

Stillwater Timberlands Community Advisory Group

April 24th, 2002

Minutes

Recording Secretary: Pam Dowding

Attendance: refer to attached sheet

6:00pm: Dinner

6:20pm: The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed guests.

Introductions

Introductions were made,

Guests were welcomed to the meeting:

Greg Hemphill, District Manager, Sunshine Coast Forest District - Ministry of Forests

Brian Kukulis- Tenures Forester, Sunshine Coast Forest District - Ministry of Forests

Bob Rebantad – Recreation Officer - Sunshine Coast Forest District

Jack McLinchey – interested in alternate seat for motorized recreation

Georgia Combe, Maintenance person for Powell River Canoe Route

Terri Thompson – interested in the education sector

Tom Cherett, Shaw Cable –

CAG members introduced themselves to guests.

Safety Announcement

The facilitator informed everyone of the location of fire exits and safety procedures.

Meeting with Harold Long – May 3rd

Members were asked to let facilitator know whether they would be attending the meeting that has been arranged for May 3rd. It was noted that the meeting is scheduled to take place on May 3rd at 10:30am at the Weyerhaeuser office.

Agenda

Discussion on the future of recreation and recreation access.

Recreation map and Operations maps available for review.

CAG letter to Weyerhaeuser re: FSP comments

Terms of Reference review committee report

It was noted that other business items could be deferred to next meeting

National Forestry Week

Information on planned Weyerhaeuser woods tour open to the public on May 11th. Discussion on CAG members participation.

Draft itinerary was provided – lunch at Nanton Lake, maps and review of FSP planned.

Greg Hemphill

District Manager, Ministry of Forests

A general overview of the recent cutbacks and new forest policy changes in the provincial government.

35% reduction in the budget – (1400 less staff) will take place in the forest service.

Government programs have been cut and there will be more opportunities for private enterprise

Ministry of Forests will no longer manage a network of recreation sites/trails

Ministry of Forests will no longer administer a user fee system

Ministry of Forest s will no longer manage a system of recreation maps and brochures

The Forest Service will getting out of the maintenance and deactivation of forest service roads

The Forest Service will be getting out of maintaining campsites and trails

Government is looking for ways to cut costs and to get other groups involved

FRBC closed and replaced by FIA – less money will be available for a larger range of activities

No huge changes in the TFL39 area, but cutbacks will have more impact in other areas

Not much change in the next six months – before Oct 1st groups will be contacted

It was noted that the forest service campsites, picnic tables and facilities were made in the 1970's and have been maintained by the forest service since then. It was noted that opportunities would exist for community volunteer groups and commercial businesses to take over the sites. Sites that are not taken over will be self maintained or closed down.

It was noted that Weyerhaeuser presently contributes to the maintenance of the canoe route. Assessments will continue on sites to decide which will be available for different options. Dinner Rock is a site that will be available for interested groups and discussions are ongoing.

Bob Rebantad - Recreation office for the Forest Service spoke about the ski hut and Inland Lake trail and campsite- they will be maintained on a limited budget for the next six months, but vandalized items will not be replaced. Different groups, agencies and local government will be contacted to see whether there is any interest in assuming the responsibilities.

It was noted that liability is a bit item of concern, and groups will probably wait until new legislation is in place before committing themselves. Workshops to determine hazards are being held, and more answers will be available in four to six weeks. Sites will be broken into profit and non-profit groups and non- – profit groups will be handled differently. Interested groups include PRPAWS and the BOMB squad. It was noted that there is not much in the way of commercial recreation sites in the Powell River area. A couple of members of the *Outdoor Recreation Council of BC* have approached the Ministry to take over the entire umbrella for liability for recreation sites.

Question: What motivation to keep sites open for user groups?

Answer: By Spring 2004 M of F will no longer be in the maintenance business. Opportunities for non profit groups such as PRPAWS and BOMB squad – they would need equipment to do the maintenance

Question: Who are the other government ministries that may look after sites?

Answer: The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management. Also Ministry of Water Land and Air will manage the commercial portion of managing sites.

Question: Has there been an interest shown from some groups who have the capacity?

Answer: Some interest has been shown already from community groups as well as some for profit groups

Question: Sechelt area has some school organizations – maintaining mountain bike tracks –

Answer – Good organizations – there are two groups, one is known as "SCUM" group – and the other is "SPROCKETS" that is teacher monitored work done by school students

Question: For crown land, public has a right to access, what happens when commercial business ventures take over, will access be denied to user groups?

Answer: Public still will have right to access crown lands – some businesses may charge fees for campsites. Commercial businesses won't be able to stop anyone coming in to crown land areas.

Question: Businesses will have lease agreements, how will liability be determined?

Answer: Liability is the biggest single issue – Government willing to pass on everything to someone else, but must find a way to help out with liability concerns for non-profit groups. Groups want to know that they will be protected if they get involved.

Question: If government is getting out of the maintenance business, and others take over responsibilities, who will monitor standards?

Answer: Ministry of Forests will set standards and do compliance inspections, but funding is reduced - \$3-4 million was used for recreation sites province-wide

Question: What about visual quality and recreation inventories- who will oversee?

Answer: Ministry of Forest will still oversee those items. Local community groups have brought a lot to the area in the last few years. Areas such as Chilliwack need guards and gates and are locked up – needing a higher budget to maintain.

Question: How many sites – and how will they be divided?

Answer: 1250 in the province – 48 will be enhanced sites with gates and security, 240 have commercial capacity, the rest non –profit or back to natural state- 300 have been identified as in need of intensive management.

Question: What kind of time-line for risk assessment?

Answer: Criteria still to be decided, all deadlines have been extended - no firm date set October 1st possible date when more information available

Question: What about the standards that were never used or made into law-will others have to maintain higher standards?

Answer: Signs are that it is already happening. New codes did achieve safety and environmental issues were addressed. Forest Service recreation adopted rules from parks, but had no prescriptive standards from government. Ministry of Forests will supervise tenures of whoever has the leases, but it was noted that staff would be decreased from 70 plus to 11 on April 1st 2003.

It was noted that Weyerhaeuser has standards that are strictly enforced

Comment from Georgia Combe - regarding standards of maintenance for the canoe route.

There has never been any pressure to increase maintenance, and no safety or environmental concerns have been reported. Sites at Khartoum, Lois, Nanton and Dodd Lakes have been maintained to level or better, and public complaints and reports of vandalism (if any) are addressed. It was noted that the campsites in Powell River are not only land-based, but also there are canoe route sites that are unique.

Wilderness roads and sites -it was noted that Min of Forests will step in to make safe if necessary.

Question: When will clear criteria become available?

Answer: Four to six weeks.

Question: Funding from the new FIA – what would funding cover?

Answer: FIA would fund some adaptive management research for VR for companies such as Weyerhaeuser. Funding will be available to develop recreation strategy with some provisions for rehabilitation of wilderness roads to make safe, but not for maintenance of those roads. It was noted that some recreational roads and campsites would grow over on their own if not maintained. It was noted that CAG and the community would have to find out what priorities are and find out where best to spend the funds that are available. Advertising will be done in May to establish what can be achieved with FIA funding. Some recreational maintenance will be coming from FIA funding.

Question: Would the Regional District be interested in maintaining some campsites?

Answer: They are interested in one site.

Question: What about health and safety concerns such as clean water and facilities that are not maintained - who will be responsible?

Answer: The public health and safety officer would be looking after the water concerns

Question: If a commercial operator takes over – can others hike through the land?

Answer: Yes – Crown land will still be accessible to the public but operators such as kayak operators will hold a license to do business on the land.

Question: What about recreation sites outside of the TFL – accessed by non-industrial roads –who would be responsible?

Answer: Sites would be assessed – Forest Service road goes to Dinner Rock now, would assess whether needed

Question: Higher level plans needed for sites around Powell River – what happens if no one comes forward?

Answer: Ministry would maintain and assess for the future- not trying to close or cancel campsites, want to see managed by someone else.

Question: Only 300 out of 1200 would be managed commercially?

Answer: 48 sites with enhanced sites, gates and fees and about 250 others will be offered to commercial operators or community groups and organizations

Question: If entrepreneurs want access to the beach how much access would be allowed?

Answer: If anyone interested- open to suggestions

Question: Concerns about cancellation of sites, allowing sites to grow in and sites that may be deliberately destroyed.

Answer: Forest service will intervene where safety is a problem and signs will come down showing designated campsites

Question: What about the Emma Lake hut?

Answer: Forest service will talk to the Alpine Club regarding the Emma Lake hut

It was noted that in Powell River the situation was not as bad as some other areas and the area has some good recreation groups that have done a lot in the past with volunteer labour. If no one wants to maintain sites, they will be assessed and decisions made after that.

Member noted that if non-profit groups take over the maintenance of sites, they would probably be looking for grants and government funding, so the government is just passing over the financial burden to another government department.

It was noted that a user pay system has been in force at Inland Lake in the form of a donation box. Non profit groups could have a similar system.

Question: Is there more information available on leases for non-profit societies?

Answer: New agencies - BC Assets and Lands and Ministry of Land Air and Water may become the permit agencies for recreation sites but no firm details are available yet.

Question: Any information on liability details?

Answer: Will be more information in four to six weeks

Question: Any news on the Dinner Rock site?

Answer: Dinner Rock is a designated site and there is no intention to remove site. Some interest from local government and local residents. Recreation area at Dinner Rock is NOT in the Sliammon AIP and any development there has to be consistent with the recreation objective.

Question: What is unmanaged recreation?

Answer: Same as "dispersed" recreation – such as mushroom picking, salal picking, hunting and hiking activities

Question: Forest service has recreation inventories but getting out of recreation use management?

Answer: The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management will look after inventories for strategic planning

Question: When the Forest service looked after sites and trails, damage would be looked after- FSP does not include use/management of recreation sites – what about the licensee?

Answer: Compliance monitoring will still be done, road inspections and environmental risk inspections will be done

Question: Will the company no longer be required to fulfill former obligations?

Answer: Company will be accountable and monitored on results. The company has objectives to provide access. Zoning access will stay the same as the FSP plan. Plan calls for buffering around Canoe Route, but no commitment for maintenance. Lots of ways to use FIA funding but not enough for all sites.

Question: Liability – checking sites – no recreation staff – how will sites be monitored without staff to check on compliance?

Answer: Agreed – less money available but compliance important and there will be fewer staff to monitor

BREAK – 8:00pm – 8:10pm

Question: FIA documentation available? Is there criteria to ensure recreation structures are safe? Are the roads leading to recreation sites included?

Answer: FIA /website information from meeting that was held in the Fraser Valley. Price Waterhouse Cooper information will be available on website

ACTION – Website address will be provided for members to access more information on new FIA funding program

Weyerhaeuser noted that the FRBC budget was \$14 million and FIA will only supply \$5million that has to be spread out all over the coast from Port McNeil and the Queen Charlottes.

Recreation officer noted that a total of \$35,000 was available for recreation sites for five years and may not last too long

Member noted that Weyerhaeuser has been looking after the Canoe Route and other recreation facilities, and has committed \$2000 through HRDC phase2.

Member thanked Weyerhaeuser for their commitment to the above. Member noted that priorities will be set in May, and asked what Stillwater Timberlands priorities would be.

Weyerhaeuser noted that they will establish an internal "wish list" for funding that would include roads, silviculture, recreation and woodland services Nanaimo research, and other operations are doing the same. How funds are allocated to licensees of the TFL - according to the cut levels from last year- this area had the highest last year.

Question: How much money was collected from Inland Lake last year?

Answer: Recreation officer noted that around \$1500 - \$2000 was collected by the Model Community Society at Inland Lake last year

Question: When is a facility considered unsafe or dangerous- scenario, when someone walks over a bridge -that maybe considered dangerous – any possibility of bridges being dismantled?

Answer: Forest Service wants to leave everything intact and will keep as much as possible in place. Decision on what is a hazard will be up to the District Manager. BOMB squad looks at bridges and do what they have access to.

Question: The government is re-writing the liability act, and will make it harder to sue

Answer: Yes, volunteer groups have sent the message that they don't want to be put in the position where they could be sued. More information on the policy coming but is not available yet.

Member of the Access committee noted that there had been recent court cases and had been gathering information on liability issues. Members agreed that no one wants to commit until a policy is in place – by October 1st everything has to be on place.

Member asked whether there was any information available on the new Municipal Community Charter that allows for recreation.

No information available yet.

Question regarding vandalism, if picnic table, signs and outhouses are vandalized, will they be taken out?

Answer: No, picnic tables won't be replaced but M of F may approve a single outhouse.

Forest service will use up supplies that are on hand and will have discussions with whoever takes over.

Question: What standards of maintenance are in place?

Answer: Minimal level of funding so if there is some equipment and supplies available they will be used up over the summer.

The recreation officer noted that if anyone is interested in taking over recreation management of sites, they could pool some sites together such as Nanton and Dodd Lake

Question: What is the charge for campsite at present? What could be charged by others?

Answer: Present charge is \$10 per night with no wood supplied, but no limit for private sector.

Question: Would the Ministry of Forests look at rates charged?

Answer: NO, new organization (Ministry of Land and Water BC) or new agency BC Assets and Lands would be the permit agency

Member noted that there is no local branch office for the above ministries.

It was noted that the nearest office for BC Assets was located in Surrey, and that location is inconvenient for Powell River.

BOMB squad members noted that there were concerns regarding deactivation and if deactivation takes place there will be fewer trails that are accessible.

Recreation officer explained that there are no plans to deactivate or remove any trails but some facilities may be removed.

Member asked about roads –would they be deactivated?

District Manager noted that there is a legal requirement to maintain or deactivate wilderness, fish/game roads and there will be less wide spread deactivation.

Question: Member asked what involvement the Regional District has in the management of recreation sites

Answer: Not a lot of success or involvement in the past but opportunities might be there. Discussions will take place with the Regional District and other user groups.

Recreation officer noted that there is not a lot of land on the water and the Dinner Rock site would be a bonus for the Regional District, but the road to it is not the highest quality.

Member asked whether campsites at the low end of the scale would be kept at present rates.

Recreation officer noted that campsites in this area are of lower quality than BC Park standards, but on long weekends Dodd and Nanton Lake sites are full.

District manager noted that if some commercial business comes forward to take over, government wouldn't dictate rates charged.

Member noted that before changes taxes paid for the privileges, now users would have to pay.

District Manager noted that in 97% of cases there is free use of campsites

Member noted that if someone takes over, users will have to pay \$10 per night and that may be too expensive for some low-income families.

District Manager noted again that good sites will be advertised and that opportunities were there for someone with a good business plan and that non-profit groups could also charge fees.

Chair of the Community Advisory thanked everyone for attending.

FSP letter to Weyerhaeuser

Draft letter to Weyerhaeuser was provided for review. Members discussed some opposition to items in the letter. It was noted that objections were not heard before during FSP discussions. It was noted that one member disagreed with the contents of the letter and has already sent a letter to Weyerhaeuser. Member noted that the Knuckleheads area would not be an issue within the next five years since the FSP was a five-year plan, and voted by a show of hands to strike the paragraph from the letter. Two opposed.

Members asked for clarification on a cabin to be built in the Knuckleheads area

Weyerhaeuser noted that they had donated a truckload of logs for the project. It was noted that construction of the cabin would be above the tree line and would have no influence on harvesting. Weyerhaeuser decides on 15 or 30-hectare openings. The FSP Plan (with all public and CAG member's comments) then goes to the District manager for approval.

Weyerhaeuser woods tour for the public

Theme: "All things big and small"

Notice of planned wood tour was distributed. Tour is planned for May 11th and bus transportation will be provided. Lunch at Nanton Lake, FSP review and maps to be provided.

Access Recreation Map

Access recreation map was provided and Access committee meeting will be planned-

Further details of date and time of meeting to be sent by e-mail

More maps requested for different user group so that they could have input before next Access committee meeting.

Action List

Action list from April 10th to be reviewed at next meeting.

Review of Terms of Reference

New draft of Terms of Reference was provided with suggested changes. Members were asked to review and discussion and approval will take place at next meeting.

Reminder – Meeting with MLA Harold Long - May 3rd at 10:30am – Weyerhaeuser office

Next regular meeting - May 8th – Coast Hotel – 6:00pm

Meeting adjourned 9:20PM

Stillwater Timberlands Advisory Group		
April 24th 2002		
Attendance		

Name	Position	Member Seat
Present		
Eagle Walz Chair	Primary	Recreation
Kathleen O'Neil	Primary	Education/Planning
George Ferreira	Primary	Recreation
Michael Conway-Brown	Primary	Recreation
Joanne Cameron-Nordell	Primary	Local Business
David Gabelhouse	Primary	Local Govt
Jane Cameron	Alternate	Recreation
Doug Fugge	Primary	Youth
Lorne Marr	Alternate	Recreation
Absent		
Ken Jackson - Vice-Chair	Primary	Recreation
Andrew Pinch	Alternate	Tourism
Peter Ranger	Primary	Forest Dependent
Paul Holbrook	Alternate	Forest Dependent
Rory Maitland	Primary	Contractors
Bill Maitland	Alternate	Contractors
Sonny Rioux	Primary	IWA
Taylor Holbrook	Alternate	Youth
Bill Duff	Primary	Citizens

Karen Duff	Alternate	Citizens
Mike Robinson	Alternate	Education/Planning
Ian Fleming	Alternate	Local Business
<i>7 seats in attendance</i>		
Resource - other		
Rod Tysdal	Weyerhaeuser	Stillwater
Ray Balogh	Weyerhaeuser	Stillwater
Colin Koszman	Weyerhaeuser	Stillwater
Guests		
Greg Hemphill	District Manager	Ministry of Forests
Bob Rebantad	Recreation Officer	Ministry of Forests Sunshine Coast Forest District
Brian Kukulis	Tenures Forester	Sunshine Coast Forest District
Guests - continued		
Georgia Combe	Maintenance person	Powell River Canoe Route
Terri Thompson	Educator	
Jack McLinchey	Motorized recreation	possible Alternate seat
Tom Cheret	Shaw Cable	Community service
BOMB squad	4 members	Community group

Cathy Bartfai	Facilitator	
Pam Dowding	Secretary	