

Stillwater Timberlands Community Advisory Group

Access Sub-Committee Meeting

Jan 29th, 2003

Minutes

Weyerhaeuser Board Room

Attendance:

CAG members others

Michael Conway-Brown Georgia Coombs

Ken Jackson Mark Forsyth

George Ferreira Randy Mitchell

Nancy Hollmann Colin Dionne

John Passek

Andrew Pinch

Rod Tysdal – Weyerhaeuser Stillwater Timberlands

7:10pm – Introductions

Introductions were made. Chair of the CAG Access sub-committee welcomed Mark Forsyth, outdoor recreationalist, hiker and climber, Randy Mitchell, canoe and kayaker and winter recreationalist, Colin Dionne, wilderness and Alpine recreationalist and Georgia Coombs, Canoe route maintenance person.

Signage

Maps were displayed and handouts were provided showing *Road and Recreation Signage for TFL 39 – 1 Year 2002*. Rod noted that \$10,000 was available each

year for 2003 and 2004 from the FIA fund for signage. Funds will be used for canoe route, road and recreation signage this year and for trails next year. Members were asked to add any other areas to the list if they were missed.

Reflective markers were discussed and it was noted that they would be nice on the trails at night and would help tourists who are not familiar with the terrain. Rod provided samples. It was noted that sometimes snowmobile tracks make the trail to cabin unclear and hard to find – reflective markers would help. It was noted that a sign was definitely needed at A and E branch and at A900. It was noted that reflective signs would be useful on the Sunshine Coast Trail and suggested that volunteers could post them on the trees. Rod noted that some existing signs are still in good condition but others had been stolen or vandalized. Signs made by the Forest Wardens were still in good shape.

Suggestion was made for a sign up Eldred River Valley on the Main Line to Tin Hat Trail Head – arrows needed – also up Goat and down SW Mainline as there is often confusion in that area.

Warning Signs – Question was asked whether warning signs for bears and avalanche control were necessary and whether they would affect company's liability.

It was noted that warning signs would include One-way signs for safety and hours of logging.

Handout describing Sign Information was provided:

Reasons for signs:

Location information

Information regarding facilities, services and attractions

Road usage and safety regulations

Warning of hazards

Signing Groups

Identification Signs

Traffic Control Signs – speed limit etc

Guide Signs –Lakes, ski areas etc.

Temporary Signs

Other Signs

It was noted that signs would be made to industry standards with guidelines from BC Parks. It was noted that rustic signs look nicer and the company does not want to put up too many signs. It was noted that directional signs are badly needed in some areas (*Suicide Creek for example*) and no one wants to see anyone get lost. It was suggested that people should enter the backcountry at their own risk and warning signs might suggest a liability issue.

Signs for Campgrounds and the Canoe Route are planned and many have to be replaced because of vandalism. It was noted that signs had been used for firewood at Nanton and Dodd Lakes. Signs to the Alpine Trail were removed. Forest Wardens signs made from rough cedar lasted longer and were not removed. It was noted that new methods and screws would make the new signs almost impossible to remove. Additional signs were requested for the *Tin Hat Trail Head (4x4) road*. It was noted that traffic signs were usually black and yellow and were made to provincial standards. Materials used for signs could be aluminum, plywood or carved cedar. Rod will consult with CAG on materials to be used.

Member noted that signage is needed for the *Centre Lakes Trail and other trailheads*.

Member noted that 4x4 posts are too close to the road in some places and need to be moved.

Member noted that reflective material would be useful in the Alpine terrain, and suggested that volunteers could place on trees. Cat's eye material was also discussed –

ACTION - Rod will look into availability of "cat's eye" reflective material.

Member noted that the 4x4 signs at Nanton and Dodd Lakes had lasted well.

Alpine – terrain – reflective signs needed – volunteers from Alpine Club to assist.

Emma Lake – Sykes slab – reflective signs – both sides of trees

Tony Lake Sign – member noted that it was on the wrong side of the road.

Alfred Mountain Trail – It was noted that there are three different routes – Rod will get in touch with Alpine Club re: signage.

A-Branch Cabin – Need to know where to place signs – will consult Randy Mitchell.

D-Branch – Alpine Club to assist with signs.

Sunshine Coast Trail – Volunteers will be needed to help with reflective signs on the trail.

Liability

Rod noted that the provincial government would be doing something soon – no details available yet. CAG will be informed when more information becomes available.

Member noted the "Occupiers Liability Act " and gave example of court case – where the Greater Vancouver Regional Board was sued by a person that was injured on Crown Land. Case was won by the Greater Vancouver Regional Board.

Access Management Plan

Copies of Access Management Plan were made available; (page 7) of handout *Stillwater Timberlands Communication and Consultation Policy*.

Questions were invited:

Question – What road maintenance is included for 2 wheel or 4 wheel drive vehicles? Is maintenance done annually or just based on complaints? Many volunteer hours are used to clear roads.

Answer – Maintenance often depends on the snow and company needs to establish standards – by what date each year.

Question – Do employees check at the end of each winter?

Answer – They do take a general look, but rely on the public to let them know where work is required due to major storms, blowdowns and washouts etc. Salvage programmes are established for blowdowns.

It was noted that Beta Lake has a wash out problem with boulders on the road.

Rod noted that there are FIA funds available for work in that area.

Question was raised about the Eldred River Road G150 G-Branch – an area popular with bear hunters, gate pulled down and old bridge (20 feet long) has a hole in it.

Answer – Rod suggested member take a picture of the area and give a strategy for the road, if FIA funds are available they will be applied.

Member noted that the area is a really nice walk from Freda main to A-B junction and there is a need for improvement of the road that is really rough.

Access to cabin – Member noted that he would like cabin to be truck accessible.

Others noted that access by quads, horseback and snowshoe were good enough, and if trucks were allowed, vandalism would be a problem.

Windsor Main Connection – Member noted that road has been fixed and is on the list for new signage for 4 wheel drive access. Members agreed that it was a good road to keep open and also suggested Spring Main and Rainbow Main.

Question - What roads get fixed and which don't get fixed?

Answer – 4-wheel drive access road have to be maintained.

Question – What about brush control?

Answer – Plans are to do B-branch to clear boulders and brush control – trim branches. Alder grows up and over the top – ice storms leave stems all over the road. Weyerhaeuser won't plow the roads. What would be a good time to clean up?

Answer – Depends on snow conditions – sometimes snow in Eldred Valley until July. Easter or May long weekend good time – lots of hikers go out on long weekend.

Member noted some brushing needed on B-branch. Also noted that there was a slide on Mainline between Diane Lake and B-Branch because machine caused problems.

Rod asked that members let company know if culverts are plugged and catch basins need attention. It was agreed that roads should be maintained by the end of April for 2-wheel drive vehicles and others as snow permits. It was agreed that roads should be ready before the May long weekend.

Block 5

Member asked whether there were any access concerns for the Phillips Arm area. Concerns regarding contractors not letting people in and restricting access. Members noted that some contractors were easier to get along with than others.

24 - hour hotline

Member noted that the 24-hour hotline was set up to provide information to the public. Contractors have to let Weyerhaeuser know if there are any unforeseen blockages on the road so that the public can be informed. It was noted that information on blocked roads should be made in writing.

Rod referred to the handout *Stillwater Timberlands Communication and Consultation Policy (page 3)* Information about local recreation resources potentially impacted will be included in operating plans. Member asked whether CAG could see a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures showing road access commitments and for not blocking roads.

ACTION - Rod will provide a copy of SOP for CAG.

Member noted that when heli-logging was taking place, access was possible every four minutes instead of the previously posted closure. It was noted that attitudes have changed and that contractors are co-operating.

Rod noted that the access commitments are part of their certification and the company makes sure that all contractors, loggers and road builders understand the procedures. It was also noted that there are safety feedback forms (sample shown) that are used whenever information is received. Company is obligated to make out the form and to follow up with an action plan. Company has to get back to the person and let them know what action has been taken.

Recent blockages at Dodd Lake

Member reported blockage on mainline for the last two weekends – and noted that the blockage should have been posted on the telephone hotline. It was noted that shakers sometimes park equipment on road.

Road License/Permit

Member asked about road licenses and what they say. Rod showed road use permit and amendment.

Third Lake

Wash out was reported and it was noted that a vehicle had ended up on its roof in that area.

Diane Main

Member asked when work would begin on Diane main. Maybe next summer?

Keys

Member asked about some sort of policy for signing keys out for the gate-suggested drivers license and registration be recorded and kept on file.

It was noted that the cabin is a two-km walk and there is a snowshoe or snowmobile trail. Some opposition to wheeled vehicles in the area of the cabin. Proposed short cut was mentioned.

Rod noted that groups who are responsible could get the key. It was noted that 20 Sea Cadets had spent last weekend at the cabin, and there were 60-70 visitors the previous weekend. Member suggested that the road to cabin be made for trucks and 4x4's – not possible - ruts in road and cross ditches will have to be put in.

Suggestion that a co-operative venture could be the road to Mt. Diadem where hikers, climbers and 4-wheelers could work together.

Question – Has there been a change of policy regarding road de-activation?

Answer – Road de-building is done – finished, new roads would be debuilt for environmental reasons. Operational maps shown to CAG show roads that are debuilt.

Question – What is the schedule for A800 trail?

Answer – Plans to build this year – may bring rail car from Nanton Lake and put across Emma Creek.

Question – Will there be bids to do the work?

Answer – Job will be tendered.

Question – Reason for restricted access on bridge on Diane Lake-High Falls?

Answer – Road slid down gully and avalanche would take out bridge, Could leave a log to walk across. Final fate of bridge to be decided this summer-Weyerhaeuser will help with access.

Fonts for Signs

Font for signs was shown. CAG picked font. New informational sign for the canoe route will be vandal-proof and sample of sign was shown. Cost for vandal-proof sign will be around \$1000. Canoe route sign will show two different routes and will include map.

Member asked whether there was a better way to post 4x4 signs – maybe they could be spiked to prevent vandalism with chainsaws?

Low Lake levels

Lois Lake levels were discussed- a problem the past two seasons. Member asked whether the lake would be lowered every year – fish farmers and other user groups are concerned. It was noted that Great Lakes Power Company owns the dam. Lake was lowered for a major re-fit of pipe system. It was noted that the Power Company is good for the Regional District.

Canoe Route - Portages

The length of the canoe route portages was discussed. The need for carts was discussed. High maintenance costs were discussed - Difficult for older people of 45-plus. Visitors have reported back to the Infocentre that they would like carts for the long portages. It was noted that there are multiple entrances and exits for the canoe route and the Sunshine Coast Trail, so portages don't have to be used but lakes can still be accessed. Member noted that the Bowing Lakes and the West Coast Trail were not free. It was noted that three counters will be installed on the Canoe route to monitor use. Various opinions on whether the canoe route was over-used. It was noted that tourists would be attracted to Powell River to the new cabin, and the municipality, Weyerhaeuser and volunteer labour made that possible. It was noted that FIA funding was providing \$60,000 - \$70,000 for the maintenance of the infrastructure for the canoe route. Weyerhaeuser has done the maintenance in the past.

FIA Funding

Rod noted that FIA funding is expected to last three years – one year so far. Weyerhaeuser is trying to update all recreational facilities during the three years as long as funds from FIA are available.

It was noted that the BOMB squad had done some good work and now liability is an issue for volunteer groups. More information on liability to come from provincial government will be made available to CAG.

Rod asked for some suggestions for some good welcoming signs. It was noted that good relationships exist between CAG and Weyerhaeuser and commitments are made possible with funding and consultation with CAG.

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Tourists

Member noted that tourists from California had come to Powell River and managed to do something different every day for ten days, including exploring parts of the canoe route. Another member noted that new people from all over

the world are coming to Powell River to enjoy hiking, climbing, canoeing and kayaking and other wilderness experiences.

Meeting adjourned – 9:30pm