North Island – Central Coast Natural Resource District
Forest Management Leadership Team Meeting #35 –Minutes
September 23, 2021 9:00 am – 11:55 am
Conference Call via MS Teams

Attendees: Jon Flintoft (Co-Chair), Andrew Ashford (Co-Chair), Christina Mardell, Ione Brown, Jennifer Peschke, Gary Gallinger, Paul Barolet, Hans Granander, Megan Hanacek (until 10:45), Tyson Berkenstock, Kai Sonnenburg, Bob Harris, Deidre Haight, Amy Beetham (facilitator)

Regrets: Cyndy Grant, Robert Zeigler, Mike DesRochers, Kim Lefebvre, Charlotte Mellstrom, Jon Lok, Emmarie Leeson

Guests: Jessica Garrick, Leah Malkinson, Lisa Nordin, Christine Lohr

1. **Welcome, Territorial Acknowledgement & Agenda Review**
   Jon welcomed everyone to the 35th meeting of the FMLT and reviewed the agenda.

2. **Adopt April 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes and Review FMLT Action Items**
   https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/DNI/external/!publish/FMLT_Information/Meetings/Meeting_34_April%2013%202021_%20FMLT%20Minutes.pdf

   Minutes were circulated May 4, 2021. No comments were received. The minutes are adopted. Andrew reviewed the action items from our last meeting.

Table 1: FMLT Action Items Summary

Action Generated	Issue	Responsibility	Due
April 13, 2021	Wood Waste Debris Management: The district would like to explore if anything is out of sync in terms of the Code of Practice and/or Special Use Permits. Please advise Andrew of any issues you are aware of personally or that you can share from within your organization related to this issue. *No comments received from FMLT members.*	All FMLT Members	August 31, 2021 *(completed)*
April 13, 2021	Public Engagement: Members interested in participating in Ione's idea to write regular newspaper articles, please advise Amy. Other related ideas are also welcome. *One response received from FMLT members.*	All FMLT Members	August 31, 2021 *(completed)*

Discussion:
-Ione: newspaper articles are good and also like what Forsite is doing to highlight a member of their group; would be interested in seeing a north island forester write a social media post about what they do, to highlight forest professionals and the good work we do
-Megan: has been finalizing a map with Andrew of the North Island – Central Coast district which should be ready the first week of October; she would like to put it up at the Port Hardy ferry and Keta Lake rest stop as well as the

private land location in Port McNeill where it was originally planned; the Port Hardy museum might also be interested in something like this to display: Andrew noted that Suzi Hopkinson (BCTS) did the map
-Ione: Please like and share the soon to be released North Island Community Forest Facebook page when it comes out.

Action Item: Andrew, Ione, and Megan will form a Public Engagement working group, solicit any additional interested members from the FMLT, and report out on working group discussions at the next FMLT meeting.

3. **Coast Operational Issues Forum (OIF) Update** – Andrew Ashford
-the most recent meeting was held September 16th as a virtual meeting
-Old Growth - Brian Bawtinheimer, Executive Director: technical team is now providing recommendations to government; meeting with Provincial inventory branch; 10.8-11.3 million hectares of old growth; all parties have to be on the same page with inventory; economic impacts of implementation of recommendations; a suite of scenarios are likely being discussed; rare and ancient forests, areas contributing to larger ecosystem resilience, site index greater than 20, areas with big iconic/monumental trees; lots of questions from OIF members – how are we determining consistency with the recommendations, is there a projected future state, how accurate is the inventory?; intend to send the plan, when it comes out, to First Nations; expect a wide variation of opinion, he thinks the status quo will change, but the scope and scale is unknown; Les Kiss is concerned that the panel is departing from the recommendations and wants the forest industry to work on the recommendation implementation
-Forest Policy Intentions Paper - Morgan Kennah: trying to do a phased consultation with forest sector participants, asking for feedback on the details of implementation; starting with indigenous nations; Group 1: how to create future tenure opportunities, clarity on compensation, create flexibility for tenure reductions, tenure disposition considerations, enhancing revenue oversight for exports, implementing old growth harvesting deferrals, *Forest and Range Practices Act* improvements advancing apportionment, reviewing the cut control process, improving the accountability in tenure management, scope of discretion for authorizations, support silviculture management and innovation investments, working to modernize tenure replacement conditions (July – August 2021); Group 2: Evolving BCTS , reintegrating prescribed fire, minimize slash burning, BCTS value-added manufacturing, promoting mass timber, revise area-based tenures pricing policy, strengthening compliance and enforcement; expect this will start rolling out
-Cutting Permit Delays: not aware of this being an operational issue within NICC; talk to Amy or Andrew about any specific delay concerns or suggestions for improvement
-Special Tree Regulation: 120 trees have been designated so far on the coast, and 45 are in our district; we have the largest number in the province so far; we are in a transition period as licensees work with this regulation on blocks that were already engineered; figuring out the exemption process and expect it will be faster moving forward; Kylie Harrison is the contact at the Coast Region office
-Maximum Density Guidelines - Greg Jorgenson: more applicable to the interior; not using the maximum density in forest stewardship plans and no commitment to thinning

Discussion:

Megan: with recent *Governance Act* changes related to practice of professional biology, the scope of practice will include conservation; British Columbia is the first jurisdiction in the world to grant right of practice to biologists

4. **First Nations Engagement: NICC Update** – Jessica Garrick, Senior Advisor, Indigenous Relations, North Island – Central Coast Natural Resource District

- Da'naxda'xw Awaetlala First Nation: recent court decision to resolve a leadership dispute within the community between two groups asserting leadership who took each other to court; there has been a determination and the court decided neither group could appropriately govern; court made several orders including one to assemble an all members meeting to create an interim governance structure; the members decided the interim group would be formed from 6 heads of families (hereditary chiefs) and that interim group is currently the decision-making body for the Nation; they will decide the longer term governance structure for the community; the province is figuring out whether this Nation is staying in or moving out of the Nanwakolas structure and who are we talking to, so consultation is still being sorted out

-Kwakiutl First Nation: – Esa has retired; for forestry engagement please continue to use the Trail Mark system; they are currently looking for another forester; Sherri Labour is their current contact

-Ma'amtagila First Nation: there is a new group to consult in our district which was formerly associated with the Tlowitsis First Nation; the Ma'amtagila, an original numayum of the Kwakiutl First Nation, left and moved in and around Call Inlet in ~1810; many moved in 1890 to join the Tlowitsis as a result of small pox; 1945 they were formally amalgamated with Tlowitsis, but maintained their Ma'amtagila sovereignty; Ma'amtagila are signalling to the province that they are separate from the Tlowitsis; this assertion does trigger the duty to engage for the Province; Province is working with the Ma'amtagila on the scope of their traditional territory; need to meet the duty to consult; Province does not expect to do retroactive consultation, but will be undertaking consultation with the Ma'amtagila moving forward

2021 Yahey v. British Columbia court decision, Blueberry River First Nation (BRFN)

-high level: BRFN became signatories to Treaty 8 in and around 1910; over time the BRFN have claimed that the cumulative impacts of development activity approved by the Province in their territory, have impacted their ability to meaningfully practice their treaty rights

-precedent setting decision: in a certain area of the BRFN's Territory, the courts found that the Province must protect the BRFN's way of life, cannot continue to unjustifiably infringe

-outcomes of this court case have implications for the Province where cumulative impacts may prevent First Nations from practicing their Treaty rights; Province-wide implications for Treaty Nations as well as non-treaty First Nations

-court was critical of the tools the province relies on to assess cumulative effects when making decisions; courts expect reasonable and substantive responses to First Nations including accommodations made; cumulative effects must be assessed, and increased scrutiny is expected; provincial consultation staff and decision-makers must document their consideration of cumulative effects

-moving forward, when Province hears concerns expressed about cumulative effects, these concerns need to be meaningfully considered in the consultation process; expect consultation timeframe adjustments as the Province considers a decision or accommodates for the impacts

Discussion:
-Andrew: how likely are we to hear about cumulative effects from local First Nations? Jessica: these are concerns we hear regularly from First Nations, and we do consider these; the Province needs to develop better tools to assess cumulative effects
-Megan: it is worth noting too that the government did not appeal this decision; the Provincial Wildlife Council is considering this; the Association of British Columbia Forest Professionals has heard about the need for robust tools related to cumulative effects from annual surveys too; it will be interesting to see how this evolves, how climate change impacts this, and what kind of tools are created; Jessica: we have some value-specific tools, but not a far-reaching tool yet
-Andrew: the Kwakiutl First Nation are a treaty nation in our district, and they have raised cumulative effects concerns, and this will influence consultation; Jessica: Treaty 8 and the Douglas Treaties have similar language and define a treaty area and treaty rights where it would be relevant to consider those cumulative effects concerns

5. **District Reminders** – Andrew Ashford
-Ecosystem-based Management Landscape Reserve Design (LRD): requirement to complete LRDs is still underway, and District Managers have put out expectations on what they expect to see including: draft LRDs that show one spatial solution that has been shared with relevant First Nations and documentation that there has been some sort of explicit conversation with the First Nations about the relationship between the cutting permit and the LRD in the context of what you are presenting to them; we are seeing LRDs being completed and submitted to the Government-to-Government table
-Special Tree Regulation: implementation check-in -any concerns around the process? Please follow-up with Andrew or Paul; Christina: BCTS is not legally enabled to report Special Trees (only BCTS tenure holders can do this) so there is a delay; Andrew: notes that there is a regulatory fix planned that will be coming at a future date; Jessica: want to highlight that those making exception requests to explicitly share this information with First Nations, as it might trigger consultation requirements; Paul: the decision goes to the Regional Executive Director rather than District Manager; Hans: asked if the exemptions allow some flexibility in the size of the reserves where trees have been standing above the crown for years?; Andrew: there is no flexibility in the regulation so would need to follow an exemption request process
-Forest Stewardship Plan Reminders: Paul – have a heavy schedule of replacements; no formal feedback at this time and will deal with them on an individual basis

6. **What's going on out there? What is keeping you up at night? –** FMLT Members
   An around the table discussion of top-of-mind issues/interests.

   -Paul: social media misinformation; a little concerned about the high temperatures we experienced this summer and some of the effects on stands are being seen as a result; dying conifers and Japanese knotweed too; climate-change alarm bells – temperature change and droughts
   -Ione: living in drought, wildfire, and invasive plants central; see stress in the north island that I haven't seen before; climate change on my mind and invasive plants; seeing stress on coastal Douglas-fir (Fdc); concerned about a wildfire only a kilometre away from home – talking about scotch broom with neighbours and have convinced Mosaic to do a broom busting treatment in the spring to reduce the fire risk in the area
   -Megan: Private Forest Landowners Association (PFLA) worked with Mosaic and their members regarding invasive species; seeing lots of broom under hydro lines down island; swiss cast is now taking hold in southern Vancouver Island and is having dramatic impacts; one member had all their Fdc seedlings die this year, and had some radiata pine and white pine do exceptionally well; need to consider how we manage for drought and other extreme events and species migration; Paul noted that white pine blister rust resistant seed is not holding up as expected so one licensee is moving away from planting this species; Megan provided the following in the chat: For anyone interested here is the latest webinar PFLA put together for our members on managing invasive species
   https://youtu.be/LCRZhytiXQ0
   -Jon: policy changes are hitting home from our discussion today; this is lining up to be the largest and biggest set of changes; wondering about transition plans and timelines; also thinking about infrastructure reliability on the north island: boil water advisory and numerous power outages – resiliency at home and at work in terms of adapting to change
   -Gary: BC Hydro was looking at not renewing the cogen plant in Campbell River, the plant has been relied on several times to supplement the island's needs; all the communities are growing and there are going to be increased electricity needs; climate change – protection staff in the district used to track fire weather conditions and it was very predictable and we are now looking at uncertainty in weather conditions over the last 5 years, and not just drought weather
   -Jen: climate change, forest health, and changing policy sounds interesting and exciting; forest stewardship plans (FSPs)
   -Andrew: stress on the forest, our people, and communities; the pace of change is fast; also don't like the unpredictability of our north island power grid
   -Kai: replacing and extending FSPs - the process is long and has more considerations than ever before; climate change – how can we change our behaviours and resiliency, and influence regulators and people to take action
   -Deidre: aging parents and Covid; all the different policies and folding them into our FSP and what can we do with our replacement FSP to do the right thing to move forward on cumulative effects; interesting projects related to watershed analysis work
   -Tyson: can't help but observe some of the stress on our forest, never seen the indicators like we see right now on drier sites; struggling with public sentiment and understanding news stories and social media posts and whether it is the vocal minority and whether public interest is changing and how we

as professionals need to adapt; there is a rapid pace of change in a lot of fields which is difficult to reconcile

-Bob: from an operational perspective, top of mind is holding onto good contractors and operators, extended shut down for the heat affects timing windows with goats and delays harvesting program

-Hans: in Bella Coola we are getting a fair amount of push back from old growth preservationists, have a changing demographic, so going to conduct a phone poll this fall to understand what the broader public thinks; updating the community forest management plan and we are expecting to do a more intensive public engagement process to determine community interests, including open focus group discussions which will also be an opportunity to educate the public on the community forest land base; looking towards a fairly intense engagement session over the winter which will hopefully ease tensions in the community and restore confidence and stability

-Christina: thinking about cumulative effects in a different way, with so many constraints and processes running in parallel and don't feel there is a look at the cumulative impacts to the forest industry and then impacts like a decrease in funding for education and health care

-Amy: capacity to engage on all the new policy pieces for all those involved: government, First Nations, industry, and the public; this will require time and resources to do well

7. **FREP Update** – Leah Malkinson, Team Lead – Monitoring and Assessment, and Lisa Nordin, Aquatic Resources Stewardship Evaluation Officer, Resource Stewardship Division, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

Leah Malkinson

-integrated monitoring and assessment program slide show presentation (see attached and related links below) and FREP Dashboard - online tool demonstration (link below)

1. FREP Dashboard
2. FREP Routine watershed assessment methodology
3. Routine Watershed Assessment Report for Kootenay Boundary Region

Lisa Nordin

-riparian slide show presentation (see attached)

Discussion:

-Gary: discussed with Tom Millard the lack of recovery of 90-year-old second growth stand streams; Paul: some streams may never recover

-Leah: Do these seem like appropriate recommendations? Kai: I can see an issue with strategic harvesting in a Riparian Management Zone (RMZ) for crown release, to achieve effective change in the understory to allow light through to the Riparian Reserve Zone (RRZ); Lisa: need to ensure woody debris and stream temperature management so be conservative if there is no RRZ associated with the RMZ

-Jen: in terms of considering the extent of past harvesting, we will likely also be shifting away from old growth harvesting into more second growth stands

8. **Next Meeting** –

   Next Meeting: **Wednesday January 19, 2022**; TEAMS meeting 9am - noon

   Topic suggestions: field trip planning – BCTS tour, Terms of Reference review, additional suggested meeting topics are welcome from members: please email them directly to Amy or the co-chairs

9. **Closing and check-in** –

   -appreciated Andrew's global outlook on issues and broader scope on topics; I enjoyed it and the speakers, interesting to hear from people on what was keeping them up at night; excellent meeting and the format is great and works pretty good with the presentations; good and always find it helpful to have the information in the meeting minutes; a good meeting and prefer this format to how I participated in the past as it is difficult for me to travel to Port McNeill; presentations well done, liked the check-in, thought it was well done; thought it was very good and that climate change was on everyone's mind; don't typically stay online for the whole meeting past my presentation but the topics were really relevant to the work I do; like seeing people in person, learned a lot today; topical and informative and look forward to these meetings, thanks to the organizers and presenters; the pass it on at the intro was a good ice breaker; FREP dashboard was interesting and the remeasurement of the data was interesting and timely; appreciate organization of this meeting; enjoyed seeing FREP results and the dashboard; liked how Jon kept us on time