

Prince Albert FMA FMP Core Planning Team Meeting

Meeting Minutes for May 31, 2017

Location: Forest Service – Birch Room

Time: 930am – Noon

Mark Doyle, Forest Service	Nadine Penney, Forest Service
Chad Wilkinson/Rod Pshebnicki, MLOSB	Darryl Sande, Kaskew
Ed Kwiatkowski, Carrier	Matt Burtney, Forest Service
Robert Follett, NorSask	Nadine Penney, Forest Service
Chris Brown, Forest Service	Doug Braybrook, Edgewood
Narayan Dhital, Min of Economy	Shawn Francis, MoE - CE and Science
Jean Eagleson, Forsite (Minutes Author)	Cam Brown, Forsite

Bold names indicate responsibility of action items.

Agenda

1. Review of past minutes/action items
2. Update on inventory and new Planning File
3. Update on Mgmt Strategies
 - Old + Very Old Retention
 - Inblock Retention
 - Caribou Management
4. Update on 12.5 utilization issue
5. PAG update (meeting in afternoon)
6. Workplan / 2018 Start Date

Minutes:

1. Previous Minutes and Action Items
 - Previous Minutes were adjusted by Shawn (Caribou section) and then accepted. Actions items were completed unless discussed below.
 - Shawn clarified that at the time of the last meeting there was not a provincial draft plan, just a concept the province was working towards with the draft plan. The intent is to convey that impacts will be mitigated by recognizing cost differences between management tiers.
 - a. The Draft Range Plan is to be out June 2017 – it is now at the stage where a draft is developed and working through final components.
 - **Cam** to still to finalize VOITS for harvest distribution

- **Shawn** is working on rationale information for the selection of the Tier 1 and 2 areas. It will be included as an appendix to draft range plan and be available soon.
- **Cam** is to review the public engagement plan document for any needed updates.
- **Forsite** still to develop a set of yield curves to reflect a 12.5 cm top utilization options for sawlogs. (Largely completed – working with Lane to finalize).

2. Old and Very Old Seral Stage Distribution

- Details in the presentation from Forsite. The proposed values are (by MU):

Species Group Label	Description	% Old + Very Old	% Very Old
H	Hardwood stands	10%	5%
HS-SH	Hardwood leading mixedwood stands	8%	4%
S(BSJ+BSL)	Black Spruce and Jack Pine/Tamarack leading softwood stands	6%	3%
S(JLP)	Jack or Lodgepole Pine leading softwood stands	6%	3%
S(WSF)	White Spruce/Balsam Fir leading softwood stands	7%	3%

- **Cam** will send out the presentation for everyone.
- Points in the presentation not encompassed by the slides:
 - Mistik FMA has a higher percentage of hardwood than the PA FMA; therefore, using Anderson’s quartiles the PA FMA would result in an even lower old and very old age classes percentage of the landscape. But the proposed numbers are much more conservative and account for risk of fire.
 - Less risk insurance for hardwood was incorporated into the proposed seral distribution percentages because hardwood stands naturally have less risk of fire.
- General consensus that the rationale behind Forsite’s proposed changes for this VOIT target was that it was good and in line with what the government was looking to receive.
- No approvals at this time, the Forest Service will have to spend some time to look at it.
- **Cam** will submit a more detailed report regarding the alternative NFP VOIT targets.
- The question was asked: Will it be an issue having to track the different percentages per species?
 - Cam’s response was that it is not an issue. The FMP will spatialize stands retained to meet objectives regardless of %. The old and very old seral stage targets will be tracked for each eco-district individually.
 - A mechanism will also be included in FMP for swapping because the inventory is not always accurate to what is on the ground.
- The old and very old seral percentages presented were subjective, but based on Anderson’s study and some consideration for risk of loss. Cam raised the wS % from 6 to 7 to account for cultural sensitivity. Cam inquired if this was appropriate or if there were any comments on that management choice.

- a. The response was that wS is already a lower proportion of the PA FMA, so saving a bit more is probably a good idea.
- Shawn asked if there is a tie in here for wildfire management objectives for PA FMP and the difference between 70 and 50 year cycles? For example, if the Licencees could not achieve the planned harvest volumes, could/would fires be used (i.e. strategically let burn) to return the landscape to a age class distribution NRV?
 - a. Cam's response was that the Licencees would not chose to let fires increase on purpose. They would prefer harvesting to be the main disturbance agent on landscape. The FMP is built around the concept of harvesting. If it came to that situation, fires could conceivably be used to create the NRV instead of harvesting.

3. In-Block Retention

- Details in the presentation from Forsite – proposal is as follows:

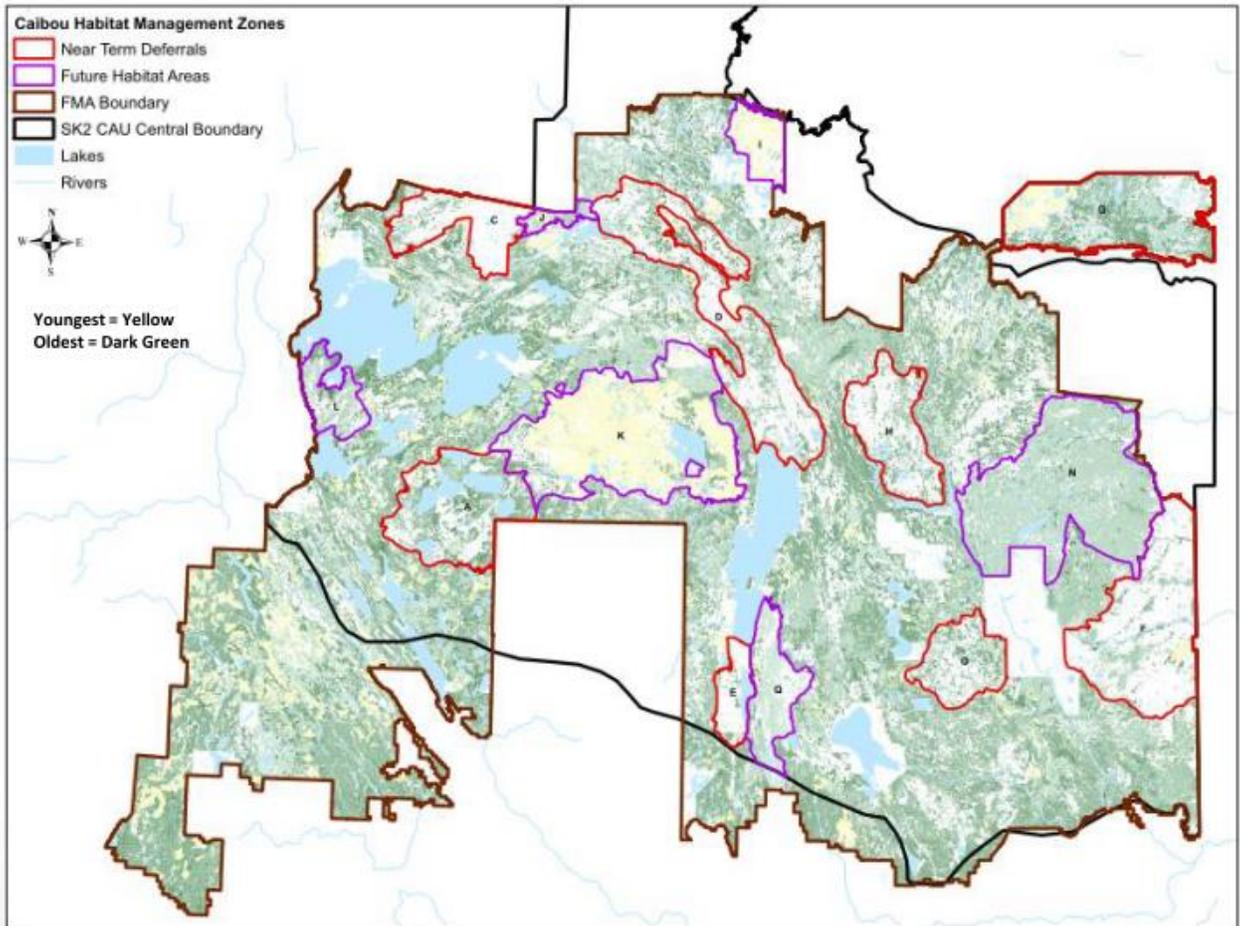
Proposed Targets for Structural Retention

1. For events >40 ha: 9% of event retained as:
 - a. **Insular Retention (6%)**
 - Forest that is interior to the harvest opening (true islands)
 - **4% must be representative , merchantable timber**
 - 2% can be non representative, non merchantable timber that provides for habitat/biodiversity values or future/rotational structure (>30 yrs old)
 - b. **Proximal Retention (3%)**
 - Forest within/adjacent to harvest area and connected to boundary
 - Will be a combination of contributing and non-contributing forest such as riparian areas, wetland edges, springs, snags, species refuges, connectivity, and/or future structure (>30 yrs old)
- A question was asked: Where does the >30 years come from in regards to >30 year old trees counting towards non-representative and non-merchantable portion of the 9% in-block retention target?
 - a. Cam's response was that 30 years was the minimum value felt to provide sufficiently big enough trees to be called "forest" structure in the immediate decade following harvesting.
- A question was asked: Can the industry measure these differences in % for proximal and insular and merchantable/representative or non?
 - a. Cam's response was yes, the level of rigour should not be much more that what is required to determine the current FMP standard's #'s. First the Licencee's would be checking for the total 9%, then they would be breaking it down and making sure 6% insular retention is achieved. After that, was the target of 4% merchantable retention achieved?
- Concern was expressed about the complexity, each timber type would have to be measured. The standard with its 9% representative retention was trying to avoid this measuring complexity.

- a. The response was that operators are currently measuring the retention to that level of detail because proximal is already problematic, this would not be much more.
 - b. It will be a GIS and mapping exercise.
 - c. Forestry officers will no longer going to look at retention in the field, compliance will be based on annual submissions of retention calculations and maps.
- Cam asked if other than measurement concerns, if anyone has any issues with the percentages themselves. The responses were:
 - a. The numbers make sense from an operational perspective. There are a lot of borderline merchantable timbers in a stand that can be used to attribute to the 5% non-representative.
 - b. No other specific concerns were expressed.
- There was a suggestion that instead of making a 4% target for representative / merchantable timber, the Licencees follow the structure retention standard, but put a caveat in the FMP that states if the 9% representative/merchantable timber cannot be achieved (for explained reason) than a minimum of 4% representative / merchantable timber be retained out of the 9%.
- A question was asked: Will there be a provision for hardwood when it is not economical for hardwood to be harvested in a softwood stand?
 - a. Cam's response is that the increased hardwood retention would be covered by the 2% insular or 3% proximal retention. The 4% would still have to be softwood (representative/merchantable timber of what was harvested).
 - b. Excessive retention of hardwood would be an operating plan issue
- Cam asked: Do we want to allow variation between events?
 - a. It is easier for the shareholders of Sakaw to have one target they all must meet.
 - b. No other support for variance between events with a 10 year target was voiced.

4. Caribou Habitat Management

- Details in the presentation from Forsite – key details are:
 - Current High Value Habitat Zones
 - Harvest deferred for 20 years
 - Restoration of existing prioritized linear features (MOE ID and funds)
 - Near Term/Future Habitat Zones
 - Harvest encouraged for 10 years to finish areas, then deferred for 20
 - Any new linear features to be restored within 2 years post-harvest
 - Restoration of existing prioritized linear features (MOE ID and funds)
 - FMA Range (entire caribou range in FMA, including zones 1 and 2)
 - Limit disturbed area to <35% of the gross area
 - Disturbance defined as <30 years old to align with NFP and 65% older
 - Disturbance buffers defined based on risk of impacting caribou habitat



- Main difference between proposed plan and the federal plan is the definition of disturbance and the elimination of costs associated with 'offsets'. The proposed plan shifts disturbance from <40 years to <30 years and uses smaller buffers for disturbed areas that represent less risk to caribou.
- A question was asked about reclaiming roads, does this BMP include other user roads? Is there a new expectation that Licencee's reclaim outfitter or old roads that people don't really "own" anymore?
 - a. Cam's response was that if company has current responsibility to reclaim road they would pay for it. If there is a road the government has identified as wanting to be reclaimed and it isn't owned by anyone, Sakaw is happy to work with the government to reclaim the road with funding, but is under no financial or legal obligation to do so.
- Shawn's response to the proposed caribou plan: This is encouraging from a range planning perspective. Shawn was not in a position to give thumbs up/down. Many of the concepts in the range plan are addressed/closely aligned with the proposed plan.
 - b. Key difference is the cost mitigation concept. The reason the government is pursuing this is it applies to all land users and not just forestry (peat harvesting, minerals, etc). The government needed tools to address them too.

- c. Concept of using deferrals as a near term strategy is a simpler and cleaner way for interim.
 - d. Basic principles – NFP, clean up areas, operate quickly and get out for a long time harvesting, minimize/stay-out of high risk areas (deferral areas). All really good things.
 - e. On buffer side and achieving the 30% disturbance target – agree to disagree about how buffers are used. The province is currently following the federal methodology. However, they recognize with a natural fire regime that it is highly unlikely for 65% >40years on the landscape.
 - i. The current draft plan strategy is to state that the 35% max disturbance target is likely unattainable... But here is a bunch of good things we are doing (like what Forsite has included in the proposed plan).
 - f. Generally ideas are in accordance of range plan concepts, and it is appreciated that Forsite trying to include some of these ideas.
- On Monday Forsite is sharing this strategy to the wider Range Planning Group (Forest Sector Committee).
 - It is important to note that the proposed plan is only addressing the FMA area in SK2 central. Since Sakaw does not have any influence outside the FMA, they plan to meet the 35% within the FMA and leave the caribou habitat areas outside of the FMA to be managed provincially.
 - There was a suggestion that Forsite may want to show the other habitat and entire SK2 range outside the PA FMA to show connectivity to FMA on maps. It would be nice to connect the dots for information purposes.
 - a. This would require getting inventory data for other areas. **Cam** will see what Forsite can get.
 - b. Looking at the SK2 range holistically might alter the caribou management zones.

5. Pulp Volume

- FMP will commit to 200,000 m³/yr from dedicated stands. It will incorporated into the baseline modeling using a proxy set of pulp stands. Cam recommends that the FMP demonstrate the impact or meeting the pulp volume commitments and commit to mapping the dedicated stands when the pulp mill becomes operational.
 - a. An alternative would be to only spatially identify 5-10 years of pulp stands. Or at least characterize the stands to be allocated and spatialize when the mill is operational.
 - b. There was some interest in a map expressed.
- There is a recognized benefit for small wood operators in province, but there was concern raised about the difference between a government and another company commitment. Sakaw is not ok with taking a sawlog HVS hit for smallwood users other than the pulpmill (which has a govt commitment).

6. Utilization Issue

- Forsite is developing yield curves for 12.5cm top dib utilization and they are expected to have about a 20% impact on sawlog yields (on average). Volume is most sensitive in younger/smaller stands.

- The intent is to have 10cm top in the preferred scenario with an option to work at a 12.5 cm top operationally. Licensee will have to pay dues based on 10cm top volumes - whether it is left in the bush or brought across the scale. This provides mills with flexibility to bring wood across the scales they think they can use.
- The idea is that a block's utilization level would be identified in the operating plan and could vary by licensee. Any 12.5 blocks would have their scaled volume inflated to reflect what should have come out of the block based on a 10cm top standard. This expansion factor and process framework would be laid out in the FMP. The 10cm top volume would be used to assess HVS and determine dues payment. This keeps govt whole in terms of HVS and dues.
- Comments were operators appreciate the flexibility as sometimes the higher cost to mill small wood is simply not viable – thus they would rather forego the HVS and pay dues on wood they did not bring to the mill.
- Since Skaw is made up of multiple companies, this utilization strategy is a way to accommodate everyone.
- Chris cautioned that slash disposal techniques may have to change along with utilization, operators will have to be conscious of creating too much slash and increased silviculture costs.

7. PAG Update

- Cam is presenting the same information today to the PAG to get their opinions.
- Try to get Gord at PAG meeting.

8. Work Plan and Approvals

- Officially signed and approved as of today.
- 2018 Tactical Plan Start
 - c. Cam does not see a problem meeting tactical plan timeline.
- Going to need to have a lot of work done within the next few months to get to the end of FMP
 - d. Need quick feedback from government on what was presented today so modelling can happen right away.
- **Cam** clarifying if the cut control will be reset once the FMP is approved.
 - a. Currently in 2 year of 5 year cut control and companies are below HVS so risk is minimal.

Subsequent meetings:

Wed July 5, 2017 (Birch Room, PA Forest Service Office)

Wed Aug 2, 2017 (Birch Room, PA Forest Service Office)

Wed Sept 6, 2017 (Birch Room, PA Forest Service Office)

Wed Oct 4, 2017 (Birch Room, PA Forest Service Office)