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YORK REGIONAL FOREST – FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL RE-CERTIFICATION (2010-2015)

The Transportation Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated August 3, 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 2010 re-certification of the York Regional Forest to the Forest Stewardship Council standards for well-managed forests.

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 being acquired in the early 1920's. The Regional Forest consists of 20 properties and includes over 120 kilometres of mapped forest access roads and trails. These natural areas provide for a broad range of passive public recreational opportunities. The York Regional Forest also serves a variety of other purposes including a location to demonstrate environmental protection and sustainable forest management as well as provide a nature setting for our 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. The York Regional Forest was re-certified in 2005 for an additional five year period.

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. The Forest Stewardship Council rules are internationally recognized as being the strictest, with the highest social and environmental requirements.

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

Forest Stewardship Council certification is granted for a period of five years after which a forest must be re-certified.

Re-certification included an intensive audit and stakeholder consultation

In March 2010, the Forest Stewardship Council certifier, the Rainforest Alliance, completed an intensive re-assessment of the management and operation of the Regional Forest including, a two-day field audit and consultation with stakeholders. Based on the results of the re-assessment the certifier recommended that the Regional Forest be re-certified for another five years (2010-2015).

In May 2010, the York Regional Forest was re-certified for an additional five years

In May 2010, the Region entered into a certification agreement with the Rainforest Alliance, re-certifying the forest. In recognition of the re-certification the Region has received a certificate from the Rainforest Alliance (*Attachment 1*).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A cost associated with the five year re-certification of \$12,000.00, was funded through the 2010 operating budget.

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 Forest Stewardship Council five year re-certification of the York Regional Forest allows us to demonstrate 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 Mr. Ian Buchanan at Ext. 5204.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)

The Rainforest Alliance

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

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CANADA

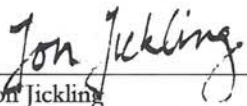
IS CERTIFIED FOR FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL FOREST MANAGEMENT

Certificate Registration Code: SW-FM/COC-000115

Valid from: May 1, 2010 to April 30, 2015

CERTIFICATE SCOPE:

Single Forest Management certificate based on Great Lakes-St. Lawrence standard (Field tested draft 2007). Additional details regarding the certificate scope, including products and species, are found at fsc-info.org.


Jon Jickling
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SMARTWOOD IS A PROGRAM OF THE RAINFOREST ALLIANCE ACCREDITED BY THE FSC

This certificate is not evidence that a product is FSC-certified; additional documentation is required from the certificate holder.

This certificate is the property of the SmartWood program of the Rainforest Alliance. Upon suspension or termination of your certification or reissue of your certificate, this certificate must be returned to SmartWood.

ACCREDITED
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