

**Vanderhoof Sustainable Forest Management Plan Public Advisory Group
March 24, 2011 Meeting
Birch Room, Ministry of Forests, Mines and Lands, Vanderhoof**

In Attendance

Public

Dan Brooks	Ginny Springer
Randy Springer	Ron Stephen
Gerd Erasmus	
Ray Brandner	

Licensee Team

Jim McCormack (for Ralph Hausot)	Sara Lazaruk
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Facilitation and Support

Dwight Scott Wolfe	Loni Spletzer
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Observers

David Sommerville - BCTS	Cathy Middleton - MFML
	Jim McCormack- SFMP Coordinator, Canfor

Guests

George LaBrash
Frank Craig – Archer Cultural Resource
Management (archaeologist)
Ed Domhof – Canfor, Plateau

Absent with Regrets

John DeGagne

Documents Distributed

- Draft Agenda for Vanderhoof Sustainable Forest Management Plan (SFMP) Public Advisory Group Meeting
- Draft Minutes of Vanderhoof SFMP Public Advisory Group Meeting from December 9, 2010
- Red binders with version 3.0 SFMP and 2009/2010 Annual Report
- Revised Transition Matrix

1. Welcome and Introductions (Sara Lazaruk, Jim McCormack)

The meeting commenced at 4 pm.

Introduction of PAG members, Licensees and guests. Ed Domhof – Plateau employee, George LaBrush – Vanderhoof resident, Frank Craig – Archer Cultural Resource Management (archaeologist).

2. Agenda, Meeting Summary and Action Items Review

1. Reviewed Agenda: 2.2.1 Additions and Deletions to the Forest Area will be tabled for future meeting. Agenda adopted as revised.
2. Reviewed Minutes of the meeting from December 9, 2010 – minutes accepted as written.

3. Handed out new SFMP binders and revised Matrix.
 4. Reviewed Meeting Evaluation Results – average score dropped to 3.8/5, reviewed comments.
 5. Reviewed Consensus building from Terms of Reference, reviewed definition of consensus.
3. Reviewed Changes to SFMP document (in red binders) as a result of BCTS internal audit. The changes include updating the Site Index Indicator to current status from 2004 status and adding in columns for Value and Objective.
4. **Reviewed Action Items from December 9, 2010 – Jim McCormack, Sara Lazaruk**
1. Action #1: Review suite of Core Indicators and identify those that could address the following habitat elements (rejuvenating riparian zones, deciduous seral stages, coarse woody debris and standing snags). Action completed.
 - rejuvenating riparian zones: to be discussed under Core Indicator 1.1.4.c Degree of within-stand structural retention (Number of non-conformances where forest operations are not consistent with riparian management requirements as identified in operational plans).
 - deciduous seral stages: to be discussed under Core Indicator 1.1.2 Forest Area by type or species composition (Percent distribution of forest type (treed conifer, treed broadleaf, treed mixed) >20 years old across DFA) and Core Indicator 1.1.3 Forest Area by seral stage or age class (Percent late seral distribution by ecological unit across the DFA).
 - coarse woody debris: to be discussed under Core Indicator 3.1.2 Level of downed woody debris (Percent of harvested blocks reviewed where post harvest CWD levels are within the targets contained in plans) (on agenda this meeting).
 - standing snags: to be discussed under Core Indicator 1.1.4.a Degree of within-stand structural retention (Percent of stand structure retained across the DFA in harvested areas), and Core Indicator 1.1.4.b Degree of within-stand structural retention (Percent of blocks meeting dispersed retention levels as prescribed in the site plan / logging plan.).
 2. Action #2: Provide reforestation options for discussion with the PAG that are legal yet still offer some flexibility. Options have been identified and will be discussed later in the meeting. Action completed.
 3. PAG member asked about looking at these indicators in the transitional development matrix in advance and providing feedback. PAG members are encouraged to prep ahead of time and then make suggestions when the indicators appear on the agenda. Suggestions received from PAG members prior to the meeting will be looked at and discussed with the larger group at scheduled PAG meetings.
5. **Coarse Woody Debris - Gerd Erasmus**
1. Gerd Erasmus delivered a presentation on Coarse Woody Debris as a Critical Habitat Element
 - Gerd reviewed the main functions of CWD for animal habitat (voles, squirrels, rabbit, beaver, birds, etc.).
 - Reproduction/resting/escape:
 - ◆ concealed spaces/dens
 - ◆ marking sites
 - ◆ display/drumming sites

- ◆ resting, preening sites
- Travel
 - ◆ concealed runways
 - ◆ exposed, raised travel lanes
- Foraging
 - ◆ hunting perches
 - ◆ food-handling, feeding sites
- Access under snow
 - ◆ Warm resting sites
 - ◆ food
- Gerd expressed concern over different types of logging practices with significantly different habitat results and gave what he considered examples of poor practice and proactive approaches.
- Gerd gave examples of the issue of riparian areas with climax forest conditions (i.e. no deciduous) and the detrimental effects on beaver populations.
- Studies have identified what is required for Fisher reproduction and resting habitat.
- Forest heath vs fiber health – many “dead” trees provide food source (eg. ants) for other animals (Pileated Woodpecker).
- The guidance documents on fisher habitat can be found here:
 - i. FORREX Ecosystem Management and Conservation Biology Web Page, under the “Highlights” section: http://www.forrex.org/program/con_bio/clust_ecosystems.asp.
 - ii. The direct hyperlink to the file (10.56 Mb) is:
http://www.forrex.org/program/con_bio/PDF/Workshops/Fisher_wildlife_forestry/Fisher_Habitat_AND_Forestry_Workshop_Presentations.pdf

2. Discussion:

- PAG member would like to see Forest Management Plans taking action to revise logging standards and other CWD management practices in light of this new information.
- PAG member appreciated passion of presentation, but wondered if the PAG group is the right forum to make the necessary changes. Presenter has high hopes that working outside government is the key. There are companies that will buy “greener” products which will bring about changes needed.
- PAG member appreciated presentation and would like to see much more purposeful planning rather than meeting legal minimums incidentally.

6. Element 3.1 Soil Quality and Quantity: Core Indicator 3.1.2 Level of Downed Woody Debris

1. Jim McCormack provided a background presentation on Coarse Woody Debris Best Management Practices.

- Reviewed key terms and definitions of coarse woody debris and decay classes
- Reviewed CWD - Stages of Decay (stage 1-9 from live to stump)
- Reviewed Soil and Water discussion items: soil productivity (long-term nutrient levels shallow soils, BMP's for soil protection) and the role of CWD.
- Reviewed research undertaken by Ruth Lloyd on Canfor's Houston Operations regarding Coarse Woody Debris Best Management Practices. 3 sites surveyed, different instructions given to each group of loggers, results noted and the loggers trained accordingly
- Best Management Practices for CWD include:
 - Retain standing deciduous trees where operationally feasible; otherwise, left where felled.
 - Same for Douglas-fir, especially vets.
 - Leave non-merchantable stems & under-utilization stems on block
 - Retain clumps of viable non-pine natural regeneration.
 - Existing CWD in Wildlife Tree Patches and reserve areas.
 - Stubbed Trees to varying degrees e.g. along riparian / Machine Free Zones
- In addition, BCTS practices the following:
 - Use stub-trees as anchors; build loosely constructed piles around stubs. Target 1 pile / 5ha, for blocks > 15ha.
 - Radiate some longer pieces of CWD out from the pile(s).
 - Retains CWD in clumps.
 - Possibly keeping longer logs in tact.
 - Jackstraw – haphazard orientation.
- A recent survey of Canfor CWD performance and target achievement in the Vanderhoof Operation showed that performance was well above the per hectare target for average volume, average # of pieces, average piece size, plus number of pieces over 6m in length.
- Reviewed coarse woody debris in managed vs un-managed stands including piece size, rate of decay, etc.

2. Proposed Indicator: Percent of harvested blocks reviewed where post harvest CWD levels are within the targets contained in plans. Target: 100% of blocks reviewed annually will meet targets Variance: 0%

3. Existing Indicator #12: The amount of Coarse Woody Debris retained on prescribed areas. Target: Sustain CWD levels >4 logs per ha after harvesting. Variance: 0.

4. Discussion:

- PAG member concerned about cruise-based sales: PAG member concerned that the CWD standards will slip with this new method of timber pricing and wanted to know how the Plan Proponents will show that there will be a commitment to maintain the standard?

- PAG member feels that order of accountability in the proposed indicator statement is reversed (site plan to meet objective). PAG member does not want to see site plan dictating good forest management. LT responded that it is the Best Management Practices that are put into the indicator detail sheet in the SFM Plan which will further describe strategies.

Action Item #1: Licensee Team to include the details of Best Management Practices for CWD in the SFM Plan for Indicator # 3.1.2. Due: Next revision to the SFM Plan.

- PAG member still doesn't see "habitat" mentioned in the definition of CWD. LT referred to Indicator 1.2.1 (Degree of habitat protection for selected focal species, including species at risk) as a better place to make statements about habitat protection. PAG member acknowledges that habitat will be discussed in other areas (eg. snags, brush etc., but wants habitat acknowledged in this section. Does not want this to be only about legal requirements. LT responded that the indicator detail sheet text will link CWD with habitat.
- PAG member said that by using Best Management Practices we are moving in the right direction.
- PAG member asked if fisher will be specifically addressed. LT responded that indicators within Criterion 1 will utilize biodiversity strategies which will focus on species at risk, potentially including fisher.
- PAG suggested revising the proposed indicator statement to read: "Percent of harvested blocks audited where post harvest CWD BMP's are followed". Target: 100% of blocks reviewed annually will meet targets. Variance: 0%. LT supported this suggested revision.

5. PAG consensus on revised proposed indicator: Percent of harvested blocks audited where post harvest CWD BMP's are followed". Target: 100% of blocks reviewed annually will meet targets. Variance: 0%.

7. Element 3.1 Soil Quality and Quantity: Core Indicator 3.1.1 Level of Soil Disturbance

1. Sara Lazaruk provided a background presentation on Level of Soil Disturbance.

- Reviewed definitions: soil disturbance, sensitive soils, Net area to be reforested (NAR), etc
- Reviewed mandatory discussion items: 1) soil productivity (long term nutrient levels, shallow soils, best management practices for soil protection), 2) seasons of operations (operating windows, impacts on soil during frozen and unfrozen conditions), 3) site rehabilitation in areas of severe soil disturbance.

2. Proposed Indicator: Percent of harvested blocks meeting soil disturbance objectives identified in plans. Target: 100% of blocks meet soil disturbance objectives. Variance: None.

3. Existing Indicator 11: Percentage of blocks meeting soil conservation targets after harvesting and silviculture activities. Target: 100% of blocks meet soil conservation targets after harvesting & silviculture activities. Variance: -5%.

4. Discussion:

- PAG member asked if disc trenching is considered a soil disturbance? LT responded that it is not necessarily a detriment, and this indicator is for measuring detrimental soil disturbances.

- PAG member asked if there will be similar detail provided in the indicator detail sheet. LT responded that soil disturbance definitions and legal requirements will be documented on the indicator detail sheet.
- PAG suggested revising the proposed indicator statement to read: “Percent of harvested blocks meeting legal soil disturbance objectives”. Target: 100%. Variance: 5%.
- Soil disturbance limits can be found in Section 35 of the Forest Practices and Planning Regulation:
http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/12_14_2004#section35

5. PAG consensus on revised proposed indicator: Percent of harvested blocks meeting legal soil disturbance objectives. Target: 100%. Variance: 5%.

8. Element 2.1: Ecosystem Resilience: Core Indicator 2.1.1 Reforestation Success

1. Jim McCormack provided a background presentation on Reforestation Success.

- Reviewed current government approved stocking standards for the Vanderhoof Forest Stewardship Plan.
- Reviewed the stocking standard approval tests.
 - Situations and circumstances where the standard applies.
 - Tree species are ecologically suitable.
 - Address immediate and long term forest health issues.
 - Economically valuable supply of commercial timber.
 - Consistency with Timber Supply Review.

2. Proposed Indicator: *Average Regeneration delay for Stands established annually*. Target: Regeneration established in 3 years or less. Variance: 1 year.

3. Current Indicator: Percent of harvested standard units meeting the Regeneration Delay date. Target: 100% of harvested standard units meet the Regeneration delay date. Variance: -5%.

4. Discussion:

- PAG member asked if there will be similar detail provided in the indicator detail sheet. LT responded that regeneration delay definitions and legal requirements will be documented on the indicator detail sheet.
- PAG member asked about Canfor’s rationale for their proposed pest management plan and it’s potential effects on habitat. LT responded that there is currently no objective in the SFMP for pest management.
- PAG member asked about forest health issues as mentioned in stocking standard approval tests – his opinion is that it should be called “fiber health” issues (a healthy forest is different from healthy fiber plant).
- PAG member would like more detail on brush. PAG member wants to know if the average stocking will provide enough brush for habitat. LT responded that within existing stocking

standards this should be addressed unless there was no brush to begin with due to pre-harvest site conditions.

- PAG member would like to see deciduous management strategy that would deal with early seral stage deciduous and pest management. LT will investigate and see where it could fit into the SFM Plan (possibly Core Indicator 1.1.2 Forest Area by type or species composition).
- PAG member likes the target of 3 years with 1 year variance, but would like to see the Free Growing indicator #8 retained in the SFM Plan. LT responded that they are legally required to get to free-growing so it is already built in as an obligation. LT and PAG agreed to leave Indicator #8 in the plan and discuss at a later date.

5. PAG consensus on the Proposed Indicator: Average Regeneration delay for Stands established annually. Target: Regeneration established in 3 years or less. Variance: 1 year.

9. New Members:

1. Ed Domhof, Frank Craig and George LaBrush, are all expressed interest in joining the Vanderhoof PAG.
2. PAG and LT confirmed the appointments of Ed Domhof, Frank Craig and George LaBrush to the Vanderhoof PAG.

9. PAG Meeting Evaluation Survey Distributed

10. Next Meeting:

April, 28, 2011 4-8 pm

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, District Office (Birch Room), 1522 Highway 16, Vanderhoof, B.C.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm

Action Items

	ACTION	WHO	DEADLINE	STATUS
12-09-11-1	Review suite of Core Indicators and identify those that could address the following habitat elements (rejuvenating riparian zones, deciduous seral stages, coarse woody debris and standing snags).	LT	Next Meeting	Completed
12-09-11-2	Provide reforestation options for discussion with the PAG that are legal yet still offer some flexibility in regeneration delay and stocking standards.	LT	Next Meeting	Completed
03-24-11-1	Include the details of Best Management Practices for CWD in the SFM Plan for Indicator # 3.1.2.	LT	Next Revision of SFM Plan	