



HIGH LEVEL FORESTS PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 1st, 2019
5pm, High Level Seniors Center

PRESENT:

Ryan Hermanutz (Agriculture and Forestry)	Lisa Wardley (Mackenzie County)
Matthew Gelderman (Agriculture and Forestry)	Jacquie Bateman (Mackenzie County)
Toni Anderson (Silvacom)	Eric Jorgenson (Mackenzie County)
Ryan Spooner (Silvacom)	Boyd Langford (Town of High Level)
John Thurston (Hungry Hills Sandbend / Careers the Next Generation)	Paul Ebert (Agriculture and Forestry)
Aaron Doepel (LaCrete Sawmills)	Barry Toker (Watt Mnt Wanderers)
Jessica Juneau (Town of Rainbow Lake)	Shaylene Lunam (Norbord)
Heather Jonson (High Level & District Chamber of Commerce)	Tim Gauthier (Tolko)
	Curtis Cole (Tolko)
	Paul Hewitt (Tolko)
	Melanie Plantinga (Tolko)

INFORMATION SENT:

Mike Alsterlund (Member of the Public)	Exact Harvesting
Bernie Doerksen (LaCrete Polar Cats)	Fred Didzena (Dene Tha)
Brent Holick (LaCrete Polar Cats)	Keith Badger (Netaskinan Development)
Carol Gabriel (Mackenzie County)	Fort Vermilion Heritage Center
Claude Duval (Watt Mnt Wanderers)	Dustin Thacker (Beaver First Nation)
Harvey Sewpagaham (LRRCN)	Lindee Dumas (LRRCN)
Mike Cardinal (Tallcree First Nation)	Jon McQuinn (LRRF)
Bernie Meneen (Tallcree First Nation)	Marilee Cranna Toews (Hungry Bend Sandhills Society)
Ken Graham (N'Deh Ltd. Partnership)	George Peters (Exact Harvesting)
Treetech Contracting	Bill Schnarr (Echo Pioneer)
Terry Batt (Trappers Association)	Bruce Bieragle (Trapline Holder)

1. WELCOME

2. AROUND THE TABLE

3. OLD BUSINESS –

- 3.1. Hauling Concern Line – this is being investigated. Resolution will be before the next PAC meeting.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 The Companies General Development Plan 2019-2024 – Paul Hewitt – presentation included.

Which highways will be used for the haul? Most traffic will be coming from west of High Level. One processing yard will be utilized. What about the other yard at the Chinchaga bridge? It would involve transporting the trees further west before turning around and hauling to High Level later. The forestry road west of Norbord will also be used.

Trees may be harvested in P19, the area near Twin Lakes and will be hauled from south of town. What will happen to the damaged timber near Paddle Prairie? This is on the settlement itself.

Traffic will also be going east from High Level on highway 58 as salvage is hauled to LaCrete Sawmills.

Will the harvest operations increase the number of trucks? Fire kill salvage harvest operations are planned to begin as soon as possible. Some of the area is accessible under frost free conditions. The hauling will begin after winter weights are permitted. Some trees may also be stored in summer accessible cutblocks and hauled later. These steps will help keep traffic as low as possible

With so much of the fire occurring in F11 where Crestview and Evergreen operate can they increase their production to use the fire kill? They are. Are those mills required to consult with other stakeholders? Jon Goertzen of LaCrete Forestry is probably the contact person for Crestview and Evergreen. What might the impact of the loss of wood in F11 be on these mills? Since there are unallocated FMU's is there an opportunity for those mills to access that timber? Currently unknown.

The companies are assessing what condition timber must be in to be utilized. This will shape the final harvest plan. If the insects have moved into the trees or the trees have dried or cracked, they can no longer be sawed into lumber. The goal is to harvest as much fire kill as possible this year, next year the conifer trees will probably be too dry to be used. It may be possible for the deciduous trees to be used after the first year. That is yet to be determined.

The Jackpot Creek fire kill may not be salvageable. It was a slower, hotter fire. If the trees are falling in together it will not be harvestable. If Tolko salvages from the Jackpot Creek fire, will the north processing yard be utilized? No, that timber would be hauled directly to the mill.

Any areas which the companies harvest becomes their responsibility to reforest. It is the interest of the companies to reforest as much as possible to return the area to production. If it is not harvested who will treat the area? It would be left to regenerate naturally.

What is the economic "hit" of the fire? There will be a reduction in the Annual Allowable Cut for the companies. The amount has not been determined. Will there be an assessment of the value of the timber lost? The people present are not able to speak to that.

4.2 Forest Health – Ryan Hermanutz, Matthew Gelderman

See attached Presentation

What kinds of insects would infest burned trees? Why might they not be present this year as in the past? The area of study for the Forest Health Officers is focused on living trees, not burned. Some contributing factors may include timing of insect reproduction and number of bugs already present in the forest.

Please report any unusual insect or disease events which you see. If someone has a question about an insect in trees what can they do? They can send a photograph or bring a sample to Agriculture and Forestry (A&F). If A&F cannot identify what the insect is they have contacts with researchers and may be able to find answers.

Are there posters in the parks or near recreational trails which would inform people that the Forest Health Officers are looking for information from the public? No, parks are managed by a different department. There is a component in the Forest Health program for educational school talks.

One of the program requirements is to do annual aerial surveys of the area tracked. The surveys are performed in July at a time when it is Spruce Budworm is most noticeable. Damage from those insects has been the biggest local concern historically. Are the results available to the public? Yes, they are published and entered into a national database. When the surveys are being flown is imagery collected for other purposes? The plane used is not set up for that kind of work. It would add to cost to multitask this flight. Do they do the surveys in conjunction with wildlife surveys? Wildlife surveys occur in March.

One of the trees which is being monitored is willow for willow leaf miner. What is the impact of willow mortality on moose population? It is not currently understood what the effects are. It is beginning to be looked at.

4.3 Bistcho Caribou Range Legacy Seismic Line Inventory Project for Restoration Planning – Toni Anderson, Ryan Spooner

This is a project which Silvacom is doing on behalf of Tolko. This project is funded with FRIAA funds. The project is in response to provincial Woodland Caribou Range Planning and the current Section 11 Conservation Agreement for Woodland Caribou. This DRAFT agreement is available online for review and comment.

The objective is to complete an inventory of seismic lines located in the area where the Bistcho Caribou range and Tolko's FMA overlap. The area was chosen because it is an area Tolko is planning to harvest in the next 20 years. The Government of Alberta has proposed that forestry companies reforest seismic lines which are located within 500 m of cutblocks. This proposal is in the Draft Range Plan. The study will help determine the potential amount of restoration required.

The Bistcho range has been assessed at a level of 91% area disturbed by humans. This is based on the assessment of area within 500m of a human disturbance to be part of the disturbed area. The disturbed area currently includes old lines which could possibly be classed as restored. This study is working to verify which lines are still in need of restoration.

What about lines which pass through muskeg or clearings? One of the criteria for a restored disturbance is tree height of minimum 5m. The inventory is noting the landscape a disturbance is surrounded by. For example If the area around the line only supports growth which is 2m in height it may not reasonable to try to reach tree heights greater than 5m.

When is the project going to be completed? Quarter 3 of 2020. Would this data be available in spring for other groups use? Much of the inventory would be complete by this time.

Will field checks be done? When? Field validation is on-going – initial sample plots and a flyover have been completed. Can this information help to inform previous data? Or

extrapolate outside the area of the study? The information may not apply outside the area of the study.

How accurate is the aerial photography being used? This is high quality imagery which was flown in 2018. Much of the interpretation is being automated.

For a line to be considered restored it must no longer be in use by humans. What about continued use by people such as hunters, trappers and recreational users? There is a list of lines still in use being made. This will also include estimated volume of use.

Is there an inventory being done in other areas? This study is only on one area Tolko plans to harvest.

Is Oil and Gas paying for restoration efforts? No. The responsibility for paying has not been determined. When the lines were opened there was no condition set for restoration. Who will to address continued disturbance by other users? These are all important questions which have not been addressed.

Preliminary findings suggest that approximately 70% of lines may require some treatment to meet the restoration requirements. Learnings include: noting that lines being shaded (north-west lines) are less recovered. Restoration of burned areas is better.

This study will identify current conditions on the landscape. This project is helping to set the standard for seismic line reforestation analysis.

As this is a FRIAA project the information will be made publicly available.

5. NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, December 3rd, 2019

6. MEETING ADJORNED