

Southwest Island Public Advisory Group (SIPAG) Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order

Chris Harvey, Environmental Programs Advisor, called the 19th meeting (1st of 2008) to order, of the Southwest Island Public Advisory Group, at 4:30 p.m. on **February 27th, 2008** in Shaker Mill Restaurant, Lake Cowichan, BC.

2. Members

Present:

- Tom Jones, Pacheedaht First Nation
- Vince Callander, Local Business
- Katherine Worsley, Chamber of Commerce
- Kirsten Campbell, Terra Tree
- Sandy Peters, Valley Fish & Game Club
- Dennis Martel, Wilderness Watch Committee
- Tim McGonigle, TFL 46 Worker
- Pat Weaver, Lake Cowichan Town Council, Cowichan Lake Community Forest Co-operative

Support (TJG):

- Mark Carter, Operations Planner

Regrets:

- George Williams, Ditidaht First Nation
- Jack Smith, Lake Cowichan First Nation
- Larry George, Cowichan Tribes

3. Documents Distributed to Members:

1. South Island Meeting #18 Agenda
2. Honeymoon Bay Operation (HBO) Tracking System for Administration Tasks (Outstanding & Completed).
3. CCFM Criterion 1: Conservation of Biodiversity (copy of existing indicators)
4. Draft Indicators/ Discussion: CWD and Bridge & Major Culverts

4. Reviewing minutes from Previous Meeting

Chris handed out the meeting minutes from the November 2006 meeting (photocopying error). However, the previous meeting minutes (November 14, 2007) were distributed via email prior to the meeting. The group agreed to review and approve the previous meeting minutes via email. Chris indicated the action items resulting from the previous meeting minutes in the operational tracker (some members had difficulty viewing this document as the print was small).

Action item 18-1: Distribute November 14th, 2007 Meeting minutes for review and approval via email to all members.

Environment Department March 31, 2008

5. Current Events / Management Issues

Chris noted that the external audit is scheduled for March 4-6th if anyone would like to join the auditors for a tour? Pat said she would like to and she is free that day. Dennis and Tom also indicated they would like to join the tour. Chris said we will confirm date and time with these members next week.

Action item 18-2: Confirm external audit field tour time, date, location, etc. with Pat, Tom and Dennis.

Environment Department March 4, 2008

Chris asked if the members had any current events or management issues they would like to share?

- Tom Jones noted that the Pacheedaht has elected a new Chief Marvin McClurg. Counsellors are Stan Jones and Tracey Charlie

6. Review of Draft Indicators

Criteria 1: Conservation of Biological Diversity, Element 1.1 Ecosystem Diversity, Bridge & Major Culvert maintenance & repairs

Chris presented a draft indicator based on the discussion at the previous meeting. She provided the requested background on current procedures for inspecting bridges & major culverts, and the corresponding repair schedules.

- Wood structures are inspected at least once per year
- Steel structures are inspected at least once per every 3 years but usually once per year
- Inspection form used, with pictures, etc.
- Any required repairs/ replacements are noted on the form (and entered into the operation tracking system)
- Repair priorities depending on the volume of traffic and resources (i.e., water quality is a high priority)

Mark commented that safety is the number one priority, potential for environmental impacts is also a high concern, however there is no formal system to prioritize. Sandy asked if it is just structures that are inspected or all roads parallel to streams? Mark said yes, they are all considered access structures. Tom requested that the indicator

show that repair schedules or budgets are driven by priority. Pat asked if they are driven by weather? Mark and Tom confirmed they are, there are certain times of year or 'windows' where the fish eggs are in the stream beds so the risk of doing operations at that time are too high.

Dennis asked if Teal ever uses plastic culverts, he has only seen metal and if not what is the reason? Mark said that the surface of roads is normally shot rock which is too heavy, also the machinery used to build roads is too heavy, therefore plastic culverts would be crushed. Tim noted that the plastic culverts are sometimes used for temporary access, when they are in and out very quickly.

Tom clarified that he would like to see all moderate to high or just high risk to fish or safety be repaired as soon as possible, say within a year. Vince asked isn't that a legal requirement? Mark said the new legislation is results driven so it is more of a due diligence. Chris asked the group if the new target would look like "Repair all major structures that have a high risk to fish streams within the next window" Mark said he thought that would be acceptable but would like to discuss with the engineers before committing. The indicator will be confirmed and presented to the group at the next meeting. The group agreed.

Action item 18-3: Present draft indicator to SIPAG at next scheduled meeting.

Environment Department June 30, 2008 (or next meeting)

Pat asked if Fisheries checks these things? Mark said not normally but you will see them out there after a major rainfall event. Tom commented that they are really looking at the rivers, not the structures.

Criteria 1: Conservation of Biological Diversity, Element 1.1 Ecosystem Diversity, Coarse Woody Debris

Chris reviewed the discussion on coarse woody debris in the April 5th, 2006 SIPAG meeting (at that time the group decided to delete the indicator for coarse woody debris from the plan).

Tim asked how the legal requirements work? Mark and Vince summarized the legal requirements regarding leaving wood and debris on site after logging (certain amount and sizes per hectare).

Chris asked Tim if there was anything special that operators were doing in their jobs to deal with coarse woody debris? Tim said that it depended on the how the pulp market was doing. If the pulp market is good, you will see more large woody debris at the roadside. The problem is that there is a delay between logging and logs reaching the market so sometimes you get large piles on the roadside that are left because the pulp market has fallen through before the wood can be hauled to market. Generally they try to disperse debris throughout the block so that regeneration isn't affected. On the roadsides they pile and later burn, these days they are trying to leave more in the woods.

Tom asked couldn't you pile and leave? Mainly concerned about the large woody debris (larger logs) as they provide excellent biodiversity, habitat, etc. Tim noted that

they are trying to keep the large pieces out of the piles, just piling branches and small stuff because these are the fire hazard more than the large pieces.

Tim asked if we don't burn, are we actually reducing the carbon emissions or just delaying their release? Kirsten confirmed that we are only delaying the emissions by leaving the wood on site as opposed to burning. Tom commented that you are gaining habitat, slower nutrient release, however sometimes burning on a site is beneficial from a nutrient standpoint. Pat asked can't we salvage? Firewood from these piles? Tim said yes that does happen. Also there was a pilot project in Skutz falls with a chipper, however it didn't work out. Vince said he knew about this project, the fisheries didn't like it as there was an increase in leaching to the streams when there were flash floods. Denis asked if they burned chips? No

Kirsten asked if the site productivity was decreased by burning? Tom said no, generally the opposite, there is an increase in growth. Katherine asked could they use the chipper in areas that weren't adjacent to streams? Tim noted that culverts can easily be plugged. Katherine asked if the chips could be trucked? Mark said that this type of operation isn't cost effective.

Mark said the goal right now is to disperse debris throughout the blocks rather than bring it to the roadside. Vince commented that the salvage crews want the long stuff, but the stumps, roots, branches, etc. they leave.

Chris reminded the group that we need something measurable for the indicator, perhaps something around the waste surveys? Mark said no because then we would be measuring how often we failed to meet the waste requirements? Vince asked what the requirements are? Mark explained how the waste surveys are conducted.

Tim noted that if we get away from burning, there would be a decrease in plantable spots. Tom and Mark agreed that they did not believe the roadside piles actually reduced growing space as the root systems of trees go right through the piles and the canopies are often are right out and closing over the roads.

Tom commented that it was part of the forest service 'protection bug-a-boo' because Vancouver Island burned before they are worried it may do so again. He noted that he has seen examples of letters from licencees to MoFR where they have agreed to stratify and decrease the burning requirements in cool wet areas (e.g., Hemlock areas). Mark agreed that it is an old mind set, however that is the current requirements that they have to burn.

Mark noted that there was a case last year (outside the DFA on BC Timber Sales land) where the roadside piles were not burned and an arsonist lit up one of the piles. In this case Teal was charged for failure to abate the fire hazard.

Tim said we have to stick with the legal requirements. Chris asked is the indicator could be to meet the legal requirements? Vince agreed. Mark said that Teal could consider writing a letter to the 'powers that be' to try to get some variance on the requirements to burn. Tom noted that there will not be any change if you don't blow the horn; it would be a benefit to have smaller piles for growing sites and not burning would reduce the costs. Tom asked if we could have an indicator where the goal was to commit to an initiative to decrease burning in the TFL? One of the goals might be to decrease coarse

woody debris brought to the roadside, another could be to sort roadside debris to keep larger debris out of the burn piles, or no logs in piles. Chris suggested that this could be written to meet the CSA requirements, Teal has 'programs' which are similar to what Tom is suggesting, where you map out a long term goal and have several smaller steps involved to meet the long term goal. The target could be to create a coarse woody debris program and then report on the status annually to SIPAG. There was agreement with this approach from all members.

Sandy suggested Teal meet with MoFR to get them on side with our goal to reduce roadside burning. Mark agreed it was a good idea, however he noted that they would always have to meet the legal requirements.

Kirsten noted that the natural levels of coarse woody debris would vary by site and ecosystem. Vince noted that it used to be a take or pay policy, which is different than the new system. Tom agreed and expanded, now there are legislated minimums that must be left, they have almost done a 360 from their old policy. They also changed the stumpage rates on lower grades to encourage leaving on site.

The group agreed with the target of "Report on status of Coarse Woody Debris Program a minimum of once per year".

Action item 18-4: Include the coarse woody debris indicator in the next revision to the Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

Environment Department June 30, 2008 (or next meeting)

7. Presentation Biological Diversity

Chris presented a power point presentation on biodiversity. The following is a summary of some of the key discussion points and questions brought up during the presentation:

Overview of Biodiversity

- Reviewed definitions of biodiversity, ecosystem diversity, genetic diversity, species diversity and special sites.
- Reviewed CSA SFM Elements
- Reviewed current indicators for each of the CSA elements under biodiversity and discussed how they are implemented in the TFL

Chris asked Dennis if Wilderness Watch would be interested in getting a copy of the Invasive Plants Training package that Teal has developed for the TFL? Dennis said yes please. She explained that it was a summary of the invasive plants found within the TFL and those that have the potential to be found (i.e., they have been found in areas adjacent to the TFL). The information includes photos and descriptions of the plants as well as management recommendations (i.e., some of the plants the best thing to do is rip them out or cut them as soon as you notice them; others that is the worst thing you can do).

Action item 18-5: Forward a copy of the Invasive Plant Species Training Package to Wilderness Watch

Environment Department June 30, 2008

Pat asked Denis how the elk are doing? Denis explained that there has been a lot of poaching recently, most of the animals being left to rot (meat isn't harvested). Pat asked if they are catching anybody? No. Following the group had a discussion on elk and the poaching crisis. Chris asked the group if we could return to the items on the agenda and discuss elk during the dinner after the meeting? The group agreed

Revision of Indicators

Chris asked the group if there were any indicators they would like to add, delete or modify?

- Dennis asked to clarify the cultural cedar indicator? Chris did so
- Katherine asked if St John's Wort is an invasive plants species or is it protected? Mark confirmed it is invasive
- Katherine requested a copy of the CSA certification standard?

Action item 18-6: E-mail Katherine a web link to the CSA Sustainable Forest Management Standard

Environment Department May 30, 2008

- Kirsten asked if the stand level retention just meets the legal requirements or if it goes beyond? Chris noted that the current target meets the legal requirements, however there will be an amendment in 2009 to increase the target for some areas of the TFL to meet the requirements of the recently approved Renfrew Aggregate Landscape Unit Plan. This plan was developed with a public advisory committee as well. It concentrates on Old Growth Management Areas as well as stand level retention. The Sustainable Forest Management Plan currently meets the Old Growth Management Areas requirements. The new target for stand level retention will be roughly 9% but it is broken down by ecosystem. Mark commented that he did not anticipate that this increase would impact the timber supply as they generally find the retention areas in 'no go zones' anyway. For example areas that are reserved already for riparian areas, wildlife, etc. Current level of retention exceeds the target, Mark guessed the average is 9% already
- Tim commented that the way it is written, we won't know if we meet the Cedar/cypress target for 5 years. Chris confirmed, however she noted that both 2006 and 2007 met the target.
- The group agreed that there are no revisions to the existing biodiversity indicators required at this time.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be tentatively set for the end of May 2008. Chris noted that at that meeting we will follow up with the indicators discussed today; review the results of the external audit, the revised sustainable forest management plan and the 2007 annual report.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m. Meeting minutes written by Chris Harvey, Environmental Department.