

Southwest Island Public Advisory Group (SIPAG) Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order

Chris Harvey, Environmental Programs Advisor, called the 19th meeting to order, of the Southwest Island Public Advisory Group, at 4:40 p.m. on June 25, 2008 in Shaker Mill Restaurant, Lake Cowichan, BC.

2. Members

Present:

- Vince Callander, Local Business
- Larry George, Cowichan Tribes
- Sandy Peters, Valley Fish & Game Club
- Jim Humphrey, Chamber of Commerce
- Tom Jones, Pacheedaht First Nation
- Dennis Martel, Wilderness Watch Committee
- Pat Weaver, Lake Cowichan Town Council, Cowichan Lake Community Forest Co-operative
- Tim McGonigle, TFL 46 Worker

Support (TJG):

- Mark Carter, Operations Planner
- Chris Harvey, Environmental Programs Advisor

Regrets:

- Jack Smith, Lake Cowichan First Nation
- George Williams, Ditidaht Band
- Kirstin Campbell, Terra Tree Forestry

3. Documents Distributed to Members:

1. Southwest Island Meeting #19 Agenda
2. SIPAG Members Contact Information (June 2008)
3. Attendance Matrix
4. Evaluation Questionnaire
5. Southwest Island PAG Meeting #18 Minutes (February 27, 2007)
6. 2007 Annual Report Summary
7. SFM Plan, Draft Bridge & Major Culvert Repair Indicator
8. SFM Plan, Draft CWD Indicator

Documents available:

9. Copy of the External Audit Report
10. Copy of the revised SFM Plan

4. Review Membership

Chris noted that Kirstin Campbell, is pregnant and her due date is soon so she wasn't able to attend. Her alternate is her husband and partner Shawn Wolansky.

The group reviewed the attendance matrix and noted that the majority of sectors are consistently represented with the exception of fisheries. Chris asked the group for suggestions for fisheries representatives? She knows some Phd/ Masters students that may be available? Pat asked what about Art Watson? Chris said that she spoke with him and he wasn't interested, the Salmon enhancement Society had no suggestions. Denis suggested Willi Jansen, the local Fisheries Officer (he provided contact information to Chris)

Action Item 19-1: Contact local Fisheries Officer to see if she is interested in attending SIPAG

Environmental Department, September 31, 2008

Chris asked if the group thought there were any other sectors of society that we should invite to join? Should we consider an advertisement in the local paper again this year? The group generally agreed that society was well represented at the meetings. Pat asked what about Chamber of Commerce from Port Renfrew? Chris said we invited various groups from Port Renfrew for the original meetings, however they all declined as the road is too rough and it is a long trip for them, however it is a good idea to ask again.

Action Item 19-2: Contact Port Renfrew Chamber of Commerce to see if there is interest in attending SIPAG

Environmental Department, September 31, 2008

Chris pointed out that although the First Nations sector was well represented at meetings, the CSA audit noted that more efforts should be made to ensure that First Nations interests are reflected in the SFMP. Tom is a consistent member, however it would be nice to see more First Nation people at the meetings. It was agreed that a big part of the problem was access, Lake Cowichan is a long trip from their village. Tim suggested that we hold the next meeting at the band office. The group agreed this was a good idea and they would be open to it. Another member suggested taking an afternoon and making it a field trip, stopping at the Harris Creek rehabilitation creek. Tim suggested one meeting per year be held at the band office. Chris said since we have more than one First Nation with traditional territory in the DFA (TFL) we may need to alternate which bands we visit. Vince asked how do you choose which to go to first? The group generally agreed that since Tom could be a bridge, the Pacheedaht band office would be a good place to start. Tom had some suggestions on proper protocol and whom to invite, topics to focus on during the meeting, etc.

Action Item 19-3: Contact Pacheedaht First Nation to inquire about the possibility of holding a SIPAG meeting at their band office.

Environmental Department, September 31, 2008

5. Reviewing minutes from Previous Meeting

Chris noted that the members received the minutes of February 27, 2008 meeting via email. She did not receive any comments or corrections to date. She asked if anyone had any comments? None were received.

- Chris noted a typo, the previous meeting was the 18th meeting (minutes said 17th)

Action Item 19-4: Correct and finalize the meeting minutes for February 27, 2008.

Environmental Department, September 31, 2008

The action items and status of action items were reviewed. The follow comments were made:

- Chris distributed the minutes from the November 14th, 2007 meeting via email and did not receive any comments. Unless the group wanted to bring any forward today? None were received, therefore, these minutes are considered finalized.

Action Item 19-5: Finalize the meeting minutes for November 14th, 2007.

Environmental Department, September 31, 2008

- The date for the external audit field tour was changed so Denis was unable to attend. Pat and Tom accompanied the auditors. They will share comments later in the meeting
- The draft indictors for major bridge & culvert repair as well as Coarse woody debris will be presented and discussed at today's meeting
- A copy of the invasive plant species training package was received by Wilderness Watch. Mark noted that they received more information from Timberwest (a handbook), planning to order more. If Wilderness Watch is interested Eric Jeklin is the contact. Dennis commented that he saw on the news that there is a new tool for removing broom. Tom said he thought it was available from Sharkar in Duncan. Mark said that CPR and Hydro used to plant broom in their right of ways because it doesn't grow too tall. Vince asked whose responsibility is it? Chris noted that legally it is the government's responsibility, however Teal has the responsibility to identify and report new plants and to try to limit the spread. However it is in their best interest to reduce or avoid the spread of invasive plants so that may mean they take action. Pat said that noxious weeds are a major problem, soon there will be nothing but broom. The local government wants to do something about it, but it seems like government in general isn't doing enough. Chris said that because broom is everywhere, the government may have given up the battle, or it may be unofficially accepted as local. At this point it would be nearly impossible to get rid of it. Tom asked if gorse is invasive or noxious? Dennis said that the gorse on private land is spreading fast and there is nothing that can be done once it is established, I guess since it is private land nothing can be done? Tom noted that if it is a noxious weed then he thought that everyone is responsible. Mark commented that this area is not near the TFL. Tom noted that gorse is like growing oil – it is highly flammable.

Action Item 19-6: Confirm whether gorse is a noxious weed.

Environmental Department, September 31, 2008

- Katerine (alternate for Jim Chamber of Commerce) received info from Chris regarding the SFMP and CSA

No further changes were made to the minutes so they will be finalized with the correction to the one typo.

6. Current Events/ Management Issues

Chris reviewed the results of the external QMI audit of the DFA (TFL). Chris noted that the full report was available for anyone who wished to view it, but since it is a long report and contains some technical language, she highlighted the following sections: Summary of Audit Findings; Recommendations; Significant Issues; Positive Aspects of the Management System; Effectiveness of the Internal Quality Audit System; Opportunities for Improvement; System Weaknesses; and General Assessment and Recommendations.

Tom commented on the OFI under section 7.3.6.1 (rewording Appendix II for general public): you don't want to dumb it down...who is the audience for this plan? Chris commented that SIPAG, Teal personnel, the general public, potentially government agencies. It is difficult to write a forestry plan

without using some technical wording. A huge effort has been made to ensure SIPAG understand the technical background. The group agreed that they have been good information and that it isn't over their heads. After some discussion it was agreed that the members prefer that the efforts are focused on educating SIPAG and keep the glossary up to date. Chris said the document is available to the general public on Teal's website and by request but to date we haven't had any requests. If a request were made about sustainable forestry, the SFMP would be a tool to explain what Teal is doing, however it wouldn't be given out without appropriate background information. Tom asked if there was any way of knowing how many people looked at the SFMP on the website? Chris said she could check with the IT department.

Action Item 19-7: Inquire whether it is possible to have a counter on the SFMP website?

Environmental & IT Department, September 31, 2008

Mark expanded on OFI 7.3.7 (Management Plan), he explained what a management plan is and why it is developed.

Vince commented on the System Weakness 7.3.4.6 (Aboriginal and Treaty rights): How can Teal do that if the government can't even do it? Tom commented that Teal can't deal directly with Aboriginal rights and title, they can only be good neighbours. Chris noted that this finding was more that they wanted to see Teal's commitment in writing within the SFM plan. Mark explained that the 3rd party that audited Teal (QMI) was audited by the CSA standards council (audit of the auditors) and it was found that they were not auditing the First Nations portion of the standard effectively. Therefore, they are now focusing their audits on First Nations issues.

Pat and Tom were asked to tell the group what they saw on the audit and tell about their tour. Pat said that it was really interesting for her to go 2 years in a row, she noticed some big improvements, particularly the road was in much better shape. The thing that stood out to her the most that wasn't mentioned in the audit report was safety. They interviewed a machine operator who was working alone, he had no radio in his machine (there was one in his truck down the road, he said he radioed once per hour), no first aid kit. She noted that it wasn't a particularly dangerous area he was working in but she thought that the operator should be taking more responsibility for his own safety. Mark noted that it is standard procedure for a hourly call in. Tim noted in this case the operator's normal machine broke down, so they pulled this older machine out of the boneyard and it wasn't equipped with a radio (normally it is). He also noted that if it had of been a riskier site, the operator wouldn't have gone to work without a radio. Dennis asked if they have JSBs? (job safety breakdowns) Tim said they do, they are required to review them once every 6 months. Pat said being in a new machine isn't an excuse, workers need to take their own safety into consideration. Chris noted that the reason this wasn't a finding on the audit report is that it is outside of the scope of the audit. CSA standard focuses on sustainable forest management and environmental issues. Safety can be considered part of sustainability, however you need to have an indicator on it so that it can be audited. There are safety audits through other systems and there is a lot of overlap between safety and environmental management systems.

Tom commented that he didn't really see anything different than what Pat mentioned. Pat said she was really impressed with the Harris Creek fish rehabilitation. It was beautiful. Generally Teal was a good host and the crew was very open. Tim agreed – he said he thought the crew was answering questions honestly, not answering to 'pass the test'.

7. Results of 2007 Annual Report

The group reviewed the results of the 2007 annual report. Discussion was focused on those

indicators that were determined to be in non-conformance and those that did not meet the target but were within the acceptable variances. The following comments and discussions were made:

- Indicator 2-5 Windthrow Treatment: Mark said the windthrow treatments were completed this summer. Chris clarified the reason we did not meet the target for this indicator this year (or last year) was that the treatments were not done within the year they were supposed to be completed. Tom asked if there were any consequences? Was there any blow down? Mark said yes, to be honest area in Walburn and Camper Creek planned for treatment had some blow down. The problem was that the company they used to do the treatments (aerial helicopters) went out of business and this year they found a company to do the work manually. Tom asked if there was blowdown in Railroad. Mark said yes one block. Tom commented that block has an impact on Harris, it would have benefited from a treatment. Mark stated that windthrow is a difficult one to predict. He said he questions the effectiveness of some of the treatments, in the future, they will plan to leave larger buffers instead of doing the windthrow treatments. Tom asked if Mark had any formal tracking to back up his assessment? Mark said no.
- Tom asked what are the consequences of failing an indicator? Chris commented that it doesn't mean Teal fails their audit but it is our report card to SIPAG and the public. We may want to look closer at this indicator in the future.
- Indicators 3-2 & 3-3 Landslides resulting from Road s and Harvesting: Tom asked if the landslides were an act of nature or due to neglect of maintenance? Mark explained the events to the best of his memory. He said he did not like the wording of this indicator because it is really difficult to tell and it can be a sensitive subject. Members agreed that wording like 'Landsldies in recent harvesting' would better reflect what they were interested in hearing about and would contain less controversial language. The group also agreed that they would like to see more detail on the events for those indicators that did not meet the target, in future annual reports.

Action Item 19-8: Include details regarding landslides, fires, windthrow, etc. in the annual report where indicators do not meet the target.

Environmental Department, March 31, 2009

Action Item 19-9: Reword Indicators 3-2 and 3-3

Environmental Department, September 31, 2008

- Indicator 3-5 Reportable Spills to Land: Mark gave more details of the events to the best of his knowledge. Chris commented that two of the three spills were on the road, which makes for a easier clean up. Jim asked so what happened after they spilled? Tim and Mark explained the process (as per SOP) they stopped the leak, called the supervisor, cleaned up with pads and shovelled the dirt. Jim asked what happens to the dirt? Tim said it is sent to a company in Nanaimo that cleans it up in biocells, etc. Jim asked who checks? Anyone? Mark said yes for these size of spill events the ministry comes out and checks the site. Dennis asked why the Jet B fuel spilled out of the vent? Was it supposed to be tighter? Mark said he wasn't aware of the specific details of this event.
- Indicator 5-12 Training Requirements: Chris noted that there was an improvement over last year. Tom asked Tim – those guys must have been through this training so many times by now it is old news. Why not change the training requirements so that new crew have to train annually but experienced crew less often. Chris commented that these training requirements are set internally. The crew really know their jobs and the contents of the SOPs, but there have been a lot of changes

in the last few years, different company, different type of certification and some changes to the SOPs. Until the results of internal audits warrant it we will continue with the current frequency.

- Chris asked if the group wanted to review any other indicators results?
- Indicator 5-13 Community Benefits: Pat asked were the donations to Lake Days included in this calculation? Chris said yes and she noted the subscript #2. members noted this size font was difficult to read. Chris said that this style was resulting from a comment last year that they didn't want to see so much detail, members just wanted to see a final number. Tom commented that he like this reporting style.

8. Review Draft Indicators

Criterion 4.0 – Soil & Water;

Value (natural ecological cycles), Objective (minimize negative impacts of harvesting on natural global ecological cycles)

Indicator: Coarse Woody Debris Program

Target: Report on the status of Coarse Woody Debris Program a minimum of once per year

Variance: Zero

The group reviewed what the Coarse Woody Debris Program might look like. Sandy said he seemed to remember from earlier discussions that there wasn't a lot of flexibility from the government? Mark said that is correct, there are utilization standards. Tom reminded the group that one of the potential goals was to write a letter to government requesting a stratification in pile burning requirements, especially for the wetter hemlock areas. Mark commented that Rick Bennet has developed piling guidelines to create more efficient pile burning. All agreed that this indicator reflected their ideas.

Action Item 19-10: Add Coarse Woody Debris Program Indicator to SFMP

Environmental Department, September 31, 2008

Criterion 3.0 – Conservation of Soil and Water Resources;

Value (fisheries), Objective (protection of fisheries resources)

Indicator: bridge & major culvert repairs

Target: all structures with a high risk of damage to the environment or safety are repaired within the next weather window

Variance: zero

Tom asked if the weather window meant fisheries window? Chris confirmed it did. The group discussed it and they would like to see fisheries window in the target as well as weather window just to be clear. Otherwise the group accepted this indicator.

Action Item 19-11: Add 'fisheries window' to the wording of the indicator ad add to the SFMP

Environmental Department, September 31, 2008

9. Future Meeting Topics

The group was in consensus that the next few meetings will focus on First Nations issues.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting will need to be scheduled for September. Members will be contacted with dates and location.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m. Minutes recorded by Chris Harvey