) • remove round pipe stream culverts (s.22) • remove culverts & bridges and stabilize road prism as needed to prevent material adverse effect on fish habitat or drinking water (s. 14.1, 22)
Restocking	• restock after harvesting or destroyed timber (s. 31)
Successful Regeneration	• successfully regenerate after harvesting or destroyed timber (s. 31)
Primary Forest Activities	• protect drinking water quality (s. 14.1) • restrict sediment transport and deposition into streams (s. 15) • protect licensed waterworks intakes (LWIs) (s. 20) • notify holders of LWIs when road construction or deactivation will occur upstream (s. 23) • notify Council of landslides and debris flows (s. 26)

INSPECTION RESULTS

Harvesting

Harvesting was carried out on 16 of the managed forests. Harvest operations ranged from multiple cutblocks over varied terrain and site conditions to small patch cuts, and harvest

related to road construction. A range of systems was observed, from clearcuts to selective harvest and individual tree selection. An additional 14 owners salvaged scattered windfall or dead trees for use onsite and as firewood. There were no field practices compliance issues found for harvest operations.

For all areas inspected, streams were clearly marked in the field and stream retention requirements were met and often exceeded. Inspectors noted: planning and use of appropriate equipment to minimize site disturbance from roads and trails associated with the harvest activities; geotechnical assessments completed on steep or potentially unstable slopes; biologist assessments of potential fish habitat; and use of qualified people to plan, document, and supervise timber harvesting activities.

Road Construction

Road construction took place within 14 managed forests. Construction included access to new harvest areas and temporary in-block spurs within cutblocks. No compliance issues were noted with road building on any of the managed forests.

Inspectors noted that overall roads are stable and designed for effective water management. Geotechnical professionals were involved where required. Roads built adjacent to streams and active stream crossings were located, built, and used in a manner that protects the stream channels and banks. Natural drainage patterns have been maintained and owners have revegetated exposed soils where required. All road construction was supervised by qualified professionals.

Road Maintenance

Road maintenance includes practices required to ensure that the surface, ditches, stream crossings, and cut and fill slopes will not cause sedimentation or deposit material that may have a material adverse effect on water quality or fish habitat. Council Regulation requires that roads are maintained until they are deactivated.

Maintenance activities include:

- ensuring the structural integrity of the road prism remains stable
- ensuring proper functioning of the drainage system: culverts, bridges, ditches and fords function properly and can handle peak flows
- preventing surface water from being discharged onto erodible soils
- grading & surfacing

No compliance issues were found. Inspectors noted that owners are monitoring and maintaining their road systems and implementing measures for winter protection where required.

Most owners, including all those with significant activity, extensive road systems, and fish streams or water intakes on their properties, have formal inspection schedules and

tracking. Road maintenance was observed to be adequate for protection of fish habitat and water quality.

Road Deactivation

Road deactivation must be carried out when an owner no longer requires a road and intends to cease maintaining it. For most areas inspected, owners are maintaining roads for current and future forest activities. Road deactivation was identified on six managed forests.

Deactivation includes removing stream culverts and bridges and stabilizing the road prism where required to reduce the likelihood of a material adverse effect on drinking water or fish habitat. There were no issues found with respect to any of the deactivated road sections. There were no roads identified that need to be deactivated due to lack of maintenance.

Reforestation

Reforestation requirements including timelines are set out in Council Regulation s. 31. The regulation specifies two requirements for reforestation of disturbed areas, which are areas that have been harvested or where timber was destroyed:

- restock within five years with a minimum number of well distributed, healthy crop trees
- establish a successfully regenerated stand within 15 years with a minimum number of well distributed, healthy crop trees that are free from competing vegetation

RESTOCKING

Restocking obligations were noted on 14 managed forests. Inspectors use annual declaration data provided by the owners to confirm restocking obligations are reported and tracked accurately and they confirm restocking status as part of the inspections.

Consistent with inspections in past years, owners generally have clearly restocked stands within the required timeframes and have shown diligence in both restocking and maintaining the young stands to ensure requirements are met.

Observed restocking practices include:

- prompt planting of harvest areas, often within a year
- installing browse control where needed
- monitoring plantations and young stands for survival and health
- fill planting where required
- brush treatment where required

Inspectors noted challenges with seedling survival resulting from drought, shallow soils, and browse. Owners are aware of seedling mortality and have plans to monitor and fill plant where necessary.

One owner was advised to survey and monitor natural regeneration to ensure a harvest block would be restocked within five years.

Tracking and follow up on potential restocking issues is part of the ongoing Inspection Program.

SUCCESSFUL REGENERATION

Successful regeneration obligations were noted for 21 owners. No compliance issues were found however challenges were noted on some managed forests including brush competition, browse damage, and mortality. Owners are generally aware of their obligations and the actions required to ensure their obligations are met.

Owners are expected to be diligent in monitoring their regenerating stands to ensure seedling survival is adequate, and brush, pests, and other challenges are managed effectively.

Primary Forest Activities

Primary forest activities are timber harvesting, road construction, road maintenance, road deactivation and silviculture treatments. Primary forest activities must not result in sediment or other material being transported to or deposited in a stream if it will have a material adverse effect on fish habitat or water that is diverted by a licensed waterworks intake.

Additionally, Council Regulation sec 14.1 (1) requires that owners who carry out primary forest activities must not cause a material adverse effect on the quality of drinking water that may affect human health at the point of diversion of a drinking water intake.

There were no potential compliance issues noted with respect to primary forest activities and any potential effects on fish habitat or quality of drinking water.



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