

PAG Meeting

Fort Vermilion School Division, November 12, 2003

Attendance:

Henry Friesen - Friesen Logging Ltd.
Ted Edwards - Land & Forest Division
Marilee Toews - Hungry Bend Sandhills
Wilderness Society
Mike Alsterlund – Public

Aaron Doepel - LaCrete Sawmills
Brandon Boucher - Dene Tha' First Nation
Byron Grundberg - Facilitator
Jamie Beaulne - Tolko Industries Ltd.
Marcel LeCoure - Tolko Industries Ltd.

1. Introduction

2. Administrative Items

- Review Last meeting minutes for corrections/clarification
- Discussion of parameters regarding structure retention within harvest areas.
 - Alberta Ground Rules state 8 stems/ha which help address line-of-sight and thermal cover issues.
 - There are no set parameters as to what that structure retention needs to be – merchantable vs. non-merchantable
 - New provincial Ground Rules are currently under development which will likely that have more defined parameters
 - In the DFMP, the Companies have indicated that 1% merchantable volume will be retained in harvest areas across the landscape, with some variation at the cutblock and compartment levels depending on the management objectives.
 - Once the DFMP has been approved, regional ground rules will be developed.
- Discussion on how the parameters for soil disturbance and productivity was monitored in the bush.
 - Soil disturbance and productivity are enforced and tracked through Operational Inspection Forms (OIF), block audits, and Forest Service
- Glossary of Terms
 - The term “Salvageable” was added to the glossary of terms
 - Discussion about the term
 - Does not refer to Industrial salvage as it is used throughout this process
 - To remain within the Companies productive landbase, areas that are burnt must be reforested, although the Forest Minister may waive the reforestation obligation for some areas.
 - Through the Forest Research Improvement Association of Alberta, the Companies may be able to access funds to complete forest improvement projects (e.g. research). They cannot use these funds to meet legal requirements. The Companies may be able to use FRIAA funds for reforestation of burned areas but only if the Minister has waived reforestation responsibility.
 - It is in the companies best interest to keep the burnt areas in the productive landbase.

3. Review Public Involvement Initiatives

- CSA Newsletters Distribution
 - The 1st Edition of the CSA Newsletter was distributed in last week’s edition of both *The Echo* & *The Pioneer*.
- CSA Forest Education Question

- As part of the Companies commitment to increase forestry awareness and education, an ad (contest) was placed in the local newspapers. However, there were no response.
- Article in the TCFN Newsletter
 - An article was placed in the Tall Cree First Nation band newsletter to solicit input into the CSA process
- Community meetings to review the progress on the SFM Plan to date will be occurring in the next couple of weeks.

4. Review Draft Annex Table

- Outstanding items from last meeting
 - *Maintenance of Coarse Woody Debris 1.2.1a-3*
 - Commitment to maintain 5% coarse woody debris (brush piles) in harvest areas which will be identified prior to reclamation and/or abandonment and monitored annually through contract administration and/or annual scanning program
 - Discussion on whether there should be a distance factor built in to the target e.g.: 50-60 meters from block edge.
 - A distance target will not be incorporated. Brush piles retention will be focused on larger cutblocks to help address line-of-sight and habitat availability objectives. The Companies do recognize however that a single pile in the middle of the block may have little value which emphasizes the need to pre-plan the retention and ensure that other retention (merchantable/un-merchantable) is available – i.e. connectivity.
 - Ground rules currently indicate that brush piles cannot be within 8 meters from block edge due to the increased fire hazard. The preference would be to keep the pile retention non-spatial.
 - Discussion whether the range of piles left should be within a range e.g.:5-15% or have a qualifier e.g.: minimum of 5%
 - There is a concern that there should be a maximum number of piles retained to meet ASRD's concern over fire control and the silvicultural liability issues for the Companies.
 - The DFMP currently outlines a commitment for the Companies to work with ASRD over the planning period to develop a brush pile retention target. During the development of the DFMP, members of the Ecological Working Group recommended that 10% retention may be acceptable target, however Forest Protection indicated that it may be too high.
 - Decision that the table will be changed to minimum 5%
 - *Conserve soil resources by maintaining soil quality and quantity 3.1*
 - Discussion on scope of Indicators
 - 3.1.1a-1 (Road Disturbance) and 3.1.1a-2 (Rutting Disturbance) have to do with rutting and roads which can be monitored
 - 3.1.1a-3 (Soil Condition) can be monitored uses NIVMA, Permanent Sample Plots (PSP), growth and yield data.
 - Scepticism from the group on the value of the lesser vegetation surveys and on whether the information is being used to monitor soil condition.
 - Questions brought up about how the lesser vegetation proves that the soil productivity is not lost and how productivity can be kept if the natural cycle of the forest is not kept.
 - Suggestion that a detailed soil comparison report added to the stewardship report each year.
 - The group agrees but wants to make sure that NIVMA and PSP have representative plots and have a soil profile component.
 - Concern that site preparation limits the other users from accessing blocks for recreation
 - Suggestion from the group is that we deal with this issue under 5.1.1b-3 (Forest Management Plans, which incorporated the needs of other stakeholders.

- New Items
 - 5.1.1a (To provide a continuous supply of timber while balancing log profile and distance to mill at or below the approved AAC)
 - There was an issue brought forward at the last meeting that there may be a boom-bust scenario for the mills that may have a significant impact on the community.
 - By ensuring an even-flow harvest (allowing some annual variation), the Companies should remove this concern.
 - Although we cannot control external pressures (e.g. Poor markets conditions, tariffs, etc.), as Companies can ensure that the forests are being managed properly.
 - A question was brought forward regarding the inclusion of non-merchantable black spruce (Sb) in the calculation of the annual allowable cut. Some Black Spruce stands were added to the productive landbase based on site productivity. Therefore, there are unmerchantable black spruce stands currently contributing to the AAC, not based on current merchantability, but based on its merchantability status in the future. Much of the Sb stands that are currently not included in the AAC calculation never will because they will never likely reach merchantability due to the poor productivity of the stand.
 - The AAC is calculated every 5 years and the defined forest area will be recalculated at that time.
 - 5.1.1b (To conduct operations while minimizing impacts on areas of historical, recreational, unique ecological, aesthetic, or other land uses of significance)
 - Areas like the Peace River Islands and the Ponton river valley have been removed from the cut because of public concern over these areas.
 - Concerns brought up that just because Tolko and FFP have committed to not harvesting in these areas. What stops Forestry giving the area to another operator?
 - Since the DFMP is a landscape plan, both timber and non-timber values that the Companies have defined and incorporated all contribute to how the landscape will be managed. Once the DFMP is approved, the government will have agreed to the deletions through the process.
 - 5.1.1b-3 (Forest Management Plans which have incorporated the needs of other stakeholder)
 - Concern that there is a need to include other relevant Acts and Regulations under legal requirements. Is there an Act that protects rare and endangered species in Alberta?
 - There are in fact a number of Laws and Regulations for endangered and/or species at risk in this province.
 - If a species that the federal government finds is endangered and the federal government feels that provincial efforts are inadequate, they can impose recovery strategies on the province.
 - The federal government have left legislation regarding species to the provincial governments, however they must align with federal legislation.
 - 5.2 (Contribute to the sustainability of communities by providing diverse opportunities to derive benefits from forests and to participate in their use and management)
 - Through the Companies public involvement plan, an issue that is often brought forward is who is benefiting from our operations (?).
 - The Companies have established a target to have >80% of the work currently completed on the DFA completed by local and/or Aboriginal contractors.
 - The Companies are currently monitoring this target.
 - Suggestion that part of the advertising should include how much the mills support the communities.
 - Tolko is currently reviewing these statistics for inclusion into our Annual Report (Corporate).
 - 5.3 (Promote the fair distribution of timber and non-timber benefits and costs)
 - Discussion that there is a number of agreements that the mills have with other mills in the area

- Concern that the silvicultural standards are based of Southern Alberta standards and are not applicable to Northern Alberta
- Site preparation is needed more in the north to meet silvicultural standards.
- The Forest companies have been adapting to meet the silvicultural needs by planning larger cutblocks that cause less disturbance then smaller cutblocks. Also a effort has been make to ensure understory and retention patches are left.
- 6.1 (Recognise and respect Aboriginal and Treaty Rights)
 - Discussion over the definition of consultation
- 6.2 (Respect traditional aboriginal forest values and uses identifies through the aboriginal input process)
 - Discussion that this value refers to cultural sites e.g. graves and cabins
 - The goal is to work with First Nations and identify areas there are to be protected
 - Question whether or not tree planters have ever identified cultural items in the field?
 - No one knows of an instance where a tree planter has found anything of cultural and/or archeological significance.
 - A commitment to develop an SOP could be included to address finding items.
- 6.3 (Demonstrate that the SFM public participation process is designed and functioning to the satisfaction of the participants)
 - There will be a survey at the end of the process to determine the satisfaction in the process.
 - The CSA standards sets out various public involvement methods
- 6.4.1a (To increase knowledge and awareness of forest management planning and operations)
 - Increase Forest Education
 - Junior Forest Rangers are an opportunity in the area
 - Comment that there should be more education in the schools not just the forest education society. This will be added to the Annex Table.
- 6.4.1b (To ensure that participants in the development of the SFM Plan have access to all relevant information)
 - There is a database used to keep track of all of the participants and the information they are receiving.
- Unresolved Annex Table Issues
 - Wood Purchasing
 - The Companies need to ensure that they purchase their wood from areas that are being sustainably managed and are following all laws and regulations.
 - Does buying wood fall into the SFM plan.
 - Marcel recognizes the potential to include purchase wood into the SFM plan but also points out that Tolko and FFP cannot be responsible for other companies activities. There is a potential for the future to apply for "Chain of Custody CSA Certification". This means that all the wood (>70%) that comes into Tolko and FFP will be coming from certified forests. However, due to the complexity and the status of the other mills that operate on the FMA, this cannot be achieved at this time.
 - Question what control does the FMA holders have over the quota holder? The FMA holder can develop new ground rules for the area and through the objectives and strategies included in the DFMP, the quota holders have to follow the plan to meet overall objectives.
 - Is it reasonable to expect the Companies to duplicate government compliance monitoring to ensure that quota operators are following all of the ground rules?
 - Adding additional protected areas
 - Since the DFMP forms the foundation for this process, the Companies cannot deviate from the objectives and strategies that have been included in that plan. Since the

inclusion and incorporation of a large protected area was not included in the DFMP, we cannot include one through this process.

- Protected areas are established by ASRD and it is not the responsibility of Tolko or FFP to develop protected areas

5. Next Meeting Date

- Participants would like to have some time to review the Annex Table and look at other companies Annex Table before next meeting.
- Next meeting , 5:00 PM Dec 9, 2003 High Level at Fairview College