

North Island – Central Coast Natural Resource District
Forest Management Leadership Team Meeting #36 – Minutes
January 19, 2022 9:00 am – 12:15 pm
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, Tyson Berkenstock, Kai Sonnenburg, Deidre Haight, Cyndy Grant, Robert Zeigler, Amy Beetham (facilitator)

Regrets: Kim Lefebvre, Charlotte Mellstrom, Emmarie Leeson (note: Emmarie is transferring to Adams Lake division at the end of January and has let us know she will no longer be participating on our FMLT), Jon Lok

1. Welcome, Territorial Acknowledgement & Agenda Review

Andrew welcomed everyone to the 36th meeting of the Forest Management Leadership Team (FMLT) and reviewed the agenda. Christina asked about whether an update on the marbled murrelet order could also be provided (see district updates section below).

2. Adopt September 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes and Review FMLT Action Items

https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/DNI/external/!publish/FMLT_Information/Meetings/Meeting%2035_September%2023,%202021/

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

Table 1: FMLT Action Items Summary

Action Generated	Issue	Responsibility	Due
September 23, 2021	A Public Engagement working group has been formed and will solicit any additional interested members from the FMLT and report out on working group discussions at the next FMLT meeting.	Andrew, Ione, Megan	<i>Completed January 19, 2022</i>

Discussion:

-Megan: reminded the FMLT that part of the focus of the public engagement was to think about something we could do in the print medium and she has been in contact with Tyson Whitney of the North Island Gazette; she contacted the North Island Gazette since it has a broad distribution through the Black Press Media platforms; there is interest in profiling projects with a 'professional practice at work' focus through scheduled segments in the newspaper; also, two Great Bear Rainforest maps have been printed and one is going up at Pita's food court (McNeill Landing), and the other one is likely going to go up at the tourism center in Port Hardy; may draw others in on the newspaper articles - focus on North Island and Central Coast; trying to showcase the good natural resource management work that is going on and how it is benefiting the public

-Ione: we will be making up a chart to schedule the articles and are interested in volunteers to write articles

-Andrew: please consider some projects you have worked on or are working on; not everything has to be as complex as the windfarm, for example

3. Terms of Reference Review

FMLT members discussed and confirmed suggested changes to modernize the Terms of Reference for 2022. Note: The revised TOR for 2022 are circulated with the minutes.

Discussion:

-Andrew: likes that the FMLT has a problem-solving focus and develops guidance

-Paul: participates on other provincial groups and likes the FMLT forum to share that information; concerned that the last guidance document was developed in 2016 and that process created some disagreement; want to continue to produce voluntary guidance that can go to others - operational guidance for professionals, and more practice-focussed conversations

-Christina: feels that there is a role for updating members on new legislation and other things

-Gary: it is good to get some guidance on how a particular district thinks about things and each group has their own ideas on how it could work; allows for an exchange of ideas from a diverse group of people

-Deidre: related to annual reports – from a person new to the group, for those reports, with different opinions out there, it is a summary of issues addressed and can describe current challenges and differences of opinion that might help folks get a better feel for the issues

-Andrew: other districts including Sunshine Coast, Campbell River and South Island have active FMLTs that are doing well; some other districts have a different client base so operate in a different way; feel our group is the most consistent

-Jon: in terms of celebrating our successes, we have maintained consistency in our meetings; we have many members who have continued since inception as well as new members with new ideas and perspectives; we have had some very interesting field trips and great field discussions; it may be worthwhile to do a retrospective on some of the earlier issues/areas we tackled as the FMLT

-Andrew: likes how we have enhanced trust and how connecting ideas between professionals encourages good natural resource management – cited the example of the wood chip plant and burn pile conversations; thanks to Gary for mentioning us to other groups he works with

4. FMLT Discussion Topic: Guiding Principle – Consider safety in all decisions and guidance – Jon Flintoft (recent extreme weather examples affecting public safety include highway closure for damaged trees, and lower mainland floods)

-how does our FMLT engage on this topic; it is a guiding principle for our professional association as well

-Jon: I was attempting to drive back up island January 2, got as far as Sayward and was turned back with a closed highway; snowfall and tree breakage was the worst I have ever seen which made me think about how our professional decisions may result in a negative outcome; need to apply a proper hierarchy of values with a lens on outcomes; atmospheric river – this new term for heavy, concentrated rain, resulted in severed ground routes in the lower mainland

-Paul: have we been hearing about fingers pointing and criticisms?

-Jon: nothing specific, but fringes of trees along highways need to be considered

-Amy: did not see any negative forestry comments in social media about the highway, but did in relation to the lower mainland flooding situation

-Andrew: facing a huge challenge in access in the lower mainland from the extensive floods there; only criticism I saw related to the highway was around highway maintenance rather than forest management

-Gary: I can reinforce what Amy saw on social media and the Narwhal saying forestry may be impacting flooding; interesting to see the things about the highway, but the devastation of the Forest Service roads and the cost to rebuild is an eye-opener

-Deidre: I got caught in the snowstorm driving south and DriveBC wasn't up to date; it was a good opportunity to talk to people about danger trees, and to really be aware of the trees around them; didn't hear people complaining about forest management; encourage people to be open-minded as the trees also made the contractors stuck

-Hans: there is a situation in Bella Coola along a section of highway that is quite steep and different storms have caused the road to close for a day; involved with the Nuxalk Nation to do some pre-emptive work there to reduce the hazard; in terms of working in the highway right-of-way (ROW), what have others experienced in dealing with Ministry of Transportation (MOTI)? Andrew: MOTI has the responsibility to maintain the corridor and the safety of the corridor; statutory ROW varies, and the distance is not clear which makes disposal of that timber complicated

-Andrew: in terms of public health and safety, one of the most important considerations is roads and bridges and this should be a reminder to manage them safely for all users; I don't prefer fringes of trees along the highway

-Gary: reminded of working on TFL44 and road sections where the ground above was unsafe due to steep slopes; so, look at what is above you in your work; with rainfall shutdown guidelines you need to consider the hazard around and above you; Jon: consider your access in and out of your worksite too

5. Modernized Land Use Planning: Gwa'ni Project Update – Cyndy Grant

As a member of the project's technical committee, Cyndy provided an update on the status of this modernized land use planning (MLUP) project. The project is developing consensus recommendations for government-to-government endorsement to achieve the shared land use vision. The project covers portions of the 'Namgis Nation Territory including the Upper and Lower Nimpkish landscape units. It includes portions of TFL6, TFL37, North Island Timber Supply Area and BCTS operating area. The project engages with local government, stakeholders, and the public. Gwa'ni is an opportunity to modernize the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan as a strategic higher-level plan, is consensus-based and responsive to engagement, and it is a step towards reconciliation. It is not forest landscape planning (FLP), although Western Forest Products (WFP) staff and 'Namgis representatives are engaged in partnership with the Office of the Chief Forester on a pilot FLP process, which is a tactical level plan. Gwa'ni MLUP and TFL37 FLP integration is occurring through the commitment of the 'Namgis representatives in these two collaborative projects.

Discussion:

-Andrew: timeline for the base case? Cyndy: We hope to have this by the end of March and then alternate management options developed over the spring and summer followed by engagement in the fall

-Hans: what public engagement techniques did you use (in light of covid)?; Cyndy: preference would have been to host an open house, but it was not possible due to Covid restrictions; we hired a public engagement consultant; sent out introductory letters to more than 200 stakeholders from Campbell River north; sent postcards promoting our survey; have an engagement website; virtual stakeholder meetings and leaning on those stakeholders to reach out to their constituents; would like to have open houses next summer if possible; Jon: participated in the engagement process and the facilitation allowed better participation of everyone on the team and was very professionally done and moved along at the pace of the participants

-lone: are you able to share the presentation with the group? Cyndy: Yes; it would have been nice to have a 'N̓amgis representative that could speak to the FLP too; lone: how does the group envision the tie to FLP given the different timelines for those projects? Cyndy: See the integrated Process diagram; to ensure ongoing integration, the 'N̓amgis representatives and WFP representative participate on both committees and give updates to the MLUP committee

-Andrew: there is currently one MLUP project per region at this time

Action Item: Include Cyndy's presentation with distribution of the minutes.

6. Coast Operational Issues Forum (OIF) Update (December 9, 2021 meeting) – Andrew Ashford

-Old Growth Implementation: Doug Kelly and Emma Neill spoke about the priority old growth deferrals (recommendation #6 from the Old Growth Strategic Review); industry is not hearing about what government is hearing from indigenous nations; in fairness, in the North Island – Central Coast district we are hearing general agreement on the need for old growth management, and an interest in further time to review the deferrals and provide response; overwhelming request for information from licensees - they want to have government share that information once it is known; District Managers will be providing briefings once we have definitive answers from indigenous nations to share; we will continue to issue cutting permits (CPs) and road permits and will ensure awareness of any overlap with deferral areas with the submitting licensee and affected indigenous nations; if licensee does not want to make modifications, we will then think about the need for a more formal process; some of our indigenous nations are signalling yes to some of the old growth deferrals in verbal discussions (perhaps related to their own planning, and not the TAP polygons), and we are waiting for their formal response

-Technical Briefing on Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) Map: vegetative resource inventory data is not perfect; talked about the three categories of deferrals – ancient, remnant and big treed; used a formula for quadratic mean diameter to pick up the largest trees; lots of questions about field verification requirements; there are still outstanding questions on this provincially - are we managing to the criteria broadly across the landscape, or to the map; the map is the best starting place to focus on for now; Is layout investment at risk? Yes, especially if your block can be described as at risk of irreversible biodiversity loss as per recommendation #6 and if First Nations support deferrals at that location; we are going to have to go along as carefully as we can while we await response from First Nations; field verification will take time; CPs have a 4 year term and all of them are still valid; if there will be a formal deferral, it will be under a Part 13 of the *Forest Act* process; licensees discussed amending area associated with TAP polygons out of CPs to show that they are trying to meet the intent of the new government policy; cannot use the CP Postponement Regulation for this situation

-Bill 23 (associated with *Forest and Range Practices Act*) and Bill 28 (associated with *Forest Act*)
Updates: Bill 23 is enacted; 66 pre-FRPA orphan CPs affected which means they all end in November 2022; Amy noted that the district will be reaching out to licensees with affected CPs; Bill 23 also speaks to road deactivation and can allow the district manager to relieve deactivation obligations; shared maintenance costs (Andrew will send out a summary); Bill 28 provides the enabling legislation for the taking of allowable annual cut, but does not give a quantum; includes requirement for inventory on area-based tenures; need to see regulations once they are developed

Questions:

-lone: there is new data on the provincial old growth website and also some changes to the location of the deferral areas? Andrew: yes, there has been a move from raster-based mapping to vector-based mapping resulting in some changes; Amy: there has been some smoothing of the linework, and we have been advised there were some minor changes to the location of some of the deferral areas because of the move to a vector approach

Action Item: Include the December 9th OIF FRPA Bill 23 presentation with distribution of the minutes.

7. District Reminders – Andrew Ashford

-Great Bear Rainforest Implementation: obligation to have a landscape reserve design (LRD), strong operational need to have LRDs approved and we are seeing those happen

-Salvage: in the context of the Great Bear Rainforest and deferrals - no problem with post-harvest salvage; have been getting requests for damaged timber and old growth management areas; salvage is discretionary, and, in this district, we have not issued a salvage tenure where timber is not the primary objective

- PHARM Implementation: starting to see submissions come in and some tardiness; there is 90 days from the declaration of harvest complete to submit; please contact us if you are having trouble meeting this deadline; I am hearing these are complex and there are some growing pains; Jen: as a non-CP person...is RESULTS the trigger? Andrew: believe it is through FTA submission

-Old growth strategic review implementation: see OIF update

-Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) Review Update: there is a wave of replacements happening right now; recommend submitting new FSPs 10-12 months ahead, if possible; please respond to our review questions in a timely manner and resubmit within 60 days; we have a number of government-to-government consultation processes that take more than 60 days, so apply the precautionary principle: during information-sharing mention the possibility of an extension request in the event the FSP replacement takes longer than anticipated; on Vancouver Island in particular there are a lot of questions about how the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) integrates with the existing land use orders like the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan (VILUP); an example would be green-up and maximum cutblock size - the obligation is to meet both FRPA and VILUP unless an exemption exists; Kai: so in terms of competing objectives, you are saying where there is a conflict, ideally we can meet both? Andrew: Yes, unless there is an exemption in the legislation or your FSP, then both obligations remain

-MAMU Order: a district-specific team is envisioned with licensee FSP representatives; Darryn McConkey has started an internal conversation; Paul: note that shared landscape units will require a

shared strategy that would be provided to the district; an FSP major amendment will need to be submitted by June 3rd; Christina: the landscape unit aggregates are larger than the individual landscape units, and the new Section 7 Notice fully replaces the previous one

-lone: what is going on with the Great Bear Rainforest Order amendment process, any timelines?

Action Item: Andrew will find out the timing on Great Bear Rainforest Order amendment process and report back to this team at or before our next meeting.

8. What's going on out there? What is keeping you up at night?

Around the table discussion of top-of-mind issues/interests.

-Tyson: I work closely with small manufacturers and logging contractors, there is a tremendous amount of anxiety and questions about how they should be planning; there seems to be less (wood) available on the open market and more competition for what is available; there is lots of uncertainty

-Gary: focus is on forest stewardship plans (FSPs) and woodlot licence plans (WLPs); coastal marine planning and how we look at that environment; I spend a lot of time fishing, and am noticing an increase in whales and herring; talking to Department of Fisheries and Oceans, sea otters are coming back and more herring which speaks to a healthier marine environment

-Hans: old growth management and the turmoil it is causing to plans and operations this year, seeing the door closing on options and wondering how do we have a business; we have very pressing issues in the Bella Coola Valley and how to do public engagement given covid; conducted a survey of the community last fall by phone, it resulted in a good report card and identified where there were weaknesses that could be addressed

-lone: we have designated January as orchard month; concerned about difficulty of small tenure management – community forest agreements and woodlots, and the changes to tabular rates are concerning; working on FSPs, landscape reserve designs, WLPs, environmental monitoring systems, etc.; hoping for a better year in 2022 - with change comes opportunity

-Cyndy: living the modernized land use plan, and the old growth implementation is on my mind; expect alignment on this over time

-Kai: have been back in the office more; working on FSPs like many colleagues so a busy time right now, didn't write the original FSPs but have been using them for years

-Jon: keeping current with all the changes to policy, professionally and within my organization; concerned about inflation being at its highest point; communication and the need to reach the intended audiences

-Christina: uncertainty and not knowing what is coming; deferrals have impacted planned timber sales; all the changes seem to be coming in parallel and are not coordinated together

-Deidre: old growth is taking a lot of focus; losing our new planner so staffing/hiring challenge; marbled murrelet mandatory amendments – how to do this efficiently and trying to connect with other licensees effectively; fisheries values in Vernon Lake; FMLT field tour challenge

-Amy: transition to a new role and transition in forestry (old growth management paradigm shift, from FSPs to FLPs, and changes coming within the ministry)

-Robert: how long to get to certainty; attended virtual Truck Loggers Association meeting and heard criticism of government about a lack of collaboration in the development of new policy

-Andrew: need to collaborate and any interest in marbled murrelet collaboration, please let Paul Barolet know; they keep announcing there is a transition to our ministry and mandates in February, so interested in what the new structure will be

9. Next Meeting –

Date: **April 20, 2022**, Teams Meeting, 9am - noon

Topic suggestions for the next meeting:

Marbled Murrelet

Old Growth

Decision: FMLT will defer the field trip until the fall given current covid restrictions.

Suggested Field Trip - Tour of BCTS Operations (Vernon) – Deidre, Paul

Potential Stops/Topics:

-Fire Salvage as a TSL - visit block (discussion).

-Reforestation areas after a fire. How's it looking?

-Forest Health – elk browse, cedar management and protectors, white pine management, sunscald / heat stress/ drought /other

-Stop at the Loci

-watershed assessment

-old growth field verification

10. Closing and check-in

-interesting topics, like the virtual forum that saves me 4 hours of driving; thought meeting was good and the topics were covered well and it is a good format; I wish we were doing this in-person; thought it was excellent and appreciated Cyndy's presentation; I find this is the best source of policy and practice updates and how we are all feeling; good meeting and like hearing what is going on; like hearing licensee perspective and communication is good; it was a great meeting with good participation; thought it was productive and positive