

Stillwater Timberlands Community Advisory Group

Meeting with Harold Long, MLA

Weyerhaeuser Office

May 3rd, 2002

Minutes

Recording Secretary: Pam Dowding

Attendance: refer to attached sheet

10:35am

Introductions

Chair welcomed members and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Members introduced themselves to guest Harold Long, MLA for Powell River Sunshine Coast. Items of concern were brought to the table for discussion. It was noted that the topics for the agenda were sent to Mr. Long's constituency assistant ahead of time so that the Mr. Long could come to the meeting well prepared with answers. It was also noted that the facilitator spoke with Mr. Long's constituency assistant at length on the topics. CAG members were disappointed to hear that Mr. Long had not personally received any of the e-mails that had been sent, and neither had the messages been conveyed to him.

Access to Dodd Lake

Discussion of an initiative by Weyerhaeuser to request the government to consider funding through a tax break or stumpage allowance to create full time access to Dodd Lake that involved a two-step process:

1. A one way loop as far as Tin Hat junction.

Enlargement of the road from Tin hat junction to Dodd Lake (mile 16) and beyond.

Weyerhaeuser noted that there is a proposal for the one-way loop that CAG had agreed to and that project will be going ahead this year. Government assistance with funding is requested for the area beyond Tin Hat junction and the another area Stillwater Mainline. It was noted that discussions with Forest Service regarding widening of the road had taken place.

Mr. Long replied that since it was a project that would cost millions of dollars, it was doubtful that the government would be able to help at this time and unlikely that the request would be granted. However, an offer was made to take the proposal to the ministry on behalf of the community.

CAG members suggested two alternate solutions:

Take off the corners of the road instead of widening

For road access to Windsor Lake, -open the old spur road

Mr. Long suggested a ferry system with a marshalling car to be used to the areas from a holding area. Members suggested that people would not be agreeable to waiting for a truck to take them and would be impatient.

Discussion followed on the ideas suggested, and it was noted that the road would have to be studied to see whether taking off the corners was a feasible option. It was also noted that the road had to be made safe for public access since it has dangerous corners and accidents had occurred in the past. It was noted that roads all the way up to the head of Haslam Lake could be possible in the future

CAG member noted that two guides are planning to operate in the Eldred Valley this year and Powell River could become a tourist destination for rock climbers and alpine hikers, making road access for the public essential.

ACTION – CAG will send a letter to government to support two options

Double lane preferred

Knock off the corners if a feasible option

Member suggested that local Value added business could use the wood if option b) was used.

Recreation Sites and trails – Liability concerns

Background – Ministry of Forests getting out of the business of recreation. The ministry will do no further maintenance of recreation facilities or campsites and roads after March 2003. Opportunities will be available for other groups to take

over responsibility for maintenance of sites and trails. Retired and volunteer groups will not be willing to take on sites if there is a risk of being put in a position where they could be sued.

Member noted that volunteer groups are not equipped to fix and clean up some sites as easily as the forest service - they do not own helicopters or float planes to access some sites. Also, groups do not want to take on the risk of being sued if accidents occur on the sites.

Mr. Long asked how many people had been hurt in the past and sued the government in this area.

Member noted that two North Vancouver people tried to sue the BC Forest Service recently but did not succeed.

Member noted that many facilities (such as the Emma Lake hut) were built by volunteer groups were taken over by the Forest Service who flew in to maintain them.

Member noted that if the Alpine Club does not assume responsibility for the Emma Lake cabin, then the facility would be taken out.

Members concluded that volunteer groups would not be able to afford insurance rates to protect themselves and are reluctant to get involved until there is some assurance from the government that they will be protected from liability issues.

Member cited an example of legal case regarding 4x4 accident where association was sued for negligence when a child was injured.

Member noted that there are certain areas that are steep and inexperienced hikers could find themselves at risk. The club that maintains the Knuckleheads cabin should not be held responsible if someone is injured. IWA volunteer involvement with the Sunshine Coast Trail and Knuckleheads would stop if no protection under the law. Examples of other recent legal cases were cited.

Mr. Long agreed that anyone using trails should be responsible for their own safety.

Suggestion was made that signs would help. It was noted that companies and businesses have liability insurance that protects them but volunteer groups could not afford to take out the same type of insurance.

Members agreed that the government should be responsible for Crown land and any hidden liabilities that may occur, and offer some protection to volunteer groups that would be willing to take over recreation sites.

ACTION – CAG will send a letter to the government stating their concerns re: liability for user groups that take over responsibility for recreation sites.

Member noted that a letter had already been sent to Premier Gordon Campbell from CAG members noting their concerns regarding the Ministry of Forest's proposed cost cutting measures that are planned for recreation sites and trails.

Member noted that Inland Lake was once maintained by the Forest Service, and is now part of the BC provincial park system. Member noted that the facilities at Inland Lake were deteriorating since the change over.

Mr. Long noted that a meeting was planned with the ministry and other small forest dependent communities' MLA's to discuss Ministry of Forest proposed changes that affect small communities in a negative way.

Liability re: wilderness roads

Members voiced similar concerns re liability for wilderness roads leading to recreational facilities. Members noted that if no one maintains the roads, they could be let go and become unusable in time. An example was noted – Dinner Rock picnic and campsite that is reached by a forestry road that in future will not be maintained by the Forest service. It was noted that a group interested in maintaining the recreational facility could not possibly be expected to also repair the road. Member also noted that volunteer groups who are willing to maintain campsite should not be held liable for accidents caused by the deteriorating road situation at Dinner Rock.

Mr. Long agreed that the government should hold liability for such cases.

It was noted that many backwoods roads would deteriorate without maintenance and many areas would become inaccessible for fishing, hiking and camping.

Member noted that many tourists come from out of town to hike and climb the wilderness and alpine areas around Powell River, and that the area has been advertised in Travel and Rock-Climbing magazines. If those areas are no longer accessible, tourists will be turned away.

Mr. Long made a suggestion that a road could be made through to Squamish. It was agreed that it would be good but it would cost millions of dollars to build such a road.

Member noted that tourists are an essential part of a diverse economy and could raise revenues for Powell River businesses.

Mr. Long agreed that the tourism business is important to the economic diversity of Powell River and agreed to look into the situation of liability and the maintenance of wilderness roads.

Suggestion from member – Maybe Weyerhaeuser could log only on one side of Stillwater main and stay on one side then the other side.

Weyerhaeuser noted that even if able to do that, shake blockers and small timber sales are scattered all over the area.

Millennium Park update

Member noted the slow progress of the proposed Millennium Park and asked whether the government had made any decision.

It was noted that negotiations had taken place between Norske and Weyerhaeuser. Norske owns the land and Weyerhaeuser owns the timber. Weyerhaeuser will purchase the land and has been trying to negotiate a trade with the provincial government for land of equal value (\$4.5million). It was noted that some proposed areas have been suggested to the government. It was noted that there are many other areas in the province and that would be suitable. The need for Powell River to finalize the Millennium Park was noted since the time frame for negotiations was running out.

Mr. Long agreed that the concept of the Millennium Park was a good one for the community and would do whatever he could to help.

Weyerhaeuser noted that they have fulfilled their commitments so far and asked what could CAG do as a group to help move things along with the Millennium Park. It was noted that some people in the community thought that the Park already existed and are not fully aware of the status.

It was noted that negotiations around Cathedral Grove on Vancouver Island were also taking place and it would not be fair if the same type of consideration was not given to Powell River for the Millennium Park.

Mr. Long noted that he would take members' concerns regarding the proposed Millennium Park back to Victoria.

Discussion on new Results Based Forest and Range practices Regime for British Columbia

Members discussed the new publication that was published recently. It was noted that there was a lot to discuss. Member suggested that a request be made to invite the traveling committee to come to Powell River.

ACTION – CAG to send a formal request to Rod Visser, Chairman of the travelling committee, to visit Powell River to discuss the proposed improvements to the Forest Practices Code.

Members agreed that more time was needed to read and understand all the proposed changes.

Facilitator thanked Mr. Long for attending and noted that copies of the letters from CAG would be available to take to Victoria on Monday, May 6th.

Meeting adjourned 11:35AM

Stillwater Timberlands Advisory Group		
May 3rd 2002		
Attendance		
Name	Position	Member Seat
<u>Present</u>		
Eagle Walz Chair	Primary	Recreation
Ken Jackson - Vice-Chair	Primary	Recreation
Michael Conway-Brown	Primary	Recreation
George Ferreira	Primary	Recreation
Peter Ranger	Primary	Forest Dependent
Jane Cameron	Alternate	Recreation

Doug Fugge	Primary	Youth
Sonny Rioux	Primary	IWA
<u>Absent</u>		
Bill Duff	Primary	Citizens
Joanne Cameron-Nordell	Primary	Local Business
Bill Maitland	Alternate	Contractors
David Gabelhouse	Primary	Local Got
Mike Robinson	Alternate	Education/Planning
Andrew Pinch	Alternate	Tourism
Karen Duff	Alternate	Citizens
Kathleen O'Neil	Primary	Education/Planning
Paul Holbrook	Alternate	Forest Dependent
Rory Maitland	Primary	Contractors
Taylor Holbrook	Alternate	Youth
Lorne Marr	Alternate	Recreation
Ian Fleming	Alternate	Local Business
<i>7 seats in attendance</i>		
Resource – other		
Rod Tysdal	Weyerhaeuser	Stillwater
Ray Balogh	Weyerhaeuser	Stillwater

Guest	Harold Long	MLA Powell River Sunshine Coast
Cathy Bartfai	Facilitator	
Pam Dowding	Secretary	