

Okanagan SFM Plan

Public Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2013. Okanagan Shuswap District Office, Vernon

Attendees: Rob Kennett, Dave Gill, Mike Watkins, Paul Ross, Lorne Bradley, Ted McRea, Keith Boulter, Patti Hansen, Bob Annand, Doug Flintoff, Kerry Rouck, Renee Clark, Pat Salm

Guest Speaker: Rich Toperczer

Meeting started at 9:30AM. The advisory group welcomed new member, Doug Flintoff to the SFM process. The meeting began with a safety/orientation briefing of the meeting room, introductions and a review of the meeting agenda. There were no additional items added to the agenda.

Action Items from previous meeting:

The list of items requiring attention from previous meetings were reviewed and discussed.

1. Discussed the SFM Plan parking lot and the suggestion at the previous meeting that it was also the place to retain opportunities to review/improve the existing suite of targets. Agreed that this should occur and as the indicators/targets are reviewed (ie. when the 2012/13 Monitoring Report is discussed) any that are deemed needing further attention would be added.

Action: Reviewed – any SFM targets that are discussed and where there is agreement that more work is needed will be added to the parking lot.

Field Trip Review

Dave Gill provided a recap of the May 16th field trip – held in conjunction with the Meadowlark Festival. Four people signed up for the tour using the Festival's website with PAG members and licences accounting for the remainder. In all there were 21 people in attendance. Dave sent out a follow-up email to those signing up through the Festival, with links to the SFM website and the invitation to more actively participate in the PAG if they so desired.

Gorman certification update

Kerry Rouck provided an update to Gorman Brothers direction on forest certification where they have made the decision to move to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program. The decision comes after their purchases of Downie Timber (Revelstoke) and Federated Co-Op (Canoe), both SFI certified. Kerry felt it made sense to have all their operations under one certification program and for geographic reasons thought SFI was a better fit – by reducing overall certification program costs. SFI does not

require ongoing public input and discussion as required by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) program and thus Gorman's will be leaving the Okanagan public advisory group process. Kerry advised that Gorman's would remain part of the public process until April of 2014 where they will contribute to reporting performance against the 2013/14 SFM Plan.

More information on the 3 forest certification standards in use in the province can be found on the Forestry Innovation Investment (BC Crown Corporation) website at:
<http://www.naturallywood.com/sustainable-forests/certified-forests>

Presentation by Richard Toperczer, Okanagan Shuswap District

Richard Toperczer, the Tenures Officer in Vernon for the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations spoke to the group on how the Okanagan Shuswap Resource District (DOS) was implementing government's direction to integrate all of the natural resource agencies – something that the advisory group learned of at the previous meeting – but on more of a provincial scale (Chief Forester's presentation).

Richard took us through the District's review and reorganization of their organizational structure made to better provide an integrated land management approach to the services originally provided by the separate government agencies. Their goal is to provide more efficient and coordinated services that seek to add value to all of the natural resources provided by an area of Crown land. One of the challenges to the integrated approach is to ensure decisions are made in a timely manner given the streamlining of resources within government. Richard advised that the integrated land management approach is an ongoing, continual improvement process with a 3-year outlook for full delivery.

The presentation also included information on the DOS Timber Supply Review – completed in 2012. The review resulted in a harvest rate reduction of 275,000m³ to the current level of 3,100,000 m³. The district anticipates the next timber supply review to occur around 2016. The species diversity within the Okanagan TSA (27% lodgepole pine) has reduced the potential impact of the mountain pine beetle compared to most of the other interior Timber Supply Areas. Pressures on the forest land base for other land uses and increased public expectations on how forests are managed are expected to put further downward pressure on available timber supply.

Finally, as a follow-up to the recommendations within the Special Committee on Timber Supply, Richard discussed some of those that might have applicability to the DOS. In general, the recommendations have been reviewed and action is occurring on those viewed as having a higher priority within the District. It is felt that the LRMP continues to serve the District well in guiding land use. Any consideration to have existing volume based licences converted to area based licences would only occur after considerable public dialogue. Advisory group members appreciated the opportunity to hear from and ask questions of the District and thanked Richard for the presentation and conversation.

Review of the 2012/13 SFM Monitoring Report

Pat provided a brief history of the development of the Okanagan Sustainable Forest Management (OK SFM) Plan and how this was the third year of reporting against the current requirements of the CSA forest certification standard. The Plan contains indicators and targets that help to assess sustainability against the Criteria and Elements set out in the CSA certification standard. The Monitoring report is a roll-up of the participating licencees performance against the targets in the SFM Plan. Highlights of the Monitoring report were covered. In total, 38 out of 43 targets (88%) were fully met, an improvement from last year where 36 targets were achieved (84%).

This year the Monitoring Report contained a bit of perspective information (Section 5) with tables/charts indicating plan area statistics and relating them to what occurred in the reporting period. The report also provided a quick look at how the indicators and targets tie back to the SFM Criteria and Elements in the CSA certification standard (Table 1). Each of the targets and the performance against these is then shown in the second table. It was noted that some targets are used to measure multiple indicators – thus achievement or non-achievement of a target can have a cascading affect throughout the Plan.

Pat asked the group if there were any specific targets that they would like to review. The group was comfortable with Pat taking the lead in reviewing targets that he felt should be reviewed with the opportunity to visit any others as we went through the Monitoring Report.

Target 2 – Old Growth Management Area

Reviewed plan performance against target #2: no net loss to Old Growth Management Area (OGMA). The target was not met as a result of proposed harvesting where the OGMA planned for replacement was less than the OGMA area planned for removal. Kerry reported that the process for reporting on the SFM targets revealed this outage and although it was in the plan stage (no harvest had actually occurred) it was included to demonstrate that the reporting process works. Kerry indicated that harvest plans have been modified and additional replacement OGMA added.

The group discussed the precision in the report – in this case the overall reduction to OGMA area amounted to less than 1/1000 of one percent (0.3 ha out of a total of 94,444.6 ha). In the end it was decided that where there were no variance limits around a hard target, it was correct to report the target as not being met.

Target 4- Tree Species Diversity

The reporting for this target also includes information on what percent the leading species occupies the site where there are 3 or more species present. Licencees reported that the leading species occupied approximately one half (51.2 %) of sites, meaning the other species also accounted for nearly one half of the trees on the site. This information indicates that most sites are reforested with multiple species and there is a good distribution in the species mix for those cutblocks.

Target 10- Reforestation With Species Appropriate to the Site

The target to have 100% of trees planted in conformance to the species requirements within approved stocking standards was achieved. This target – 100% with no variance, has been difficult for licences to attain in the past two years (99.6% and 99.9% achievement in 2010 and 2011 respectively), so a well done!

Target 13- Reforestation – Free-Growing Success

The target to have all cutblocks reach free growing requirements on or before the latest date was not met. There was a 5.5 ha area that was not declared free growing prior to the late free growing date (out of a total of 6,453.2 ha declared free growing).

The graph indicating use of herbicides was discussed. The PAG requested that in addition to showing the number of litres applied, that the actual products used also be reported in subsequent reports.

Target 14- Percentage of Permanent Roads and Landings in Harvest Areas

The target of having less than 6% of area in permanent road and landings (maximizing the productive area to grow trees) has been easily met. Given the data over the past 6 years, the group discussed if this target should be lowered. Part of the reason that the target has been below 3% in past reports is because of a Mountain Pine Beetle harvest emphasis where terrain conditions are relatively moderate and harvest areas somewhat larger. In the end it was decided to leave the target at 6%.

Target 17- Landslides

With the occurrence of 4 slides, the target of zero slides induced from forest management activities was not met. The specifics of the slides and mitigative actions were discussed. The group felt that a target that reported on the adherence to corrective and preventative actions on any slides was probably better than a “zero slides” target. The example of Target 25 – riparian was used as an example. All slides would be reported, as well as the attention to mitigative actions. Agreed that the draft 2014/15 SFM Plan will have a re-written target 17 that reflects this discussion. The final wording for Target 17 is to be agreed upon at the fall meeting.

Target 20- Harvest in Community Watersheds

There was discussion over the ECA numbers – and concern over increasing ECA numbers in some watersheds. The relationship between peak flow hazard and ECA was also discussed – and while the goal is to keep the peak flow hazard at moderate or less, the target does provide for hazards above moderate (harvest must be consistent with recommendations).

Target 22- Permanent Road Inspections

Road inspections were not completed as planned, thus not meeting the target. Both BCTS and Tolko provided a bit more information on roads not inspected. Tolko was asked why some roads planned for inspection were not completed when a large number of roads not needing inspection were completed. Rob advised that it was likely that the additional inspections were being made on roads that were enroute to those planned for inspection.

Target 38- Forestry Contractor Safety and SAFE Certification

The target to have 100% of the contractors SAFE Company registered and/or certified or carrying an equivalent safety program was not achieved. There was no further discussion beyond what was written in the comments section of the report.

Current DFA Issues, Summary, Wrap-Up

Future PAG Field Trip

While the May 16th field trip in conjunction with the Meadowlark Festival was viewed as very positive, the group also saw the merit in having tours in the northern part of the SFM Plan area. Paul volunteered to look into the possibility of offering a field tour in conjunction with Kelowna's Mayor's Environmental Expo next spring. Licencees will also look at any upcoming field tours associated with the TSA steering committee that might be appropriate (possibly something in the fall of 2013). A return to the Meadowlark Festival in 2014 would be somewhat contingent on these other possibilities. Group agreed that we should continue the relationship with the Meadowlark Festival, regardless of the outcome of other tour possibilities.

Fall Meeting

Agreed to a tentative meeting date of Thursday, November 21, 2013. Meeting to occur in Kelowna at the Benvoulin Heritage Church.

There was a desire to continue to include guest speakers at subsequent meetings. Ideas were discussed and the group felt any of the following options would be well received:

- 1) Kristine Weese - Climate Change
- 2) Susan Lapp – Cumulative Effects
- 3) Patrick Tobin - Regional Compliance and Enforcement Manager's view of the world
- 4) Dave Peterson – Chief Forester (his role subject to change within the Ministry as a result of Cabinet changes)

Licencees will discuss further and make arrangements for a speaker.

Rob reminded public members to submit their mileage claims for travel to the meeting to him directly (robert.kennett@tolko.com).

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.