

# Nicola Thompson Fraser SFM Plan Public Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

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**November 21, 2019. Brambles Bakery, Merritt**

**Attendees:**

Norm Hanson	Leona Antoine	Harley Wright	Frank Etchart
Liis Jeffries	Chris Lepsoe	Reuben Irvine	Gerry Sanford
Bert Park	Shawn Larson	Craig Hewlett	Aidan Coyles

**Speaker:** Ed Nedokus

**Facilitator:** Pat Salm

**Introduction, agenda review, safety:**

The meeting started at 9:30 am. The meeting began with introductions, meeting room orientation and a review of the meeting agenda. Aspen's 2018 Summary Monitoring Report was added to the agenda.

**Action Items:**

Two items from the previous meeting were included with the agenda. The first item will be covered with a presentation by Ed Nedokus outlining the process Aspen Planers use to manage the requirements of the Migratory Bird Convention Act.

Craig spoke to the second item (improvements to target 24) and specifically on how the Kamloops target uses a subset of watersheds that were deemed to be higher risk. Craig explained that Gilbert Smith has little activity in these watersheds and as such does not contribute to the target reporting statistics. At the same time Craig pointed out that in most cases they go to great lengths to manage water at the watershed and site level. Shawn agreed that looking at a different subset such as those where streams are designated as fisheries or temperature sensitive might be a preferred route. Leona mentioned that there was considerable work being done by the Fraser Basin Council on water and water values in the Cascades TSA. Shawn offered to bring in a guest speaker such as Michael Milne to review the types of things that are being researched and considered in managing watersheds.

Action: Shawn to contact and invite Michael Milne to speak at next meeting.

Action: Craig and Shawn to continue to evaluate how target 24 could be adjusted.

**CSA External Certification Audits:**

Pat has posted the detailed audit reports to our NTF website. The companies quickly reviewed their audits and discussed any action items pertinent to the advisory group.

**Aspen Planers:** The audit occurred on October 23-24, 2019. Shawn explained the audit process and reviewed the findings in the audit report. Shawn indicated that the audit identified an issue with respect to target 14. Aspen is proposing changes to the target that will help better define their identification and management/protection of culturally important sites. These will be discussed later in the meeting (proposed changes to the 2020 SFM Plan). Shawn also noted the corrections made to their 2018 Summary Monitoring Report – sent out earlier to the advisory group.

**Gilbert Smith:** The audit occurred on September 10-12, 2019. Craig reviewed the audit report and findings. Reuben indicated that he had a phone interview with the auditor and was asked information regarding the PAG process. The audit identified a non-conformance related to how a few of the targets were reported on. Craig has proposed a change to the reporting template in the SFM Plan to be discussed later in the meeting (proposed changes to the 2020 SFM Plan). Bert asked for an explanation of the reference to rancher communications. Craig explained that this was a conversation regarding site preparation (stumping an area for root rot) and how it might impede cattle access. Steps were taken to ensure access remained following treatment.

### **Migratory Bird Laws and Due Diligence – Ed Nedokus**

At the previous meeting, public members sought information on how licensees were managing to the intent of the Migratory Bird Convention Act (MCBA) –explaining what is currently done to avoid birds and nests. As a result, Ed Nedokus was asked to explain the process that Aspen Planers uses to avoid incidental during forest operations.

Ed went through the legal requirements of the MCBA, then using an example of a planned harvest area showed a map overlaying a risk rating of areas. The risk rating was work originally done by Canfor and is also used by BC Timber Sales. Risk ratings are based on the ecological classification, forest cover and age of an area. Cut blocks planned within higher risk areas require a higher level of due diligence if harvesting is planned within the nesting season. That could include prescriptive measures such as wider riparian buffers or greater within block retention.

Bert expressed a concern that bird surveys indicate that populations of migratory birds are declining overall in Canada and wondered if this strategy is being applied on all operations throughout the year. Ed explained that the intent of the process that he was describing was to manage the legal requirements of the MCBA and to reduce incidental take.

A copy of Ed's presentation materials will be posted to the members section of the NTF SFM website. The advisory group thanked Ed for his presentation.

## Review Proposed Changes to the 2019 SFM Plan.

Pat reviewed the summary of proposed changes document sent out to everyone in advance of the meeting.

The two proposed changes were a result of this years audits. The first was a change Target 14, the second was adding clarification to Targets 17 and 18 as they appear in Appendix 3 of the Plan.

The possible changes to target 14 generated considerable discussion. Conversations centered around differentiating broad values such as water from more site specific features such as a stone quarry or pit house. In the end the group agreed to clarify that the target was intended for site specific situations by making a slight change to it and adding additional background information. While the 100% target was a desired goal, the group agreed to a 10% variance to the target. The additional changes are shown in red italics below:

<b>Target</b>	<b>14.</b> 100 % <i>conservation or</i> protection of culturally important, sacred and spiritual sites that have been identified and mapped- <b>and</b> 100% conformance to all <i>operational</i> plan commitments specifically designed to manage the culturally important, sacred and spiritual-sites that have been identified and mapped.
<b>Background</b>	This indicator recognizes the importance of managing and protecting culturally important, sacred and spiritual sites, during forestry operations. <i>Licenseses generally conduct cultural Heritage Resource evaluations on all roads and cutblocks in advance of operations. Where necessary, the evaluations will include recommendations to mitigate impacts.</i> <i>Generally, the mapped location of these sites are specific - identifying features such as a CMT, pit house or ceremonial ground. The target is not meant to assess conformance to broad principles or values that are difficult to field verify and map.</i> First Nations, with the benefit of local and traditional knowledge may provide valuable information concerning the specific location and use of these sites as well as the specific forest characteristics requiring protection or management. The intent of the indicator is to manage and/or protect those truly important sites, thus there is a degree of reasonableness in identifying the sites.
<b>Variance</b>	<del>None.</del> <i>10% to allow for situations where either the identification of a unique site or it's mitigation strategy falls short of evolving goals or values.</i>

Changes to appendix 3 were more of a housekeeping nature to ensure companies reporting into the plan are consistent in how Targets 17 and 18 were reported on. The agreed to changes are shown below:

<b>17</b>	2.1.1	Target: All cutblocks declared free growing in the reporting period will reach free growing requirements on or before the latest date. Also report area on those cutblocks that outperformed late free growing requirements and average time by which requirements were exceeded. <b>Reporting:</b> Licensees will report on the cutblock area (hectares) that achieved free growing status on or before their late free growing date and the average time (years) that the cutblock outperformed it's late free growing date (weighted average).	Area (ha) where late free-growing <del>date is due</del> <b>was declared</b> in the reporting period _____ Area (ha) of cutblocks (above) that achieved free growing status <b>before late date</b> _____ Average time (years) that cut blocks (above) out performed late date _____
<b>18</b>	2.1.3, 3.1.1, 4.1.1	Target: Less than 6 percent (7% for the Lillooet TSA), on average, of harvested areas will be in permanent roads and landings. <b>Reporting:</b> Licensees will report the area (ha) of permanent roads and landings identified in operational plans over gross block area (ha) for cutblocks harvested during the reporting year, using information contained within Licensee plans.	Gross cutblock area (ha) <b>of blocks that were harvested</b> _____ Area (ha) in permanent roads and landings _____

Both the summary page and the red-line version of the Plan are posted on the NTF website (members only section).

#### Discussion of Matt Manuel's email:

Matt followed up his earlier email regarding opportunities to make changes to the SFM Plan with a second email sent to the group on the morning of today's meeting. The email was reviewed at the meeting. Most people thought that there are indeed opportunities to improve the SFM Plan's context and content. After some good discussion it was felt that the best course of action was to have Matt work directly with Shawn Larson (Aspen) on any specific changes, particularly if the changes involve the existing suite of indicators and targets. Any proposed changes that have been developed could then be brought forward - either at the advisory group meeting in the spring or at a later date if it is still a work in progress. The broader advisory group would then need to review and endorse changes.

Pat will reply to Matt's email as per the discussion above and suggest he work with Shawn on proposed changes.

## **Current DFA Issues, Summary, Wrap-Up**

### **PAG 2020 Field Trip**

Agreed that we should schedule a field trip – to occur next fall. Discussion on topics and date for the tour to be discussed at the meeting in the spring.

### **Review of 2019 Monitoring Report**

Agreed to a tentative spring meeting date of Thursday, May 14, 2020. Advisory group meeting to review the Licensees performance against the 2019 SFM Plan indicators and targets.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.