



Public notification

FSC® Forest Management Annual Surveillance Audit
for

The Regional Municipality of York

in

Newmarket, Ontario, Canada

Date of notice: January 23, 2026

Introduction

Preferred by Nature is conducting an FSC® forest management and chain of custody Annual Surveillance Audit of The Regional Municipality of York located in Newmarket, Ontario, Canada. The evaluation will be conducted during the week of **March 2nd, 2026**.

Scope of Evaluation

The FSC® certification audit will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forest management unit(s) managed by The Regional Municipality of York, using the FSC Standard for Small Scale Low-Intensity and Community Forests (FSC-STD-CAN-01-2024-SIR FSC):

<https://ca.fsc.org/ca-en/forest-management/small-community-forest-standard>

Information on this FSC certificate holder is available on FSC's website:

<https://search.fsc.org/en/certificate/a0240000005sRceAAE/>

Preferred by Nature is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) and this evaluation will follow procedures which have been approved by the Forest Stewardship Council®.

Team Composition

James Hallworth, R.P.F, will lead the audit team, which also consists of Kyle Berwick, R.P.F.

Steps and Schedule

Following is a short description of the evaluation process and a tentative agenda:

- Field visits – During the week of **March 2nd, 2026**, the audit team will conduct field visits of recent and active forest management operations on the certified area.
- Stakeholder and Indigenous communities/peoples' consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders and indigenous communities/peoples regarding the forest management activities of the certificate holder in communities. This can include private interviews and discussions as well as public meetings.
- Final evaluation briefing – Prior to departure the team will meet with the certificate holder's forest managers and other parties to finalize their data collection and present preliminary findings.
- Draft report production – The audit team will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to the certificate holder. This should occur within one month after completion of the evaluation.
- Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from the certificate holder forest managers, and other general stakeholder and indigenous communities/peoples' comments, Preferred by Nature will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by **end of May 2026**.

Your Comments Sought

As a part of the audit process, we invite stakeholders and indigenous communities/peoples to offer comments on the certificate holder's forest management activities in relation to conformance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above. **We welcome input, either public or confidential.** Your input will be valuable at any stage of the process, but we would prefer to receive your comments before the end of the on-site audit so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision. Your options for communicating your comments are as follows:

1. Meet with a Preferred by Nature audit team member before or during the audit.
2. Send comments to the Preferred by Nature staff person responsible for coordinating this audit (see contact info below).

Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential, available only to FSC and Preferred by Nature staff.

Audit reports are made publicly available on the FSC website within 90 days following the audit. For past evaluation results, please visit <https://search.fsc.org/en/>.

Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access PbN's Dispute Resolution Policy at www.preferredbynature.org

Contacting the audit team and Preferred by Nature

James Hallworth

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