

*This is a sample letter provided to a Level 1 student that **failed**.*

You will see that a significant amount of detailed information is provided to the student about various aspects of the marking. This feedback is critical to ensure that students understand their weaknesses and where they need to focus their attention to improve.

Your letter should be emailed to the CIF along with the Audit Report. They will share the results and your letter with the student.

<Your header information>

<Date>

<L1 student name>

<Address>

Dear <name>:

SUBJECT: **Tree Marking Certification – Field Audit**

On <date>, I conducted an audit of the tree marking work that you had completed at <name, location of property>. During the audit we looked at 10 prism plots that gave a good indication of the variability of the stand and included <#> trees for assessment. As I discussed with you in the field, this type of stand with a complex stand structure and varying density is difficult to mark, and requires a steady hand to ensure even thinning of clumps, improvements in quality and some removals of larger trees. More experience with tree marking would help you be more consistent in terms of tree quality selections and density control

Since our audit meeting I have reviewed both the audit results and the prescription package that you submitted. The audit results are summarized in the attached Audit Report. We prefer that markers achieve a Tree Marking Quality (TMQ) mark of 95%+ on the audit although passes can also occur when the lower confidence interval for TMQ stays above 90%. In your case the TMQ of 91.0% indicates that you are generally on the right path however your lower confidence interval was 86% and your errors fall across a range of aspects and were rather inconsistent as opposed to types of the errors that can sometimes be addressed with a simple remark such as “did not mark enough UGS Med. Sawlogs. I have the following other concerns and recommendations:

Density Control

Table 1 is a summary of the basal area (BA) distributions recorded at the various stages of this work. The pre-harvest prescription data was fairly consistent with what was measured in the audit plots except possibly the large sawlogs which were greater in the audit. The prescription targets an overall residual basal area (BA) of 19 m²/ha. The audit shows your marking reduced the BA to 24.8 m²/ha or a 14 % reduction as opposed to the 31% asked for in the prescription. The 7 spacing infractions and most of the 6 quality choice infractions were related to situations where more trees needed to be removed. As discussed during the audit this clearly indicates that you were not thinning this stand enough. In some of the denser areas you need to take a few more trees especially when there is UGS available. When checking your work as you mark, aim to get the residual BA in your prism swings down to 18 to 22 m²/ha (9 to 11 residual trees in the prism sweep) except where starting BAs are over 32 m²/ha. On average this would equate to removing approximately 2 to 3 more trees per prism swing.

Your marking in the poles was consistent with the prescription target. Your marking in the small and medium sawlog sizes was not heavy enough. Generally the prescription was looking for 1 out of 3 trees in these sizes to be removed and you were only getting 1 out 6, representing about half of what should have been targeted. The large and x-large sawlogs are a little under stocked in this stand and you went lighter on these and that is the correct approach.

Table 1. Summary of Basal Area Distributions in m2/ha.

BA Source	Poles	SmSaw	MedSaw	LgSaw	X-LgSaw	Total
Pre-Harvest	6.4	9.8	8.4	2.4	0.4	27.4
MNR Audit Pre-Harvest	5.0	10.4	8.0	5.4	0	28.8
Target	4.6	6.4	5.8	2.0	0.2	19.0
Audit Residual	4.2	8.0	7.6	5.0	0	24.8
Provincial Ideal	4	5	5	4	2	20

Quality

The prescription asks for the AGS ratio to move from 87% to 100%. The audit identified a lower level of pre-harvest AGS at 75% and your marking improved the AGS ratio to 85.5%. For the most part you have done a good job of removing the poorest quality trees. However there were cases where obvious UGS trees, mostly in poles and small sawlogs should have been removed. In other cases the extra trees needed to improve the density were UGS and could have benefited both aspects. By taking the extra trees identified as quality infractions and some of the spacing trees the AGS ratio would have been improved to around 90%. In general you should remove UGS trees whenever spacing, diameter class distribution and wildlife considerations will permit.

Integrated Resource Management (IRM) Considerations

This stand is dominated in the overstory with large white oak, black oak and white pine, providing a surplus of mast and scattered conifers and easily meeting the Provincial targets. Even a few more of these trees could have been removed to satisfy other marking objectives, as noted above, without compromising habitat needs. The multi-layered canopy and heavy leaf cover did make observing cavities quite difficult so I am guessing there were a few more in this stand than I observed. As well you noted that you recorded leaving at least 20 although some were snags. Even at 20 you are way below the Provincial target (10 live cavity trees per ha) since this is approx. a 9 ha woodlot. Of the 5 live cavity trees that we observed during the audit you marked 2 of them. In woodlots like this you need to keep all the live cavity trees observed as well as the dead trees that can be safely retained.

Summary

In general it appears that you are using a cautious approach to marking and this is the right position to start from. With more experience, I am sure your decisions and the consistency of your marking will improve. It was a pleasure conducting the audit with you. I hope the discussion we had during this audit and the assessment of the results will help you in your tree marking operations. I appreciated the assistance that you

provided me during the audit. The tree marking course rules allow you one more attempt for a field evaluation audit. I would be happy to conduct another audit for you once you feel more comfortable with your approach.

Finally it maybe a worthwhile exercise to go back to the audited woodlot and mark additional trees in order to bring the stand more in line with the prescription. Take care to make sure no additional live cavity trees are marked for removal. If you have any further questions about your audit, or the recommendations, please give me a call.

Yours truly,

<Level 2 Auditor name>

<Contact information>