Québec’s forest regime is evolving constantly, and the government works hard to adjust its management methods to suit new contexts and the growing needs of local and regional communities. The sustainable forest development act introduces some new methods for planning and carrying out management work in the forests. The ministère des forêts, de la faune et des parcs has been responsible for planning and carrying out forestry work since April 1, 2013. As for the holders of supply guarantees and permits to harvest wood to supply a wood processing plant, and the purchasers of wood on the open market, they remain responsible for carrying out activities relating to the harvesting of any wood they purchase under the rights granted to them.

Changes introduced by the new forest regime

On April 1, 2013, the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs became responsible for the sustainable management and development of forests in the domain of the State. This responsibility includes planning, carrying out, monitoring and controlling forestry work, scaling the wood and allocating rights in the forests. The Ministère may carry out some of the management activities stipulated in the plans, or commission forestry companies, including forestry groups, forestry cooperatives and silvicultural contractors, to do the work on its behalf.
The work in question includes harvesting, forest roadwork, scaling, transportation of wood, non-commercial silvicultural activities and monitoring and control tasks. However, supply guarantee holders are responsible for harvesting the wood purchased under their guarantees.

The mission of the Regional Operations Sector of the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs is to oversee the preservation of land and natural resources and promote the creation of wealth through land and resource development, using a sustainable approach in partnership with the regional communities. The Sector has ten regional offices and central units that coordinate and support regional operations in the areas of energy, wildlife, forests, mining and land.

All operations relating to the sale of timber are carried out by the timber marketing board. The wood must be cut by the purchaser in compliance with the stipulations contained in the work specification and in the silvicultural prescriptions prepared by the Ministère. The specification sets out the location and a description of the work, along with details of the forest road infrastructures to be built, a schedule of activities, and any harmonization measures to be applied. The Ministère's Regional Operations Sector is responsible for monitoring and controlling all activities carried out with a view to harvesting timber sold on the open market and restoring logging sites to production.
Since April 1, 2013, the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs has either carried out the management activities stipulated in the plans, or has commissioned forestry companies, including forestry groups, forestry cooperatives and silvicultural contractors, to do the work on its behalf. However, the holders of timber supply guarantees are responsible for harvesting the wood purchased under their guarantees.

The Minister may refuse to enter into an agreement if a guarantee holder has failed to comply with the conditions of an integrated plan, a prior harvest agreement, the standards applicable to forest management activities or any other obligation imposed upon it.

All the planned forest management activities must be carried out by companies that have or are in the process of obtaining a certificate recognized by the Ministère, or by companies under the supervision of such a company.

Harvesting Timber under a Supply Guarantee

The holders of supply guarantees are responsible for harvesting wood purchased under their guarantees. Authorization to harvest the wood is given in a harvest agreement signed by the Ministère and by all the guarantee holders in the area it covers. The agreement defines the forest operations zones and the activities to be carried out, stipulates any conditions and lists the guarantee holders’ other commitments. It also determines the penalties applicable if a holder fails to meet its commitments. When harvesting wood, supply guarantee holders must comply with the silvicultural prescriptions prepared by the Ministère, and must apply the harmonization measures set out in the integrated plan.

The guarantee holders who sign the agreement must decide which one of them will carry out the harvest. Before signing the agreement, they must also decide how harvesting operations will be integrated.
Since April 1, 2013, the Ministère has commissioned management companies to carry out non-commercial silvicultural work, through five-year performance contracts or annual contracts awarded via calls for bids.

Obviously, an agreement can only be renewed if the company's performance is evaluated positively. The Ministère has also entered into a delegation agreement that entrust responsibility for the management of non-commercial silvicultural agreements to Rexforêt.

In all cases the companies concerned must have the necessary forest-related expertise and meet the Ministère's certification requirements.

The certificates that guarantee holders and forestry companies must obtain will have a positive impact on the quality of the work done, and on compliance with laws and regulations.

**ANTICIPATED BENEFITS**

Long-term agreements with forestry companies will provide the stability that the companies want. However, stability should be reflected in working conditions in the forests. This is a matter of some concern to the Ministère. The certificates that guarantee holders and forestry companies must obtain before signing a contract or agreement or being authorized to harvest wood will have a positive impact on the quality of the work done, and on compliance with laws and regulations. In addition, all contracts and agreements are subject to a performance evaluation, and any improvements requested must be made before the contract or agreement will be renewed.

For further information on the forest regime of the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs, please visit the following website:

[mrn.gouv.qc.ca/forets/index/ .jsp](mrn.gouv.qc.ca/forets/index/ .jsp)