

FSC undermines paper recycling, contributes to global warming

Tags: [Canada](#), [Recycling](#), [Certifier conflict of interest](#), [Rainforest Alliance SmartWood](#)

FSC-Watch receives many queries and messages of concern, including from industry, as to why the FSC is helping to undermine efforts at paper recycling by allowing the certification of paper with little or no recycled content. We have now received the following article from the May/June 2008 Eco-Journal of the [Manitoba Eco-Network](#), Canada, which we are happy to reproduce.

The article provides interesting insights into how SmartWood's [FSC certification](#) of the output from Tembec's [Pine Falls operations](#) has helped destroy production of recycled paper.

Manitoba is now left with a huge pile of collected paper, which can either be burned or landfilled, or shipped to more distant recycling facilities, all of which will increase greenhouse gas emissions. The pulp and paper industry is one of the world's major greenhouse gas emitters.

FSC-Watch would be interested to know if anyone can calculate how much extra CO2 is now going to be produced, compared with the amount of money that Rainforest Alliance SmartWood has earned by issuing the FSC certificate to Tembec.

Recycling goes backwards

News paper recycling is one success story that environmental organizations, industry associations, and governments can all agree has achieved its original goals envisioned back in the early 1990s when waste reduction and prevention programs were introduced.

Last year in Manitoba over 90% of newspapers, flyers, magazines, and telephone directories in residential use was collected for recycling, an outstanding accomplishment by any standard [1]. Now imagine all that paper, about 35,000 tonnes per year, leaving the province in a row of 4,500 garbage trucks stretching 50 kilometres bound for points east, south, and overseas, and one might question whether a different chapter of the story is unfolding.

Until recently, most old newsprint in Manitoba was used by the Tembec pulp and paper mill

An Independent Observer of the
Forest Stewardship Council



FSC certified industrial wood fibre production, dependent on pesticide use, replaces and pollutes Ireland

About

This site is dedicated to encouraging scrutiny of the Forest Stewardship Council's activities. By doing so, it aims to increase the integrity of the FSC's forest certification scheme. Read more ..

Archives

or

or

or

Recent Comments

• WWF, Tropical Forest Trust, and Perhutani: more unanswered questions:

- Simon, Nov 13
- prat, Nov 13

• FSC's certified disgrace continues in Ireland:

- Marketal, Nov 12

• The FSC in pictures:

- Gerriet, Nov 12
- Leezer, Nov 12

• NGOs in a tangle over need for FSC 'reforms':

- Gerriet, Nov 12
- Peter Pan, Nov 12
- Gerriet, Nov 11
- Peter Pan, Nov 11

• FSC is misleading consumers about paper products:

- Davian, Nov 12

in Pine Falls to manufacture paper with some recycled content. With the closure of this facility in early April 2008, there is no capacity in the province to use recycled paper fibre for manufacturing purposes [2]. Nor is there a local source for printers or publishers who want to purchase newsprint with recycled content.

In making its decision, Tembec representatives cite very challenging changing global market conditions. Their business is being squeezed between rising prices for old newsprint, driven by off-shore demand, and flat domestic prices for newsprint as North American readers reduce their consumption due to the Internet. To illustrate, the price for old newsprint has risen from approximately \$40 per tonne to over \$80 since 2000, and about 67% of old paper collected in the U.S. is now exported to China, up from less than 20% in 2000 [3].

Tembec's de-inking facility at Pine Falls opened in 1995 with a capacity to process 100 tonnes of old paper per day during a time when similar operations were expanding across North America. Governments encouraged, and in some jurisdictions required, the use of newsprint with recycled content, while the supply of old paper became accessible with the spread of public collection programs. In Canada, the growth in mills capable of manufacturing recycled content newsprint grew from 1 in 1989 to 22 in 2005, resulting in large decreases in landfill wastes from paper products. By 2005, 26% of fibre for paper manufacturing in Canada came from recycled paper, some of it imported or back-hauled from the U.S. on the same trucks delivering new paper south of the border [4].

The environmental consequences of discontinuing the use of old paper at the Pine Falls mill are worrisome. It has been estimated that replacing the amount of fibre previously coming from recycled paper could result in the cutting of an additional 200,000 trees per year [5]. Tembec has stated that it will obtain replacement fibre from "residuals" such as bark, shavings, and chips from regional saw mill operations. As well, with the depressed market for lumber, the company has scaled back production of wood products and is currently using most of the trees it cuts down in Manitoba for paper [6].

Consequences that go beyond Tembec's mill, such as greenhouse gas production to ship recycled fibre around the world for processing and reselling, are more difficult to assess and to assign responsibility. The unaccounted carbon footprint of recycled paper in the global market place is an environmental cost that must be factored into the equation.

Tembec's Pine Falls operation has positioned itself as an environmentally friendly producer

Services

Search this site

Get posts by email:

Syndicate

Recent Posts: [RSS](#)
Recent Comments: [RSS](#)
Posts & Comments: [RSS](#)

Contact

info@fsc-watch.org

by receiving Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification in October 2007 for its forestry practices on Forest Management License 1 in eastern Manitoba. This certification was granted from the Rainforest Alliance's Smartwood program after an audit to ascertain Tembec's compliance with FSC standards. This means any one of the FSC range of certified paper labels could potentially be used on Tembec's paper, including the symbols for "100%" from forests managed to FSC standards with no recycled content; "Mixed Sources", a product group including content from forests managed to FSC standards, controlled sources, and/or with optional recycled material; and "Recycled", using only post-consumer reclaimed material [7].

Will the decision to stop using recycled content at Pine Falls affect Tembec's FSC certification? According to a spokesperson for Smartwood, the answer is "no", as long as Tembec does not exceed its allowable cut for logging or permit forest materials from uncertified or unauthorized sources to enter into its manufacturing process [8]. The FSC certification does not require that any recycled material readily available in a geographic area be used as a first choice to meet fibre requirements in paper manufacturing. In fact, the certification may have inadvertently made it easier for Tembec and other companies to drop their use of recycled content, since they can still sell their newsprint as environmentally friendly without reclaimed fibre.

The FSC certification for paper at least ensures that consumers know what they are getting, if they look closely and understand what the symbols mean. The labeling system is not perfect, but it is an improvement from the ubiquitous recycled loop symbol that can be used by anyone and is not regulated or licensed by any organization.

An FSC brochure about its commitment to social and environmental responsibility uses the phrase "Beyond Recycled" [9]. The problem outlined by the Council is that not enough paper is collected, with only enough recycled material to produce 35% of the market demand for paper. Obviously, these words were not written with the current situation in Manitoba or elsewhere in mind. With fundamental market shifts and restructuring in the paper industry, it may be time for the FSC to revisit its assumptions and the scope of its standards.

In its 2007 Annual Review, the Forest Products Association of Canada maintained that the best way for our domestic industry to compete in the shifting global marketplace will be to capitalize on Canada's reputation for sustainably produced and environmentally friendly

goods. Consumers increasingly want forestry products that are legally sourced, certified to recognized standards, and produced with minimal environmental impact. Achieving this vision in the forestry industry "will require greater recovery and recycling of wood and paper, increasing the capacity of forests as carbon sinks, and further reducing fossilfuel use in the manufacturing and delivery of our products" [10]. All the right words. Now where are the right actions?

Donna Krawetz is a volunteer writer and a retired public policy advisor.

References 1. Statistics on recycled paper in Manitoba drawn from Stewardship Circle: Newsletter of the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation, Spring 2007, and Fact Sheet: Newspaper, both available at www.mpsc.com. Please note these statistics only include material from residential programs. 2. Jim Fogg, General Manager, Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation, Personal Interview, April 30, 2008. 3. Richard Fahey, Vice-President Communications, Tembec, Personal Interview, May 6, 2008. 4. Forest Products Association of Canada, Canadian Pulp and Paper Buyer's Guide To Environmental Assurance, 2005, p. 8, <http://www.fpac.ca/en/pdfs/buyersguides/paper/FPACBuyerGuide-PaperENG.pdf> 5. "Tembec switching from recycled paper to trees," *CBC News*, March 14, 2008, <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/manitoba/story/2008/03/14/tembec.html> 6. Richard Fahey. 7. Forest Stewardship Council, "Use of the FSC Trademark: New FSC Labels," <http://www.fsc.org/en/gettinginvolved/usetrademark/newLabels> 8. Alexandre Boursier, Canadian Regional Manager, Smartwood Program, Rainforest Alliance, Personal Interview, May 1, 2008. 9. Forest Stewardship Council Canada, Committed to social and environmental responsibility?, Toronto: Forest Stewardship Council Canada, 2006, <http://www.fscCanada.org/SiteCM/UD/2A6E3DC19244E1FC.pdf> 10. Forest Products Association of Canada, ASK* - FPAC 2007 Annual Review, p. 9, http://www.fpac.ca/pdfs/annualreviews/fpacannualreviewe_2007.pdf

Posted by FSC-Watch on [05 July 2008, 16:24](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#) | [Backlinks \(1\)](#)

Comments

I'm from Manitoba and have worked to protect forests for almost two decades. Tembec in Pine Falls has taken a giant step back in getting rid of their recycled content--with the help

How can anyone support the removal of Post consumer recycled content? I would really like to hear from someone about this.

David Nickarz

Posted by David Nickarz at Sunday 06 July 2008, 21:52 CET #

I am with a company that sells recycled items to companies in china and india. Who can I speak to about taking this unwanted recyclable paper from Manitoba to people who would like to recycle it?

Posted by amit karia at Wednesday 16 July 2008, 21:18 CET #

The paper is most likely spoken for already. American markets I'm guessing. You can contact Tembec in Pine Falls, Manitoba. They might tell me about it.

Dave Nickarz

Posted by David Nickarz at Thursday 17 July 2008, 03:16 CET #

We are manufacturer of paper and board.

we are environment friendly and uses waste paper for paper making.

kindly do tell us if you help out us to import waste / recycled paper to India. Like old news paper, kraft catroon boxes, magazine, ledger cutting, white cutting waste, computer cutting, mix waste paper etc.

we have huge demand of it.

Posted by abhishek at Saturday 26 July 2008, 09:37 CET #

They say shutting down the recycle plant at tembec will cost the environment 200,000 more trees a year but really

it takes 15 to 17 trees to make a ton of paper. The recycle plant is capable of 110 tons finished .

17 trees x 110 tons paper =1870 trees per day x 365 days = 682,550 trees will be cut more by shutting down the recycling plant.

Really its 3 times more then what they are saying.

Posted by Henry at Sunday 31 August 2008, 16:24 CET <#>

Backlinks

[Remmrit Bookmarking: Recycling Bookmarks](#)

Remmrit.com user has just tagged your post as recycling!

trackback registered at Saturday 09 August 2008, 07:30 CET

Add a comment

Name:

Email: (not displayed unencrypted)

No HTML please.

You can edit this comment until 30 minutes after posting.

[< 136 older entries](#)

[17 newer entries >](#)