

PAG Meeting

Fairview College, September 2, 2003

Attendance:

- Tom Friesen - Precision Lumber Products Inc.
- Henry Friesen - Friesen Logging Ltd.
- George Friesen - Friesen Logging Ltd.
- Jordan Johnston - Alberta Naturalists
- Dennis Eckford - Alpine Environmental Ltd.
- Ted Edwards - Land & Forest Division
- Marilee Toews - Hungry Bend Sandhills Wilderness society
- Mike Alsterlund - Public
- Monty Moore - Husky Oil
- Byron Grundberg – Facilitator (AGFOR Consulting Ltd.)
- Tim Gauthier - Footner Forest Products Ltd.
- Trudi Lang -Tolko Industries Ltd.
- Marcel LeCoure -Tolko Industries Ltd.

1.0 Introduction

- There was a quick “Round-Table” to introduce all those in attendance.

2.0 Administrative Items

- Review of the August 5th Meeting Minutes
 - The group reviewed the August 5th meeting minutes
 - Minutes accepted – (motioned)
- Review Work Plan
 - As a follow-up to the August 5th meeting, the group once again reviewed the draft workplan. Although Byron did not expect consensus on the workplan, he was hoping to ratify the workplan and confirm the date of the next meeting.

Due to other commitments, Byron will not be able to attend the October meeting and proposed to the group to have the next meeting on September 30th, a session that would be solely dedicated to the CSA public advisory process.

Since the next meeting should take us to a decision point (ie. Value and Objectives), it can be expected that the meeting may be slightly longer. Although it is an extra meeting, more would be accomplished.

- The September 30th date seemed to work well for several members of the group
- Byron also noted a minor typo in the workplan. In the August 5th date, the activities include input regarding goals. “Goals” is actually a term used under the 1996 standard. That term has been replaced with objective in the 2002 standard.
- Motion to accept September 30/03 to be the next meeting date – accepted.

- There were a number of documents distributed to the group
 - Revised CSA Annex Table (August 28th 2003)
 - Glossary of Terms – August 28th 2003
 - Marcel indicated that as new terms are added to the Annex Table and/or Minutes, those terms will be included in the Glossary of Terms to provide additional clarification for the group.
 - New terms this meeting;
 - Annual Performance Report
 - Compartment
 - Local – Marcel discussed the term “local” as it will be used in the context of the SFM Plan and recognized that Paddle Prairie was accidentally missing. In addition, it was identified by one of the participants that Rocky Lane was also missing. Marcel will add both communities to the list prior to the next meeting.
 - Operations Inspection Form / Project Tailgate Checklist – As mentioned previously, there is also a “Systems” component to the CSA certification process. These 2 forms are used by the field supervisors for documenting inspections and provide documentation that areas of concern are identified prior to the commencement of operations. Examples of both forms will be distributed to the group later on.

A question was brought forward regarding what to do with the old versions of some of the revised documents. Byron indicated that the old versions should be disposed as that is a component of the “Systems” aspect to the certification process and is linked with the ISO140001 standard

3.0 Review Draft Annex Table

Since there were a few changes to the Annex Table since the last meeting, and for those people who did not attend the August 5th meeting, a review of Criteria 1 (Conservation of Biological Diversity) and Criteria 3 (Conservation of Soil & Water Resources) will be completed to start the meeting.

- 1st page of the Annex Table has not been revised
- Second page has a few changes

Follow-Up

During the August 5th meeting, a question was asked regarding the how the companies ensure their supervisors are reacting appropriately in the field?

The Companies do have a legal obligation to act in due diligence during their operations. Changing legislation (example: Species at Risk Act) force the Companies to do more to ensure that they conduct their operations in a manner that mitigates the effects on rare plant and wildlife species.

Since the last meeting, Marcel has discussed the possibility of developing an Operator Handbook that would be used by staff and contractors to identify rare species and/or habitats. In addition, it was also suggested at the August 5th meeting that the Companies involve the public in its operational planning. The Companies are always looking for input into operational plan development and are currently developing a survey to be used during Open Houses, Trade Fairs, and other public events. This survey will be user-friendly and in the form of “Checkboxes” that would highlight the locations of species habitats, heritage sites, or traditional use areas.

Some of the outcomes of this survey may result in identifying special areas via map and/or a joint field trip.

- These mechanisms would be a good way of meeting objectives and targets in 1.2.1.a-1

Some of the concerns brought forward by the group were the following:

- The idea of establishing protected areas or adding areas to be excluded from harvest should be done to monitor, even if the patch set aside burns down. There is more timber on the landbase than the companies need to cut. The Boreal forest is one of the last that is untouched. If protected areas are established as an objective, ecological evolution could be added as a legal requirement.

One of the fundamental foundations of the CSA certification process and the PAG Terms of Reference is that this process will have to abide by the objectives and strategies outlined in the DFMP. The Public Involvement Plan that was implemented in the DFMP process took place over a period of 3 years. During the determination of the net landbase, there was a considerable amount of area excluded from the net productive area in the Timber Supply Analysis (TSA) and since the DFMP has been completed, additional areas cannot be considered for exclusion until the next DFMP submission in 3 years.

- There was also a concern regarding the monitoring of the Companies' activities and who is involved with the development of the Annual Performance Report and Stewardship Report that appears in several of the Monitoring & Measuring columns in the Annex table. It was indicated that most people don't trust companies.

The Annual Performance Report and Stewardship Report are ASRD requirements for the companies to submit at various times. These reports are completed by the Companies. The goal of the Companies is to merge as many of these reports as possible i.e. CSA vs. DFMP for simplicity.

People must keep in mind that certification initiatives are voluntary and the government is not responsible for regulating. It was also mentioned that the stewardship must be done by foresters and that foresters can only present what's there.

If the Companies do not meet their commitments outlined in the CSA and/or other certification processes, the penalty is the loss of certification. For Companies that are certified and lose their certification following an independent 3rd party audit, those companies are also identified and the information is made public.

It was mentioned by one of the group members that as a group, they can define what the companies are going to be doing and if the companies want certification then they have to comply with our requests.

Byron indicated that the group can't change existing laws and regulations; those are a minimum in the certification process. The group has to define how they will be monitored.

Although the group could have auditors come in to assess the Companies operations, one of the group members indicated that he would rather have a company have serious employees be committed to the process.

- A member of the group asked how much of the FMA is not going to be harvested?

During the net landbase determination, approximately 52% of the landbase was excluded from future harvest activities. The analysis removed unmerchantable, inaccessible and inoperable areas. Some of these areas included the Watt Mountain Natural Area, Ponton River Corridor, Peace River islands, and all watercourse buffers as per Alberta ground rules.

- A member also asked to if targets can be placed on the amount of older age classes being maintained on the FMA.

Since the DFMP forms the foundation for the CSA certification process, the Companies cannot deviate from the Goals and Objectives that guide the direction for the management of the FMA. Since the companies did not incorporate a target, we cannot add a target that would affect the Timber Supply Analysis. However, there are stands out there that go beyond harvest age to ensure that there are older age classes present on the FMA.

In addition, the Ramp-up strategy in the DFMP outlines a reduction in harvest levels for the first 5-year period to give the Companies time to work out operational constraints. In the next TSA, targets for age class maintenance may be considered for incorporation if that is what is desired.

- How does the government like this proposal?

Ted responded to say if a significant portion of the cut was left, someone would more than likely see this as an opportunity.

Mike responded by saying that if we had a protected area, and there was a disaster, at least we would have a cushion. Jordan said the mountain pine beetle created a disaster in BC because of “protected areas” and the Kelowna fire actually started in a Provincial Park.

Instead of protected areas, we should have a “management system” so we don’t develop a disaster. It wouldn’t be perfect, but we would at least make the first steps.

Marilee said the original question included a distribution of age. Byron said there is a general agreement to provide a distribution of age classes

- Target is blank – need an area
 - Task is to find out more #'s to determine targets.
 - Short term target is to develop a strategy for DFA. Performance measure
 - Put 5 years in the monitoring and measuring
 - Maintain current forest situation too.
 - PSP’s could be used to see what happens over time. This is the forest we have now and over time the mosaic of what will be overtime...baseline information, and the numbers.
- What has the company already decided for 1.1.1c?

Although the Companies did not incorporate a target into the DFMP, there are stands out there that go beyond harvest age to ensure that there are older age classes present on the FMA.

- There was concern regarding the actual ability for a participant to make changes to the plan?

All public concerns will be addressed, but not necessarily adopted. If the group has a value that’s important and it’s not addressed in the table, then that concern can be brought forward. “Dynamic Process”.

Marcel also indicated that the group agreed that he was supposed to fill in the table and present it at the meetings. The Terms of Reference is our guiding document.

The Companies have been very clear that we don’t want to deviate far from the DFMP. Honesty is imperative.

1.2.1 (Species Diversity)

There were a few changes made to this section between the August 5th and September 2nd meeting.

The main change that was made was that CWD was removed and added into the 1.2.1a-2 indicator, however following discussions with Byron, we think it would be best to keep it the same as it appeared in the August 4^h version.

The current indicator incorporates both merchantable retention (%) and residual material retention (5% of area)

- With regards to assessing habitat for selected species, there was some concern with only assessing the habitat for 5 species, even though those species are representative of specific covertypes. The concern was that if you only assess the habitat for the 5 species, the Companies are not satisfying SARA (Species at Risk Act)

The Companies need to ensure 2 things: habitat attributes are maintained at the stand level and landscape level

A comment was made regarding what the expectations are for the companies? It is infeasible for the companies to do things like radio collaring pileated woodpeckers? No one expects the companies to do that, however the attributes in the habitat analysis is more important than just the covertype to survive in the forest.

- This approach only monitors the habitat for the main species. The coarse filter can be used for many representative species however you need to ensure that the other species are also considered. We need to include species to motivate a greater understanding of the species (ie. training staff and contractors)

It was suggested that the current list and indicator is too narrow, or we haven't selected the right species. Byron inquired if it was being suggested that we need to include species that aren't dominating; having to do with more mature forests?

It was suggested that since the DFMP already exists, it was suggested that we state something that would indicate that we won't be limited to the existing list. Don't limit the training to school; good to keep us aware of the diversity. Broader base of knowledge.

It was also mentioned that most of the published data is for areas like Hinton and may not apply to this area. It is important to enhance our data.

- It was suggested that the 1% retention target is useless.

Marcel indicated the target will be to retain patches of trees. These patches will also provide some of the characteristics of older stands in harvest areas over time which was positive to the group.

- It was asked as to why the companies would intentionally train contractors to leave single trees for retention?

The current Ground Rules state that 8 stems per hectare is the legal requirement. A representative from a harvest operations perspective indicated that it sometimes makes more sense to leave a single tree surrounded by many smaller trees – he liked the wording in the Annex Table.

Byron stated that the time was approaching 9pm and he would like to see this meeting determine some decisions. The group will definitely not finish up this process by the September 30/03 meeting as originally planned. Should have stayed on 1 column and work it all the way through. Everyone should do homework and submit their ideas to Marcel along with comments.

Mike said he already had worked the sheet for #4 and would submit the information to Marcel.

4.0 Next Meeting Date

- Next meeting September 30, 2003 in High Level at Fairview College
- It was suggested to have the September 30/03 a longer meeting to hopefully make more progress.
- Marcel will do up a sheet in "Italics" and group will go thru each row.
- Maybe the companies should meet 1-1 with members of the group individually. The meetings may then go smoother, however most members didn't like that idea.
- How long is the September 30/03 meeting? Plan for the meeting to be 5-9 PM.
- Time and date are confirmed.
- Bring own written comments.
- Be prepared to suggest alternatives.
- Marilee said that she appreciated the group because she's learning things she wouldn't learn if it was only her discussing the issues one on one.