



HIGH LEVEL FORESTS PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday, March 19, 2019
5pm, High Level Seniors Center

PRESENT:

Mike Alsterlund (Member of the Public)	Faron Dyck (Norbord)
John Thurston (Hungry Hills Sandbend / Careers the Next Generation)	Robin Cumine (Norbord)
Boyd Langford (Town of High Level)	Fred Radersma (Norbord)
Bill Schnarr (Echo Pioneer)	Jessica Juneau (Town of Rainbow Lake)
Aaron Doepel (LaCrete Sawmills)	Curtis Cole (Tolko)
	Ashley Hazlett (Tolko)
	Melanie Plantinga (Tolko)

INFORMATION SENT:

Margaret Carrol (High Level & District Chamber of Commerce)	Exact Harvesting
Bernie Doerksen (LaCrete Polar Cats)	Crystal McAteer (Town of High Level)
Carol Gabriel (Mackenzie County)	Fred Didzena (Dene Tha)
Claude Duval (Watt Mnt Wanderers)	Keith Badger (Netaskinan Development)
Jessica Juneau (Town of Rainbow Lake)	Fort Vermilion Heritage Center
Harvey Sewpagaham (LRRCN)	Kieran Broderick (Beaver First Nation)
Mike Cardinal (Tallcree First Nation)	Lindee Dumas (LRRCN)
Bernie Meneen (Tallcree First Nation)	Terry Jessiman (Agriculture & Forestry)
Ken Graham (N'Deh Ltd. Partnership)	Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement
Brent Holick (LaCrete Polar Cats)	Jon McQuinn (LRRF)
Connie Martel (Dene Tha' First Nation)	Marilee Cranna Toews (Hungry Bend Sandhills Society)
Treetech Contracting	Terry Batt (Trappers Association)
Lisa Wardley (Mackenzie County)	George Peters (Exact Harvesting)
Jacque Bateman (Mackenzie County)	Paul Ebert (Agriculture and Forestry)
Stephanie Grocholski (Agriculture and Forestry)	Barry Toker (Watt Mnt Wanderers)

1. WELCOME

2. AROUND THE TABLE

John Thurston – has received a couple of calls from citizens concerned about trucking. One of the members of the public tried to call the Log Haul Concern Line and was not able to get through. John also tried the number and couldn't get through to anyone.

Isn't the line monitored 24 hours? Melanie will do some double checking. She thinks that the line is currently directed to the main switch board, after the caller gets through they would need to leave a message. The switchboard instructions may not be clear to callers. John suggests that the companies rethink things prior to next fall's haul.

A member of the public was wondering about road construction. They noted that a harvesting road they observed had all the duff removed and the clay was exposed. Is this the common practice for road construction? The road does not usually go that deep. The duff and other organics are returned to the road when it is reclaimed. The material is returned leaving only a quad trail for planting access.

Co-op card lot – there was some logging debris left at the card lock. Curtis will remind the contractors to remove debris from the trucks at the mill yard and not elsewhere in town.

There was recently a Forest Expo held in John D'or. It was well attended and seemed successful. John thanks Tolko for sending some representatives. Fred asks if Norbord was informed/invited. John contacted Norbord but didn't hear back.

3. OLD BUSINESS –

3.1. High Level Forests Public Advisory Committee Terms of Reference (TOR)

- Boyd Langford moves that the Terms of Reference be ratified as printed.
- Aaron Doepel seconds.
- Carried

3.2. Could Tolko make the measurements taken of dust particulates and other burner emissions public? Curtis will follow up with the mill.

- Burner temperature readings are being tracked as well as dust fall and particulate monitors located around town. All the readings are sent to Alberta Environment and Parks. There has been one reading exceeding the maximum levels since the burner re-fired. This reading was in November and was at approximately the same time that area farmers started to burn land clearing debris.
- The government has rules surrounding the levels of the different readings and regulates how much hog may be consumed per hour.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Harvesting information from the 2018-19 Harvest Season

La Crete Sawmills – Aaron Doepel – LaCrete has hauled approximately 225,000 cubic meters or 91% of the planned volume. There are between 400 and 700 loads left to be hauled. How many loads do they haul per day? 70 loads per day. They only haul when the temperature is low enough and are hauling fewer loads right now. There may be some volume stranded until next season.

LCSM is using a bark burner to dispose of the bark waste which cannot be otherwise utilized. They are hoping to use the heat generated to heat one of their drying kilns.

Norbord Inc – Faron Dyck – Norbord started to harvest in the Ponton (PN) compartment and moved to the Basset compartment. The volume in the PN blocks was lower than anticipated. Why were the volumes lower? The inventory being used is the AVI (Alberta Vegetation Inventory). The AVI is built using aerial photographs which are examined by professionals to determine the species and size of trees on the ground. The inventory currently available is using photos from 1994. New inventory photographs are being taken for up to date interpretation. Norbord may not be able to haul all the volume they planned before the ice roads melt.

Norbord is using their satellite yard west of High Level to store some of their volume. Are the satellite yards going to be reforested? Yes, when the decision is made that they are no longer needed than they will be reclaimed. Someone visiting a satellite yard said that there were ditches. The satellite/processing yards are currently held under lease as industrial sites. Industrial sites can be more developed than cutblocks would be. They have the same reclamation requirements as other industrial sites such as wells.

Tolko Industries Ltd. – Curtis Cole – Tolko has approximately 100 loads of spruce and 300 loads of aspen to move prior to the end of the season. Tolko has 99% of the volume which they predicted. The wood purchased from Little Red River Forestry in F23 was harvested and hauled smoothly. Tolko was able to haul some incidental conifer from the Mercer, Peace River harvest near Twin Lakes.

Tolko is in the process of finishing reclamation and removing camps and equipment from the woods.

How much timber did Tolko harvest this year. About 1.5 million cubic meters of conifer (white spruce, black spruce and some pine) and 175,000 cubic meters of aspen.

How cold do the temperatures need to be to keep the ice roads usable. If the temperature drops to between -5 or -10 degrees at night operations should be able to continue at night.

4.2 Silviculture Programs – Ashley Hazlett

Tolko and LaCrete Sawmills (the companies) will not be using herbicide in their cutblocks this year. The companies are trying an alternative, manual method of stand tending called bend and break. This treatment involves partially cutting through the competing aspen in a 1-meter radius around the crop (conifer) tree. The aspen is then bent away from the crop tree to reduce competition and allow better growth. Does not the elimination of competition lead to weaker, knotty timber? The stand tending treatment helps the companies meet the standards which the provincial government sets to qualify a block as reforested. But are not the natural stands mixed? The stands will return to mixed stands despite the treatment. The treatment is only being done on “C” and “CD” blocks. Blocks which are only conifer are classified as “C”, blocks which are mixed but more conifer than deciduous trees are “CD”.

About 1400ha of bend and break is planned for this season. Local first nations are being given the chance to work on projects of approximately 100ha each. What is the difference of cost between chemical and bend & break stand tending. Ashley does not have that information. Chemical is cheaper than manual stand tending. The companies are trying to make bend and break more cost effective.

The companies are going to plant 15.8 million seedlings this year. The trees to be planted this spring are “I-wrapped”. “I wrapped” trees are frozen and then wrapped in plastic. They are put together in such a way that the trees do not have to be thawed before being planted. The bundles can be opened and planted while the tree is frozen. This reduces the number of “J” root trees. How long does it take a frozen tree planted in clay soils to defrost? Ashley is not sure, a frozen tree which is planted retains more moisture in the plug. Are the planters faster or slower planting the frozen trees? About the same. What

about litter? There is already plastic from the previous method of bundling trees. Alternatives to plastic are being explored. You cannot burn plastic, so it must be flown out of the blocks.

How many trees are snow cached this year? 4.2 million are in snow caches at 7 sites. 6.5million seedlings are being grown from improved stock. Are these trees from the same region and grown in the same soils as they are planted in? The parents of the improved stock are from the operating area.

The companies have not been using mechanical site prep in the cutblocks after harvest. This means that there are fewer raised sites to plant. The companies are trying to optimize the regeneration by having the trees planted near stumps.

With a mono culture of trees are not bugs and diseases a greater threat? It is not a mono culture as there are still aspen and other species being regrown.

Norbord Inc SFI Audit – Robin Cumine

Norbord had an external audit done by KPMG (a third-party auditor) in February. There were no non-conformances or opportunities for improvement recommended. There were two Good Practices identified by the auditors. The previous minor non-conformance for an expired fuel tank was actioned and no longer a non-conformance. When will High Level Norbord be audited again? One or two years. It is not known at this time.

Items of Concern tabled until a future meeting – (from the written notes supplied by Mike Alsterlund)

Annual Cut: This question has been brought to me by local inhabitants who are concerned about job continuity in the forest industry for them and their future families.

80's AC(Annual Cut)/FMA = 70,000 m³ = 1% AG(Annual Growth)

From the '80s - - 2001 /FMA = increased to 140,000 m³ =2 % AG

This is not sustainable. Did their FMA increase? By what process and permission? Where is this recorded? During that time, did this happen gradually or all at once. Can't imagine that surge in growth???

Also during that time Black spruce was not considered merchantable timber and loads of these trees were not labeled as merchantable. In addition an occasional load of White Spruce was also labeled such??

2002-2014/ AC/FMA =increased to 1,400,000m³ ??AC. WOW?? Did the FMA increase? If so, by what process, and verification?

2017 AC 1,600,000cm³ How does the growth potential agree with this increase. I am not sure of this bit of information, but I believe you have increased even this number?

Is this covered in the Audit? How was the FMA enlarged?

Were Species at Risk and the potential Park considered?

There is a huge combined logging operation 4Skm west 35km north of High Level on the Ponton watershed in a area considered for future Park. First as a resident adjacent to the Ponton river I have, as an avid white water canoeist watched the depreciating water flow grow alarming worse yearly. This huge cut will potentially increase this problem. Secondly, with the potential of future irrigation we are

creating future water problems. The other aspect concerned with this area is that it is potentially considered as a wild life protection Park area. Why is logging going on there at all???

Your AC are huge. You need to enlarge?

In a conversation with a forester over this park Caribou regeneration potential, I was given the most emphatic answer: Our neighbors to the north, west and east don't have these considerations, why should we. So everyone should not care? We don't have enough forestry and mineral explorations otherwise?

The personal question I have is: when Ralph Kline designated the right to design and determine management, AC,AG, and cut bloc areas and patterns to the companies involved. What evidence can you give that SFI is beyond arms length, and is not influenced by your political and monetary pressure that accommodates an unbalanced forestry approach for all concerned parties, i.e. conservation as well as future economy of the region.

Thank you to Mike for providing written copies of his questions. They have been distributed to the companies.

5. NEXT MEETING – May 14th, 2019 – Climate Change and Forestry with David Price, Research Scientist, Canadian Forest Service.

6. MEETING ADJORNED