



**HIGH LEVEL FORESTS
PUBLIC ADVISORY GROUP**

APPROVED MINUTES

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

5:00 pm – Spirit of the North Community School, Lunch Room
High Level, Alberta

ATTENDANCE:

Jeremy Beal (CSA Coordinator)
Marilee Toews (HBSWS)
Aaron Doepel (La Crete Sawmills)
Barry Gladders (Tolko Industries)

Carrie Demkiw (Facilitator)
Boyd Langford (TRL)
Al Toews
Marty O’Byrne (ASRD)

REGRETS:

Walter Sarapuk (MD)
Jon Goertzen (La Crete Forestry)
George Friesen (Friesen Industries)
Lindee Dumas (LRR)
Rod Chalifoux (THL)

Joy Friesen (HBSWS)
Paul Catt (WMW)
Theresa Griffith (Flow North)
Veronica Tallcree (LRR)

Recording Secretary: Brenda St. Arnault

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:25 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Agenda accepted as presented with changes to 4.2
Feedback for criterion 2, add as Agenda item 4.3

Moved by Boyd Langford – Carried

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (October 18th & November 1st, 2011)

Carrie D. reviewed minutes;

Discussion on October 18th minutes

Moved by Marilee T. – Carried

November 1, 2011 minutes – Carrie D. reviewed minutes and accepted as presented

Moved by Aaron D. – Carried

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Special Speaker Marty O’Byrne, Senior Forester, ASRD

- Soil Productivity
- Seasons of Operations
- Maintenance of Forest Growth
- Growth and Yield
- Nutrient lost

Jeremy B. – explained why Marty is here to do a presentation on Soil and provide us with more resources.

Jeremy B. - How does this relate to winter operations? Frozen soils, what is the difference between winter and summer operations relating to the effect to soils?

Marty O. - I will review this in later in the presentation.

Effects include: compaction, displacement, rutting, mixing, stream bed, “structure” material deposit in stream bed. Generally though, the risk is lower in the winter than in the summer.

Aaron D. – In comparison, how much degradation can you blame on rutting, mixing, etc on disturbance to site preparation and our common practises?

Marty O. – Every time mechanization meets soil there is degradation - these are risks that we need to minimize. This is not to say that all risks happen all the time. I will review this further on in the presentation and hopefully this will answer your question.

Marilee T. - asked what the word (Ingress) meant

Marty O. - Natural seeding

Marilee T. – Is there an expectation that a certain level of soil assessment is done previous to harvest?

Marty O. - Government has not regulated the criteria for site preparation, but there is an expectation that companies are doing their due diligence to the best of their knowledge.

Jeremy B. - we don’t assess every area, the guys know what the soil assessments are for the areas we are working in, we do look at the soil a couple of times each year when doing site preparation.

Aaron D. – We may not do this every single time, but with experience you know what type of soil you are dealing with based on what is growing in it.

Marty O. - Apply strategies; know what the risks are for soil to get ruined. Everybody knows there is a risk in the delivery of the plans. The government expects that people will build their pre-harvest plan around minimizing the risk on the soil. Sometime mistakes are made, but these have been reclaimed with success

Aaron D. – a few years ago we had worked in a harvest area by the Wadlin hills south of Fort Vermilion and recognized there was some historical slumping happening. We brought in soil experts from BC to assist with identifying the risks and putting a plan in place to avoid contributing to the slumping.

Marty O. - picture review of the variance soil layers

Jeremy B. - Clarification to the variety of layers that happen over the years.

Marilee T. - We have a soil collection at the museum, shows profiles of different soils, if anyone is interested.

Marty O. - And the collection is from soils of this area?

Marilee T. - It does come with pictures and lists areas of where the soils came from, if anyone is ever in the Fort Vermilion and would like to have a look at the collection.

Reforestation

Aaron D. – One of the previous limitations we had in the past was a regenerative survival rate in seven years.

Marilee T. - The RSA now says that you do not need to reforest an area back to what was harvested there? You can reforest to something else?

Marty O. - Right, there is more flexibility for companies in what they re-forest

Marilee T. – Because spruce is the most valuable species, conceivably companies could just reseed with spruce?

Marty O. - We in reforestation, we feel that the way regeneration is structured now, we can move that to another landscape. We need to just ensure that what is harvested is replaced in equal proportions somewhere on the landscape – even if it is not in the same place.

It allows the diversity to be brought back, under the regulation

Marilee T. - With spruce planted over spruce, how is that going effect your soils over a long period of time?

Marty O. - There will be changes to the soil over time; there could be an affect on the soil.

Jeremy B. – if I can clarify, it comes down to economics of the stand; it comes down to mixed woods but you still have to balance it out, in our FMA it comes down to a volume thing not to stand. We would not try to turn a “D” stand into a “C” stand, it would take too much intervention. There may be some more flexibility in mixed wood stands.

Marty O. – the idea is to maintain ecological diversity. We have more flexibility in how we do this – the goal is a “softer foot print”.

Marilee T. - Management decisions that are made on the landbase, what are the long term choices being made? How far into the future are we planning for?

Marty O. – Do what you can to bring the diversity back to what it was. We are replacing trees. We are at the beginning of being more flexible in what is going to evolve around regulations over the next 20 – 25 years.

Aaron D. - What do you have to say about Fir? The fact that it is considered a climax species, but for economic reasons it isn't really desirable.

Marty O. – Fir sometimes ends up on the truck, but doesn't get reforested. It is very prone to disease, very easily damaged. Then it starts dying around age 70, very dormant. As far as bringing back it back as a species, you could bring it back.

Marilee T. – so what if fir topples over and dies after 70 years, how does it come back? How prevalent are Fir stands in this area, is it very common to have fir stands in Alberta?

Marty O. - Not in Alberta, there are areas that are indicated, mostly around water area. If a fir dies it will just create a loop around to the growth of the original species.

Jeremy B. - You don't need to worry about the fir population, we may harvest a bit of it, but not to any extent.

Jeremy B. - Frozen ground rules; harvesting areas in winter compared to summer harvesting; there are things we get away from disturbing/damaging when we harvest in the winter months compared to what kind of damage can be done in the summer.

Marty O. – There is minimal risk to soil (within operating) in the winter. The soil does not appear to be significantly impacted by the machinery during winter operations.

Marilee T. – Years ago I read some information about the effects of repeated snowmobile traffic over the same path. So, although it may not look like we are having an impact, it is still possible there is an impact.

Marty O. – We haven't found that there is a significant impact, but there may be. As far as bringing the forest back, we have been fairly successful.

Marilee T. - How do you make these mounds, some of the mounds look very high , will it ever level down or are we making a permanent structure on the landscape?

Marty O. – No, for the most part they settle right down. As we become more sophisticated with silviculture we are finding ways to reforest with less impact. There is less big machinery on the landscape doing the work, resulting in less impact.

Marilee T. - In reality, how high are the mounds in some of the slides we have seen?

Marty O. - In most cases the mounds are usually about 2 feet high, and then they settle down after the seedlings have been planted.

Aaron D. - Trying to picture this piece of equipment – with the wings, is this done in frost free conditions or how is this done?

Marty O. - Yes, it is done frost free

Marty O. – does Soils come up with the new CSA or had it always been present?

Jeremy B. – it has always been in the CSA but it is a mandatory discussion item required in the new standard.

4.2 Review Tolko’s proposed Indicators and Targets for Criterion 3 and 4

We will defer 4.2 and 4.3 to December 6, 2011 meeting.

Marilee T. - Criterion 4 – is there a handout for it;

Jeremy/Carrie - It has to do with Carbon; it is such a broad topic, we are having trouble coming up with a guest speaker; we will have to have to discuss how to tackle this topic.

4.3 Follow up on Criterion 2 – VOIT’s

5. CLIPPING SERVICE (10)

Jeremy B. distributed latest news clippings to the members.

6. AROUND THE TABLE

7. NEXT MEETING – December 6, 2011, 5:00 pm

8. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting Adjourned by Carrie D. - 8:10 p.m.