

PAG Meeting

Fairview College, August 5, 2003

Attendance:

- Henry Friesen - Friesen Logging Ltd.
- Tracie Dahdona - Dene Tha First Nation
- Lorraine Donovan - Town of High Level
- George Friesen - Friesen Logging Ltd.
- Jordan Johnston – Alberta Naturalists
- Dennis Eckford – Public
- Brandon Boucher – Netaskinan Logging
- Ted Edwards - Land & Forest Division
- John Thurston – High Level Outdoor Club
- Marilee Toews – Hungry Bend Sandhills Wilderness society
- Byron Grundberg-Facilitator
- Tim Gauthier - Footner Forest Products Ltd.
- Clint Soltys-Tolko Industries Ltd.
- Marcel LeCoure- Tolko Industries Ltd.

1.0 Introduction

- Welcome

2.0 Administrative Items

- Minute Distribution – July 8, 2003.
 - The group reviewed the July 8th meeting minutes
 - Byron indicated that there were two outstanding items regarding the Terms of Reference which need to be addressed: Identify Communication Committee members & Induction Committee members:
 - Byron asked for volunteers:
 - Communication Committee: George Friesen volunteered
 - Induction Committee: Lorraine Donovan volunteered.
 - Marcel LeCoure will be the company representative in both committees
- Minutes accepted – John Thurston (motioned)
- Byron distributed a revised workplan (draft) to the advisory group for their review:
 - Although Byron did not expect ratification of the workplan at this meeting, he is requesting comments on the workplan
 - The workplan remains a target, however it may be adjusted depending on progress at the various stages.
- Marcel discussed and distributed the compensation forms to everyone to fill one out and submit to Clint before the end of the meeting.

3.0 Distribution and Review of Draft Annex Table

3.1 Marcel distributed a number of documents as a follow-up from the July 8th meeting:

- Draft Annex Table
 - This Annex table is slightly different from the Annex Table that was emailed and/or faxed to the advisory group members last week. Numbers have been given to each of the critical elements, values, objectives, indicators so the information can be easily be cross-referenced with another document entitled “DFMP vs. CSA”

- A document entitled “DFMP vs. CSA” was also distributed. This document outlined each of the items in the current draft of the Annex Table and aligned them with the issues and concerns brought forward in previous public involvement processes and incorporated in the DFMP.
 - An updated “Glossary of Terms” was distributed
 - A document detailing a description of the DFA entitled “DFA Description” was also distributed.
 - All documents are also available on the CSA website.
- The companies see the CSA public involvement process as an extension of the DFMP public involvement process. Items brought forward which have not been incorporated into the recent submission of the DFMP will be considered for incorporation in the next plan (3 years). The public involvement process will be an ongoing process over time.

(Current)	(Present)	(Future)
DFMP	CSA	DFMP

Continuous over time – removes the ambiguity of public involvement

- Although the Annex Table includes all 6 criteria, the focus of the meeting was to review the following criteria:
 - The Conservation of Biological Diversity
 - Conservation of Soil & Water Resources

3.2 Conservation of Biological Diversity includes 4 critical elements:

- Ecosystem Diversity
 - Species Diversity
 - Genetic Diversity
 - Protected Areas
- Discussion relating to ecosystem diversity, species diversity and protected areas was somewhat inter-related. It is summarized according to three general concerns or subject areas presented below:
 - Lack of Baseline Data
 - What kind of information is available with respect to areas of significant ecological and/or biological significance in the DFA?
 - The companies recognize the lack of information in the region. One of the more fundamental concepts included in the CSA process and incorporated into the DFMP is the concept of adaptive management. As things are found in the field either before or during harvest operations, the companies have the ability to make changes to their plans.
 - The Watt Mountain area was raised as an example of a location with an abundance of rare plants (or rare to this area of province at least).
 - The Watt Mountain example is an area that the companies can develop operational strategies through this process to mitigate our harvesting and silvicultural operations on this area. The map of the DFA does identify the Watt Mountain area as an area of special interest. Marcel tried to find out specific information regarding the area, however could not find out anything on the Alberta Community Development website. The companies and government have to do a better job in sharing this information.
 - The local ASRD office has a great deal of information regarding the Watt Mountain area, which the companies could access.
 - Can the company access a centralized database that summarizes research and/or inventory data with respect to significant or rare habitat, species, or ecosystems?

- Some information is available in the form of “Protective Notations”. If a notation exists it can be searched through the Land Status Automated System (LSAS).
- 20 years ago the Government did an analysis of all of the natural areas in Alberta – most of the information is fragmented and scattered between companies and departments.
- If a provincial database doesn’t exist should the companies begin to develop one for the DFA?

- There seemed to be some consensus that the companies should at least research the feasibility of initiating a database to summarize existing knowledge of research with respect to significant or rare habitat, species or ecosystems on the DFA. This could be stated as an objective on Annex C. The initial target with respect to when, how and how detailed might be quite general but could be reviewed through subsequent updates.

- **Field Identification of Rare and Unique Habitat, Species or Ecosystems**
 - Where baseline data is lacking, can a systems approach help mitigate potential impact of company operations on rare and unique habitat, species or ecosystems?
 - Are company staff familiar with field conditions of specific blocks? Do they see them during the snow free period or only in the winter when rare plants are covered by snow? Are field staff trained to recognize unique species or features?
 - 90% of the cutblocks are walked by company staff during frost-free conditions to verify creek location(s) and classification. In addition, any operational issues, including rare finds, can also be identified.
 - A significant amount of information is already collected through pre-harvest assessments. Currently much of this information is in hard copy format and not in a central location.
 - Staff and contractors need to be aware of these kinds of concerns and be trained to deal with them. Training and continual improvement with respect to application of training both fit within the “systems” component of an SFM plan.
 - The companies would also like to involve public in the in the identification of these areas because many of the staff do not have the same knowledge of the area as some residents.

- Should one or more objectives or targets in the Annex Table be linked to policies and operating procedures relate to this issue?

- **Coarse Woody Debris**
 - Coarse woody debris is generally accepted as a valid indicator for ecosystem diversity but is there enough information to define targets?
 - Does the indicator in the draft Annex Table only refer to coarse woody debris in top piles or does it refer to coarse woody debris scattered through the cutblocks?
 - Does the company collect any information about debris loading in various ecosystems? Should it?
 - This CWD indicator will address both, however the exact procedure the companies will use to measure the CWD on site has yet to be determined.

- Discussion went in a similar direction as the discussion for habitat, species and ecosystems. Does PAG have any specific suggestions to bring forward?

- **Genetic Diversity**
 - There was some discussion around the issue of tree improvement. Why would the companies go this way rather than rely on natural seed? What kind of safeguards are in place to protect genetic diversity. Given that the companies operational reforestation programs are largely based on naturally collected seed, the objectives/targets proposed in the draft Annex Table appear reasonable.

3.3 Conservation of Soil and Water Resources includes two critical elements:

- Quality and Quantity of Soil Resources
- Quality and Quantity of Water Resources

- Quality and Quantity of Soil Resources
 - The objectives and targets proposed in the draft Annex are based on the Soil Conservation Guidelines – cannot exceed 5% disturbance – 100% compliance.
 - Is it clear whether the guidelines refer to a block by block or compartment basis (i.e. are you in non-compliance if one block exceeds 5% disturbance but the average for a licence or compartment is < 5%)?
 - Due to size and/or shape, some specific blocks could exceed the 5% threshold.
 - It was suggested that the wording of the target be modified to eliminate any possible ambiguity.

- Quality and Quantity of Water Resources
 - The companies described the watershed analysis that will be part of the Detailed Forest Management Plan. There was a map available which outlined a couple of potentially “high-risk” compartments, which will undergo a thorough analysis.
 - If we follow the harvest sequence outlined in the Preferred Forest Management Strategy, the companies should be able to minimize our impacts on watersheds following the completion of the analysis.
 - The companies have also designed a creek crossing database which includes the annual monitoring of watercourse crossings to ensure that there is no impact to the watercourse as a result of our operations
 - There was no further discussion relating to values or objectives of soil or water resources.

3.4 Wrap Up Discussion of Annex Table

- Question: There are some blank areas in the draft Annex Table. When, how will they be expanded on?
 - Answer: The table will be expanded. The first draft only included information already outlined in the DFMP to illustrate some of the things the companies are already doing as a result of previous public involvement plans. One objective of PAG is to provide adequate feedback with respect to any values, objectives or indicators that may be missing.

- Question: How and when do you monitor?
 - Answer: The companies track a lot of information during their operations to monitor their activities. The Environmental Management System will specify information that must be recorded and filed. In addition, monitoring is also achieved through audits. Stewardship reports summarize key results and report them back to the public.

4.0 Next Meeting Date

- Next meeting September 2, 2003 in High Level at Fairview College

Outstanding Items for Next Meeting

- **HOME WORK**

Draft Work Plan

- 1) Work through 1.4.1.
- 2) Identify any new values/objectives that you can think of?
- 3) Questions to ask:
 - a) Are the objectives/values that are important to you present in the draft Annex? Are they clear enough? Are the indicators logical and follow the objectives?
 - b) As a group, are you more comfortable with the work plan?
 - c) Should we schedule the October meeting for an alternate date (possibly slightly longer to wrap-up this segment of the work plan) or proceed with the Joint PAC/PAG meeting dates and hold the October meeting without the facilitator?