

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

***Western Forest Products Inc.***

**Community Advisory Group**

**Minutes of Meeting November 12th, 2015**

**Attendance:**

Jon Flintoft, WFP	Gaby Wickstrom, Port McNeill & District Chamber of Commerce
Gunnar Wigard, Large Contractors	Ione Brown, NICFLP
David Wall, Karst and Caving	Jeff Houle, Small Contractors
Ray Harper, Labour	John Tidbury, District of Port Hardy
Tom Doak-Dunelly, General Public	Steve Lacasse, Environment
Dave Trebett, Tourism and Recreation	Graham MacDonald, Town of Port McNeill
Patrick Donaghy, Local Government	Fred Roberston, Education
Ben Trerise, Fish and Wildlife	

**Presenter:** Duncan Mactavish, Recreation Sites and Trails B.C.

**Regrets:** David Steele, WFP, Dale Dorward, Small Business, Janet Dorward, Business

**Observers:** Joli White, Recreation and Tourism Alternate, Jim McDowell, NIFO Planning Manager, WFP

**Advisors:** Paul Barolet, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations

**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. Annemarie reviewed the objectives of the meeting, namely to review the minutes and action items from the September 10th meeting, hear a presentation by Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations Recreation Sites and Trails B.C. representative Duncan Mactavish on future plans for the development and maintenance of recreation sites on the DFA (recreation, Criterion 5, Economic and Social Benefits), review and distribute the annual participant satisfaction survey, review the September 11<sup>th</sup> field trip, review the results of the October 22<sup>nd</sup> panel session on recruitment and retention of a skilled forestry workforce on the North Island, discuss WFP's recent creation of a Central Island Forestry Operation and a move to shiftwork, review the draft 2016 schedule of meetings, and set the date of the next meeting, which will be in February of 2016.

Annemarie reminded everyone to take a look at the operational map that Jon had brought for members to review. She welcomed presenter Duncan Mactavish and then invited everyone to introduce themselves for the benefit of the presenter.

## 2.0 REVIEW OF LAST MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS

Annemarie asked if there were any comments on the minutes of the September 10th 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 addition or modification of 5 action items developed during the course of this meeting. For the benefit of new or recent 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.

It was noted that most of the action items were ongoing in 2016, and that action item 173 had been incorporated in the draft 2016 meeting schedule, and 182,183 and 184 had been completed by this meeting.

ACTION ITEMS					
#	Item	Responsibility	Initiation Date	Target Date	Completion Date
140	Follow up on engaging youth in SFMP	Fred Robertson/Jon Flintoft/ Kindry Mercer/A. Koch	June 27, 2013	Ongoing, in 2015-16	
163	Provide an update on the Pacific TSA Timber Supply Review	Jon Flintoft	September 11, 2014	Later in 2016	
175	Dedicate a future meeting to a presentation on stumpage by a government and a WFP representative	Annemarie Koch	April 23, 2015	Sometime in 2016	
177	Review the wording for the target related to Target 2 of Indicator 3.1.1,number of slides treated so that it is clearer and more easily measured and tracked	Annemarie Koch/Jon Flintoft	April 23, 2015	For 2015 annual report	
178	Coordinate production of a local map of roads and recreational sites in the DFA	Kindry Mercer	June 4, 2015	Sometime in 2016	
185	Send reminder to VINWAG members to fill out participant satisfaction surveys and attach survey in Word format	Annemarie Koch	November 12, 2015	November 13, 2015	
186	Respond to participant satisfaction survey	VINWAG Members	November 12, 2015	November 20, 2015	
187	Submit questions for WFP senior management re: CIFO amalgamation to Annemarie	VINWAG Members	November 12, 2015	November 26, 2015	
188	Invite Bill Day to meet with VINWAG and NWAC members to answer questions re: CIFO amalgamation	Jon Flintoft	November 12, 2015	Before the end of 2015	
189	Provide further input on draft 2016 meeting schedule to Annemarie	VINWAG Members	November 12, 2015	November 20, 2015	

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

### **3.0 FUTURE PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF RECREATION SITES WITHIN THE DFA: DUNCAN MACTAVISH, RECREATION SITES AND TRAILS B.C., MOFLNRO**

Duncan began his presentation by outlining the mandate of Recreation Sites and Trails B.C. (RSTBC) and his role as District Recreation Officer for this Recreation District. Duncan noted that he does not report to the District Manager but to a Regional Manager in Powell River.

Duncan noted that the mandate of RSTBC is to promote and manage a network of designated recreation sites and trails, manage public recreational use and protect recreation resources on Crown Lands outside designated parks and authorize construction of recreation facilities on Crown Land.

Duncan outlined the legal elements and definitions for recreational sites and trails under the Forest and Range Practices Act, including sections 56, 57 and 58, and the Forest Recreation regulations.

He outlined developments that were under the purview of the District Recreation office, described the recreation regions in the Province and provided an organizational chart showing program staff throughout the Province.

Duncan noted that the Discovery Coast Recreation District that he covers ranges from Bella Coola down to Campbell River.

He noted that he has 207 recreation sites and 39 recreation trails currently in the Discovery Coast District and 14 more sites proposed for 2016. Duncan referred to the partnership agreements that help his organization get things done. He noted that current partners include First Nations, community groups, forest companies, regional districts and municipal governments. He pointed to three karst sites in this District, including Upana Caves, Thanksgiving Cave and Candlestick Cave. He explained that access to these caves ranges from free and open to the public to quite limited to protect the karst resources.

Duncan reviewed some of the provincial statistics for his organization. He noted that any user fees collected go back to the site from which the fees are collected. For example, he noted that fees from Clint Beek go back into managing that site. He noted that, currently, only one of the sites in the Province pays for itself.

Duncan reviewed the benefits of the partnership model. He noted there are 17 partnership agreements on the Discovery Coast, including 4 on the North Island with the 'Namgis First Nation, WFP, RDMW and a private individual. He pointed to some of the partnership agreements that they hoped to develop over the next few years. He referenced the Marine Trails Network.

Duncan reviewed the history of development of recreation sites on the North Island, noting many of them were not legally established. He noted that the economic downturn had restricted recreational development starting in 2008 and pointed to how efforts had been made to continue with limited resources to develop as many recreational initiatives as possible, including the Alice lake Loop.

Duncan noted that the Forest Service recreation function had been absent for a number of years in early 2000 but that efforts were being made now to rebuild much of what had been lost. Duncan reviewed the funding sources he uses to develop and maintain recreation sites and trails in this region. He noted that, in 2015, 40% of the budget has gone into this area, and a total of almost \$700,000 has been invested in the North Island since 2010. He noted, for example, that RSTBC had invested close to \$95,000 in the Clint Beek site over the past few years, and that this had been supplemented by investments from WFP.

Duncan noted that funds had been invested in Marble River and Spruce Bay to bring these sites up to provincial standards. Duncan noted that a significant amount of money had been spent on Vanishing River and that much of this was lost during a 100 year flood event. He added that the site had been subsequently rehabilitated and then another flood had destroyed the site improvements and so now the site has been left and RSTBC will not be putting any more funds into the site.

Duncan pointed to challenges of maintaining existing sites and trails to Provincial standards. He noted that RSTBC had contributed to the Woss lookout tower project.

He noted that investments in the Marine Trail Network were ongoing, to identify sites of interest along the coast between B.C. and Alaska, and develop camping and picnic spots along the way. He noted that money had been invested in an archaeological assessment in Quatsino Sound to support recreational development there.

Duncan reviewed some of the program challenges, including vandalism, increased demand for recreational sites, access management and planning and use conflicts, including public versus commercial, motorized versus non-motorized, and staffing.

Ben asked about the future of the Marble River Trail. Duncan noted that a lot of money would be required to bring the trail to Provincial standards, and that a decision had been made to focus on the campsite. He reminded members that the mandate of his organization was back country recreation. It was noted that the trail largely lies within B.C. Parks' jurisdiction in any case.

John asked about the Vancouver Island Spine recreational trail. Duncan noted that this was the Vancouver Island Spine trail group's initiative and that RSTBC was not actively involved with this group at this time. He noted that this was a huge undertaking with many hurdles related to consultation with many parties, and authorization over land use, and that it was not likely the route would receive legal authorization and permits in the near future.

Fred noted that a link from this trail to the Cape Scott trail would be beneficial to tourism development in this region.

Dave Trebett asked if there was a list of sites on the North Island that RSTBC was looking at cleaning up. Duncan noted that the Alice Lake Loop was a priority. He pointed to the work that WFP was doing in this area and added that they would be looking at some more sites out toward Holberg, and Merry Widow.

It was noted that the North Island tourism association had put together a recreational map and that the group had been consulting with WFP on this.

It was noted that the Backroads Map people were looking at producing a guide specific to the North Island.

Fred noted that he had been looking at the maps that WFP employees have available on their iPads. It was noted that Avenza is a free app that can be used as a map, and that maps can be purchased from the Backroads people that can be downloaded onto an iPad and used for this area. It was noted that hundreds of kilometres of new road are built annually in and adjacent to the DFA and that the updates might not be available through many of the downloads. Ben pointed to a number of existing maps that are available off the Internet.

Graham noted that trails are one of the top activities on the North Island and that access to good maps is critical.

Duncan noted that signage was critical to ensure safe access.

Joli asked about the Merry Widow Mountain site and it was noted that this was an older site that had not been maintained to provincial standards.

Joli asked about the sites listed on the RSTBC website and wondered why sites, e.g. Ida Lake and Bonanza, would have been taken off this list. Duncan noted again that the only sites that would be listed in future would be those that were legally established and that meet provincial standards (market ready).

Duncan noted that there was an interactive map on the RSTBC website now and that efforts were being made to improve marketing and promotion of the sites and trails. Jon showed some photos of recreation sites in the DFA, including Clint Beek campsite and Marble River that illustrated the benefits and challenges of operating recreational sites in this region. It was noted that costs for access to sites like Merry Widow can be prohibitive, and where partnerships with WFP might be useful, if development plans permit.

#### **4.0 ANNUAL DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION SURVEY: ANNEMARIE KOCH**

Annemarie noted that the surveys had previously been distributed in Word format so that members had the option to fill them out and submit them digitally, or to print them off and submit them as paper forms.

She invited members to fill out the surveys and, even if they did not wish to fill out the entire forms, to provide feedback on how the format and content of the meetings could be improved to enhance the public input process. She asked members what a reasonable deadline for submission of the surveys would be and it was agreed that the responses should be submitted by email, mail or by hand to either Jon or Annemarie by November 20, 2015.

It was agreed that Annemarie should send out a reminder to fill out the participant satisfaction surveys and attach a copy of the survey in Word.

#### **5.0 DISCUSSION OF SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup> FIELD TRIP: JON FLINTOFT**

Jon reviewed the field trip itinerary and participants. He noted that there had been a discussion of stumpage calculation led by Kevin Laird and Jennifer Bendickson.

Jon reviewed the results of the tour of Quatern's operation and noted that WFP's communications person Zac Whyte had attended the tour. He noted that the tour continued to Neroutsos Inlet where Murray Estlin talked about viewscapes and visual quality objectives.

Annemarie noted that a copy of the field trip summary was available on the PAG website.

#### **6.0 REVIEW OF OCTOBER 22 PANEL SESSION ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF A SKILLED FORESTRY WORKFORCE ON THE NORTH ISLAND: ANNEMARIE KOCH**

Annemarie noted that she had previously circulated a summary of the session on November 5<sup>th</sup>. She added that a small working committee, including a number of VINWAG members, had been formed to follow up on developing a strategy to better engage forestry workers in the region and that this group would be getting together in January, 2016 and would report back to VINWAG in the New Year.

#### **7.0 DISCUSSION OF THE CREATION OF WFP'S CENTRAL ISLAND FOREST OPERATION AND THE MOVE TO SHIFTWORK: STEVE LACASSE**

Annemarie invited Steve to open the discussion and Steve noted that he had learned about the amalgamation process that had created the Central Island Forest Operation in the newspaper and it had concerned him greatly so he had asked Jon to discuss the implications of this amalgamation to the North Island as a whole.

He asked Jon to explain what WFP's position was with respect to the North Island DFA. Jon reviewed the amalgamation of Holberg, Port Hardy and Port McNeill into the North Island Forestry Operation in Port McNeill. Jon explained that there would still be people working in Holberg and Port Alice and that they would continue with five and two day shifts.

Jon noted that on September 10, 2015, it was announced that Gold River, Englewood and Mid Island had been amalgamated into the Central Island Forest Operation. He noted the planners would move into the Campbell River office, but that supervisors would be still operating out of Englewood and Gold River. It was noted that there would be a variety of shift options under this operation.

Steve asked why Englewood wasn't merged into NIFO since the wood comes this way. It was noted that the wood is just as close to Gold River and Campbell River and that there was an overall desire of the company to centralize in Campbell River. It was noted that much of the staff was driving up from Campbell River every day anyway.

It was noted that Beaver Cove and the railway would continue to operate.

Patrick noted his concern for the viability of Woss as a community with the effects of the amalgamation. Patrick pointed to the value of the Woss fire department as a first responder for highway accidents. He noted that Woss was just barely holding on as a community now and that he feared the new shift schedule would further erode the community's viability.

Fred noted that this topic was important to members of VINWAG, as it relates to Criterion 5 and the value of community stability. He noted that what both companies and communities are looking for is balance and quality of life for employees, and that this happens by having active communities supported by viable business operations. He noted his concern for the move to shiftwork and said that this particular business decision could have a significant impact on communities on the North Island. He noted, therefore, that members of this group should have some input or be able to comment on decisions like this.

Graham noted that WFP's decision was going to have a serious impact on our community and that we need to diversify in order to keep our communities going. He pointed out that forestry is a diminishing industry and that we need to look at other ways of building our communities and taking more control of our economy and future.

Steve noted that the company should listen to the group on matters that concern community stability, as this is one of the values identified in the certification process. He noted that the group is helping the company to stay certified, and members need to make their feelings known about decisions that impact our communities in this way.

Graham noted that he felt forestry was 'done' on the North Island and that there were no new ideas coming out of the industry here that would create new jobs or revenue.

Dave Trebett shared his previous experience with the introduction of shiftwork and noted that it had resulted in a loss of revenue for him personally as a long term employee, and that the workforce would tend to become more transient and not contribute to community stability.

It was suggested that it was maybe time for members of the group to say 'enough is enough' on business decisions that have negatively impacted community stability.

It was noted that the company made a profit last year and that decisions like this were not necessarily made by shareholders to deal with profit margins, but by senior management in the company who had no interest in and did not support this region.

There was a discussion of the effects of shiftwork and it was noted that NIFO might not stay with five and two shifts.

There was a discussion of what the members of VINWAG could do to bring their concerns to senior management at WFP.

Jon noted that the minutes from these meetings do go to the senior management at WFP in Campbell River.

It was noted that, for now, there would still be a Nimpkish Defined Forest Area. And that it would not be amalgamated into the North Island Defined Forest Area.

It was suggested that a senior representative of WFP be invited to address members of the public advisory groups, VINWAG and NWAC. It was noted that the North Island is the flagship of WFP, but that this is not reflected in the location of the company's administrative offices. Steve noted he would like to ask senior management why the offices for Englewood were moved to Campbell River and not here, and Patrick asked whether there was a way for the company to contribute more to communities, for example investing to keep the school open in Woss, to help stabilize the community and, ultimately the workforce.

Fred asked whether WFP was at this time considering extending the model that was being employed to the south of us to this area, making Campbell River the head administrative office for all of the North Island.

It was noted that the group needed to find someone at WFP to answer questions that the group has in a meaningful way.

Patrick noted that Shannon Janzen has agreed to come up and address the Regional District about concerns that have been expressed.

Graham noted that property values in communities will be hugely impacted by these decisions.

Paul suggested that people be given time to formulate some questions and pass them on to Annemarie over the next week. Patrick suggested that, in view of the significance of this matter, we should consider holding another meeting in 2015. It was agreed that another meeting should be held in the near future. John Tidbury noted that a good corporate citizen should support communities.

It was noted once again that the advisory group should be given information about decisions that are going to affect community stability so significantly.

There was a discussion of what the group might expect to hear from a WFP representative. Members agreed to proceed with questions posed at this meeting and any additional questions submitted by November 26, 2015, and at a meeting to be held as soon as possible with a representative or representatives of senior management at WFP.

It was suggested that Bill Day be invited as soon as possible to address the North Island public advisory groups and the concerns of members for community stability, including having a solid base of working residents who will support the communities.

## **8.0 DISCUSSION OF 2016 MEETING SCHEDULE:ANNEMARIE KOCH**

Annemarie asked members for their feedback on the draft 2016 meeting schedule that had been circulated with the meeting agenda. She noted that she had tried to incorporate a number of the new discussion items associated with the revised CSA Z809-15 standard and asked members if there were any other topics they would like to see addressed in 2016.

Annemarie asked whether members felt there was a need to have a presentation on the forestry recruitment initiative in February, or whether a brief update on this subject was sufficient.

It was agreed that members would provide further input on the draft meeting schedule via email to Annemarie, by November 20, 2015, and that the first meeting of 2016 would be on February 25, and that members could further discuss and possibly confirm the meeting schedule at that time.

## **9.0 NEXT MEETING:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on February 25, 2016.

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

<b>When:</b>	<b>FEBRUARY 25, 2016</b>
<b>Dinner:</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>