

CSA Community Advisory Group
To Western Forest Products
October 16, 2017
Western Forest Products Boardroom

Attendance

Present

Jane Cameron - Chair
Dave Hodgins
Andy Payne
George Illes
Colin Palmer
Bill Maitland
Paul Goodwin
Mark Hassett
Mark Anderson
Joseph McLean
Tom Koleszar
Wayne Brewer
Tyson Berkenstock - WFP
Darwyn Koch - WFP
Val Thompson – Facilitator/Secretary

Absent

Ben Berukoff
Russ Parsons
Doug Fuller
Karen Skadsheim
Barry Miller
Read English
Rory Maitland

6:00 pm: Meeting called to order
Quorum met.

Safety Review

Facilitator noted fire exits and first aid attendants in case of emergency. Meeting place in case of emergency was noted.

Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct for Community Advisory Group was reviewed.

Review and Acceptance of Agenda

Agenda was accepted.

Review and Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes were accepted.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair welcomed group.

Correspondence

Copies of recent correspondence was provided and reviewed

Emails to First Nations

Letters to PRPAWS

Operational Information Map Update

New Blocks on the Map

ST-350, ST-054, ST-058, ST-056

Current Activities

Harvesting – PD-464, PD-530, ST-286, WL-012, GI-135, GI-136, GI-206, ST-067, GI-134, GI-142, EL-702, ST-028, ST-388, WL-948

Road Construction – ST-055, ST-095, ST-096, GI-142, GI-141, UL-848, PD-287, PD-528

Sunshine Coast Trail

ST-249 Block Harvesting: Harvesting underway.

FH-044 Block Harvesting: Scheduled for release this week.

Fires/Slides/Spills (YTD):

New fire – There was a fire on Sunday October 15th at 11 ¾ mile on the Stillwater at a campsite on Lois Lake. Ken responded to the fire and by the time he arrived it was all out. The Fish Farm staff noticed the fire from down the lake and responded quickly – hats off to them. The fire ended up being about 5 by 5 metres in size and was started by an unattended camp fire. FLNRO sent a crew out after Ken left the site.

No new spills.

No New Slides.

Safety Stats (YTD):

Stillwater Timberlands as of September 31, 2017:

#of incidents = 0. TIR 0.00

#of recordable incidents = 0. MIR = 0.00.

#of lost time cases = 0. LTR = 0.00

#of lost time days = 0. SR = 0.00

Stillwater Contractors as of September 31, 2017:

#of incidents = 10. TIR 13.50

#of recordable incidents = 3. MIR = 4.01.

#of lost time cases = 2. LTR = 2.67

#of lost time days = 305. SR = 407

TIR = Total Incident Rate

MIR = Medical Incident Rate

LTR = Lost Time Frequency Rate

SR = Lost Time Severity Rate

Harvesting Stats (YTD):

As of September 31, 2017 the total amount harvested from the TFL (YTD) is 289,324 m3. This number is approximately 32,000 m3 short of the budget projection.

Speaker: Tyson Berkenstock - Understanding Wetlands, Stillwater THLB Stabilization Project, and Unique Water Features

Tyson is a biologist not an ecologist but that said as foresters they all have an understanding of wetland.

The CSA Definitions is “areas that are seasonally or permanently waterlogged and characterized by vegetation adapted for life in saturated/flooded conditions. Wetlands can be treed, shrubby or open and include bogs, fens, swamps, marshes and shallow open water areas. Some wetlands are stagnant systems (e.g., bogs), slow flowing (e.g., fens, swamps), or have fluctuating water levels (e.g., marshes, shallow open water).” (2016, p.17) “Wetlands are a component of forest ecosystems that provide many valuable ecological services. Wetlands are rich in biodiversity and provide important habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals.” (2016. p.52) “Wetlands are a component of forest ecosystems and play a pivotal role in regulating local and regional forest hydrology and serving as both a source and sink for water and nutrients.” (2016, p.59)

Tyson's introduction from his presentation includes the following definition from Wetlands of British Columbia (MacKenzie & Moran, 2004) - “areas where soils are water-saturated for a sufficient length of time such that excess water and resulting low soil oxygen levels are principal determinants of vegetation and soil development. Wetlands will have a relative abundance of hydrophytes in the vegetation community and/or soils featuring “hydric” characters.” (p.6)

Wetland plants include unique and uncommon plant communities. Bogs are characterized by sphagnum mosses and are stagnant and nutrient poor. Fens are slightly acidic to alkaline in pH, associated with moving groundwater and nutrient rich compared to bogs. Marshes have alkaline pH soils, dynamic water movement, are non tidal, have mineral soils, and are dominated by only a few aggressive ‘grass-like’ species. Swamps are nutrient rich wetlands with seasonal saturation; aeration allows for tree growth, some commercial species are grown but harvesting can impact water table by reducing transpiration.

These wetlands are fairly productive, there are lots of insects and food for wildlife. Tyson included a number of photos of wildlife from wetlands including crayfish, western toad, roughskin newt, north-western salamander egg mass, great blue heron, and osprey.

They manage these wetlands at a landscape level and at a site level. Because they are often so productive and diverse they use them as ecological anchors for landscape level reserves or alternatively at a site level for our variable retention strategy. There is an inventory of wetlands around here that planners can use to define Old Growth Management Areas (OGMA) that meet old growth objectives and also likely provide fairly valuable retention for these often rare sites. The wetlands don't actually contribute to the targets for old growth in each BEC but what it does is provide an ecological anchor in which you can capture old growth that likely has a more unique value than other places on the landscape. Wildlife values, biodiversity values, and operational values can be addressed with the same retention area.

Question: I understand why there are buffers exist for wetlands, but 10 metres seems to be an arbitrary number. Why cannot it depend on the situation? It should be based on a hydrology study of water flow to the area.

You are right – it is the incoming flow and temperature of the system that is important to the viability of the wetland. The distances are from the early 90s and have made their way through the legislation over the years and this does not necessarily reflect current science or understanding of the resource. Through our variable retention strategy and managing for riparian systems each forest professional is able to have lots of flexibility of how they manage these areas. We have retention training happening right now and planners are encouraged to use the incoming stream and the wetlands themselves as an anchor for internal retention.

Comment: The government should recognize how important the wetlands are and create better legislation to protect them rather than have an arbitrary distance specified.

Comment: At least there is some kind of number to start with. It can be moved with work. Better than have someone come in and destroy a wetland.

Comment: It should be left to the professionals to identify what should be done and then approved by the government.

Comment: But then it will be interpreted differently by each individual.

Same with visual quality. It is subjective and it needs to be and more in the realm of professional reliance.

Comment: I totally agreed. It is the people with boots on the ground that can see what needs to be done.

Question: Isn't planned OGMAs around the wetlands the start of it. Isn't that what you are trying to do as professionals? Protect the wetlands a different way?

It is. The Stillwater THLB Project that we will be talking about next will be explicitly considering values like wetlands.

Question: When I deal with the DFO there are 20 biologists and if I ask them one question I get 20 different answers. Does everyone have a different opinion about how the wetlands should be addressed or is the consensus on the objective and how to get there?

Like any qualitative value there is a component of interpretation that has to go into evaluating it. Evaluating the classification of the wetland is more objective. You would likely get different answers regarding evaluating the sensitivity and impact of a certain management prescription. It is tough because wetlands aren't just characterized by something like the location of a culvert. There are so many factors such as climate, weather, and snow melt. Similar to evaluating the impact of any resource management activity on riparian features like streams.

There are so many variables at play. For instance, I recently had the pleasure of attending one of Hakai's (a research institute) presentations a couple of months ago. They have a 3 years study taking place on the central coast. They are evaluating controlled experimental harvests in watershed studying the conditions and characteristics of the water. They are looking at things such as temperature, turbidity, and flow rate and there is no consistency within or between their study locations. The environmental variability dominates. Wetlands would be different, but they are similar in that there are so many inputs defining their state and anthropogenic inputs are just one of those. It is challenging to evaluate the cause and effect. So, yes, there are likely many interpretations. But it is up to us and that is why we are doing the retention training right now. To create a foundation where we have a common level of understanding and how to manage features like this.

Tyson gave a brief history from the time they applied for the Stillwater THLB Project. They had approval from the region and postponed because they are waiting on LiDAR data. To do a project like this without LiDAR would be a bit silly because the initial OGMA plan that happened in this area was one of the most comprehensive plans done at the time and is still currently really well done. It considered a lot of important values that are still important today. The new project of moving certain OGMAs and wildlife habitat areas is now viable because we have a lot more data that can inform that similar decision making.

LiDAR is some of the most powerful data that they can use for optimizing both timber and non-timber values on the land base. From a wildlife perspective they have information for species at risk that were not considered in the initial plan. They have individual nest locations for marbled murrelet and this is one of the only places on the coast that has that data. It is fairly special. They define marbled murrelet wildlife areas based on habitat assessments done by biologists who are interpreting the forest and specific features of the forest that would indicate the likelihood of murrelet nesting. It is very comprehensive, but you can't beat nest locations to know where they are nesting. They do not nest in the same place each year but other birds will use the same tree and the biologists know for sure that the characteristics are suitable.

They have goshawk inventory now that didn't exist before. There is discussion about these being flexible instead of hard reserves because the birds do fly and move. Right now the thought at the government level is that they should be considering hard reserves which feeds into a process like this project. These areas are in very operable timber so it makes sense to optimize the wildlife and other resource values and free up potential timber elsewhere. The project is meant to optimize social, environmental, and economic values.

The next steps include contacting government and the nations with overlapping traditional territory and initiating a first meeting where they will talk about important values on the landbase. They will then reach out to the CAG and other stakeholders who could provide input and information they might not have that could guide them to design the reserves in the best way to encompass the values that are dear to everyone. The technical committee will likely want to meet with the group in January.

Question: What does government's commitment look like? And what about other stakeholders like BCTS and the small business community and recreation groups?

Government has committed to do it. We are not changing legislation. It is quite clear but does offer flexibility. We can't make the entire thing an OGMA and we can't get rid of all of the OGMA. There are targets for each variant and we can work within each variant to put the OGMAs in the best places. A lot of people want to be involved with this project and government must be involved. WFP will lead it. Ideally forest professionals and biologists will be at the table as is laid out in the Chief Foresters mandate letter. They will take input from stakeholders and First Nations to design these areas within the existing parameters of the legislation.

Question: Do you still use the notion of recruitment for OGMA's?

To a certain limited degree. How we have evaluated success in the past is using what is currently there as a baseline, not because it is the right number but because it is something and is a good place to start. We want to improve where we are now. We are a license holder, we can't set wildlife targets on the landbase but we can make decisions to maximize the protection for certain species with this program. A limited amount of recruitment is allowed. It is an option to consider the current amount of recruitment as a baseline for the amount of recruitment for the first iteration.

Question: Is this just the TFL? Are there any other licensees or woodlots involved?

BCTS did not want to participate. Woodlots are out of scope for OGMA planning here. They do not exist in the woodlots here to my knowledge. Powell Daniels, Powell Lake and Lois are the main landscape units involved. We are the main tenure holder there. We will only be involving land in these areas that we hold.

Question: Nothing in the Haslam?

No. The district was in the middle of redefining their landscape unit plan when we last spoke.

Darwyn said it is out for public review right now. There are OGMA's proposed for Haslam that make sense.

Question: What is the time frame for this project?

About a year from start to finish. From the first email to public consultation and potentially a new order which would make it legal.

Question: In the end the product would be OGMA's?

Yes and WHAs.

Darwyn said co-located with overlapping habitats addressing many needs.

Adjourned 8:50 pm

Action List Items

Action Items	Who	When