

MNR3006MC2008-3239

JAN 1 22009

Mr. Gaye Smith
RR3
Paisley ON NOG2NO

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for your letter outlining your concerns with the Ministry of Natural Resources' (MNR) efforts at engaging stakeholders and clients in resource management planning processes in Ontario.

I can assure you that MNR takes its commitment to public consultation very seriously and makes every effort to ensure that the general public, municipalities, stakeholders, partners and clients have the opportunity to provide input through a variety of mechanisms. These may include public open houses, client meetings, information mail outs, Environmental Bill of Rights Environmental Registry postings and participation on planning teams or advisory committees.

The development of a Forest Management Plan (FMP) is a process strictly regulated through legal requirements defined by the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and the 2004 Forest Management Planning Manual.

The eFSA requires that each FMP provides for the long-term health of the Crown forest and has regard for plant life, animal life, water, soil, air and social and economic values, including recreational values and heritage values. The FMP meets these requirements by developing and incorporating a management strategy that balances objectives related to forest diversity, socio-economics, forest cover and silviculture. This FMP identifies a set of indicators that are monitored and assessed over time to determine the effectiveness of activities in achieving management objectives and to assess the sustainability of the forest. The formation and involvement of a Local Citizens Committee (LCC) to provide advice to the local MNR is an important part of that process.

In the case of the current Temagami FMP, there appears to be some confusion about the commitment of the LCC to the FMP process. While the LCC did not support the draft plan by a vote of six to four at the July 2008 meeting, the LCC concluded the special meeting in August by preparing a statement to communicate to the public. The statement recognized that while issues were still being worked on they supported the MNR continuing to move forward with the forest management planning process. It is important to note that the grounds for disagreement were not related to the overall sustainability of the prepared draft plan.

Forest management planning is a legal requirement regardless of the existence of a Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL). SFLs are required to follow the same legislation, rules, guidelines, policies and public consultation processes as MNR when undertaking forest management planning on areas under their management.

Resource management planning in Ontario is undertaken through the application of the best available science, provincial direction and guidelines, applicable legislation and consideration of the needs of all users of Crown land. Attempts are made to balance the needs of stakeholders while ensuring the ecological sustainability of the resource for the use, benefit and enjoyment of Ontario's future generations. Finding consensus is often difficult and not everyone is pleased with the final decisions.

If you require additional information or clarification on your specific concerns in the Temagami area, please contact Bob Aubin, Temagami Area Supervisor, at (705) 475 5516 or bob.aubin@ontario.ca.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Cansfield". Below the signature, there is a faint, light blue watermark that reads "Minister of Natural Resources of Ontario".

Donna Cansfield
Minister of Natural Resources

c: Bob Aubin, Temagami Area Supervisor, North Bay District Office