

Southwest Island Public Advisory Group (SIPAG) Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order

Chris Harvey, Environmental Programs Advisor, called the 3rd meeting of 2006 to order, of the Southwest Island Public Advisory Group, at 4:30 p.m. on **September 13^h, 2006** in Shaker Mill Restaurant, Lake Cowichan, BC.

2. Members

Present:

- Tim McGonigle, TFL 46 Worker
- Vince Callander, Local business
- Sandy Peters, Valley Fish & Game Club
- Dennis Martel, Wilderness Watch Committee
- Pat Weaver, Lake Cowichan Town Council, Cowichan Lake Community Forest Co-operative

Support (TJG):

- Mark Carter, Operations Planner
- Teresa Burton, Recording Secretary
- Jill West, Environmental Programs Advisor (guest)
- Chris Harvey, Environmental Programs Advisor
- John Pichugin, Manager, Engineering & Forestry
- Keith Chapman, Environmental Programs Advisor (guest)

Regrets:

- George Williams, Ditidaht Band
- Harry George & John Kiki, Cowichan Tribes
- Tom Jones, Pacheedaht First Nation
- Ted Burns, Fisheries Biologist
- Jim Humphrey, Chamber of Commerce

Chris Harvey asked members to introduce themselves for the benefit of the new people. She reviewed those members who were unable to attend the meeting.

Chris informed the group of two new SIPAG members for Cowichan Tribes whom are Harry George and John Kiki as their alternative representative.

3. Handouts

The following materials were distributed to the group:

- Meeting agenda
- Draft meeting minutes from April 5th, 2006 meeting
- Presentation notes (Fisheries/ Forestry Interaction)
- Revised Targets & Indicators for Biological Diversity (invasive plants, hardwoods, special sites) and Economic & Social Benefits (special sites)
- Copy of Water Quality & Quantity Targets and Indicators

4. Meeting Agenda– Fisheries / Forestry Interactions

Chris Harvey presented the agenda for the meeting.

5. Reviewing minutes from Previous Meeting

A draft copy of the minutes from the April 5th, 2006 SIPAG meeting were distributed. Chris Harvey reviewed the action items from the meeting and the current status of each.

Those action items that are not complete are tracked in the HBO Tracking System. Chris informed the group that

- Meeting minutes from the February 22, 2006 meeting were distributed by Teal and all members noted that they received them
- Indicators for invasive plant species, hardwoods, sites of special significance, and fisheries sensitive features to be discussed at this meeting.
- Teal has been working with Pacheedaht First Nations to develop the Cedar Indicator for the Sustainable Forest Management Plan, this indicator will be presented to the group once approved by the Pacheedaht. Tim asked what kind of cedar? Mark explained that the indicator was for cultural cedar, the Pacheedaht had provided specific characteristics for location, diameter, age, etc. including a recruitment strategy.

Chris asked the members if they had any concerns or comments regarding the meeting or minutes and there were none. The minutes were accepted as written.

6. Current Events / Management Issues

Chris asked the members if they had current events or management issues to deliver.

- The two guests present were introduced by Chris. The first is Jill West who will be replacing Chris Harvey while on maternity leave. The second, Keith Chapman, is here tonight to observe as he is in the process of organizing a public advisory group for Teal's Fraser Valley operations, as they are also pursuing CSA certification.
- Chris informed the group that Teal received information that the Forest Stewardship Plan for TFL 46 would be approved early in October.
- Chris informed the group that Teal will have a CSA Internal Audit September 21 & 22 and CSA External Audit Jan 22 & 23. And the group had previously discussed that a SIPAG member would attend. Tim McGonigle expressed an interested in attending the Internal Audit and Pat Weaver would like to attend the External Audit.

Action item 12-A: Notify Tim McGonigle of Internal Audit Schedule

Environmental Department September 19, 2006

Action item 12-B: Notify Pat Weaver of External Audit Schedule

Environmental Department January 15, 2006

- Dennis Martel said Wilderness Watch & Conservation group be holding their next Forest Crime Watch meeting on September 20th, 9:30 am at the Duncan Forest Museum. Dennis invited Teal to join the meeting, and provided details to Mark.

7. Sustainable Forest Management Plan review of revised indicators and targets

Chris Harvey reviewed the revised draft indicators, that were discussed at the previous meeting:

Criterion 1.0 – Biological Diversity, Element 1.1 Ecosystem Diversity;

Value (native flora & fauna), Objective (Maintain natural diversity of native flora and fauna)

Revised Indicator: % site occupation of Invasive Plant Species

Revised Target: <10% site occupation by invasive plant species at time of Free Growing. Measured on an annual basis averaged over all blocks declared Free Growing in each calendar year

Variance: 5%

Chris asked the group if there were any comments on this revision? She pointed out that this measurement will not include tracking the entire TFL land base and generally doesn't include road sides which is a problem area, however, it will indicate to us whether there is an increase or decrease in site occupation. Measurement of the entire landbase would be a difficult task to undertake, and Free Growing surveys are an obligation that we are already doing, so a sample of the landscape will be recorded.

Tim McGonigle commented that invasive plants on road sides are maintained through brushing treatments. Chris said yes we do have some strategies in place to maintain it through brushing and reminded the group of previous discussions regarding the management of invasive plant species during the FSP review.

Chris asked the group if this indicator reflected their input? Members agreed that it did.

Action item 12-C: Add final invasive plant species indicator to SFM Plan in the next revision to the document

Environmental Department March 31, 2007

Dennis Martel said that TimberWest has a Gorse problem in the Wardroper area and likely it is just a matter of time before the problem becomes wide spread. Chris responded that initial action when the invasive plant is first detected is important as it is the most effective way to manage. Keith Chapman commented that the key to managing invasive species is to start with management in the pristine areas and work inwards towards the core areas because otherwise you are treating in spots, chasing the problem around and progress is limited.

Revised Indicator: Number of hardwoods stems per ha

Revised Target: Average number of hardwood stems per ha is a minimum of 25, measured on a 5 year rolling average over all blocks declared Free Growing in each calendar year

Variance: 5%

Chris reminded the group that we previously discussed that it was very difficult for us to pick a number because at this time the Forest Service doesn't recognize hardwoods as a crop tree, it is generally considered to be competing brush species. She worked with the Forester to find a number that would allow for the natural variation in sites, allow for the presence of hardwoods and not limit the ability of the site to meet Free Growing standards. Chris asked the group if there were any comments on this revision? Chris commented that Tom Jones was the member who originally put forth a concern regarding hardwoods so it is too bad that he is not available at this meeting to comment, however, she recalled that his concern was that we pick a number simply to indicate that hardwoods are a value and are present on the landbase.

Chris asked the group if this indicator reflected their input? Members agreed that it did.

Action item 12-D: Add final hardwood indicator to SFM Plan in the next revision to the document

Environmental Department March 31, 2007

Value (Rare or unique biological features such as, karst, topography, caves, mineral licks, etc.), Objective (Protection of rare or unique biological features at the local level)

Revised Indicator: Special Biological Sites

Revised Target: Spatially track all special sites identified

Variance: Zero

Chris explained that Teal will track sites through the GIS department where we can mark sites on a map & attach a note that provides the details. Chris reminded the group of past discussions that they had recognized that generally OGMA, WHA and WTP protect unique sites, but this provides another level for local input. Chris asked the group if there were any comments on this revision? Sandy Peters asked who decided what qualified as a special site? Chris replied that at this time there are no criteria but generally it is fairly clear when we are dealing with something unusual or there will be public input. Mark Carter provided an example where Scoular's Corydalis (a rare plant) was protected in a WTP.

Chris asked the group if this indicator reflected their input? Members agreed that it did.

Action item 12-E: Add final special biological sites indicator to SFM Plan in the next revision to the document

Environmental Department March 31, 2007

Criterion 5.0 – Economic and Social Benefits, Element 5.1 Timber and Non-Timber Benefits;

Value (Special Sites), Objective (Manage rare or unique site of ecological, geological, historical or cultural importance in a manner that recognizes their special qualities)

Revised Indicator: Sites of Special Significance

Revised Target: Spatially track all special sites identified

Variance: Zero

Chris reminded the group of previous discussions, and examples noted at that time included a unique viewpoint, a favourite picnic spot or favourite fishing hole for things that don't fall under the normal legislation regime but are things that are still valuable to the community that we want to flag for special management. So our commitment here is that we will spatially track them and we would have a layer on our maps that will identify them. Mark added that one example is the old logging camp at the bottom of Harris Creek that under legislation isn't protected. Also Mark doesn't think the Red Creek Fir is protected. Another example is the Parker Creek.

Tim McGonigle said that through the engineering process places like C9 & Parker Creek Karsts are marked on the map so we have them on our inventory. Chris said that by getting these things marked and identified it will avoid them being forgotten and perhaps lost in future rotations or personnel changes so the idea is to start the inventory now.

Chris pointed out that the indicators are very similar for special biological sites & sites of special significance and this is one area where the external auditors indicated there may be room for improvement – combining similar indicators. She suggested we combine these indicators. Members agreed that this would reflect their values.

Action item 12-F: Combine indicators for special biological sites & sites of special significance in the SFM Plan in the next revision to the document

Environmental Department March 31, 2007

8. Forestry / Fisheries Interaction

Current Management Practices

Chris Harvey presented an overview of our current management practices, including some of the legislative requirements, requirements through the Forest Stewardship Plan and some of the due diligence requirements (see PowerPoint presentation hand out).

- The most basic level of management to protect water & fisheries is stream classification. Each stream is classified and depending upon that classification there are various requirements for the management, possibly including a Riparian Reserve Zone where there is absolutely no harvesting, and/ or a Riparian Reserve Zone where there may or may not be a certain level of harvesting depending on the site characteristics. A quick explanation on how they are classified: they are classified as either fish bearing or non-fish bearing, or if it were in a community watershed it would bump it up into a higher level, and it is based on the width, so generally the bigger the stream, the bigger the buffer.
- An example of a S1 stream would be the Gordon River, which has a Riparian Reserve Zone of 50 meters where no harvesting can take place, and then outside that there is a 20 meter wide Riparian Management Zone, within which site factors are considered, such as windthrow, terrain stability, biodiversity and wildlife habitat. These zones combined make up the Riparian Management Areas.
- Sandy Peters asked how the level of retention in the Riparian Management Zone is determined as it would appear to be a very subjective judgment? Chris responded that the next slide should answer that
- In Teal's Forest Stewardship Plan they made a commitment for minimum retention levels in the Riparian Management Zones, so we came up with 2 levels of Basal area retention. The first, which is for Fish bearing or sensitive water bodies, will retain 25-100% of the basal area. The second measurement, which includes all other waterbodies is to retain 0-100% of the basal area. Again, site level characteristics determine retention level and it is difficult to establish a specific commitment that applies to a broad range of situations. Chris asked Sandy if this answered his question? He said more or less. Chris mentioned that the new legislative regime stresses a results based approach, therefore Teal is liable for damage caused to the environment. An example of a less subjective decision for retention levels is where windthrow is a factor.
- Chris next presented a list of some other legislative restrictions within Riparian Management Areas.
- The legislative requirements mentioned so far apply to all waterbodies across the landscape. In addition, areas where it is determined require another level of special management include Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds. Mark Carter explained that under the new legs the government

has assigned Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds and in TFL 46 they have singled out Hatton Creek, Hemmingsen Creek and Gordon River. They did this because the Ministry of Environment is concerned for the summer run steelhead and because of the extensive harvest history

- Must not damage fisheries sensitive features. Definition reviewed, and summarized as those features that do not fall within definitions of waterbodies,
- An overview of Teal's Standard Operating Procedures and Emergency Preparedness & Response Plans with respect to working around fishery/water resources

9. History and Current Fisheries/ Forestry interactions

Mark Carter presented a collection of photos on Fisheries/ Forestry interaction including background, main watersheds, impacts of logging, infilling & accumulation of gravel in lower reaches of San Juan & tributaries and past and current rehabilitation projects. The following is a summary of some of the comments made during the presentation:

- Commercial fishing fleet, many locals used to depend on both industries for work
- Sports fishing values (e.g., steelhead)
- Main watersheds in the TFL flow towards the west (not Lake Cowichan), map showing streams, lakes and watersheds
- Nitinat is a saltwater lake (like a large inlet). Many recreation resources (e.g., windsurfing, fishing)
- Due to road building and harvesting timber on a large scale, impacts on other resources (fisheries, wildlife, etc.)
- One of the impacts of mismanagement include bridge washout with debris logjams (e.g., Port Renfrew bridge), has also happened to the Ministry of Transport on heavily used highways (e.g., west coast highway),
- Landslides do occur naturally but also can result from poorly built or poorly managed roads and heavy rain or rain on snow events
- Higher levels of sediment in streams, causing stream infilling and lower oxygen levels
- Fairy Lake hatchery to restock fish
- Rehabilitation project on Lens Creek (important river to the Pacheedaht for the Coho run), creation of a side channel for rearing. Helen Dunn Fisheries Biologists and local very pleased with the project, very successful
- Similar project now underway at Harris Creek –creation of a rearing channel. Good example of the use of FIA funding towards other resources.
- Industry now recognizes that old road building techniques were not the best (e.g., roads are not stable) and these old roads are what they call 'sediment point sources'. Over the past decade or so much work has been completed to rehabilitate these old roads to stabilize and in some cases revegetate. Sandy Peters asked how these projects were funded? Mark replied that the projects are completed under the FRBC or FIA funding, which was introduced as a 'super stumpage' in order to put money back into forest resources. One of the large projects completed was to prioritize the road rehabilitation projects and at this point the bulk of the worst areas have been completed.

- Old classification system included 3 categories: A) salmonids; B) sport fish; and C) no fish
- A series of wet winters resulted in really opening the eyes of industry to the damage on streams. Past practices included logging right to the bank, now retain buffers (e.g., Braden)
- In the past common to fall and yard across all streams, then stream cleaning introduced when recognized too much debris.
- Wind crown treatment to reduce the sail and decrease the potential for windthrow (top and prune). Have found it works well in second growth but not so well in old growth
- S4 stream, tributary to the San Juan. Teal recognized as habitat for coho fry so retained a buffer (no legal minimum requirement) and used windthrow treatments, has worked well. Dennis Martel asked what % do you find blows down? Mark replied that generally very little if treatments are completed. Sandy Peters asked why isn't there legal protection for these types of streams? Mark replied that there are some cases where leaving a buffer may cause more damage. Also in some areas, these streams are very common across the hillside and operating with effective buffers on all of them would be very difficult. Chris reminded the group that an S4 stream is a fish bearing stream that is less than 1.5m width.
- Creek cleaning after logging. Unfortunately, loggers were very good at cleaning streams out and too much debris was removed, including root wads, etc. pulled from banks. Result was damage to stream banks and channel, increased velocity of the stream. Now focus on hand cleaning or try to avoid input in the first place, most streams are assessed post logging, particularly if they are tributary to fish bearing streams.
- Mark asked the group if there were any other questions?

Criterion 3.0 – Conservation of Soil and Water Resources, Element 3.2 Water Quality & Quantity;

Chris Harvey returned the focus of the group back to identifying an indicator and target for the objective "Protection of fisheries resources, Management of Fisheries Sensitive Features". She asked the group if Mark's presentation inspired any ideas? None were put forward. Chris reviewed the SFM plan Indicators & Targets that were developed last year for Water and Fisheries values to remind the group of the current content of the SFM plan.

- Dennis Martel asked if Teal still used box culverts for fish passages. Mark Carter said they rarely did because of the expense of logs, however, that is why they have built up quite an inventory of portable bridges.
- Sandy Peters asked if there is any record of significant fisheries projects? Chris replied that projects that were completed through FRBC and FIA funding are recorded as part of the tracking of funds. Sandy asked for clarification that these records would be available to someone who wanted to do research? Chris replied that that some information would generally be available but not necessarily in a user friendly form.
- Vince Callendar suggested that the industry should record significant improvements. That the industry should be given a pat on the back every once in a while. Companies should be up front and educating public about the improvements they've made in their logging practices. He put forward ideas such as advertising or pamphlets. Pat Weaver commented that sometimes drawing attention to achievements can also draw criticism. Mark Carter said that there are some signs posted in the TFL indicating various projects (e.g., Lens Creek). Vince thought this is an excellent idea. He also suggested a map with accomplishments printed

- Chris Harvey suggested that, since the group seems to want to recognize the fisheries rehabilitation projects, the new indicator and target focus on FIA funding directed to fisheries projects? The group liked the idea. Chris suggested that Teal needs to bring more information to the next meeting regarding funding but the target could be a multi-step target to complete the Harris Creek Rearing channel. The group gave general agreement. Chris added that Appendix II (Indicator Description) could potentially be a place where past funding may be highlighted, as the SFM plan is a public document.

Action item 12-G: Draft an Indicator and Target regarding Fisheries projects funded by FIA to present to SIPAG at the next scheduled meeting.

Environmental Department November 22, 2006

- Teresa said she felt the fish rearing channels and efforts of the Four Mile hatchery were having a positive effect on the sport fishing industry in Port Renfrew by what she hears from the sports fishermen.
- Dennis Martel said that the Valley Fish & Game started a Chinook Net Pen in the San Juan Bay with the help of the hatchery. The first year they stocked 10,000 fry, 2nd year stocked 20,000 and now in its 3rd year with a stock of 30,000 fry.
- John Pichugin said that potentially they will direct some FIA funding next year towards a Fish Enumeration project for the Port Renfrew area.
- Mark Carter said it is also important to have a Hydrologist review Coastal Watershed Assessment Procedures. Sandy Peters agreed that yes, this is really important. Mark said that Teal would like to have the Gordon River Watershed Assessment done first then the Hatton Creek Watershed.
- Mark added that under Coastal Watershed Assessment Procedures we had been governed by ECA (equivalent clearcut area), which constricted how much area we could log. This was particularly important in the past as harvest levels were very high. Now the trees have really grown up and calculations must be reviewed, however, we need to ensure that our rate of cut is managed and this is why updating the Coastal Watershed Assessment Procedures is so important. In the Hatton Creek area gully crossings are very important because of the sensitive soils there.
- Tim McGonigle noted how procedures and equipment such as spill pads and awareness training had improved the handling or avoidance of spills. He commented that you can see how far our industry has come and that now the loggers are the most diligent environmentalists because that's your livelihood and your recreation playground as well.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 4:30 pm, at Shaker Mill Restaurant on November 22, 2006.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.