

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

***Western Forest Products Inc.***

**Community Advisory Group**

**Minutes of Meeting Held September 14, 2017**

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**Attendance:**

Jon Flintoft, NIFO, WFP	John Tidbury, District of Port Hardy
Michelle Baker, NIFO, WFP	Fred Robertson, Education
Leith Paganoni, Aquaculture	Patrick Donaghy, Local Government Alternate
Gunnar Wigard, Small Contractors	Jeff Houle, Suppliers
David Stewart, Large Contractors	Gaby Wickstrom, Pt. McNeill Chamber of Commerce
Steve Lacasse, Environment	

**Presenter:** Tyson Berkenstock, Stewardship Forester, WFP

**Regrets:** Tom Doak-Dunelly, General Public, Natasha Dickinson, proposed primary karst representative, Ione Brown, NICFLP, Elizabeth Aman-Hume, Business, Pt. Hardy, Ray Harper, Labour, Dave Trebett, Tourism & Recreation

**Advisors:** Paul Barolet, MOFLNRORD

**Observers:** Jim McDowell, Planning Manager, NIFO, WFP

**Chairperson and Facilitator:** Annemarie Koch

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

## **1.0 SAFETY AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Annemarie welcomed everyone to the meeting, initially forgot but Jon reminded her to stress the importance of safety throughout 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 June 22nd, 2017 meeting, hear a presentation on forest management and the role of wetlands, review new and revised indicators required under the new CSA Z809-16 standard, fill out the annual participant satisfaction surveys, hear an update on WFP's harvesting plans in the DFA, discuss the September 15<sup>th</sup> field trip itinerary and set the date of the next meeting.

Annemarie noted that Elizabeth Aman-Hume had expressed her regrets and was unable to attend the meeting, but had committed to attending future meetings. She reminded VINWAG members that Jeff Houle had approached the Port Hardy Chamber of Commerce earlier this spring about providing a Port Hardy business representative and Elizabeth had agreed to represent these interests.

Annemarie noted that proposed primary karst representative Natasha Dickinson had once again expressed her regrets for not being able to attend the meeting and that she had committed to making future meetings with the group.

Annemarie 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 June 22nd 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 seven 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.

Annemarie noted that action items 224, 226 and 228 had been completed. She noted that action items 217 and 225, regarding new and revised indicators required under the CSA Z809-16 standard would be dealt with later in the meeting.

Further to action item 208, Annemarie noted that Jim and Jon would be talking about WFP's five-year harvesting plans later in the meeting.

She asked Michelle to report out on action item 216, regarding efforts to promote the digital map app. Michelle noted she had talked to Gaby about use of the map app, but that she hadn't heard back from Joli yet. She noted she had helped a number of people put the app on their phones. She noted that she hadn't received feedback from the visitor centres on how tourists were taking to the app. John noted that the Port Hardy visitor centre wasn't sharing the map app very well. Annemarie invited John and Gaby to talk to the people at the visitor centres and the North Island tourism association about using the app. Fred agreed to talk to Adrian about use of the app for the forestry program. It was noted that the app was not entirely user friendly but agreed by those who have downloaded it that the map app can be very helpful. Action item 216 is completed.

It was agreed that Gaby would help organize a workshop with Michelle and John Tidbury, to show people how to download and use the map.

Jon reported out on action item 218. He noted that he and Dave Steele had met with Dave Trebett the day before the VINWAG meeting to discuss ways to protect the heritage values of the Hecht Trail and Dave was happy with the options identified. He noted that Dave Trebett had expressed his regrets that he could not attend this meeting, but would report back on this item at the November meeting.

Annemarie invited Jon and Michelle to report out on action item 227, namely finding ways under the required revisions to indicators under CSA Z809-16 to continue to monitor and record where employees and contractors working in the DFA reside.

Michelle noted she had talked to WFP administration and that she had confirmed that where employees and contractors live could be reported out in the SFMP under the CSA Z809-16 standard in place of local hires (indicator 5.2.6). The wording of the indicator and background information will still need to be developed and discussed.

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 2016	
191	Follow up on recommendations 4-5 of the 2015 participant satisfaction survey in mutual consultation	Members of VINWAG and WFP	February 25, 2016	Ongoing	
196	Consider ways to enhance communication of what VINWAG does to the public, integrate with WFP's communications strategy	Annemarie Koch	April 28, 2016	Ongoing	
208	Provide for brief presentation on and Q&A on harvesting plans at each meeting	Jon Flintoft/ Annemarie Koch	September 8, 2016	Ongoing	

210	Update VINWAG on procedural efforts to address a UBCM resolution to ban all future harvesting of old growth on Vancouver Island	Fred Robertson, Shirley Ackland, John Tidbury	June 22, 2017	Ongoing	
213	Implement recommendations in 2016 participant satisfaction survey report	Annemarie Koch/Jon Flintoft/VINWAG Members	February 23, 2017	Ongoing in 2017	
229	Organize a workshop on how to use the digital map app for tourism information providers	Gaby Wickstrom, John Tidbury, Michelle Baker	September 14, 2017	Sometime in 2018	
230	Report out on options identified to protect heritage values of Hecht Trail	Dave Trebett	September 14, 2017	November 9, 2017	
231	Ask Glynnis Horel for input on practical ways to monitor water quality and quantity in the DFA, possibly at joint meeting on October 26th	Jon Flintoft	September 14, 2017	October 26, 2017	
232	Review spreadsheet with proposed changes under CSA Z809-16 and get back to Jon and Michelle with any further input on the proposed changes	All VINWAG members	September 14, 2017	October 27, 2017	
233	Look at ways to increase participation in the annual field tour	Jon/Michelle/All VINWAG Members	September 14, 2017	Early in 2018	
234	Invite Glynnis Horel to Joint Session on October 26 <sup>th</sup> to discuss watershed management and ways to monitor water quality and quantity in the DFA's	Jon Flintoft	September 14, 2017	October 26, 2017	
235	Invite appropriate WFP representatives to joint session on October 26 <sup>th</sup> to discuss dryland sort operational changes at NIFO and CIFO	Jon Flintoft	September 14, 2017	October 26, 2017	

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 FOREST MANAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF WETLANDS: TYSON BERKENSTOCK, WFP**

Annemarie reminded everyone that the requirement for an understanding of wetlands had been introduced under the CSA Z809-16 CSA standard (mandatory discussion item) and that Tyson had been invited to provide some background on the subject.

Tyson reviewed the definition of wetlands under the CSA Z809-16 standard, noting wetlands can range from swamps and marshes through to low floodplain sites, such as those found on the central coast. Tyson noted that wetlands, while not very productive from a timber perspective, provide very valuable ecological services and support biodiversity.

Tyson referred to the 'Wetlands of British Columbia,' the 'bible' on the subject, which was produced by the Province. He explained that wetlands are perpetually wet and support specific associations of plants. He noted that wetlands are very sensitive and highly susceptible to change. Tyson reviewed some of the types of plants found in wetlands, including Labrador tea and bullrushes. He provided some background on these plants. It was noted that all wetland plants live in relatively low oxygen environments.

Tyson reviewed the soil regimes associated with wetlands under the biogeoclimatic ecological classification system. He pointed to the soil conditions associated with bogs versus swamps and marshes, and noted that many of these wetlands are critical habitat for juvenile salmonids.

Tyson discussed the attributes of bogs, noting they generally had few nutrients and were stagnant and characterized by sphagnum moss.

Tyson reviewed the characteristics of fens, noting they were slightly acidic, associated with moving groundwater, nutrient rich compared to bogs and common on the mainland coast.

Tyson reviewed the attributes of marshes, noting they tend to be alkaline, have dynamic water movement, are non-tidal, have mineral soils, are dominated by a few aggressive grass-like species and found somewhat commonly in the DFA.

Tyson reviewed the characteristics of swamps, noting they are nutrient rich, show seasonal saturation, have aeration that allows for some tree growth, are often not very productive and the water table can be affected by harvesting. He noted that swamps are very sensitive to harvesting and must be managed carefully.

Tyson described some of the animals that are associated with wetlands, including the western toad, northwestern salamander and rough-skinned newt. He noted that wetland habitats provide structural diversity, water, abundant forage and high prey densities for these animals.

Tyson reviewed the bird species that rely on wetlands, including bald eagles, great blue heron, and various species of ducks that use these sites for nesting.

Tyson noted that wetlands are managed at a landscape level and at a site level. He noted that wetlands in old growth areas don't contribute to OGMA targets but can act as an ecological hotspot or anchor that supports conservation values.

He noted that wetlands are often managed within and around old growth management areas. Tyson reviewed some site level retention measures used to manage wetlands and how this is done in conjunction with Wildlife Management Areas. It was noted that wetlands are dynamic and will change over time through succession and changes in climate for example.

Tyson reviewed various site level management challenges, and practices that are used to protect wetland values. He pointed to a series of site level management practices, including the application of a reserve zone to a complex of wetlands, for example.

Steve asked about the measurement of water quality and quantity required under the new standard and whether wetlands might be used to monitor these values. Tyson noted that a few wetlands in the DFA might be selected and monitored over time to determine any changes to the habitat, e.g. with deposit of organics or reduction of water level. It was noted that siltation and temperature were some of the factors that should be measured also. Tyson noted that he would look into which areas might be monitored in the DFA and possibly included as targets in the SFMP. Patrick noted there was about 15 years of data available below the landfill that could serve as a baseline. There was a discussion of the types of values that might be measured, including frequency of amphibian nesting.

Fred noted that it might be interesting to get information out on restrictions to harvesting that are made in order to protect wetlands, for example.

Tyson noted that forest management decisions around migratory birds were being tracked to show how management is changing to protect these species and he added that tracking of this nature is also being used to some extent on wetland species.

Tyson noted that there had been some research on 'environmental DNA' but that this monitoring practice was quite expensive at this time as a means of tracking biodiversity. There was a discussion of how this might help to monitor shifts in environmental characteristics in future.

There was a discussion of how MOFLNRO might track and monitor wetland areas. Tyson offered to follow up with Jon and Michelle on some of the monitoring options for water quality and quantity on wetlands.

There was a discussion of how climate change will influence wetland dynamics on the North Island over time. It was noted that maintaining natural drainage patterns in road building has generally been beneficial to wetlands in the DFA.

#### **4.0 REVIEW OF NEW AND REVISED INDICATORS REQUIRED UNDER THE CSA Z809-16 STANDARD: JON FLINTOFT, MICHELLE BAKER, WFP**

Annemarie reminded everyone that Jon had pointed out at the last meeting that there would need to be some revisions to the existing indicators and targets to meet the new CSA Z809-16 standard, and that the proposed changes had been circulated in a spreadsheet to members with the agenda. She invited Jon and Michelle to go over these proposed revisions with members of VINWAG.

Michelle reviewed the changes, including the addition of 'geological and heritage' in the title on Indicator 2.1. She noted that the numbering had changed on a number of the indicators. She added that the wording had changed on indicator 1.4.1, noting areas of 'special significance.'

Michelle noted that Indicator 3.2.2 was an entirely new indicator, namely 'proportion of forest management activities consistent with prescriptions to protect identified water features'. Steve asked how this target protects quality and quantity of water. There was a discussion of what could be monitored to track the protection of water quality. Steve noted that the Marble River has years of water quality data, including temperature and flow regime. It was suggested that, at the cutblock level, water sampling could be done above and below and area that has been harvested. Jim and Jon stated that the DFA contains a multitude of streams of different sizes and conditions that makes this practically and economically unfeasible.

There was a further discussion of what could be done to track water quality and quantity and the need for baseline data (difficult to determine) and how external factors like natural slides could be taken into account and also affect the results. It was noted that, at the river level, a form of monitoring could be established but that this would be more challenging for the multitude of streams across the DFA. However, several rivers are not completely within the DFA.

Jon explained how the first target around stand level retention measures is intended to protect existing riparian areas. Jim noted that there are thousands of kilometres of roads across the DFA and many haven't received formal inspections historically. WFP utilizes a road inspection program which inspects roads on a risk-based frequency. The inspection program looks at all new construction and deactivation in addition to existing roads and this should help to reduce sedimentation and protect water quality in the long run.

It was agreed, after some discussion, that the two targets suggested address the new indicator established under the CSA Z809-16 standard, namely 'proportion of forest management activities consistent with prescriptions to protect identified water features.'

There was a suggestion that sedimentation might be monitored in specific areas. There was a discussion of how Quatse Lake was monitored during harvesting activities because it was a watershed area supplying water to the residents of Coal Harbour.

It was noted that MOFLNRORD randomly monitors sedimentation in cutblock areas within the DFA. It was suggested that some research could be done on monitoring sedimentation in areas associated with conventional harvesting practices. Steve suggested that measurement of turbidity be added to what the salmonid enhancement people measure in local watersheds. He added that he would like to look at additional ways that water quality and quantity can be monitored and measured. It was noted that water quality data might be collected from existing stations to gather data over the long term. It was also agreed to ask Glynnis Horel to suggest ways of measuring water quality and quantity over the long term.

Michelle reviewed the new proposed targets for the Indicator 5.1.1 around 'evidence of open and respectful communications with forest dependent businesses, forest users and local communities to integrate non-timber resources into forest management planning. When significant disagreement occurs, efforts towards conflict resolution are documented.' She reviewed the two new proposed targets:

1. All written communications with forest dependent businesses, forest users and local communities, related to integrating non-timber forest uses into forest management planning are recorded and reported out annually and, where disagreement occurs, all efforts of conflict resolution are documented;
2. Senior WFP representatives meet with VINWAG at least once every 2 years to discuss community issues

John and Fred noted that it had been very positive having NIFO representatives attend council meetings. It was noted that meeting with Dave Trebett was also evidence of open and respectful communication. It was pointed out that the Devil's Bath discussion was also evidence of open and respectful communication.

John noted that he talks a lot to people who hike the North Coast Trail and that he shares much that he has learned about the forest management practices at VINWAG meetings.

Jon noted that Indicator 5.2.2 had been expanded to include 'support and participation' in training and skills development.

Michelle explained that the target around FNIEG meetings had been dropped, as the group's interest in participation had fallen off and the players had changed and were no longer attending. Jon noted that there were other means for the company to engage with First Nations and that this seemed to be preferred by First Nations at this time.

There was a discussion of changes to the second target under this indicator and how the management of monumental cedar requests was being retained.

It was noted that the old target around engagement protocols had been deleted because of the inability to develop protocols for all of the First Nations within the DFA.

Jon noted that all of the non-core indicators had been retained in the move to the new plan under the CSA Z809-16 standard.

Annemarie asked members to review the spreadsheet that had been distributed to them and get back to Jon and Michelle with any further input by October 27<sup>th</sup>.

Jon reviewed NIFO's timeline for moving into the new standard. He noted that, by January 2018, the new SFMP had to be completed and added that he would check and see if the October 27<sup>th</sup> deadline for input fit into this timeline.

## **5.0 DISTRIBUTION AND COMPLETION OF 2017 PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION SURVEY: ANNEMARIE KOCH AND VINWAG MEMBERS**

Annemarie reminded VINWAG members that one of the recommendations from the last participant satisfaction survey was that members be given opportunity to fill out their annual participant satisfaction surveys during the course of the meeting. She noted that a digital copy of the survey had been distributed with the agenda, for those who like to fill out the forms digitally, and that printed copies were available for those who wished to take time now to respond. She thanked those who had responded already by email.

Members took some time to fill out the printed copies of the survey that had been distributed at the meeting. Annemarie thanked members for filling out the survey.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION OF FIVE YEAR ANNUAL HARVESTING PLANS AND THE ANNUAL FIELD TRIP ON SEPTEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>: JIM MCDOWELL AND JON FLINTOFT, WFP**

Jon referred to the map on the wall showing harvesting plans over the next five years. He noted that NIFO was setting up for winter harvesting by planning and building roads. He noted that there were no mandatory shutdowns related to fire weather this past summer season. Jon noted 1.3 million cubic metres of harvest from the TFL was scheduled in the coming year. He referenced a helicopter program for a harvest of 30,000 cubic metres out of the Port McNeill area.

Annemarie noted that WFP Planning Manager Jim McDowell had offered to provide an operational update and she invited him to proceed. Jim noted that there had been heavy capital investment in mills over the last couple of years, with the expectation that the timberland operations would be supplying these mills with fibre to operate at an optimal level. He added that the changes to accommodate this had been put in place and that timber supply costs now needed to be kept in check, so every aspect of operations was being reviewed to improve production levels, resulting in some changes at the dryland sorts, and changes in log flow out of Port McNeill and the Quatsino sort. He noted that these changes were implemented to reduce production costs and will not compromise worker safety. He pointed out, for example, that the number of log sorts had been reduced, in order to simplify the sorting process and make it more streamlined. He added that a new weigh scale had been installed to help streamline the process of moving the logs through the sorts, and that a target had been set to move up to 70% of harvest through the weigh scale. He noted this might result in a small level of employment reduction, but added that WFP is committed to relocating people into different job functions or retraining them, and that any job losses would tend to be through attrition and retirement.

Jim noted that he wanted to be sure members of VINWAG were aware of this operational change, as they had expressed their concern previously for not being informed when there was an operational change of this scale.

Gaby asked about rumours of dryland closures and Jim noted that he was not aware of any complete closures of sorts at NIFO.

Jon noted that there weren't enough members confirmed for the field trip, so it was going to be cancelled. He noted that we would try again next year and asked for input on how to increase participation and access to the tour next year.

## **7.0 NEXT MEETING: ANNEMARIE KOCH**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be a joint meeting with NWAC on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at Black Bear Resort in Port McNeill. Annemarie noted that it had been previously agreed to either host a panel on a proposed ban on old growth logging on Vancouver Island, or to hear a presentation by Mike Davis on Management Plans for TFL's 37 and 6. She noted that additional suggestions had been made to hear a presentation by Kindry Mercer on community and recreational initiatives in the DFA's, or a presentation from MOFLNRORD representatives on the 2017 wildfire season.

Annemarie noted that she had been advised that locally elected officials were dealing separately with the old growth initiative, and that members of NWAC were going to have a separate presentation on the

management plan for their DFA at their November meeting, so she asked VINWAG members whether they would consider a presentation by Kindry Mercer on recreational initiatives in the DFA's, a report from a MOFLNRO representative on the wildfire season or an update from Glynnis Horel on watershed management plans, water quality and quantity measures, and related initiatives in the DFA's.

Steve noted he would like to hear what Glynnis had to say about ways to monitor water quality and quantity in the DFA, and he added that this would be of interest to NWAC members as well.

Members added that they would also like to hear more about the changes to dryland sort operations at NIFO and the status of the Beaver Cove dryland sort under CIFO at the October 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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

**When:**           **OCTOBER 26, 2017**  
**Dinner:**       **6:30 p.m.**  
**Meeting:**      **7:00 p.m.**