

**VANCOUVER ISLAND NORTH WOODLANDS ADVISORY GROUP  
(VINWAG)**

**Western Forest Products Inc.  
Community Advisory Group  
Minutes of Meeting April 24th, 2014**

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**Attendance:**

Jon Flintoft, WFP	Dale Dorward, Small Business
Dave Trebett, Tourism and Recreation	Jeff Houle, Small Contractors
Patrick Donaghy, Local Government	Tom Doak-Dunelly, General Public
Ray Harper, Labour	Ben Trerise, Fish & Wildlife Alternate

**Presenter:** Nancy Densmore, MOFLNRO

**Regrets:** Andrew Mitchell, NISS student, Ione Brown, NICFLP, Fred Robertson, Education, Gaby Wickstrom, Local Government, Ralph Wallas

**Observers:** Brian Smith, Operations Manager, Port McNeill and Jeune Landing, WFP

**Advisors:** Paul Barolet, Stewardship Officer, MOFLNRO, Christina Mardell, Stewardship Forester, MOFLNRO, Lucas Wetterberg, Rotary Exchange Student from Sweden

**Chairperson and Facilitator:** Annemarie Koch

**Minutes taken by:** Jon Flintoft and Annemarie Koch

## **1.0 SAFETY AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Annemarie welcomed everyone to the meeting, stressed the importance of safety in WFP's operations and reviewed the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency, including the procedure to follow in the event of an earthquake, like the one experienced in Port McNeill on the previous evening. Annemarie reviewed the objectives of the meeting, namely to review the minutes and action items from the previous meeting, hear a presentation by Nancy Densmore on the distribution and ecological role of coarse woody debris (general information for Criterion 3, Soil and Water), continue discussion on the 2013 annual report and proposed revisions to SFMP targets and indicators, review and update the terms of reference, discuss the chairman's award, hear an update of the First Nations Information Exchange Group and confirm the date of the next meeting.

Annemarie invited everyone to introduce themselves for the benefit of the presenter, and new observers who were attending the meeting.

## **2.0 REVIEW OF LAST MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS**

Annemarie asked if there were any comments on the minutes of the February 20th meeting and reviewed action items requiring updates or immediate attention with members, and the results of the discussion are summarized in the table below, along with the revision of two action items (124 and 137) and addition of three new action items developed during the course of this meeting. For the benefit of new members, Annemarie noted that she would be assuming all members had read their minutes and would not be taking additional time to go through them at the meeting, other than to deal with questions, changes and action items. Action items that were completed were dropped from the list and revised action items were retained as modified.

<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>
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#	Item	Responsibility	Initiation Date	Target Date	Completion Date
124	Use the 4,500 cubic metre target provided by Jon for the 2013 annual report, but work on a new target for volume of wood sold locally, for Indicator 6.3.1 that shows whether requests were responded to	Jon Flintoft	June 14, 2012	June 26, 2014	
137	Use an increased variance for the 2013 annual report, but continue to discuss an appropriate target for Indicator 5.2.3, level of employment that reflects volume harvested	Jon Flintoft	April 11, 2013	June 26, 2014	
140	Follow up on engaging youth in SFMP	Fred Robertson/Jon Flintoft/A. Koch	June 27, 2013	Ongoing, in 2014	
152	Invite a MOFLNRO representative to further discuss the role and purpose of stumpage	Annemarie Koch	November 28, 2013	Sometime in 2015	
154	Invite David Melville to participate in September 12 <sup>th</sup> VINWAG field trip	Jon Flintoft	February 20, 2014	September 12, 2014	
155	Send out link to Forest Practices Board Special Investigation report on Management of Karst Resource Features on North Vancouver Island, with reference to Devil's Bath, with the April 24 <sup>th</sup> meeting minutes	Annemarie Koch	April 24, 2014	With the April 24 <sup>th</sup> Minutes	
156	Make the target to produce a map for recreationalists a priority	Jon Flintoft	April 24, 2014	By 2015	
157	Circulate updated Terms of Reference	Annemarie Koch	April 24, 2014	With the April 24 <sup>th</sup> minutes	

Annemarie noted that action items 106, 124, 137, 138 and 155 would be addressed during the meeting and that draft indicators and targets had been distributed with the meeting notice on April 10. She noted that action item 156 had been completed. She pointed out that, further to action item 153, she had confirmed Pat English as a presenter for the June 26<sup>th</sup> VINWAG meeting and that, further to action items 148 and 153, Paul Barolet was making arrangements for a speaker to address the effects of climate change on forestry at the November 13<sup>th</sup> VINWAG meeting. It was noted that Jon and Annemarie are working on action items 152 and 154.

She referenced the wall map Jon had posted for review during dinner asked if anyone wanted to comment on or ask questions about WFP's proposed harvesting plans in the DFA.

Annemarie stated that, further to action item 140, VINWAG agendas and meeting notices were being circulated to NISS principal Jay Dixon and student Andrew Mitchell.

Annemarie added that, unless members of VINWAG wished to discuss any of these items, and unless there were any comments or changes, she would ask members to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting.

Annemarie noted that the Special Investigation report on *Management of Karst Resource Features on North Vancouver Island*, that included issues related to harvesting at Devil's Bath, had been released and that copies and a summary of the report could be accessed off the Forest Practices Board website [http://www.fpb.gov.bc.ca/SIR39\\_Management\\_of\\_Karst\\_Resource\\_Features\\_on\\_Northern\\_Vancouver\\_Island.htm](http://www.fpb.gov.bc.ca/SIR39_Management_of_Karst_Resource_Features_on_Northern_Vancouver_Island.htm)

She noted that a link to the site would be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

The minutes were accepted as circulated.

### **3.0 THE ECOLOGICAL ROLE OF COARSE WOODY DEBRIS: NANCY DENSMORE, MOFLNRO**

Annemarie introduced the speaker and reminded VINWAG members that the request for a presentation on the ecological role of coarse woody debris had arisen from discussions regarding the second target for Indicator 3.1.2, level of downed woody debris, which is currently that 100% of 2nd growth cutblocks retain  $\geq 5$  CWD pieces per hectare.

Nancy noted that she works in monitoring in forest and range evaluation for the Resource Practices Branch. She provided a definition of coarse woody debris, namely pieces that are greater than 7.5 cm in diameter, not self-supporting and described by diameter, length, species and decay class.

She noted that CWD is part of the coarse filter for maintaining biodiversity. She noted that maintaining CWD as a component of a stand provides habitat for vertebrates such as marten, black bear and pileated woodpeckers, and invertebrates such as ants. She noted that 30 percent of the diet of black bear comes from insects in downed wood. She pointed out that pileated woodpeckers are primary borers of the wood and are a keystone species. Nancy noted that birds such as spruce grouse are more opportunistic in their approach to downed wood and may use downed wood for nesting. She added that winter wrens use the root wads for nesting. Nancy referred to microhabitats for fungi, moss, liverworts and lichens. She noted that we have learned a lot in B.C. from Sweden about the importance of dead wood in the forest ecosystem.

Nancy noted that there are over 500 species of macro-fungi dependent on dead wood.

Nancy referenced the importance of dead wood to soil nutrition, e.g. with nitrogen mobilization, and as a nitrogen sink as the carbon declines in the dead wood. She noted that organic matter in decomposed logs is very long lived and provides chemical activity and soil moisture.

Nancy described the importance of ectomycorrhizal fungi in the dead wood that help with plant nutrient uptake and seedling establishment. She noted that these fungi help to distribute nutrients further down in the soil.

Nancy pointed to how rotting roots are an important part of coastal drainage patterns and help to avert landslides where there is CWD terracing from large logs cross slopes.

Nancy showed how coarse woody debris breaks down following natural disturbance over a timescale and noted it was important to think long term about the importance of decaying material in the forest ecosystem.

Nancy noted that, as well as thinking temporally, it was important to look at the geographic scope of the forest area being managed for CWD.

Nancy reviewed some of the data for coarse woody debris volume found in wildlife tree patches on northern Vancouver Island. She noted there is a lot of variation in the amounts of CWD in different stands long after a disturbance.

Nancy noted that we tend to look at the CWD in the landscape post harvest. She reviewed photos demonstrating different levels of CWD on sites on northern Vancouver Island, noting the value of standing retention, as well as the downed debris.

Nancy noted that high levels of diversity can be found in part standing and partly downed trees, that provide the biggest variety of habitats. Nancy noted that the best bear dens are formed from a hollow stem with a solid surrounding wall that is created by compartmentalization of decay in standing trees.

Nancy reviewed some data on standing retention. She noted that the 17% average retention on WFP's stands was healthy.

Nancy pointed to the value of large snags and large diameter trees, and noted that WFP was representing what was there pre harvest, which is in accordance with the provincial standards on stand retention. She congratulated WFP for their performance in this area.

Nancy reviewed the FREP monitoring program and noted it was put in place when FRPA came into being. She noted there was no current government objective for CWD, but a plan and a practice requirement are in place.

Nancy described the monitoring methodology, including a modified timber cruise and line transect for CWD.

Nancy reviewed the CWD indicators that are used under FREP, including total volume, volume from large diameter pieces and volume or count of log size pieces. She noted that diameter is important for denning animals.

Nancy noted that comparisons for healthy CWD are made in relation to post natural disturbance, or CWD on the ground pre harvest, or in unmanaged stands.

Nancy noted that the surrogate baseline that is used is generally generated from unmanaged stands.

Nancy reviewed the CWD that can be found in retention patches.

She noted that CWD on harvested cutblocks can be measured at the stand-level, but CWD should be managed at the landscape level.

Nancy pointed to the importance of maintaining diversity across the stands. She reviewed biodiversity measures in the landscape that have been designated, e.g. OGMA's, parks, UWR's and wildlife habitat areas. She referenced Fred Bunnell's work out of UBC, noting that it was important to maintain a high level of CWD in harvested areas, in order to help maintain forest ecosystem biodiversity.

Nancy noted that WFP seems to be maintaining healthy volumes of CWD on the DFA on the North Island. She reviewed CWD that is 30 cm and greater in WFP's DFA and log sizes greater than or equal to 20 cm and greater than or equal to 10 metres long, and noted that the volumes and density of CWD on WFP's DFA are generally good from a biodiversity perspective.

Nancy reviewed some of the training that takes place so operators can learn what is desirable in the way of CWD.

Nancy reviewed some historical research on CWD and how decay constants have been developed. She noted that decay tends to be slower in larger and longer pieces. She reviewed the 100 year decay process in a Douglas fir as an example.

Nancy reviewed the ecological principles of CWD management, noting it was important to mimic natural disturbances, and adding that overlapping logs last longer, and stating that it was important to maintain full range of decay and diameter classes, and variability across the landscape.

It was noted that stumps are seen as CWD but not measured.

Ray asked whether shape of the piles matters. Nancy noted stability was important and height above the snow. It was noted that plantable area is important. It was noted that roadside piles are not desirable from a habitat perspective.

There was a discussion of public perceptions of waste. It was noted that waste can play an important ecological role. Patrick asked if there had been any thought about pulling together the role of CWD in streams as well as in terrestrial environments. Nancy noted that links had not been made between the terrestrial and instream habitats but that work had been done in both areas.

#### **4.0 ONGOING DISCUSSION OF 2013 ANNUAL REPORT AND PROPOSED REVISIONS TO SFMP INDICATORS AND TARGETS: JON FLINTOFT**

Jon noted he had not finalized the annual report yet, but noted he would review the indicators he did not cover at the last meeting.

Jon reviewed the indicators related to habitat in the DFA, noting targets for habitat retention were met. He noted that the target for sacred and culturally important sites had not been met in 2013, as a CMT was accidentally harvested, in a right-of-way area. He noted that the faller believed he was falling a danger tree, based on his interpretation of the plan, as the feature was improperly mapped. Jon explained how the markings on the CMT were not immediately visible. He added that discussions had taken place with the Quatsino First Nation and an alteration permit had been acquired and arrangements were being made to transport the CMT to the Quatsino Reserve for display purposes. It was noted that there were a number of factors that likely led to the accidental harvesting of the feature. There was a discussion of whether there was any effort to ensure this situation did not arise again. Jon noted that it would be general practice by WFP to ensure that this type of mistake was not repeated, for example, field checking to ensure proper mapping is provided.

There was a discussion of balancing safety against CMT values and how an alteration permit can be used on a limited basis for this purpose, in concert with discussions with the First Nation.

It was noted that CMT tags and identification can disappear over time. It was noted that more permanent marks might not be acceptable to the First Nation. It was noted that more permanent flagging could be used in future.

Jon reviewed the harvest level indicator. He reviewed the figures for 2013 and how they relate to the cut control tolerances, and the reduction in AAC that took place under the management plan review. Jon pointed to how trends in harvest levels have been improving. Jon noted how any undercut may be offered up to another entity.

There was a discussion of how the move of TFL 39 Block 4 will affect the cut control levels after it is completed.

Jon reviewed the indicator related to area withdrawn from the DFA. He noted this target was met in 2013. Jon noted there was a general request to create a recreation site around Colony Lake, near Quatsino.

Jon noted that there was a net carbon uptake. There was a discussion of how accurate carbon calculations could be.

It was noted there are no methane calculations around the Holberg dump currently. It was suggested that compost could be placed on top of the waste material at the dump.

Jon reviewed the indicator around producing recreational maps and that meeting the target on this and a tourism brochure was in process. It was noted that time was a factor in not meeting these targets. It was noted that discussions were taking place with the North Island tourism representative regarding the forest management brochure. It was noted that the map was probably a higher priority for recreationists. It was agreed to make the target to produce a map for recreationalists a priority over a forestry brochure for tourists.

Jon reviewed the indicators proposed for revision, including Indicator 5.2.3. He noted that the target had been met in the past few years, but that he was proposing to increase the variance from 10 to 15% to give some flexibility on performance levels.

It was noted that the measure should be related to cubic metres harvested. It was noted that the effect of technology on employment needed to be taken into account. It was noted that the variance provides some flexibility and that WFP is trying to keep employment numbers up in a variety of ways.

It was agreed to accept the increased variance for this target for the 2013 annual report, but to continue to try and develop an indicator that better reflects the variety of factors that affect employment levels, such as technological change. Patrick noted it would be interesting to know how much of the forestry expertise and technical employment is North Island based and what we can do to keep more of these types of employees on the North Island.

Jon reviewed Indicator 5.2.6 and noted that he had carried this indicator forward from the old plan. He pointed to the challenge of recruiting skilled trades people on the North Island.

Jon reviewed Indicator 6.3.1, noting the target had been reduced to 4,500 cubic metres. It was noted that it had been suggested that the target be changed to be a percentage of requests for volume. It was noted that *whether the requests were being met* is what should be measured. There was a discussion of the 'willing seller, willing buyer' matter. It was noted that, if someone wanted to buy wood at market value, WFP would do whatever it could to meet this request.

It was agreed to proceed with the 4,500 cubic metre target in the 2013 annual report, but to continue refining this target.

## **5.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE: ANNEMARIE KOCH**

Annemarie noted that the proposed revisions and updates to the terms of reference were highlighted in yellow in the document that was circulated to members on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

She then reviewed the revisions as follows:

1. Page 2: wording change in the timeline to indicate that 'results will be provided to VINWAG members by April 15<sup>th</sup>, rather than reviewed by VINWAG members by April 15<sup>th</sup>;
2. Pages 4 and 6: addition of discretion of the facilitator to call for a caucus of members only, without observers and advisors, at the request of members;
3. Addition of footnotes that chronicle the date and purpose of changes, further to action item 138, and a record of review and updates at the end of the Terms of Reference.

It was agreed to adopt and circulate the revised Terms of Reference.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION OF CHAIRMAN'S AWARD AND UPDATE ON FNIEG: ANNEMARIE KOCH & JON FLINTOFT**

Annemarie provided some background on the CSA Users Group Chairman's Award, noting that, while there had been no new nominations in 2013, the award might be something members of VINWAG might want to consider at some point, in view of the group's long history.

She reviewed the criteria for the award, which include:

1. Contributions to the advancement of a particular aspect of SFM (i.e. forest conservation, wildlife stewardship, First Nation engagement);
2. Contributions to the awareness and education of SFM to local communities (i.e. hosted community forums, prepared news articles, website development);
3. Showing leadership in advancing the CSA Z809-08 Standard requirements for SFM;
4. Recognition by the certifying auditor as being a highly engaged and effective advisory group.

Annemarie provided an update on FNIEG, noting the group had recently met to discuss indicators related to aboriginal criteria in the SFMP and toured Cape Scott Windfarm. It was noted that Jon would bring back any suggested revisions to the targets and indicators to VINWAG members.

#### **7.0 NEXT MEETING:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 as per the proposed schedule of meetings confirmed by the membership. Annemarie noted that the proposed topic was the regional forest policy, related to Criterion 5 and that the proposed speaker was regional district economic development manager and VINWAG member Pat English.

Annemarie and Jon thanked everyone for coming and wished them a safe journey home.

**When: JUNE 26th, 2014**  
**Dinner: 6:30 p.m.**  
**Meeting: 7:00 p.m.**