

**Vanderhoof Sustainable Forest Management Plan Public Advisory Group
November 4, 2010 Meeting
Village Inn, Vanderhoof**

In Attendance

Public

Dan Brooks	Ginny Springer
Randy Springer	Ron Stephen
Gerd Erasmus	

Licensee Team

Ralph Hausot	Bruce Middleton
Sara Lazaruk	

Facilitation and Support

Dwight Scott Wolfe	Loni Spletzer
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Observers

Jim McCormack - Canfor

Guests

none

Absent with Regrets

Ray Brandner	Steve Little
John DeGagne	

Documents Distributed

- Draft Agenda for Vanderhoof Sustainable Forest Management Plan (SFMP) Public Advisory Group
- Draft Minutes of Vanderhoof SFMP Public Advisory Group Meeting from February 4, 2010
- Canfor Vanderhoof Surveillance Audit July 23, 2010
- Sustainable Forest Management Plan 2009/10 Annual Report (Vanderhoof Defined Forest Area Licensee Team)
- Order Establishing Landscape Biodiversity Objectives for the Prince George Timber Supply Area October 20, 2004
- Sustainable Forest Management Public Opinion Survey Prince George TSA: comparison between 2006/2007 and 2009

1. Welcome and Introductions (Bruce Middleton)

The meeting commenced at 4 pm.

New Licensee Representatives: Sara Lazaruk (Planning Forester, BCTS) will be replacing Bruce Middleton, Ralph Hausot (Planning Forester, Canfor) will be replacing Janine Gervais.

Observers and PAG Members were introduced: Jim McCormack (Planning Coordinator South-West, Canfor)

2. Agenda, Meeting Summary and Action Items Review

1. Reviewed Agenda: accepted as written
2. Reviewed Minutes of the meeting from February 4, 2010
 - a. Correction: Ginny Springer was not in attendance, will be put into Absent with Regrets
 - b. PAG member asked if Steve Little was now on the PAG. The Licensee Team responded that Steve has not formally been added to the PAG.
 - c. Minutes accepted as revised
3. Reviewed Actions
 - a. There were no new actions resulting from the February 4, 2010 meeting

Action Item #1: Facilitator to contact Steve Little regarding joining the PAG. Due: Next meeting.

3. Updated Vanderhoof SFM Plan – Brief summary of Version 3 (Bruce Middleton)

1. This version represents a complete revision of the SFMP framework (i.e the original Slocan Framework revised to CSA with values, objectives, indicators and targets). This version incorporates a complete update of all revisions to the SFM plan since version 2.0 (circa 2006) including indicator modification & deletion, implementation strategies, current practices, current status, indicator targets, new legislation, and continual improvement. This version does not include any new content required with the new version of the CSA SFM Standard (Z809-2008).
2. Plant diversity index – this indicator cannot be measured as it is currently written in the SFM Plan. The Licensee Team have had problems trying to make this indicator meaningful as it has rather complicated science associated with it. PAG member asked if this indicator had previously been flagged as “not met” by the auditor. The Licensee Team confirmed that this is the same item. The indicator could be added to the Continuous Improvement Matrix and try to rework but not advised as a wise use of PAG and LT time. PAG was in agreement that this indicator should be removed from the SFMP.
3. PAG member noted that this version of the SFM Plan seems easier to read. PAG member asked about having to start from scratch. LT clarified that many sections will only have to be modified as they already will dovetail nicely with the new CSA standard.
4. PAG member asked if there is something in the plan that talks about how long the current version of the SFM plan will be in effect. LT clarified that there is now a 2 year timeframe to update this plan to align with the new CSA Standard (Z809-2008).
5. PAG member noted that there is new guidance emerging in other Forest Districts regarding Fisher habitat and its relation to CWD indicators and operations. PAG member would like to direct LT attention to this guidance and this should be taken into consideration when reviewing related indicators. 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.
6. PAG member asked about the “what if” scenarios written into the SFM Plan. LT clarified that those scenarios were a requirement in the previous CSA Standard (Z08-2002) and were part of the previous version of the SFM Plan and are carried forward.
7. PAG has adopted the new SFMP.

4. CSA Z809-08 A Comparison to the Z809-02 Standard (Bruce Middleton)

1. Bruce reviewed highlights of the revised CSA standard which become official in the Fall of 2009. This is the 3rd edition of the standard (1996, 2002, 2008). The standard is reviewed and updated every 5 years. There is a three year time for transitioning to the new standard once it becomes official. There are now two years left.

2. - Summary of Key Changes:

a. includes rigorous public participation requirements and a performance framework for addressing the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers criteria for Sustainable Forest Management at the Defined Forest Area level.

i. PAG member wanted clarification on “rigorous public participation”. There was some discussion around the new standards requiring minimum numbers of public involvement and recruitment activities for new members.

b. The new standard requires a minimum of 35 Core Indicators. Currently there are 43 Indicators in the Vanderhoof SFM Plan. The standard includes provision for the addition of “locally selected indicators.

i. PAG member asked if there is a very specific process and guidelines required by CSA since these Indicators are mandatory. There may be a lot of science needed to support certain Indicators. PAG member asked LT what they think of this new Standard. The LT stated that the Core Indicators will help reporting consistency and efficiency. Individual SFM Plans will contain enough flexibility to reflect individual regions and needs.

c. The standard requires key topics to be discussed during the development of Core Indicators. These represent issues commonly faced by forest managers and interested parties in DFAs across Canada.

d. The new standard includes a variety of Aboriginal requirements including understanding & incorporating Aboriginal forest values, knowledge & uses into forestry plans as well as capacity building and meaningful involvement.

i. PAG member asked if there was an existing indicator around aboriginal communication. The LT noted that there are indicators in the SFM Plan already related to First Nations opportunities.

e. The new standard includes a Safety, Worker Protection, and Community Stability requirements.

i. PAG member thought this was outside the scope of the SFM Plan since the companies have their own programs and systems in place. PAG would simply want to see that these programs are being followed (eg. WorkSafe)

3. General Discussion

a. PAG member asked if new Standards are available on online. The new Standard can be found here: <http://www.csagroup.org/%5Crepository%5Cgroup%5CZ809-08.pdf>.

b. PAG member asked about how rumoured changes in tenure (area vs. volume-based tenure) would affect the SFM Plan implementation. Observer commented that there is talk about tenure reform within the Forest Service and that this talk has been going on for years. PAG member asked how enhanced utilization would impact indicators such as CWD and stand level retention. Canfor and BCTS have processes in place for wildlife tree retention and CWD at the block level

and these would be maintained regardless of utilization. LT noted that Wildlife Tree Retention Areas are mapped and tracked – this has been done for the last 4-5 years.

c. PAG member looking forward to transition since he felt that PAG had stagnated and this is an opportunity to open up and refresh the SFM Plan.

d. PAG member would like LT to expedite the process by doing most of the groundwork and then presenting summaries to PAG (not re-invent the wheel) since time commitment is an issue. There will be more frequent meetings to transition to new Standards. PAG member looking forward to working through his specific interest areas.

5. Public Opinion Survey – PG TSA (2009 & Comparison) – Sara Lazaruk

1. Survey done on Prince George TSA – Comparison between 2006/2007 (1st wave) and 2009 (2nd wave). The report is online at the project website www.sfm-pos.ca.
2. The PAG was encouraged to ask questions and these will be noted in the minutes and provided to Howard Harshaw.
3. It was noted that the population statistic for Fort. St. James is incorrect
4. PAG member noted that approx 70% of those surveyed stated that their main connection to forests was non-motorized recreation – he thinks that people may have had connection to the forest for canoeing, hiking etc, when they were young but not representative of current activities
5. PAG member asked for definition of “biocentric” from slide 9 – Question 2 on the survey
6. Global warming moved to lower priority in 2009. PAG member asked about negative rating for “benefits that First Nations receive”. (rating is .65 and then .85 in 2009). How can rating be negative?
7. PAG member requested that numeric values be put on tops of bar graphs. Details on the graphs can be found at the website and the report. PAG member likes visible representation in graph form, but would like it to be more quantified than “1st wave more agreeable”, etc. Would be nice to see the significance represented in graph form.
8. Question 8: Priority to manage mountain pine beetle, this is not an issue any more, so the 2009 response was lower.
9. Question 9: Management of Rare Plants & Wildlife, PAG member wondered what people think when this is answered and if other options were given. It was suggested that no other choices given in order not to bias the outcome. (etc if Mining option given, then person thinks about that and is influenced differently). PAG member who completed survey said his responses were based on intuition.
10. Question 10: Reviewed Effects of Climate Change on your community, discussion about people’s observations and how they changed. Noticing and doing anything in response are relatively unchanged in new survey. PAG member felt “Climate-gate” on the news (media) would influence opinion. PAG also wondered if pine beetle epidemic coincided with public opinion about climate change.
11. Question 10 - Noted relationship between personal commitment/response. Also, current employment situation must play a part in the responses.
12. LT wanted to clarify that this review of the outcomes of this survey was intended to make everyone aware of public opinion and then take care that PAG considers public opinion when looking at Indicators. PAG member does see value in these types of presentations – interesting to see how public values change. PAG concerned with drop in number of responses in 2nd wave – it was clarified that

response rate is higher probably because sample size was smaller. Approach in 2nd wave was to contact people by phone etc. not just use mail outs.

13. PAG members discussed old maps. PAG member says that surveys can be manipulated by the media or others. PAG member felt it is more intuition than science. PAG member felt that the survey is a good way to involve the public in Sustainable Forest Management.

6. Sustainable Forest Management Plan 2009/10 Annual Report (Bruce Middleton)

1. Summary of 2008/09 Results:

- a. Thirty-nine indicators are meeting target
- b. Two indicators not met
- c. Two indicators in progress

2. For each measure in the Annual Report the LT has clearly stated whether the target was met, not met or in progress. For each measure that was not met, the LT has provided details on What Happened, Root Cause and Action Plan.

3. Indicators in Progress (2):

- a. Distinct Habitat Types (page 2)
 - i. The DFA is located within the west region of the study area, which is represented by 60 ecosystem groupings. Since both the DFA itself and the ecosystem groupings have changed substantially in the last several years, no meaningful comparisons to the original 2004 Ecosystem Representation Analysis (ERA) baseline target data can be made. Appropriate targets will be determined for the revised DFA once new baseline data has been calculated. Continual improvement efforts will examine the relevance of this indicator, given the severe level of pine mortality within the DFA and the caution that meaningful ecological thresholds are difficult to determine.
- b. Monitoring Access Management (page 9)
 - i. Licensees, BCTS and Government staff have developed interim access management implementation strategies (Access Management Plan Implementation Principles). Discussions continue to focus on obtaining AMP objective clarity, assignment of responsibility and the development of an effectiveness monitoring plan. MoFR stewardship staff have agreed to monitor the implementation of the AMP, thus enabling initial baseline conformance data to be gathered. Once sufficient baseline data has been obtained to determine whether implementation strategies are effective, some conclusion can be drawn on which AMP values are at risk and which AMP areas should be chosen for the development of effectiveness monitoring plans.

4. Indicators Not Meeting Target (2):

- a. Young Forest Patch Size (page 3)
 - i. As currently written in the SFMP, the objective pertaining to young forest patch size was not achieved (only two patch sizes are within the target variances). However consistent with the Order Establishing Landscape Biodiversity Objectives for the Prince George Timber Supply Area (2004) the true objective is to trend toward the natural range of patch size variability depicted in the target. When we compare the initial landscape condition in 2004

with that of 2009, we see a clear trend toward the natural range of variability. It should be noted that given the dynamic nature of disturbance within the DFA, the target for each patch size category will never be achieved and given the beetle epidemic, the current status is likely the best approximation to be expected.

- ii. Continual improvement will focus on the relevance of this indicator given that the current patch size has been dictated by MPB mortality and salvage efforts are being undertaken to reduce non-recoverable losses. Current patch size targets are based generally on historic fire events, not catastrophic beetle mortality.
- b. Support Opportunities in the DFA (page 11)
 - i. Market conditions and product deterioration (MPB mortality) have led to reduced budgets for both Canfor and BCTS. Staff workloads have increased as more development activities are undertaken internally and thus in-kind contributions have decreased. Financial contributions have decreased likewise given the above. Root Cause: Depressed Lumber markets & product deterioration. Action Plan: Given there are only two signatories, the LT believes the target is set too high and will recommend a reduced target to the PAG.

5. - Discussion:

- a. On page 3, Indicator 3 status should be changed to “No”. On the title page, the Publication Date should be November 4, 2010.

Action Item #2: PAG to review draft 2009-10 Annual Report and provide comments to Facilitator. Due: Next meeting

7. Proposed changes to Indicator 3 Patch Size (Bruce Middleton)

1. Existing Indicator Statement: The percent area by patch size class by NDU. Target: Achieve & sustain patch size targets in accordance with PG TSA Biodiversity Order. Variance: 0%
2. LT Recommendation: Remove this indicator from the plan.
3. Discussion:
 - a. LT Comments: This measure, although still within the legal realm, is no longer deemed appropriate by the LT for the landscape which we are managing. Patch Size targets within the DFA were derived from stand initiating events associated with wildfire occurrence. Given the effects of climate change, catastrophic MPB mortality has now established new natural disturbance patterns. Whether dead pine types are harvested, or left to regenerate naturally, an early seral opening is the result. It makes no sense to track and analyze patch size by harvest disturbance only in a dead pine forest condition. The Craig Delong research undertaken in 2002 established patch size targets based on past fire disturbance.
 - b. PAG member asked about percent difference between Moist Interior Plateau vs. Moist Interior Mountain – LT referred to Handout “*Order Establishing Landscape Biodiversity Objectives for the Prince George Timber Supply Area October 20, 2004*” for visual comparison without giving exact numbers. PAG noted that there was a large change – LT said it is a “trend toward” target and was a high achievement. The issue is that the Variance could not be attained with current patch description despite great success in “trending toward” natural range of variability. PAG member was impressed that the activity with this indicator was well done. PAG member asked about what the numbers represent - LT said it includes any disturbance. PAG members directed to maps

posted at back of meeting room. Maps show distribution of pine and projections of pine beetle hazard (learned that many areas were hit that weren't predicted). Maps represent early seral areas.

c. PAG member said there is still value to reducing fragmentation to meet access management and road density objectives. Observer mentioned that reducing fragmentation is a great objective but how does one measure and how does one target?

d. PAG member wondered about patch shape, feels it is important, so if this indicator is removed what operationally will be done different? LT said it makes no difference to current planning. PAG member has issue with fragmentation – can this indicator be changed to add value? LT asked about core issue – there are other ways of dealing with side issues without looking at patch size. PAG member has issue with number of passes in an area – impacts wildlife etc.

e. PAG member wants to know why can't remove all marketable saw logs out of an area and then leave for 20 years rather than going in again in a few years. PAG member says issue not about access but about habitat. We need variety. Beetle has started early seral forest. PAG member said there should be variety of patch sizes.

f. PAG member asked about creating a new Indicator at some point that encompasses fragmentation, road access and habitat variety. PAG member wants values represented somewhere. One PAG member strongly against dropping Indicator until other indicators address these values. PAG member noted that there is trend to drop indicators at every meeting and then values are forgotten.

g. PAG member says that if we are going to go against legal requirement then he has other areas that he expects flexibility. Facilitator noted that there is legal requirement for Licensees to comply with regulations. LT indicated not going against legislation, but important to assess whether indicator is a measure of sustainability within the DFA. Under the new CSA Standard, there will be opportunity to revisit and ensure values are kept in the plan.

h. Several PAG members indicated they cannot agree to drop this Indicator in isolation without first knowing if these values are retained in the new Plan.

4. No PAG consensus was reached on LT recommendation to remove this indicator from the plan. The indicator will remain in the SFM Plan and will be revisited when the SFM Plan is updated to align with the new CSA Standard.

8. Proposed change to Indicator 29 – Support Opportunities in the DFA (Ralph Hausot)

1. Existing Indicator Statement: Annually, the number of support opportunities provided in the DFA. Target: Annually, sustain >100 support opportunities in the DFA. Variance: -25

2. LT Recommendation: Reduce target to 50.

3. Discussion:

a. LT Comments: This is a difficult Indicator to track, more diligence may yield more support opportunities. Canfor & BCTS are undertaking more work internally, reduced ability for Staff to contribute & complete core business. LT believes Target too large for remaining two signatories to achieve.

b. LT Performance 23 (2008 – 2009), 26 (2009 – 2010). Examples include:

i. Donating use of Board Room for 4-H meetings

- ii. Donating Prizes to Nechako Nordics X-Country Ski Race
 - iii. Staff Time Contributions – BC Breeding Bird Atlas
 - iv. Donations – United Way Campaign, Neighborlink Foodbank, Santa's Anonymous
 - v. Educational Events, Prairiedale Elementary Tree Plan
- c. PAG member remembers a similar presentation last year as target could not be met, LT requested a lower target – PAG not willing to just change targets so they can be met. LT said that target was inflated in the first place with all other licensees involved.
4. PAG consensus on reducing target to 50.

9. Audit results

- 1. Audit results handed out but not discussed due to time constraints. Comments welcomed at next meeting.

10. Goodbye to Bruce Middleton

- 1. PAG members wished Bruce well as he is stepping down as the BCTS representative to the Licensee Team.

11. Next Meeting:

Thursday Dec 9, 2010 4-8 pm

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm