

Nimpkish Woodlands Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes June 25, 2020

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Attendance: Stu Ellis, General Public, Derek Koel, Town of Port McNeill, Steve Lacasse, Environment, Jon Lok, Strategic Natural Resources - Contractors, Mike Green, Mount Cain, Annemarie Koch, Paul Barolet, Johnathan Flintoft, Port McNeil WFP

Regrets: Trevor Egely, Large Contractors, Cameron Brady, Karst, Adrian Pendergast/ Rena Sweeney, Education, Bill Nelson, Observer, Holbrook Dyson, Pat English, Local Government, Rod Sherrell, Local Government, Jack Miller, Labour

Presenters: Sebastien Lecours, WFP Operations Forester

Advisor: Paul Barolet, MOFLNRO

Observers: N/A

Facilitator: Sebastien Lecours, WFP Operations Forester

Notes: Jeanne Matthews, WFP Senior Field Planner, Theresa Cleroux, WFP Field Planner

1. Introductions/Welcome:

Sebastien would like to keep the meeting light and use tonight as a learning ground for using Teams. Meeting official start at 6:11 pm to ensure all attendees are comfortable with the program.

Sebastien starts by welcoming everyone that has joined the meeting, hopes that future meetings will revert to in-person attendance soon.

Introductions by everyone in attendance. Quick run-down on teams meeting etiquette.

2. Group Discussion: How is everyone doing?

Sebastien asks if anyone has any comments or questions, long time since the last meeting due to the labour dispute.

Paul: Just had Forest Management Leadership Meeting. Recent Forest and Range Practices Act change concerning roads and sedimentation in streams – currently coast has the best practices. Need a culture of change on management of roads and sediment getting into streams. Getting ready for more work on the Nimpkish River concerning knotweed. Some funding fell through due to Covid-19, but will continue with knotweed eradication program anyway.

Derek: Happy NWAC is back to meeting. Concerned about how WFP was behind on its annual cut for the 5-year cycle in 2018 and now are even more behind with the 2019 strike, would be interested in hearing answers on that (operational update). Sebastien says that he will try to get to that question at the end of the meeting if there is time.

Stuart: Happy that things are going well with Covid-19 cases dying down, has a controversial question about the 7 month strike; thinks it's peculiar that it was so quickly solved after the mediators got involved and was wondering if there was something that can be learned from what happened there. Sebastien appreciates that it is being looked at as an opportunity for growth, will get to it at end of meeting.

Jon: Happy to be catching up with Englewood again, excited to see everyone together at meeting.

Mike: Mount Cain had a slow start, a fantastic mid-season, record ticket sales, but early shut down with Covid-19. Thanks WFP for being a top supporter for Mt. Cain, even with the labor dispute.

Annemarie: Appreciates being a part of the meetings again, is sad to have to step down from helping with them. Looks forward to working with the North Island Community Forest.

Steve: Also attended the Forests and Range Practices Act webinar on streams, which he believes goes along with WFP's work in the Nimpkish valley, thinks that there may be more that we can do in the watershed – some on-going data collection so that we can back up reports that we aren't affecting fish. Affecting fish at any time in their life-cycle is something that we should visit again.

Johnathan: Glad to be a part of the meeting.

3. Review/Revise/Adopt Agenda

Sebastien goes over meeting agenda. Appreciates the support and participation of everyone on the NWAC team through the years. Motion to accept agenda (accepted).

4. 2020 Annual Report Review (Part 1 of 2): Sebastien Lecours

Sebastien shares the powerpoint for the 2019 CSA Indicator Annual Report, part 1 of 2.

Will go through each indicator and will give a chance for anyone who wants to jump in on any of the indicators with questions/comments/concerns.

Indicator 1.1.1 – Ecosystem Area by Type: More than 50% of each ecosystem type in productive forest area of the DFA within the mid to old seral stages at any time. Targets have been met for each ecosystem. Mid-Late Seral stage being 40 -250 years old. Derek asks about the species in those areas. Sebastien explains the different biogeoclimatic zones, elevation, and the tree species most likely to be found in those sites.

Indicator 1.1.2 – Forest Area by Species Composition: Forest area by species composition remains within 2% of the baseline on a 5-year basis. Percentages given by species. Deviations have not been significant. There is a downward creep with the Cw planting as there have been problems with elk browse so many do not reach free-growing. Sebastien mentions that if he is moving through the slides too fast, feel free to stop him. There is a question about planting Hemlock with genetic gain versus taking natural hemlock. Jeanne explains that we are planting hemlock, but also accepting naturals. There is a question about planting Alder and any issues that may have had. Jeanne explains that WFP Englewood lost 80% of our Alder to frost. Sebastien asks about hemlock being planted, what percentage? Jeanne says about 25% of Hemlock in our forest is planted (genetic gain). There is a question about the wildfire areas that were planted and funded by FCI/Section 108 (Government programs). Jeanne explains that the areas that were planted are growing well, the ones that we've checked so far have good roots, we will be planting more fall 2020. It is suggested that this may be a good field trip for the NWAC group. There is a question about any evidence of climate shift or species migration in the north island due to climate change. Jeanne explains that what we are seeing more of in terms of climate change is mostly increased pest issues (Swiss needle cast etc.). It is noted that samples should be sent away for confirmation of Swiss Needle Cast. It is explained that Swiss Needle cast kills all the needles on the tree except the last two years, will not kill the trees, but will dramatically slow down the growth of the trees and will continue to over several years. Could have a big impact on the forest.

Indicator 1.1.3 – Ecosystem Diversity: The percent of productive forest area in older age classes: 81-250 years, is at least 25% of DFA on a 5-year basis. Sebastien goes over data figures. Sebastien believes that

the data indicates a healthy forest. A large amount of the older age class in the forest is protected under WTP, WTR, OGMAs etc. No comments.

Indicator 1.1.4 – Stand retention system according to VILUP (Vancouver Island Land Use Plan) zones. Unless the cutblock is under 5 Ha it is required to be a retention block. WFP has been over-achieving in this area going above the expected amount targeted for retention systems. Sebastien wants to ensure that we continue to overachieve in this point, but is concerned about some safety issues, and economic factors. Steeper slopes would be safer for workers if there were less retention left in the block, and on the lower slopes we would continue to maximize retention. Agreement with those plans going forward. Noted that there may be some challenges with visual objectives in some steeper blocks. Sebastien agrees. The guidance he has given the planners is to continue to over-achieve, but possibly leave less retention in more technical areas, or areas with some access or harvesting issues. No further comments.

Indicator 1.2.1 – Degree of Habitat Protection for Focal Species: Focal species are Marbled Murrelet, Northern Goshawk, Roosavelt Elk, Keens Myotis, Red Legged Frog. Sebas suggests that proposed area is removed from the indicators, as it is only proposed and will change without change to the on-the-ground area being protected, would like to focus on the legal area protected. Legal areas have stayed constant over the years, sometimes the proposed area will reduce, but the actual protected areas will not. Trend for legal protected areas is likely to go up, especially for Goshawk. No comments.

Indicator 1.2.2 – Degree of Suitable Habitat in the Long Term Available for Focal Species: Protected lands should remain the same or increase over time. There is a question about variance, appears that there has been a larger variance than 2% in the MAMU Nesting Habitat, is this a 2% variation from the previously recorded area or is it a 2% variance from the initial habitat area from 2009? Sebastien says he will investigate this issue.

Indicator 1.2.3 – Species Diversity: Question about what non-native species are being planted and if they will continue to be planted. Jeanne explains Noble Fir is the only non-native species that we used to plant, as we were attempting to assist with climate-induced migration. However, we are unlikely to continue to plant as it is very site-specific. WFP will likely plant only native species in the future.

Indicator 1.2.4 – Cutblocks harvested are managed to address special habitat features identified. Sebastien speaks to some recently harvested blocks, where eagle/goshawk nests and bear dens have been left as undisturbed as possible by nearby harvesting. Paul comments that when he flew the area affected by wildfire, some of the area was in OGMAs, so protected area has been altered by fire, there doesn't seem to be any plans to add to OGMAs because the areas have only undergone natural disturbance. By definition they are still old-growth ecosystems and have enough old stems to contribute to the functioning purpose of an OGMA. Sebastien says that is an interesting point that Englewood should think about. There is a question of any plans to move OGMAs areas around, even though burned areas have not been harvested. There is a remark on lost harvesting opportunities within the OGMA. Sebastien explains that it was difficult to harvest those areas because of dropping markets causing more particular demands on timber, where good timber would be turned down because of small blemishes due to fire. This was the reasoning behind not salvaging fire areas in 2019.

Indicator 1.3.1 Genetic Modification Organisms planted – Zero. Met every year. Sebastien asks if the team feels like this is an effective target. It is noted that the original premise was to ensure that trees planted were not genetically modified to ensure that areas reforested come back as a forest as opposed

to a tree farm. Concern about situations like the Black Alder that was planted near Campbell River for pulp, does not want a similar situation here. Question if WFP has a policy to not introduce GMO trees, if so, this may not be an important indicator. Sebastien says that he will look into the official WFP policy, if we have one that ensures we will not plant GMO trees this indicator will possibly be changed or removed.

Indicator 1.4.1 Protected Areas and Sites of Special or Cultural Significance. 100% achievement in protecting these areas. Sebastien says that this is an area WFP is very proud of as we work with the Namgis to ensure that we are protecting this. Indicator should not drop below 100% any time in the future. Question about the Danyas blocks being harvested for Namgis. Sebastien says that they are harvested as a partnership, the block harvested had over 100 recently bark-harvested trees, so in planning phase the Danyas team collaborated and protected some of the bark-harvested trees in the retention. Comment made that would mean that some of the cultural trees have been harvested. Sebastien explains that some were, but it was with permission and approval. Paul mentions that he, Sebastien and the Namgis did a day looking at cultural heritage features in the forest. Sebastien agrees that it was a productive day. Comment is made that relationships with the Namgis have been up and down, but sounds like it has been getting better, or is in a good place right now. Sebastien speaks to the relationship and how it has become a genuine relationship, some challenges, but good conversations about all of them. Relationship is in a much better place than a couple of years ago and is becoming more collaborative as we continue.

Indicator 1.4.2 Proportion of Identified Sites with Implemented Management Strategies. Some concern about the small changes in park areas although the parks should not have changed in size. It is noted that the Nimpkish Ecological Reserve size has changed due to the changes in river flow. John Flintoff says that when the areas are re-run by the GIS department, sometimes the areas will change due to the script being used as opposed to the on-the-ground areas actually changing. No further comments.

Indicator 2.1.1 Reforestation Success: All areas are meeting Free Growing milestones.

There is a question about expanding the data to explain how many hectares fall under 97.1. Explanation that the legal stocking standard may not be entirely met, but the forester can declare anyways (like in areas where there is a landslide and there is a section that is not possible to reforest due to a lack of soil to plant in). Would like for there to be a column for this indicator that shows the area that won't be able to meet free growing (as a percent of the block?). Possible action item. To be discussed further in next meeting.

Indicator 2.1.3 Additions and Deletions to the Forest Area: No more than 7% of the cutblock can be considered unproductive area (roads)

Sebastien explains how this figure is measured. WFP did not meet the allowance but was within the variance for 2019. The reason behind this is because many of the blocks measured had existing roads, and the roads may have been accidentally made wider when they were re-surfaced for harvesting use. This is unlikely WFP building more roads or bigger roads and is not likely to continue into the future. Commented that an increase of the sample size of the roads measured would allow for a better understanding of what the problem would be. There is a question about road deconstruction. Sebastien says that WFP generally doesn't deconstruct them as blocks tend to be re-harvested and destroying road would be counter-productive. However, WFP has had some roads broken up and planted.

I 2.1.3a – Zero operationally caused fires annually. 0 Ha of operationally caused fires in 2019.

No comments.

I 3.1.1 – Level of Soil Disturbance: All soil disturbance limits met.

Sebastien asks if there are any opportunities to change this indicator. It is commented that while it is good to have good soil conservation practices, there is the question about climate change and intense storm events – if they should be tracked should a lot of landslides start occurring on the TFL. Some regional geologists are concerned about heavy winter rainfall and increased sediment delivery, maybe they should be monitored to ensure that we aren't just looking at forestry when it comes to sediment loading. There is a comment that we should be looking in particular at landslides that initiate at roads. Sebastien agrees. Possibly should be monitoring the storms as WFP is working on watershed management plans focusing on sedimentation. WFP does report any slides that happen, but it would be good to monitor the cause of the slides. Sebastien suggests that we look at this indicator again as 0 ha of landslide area may not be realistic. It is noted that the key point of this indicator is that we want the slides to come back to productive forest within 5 years and not left as unproductive site. Sebastien agrees but is still concerned about it being 0 ha., does not seem achievable. Commented that 0 ha may be a good target, though unrealistic, because it has a variance. Another comment that even if the slides end up naturally rehabilitated with Alder, it would still be considered productive forest, so 0 ha may be realistic target. Sebastien says that if the slides are at 0 ha it is likely that the reporting may need to be reviewed.

I 3.2.1 – Water Quality and Quantity

Official WFP report is being completed in 2020 for the watershed quality using the same information as previous years. 100% of site plans have been consistent with watershed management strategies. Sebastien challenges if we need this target (100% compliance with management strategies) or if we can make a better target. It is noted that this target is about watershed management plans being implemented, not the actual quality of the water, name of target may need to be reviewed for accuracy. Question about the quality of the indicator, how would we measure that? Noted that this target is more about mitigating risk than monitoring quality. It is mentioned that this has been talked about before, meeting this target doesn't tell us anything about the water, just that we met the plan. Suggests we should try and figure out a way to measure water quality, come up with a fair plan to get the data that we need. Sebastien says that we should have experts come in and speak about water quality in a future meeting. It is mentioned that the new government legislation on water quality would be a good resource for any members interested in water quality.

I 3.2.2 Management prescriptions to address water features.

Sebastien says 3 cutblocks had good prescriptions but were not completely implemented during the harvesting phase. Plans are in place to address these. Instead of just meeting the status quo for lower value streams, WFP is now adding machine free zones/high stumping instead of merely falling/yarding across to only meet legislation. Englewood is also doing wider retention along streams allowing for larger riparian areas. Collaboration with Namgis is in works to ensure that WFP continues to improve stream care. Sebastien is sure that it will continue to improve with time.

It is mentioned that, while there is an understanding of how difficult it is to manage small streams in a harvest block, it is suggested that members look into "Why Small Streams are Important" addresses Carnation Creek Study.

Sebas requests an additional 6 minutes in order to complete indicators or can go directly into Q&As as meeting has gone over allotted time.

I 4.1.1 Net annual carbon uptake: is positive year after year

Net carbon uptake is much larger in 2019 than before, likely due to shorter harvesting period. WFP hired a new Carbon Forester who could be a guest speaker in upcoming meetings if group is interested. No comment.

I 6.1.1 Fair and Effective Decision Making

Sebas asks if the group feels that it is appropriate to reflect on 2019 through a survey in the next couple weeks it can be set up. Group feels it's unlikely anyone will remember 2019, and surveys should simply be continued in 2020. Sebastien says that he will make sure we have two in 2020, one very soon and one at the end of the year.

I 6.2.1 Co-operation with Workers to Improve Safety Standards and Procedures

Health and safety meetings in Englewood are being improved with some training to ensure high standards are met. No comments.

I 6.2.2 Worker Safety Program and Implementation Review: Safe certification target has been met. Sebastien reviews data. No comments from group.

I 7.2.2 Aboriginal Knowledge of Identified Sources/Values that are Culturally Important

41 Blocks were looked at through a CMT/CHR assessments. Namgis crews will go out to blocks at pre-lay-out to look at features identifying any features to be looked at by an archeologist. 17 blocks were reviewed by archeologists in 2019. No comments.

I 7.2.3 Level of Management/Protection of Culturally Important Areas

Sebas details the management strategies found through collaboration with indigenous groups, explains that areas are usually avoided, though sometimes machine-free zones are created around the features with high-stumping around the feature in order to protect it. Whole trees are not left in case of windthrow, which could cause damage to cultural features.

Sebastien finishes indicator review by thanking everyone for their participation in the meeting.

Sebastien goes over proposed agenda for the year (Meetings June 25, July 9, September 17 – Thursday night dinner, survey and chat about archeology, 2021 operational plan. September 18 – Field Trip, November 19 – Presentation from Leadership Team (Carbon Forester??), survey, SFMP priority discussion)

There is some debate about timing. Decided that meetings will be changed to September 24-25th, and November 26th.

There is a question if VINWAG meetings are going to be resumed. Johnathan explains how the VNWAG meetings may happen in the future. There is mention that before the strike or Covid, there were plans to have a meeting together with VINWAG, would a joint meeting still be possible? Johnathan says that it was planned, had to be postponed, maybe will happen at the end of the year. After Johnathan and Sebastien discuss the meeting, they will propose a date.

5. Closing Items/General Q&A Open Discussion

Sebastien asks if action items can be skipped in view of amount of time left. Accepted by group.

Sebastien talks about the strike and harvesting in 2019. Only 123,500 m³ + 30,000 m³ of Danyas harvested. Englewood had concerns about continuing to run in 2020. Plan for this year is 305,000 m³ set to harvest, roads are being built now, as last year WFP curtailed road building in light of market/strike issues. 400,000 m³ proposed for 2021, yet to be approved. Early February 2019 lost engineering/planning, now everyone is back to work, we are hiring contractors, it looks like things are coming together. There is a question if there will be additional employment with the harvest amount ramping up. Sebastien says that employment will likely go up due to retirement and increased harvest. WFP Englewood has several employment opportunities currently.

It is suggested group talks more about Swiss Needle Cast. Group Agrees. Swiss needle cast has been found right outside of Port McNeil, so has worked its way up the island. Photos are shown over teams of tree with Swiss Needle Cast. It is explained that samples must be sent to the lab, not just pictures.

It is suggested to log out of the Teams program completely to not continue to have notifications pop up after the meeting is over.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:32 pm