

3

YORK REGIONAL FOREST ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

The Transportation Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated February 18, 2010, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report informs Regional Council of the recent receipt of an environmental Certificate of Appreciation awarded to The Regional Municipality of York for its commitment to sustainable forest management by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Canadian Boreal Initiative, David Suzuki Foundation and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS).

3. BACKGROUND

The Region owns and manages 2,200 hectares of York Regional Forest (YRF). The properties have been owned by the Region for many years, with some dating back to the 1920's. The Regional Forest consists of 20 properties and includes over 120 kilometres of mapped forest access roads and trails. These properties provide a variety of passive public recreation opportunities and serve a variety of other purposes including environmental protection, the demonstration of sustainable forest management and also provide a forum for public environmental education programs.

The York Regional Forest was the first public forest in Canada to be certified to the Forest Stewardship Council standard

The Forest Stewardship Council is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. Forest Stewardship Council certification is recognized internationally as the 'gold' standard. To date, over 123 million hectares of forest have been certified around the world.

In 2000, the York Regional Forest became the first public forest in Canada to be Forest Stewardship Council certified. The Region is seen as a pioneer in the certification of municipally-owned forests. Our efforts are seen as contributing, along with large forest

companies and small woodlot owners, to the sustainable management of the world's forests.

Forest Stewardship Council certification demonstrates that the York Regional Forest is managed in a sustainable manner

To become certified, the management and operation of the Regional Forest was subject to a rigorous independent third-party audit. To maintain certification, the Regional Forest is audited annually and the certification is re-assessed every five years.

To earn Forest Stewardship Council certification, an organization must manage its forests to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of present and future generations. This includes managerial aspects as well as environmental and social requirements. Their rules are internationally recognized as the strictest, with social and environmental requirements the highest.

There are 10 principles and 56 criteria which form the basis for all Forest Stewardship Council forest management standards. Based on these 10 principles, they developed further rules (called policies or standards) that further define and explain certain requirements stipulated in the 10 principles. The following is a list of the principles:

1. Compliance with all applicable laws and international treaties.
2. Demonstrated and uncontested, clearly defined, long-term land tenure and use rights.
3. Recognition and respect of indigenous peoples' rights.
4. Maintenance or enhancement of long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities and respect of worker's rights in compliance with International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions.
5. Equitable use and sharing of benefits derived from the forest.
6. Reduction of environmental impact of logging activities and maintenance of the ecological functions and integrity of the forest.
7. Appropriate and continuously updated management plan.
8. Appropriate monitoring and assessment activities to assess the condition of the forest, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.
9. Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) defined as environmental and social values that are considered to be of outstanding significance or critical importance.
10. In addition to compliance with all of the above, plantations must contribute to reduce the pressures on and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

In global markets, Forest Stewardship Council's certified wood products are increasingly capturing higher premiums and greater market share due to their 'green' reputation and recognition of increased environmental awareness.

Forest Stewardship Council's audit and certification allows the Region to demonstrate to the public that the Regional Forest is managed in an appropriate and sustainable manner.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Prominent environmental organizations including the World Wildlife Fund and the David Suzuki Foundation, have endorsed Forest Stewardship Council certification. Many of the values held by these environmental organizations are shared with the Forest Stewardship Council and its certified forest owners and managers.

The York Regional Forest has been recognized by prominent environmental organizations for its commitment to sustainable forest management

The York Regional Forest was recognized in 2009 by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Canadian Boreal Initiative, David Suzuki Foundation and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) for its commitment to sustainable forest management. York Region was one of 52 Forest Stewardship Council certified forests in Canada to receive this distinguished Certificate of Appreciation. The Region has been presented with a letter and certificate in recognition of this achievement (*Attachments 1 and 2*).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The overall protection and sustainable management of our forests has many environmental and social benefits. These benefits range from helping to clean the air, improving ground and surface water (quality and quantity), and providing important wildlife habitat. The York Regional Forest is also a significant public amenity which provides passive recreational opportunities such as hiking and bird watching. This opportunity for people to relax and connect with nature in a wilderness setting, adds to our residents quality of life.

7. CONCLUSION

The receipt of this Certificate of Appreciation from environmental champions including the World Wildlife Fund and the David Suzuki Foundation, demonstrates to the public and other organizations that The Regional Municipality of York is an environmental leader through our sustainable management of the York Regional Forest.

For more information on this report, please contact Ian Buchanan, Manager, Natural Heritage and Forestry Services at extension 5204.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The two attachments referred to in this clause were included in the agenda for the March 3, 2010 Committee meeting).

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Dear Regional Municipality of York,

We are writing to thank you for the leadership and commitment to sustainability you have shown in achieving FSC certification in your forest operations.

We realize that FSC has tougher and more demanding standards than its competitors and want to recognize the extra lengths that you have gone to.

In this time of growing public and marketplace concern over the environment, we hope that your investment in FSC is rewarded appropriately. As a small gesture of our support for your efforts, accompanying this letter is a certificate of appreciation from our organizations to all of your people!

Thank you again.

Sincerely,



David
Suzuki
Foundation



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Supporting responsible use of forest
resources
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info@fsccanada.org

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

IS HEREBY GRANTED TO:

The Regional Municipality of York

FOR SHOWING LEADERSHIP AND MAKING A LASTING
CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVING THE WORLD'S FORESTS
THROUGH THEIR COMMITMENT TO



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AWARDED:
September 2009



David
Suzuki
Foundation

