



HIGH LEVEL FORESTS PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 4, 2007
5:00 p.m. – Tolko Industries Ltd. Boardroom

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

John Thurston (Chair)
Scott McNeil
Aaron Doepel
Marilee Toews

Leslie House
George Friesen
Walter Sarapuk
Jeremy Beal

Recording Secretary: Brenda St Arnault

1. CALL TO ORDER:

John Thurston, Chair, call the meeting to order at 5:05 pm

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

MOTION

MOVED by George Friesen

Agenda is accepted as presented.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: July 3, 2007

In future minutes, answers should be included with questions. Document answers from July 3, 2007 meeting to be discussed at October 2, 2007 meeting.

MOTION

MOVED by Walter Sarapuk

CARRIED

4. ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

- a) John Thurston commented on a cutblock he visited with his wife in late July west of High Level and what they saw was very disturbing. There was a Hydraulic leak from a skidder, garbage burned, and scattered debris that included survey stakes.

Scott will look into this issue as to who was responsible, what cutblock this occurred in and possibly determine when this happened. Scott mentioned there is a Husky Plant that can be used as a point of reference. (KM 19)

Comment made by George Friesen that this is not acceptable by any logger.

Discussion held regarding different types of spills/amount that are reportable.

Comment made by Aaron Doepel that there are written Manuals/Plans in place that explain the procedure on how to deal with various environmental issues.

ACTION: Scott will report back on his findings for next meeting.

- b) Marilee Toews expressed a concern about the Bridge deck for the Boyer River Bridge on Highway 88, who's responsible for repairs/complaints? Discussion was held regarding who does the repairs and overall responsibility. Scott McNeil commented that bridges in this area would be the responsibility of La Prairie Group. Walter Sarapuk commented that all bridges belong to Province. Another way to deal with it is to call La Prairie Group and voice your concerns about the bridge.
- c) John Thurston asked who sits on the selection committee for High School scholarships from Tolko Industries Ltd.

ACTION: Jeremy will look into this and get back to John.

- d) Question was asked by John Thurston about the black caterpillars on highways east of High Level, What are they?

ACTION: J. Beal/S.McNeil to report back

- e) Les House commented on the safety concern regarding railroad crossings in community of Paddle Prairie as there is poor visibility that may lead to an accident. Who is the company to contact about clearing brush at crossings? Les has made several phone calls and has been getting the run around.

There was a discussion regarding who is responsible for railway/crossings maintenance and the consensus is that CN railway would be the company to deal with issues.

ACTION: Scott will look into getting contact information for Les.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Review of current SFM Plan VOIT's, with proposed VOIT table (J. Beal)

- VOIT Development

Jeremy explained to Les House what has been happening with progress with the development of the DFMP and VOIT completion. VOIT's need to be completed by February 2008, however, target is to complete VOIT review in committee by December meeting.

Handouts were provided:

Annex 4 Performance Standards
Appendix C – Ratified Annex Table

Presentation to PAC Committee by J. Beal

- Review of current SFM Plan VOIT's, as compared with proposed VOIT table.

1.1.1.5 (Maintain unique habitats provided by wildfire and blowdown events)

Is there value to the group in the Old VOIT? (J.Beal)

Marilee Toews asked about other VOIT's within the table, and when they will be discussed. Jeremy advised that we are reviewing 12 VOIT's from last meeting and will eventually be covering all VOIT's.

Discussion on the process of wood salvage. Scott McNeil advised the wood is planned to be harvested soon after fire/windthrow as possible in order to get area back on associate yield curve (ie., meeting yield targets).

Question from Marilee Toews on what is meant by "unique" habitat, Scott replied that unique habitats can be the result of forest fires (CWD, snags, etc)

Jeremy asked if there are anymore comments?

- Jeremy believes this is a Better VOIT than the previous
 - John agrees with Jeremy
- a) Are there written qualifiers as to how to deal with burned forest?
Burned forest would need to be in proximity to proposed operations, or be of sizable area to change plans.
 - b) Whose' rules are followed, who determines this?

Companies will be working with SRD

c) Aaron Doepel asked if there are set criteria followed?

Companies have costs they must operate within and the choice to salvage or not becomes a financial decision and capitalizing on available damaged volume, if possible.

1.1.1.6 (Retain ecological values and functions associated with riparian zones)

Proposed version is worded as a broader statement at the landscape level. New VOIT to be put in place as it is required by Alberta. Marilee Toews expressed disappointment that the government has expectations for the go forward without considering work that have done previously in the 2003 SFMP. Input from the PAC should be considered by the companies.

Comment from Les House regarding the Chinchaga River, this is one of the few rivers in Alberta that is not polluted.

- Do you think that there should be certain procedures to be followed so this river doesn't get polluted like the other rivers in Alberta? (L.House)
- Scott referred Les to buffer requirements set by Alberta to protect waterways.

Is there an extension to this table that identifies how the companies will meet the target and what is involved in monitoring and measuring, similar to the SFM Plan table? It may cover some of Les's comments. (M. Toews)

1.1.2.2 (Maintain integrity of sensitive sites)

Marilee Toews was concerned that areas identified as sensitive sites (ie., Peace River, Islands and Ponton River Corridor) in the current DFMP may not be managed in future versions once persons around this committee are not involved anymore. Is this an ongoing target or is it done?

- DFMP is done every 10 years; the VOIT framework will be revisited annually and may incorporate revisions (J.Beal).
- **ACTION: Suggest we revisit this and reword Target to provide companies and opportunity for improvement (J. Beal).**

1.1.2.3 (Maintain aquatic biodiversity by minimizing impacts of water crossings) both VOIT's have to do with crossings as per the operating areas.

Is using the new VOIT suitable to the committee? (J.Beal)

Aaron Doepel asked how do the companies document that the crossings are taken out and do not require further reclamation?

Scott McNeil stated that companies audit their blocks and crossings and they will do reclamation if required.

How do we go back and fix crossings that were overlooked? Do we create a bigger mess and pull them out or do we leave them? Dealing with environmental issues?

Scott McNeil commented that reclamation would be done preferably while frost was in the ground.

VOIT deals with Government Code of Practice for watercourse crossings. George Friesen commented that this VOIT would be less strict than what we have been doing.

So what do we do since it's not a perfect world?

- Our Target must be 0 as this is what we are required to do. (J. Beal)

ACTION: Jeremy to look at CODE OF PRACTICE to compare the 2 VOITS

Take a look at creek size (s); currently companies create crossings even on small streams. (G. Friesen)

2.1.2.1 Limit conversion of productive forest Landbase of other uses

This is a NEW VOIT

- No problem identified by committee.

2.1.2.2 Recognize lands affected by insects, disease or natural calamities

ACTION: Need to review 2.1.2.2 and bring back to the group as there is a commitment in the current VOIT to harvest 15% of the coniferous volume from spruce budworm infected areas as per the Spruce Budworm Management Plan (J. Beal)

2.1.3.1 Control non-native plant species (weeds)

Discussion/comments made on methods to prevent spreading of weeds. Les House commented that when equipment is backblading in the winter time, the equipment is cleaned before moving on to other areas to prevent spreading of weeds. Jeremy Beal stated that Tolko does follow practice of cleaning equipment and vehicles before they move on to another area.

Marilee Toews commented that there are other players out there that are working against what we are trying to do; she feels this should be monitored at a broader scale. Scott McNeil mentioned how Mother Nature has a big role to play by carrying seeds on its watercourses naturally.

Les House commented on how EnCana is working towards fighting spreading of weeds, by hand pulling, bagging the weed and then burning.

3.1.1.2 Minimize incidence for soil erosion and slumping

- No problems/questions

5.1.1.1 Establish appropriate AAC's

- Ties back to 5.1.1a of old Plan
- No problems with new VOIT

5.2.3.1 Maintain Long Run Sustained Yield Average

- 3.1.1a - Old Plan
- How do we achieve no Net Loss? (M. Toews)
- Sample plots are set up – every 5 years doing re-measures. Overtime new plot information and re-measures will help to analyze natural vs. managed stand yield (J. Beal)

Help predict overtime (J. Beal)

New VOIT's that have not been reviewed.

1.3.1.1 New, related to SFM Plan 1.3.1a – 1 & 1.3.1a – 2

VOIT Related to Reforestation and Jeremy commented that we have no indication this will be in place when we submit. Aaron Doepel asked how is Alberta going to cooperate with the companies on this? Jeremy's response, by assisting to establish in-situ Reserves and Companies will be allowed to collect cones within PNT once conservation areas are identified.

1.3.1.2 Retain wild forest genetic resources through ex-situ conservation

Jeremy mentioned that VOIT is new, related to SFM Plan 1.3.1a – 1 & 1.3.1a – 2 and at this time does not apply to us.

Marilee and Aaron commented that Company should re-evaluate this issue, if we should even include this?

The VOIT could be changed to “if and when” the Companies are involved with Tree Improvement programs. (J. Beal)

ACTION: Reword target (J. BEAL)

3.2.1.1 Limit impact of timber harvesting on water Yield

- Watershed Analysis Project done by Silvacom
- NEW VOIT

3.2.2.1 Minimize impact of operations in riparian areas

- See SFM Plan, 3.2.1a – 2
- No questions/discussions

5.2.2.1 Integrate other uses and timber management activities

- Should this VOIT take the place of the other VOIT in the SFM Plan (5.3.1)?

ACTION: Jeremy to go back and rethink better wording

6.1.1.1 Implement Public Involvement Program

- SFM Plan 6.1.1a consultation
- Same VOIT
- No problems/No discussions

5.3 Changes of Terms of Reference for Public Advisory Committee

- J. Beal presented a change to the ToR for the PAC with regards to First Nation aboriginal and treaty rights.
- Change approved as follows:

Change approved however needs to amend wording of “All members of the general public including First Nations and Government”.

- Also, change approved at beginning of document with how this ties to other documents i.e.; Public Involvement Plan and DFMP Terms of Reference.

5.4 Annual Performance Report – finally complete

- CD provided
- Next year’s report will have 2 parts, one before Christmas and one after, based on ease of reporting.

Item added to Agenda

- Jeremy presented as Supplement for the SFM Plan that briefly describe the most current approved DFMP
- Supplement that was suggested by Auditor
- Put off decision until Oct 2007 meeting
- Questions regarding “Ecological” for one of the reasons for Ramp-up decision.

ACTION: J. Beal to come back with answer.

6. OLD BUSINESS

6.1 Clipping Service

Jeremy Beal distributed the latest clippings service for group. Marilee Toews provided additional clippings to group and will be distributed out at October meeting.

6.2 Element 4.2 SFM Plan

This objective applies to Oil and Gas Activities that was brought up by Mike Alsterlund. It will be table until October 2007 meeting; hopefully Mike will be in attendance.

7. CORRESPONDENCE / REPORTS

7.1 Rainbow Lake 2007 Community Night

Discussion held regarding the Town of Rainbow Lake holding their community night and if the Public Advisory Committee would be interested in setting up information table. Some concern about who would be able to man the table and John Thurston will talk with Monty Moore and see if he would be willing to help out and he will get back to Jeremy as soon as possible.

8. ROUND THE TABLE

- a. No comments
- b. EMEND project: Marilee would like get a copy of Tim Vinge's work on summarizing results from the EMEND research projects.

9. NEXT MEETING: October 2, 2007, 5 PM, NAIT Campus, High Level

10. ADJOURNMENT – 8:15 PM