

Minutes
Okanagan Sustainable Forest Management Plan
Public Advisory Group Meeting
Tolko Head Office, Vernon, B.C.
December 10, 2009

Attendees

Keith Boulter	Paul Ross	Randy Hardy	Lorne Bradley
Mike Watkins	Rob Kennett	Grant Thompson	Don Guild
Clive Johnson	Lisa Scott	Dave Gill	Darcie Annesley
Kerry Rouck	Scott Smith	Pat Salm (Consultant)	
Mark Hopkins (Facilitator)			

1.0 Introductions and Agenda Review

Following the self-introduction of the PAG members, the agenda was reviewed. There were no additions/alterations to the agenda

2.0 Review of Minutes and Action Items from Nov 26th, 2009 PAG Meeting

Review of the Action Items from the previous mtg. led to further discussion on actions taken by companies when they encounter previously unknown archaeological resources. Paul Ross updated the group on the Tolko process. Pat Distributed a revised version of the PAG Terms of Reference - removing Weyerhaeuser's name from the Title. The incorrect version (which included Weyerhaesers name) was mistakenly distributed at the last meeting.

Paul: Tolko, and virtually every other company, has some sort of Standard Operating Procedure, calling for operators to halt operations in the event they find previously unknown arch features.

Kerry/ Dave Gill: Agreed that Gorman and BCTS have such SOP's

Paul: Most machine operators well aware of what features look like (culturally modified trees, etc.)

Paul: Arch. Branch information is available to archaeologists and government which is not generally available to companies or the public. MoF contacts arch branch to get information. On a site specific basis, corporations can apply for an arch review of a local interest area. This is not the process for roads and cutblocks which are more extensive.

Clive: How do you find out if a feature is there?

Paul: Arch. branch informs MoF who in turn advises licencee.

Dave: Unknown feature requiring a work stoppage is not limited to arch features. Could be riparian, stream, etc.

Action Item: Re-write of SFM Plan should include revision of Section 6 to include a description of the process for dealing with arch. or other unknown features as they are encountered.

Pat: noted that there was some discussion at the previous meeting regarding Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) and the role of the provincial Seed Registry, which were not covered well in the minutes. Further discussion ensued on these topics:

Pat: Distributed hand-out, discussion ensued on fact that GMO's are not allowed in reforestation in BC. Questions arose about the use of selective breeding programs and the use of such seed in reforestation. Reforestation in BC requires the use of seed registered with the provincial seed bank. There are very narrow limits on what seed can be used where. Almost all are native species, with the exception of some provenances such as White Pine and Douglas-fir. (Which are still native spp.) The CSA standard explicitly states that GMO's cannot be used in reforestation programs.

Question: What is the real difference between the product of selective breeding and GMO's

Facilitator: Selective breeding is exactly that, the crossing of individuals with desirable traits to produce progeny with a higher tendency to have such traits. Genetic modification involves the artificial manipulation of the genome (such as the splitting of cells).

Paul: in follow-up to question raised by Clive at the last meeting: Is it always best to plant as soon as possible? Paul spoke to a number of silviculturalists about waiting. The collective response was that the single greatest determinant of a successful plantation was how quickly after harvest the area was planted. Prompt planting minimizes weed competition.

Clive: clarified that his comment was in regard to the extra effort required to move from 70% success to 90% success. Is added effort always worth it?

Pat: Distributed binders to those members who had not yet received them and described their content, arrangement, and the insertion of new information he distributed.

3.0 Indicators 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 (discussion continued from Nov 26th)

Pat: Recapped Mike's concern from last meeting about harvesting and replacement of some OGMA areas. It is the Rare Ecosystem portions of the OGMA which need to be protected. All parts are not equivalent. One pager distributed at the meeting included new target related to rare ecosystems and how it could fit into the new core indicators.

Collective homework by the licencees indicates that the data does exist to identify which specific polygons within the OGMA's contain the "Rare" polygons. This information was gathered during the course of the Okanagan LRMP process. Clive stated at the last meeting that he felt 90-95% of the "rare" out there had been included in the established OGMA's.

Kerry: Looking through the minutes of the old LRMP meetings, it appears the information has ever been “official” and was never received by licencees as part of the FDP information package.

Clive: Believes he has the information in digital form as well (3.0 ArchInfo format). Felt that it is unfortunate that the information has not been maintained and would like to see plan text include commitment to maintain/update the information.

Pat: Outlined the intent of the Indicator which is to report on the disturbance of any “rare” ecosystems.

Clive: Thought there was an understanding that there would be some sort of consultation process in the selection of replacement OGMA’s. What is the process for OGMA “movement”?

Kerry: In 2005 or so there was a provincial strategy on OGMA’s and how to deal with incursions into them.

Clive: The Pine (Montane Spruce) areas are generally not an issue.

Paul: Feels the use of the “rare” information and its tracking enhances the overall OGMA process.

Clive: Doesn’t recall any “rare” south of Kelowna which was not included in an OGMA

Scott: Agrees that the “rare” was very well covered.

Clive: It is only in the very dry and very high elevation areas where there is substantial ‘rare’ outside of OGMA’s. Often, it is the understory species which are the rare parts. Not the tree species.

Don: wants some assurance that the “rare” outside of OGMA’s is well managed. The effect of roads can extend well beyond their boundaries; as much as 300-600m or more in the case of wetlands.

Grant: Westbank FN Comm. Forest Licence has only been around for 5 years and would like to get the OGMA information for its planning.

Pat: Believes there should be mention in the text of the plan about the provincial approach to management of OGMA’s and the areas around them.

Clive: Would also like to see a commitment to the inclusion of new information, specifically Dennis Lloyd’s work, as it becomes available.

Rob: The problem with doing so is that all the targets (LRMP, etc) are based on the old Biogeoclimatic zones.

Mike: Happy to hear that the licencees have the information, he was concerned as the ‘rare’ is the important part of the OGMA.

Clive: Commented that the OGMA was the only “tool” available to deal with rare ecosystems.

Kerry: We have a number of tools to deal with rare outside of OGMA’s WTP’s Riparian management zones, etc.

Paul: For proposed harvest areas outside of OGMA’s we have not generally been considering “rare” We do have the coverage, but have not historically used it. Crews look for unusual features in the placement of WTP’s

Pat: Identification in the field can be difficult as you often don’t have the background attribute information identifying what was “rare” in the first place.

Paul: Often comes down to professional opinion.

Mike: Agrees everything should be “ground-truthed” but are you telling me there is no management of “rare” outside of OGMA’s?

Kerry: there are lots of opinions on how to deal with it, but no consistent approach.

Clive: Outlined the criteria used in the LRMP process, the priorities were “rare”, “old”, and drainage representation, in that order.

Kerry: Afraid that using the new information (Dennis Lloyd) would open the whole LRMP OGMA process – a huge job.

Pat: Suggested we monitor and report for a year or two year then revisit the issue. The suggested target appears to capture 90-95% of the areas deemed to be rare so it’s a reasonable measure.

Don: Is there any research out there looking at the success of OGMA’s in protecting “rare “ ecosystems and how much buffering around them is required.

Scott: Feels it is a government job to map rare ecosystems, not the responsibility of licencees.

Paul: Worthy of asking the universities, etc. to look into the issue of OGMA effectiveness.

Kerry: Outlined FREP program which was to look at the effectiveness of the Forest Practices Code.

Scott: Licencees wishing to work with the CSA SFM process should push government to generate and maintain a “rare ecosystem” database.

Action Item: Clive and Dave are to bring representative OGMA maps to the Jan 7th meeting

Agreement: The PAG agreed to include new “rare” target as it was presented and that it would measure indicator 1.1.1.

Agreement: The following four points were agreed to with respect to rare Ecosystems, within the text of the plan there will be:

1. A description of the OGMA replacement process (example appended to end of minutes).
2. A confirmation that management for rare ecosystems outside of OGMA’s will be subject to field confirmation of rare site attributes and that WTP’s will form the basis of protecting these sites.
3. . Direction to government that there should be further monitoring of OGMA effectiveness
4. Direction to Government that the jurisdiction, definition, identification and maintenance of “rare ecosystems” needs to be clarified.

1.3 Genetic Diversity

Pat: suggested that old indicators 2 and 7 be retained as the indicators for 1.3. as well as the new ‘rare’ indicator for 1.1.1 Following limited discussion, this was agreed to.

Agreement: Existing “old” indicators #2 and #7 and the new ‘rare’ indicator for 1.1.1 will be retained in the new plan as targets for Indicator 1.3 Genetic Diversity.

1.4.1 Proportion of Identified sites with Implemented Management Strategies

Pat: outlined the proposal to retain old Indicator #2 target and in addition add a new target “licencee operations will maintain the retention of “rare” ecosystems within Old Growth Management Areas (OGMA’s).”

Pat: Feels the proposed 1.4.2 is a better fit with the Indicator.

Lisa: In 1.4.1 is “critical” a well defined term?

Pat: I don’t think it is. It’s not “critical” in the sense of the Species at Risk Act (SARA)

Lisa: I think it needs a better definition of both “rare” and “critical” habitat.

Pat: Rare Species have been identified under the LRMP and if the wording is changed from “critical” habitat to “important” habitat, it aligns better with the Accounts and Measures within the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS).

Clive: Can we identify the source of the words used, did they have specific meaning.

Action Item: Update the proposed target (from old indicator #2) to identify the source of the words used. Change “critical” habitat to “important” habitat. Alter old Indicator #2 to read “...as defined in the OSLRMP and KBLUP...”

Agreement: For Criteria 1.4.1 retain target for indicator 2 changed as follows:
100% conformance to site plans to manage for and/or protect important habitat for IWMS species and rare species as defined by the OSLRMP and KBLUP. Also agreed to add the rare ecosystem target from 1.1.1 here.

1.4.2 Protection of identified sacred and culturally important sites

Paul: Outlined the process for the inclusion of archaeological information into a Site Plan

Action Item: Paul will bring some sample documents depicting the flow of information from FSP to Site Plan. Paul will include the legislative requirements for this as well.

Clive: Outlined the provincial plan review process to the PAG.

Scott: Likes the 1st of the two proposed 100% targets for Indicator 1.4.2. However, how measurable are the results?

Rob: Originally had some issues with the wording as proposed. This has been somewhat removed by the inclusion of the words “reasonable and specific”.

Grant: The current wording looks after those important sites that are already known. What about situations where a contractor identifies a previously unknown site, what is the management plan? How is that dealt with?

Pat: Good Point, perhaps we should report on the frequency of encountering previously unknown sites.

Rob: We are probably able to track that on-block; however, often these are dealt with by simple avoidance at the recce and layout stage. In that case, actions would have been taken but there would likely be no record. In the end agreed to add a line to the monitoring report for this to at least give an indication of how often these types of events occur.

Agreement: For Criteria 1.4.2 keep both of the proposed 100% targets in lieu of targets for indicator 29 but remove reference to “mapped” from both.
Add a line in the monitoring template to record situations where an unknown feature was identified and then managed or protected.

4.0 Invasive Plant Species Update – Lisa Scott (late agenda addition)

Over the course of her presentation Lisa raised the following points:

- Although she is an R.P. Biologist and has a Masters in zoology, she has been dealing with invasive plant species in the Okanagan for the last 15 years or so.
- The management group in the Okanagan was amongst the 1st in the province

- Focused mainly within the Okanagan and Similkameen drainages.
- She is involved in the provincial level council as well
- Has grappled with the issue of where, within the framework of the Z809-08 Standard, does in indicator for Invasive Plant Species best fit in? And do we need an Indicator for Invasive spp?
- Clarified the language around the use of term “certified seed” and it’s correlation to the term “Canada No. 1” seed. She confirmed that the latter is a high grade of “certified” seed.
- Indicated that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is looking at upgrading the current seed grading system and nomenclature.

Action Item: Lisa to send an e-link on the process to Mark for distribution to the PAG.

The East Kootenay area is looking at incorporating more extensive measures to control weeds in all plans. Lisa circulated pamphlets on Invasive Plant species to the PAG members. Invasive Plant program database is available on-line and available to identify areas of concern for specific invasive plants.

Randy: Outlined the use of this database in their planning processes.

Lisa: Wants to know that there are measures in place to control the spread of weeds. Measuring the results is much more problematic.

Paul: Outlined the Tolko road inspection program. The frequency of inspection is based on the priority ranking, not necessarily looking at weeds.

Lisa: Noted that indicator 11 looked at seed application. She shares PAG’s feelings that having an understanding of the success of the application would be helpful. Is using 60% coverage at the end of two years (post seeding) considered a success?

Rob: Just doesn’t seem practical to measure all areas – access issues etc.

Lisa: it would be a sampling process not all areas would have to be inspected.

Clive: The first two years after seeding are the most critical. After that the cows move in and become an issue.

Clive: There has recently been a push to utilize genetically modified Alfalfa. Clive would like to add stipulation that seed is GMO free in addition to Canada #1 designation. It was also noted that “native” grass species are not generally available.

Action Item: Paul to follow-up with seed suppliers on the GMO grass seed issue.

Mike: Are there Weed control measures identified in Licencee access management plans.
Licencees: No.

Action Item: Pat to look at altering text related to Indicator #12 in regard to permanent roads and landings to include the role of controlling invasive species.

Action Item: Pat to change all references to “Noxious Weeds” to the term “Invasive Plants”

5.0 Criteria #2 Ecosystem Condition and Productivity - Discussion Topics

Pat: Outlined those items in the PAG binder identified as outstanding discussion topics related to Criteria #2. PAG members reviewed the supplied background material related to climate change impacts and biomass utilization and the following discussion ensued:

Clive: What, if anything, is in this plan to reduce the amount debris pile burning? I’m looking for the means to leave more material behind.

Grant: Was part of a group looking at changes to the Open Burning Regulation- which was considering an outright ban on all open burning. There will be a change coming down the pipe soon. There are a lot of bio-energy projects proposed – many are in the pilot stage.

Rob: The current price for electricity only allows suitable bio-energy material to be hauled about 25km.

Paul: Described current roadside logging systems and feels all roadside debris piles need to be burned as hazard abatement. Some on-block piles are burned, some not, depending on size, location, etc. Tolko has started some hog-fuel grinding trials for the Armstrong mill.

Grant: Last year 1200 piles were burned on our tenure over a 3 week period. This year they will be burning only 50 piles, the balance to be chipped and trucked for hog-fuel.

Paul: Concerned about setting a hard target, when the ability to do so is based entirely on fluctuating economics.

Pat: cited the example of changing economics as the circle from within which hog-fuel is purchased for the Kamloops Pulpmill has expanded since the adjacent Weyerhaeuser sawmill closed.

Clive: Is concerned with the potential for the inclusion of MSMA treated trees in the hog fuel. Arsenic is very persistent in the environment.

Randy: MSMA treated trees are identified on maps and are avoided.

6.0 Criteria 2.1.1 Reforestation Success

Scott: Indicator #16 (regen. delay) not really of much use as an indicator of reforestation success (too short term). Indicator # 17 (Free-growing) is much more indicative of success.

Licencees: the regeneration delay Indicator is useful in some other Criteria as well.

Scott: What is the “late free-growing date”?

Licencees: explained the difference between the “early” and “late” free-growing dates.

Agreement: It was agreed by the PAG that the targets for old Indicators 16 and 17 should both be kept as targets for 2.1.1.

6.1 Criteria 2.2.1 Additions and Deletions to the Forest Landbase

It was suggested that the Indicator #12 target (Percent of Openings in Permanent Access Structures) be retained as a suitable Indicator/target for Criteria 2.2.1. Following limited discussion this was agreed to.

Agreement: It was agreed by the PAG that the target for old Indicator 12 be retained in the new plan as the target for Indicator 2.1.1.

6.1 Criteria 2.2.2 Proportion of the Calculated Long-range Harvest Level that is Actually Harvested

It was proposed that old indicator 25 (Harvest Level) be retained as the Indicator/target for 2.2.2. It was recognized however that this is complicated by the staggered 5-year Cut-control periods of the different forest tenures and opportunities to balance harvest and begin a new 5 year cut control period at any point within the existing cut control period.

Agreement: It was agreed in principle that old Indicator 25 be retained as the Indicator for Criteria 2.2.2. New wording for the target as follows: Harvest the allowable cut over the cut control period.

Pat will need to ensure indicator/target text be updated to the new cut control legislation.

7.0 Discussion Items Criteria #4 Global Ecological Cycles

PAG members took the time to read the McGill student Paper included in their package, “Form Carbon Source to Sink: How Forestry can Help Mitigate Climate Change”

Pat: Current suggested targets on this topic all positively contribute to carbon uptake. In terms of understanding the carbon balance for the area under the Plan, Pat pointed out that there is currently work being done at various scales on this topic. The recently completed Lillooet Timber Supply Review included carbon modeling.

In general, over the last sixty years or so BC has been a net sink for Carbon but the 2003 fire season and the current beetle epidemic are likely resulting in the province being a net source at the moment.

Clive: believes both age and growth rates (Mean Annual Increment) will influence the rate of carbon sequestration.

Pat: The carbon budget models generally rely on forest inventory data and their associated growth rates to predict rate of carbon uptake. Licensees have limited influence over growth rates

Grant: Believes that pat is saying there is not much more that licencees can do, other than watch the current suite of tools for applicability.

Clive: Can companies target the highest MAI sites – from a Carbon Management perspective? Can we target high MAI sites which equate to high carbon sequestration rates?

Keith: It is the middle age classes which store the most carbon.

Pat: There are a couple of carbon accounting models that could be used, one out of UBC the other developed by the Cdn. Forest Service. In general, they rely on timber supply data converting volume to biomass for a calculation of carbon stock.

Scott: Are there other models out there? Have other parties tried this?

Pat: Canfor in the N. part of the province has done some work – not sure how they are using the results of the modeling.

Agreement: It was agreed in principle that old Indicators 8, 12, 16 be retained as targets for Criteria 4.1.1. Still need to explore what type of carbon balance modeling has been completed or might be planned within the TSA.

Action Item: Pat will collect more information on the work Canfor has done as well as general carbon management info for BC. He will also see if he can access the data behind the Okanagan TSA slide on carbon stock change (source Werner Kurtz information) and present info at the Jan 7th PAG mtg.

Scott: Slide indicates that modeling has already been done for the Okanagan TSA.

Scott/Clive: Not all 140 year old pine stands are the same from a carbon uptake perspective.

Next Meeting:

9:00am – 4:00pm

Thursday, Jan 7th, 2010

Kelowna Location TBA

General considerations when replacing OGMA's

Since areas have not been field verified it is likely that the some patches may not be located accurately and some adjustments to the locations may be required. It is also likely that some patches are not suitable located given operational planning needs and safety concerns. Although the data files used were considered the best information it is likely there are some errors in the information. It is possible that areas may be logged and still show as old forests and or mapped locations may be inaccurate. There are also likely situations where seral patches have equal or better biological values may be available on the landscape than the patches identified. In these cases it may be appropriate to move patches. It is recommended that the following considerations be used in deciding if an identified seral patch is adjusted or replaced:

- a) Are there practicable alternative to road development or maintenance through a seral patch?
- b) Were there mapping errors in the seral patch and can the boundaries of the seral patch be adjusted to better reflect the physical features that were intended to be included in the seral patch?
- c) Was a patch mapped in error?
- d) Can harvest boundary alignment be improved to help ensure continued maintenance of the seral patch?
- e) Can the contiguous area of a seral patch be improved by incorporating adjacent areas that have old forest attributes identified through field assessment?
- f) Is there a substantiated forest health factor within a seral patch that poses a significant risk to forest stands outside the seral patch and requires timber harvesting?
- g) Is there a substantiated public or industrial safety concern within the seral patch that requires timber harvesting?
- h) Where replacement of a seral patch is being considered , can a substitute seral patch be located that provides equal or better retention of key old forest attributes (forest interior, large trees, snags, etc.) that are understood to be important for biodiversity conservation be found?