

PAG Meeting

Fairview College, September 30, 2003

Attendance:

George Friesen - Friesen Logging Ltd.
Ted Edwards - Land & Forest Division
Marilee Toews - Hungry Bend Sandhills
Wilderness Society
Mike Alsterlund – Public
Tracie Dahdona - Dene Tha' First Nation

Byron Grundberg - Facilitator
Jason Kofluk- Footner Forest Products Ltd

Michelle Holstein -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

- A member of the group asked it whether or not the mixedwood management concept affects our CSA process?
 - Marcel indicated that it does not unless we include objectives, indicators, or targets that would relate to mixedwood management.
- The September 2nd Public Advisory Group (PAG) meeting minutes were distributed to the group.
 - The group reviewed the September 2nd meeting minutes
- Minutes accepted with noted changes– (Mike Alsterlund moved)
 - Page 3-second paragraph from the bottom "During the net landbase determination, approximately 52%..." should read "approximately 50.2%..."
- One of the group members requested clarification in the minutes under 1.2.1 (Species Diversity) at the bottom of the page.
 - Patch Retention – What is the purpose of single-tree retention?
 - Marcel indicated that during operations, there are single-trees left to provide diversity in the cutblocks. Patch retention will be focused on larger cutblocks where line-of-sight and distance to hiding cover for wildlife may be an issue. In cases where single merchantable trees are retained, stems are generally stubbed or surrounded by unmerchantable stems to help ensure that the trees remains standing.
 - George Friesen (logger) indicated that there is no hard fast rule for patch retention as there are too many variables. Many of these decisions are made when harvesting.
 - Marcel indicated that the contractor /operator are made aware of the different strategies during "Tailgate Meetings" which will be discussed in greater detail later in the meeting. Ted: Ground rules also play a part, 8 stems per ha.

3.0 Review Public Involvement Initiatives

- Some of the Companies initiatives to solicit public input were distributed to the group, including:
 - CSA Certification Newsletter
 - Distributed for all to review.
 - The newsletter idea was first introduced during the development of the DFMP.
 - Although the newsletters were distributed at the 2003 Trade Show in High Level, the newsletters can be changed to incorporate the suggestions of the group.
 - More additions are likely to follow. The companies are looking into a variety of distribution methods to solicit input.
 - CSA-SFM Information Cards
 - Distributed out for all to review.

- These cards were introduced at the Tolko Open House in August of this year. Although the amount of information on the cards is limited, the purpose of the cards was to generate some interest on the CSA website.
- The Public Input Questionnaire
 - Distributed out for all to review.
 - Marcel indicated that the survey was introduced at the 2003 High Level Trade Show. Ted Edwards actually gave the “survey” idea to Marcel as other companies in the province have used a similar survey.
 - Marcel indicated that a total of 55 people completed the survey, which will also be likely be added to the website.
 - A member of the group mentioned that the Trade Show might not be the best venue for that type of survey. Marcel agreed and indicated that the survey will be much more useful at such events as the GDP Roadshow.
- A member of the group inquired about the number of people accessing the website. Marcel indicated that the last time he checked there were approximately 225 hits. Although a portion of those is expected to be internal (50-100), there are still people using the website. Marcel indicated that the website will remain accessible even after the completion of the SFM Plan for continued feedback.
- A member of the group also inquired if people can still join the Public Advisory Group? Marcel indicated that we would welcome more people to participate in the process.

4.0 Review Draft Annex Table

- Byron asks that everyone focus this meeting and get as much accomplished as possible.
- To start the meeting, an updated annex table and glossary of terms document was distributed
 - To make it easier to identify the changes from the September 4th version, Annex Table changes are in *italics*
- Conservation of Biological Diversity
 - 1.1.1c
 - Pages 8-5 & 8-6 (Age-Class structure over time) from the Integrated Detailed Forest Management Plan were distributed and Marcel explained them.
 - The difference between the gross (left) & net (right) is buffers, ground rule deletions, species and/or sites not incorporated into the TSA etc.
 - The Companies have committed to determining the range of natural variability for the DFA. A common question often brought forward by members of the general public is how much old forest *is* maintained across the landscape? How much old forest *should* be maintained across the landscape? (Forestry Chronicle article “Old-Forest in Foothills” distributed).
 - Fires, insect & disease naturally affect the age class structure across the landscape and there is evidence that there is spatial (subregion/area) and temporal (time) variability in the amount of old forest over time. The Companies want to determine that range and conduct our operations so we are in fact operating within that range.
 - Will there be older timber in the landbase in the future one group member asked?
 - Marcel indicated that there would be older forests maintained over the 200-Year planning horizon, barring future fires etc. that cannot be forecasted. Currently, 16.3 % of the forested landbase is >200years old. At the end of the 200-year plan, it is estimated that there will be 10.3% that will form the target (10%). If there was no harvesting on the landbase over that time, 15.8% of the forested landbase would be >120 years – not a significant difference.
 - It was asked by a member of the group why the natural curve is not maintained over time?
 - Byron indicated that these forecasts are just “snapshots” in time

- Marcel indicated that age class structure is highly variable over time.
- A group member was concerned that much of the future forest looks less mature.
- Marcel indicated that through sustaining the harvest levels over time, the portion of the landbase that the Companies operate in (<50%) will become “regulated” over time with approximately the same amount of area within each age class. However, one should note that the remaining 50% is able to continue through its natural succession.
- Marcel indicated that the Companies have committed to operating within the range of natural variability and must assess that range prior to the submission of the next DFMP.
- There was a question as to the mechanism that the Companies are recording what information needs to be addressed in the next DFMP?
- Marcel indicated that through the ongoing Public Involvement Plan and the CSA certification process, the Companies track issues and concerns brought forth. The Companies realize that there are a few outstanding issues from the current DFMP that need resolution and those outstanding issues will be discussed and may be incorporated into the next plan.
- 1.2.1
 - An issue was brought forward regarding the “Means of achieving” section and the removal of “Determine a more ecologically based target for retention prior to the next DFMP” from the draft annex.
 - Marcel indicated that that remains a commitment in the DFMP and was removed because it doesn't affect the current indicator and target. If the group would like to see it put back in, Marcel would. The group agreed that it should so Marcel will ensure this is completed before the next meeting.
 - One of the group members indicated that it should be a minimum of 1%.
 - Marcel indicated that the Companies will average 1% merchantable retention across the landscape with flexibility at the compartment and cutblock levels to incorporate other objectives & values.
 - Some blocks will have 0% merchantable retention, others may have 3-5% depending on the block.
 - It was brought forward that the Companies should be working with the logging contractors as part of this process.
- 1.2.1a-3 blanks discussed
 - One of the group members indicated that Kim Morton from Fish & Wildlife gave a presentation for pile retention during the DFMP process.
 - Marcel indicated that the Companies did commit to working with ASRD to identify a target before the next DFMP
 - Byron asked the group whether or not we need a target or objective?
 - One of the group members felt we should include a target to establish the target over the planning period.
 - Marcel: develop by next DFMP
 - Ted Edwards from ASRD indicated that the government are currently developing new legislation for pile retention as well.
 - Marcel: no more than 10% has been acceptable for a particular disposition in the past because of the silvicultural liability and potential fire hazard.
 - Marcel to propose at next meeting.
- Marcel distributed an example of an Operations Inspection Form and a Project Tailgate Checklist for reference as they do appear often in the Annex table.
 - Both forms are important to the “systems” portion of the CSA certification process. They are used to identify areas that require special attention or are used in monitoring activities for compliance.

- There was concern regarding the communication between the different phases i.e. logging vs. scarifiers etc.
 - Jason from FFP indicated that a tailgate is done before starting operations, and where it applies, each phase.
 - One of the members of the group inquired about how the government checks on industry? What percentage is checked?
 - Ted indicated that they use similar forms
 - ASRD shoot for 100% but not enough staff for that kind of coverage
 - Marcel indicated that status reports and plan updates are submitted weekly by the Companies to the government.
 - One of the group members indicated that all users of the forests should be accountable for their activities (i.e. recreational) not just the Companies.
 - Activities of outfitters were discussed.
 - Marcel indicated that the Companies remove all temporary crossings following operations to minimize potential of damage from other users.
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- Maintenance and Enhancement of Forest Ecosystem Condition & Productivity
 - 2.2.1a-1
 - Means of Achieving is new ground, stay with the game plan.
 - Byron: follow across the page
 - 2.1.1b-change to “fire and other natural disturbances”
 - It was mentioned by one of the group members that we should also let nature take its course.
 - Change wording
 - Leave room for natural regeneration
 - Byron also indicated that silviculture records (SIS) should be moved to means of achieving
 - Ted: fires
 - Fires are GPS'd annually and the area is recorded and incorporated into future TSA's
 - 2.2.1a change “does” to “do”
 - Byron: similar to 1.2.1a-2
 - Add 1.2.1c-1 “Involve the public in identifying additional species to be included in future analyses”, to the means.
 - Add words “representative & unique” to species
 - Marcel lead a discussion regarding the habitat summary analysis that was completed and distributed the summaries to the group.
 - Pleated woodpecker habitat is the only habitat that sees a decrease in habitat in one of the snapshots.
 - The Companies do not see this specific species analysis as a huge issue for a few reasons:
 - Stand-level habitat is also being maintained in cutblocks during operations
 - The query information was based on Alberta-based research only, which showed the high preference for deciduous stands only. However there is other research that indicated that mixedwood stands also provide habitat which isn't being shown in this analysis.
 - There is an increase near the end of the 200-year planning period.
 - One of the group members indicated that there is a 4.5 ha required per woodpecker pair
 - Other species trends
 - Bison fluctuation in thermal cover only

- Marten habitat increase over time
- Caribou and moose habitat increase over time
- Through this process and the DFMP process, the Companies have committed to involving the public in identifying other species to be included in future analyses.

A short break was held

- Conservation of Soil & Water Resources
 - 3.1
 - Byron indicated that soil compaction & rutting can be issues during harvest operations and can impact productivity.
 - Soil condition was suggested as an additional indicator.
 - One of the group members inquired about the feasibility of monitoring soil sampling? Perhaps a scientific analysis can be added to the monitoring?
 - Soils could be sampled before, during, and following operations.
 - Byron: What is the target, and how would you monitor it?
 - No current laws or regulations for soil
 - Not specifically addressed in the DFMP
 - One of the group members indicated that the indicator could be “soil condition”, which means a lot of things
 - Could Pre/Post-harvest assessments collect this information?
 - One group member indicated that this sort of work could help with the lack of baseline data for the region.
 - Byron noted that if “Road Disturbance” remained as an indicator, then “rutting” would also need to be addressed to ensure that the Soil Conservation Guidelines are addressed.
 - Add “Compliance with Rutting Guidelines” as a second indicator for Soil Productivity
 - One of the group members indicated that roads and rutting are too “operations” specific and inquired about other potential indicators for soil condition?
 - Jason from FFP indicated that soil changes over time so you can’t obtain a baseline
 - Byron: A good indicator needs to be measurable
 - One of the group members indicated that regeneration could be a potential indicator. Another potential indicator could be tree-growth (Growth & Yield Program).
 - The Companies will try and determine another indicator before the next meeting.
 - 3.2
 - Marcel indicated that nothing changed in this critical element since the last meeting. The Companies did specify a target of 0% for 3.2.1a-3 and outlines a variance of 5%. Although reclamation of former crossings is rare, the Companies have done additional reclamation where it was deemed necessary.
- Forest Ecosystem Contributions to Global Ecological Cycles
 - Marcel identified a “typo” in the acceptable variance of 4.1.1a-1 and thus will remove “not” from “...will not be NSR”.
 - It was suggested by one of the group members that we add “environmental stability” in the basis for target (4.1.1a-1)
 - Byron: Need to focus on Global Ecological Cycles
 - One of the group members asked why “productive” was added to the indicator for 4.2.1a?
 - Productive can mean a lot of things
 - Why added?
 - Marcel: target non-productive area

- Remove “productive”
 - Marcel will end the target at the end of “Non-Forested” and will now be cut-off after the word non-forested and will now be “Decrease the total area currently identified as non-forested”.
- One of the group members requested clarification on “Co-ordinate with O&G sector and actively rehabilitate abandoned MSL’s, landings, etc.”
 - Marcel indicated that this is a strategy that the Companies have been active with to help compensate for the increased land-use activity on the DFA. The number of opportunities will vary each year and will also depend on feasibility.
- Monitoring and Measurement
 - Ted inquired about the significance of the 2014 timeline?
 - Marcel indicated that the Companies are implementing a new inventory program that will consist of a plan of 1 Operating Area/Year. All the Operating areas will be completed by 2014.
 - It was also suggested that the Annex table should outline our specific intentions i.e. wellsites, seismic lines, etc.
 - Remove anthropogenic, use human caused instead.
 - Byron suggested that we add fire areas as well
- Multiple Benefits to Society
 - One of the group members indicated that recreation users are not incorporated into the Annex Table
 - Marcel indicated that although there are no specific indicators related to recreational users, 5.1.1b-3 is an indicator that relates to the incorporation of the needs of stakeholders in FMP’s.
 - Marcel also discussed the Watt Mountain Wanderers Snowmobile Club as an example. Tolko has loaned their GPS unit to the group to allow them to map their trail system that is used by planning staff in the development of management plans.
 - Marcel also indicated that the Companies are looking into an analysis regarding harvesting activity around the Rainbow Lake Campground (recreational group).
 - A group member also expressed interest in adding “unique ecological” to the list before the word significance.
 - Change 5.1.1b-1 to include “recreational, historical, aesthetic & unique/ecological”
 - One of the group members discussed an experience with a group that wanted to organize an ATV event in a sensitive area. By working with the group, the sensitive area was not used and the group were still able to host the event.
 - This group member stated that educating the public regarding the benefits of integration should be promoted.
 - There was also concern that the list of non-timber forest users does not include other land uses i.e. trapping, hunting, etc.
 - It was suggested to add “other interests” or “other land uses of significance” to the objective.
 - 5.3
 - There was concern regarding the long-term, local job security within the industry and how that could be incorporated into an objective for 5.3?
 - Indicator would be a stabilized work force
 - Don’t want boom & bust due to bad planning
 - A discussion was held about where to put this issue if at all
 - Byron: Marcel to complete 5.3 for the next meeting

4. Next Meeting Date

- Next meeting November 4, 2003 in High Level at Fairview College