



HIGH LEVEL FORESTS PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday, December 3rd, 2019
5pm, High Level Seniors Center

PRESENT:

John Thurston (Hungry Hills Sandbend / Careers the Next Generation)	Lisa Wardley (Mackenzie County)
Aaron Doepel (LaCrete Sawmills)	Boyd Langford (Town of High Level)
Mike Alsterlund (Member of the Public)	Paul Ebert (Agriculture and Forestry)
John Wiebe (Treetech Contracting)	Barry Toker (Watt Mnt Wanderers)
Willie Wiebe (Treetech Contracting)	Tiffany Olsen (Norbord)
Anthony Peters (Timberbound Contracting)	Tim Gauthier (Tolko)
Norm Livingstone (Tolko)	Curtis Cole (Tolko)
	Melanie Plantinga (Tolko)

INFORMATION SENT:

Bernie Doerksen (LaCrete Polar Cats)	Exact Harvesting
Brent Holick (LaCrete Polar Cats)	Fred Didzena (Dene Tha)
Carol Gabriel (Mackenzie County)	Keith Badger (Netaskinan Development)
Claude Duval (Watt Mnt Wanderers)	Fort Vermilion Heritage Center
Harvey Sewpagaham (LRRCN)	Dustin Thacker (Beaver First Nation)
Mike Cardinal (Tallcree First Nation)	Lindee Dumas (LRRCN)
Bernie Meneen (Tallcree First Nation)	Jon McQuinn (LRRF)
Ken Graham (NDeh Ltd. Partnership)	Marilee Cranna Toews (Hungry Bend Sandhills Society)
Terry Batt (Trappers Association)	Bill Schnarr (Echo Pioneer)
Jessica Juneau (Town of Rainbow Lake)	Bruce Bieragle (Trapline Holder)
Heather Jonson (High Level & District Chamber of Commerce)	

1. WELCOME

2. AROUND THE TABLE

3. OLD BUSINESS –

3.1. Hauling Concern Line –

Calls going to the Log Haul Issue and Concern Line are being directed to a dedicated voice mail box. These messages are being forwarded to several Tolko woodlands staff members who will respond.

Have there been many calls? Not since September.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 The Companies Harvesting Activities Update

LaCrete Sawmills

Has been harvesting for a month. 50,000 cubic meters have been harvested so far. LCSM is also taking some of the wood which is too burned for Tolko's use. They have received approximately 12,000.

There is a possibility that some green wood will be harvested to reach the needed volume.

When is the wood judged salvageable? In the field or at the mill yard? First, the companies flew over the fire. They did some on the ground assessments. Now that they are harvesting they are getting a clearer picture of what can be used.

When running the wood through the mill some of the smaller, blacker pieces have been a problem. Possibly the larger pieces will be better.

Has the AAC been reduced? If the companies were to move into the green wood would there be loss to the future cut? The AAC has been reduced to compensate for the loss. The Government of Alberta is still reviewing the amount of volume lost and the amount is not certain. The loss of AAC on the FMA is relatively small compared to the loss to F11.

How much natural regeneration is expected? In a pine stand there will be a great deal of rapid regrowth. The aspen will grow quickly. The spruce will take more time.

A great deal of fireweed was present after the fire. How long will that bloom? It will be growing for a little while. The seeds will be dropped into the soil and will lay dormant for a very long time.

The LaCrete Sawmills and Tolko will replant the area they harvest. There is funding which the companies can apply for to reforest historic blocks which have burned. The Wildfire Restoration Program may provide funds to replant block which were already planted. The companies on the FMA need to retreat approximately 2,200 ha.

With the active fire season may there be an extension of timelines for reforestation? That is under discussion.

In places where the fire burns down to the mineral soils will regrowth be inhibited? Spruce regrowth may be slower. Aspen will grow quickly.

Will there be seedlings available to replant the fire? Is there a shortage of nursery space? There is less pressure on nurseries than had been anticipated. With the closure of several mills in BC the demand for seedlings is lower.

Fire kill salvage in the Jackpot Creek fire has begun. Was it not believed that there would be too much blowdown in that fire to make harvest feasible? There is less blowdown than anticipated. The trees harvested there will be brought straight to the mill in cut to length pieces. Will there be any full tree operations? Tolko will be harvesting full trees west of town for summer processing in the yard.

What will happen to the trees which cannot be salvaged? The pieces will be piled and disposed of. Any area too burned to be used will not be entered. There is now imagery which is helping the companies identify the areas that can be salvaged and avoid those which cannot. If the badly burned stands are left will this cause a hazard for the tree planters?

The contractors have been instructed to remove trees along access lines which could be a problem.

Norbord – Will not be harvesting any blocks this winter. They will get wood that is incidental from the conifer operators. Possible exceptions would be private wood (which is only taken in the summer.) Norbord is also retrieving the wood which was stranded this spring. Norbord is looking to maximize the wood recovered from the burn. Tiffeny has been discussing deciduous salvage with Alberta Pacific in Fort MacMurray to find ways to maximize fire kill salvage.

Is Norbord purchasing wood from Paddle Prairie? Manning is taken some fire kill from there. Is Little Red River Forestry cutting this year? No, there will not be any harvest coming from F23 this year.

The Watt Mountain Wanderers would appreciate feed back from the companies about when and where they will be harvesting west of High Level. There are snowmobile trails in that area which they would like to work on. The club is waiting to hear the harvesting plans before they make their plans. Kevin Allen is the supervisor working in the area they are interested in.

There was harvesting in the Ponton Area last winter. Is monitoring being done on the snowpack? Possible erosion and run off in the area? Are the soil types considered? Before harvesting an area, the companies enter information about the area into a model which hydrologists use to calculate the change to run off following disturbance.

The harvest in the Ponton area the activities also opened a road. Can this access be restricted? It will depend on whose land or disposition the road is on.

The companies will bring the plan for the Ponton 6 area to the next meeting to shed some light on these questions.

4.2 Silviculture Activities in 2019 and Plans for 2020 (Power point attached)

The most productive day of planting saw 200 people planting between 550-600 thousand trees.

Bend and Break

Will removing the competition around the trees cause branches resulting in knottier lumber? While the competition is reduced allowing more growth the trees will still self-prune. Bend and break is not a lasting treatment. The treatment is expected to give a kick to the MAI (mean annual increment) growth.

Bend and break is an additional tool in the reforestation tool box.

How many people were employed by doing bend and break? From May-October 7 people were employed.

The companies ran a 5-week training program this fall with 21 people attending. Members of the Dene Tha First Nation, Beaver First Nation and Little Red River Cree Nation, Tallcree First Nation and Lubicon Lake First Nation trained people through the program. Due to the nature of some of the funding only First Nations people were eligible to attend.

Will this training program be offered regularly? Unknown. There is going to be additional supervisor training in March. There was good feedback, so it is possible that the funding could be available in the future.

Did the fire affect the program? Yes, the workers were evacuated and some of them left the program to go and help fight the fires.

Have the workers doing the work been taking note of plants used traditionally? Not formally. There was an elder's tour into the blocks this summer, they noted the presence of those plants.

Are other mechanical stand tending methods being utilized? When brushing (sawing down competition) you cause suckering. Has girdling been considered? Not on young stands. On 40-50-year-old stands it may prove effective. (Girdling is the removal of all bark in a ring about the tree. This keeps nutrients from travelling from the roots to the leaves).

2020 Silviculture plans

Approximately 16.5 million trees are scheduled to be planted next year.

The Jackpot creek fire will be replanted in 2021.

Norbord will be planting the roads in their Ponton and Bassett blocks.

How many trees are planted to replace harvested trees? Tolko and LaCrete Sawmills plant 2-3 seedlings for every tree harvested.

Thank you on behalf of the golf course for the seedlings provided which Little Red River Forestry planted for them.

With the construction of the thermal energy plant at Tolko has the idea of nursery built on site to utilize waste energy been considered? It has but there is not enough heat capacity for a nursery.

Tolko/LaCrete Sawmills have switched to "1 wrap" individually wrapped trees, is this changing the work of the planters? The trees can better withstand being handled prior to planting.

When herbicide is used for stand tending how much is used? Approximately 500ml per ha. It kills the aspen but does not permanently stop the growth of willow and alder.

What is the half life to the chemical in the soil? The chemical becomes inert in about a week. What is the effect on rodents?

Other new business

Thank you to Tolko for guiding several teachers on a cut block tour during the last teacher professional development day. Forestry is sometimes misunderstood, and the tour may have helped clear up some misconceptions.

Students who are working on equipment in the woods may now apply to the school division for High School credit.

SFI has a project learning tree which may fund some educational programs. Look on the SFI site for "green jobs".

5. NEXT MEETING – To be determined.

6. MEETING ADJORNED