

Minutes

Kamloops – N. Thompson Sustainable Forest Management Plan Public Advisory Group Meeting Best Western – Kamloops Town Lodge April 1, 2010

In Attendance:

Alf Farenholtz	Glenn Foss	George Brcko
Dave Poole	Rick Cooper	Pat Callahan
Larry Michaelsen ('til 10:30)	Frances Vyse	Bert Parke
Michael Bragg	Brian Dack	
Mark Hopkins – Facilitator		

1.0 Introductions and Agenda Review

Following introductions the agenda was reviewed, including the addition of Larry Michaelsen to the agenda; speaking to the issue of Coarse Woody Debris on BCTS permit areas. There were no other changes to the agenda.

2.0 Previous Meeting Minutes

The Action Items arising from the previous PAG meeting in November, 2009 were reviewed, all actionable items have since been completed. There were no other changes to the Nov, 2009 Minutes.

3.0 BCTS and Coarse Woody Debris Management – Larry Michaelsen/Rick Cooper

Rick: briefly outlined BCTS Chronic problems with achieving the target CWD levels included in the SFM plan, especially within the drier “x” BGC sub-zones. Pointed out that almost all of the CWD shortfall in the 2009 Monitoring Report was on BCTS operations. BCTS has looked at the problem from a number of perspectives, including:

- Training problems
- Assessment procedure differences (compared to licencees)

BCTS has concluded that most of the difference in results between BCTS blocks and Licencee blocks is due to two factors:

- Licencees have greater control over their loggers
- BCTS tends to operate in more of the drier, and CWD poor, ecosystems.

Mike: Is the problem confined to specific BEC zones?

Rick: Yes, for the most part to the subzones labeled as “x” or xeric

Larry: on BCTS areas the loggers bid on the block and “own” all of the wood on the block. Of course they want to remove as much wood as possible. This has become a bigger issue with the advent of bio-fuels and tub-grinders.

Larry: Within limits we can contractually specify such things as the spacing and height of stub-trees (for boundary and riparian areas). We’ve also looked at reserving/stubbing all cruise plots (painted trees) and other means of preserving some smaller trees. Although these things can help, the problem is still there as there is often very little CWD on the block to start.

Larry: Would like to see the 5m³/ha SFM Plan rule currently in place on the “x” BEC sub-zones extended to cover the “d” (dry) subzones.

Frances: That covers a very large area.

Larry: We’ve also looked at planting to higher densities on these sites to increase the future CWD levels through increased “drop-out”.

Larry: the loggers are caught between the contractual utilization standards and the requirements for CWD on-site. In one case the Compliance and Enforcement Branch levied a \$20,000 fine on one of their BCTS loggers who did everything right according to the direction he received.

Alf: would it help to have a group like the PAG send a letter to the Ministry on this issue?

Larry: Couldn’t hurt.

Facilitator: How big is the short-fall in CWD on the “d” sites? Would changing the standard from 20m³/ha to 10m³/ha (rather than all the way down to 5m³/ha) solve 90% of the problem?

Dave: A 15% jump in the standard is huge a 10% change would certainly be more justifiable as a short or interim step.

Mike: It would be good to see the actual numbers.

Action Item:

Rick: Will circulate the actual survey numbers to the Facilitator for distribution to the PAG members.

Action Item:

Larry: Will provide a copy of the Foresite CWD Report for distribution to the PAG.

Mike: Why is this a problem when we can put 50m³ CWD requirement in the SP without a problem, if we choose to.

Rick: MoF Victoria will not allow the inclusion of such clauses. They want to maximize potential revenue.

Bert: If the MoF is going to be relying on more 3rd party certifications to reduce the amount of Inspections they should give us (the PAG) control over the standard and input into what goes into the legal agreements.

Larry: There have been rumors of a major policy shift on this as we move forward with policy changes and tenure reform.

Facilitator: In the Okanagan there is no fixed volume/ha assigned just compliance with whatever level has been prescribed in the SP.

Mike: The Okanagan (TSA) approach may not provide any resolution on the issue due to the contract issues discussed earlier.

Bert: Should the CWD definition be removed and separate fro the definition of waste?

All: Yes it should, but easier said than done.

Action Item: Following the distribution of the actual BCTS CWD volume numbers to the PAG, The PAG may elect to draft and send a letter to the MoF requesting amendment to the CWD standard.

4.0 2009 Monitoring Report Review

Indicator #1 - Achievement of the TSA's Old Forest Strategy.

Mike: Indicator #1 is mainly tracked through compliance with OGMA area targets and strategies.

Alf: How "firm" are the OGMA's in the field? On the field trip we looked at an OGMA which had been moved. Is that common?

Mike: No, not common, it is typically the result of a mapping error.

Bert: wasn't this addressed in the LRMP?

Mike: Yes, but only to the landscape unit targets level, which left things a little "iffy".

Bert: are some of these areas dead? (pine beetle).

Mike: Yes, but that's OK within the mgmt guidelines.

Indicator # 2 - Level of Conformance to Riparian Management Area and Lakeshore Commitments Contained Within Plans

Rick: The one “non-compliance” was a BCTS road in the Clearwater area. There was an unknown water licence on a drainage where BCTS built a rd. BCTS had contacted the Water Licence holder as a landowner referral. The landowner, did not respond as he believed that BCTS would be aware of the Water Licence. The landowner is looking for compensation through drilling a well and payment for water trucking costs. So far BCTS has only built a large culvert by the point of diversion and are waiting to see what happens after the spring freshet before further action.

Dave: What action taken to avoid problem in future?

Rick: We would have done a number of things differently if we had been aware of the licence.

Frances: how often does this happen?

Rick: We sent out letters, but as he had a water licence from the government the landowner didn't feel he needed to point out its existence.

Frances: what are the potential costs?

Rick: Likely in the 10's of thousands.

Indicator # 3 - Level of FPC Compliance with Mountain Caribou Strategies.

The one harvest block within the Caribou management zone was conducted by Gilbert Smith Forest Products.

Bert: Is there a different set of rules now?

Steve: Yes, there is now a GAR order. But that was not in effect at the time of harvest.

[Note: Check page 14 of 2010 Plan for correctness]

Indicator # 4 - Stand Level Retention -- Individual Wildlife Trees/Stubs and/or Wildlife Tree Patches

Frances: the photo in the report has the ideal combination of leave trees...that's what we want. No further discussion on this Indicator

Indicator # 5 - Stand Level Retention -- Coarse Woody Debris

This Indicator was already discussed under Section 3.0 of these minutes.

Frances: where was the photo in the report taken?

Mike: Tolko block near Woods Creek in the Highland Valley

Indicator # 6 - Average Regeneration Period from Time of Harvest.

Results reviewed, the following discussion ensued.

Dave: the increasing regeneration delay period since 2006 is likely due to the increased use of Natural Regeneration (as opposed to planting).

Mike: The Forest Practices Code was very target driven which “forced” planting in many areas where it was not strictly required.

Alf: What is the mix of species? Where is the info?

Mike: the decision at the time of creating this suite of indicators was to look at that at the time of free-growing, knowing that there would be considerable natural ingress of a mix of species on the blocks.

Indicator # 7 - Management Strategies for Rare Ecosystems

Bert: why are the blue-listed species not shown. I thought we’d agreed to that?

Dave: The inclusion of “blue-listed” relates to animal species. This indicator is tied to plant communities. There were no red-listed plant communities harvested in this reporting period.

Bert: Is the decision red or blue-listing based on the presence of marketable species?

Mike: No, the communities are listed on the government website.

Dave: trying to include blue-listed communities would be problematic as some communities which may be provincially rare, may be locally abundant. For example, SBSmm is provincially rare, but occupies about 25% of Canfor’s TFL 18. The biologist who helped to initially develop the list felt the “red-only” approach was appropriate.

Bert: what are you planting in these areas?

Dave: Similar species to those harvested from the area.

Mike: The government would not allow the wholesale protection of these areas due to their revenue expectations.

Bert: Are these areas all mapped?

Dave: Some, not all, as they are down to the “site series” level which is not available everywhere.

Frances: I just noticed there is no legend for the BGC map in the 2010 Plan and the map and pie-chart colors do not correspond.

Action Item: Ensure the BGC zone map legend and pie-charts are amended in the 2011 SFM Plan.

Indicator # 8 - Identification and Protection of Wildlife (Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Fish and Amphibians) at Risk

This indicator was the second where there was a non-compliance with the SFM plan identified. The issue relates to the fact that the submitting forester for the Small Scale salvage program did not provide evidence that the presence or absence of red and blue listed species had been determined.

Mike: The Small Scale Salvage “checklist” regarding SAR was blank.

Rick: Those licences where there was no checklist provided are being investigated by the MoF Compliance and Enforcement staff.

Brian: If that was truly the case then Fisher would preclude all logging.

Rick: Typically there has to be some confirmation of the presence of the species. (visual confirmation) to trigger whatever the management action may be.

Brian: where does the Conservation data Centre (CDC) get its information?

Frances: From a wide range of sources; ranchers, trappers, etc.

Brian: trappers only report Fisher and Wolverine

Mike: My experience is that there is a long delay in getting things actually listed in the CDC database.

Bert: Under target 8b, what species were specifically avoided?

Rick: This is not currently recorded or tracked. There is no consistent record of what may have been considered/avoided in the location of a block.

Indicator # 9 - Percent of Land Base for Broad Leaf Species.

The results were noted, further discussion ensued

Indicator # 10 - Annual Percent of Harvested Areas in Permanent Access Structures (E.G. Roads and Landings).

The results were presented and the following questions ensued:

Bert: How does Small Scale salvage operate/ are they building their own roads too?

Dave: In theory, they don't build roads, but rather they operate from existing ones.

Frances: Do you track rehabilitation of "permanent" roads?

Dave: that is addressed through the additions and deletions to the landbase through the TSR process.

Indicator # 11 - Annual Harvest Level Relative to Annual Allocation.

The results were presented and the following questions ensued:

Brian: Can the undercut be realized in the future?

Mike: yes within the limits of the cut-control regulation.

Bert: Is Nursery capacity keeping up?

Licencees: yes, there is much greater capacity than demand currently.

Indicator # 12 - Incorporation of Traditional Knowledge, Non-Timber Resources, and Cultural and Spiritual Values in Forest Planning, Where Available.

Bert: do you ever get into disagreements with 1st nations?

Mike: Yes, and in that case the district Manager is the arbitrator.

Indicator # 13 - Level of Conformance to Soil Conservation Commitments Contained within Plans.

Results reviewed, no issues, no further discussion.

Indicator # 14 - Number of Months for Road Cut and Fill Slope Seeding Application.

Bert: Are there instances where old seed has been used and does this result in poorer results?

Mike: There maybe some instances, but no noticeably poor results.

Frances: Why has the seeding completion been taking longer over the last few years?

Rick: This result is probably due to BCTS operations where roads are built with very little lead time in advance of harvest. Contractors wait until completion of harvest activity before seeding. Typically about 2 years for BCTS.

Bert: How effective is the seeding?

Dave: It controls erosion, weeds, water quality, cattle management, etc.

Indicator # 15 - Percent of Permanent Status Roads That Have Maintenance Completed as per Programs.

Results reviewed, the following discussion ensued:

Bert: where is the boundary between “maintenance” and reacting to problems as they arise?

Mike: This Indicator includes only those non-routine actions which are not part of day-to-day maintenance. E.g. the completion of a culvert repair requirement identified during an inspection is included, grading the road is not.

Indicator # 16 - Level of Participation In the Annual Reporting of Results and the Number of Advisory Group Meetings Held Annually.

Results reviewed, no issues, no further discussion.

Indicator # 17 - Number of Registrations to a Recognized Third Party Certification.

This Indicator has been removed from the SFM Plan.

Indicator # 18 - Protected Ecosystems

Results reviewed, the following discussion ensued:

Frances: still feels that the % protected area located outside of Wells Gary Park should be separately indicated (and increased).

Indicator # 19 - Percent of Affected Ranchers with Whom Forest Planning is Discussed.

It was noted that the title of this Indicator should be changed to reflect the inclusion of trappers.
[Facilitator's note: this was done on the 2010 Plan]

Indicator # 20 - Level Of Conformance to Strategies In Plans Designed to Achieve Preservation, Retention and Partial Retention of Visual Quality Objectives.

Alf: Who checks for compliance with the VQO's?

Rick: This is a Compliance and Enforcement issue and is evaluated as part of their routine inspections.

Dave: Canfor recently underwent a Forest Practices Board audit which included evaluation of VQO compliance. Canfor is expecting a favorable report.

Indicator # 21 - Mean Annual Increment (MAI)

Results noted, this Indicator has been removed from the 2010 SFM Plan. No further discussion.

Indicator # 22 - Forest Age-class Distribution

Results noted, no specific discussion ensued.

Indicator # 23 - The Number of Working Relationships with Applicable First Nations.

Results noted. Frances was glad to see the inclusion of the requested further detail on the types of partnerships. No other specific discussion ensued.

Indicator # 24 - Number of Presentations or Field Trips to Schools, Public Groups and Individuals.

The target was met, but the number of visits was significantly down from the previous year.

Bert: Is this sustainable, given the poor economics?

Mike: During the latter part of 2009 there was a \$ shortfall to the Forest Educator position. There will likely be a similar sized program in 2010 to 2009.

Rick: About 140 of the 203 actions were conducted by BCTS/MoF. Given the funding changes coming down the pipe may be smaller program next year.

Alf: Is there room for a forestry curriculum in BC High Schools?

Mike: School District 73 is supporting the program through provision of an office and access to a photocopier. There is also a voluntary 3-4 day program offered at McQueen Lake School. They (SD 73) have been trying to resurrect the former Forestry program at Norkam High school – not sufficient enrollment though.

Indicator # 25 - Participation with First Nations to Implement and Improve Upon The Revised Archaeological Overview Assessment Model and Process.

Mike: there is on-going annual refinement to this program
No further discussion ensued.

Indicator # 26 - Participant Satisfaction Survey

Results reviewed, there was no further specific discussion on this Indicator

Indicator # 27 - Public Awareness of the SFM Plan

Results reviewed, there was no further specific discussion on this Indicator

Indicator # 28 - Number of Opportunities/ Avenues for Public Participation in Decision-Making Processes.

Results reviewed' the following discussion ensued:

Frances: what are the implications of all these meetings (LRUP's, etc.) which are no longer happening?

Rick: ILMB has the lead on these sorts of meetings, but none were scheduled.

Bert: I've heard these types of public meetings have become a thing of the past.

Dave: The Auditors will begin to question these indicators if this continues.

Indicator # 29 Report on Number of Research and Extension Initiatives Licencees Have Participated in.

Frances: the tabular summary of the research initiatives is an improvement over previous years Monitoring Reports, but would like to see more "rigor" in reporting on the programs. Statistically valid? Who are the Lead Investigators? Where can you get more info?, etc.

Frances: Feels inclusion of company membership in Forrex as that part of the report doesn't relate much info. What are they doing?

Action Item: Frances will supply the facilitator a draft “template” for completion by licencees to report on key elements of their research projects. This will be circulated to the PAG for further discussion.

Mike: Expressed frustration over the lack of research information forthcoming from the MoF. There is a lot going on that we know nothing about.

Bert: We should look to the included list of research for potential presenters at future PAG Meetings.

Action Item: Frances will speak with TRU faculty members about possible presentations to PAG on research activities. Facilitator will try and book them for next PAG meeting.

Indicator # 30 - Percent of Harvested Cutblocks Having Three or More Tree Species Identified in the Free-Growing Inventory.

Alf: At the time of free-growing, what percent of the trees are of planted origin, and what % natural ingress

Licencees: Can’t tell at the free-growing stage, but there is generally quite a bit of fill-in.

5.0 Potential Merging of Kamloops – N. Thompson and Merritt TSA SFM Plans – Mike Bragg

Mike: Since the last time we discussed this issue the world in Merritt and Kamloops has changed dramatically. Weyerhaeuser and West Fraser have withdrawn from the process, and the Merritt licencees are now onside with merging the plans. There has also been discussion of bringing the Lillooet TSA in (this happens to be the same area as the Forest Educator position).

The plan is to use the Kamloops 2010 Plan as the basis and add on to it as required for the specifics of the other TSA(s). Merritt is hoping to have the merging completed by the end of June, 2010.

Action Item: Mike & Rick to forward progress summaries from Pat Salm on to the Facilitator for distribution to the Kamloops PAG.

6.0 Next Meetings

The Next PAG meetings will be:

Fall Field Trip

Thursday, September 23rd, 2010
BCTS Hosting - Tour Details TBA

Fall PAG Meeting

Thursday, November 25th, 2010
Details TBA