

Nicola Thompson Fraser SFM Plan Public Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

April 23, 2015. Merritt Civic Centre

Attendees:

Frank Etchart	Kathy Crack	Liis Jeffries	Chris Lepsoe
Dave Poole	Alan Burger	Lorne Wood	Jamie Skinner
Bert Parke	Katharine Shewchuk	Norm Hansen	Matt Manuel
Gerry Sanford	Brent Turmel	Dawn Smeeton	Stefan Borge
David Kerridge	Craig Hewlett	Jim Baker	

Guests: John Surgenor

Facilitator: Pat Salm

Introduction, agenda review, safety:

The meeting started at 9:00AM. The meeting began with introductions, meeting room orientation and a review of the meeting agenda. One additional item was added to the agenda were included under other business (review of MFLNRO initiatives by Jamie Skinner).

Action Items:

There was one action item from the November 20, 2014 meeting – the item was for Licences to look at adding a Merritt TSA specific rare ecosystem target. Aspen is taking the lead on this and Brent heard from the Advisory Group on their interest in how the target was going to be developed. Specifically, the group wanted to understand how the ecologist/biologist that would be determining rare ecosystems. As the work was yet to start, Brent could not provide answers.

Action: The draft target and work to produce it will be tabled at our next meeting (by Brent this fall).

A coarse filter for understanding rare species or rare ecosystems can be found on the BC Systems Explorer website – this database can be sorted in a number of ways to look at rare species or rare ecosystems in any part of the province. The weblink is as follows:
<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/atrisk/toolintro.html>

Recent Certification Audits:

Gilbert Smith External Audit held Dec 16-18, 2014. The SAI Global audit report has been posted to the [documents page of the NTF website](#) (all recent external audits can be found here). Craig reported there were no non-conformances. He also noted there were a number of opportunities for improvement suggestions made by the auditor – one which was to ensure the target information in monitoring

reports mirrored that found in the SFM Plan. Craig noted that their next audit is likely to occur in the fall of this year to enable a visit to active operations with little or no snow.

Review the 2014 SFM Monitoring Report:

Reviewed the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) process, the tie that the Monitoring Report has to the SFM Plan and how these are aligned with CSA SFM Criteria and Elements of sustainability. The indicators and targets of the Report are aligned with these Criteria and overall performance can then be evaluated. The Monitoring Report provides performance against the targets in the SFM Plan. Reporting is a roll-up of all licencees performance, individual company reports can be found in the Appendix. The targets in the plan were reviewed; advisory group members were asked to stop at any of the targets where they had a specific question or request.

Appendix 1: Detailed Reporting of SFM Targets

Target 2: There was discussion around how the reporting may change over time as the free growing surveys look more and more at harvesting focused on the Mountain Pine Beetle. There were questions regarding the free growing survey results and how that differed from green-up or adjacency requirements. There were concerns over the amount of harvesting that was occurring in areas where existing cutblocks adjacent to proposed blocks were not adequately greened up. Licencees reported that there were survey methods for determining when a logged and regenerated block had met green-up requirements and reviewed circumstances when adjacency requirements did not need to be met (ie. harvest of fire killed or insect infested trees).

This led to a broader discussion about the requirements of the Migratory Bird Convention Act. The Act requires protection for bodies, nests, egg, shelter of migratory birds and allows for incidental take. Brian advised that other industries like oil and gas appear to be much more compliant than the forest industry. Alan advised that on the transmission line from Merritt to Vancouver, BC Hydro had biologists out conducting nesting surveys in advance of their operations. The BC Trappers Association continues to meet with resource industries and government to understand how compliance will be attained. Licencees advised that they are now aware of the legislation and are working to ensure their operations conform.

Matt wondered if stocking standard needed to be revised to ensure that whitebark pine was an acceptable species in areas where there was a desire have it (re) establish. Licencees reported that whitebark pine is listed as an acceptable species in ecological zones influenced by the Cascade mountains. It was felt revisions to stocking standards fell outside the scope of the SFM Plan and influence of the advisory group.

Target 5: Discussed the target for stand level retention of trees and stubs. Some advisory group members felt there was value in having larger Wildlife Tree Patches (WTP's) than a number of smaller ones inside a harvest area to provide better protection to the animals using those reserve areas. Licencees discussed the challenges and effort needed to manage designated WTP's over the long term with volume based tenures and multiple operators in the DFA.

Target 6: Discussed situations where the habitat of a red/blue listed species was identified with an area planned for harvest. The report only identified that measures included in the operational plan were followed. The advisory group would like to know more about these situations – what were the circumstances around the habitat feature and what were the management measures prescribed. This has been a parking lot item in the SFM Plan for some time. Jerry advised that he would look at trying to develop a target for rare ecosystems in the Merritt TSA, similar to that done in Kamloops and Lillooet.

Action: Pat to advise Laura Ann that the public would like to see a better explanation in reporting target 6b (not just that SP measures were followed).

Target 9: Advisory group members wondered where the list of species in the government's FPPR Section 7 notices originated – why only these species and not others? The list originates from the days when the Forest Practices Code was replaced by the Forest and Range Practices Act; the intent to provide adequate habitat in the short term until the government established former Wildlife Habitat Areas. For more information, members can visit the government website:

<http://www.elp.gov.bc.ca/wld/frpa/notices/index.html>

Target 10: This was one of two targets not met. In this case, the outage was a result of (spruce) trees being planted in an area where it was not listed as a preferred or acceptable species – even though spruce was harvested from the area. Lorne advised this was caused when BCTS merged two slightly different sites into one (dryer) treatment unit. Pat noted that overall for the plan area, there were approximately 15 million trees planted and this incident involved less than 100 trees. But because the target is 100% and has no variance, the target was not met.

Target 19: There was a question raised as to the 2014 harvest vs. Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) for the Merritt TSA. A discussion occurred over the flexibility built into the government's Cut Control Regulation and how each licence that the forest companies hold has its own cut control period. It will be rare when the annual harvest rate mirrors the AAC. It was felt showing more years of harvest vs. AAC for each of the management units would help.

Action: Pat to advise Laura Ann that future graph show at least 5 years of harvest and authorized cut.

Target 23: Coarse Woody Debris. Discussion occurred around the amount of debris that is left behind scattered throughout the block, the retention of debris piles and how licencees must balance this with the regulatory requirements of the Wildfire Act where they are obligated to conduct fire hazard assessments and reduce fuel loading to manage fire risks. Brent advised that they are working with a group of MoFLNRO staff at various levels to allow retention of piles without exposing the company to penalties under the Wildfire Act. The group thought it might be good to have one of these individuals come and speak at the next meeting.

Action: Brent to speak to members of the fire hazard work team and request their participation at the next meeting.

Target 41: The target number of presentations was not met in Kamloops or Merritt. It was noted that these targets have been modified and under the new target, both Lillooet and Merritt would have met

the target. In Kamloops, there appears to be a bit of work to do, but the target appears to be achievable.

Management of Mule Deer Winter Range by John Surgenor

John gave a very good presentation on mule deer, their limitations and how/why mule deer winter range is managed by the province.

The presentation covered the following topics:

- The economic value of Mule Deer
- Distribution
- Habitat Requirements
- Seasonal Movements and Home Ranges
- Winter Range Requirements
- Modeling Winter Range
- Managing Winter Range

The advisory group discussed the timing of implementing winter range requirements for Lillooet and Kamloops. These requirements will be in the form of a Government Action Regulation and licences will then need to update their Forest Stewardship Plans to include these new management requirements, where applicable.

The presentation has been posted to the members section of the website. Advisory group members felt this was an excellent presentation and greatly appreciated the opportunity to hear from John.

Other Business

1. CSA standard revision update. The standard is revised every 5 years. The current revision process is underway and the “normative” or required parts of the standard are nearing draft completion. The CSA Technical Committee is hoping to have the standard and guidance ready for public review this fall. Pat noted the CSA User Group recently posted an update on the revision and copies can be accessed at their website: csasfmforests.ca (go to the “news” webpage).
2. Local initiatives. Jamie advised on Timber Supply Reviews currently taking place for the Kamloops and Merritt Timber Supply Areas. A public discussion paper should be available next month (May) where there will be a 60 day window to review and comment. Once the documents are made available, licences will forward to Pat who can ensure re-distribution to advisory group members.

Current DFA Issues, Summary, Wrap-Up

PAG 2015 Field Trips

Reminder that the next field trip is June 11th and will be held in the Peter Hope Lake area. Licencees will arrange to have transportation available for Merritt and Kamloops for those wanting to attend. Pat to send out an email reminder and itinerary a few weeks prior to the date.

Canfor meeting on their plans in the Wells Gray corridor – open house to occur the week of May 25 – 29 in Clearwater, BC. Dave Poole to advise Pat once date is finalized. Pat will inform advisory group members.

Fall Meeting

Agreed to a tentative meeting date of Thursday November 5, 2015 where discussions regarding the 2016 SFM Plan will occur. Meeting to occur in Merritt (location tbd - but likely at the Civic Centre).

Jamie requested public members submit their mileage claims for travel to the meeting to him directly. Contact Jamie if you need more information (Jamie.skinner@tolko.com).

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.