

BV Community Resource Board – Final Minutes

Jan 20, 2025

Present:

Directors: Ron VanderStar, Anne Hetherington

Secretary: Sue Brookes

Guests: Nicolas Dormaar

Public: Greg Young, Jesse Sheffield (Greg and Jesse: Quick Residents Association), Dave Hooper (Wildlife for Tomorrow), Mitch Bowers (Forestry), Kevin Tyler (Citizen - volunteer warden), Jay Gilden (Stewardship Coalition, What Matters in our Valley), Bob Mitchell (Former Director), Alain Labrecque (Evelyn/Raceway Rd.), Eric Klasson (Forestry/Silviculture), Brett Bandy, (Real Estate Manager - retired, City of Vernon, interest in backcountry and recreation)

Regrets: Directors Ted Vander Wart and John Fisher

Next Meeting: Feb 17, 7pm, Smithers Council Chambers 2025

Meeting convened at 7:05pm

Chair: Anne Hetherington

Everyone in the room introduced themselves.

Agenda Items:

Announcements

1. Treasurer's Report
2. The Lakes TSA (the Pilot FLP process)
3. An Update from the BV Stewardship Coalition
4. Deferred Old Growth Areas
5. The Silviculture Innovative Program Grant application
6. Visitor Alain Labrecque
 - 1) FID#79 and agricultural development in the valley
 - 2) Drax

Announcements

29th Jan. 2025, the Wildlife for Tomorrow AGM

6th of March 2025, the Bulkley-Morice Forest Landscape Planning Project open house in Smithers.

See dates for a Granisle and Houston open house and more at:

<https://planninginpartnership.ca/p/6758cee82522fa00393c2975/commenting>

1. Treasurer's Report

No changes from November except for recent recording secretary billing. We have an operating budget of \$5000.00.

Motions are deferred to consensus in email.

2. The Lakes TSA (the Pilot FLP process)

Nic spoke based on his knowledge

- there is a draft document among stakeholders
- there will be a legal requirement for monitoring of some form
- the Recreational Access Management Plan (RAMP) will not figure into the Lakes TSA, it would be considered out of scope

- there are no technical working groups identified yet

Gallery discussion:

- monitoring the effectiveness of the LRMP and how is it measured
- mountain goat habitat management was cited as one example where the LRMP never achieved effectiveness. There was some debate at that interpretation in the gallery. Caribou populations may be a successful example.

One problem with monitoring is the level or specifics of monitoring. **Compliance monitoring is the minimal required monitoring.** The establishment of the LRMP included an expectation that the Province would perform at this level. Asking further questions enables **effectiveness monitoring.** This measures whether a goal was achieved and answers specifically to a vision or plan. The Province has never provided a definition of monitoring, let alone a checklist for historical or current LRMP values and their effectiveness monitoring in BV land use planning.

Action Item:** Sue to revise the letter to Cam and Tara so there are 2 letters 1) relating to OLD growth criteria and a second on a report out on the Lakes TSA. Directors are to review the letter. The first letter needs to confirm whether Old Growth determinations are being done in a modelled VRI - vegetation resource inventory or an actual on the ground inventory.

3. An Update from the BV Stewardship Coalition

Thank-you to Jay Gilden

The eroding of the protection of Section 16's and why:

- the designations in the lands records would alert developers to the existence of protection on certain lands in the LRMP. Without these designations - the stewards, like the Board, don't get a referral and developers don't know about the designation
- there has been an erosion of the protection of these areas to the point that the values are at risk
- getting these designations respected has been an ongoing process
- they prefer a joint letter to the Hon. Ravi Parmar, Ministry of Forests
- we read the letter out loud and discussion followed
- logging as usual is not a solution to meet the goal of the LRMP
- this doesn't mean the Board doesn't support logging at all - it does
- logging in these areas is useful; partial cutting, smaller blocks and other techniques can be utilized to enhance and maintain the values of the LRMP
- resolving the cancellation of the Section 16 and 17's through FLP planning is insufficient. It's out of scope of the FLP process. These designations were a result of a higher level plan and should be honoured by the Province.
- prior the LRMP these section 16's were already whittled down based on agreements and preceding land use plans between forestry and agriculture

Board discussion: The reason Directors suggest our own letter is important is that the Province and the Interior News erroneously reported that the CRB supported the cancellations.

- we need a new management plan in place
- in hindsight we should have cc'd the Interior news when we emailed the Province concerning the misrepresentation
- BCTS never acknowledged their misrepresentation. To this day they state the CRB were in support of the WHMA cancellations. This is just not true. The Board was informed of this process after the cancellations.
- the power of the board is the diverse representation. Getting consensus and producing the LRMP was a great community achievement yet the LRMP was still unilaterally sidelined by a District Manager
- we write a letter, no response, this is considered a muted statement

- social licence only works when there is the light of scrutiny

Action Item** Anne to draft the letter to the Minister and let Len (BV Stewardship Coalition) know.

Hudson Bay Mountain Bike Trail:

- a quick background and update was provided for the gallery
- mention that the HBM Resort is in non compliance of it's own development plan. They demonstrated a lack of consultation, lack of oversight and so on.
- the HBM Resort ha indicated that that use of a backhoe to construct a trail does not count as a 'facility' improvement
- there is no meeting set yet
- they are getting a new EA done - will this be done from a desk? or on the ground?
- the theory on why development is at a stall is because there were no water permits sought or received
- 3 km of trail is already done on the prairie

4. Deferred Old Growth Areas

Gallery Discussion:

1. How can we ask about definition of Old Growth, through the Compliance office? We will start with Cam and Tara but this might need to be directed elsewhere.
2. Previously the definition was science based but now it seems to be based purely on age.
3. Having an eco system based definition that defines composition and structure of the old growth forest is more important than age. For instance seral stages are important since the shrub and the old growth stages are the most important for wildlife.
4. The 6 Pillars for Biodiversity means that if you take care of these pillars, old growth being a key pillar, then you take care of biodiversity.
5. BC Timber Sales is logging in Old Growth Core Ecosystems. A member of the gallery commented that the age requirement was not met by a shortfall of 10 years. The failure here is simple: if you core one tree there is likely to be another tree in the stand that does meet that age requirement, what is the best practice or what are confidence intervals applied?
6. Directors have another 10 bullets for problems with the definitions of Old Growth.

5. The Silviculture Innovative Program Grant application

- there is support for this program but the research centre will not fund it
- without spatial polygons you will never know your spatial supply, so we need to look for other sources of funding - Wetzinkwa, BCForest Service, UBC possibly?
- with the Goshawk project PATCHworks was very efficient and found over 200 years of stabilized timber supply, while also saving the recreation area and the habitat. Another outcome was early stand improvements necessary to improve ecosystems
- Anne has a hard copy of this project for review if anyone wants it please contact her
- without utilizing this or similar tools you cannot have bigger conversations like how do we keep jobs in the local economy

6. Visitor Alain Labrecque

Please refer to the October 2024 minutes

Visitor Alain Labrecque - farmer, his protein crops are at risk due to **abundant wildlife**

Alain summarized his reason for attending this meeting

- **Alain** felt unfairly treated when the CRB responded to the request of Dean Daly regarding his woodlot.
- he is also raising issues around pellet production and what the mill can take, citing the Board as responsible for Drax's policies.

1) FID#79 and agricultural development in the valley

- The Board acknowledges we need rancher, farmer representation and encourages those present to sign up as Directors and/or spread the word
- A comment from the Gallery was that a chunk of Alain's grazing lease has been removed from the ADA.
- There is a skioe ti the river which should not be used for agriculatre though we do not know Alain's plans.
- Stevenson and Shuffert from the Province, had given Alain advice to move farm locations (there was some push back about Canola where he was previously in the valley) and he did but now he's still trying to rezone the farm and running into resistance to his plans due to Dean and Len's recommendations
- as a producer he has difficulty producing with these regulations and unknown LRMP designations
- Directors mention that our intention was to encourage the Province to open a discussion about agricultural and other development in the valley bottom. The Board reiterated that the need to independently look at each parcel of land and consider it's many factors before making sweeping conditions for development.
- the Raceway R land in question is a rare corridor still intact and obviously well used by wildlife.
- Had the Province consulted with us around the values of the LRMP and how it applies in this case, Daly's and Alains issues could be discussed openly.
- Alain mentions his agricultural vision includes:
 - putting in centre pivots for irrigation, he's got about 1200 acres and he wants continuity between them
 - wildlife corridors pose work hazards threatening safety to his family and staff
 - he says there are grizzly? among other predators getting into the cereal and oats
 - he wants a long term ag. lease for cattle despite a lot being rocky ground
 - he argues that Lychaks and everywhere else around his land is growing back so to his mind there is enough natural regrowth to support abundant wildlife in the vicinity

Gallery Discussion:

- in Alberta there was a wildlife compensation program for ranchers. This served to motivate certain strategic planning but BC has no similar program
- in Montana ranchers can get \$300 for a photo of an animal using certain corridors, as evidence they're effective
- Alain is encouraged to reach out to "Wildlife for Tomorrow"

Board Discussion:

- Should we try to resend our letter requesting consultation regarding land use planning in the valley bottom?
- A Director agreed with Alain that this parcel should be in the ADA, it's good soil with river access for irrigation
- Alain has hired a consultant to try to get him the Crown land piece.
- Directors say it's worth a look at how to keep some connectivity and reduce predator problems at interfaces with a broader perspective of how do we make the best of the agriculture

2) Drax

- as a result of refusal of his wood by Drax, he is now going to produce his own pellets starting with bush grinding, Alain has got a great chipper in there on his private land. He expects to bring in up to 40% of his total volume for chipping from off his land - this is due to some regulation he is aware of
- he is still exploring markets so he may haul wood/chips or pellets to Vanderhoof or Prince George

- his ultimate goal is a gasified pellet plant, producing over 1000KW. Alain says he's in touch with Rustad about entrepreneurial ideas.
- **his recommendation is to allow an exception to Drax to allow wood from agricultural zones or development areas**
- Drax was created to use byproduct, not raw logs
- Lessons learned:
 - Chipping of willow and balsam tips, you get the most dense fibre providing high BTU's when used as pellets.
 - Chipping tips can provide high value pellets and fast.
 - Drax would like to buy Alain's chips but they are forbidden because of a green forestry practises. What standard exactly we do not know but Alain's explanation was that his land is too close to an TSA Old Growth designation.

Gallery Discussion:

- Drax is insinuating that boards like ours prevents them from taking certain timber (Old Growth) and not making it clear to farmers and ranchers that its their trade agreements and clients that require them to be more selective.
- Gallery members remind folks that if Drax doesn't meet international agreements then it will loose it's Canadian government subsidies too and ultimately fail.
- what about Alain developing an official farm management plan? Alain suggests that he would need to hire a lawyer and some of their recommendations can be backwards.

Board Discussion:

- expand the FLP technical working group to include forestry and agricultural byproducts
- it was a divisive beginning tonight but by the end the effectiveness of local land use planning prevailed:
 1. people aired their issues
 2. people walked away with more understanding
 3. there was a light shone on government accountability
 4. the bigger conversations were addressed

Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm