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Private Managed Forest Land Council Finds No Contraventions Relating to Recent Slides in the Beaufort Range

The Private Managed Forest Land Council has determined that TimberWest Forest Corporation did not contravene the *Private Managed Forest Land Act* (the Act) relating to recent landslides on Block T141 or Block T144 in the Beaufort Range area near Port Alberni. During the week of November 14, 2006, a severe winter storm crossed central and southern Vancouver Island triggering many landslides, including one slide on Block T141 and two slides on Block T144. Council has determined that timber harvesting activities of TimberWest within Block 141, including drainage structures, were in compliance with the requirements of the Private Managed Forest Land Council Regulation. In regards to Block T144, Council has determined that, while TimberWest's maintenance of a stream crossing did not minimize any increase in landslide hazards as required under Section 13 of the Council regulation, TimberWest had exercised due diligence. Accordingly, under section 29 of the Act, TimberWest cannot be found to be in contravention of the regulation.

The Council initiated a review of the landslide on Block T141 following a complaint from an adjacent land owner, and a review of the landslides on Block T144 following notice that the slides had occurred provided by TimberWest as required under the Act. Council staff and technical expert consultants retained by Council conducted detailed site inspections of both timber harvesting blocks from November 2006 to January 2007.

Council found that the landslide on Block T141 had been triggered above the timber harvesting block as a result of severe weather, and that neither timber harvesting nor road construction or maintenance on the block significantly contributed to the event.

In respect to Block T144, two slides which had initiated within the timber harvesting block were investigated. Council found no pre-existing terrain instability issues, that road construction met industry standards, and there was a proper level of road maintenance. The evidence is that increased flow in a stream of Block T144 due to the heavy rainfall on snow event would have caused one slide even if Block T144 had not been harvested. On the second slide in this block, there is evidence that a partially blocked culvert diverted flow from a stream during the severe weather event following November 14, which could have initiated the slide. However Council found that TimberWest acted diligently by ensuring road construction met industry standards, they acted according to a proper road maintenance plan, they promptly cleared the culvert and reported the slide, and have developed and are implementing a remediation plan.

The Council is an independent provincial agency established in 2004 under the *Private Managed Forest Land Act* to administer the Managed Forest Program and protect key public environmental values on private Managed Forest land in British Columbia. The mandate of the Council is to encourage forest management practices on private managed forest land, taking into account the social, environmental and economic benefits of those practices including regulating forest practices relating to soil conservation, reforestation, and the protection of water quality and fish habitat.

The Council's investigation reports, summary reports, and block assessment reports are posted on the Private Managed Forest Land Council's website at <http://www.pmflc.ca>. For more information, contact Stuart Macpherson, Executive Director at (250) 386-5737, or execdirec@pmflc.ca.