



Public Briefing Paper for
**Forest Management Certification annual audit of
The Eastern Ontario Forest Group
In Kemptville, Ontario, Canada**
Date of Notice: October 9, 2018

Introduction

The Rainforest Alliance is conducting an annual forest management surveillance audit of the The Eastern Ontario Forest Group (EOFG) located in Kemptville, Ontario, Canada. The audit will be conducted the week of December 3rd, 2018. The forest management certification annual audit will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forested lands under EOFG's management, using the FSC® Rainforest Alliance locally adapted Standards for Assessing Forest Management in the Great Lakes/Saint-Lawrence region (RA GLSL).

This Standard is available on Rainforest Alliance's website at:

<https://ra.secure.force.com/SWPubDocs/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=01550000001Kee1AAC>.

As there are changes in the certified landbase, conformance against FSC's excision policy FSC-POL-20-003 (2004) EN – *The excision of areas from the scope of certification* will also be assessed. Rainforest Alliance is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and this annual audit process must follow procedures which have been approved by the FSC.

Assessment Team

The audit will be conducted by **Darren Johnson**. Darren is a Licensed Professional Forester with more than 20 years experience in North America, Asia and Africa working with government, the private sector, indigenous groups and civil society. Areas of expertise include forest management policy & planning, conservation and climate change related activities. Darren holds a MS in Forest Ecology from Edinburgh University in Scotland and a HBSc in Forestry from Lakehead University in Canada. He has completed the FSC FM and CoC Lead Auditor training course and conducted more than 5 FSC FM audits and multiple COC audits.

Audit Steps and Schedule

Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

- Auditing organization – The Rainforest Alliance auditor will begin stakeholder consultation and evidence review starting in November 2018.
- Field assessments – The auditor will visit sites managed by EOFG the week of December 3rd 2018.
- Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork portion of the audit, the auditor will contact local stakeholders and Aboriginal groups regarding EOFG's forest management in communities surrounding the forested areas under their management. This will include private interviews and discussions.
- Presentation of preliminary findings to Company – Prior to departure, the auditor will meet with EOFG managers and other parties to present preliminary findings and discuss followup information gathering.
- Draft report production – The auditor will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to EOFG.
- Audit Conclusion – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from EOFG forest managers, other general stakeholder comments and based on the Company's conformance with the FSC and Rainforest Alliance requirements, Rainforest Alliance will finalize the audit report and reach a certification decision regarding certificate maintenance. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur in January 2019.

Changes in the certified landbase

Location & rationale for excision:

EOFG plans to excise a total of 1.26 ha in the Coulson Forest Tract, located on 8229 Hornby Rd., Halton Hills. A map of the excision is available at the end of this notice. The excision is required for a road widening project to address traffic demands along Trafalgar Regional Road, as the area is to be converted to non-forest use. A map showing the area to be excised is provided at the end of this notice. The Halton Region Environmental Assessment for this project is available at the following address: <http://www.halton.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8310&pageId=116135>.

Your Input Sought

As a part of the annual audit process, we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on EOFG forest management in relation to conformance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you. Your input will be valuable at any stage of the assessment process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the field portion of the audit (i.e. prior to Dec 3rd) or during the audit so that we can take them into consideration during the audit process. To provide comments and if appropriate, arrange an in-person meeting or phone interview, **please contact Darren Johnson** at djohnson@nepcon.org or (802) 825-5307.

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential available to only the FSC and Rainforest Alliance staff. Anyone who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access Rainforest Alliance's Complaints, Appeals and Dispute resolution procedures at http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/forestry/certification/transparency/disputeresolution?id=dispute_resolution.

