



**Meeting Notes**  
**Public Advisory Group (PAG), Prince Albert Timber Supply Area (PA TSA)**  
**December 14, 2022**  
 Hosted: Teams Meeting

**Participants**

Interest Category	Organization	Name
Facilitator	BBNR Management Solutions	Carl Neggers
1_Environment & Wildlife	Ducks Unlimited Canada	Mark Kornder
1_Environment & Wildlife	Prince Albert Model Forest	Peter Friedrichsen
3_Municipalities and Communities	Northern Village of Green Lake	Joe Gardiner Alice Laliberte Dustin
3_Municipalities and Communities	City of Prince Albert	Don Cody
4_Community Associations	Provincial Association of Resort Communities of SK	Doug Allan
5_Cottage Owners Associations	Whelan Bay Cottage Owners Association	Crystal Rinas
8_Outfitting	Saskatchewan Commission of Professional Outfitters	Jaime Johnson
12_Government. Advisors & Resource People	Ministry of Environment, Forest Service Branch	Sarah Schmid
12_Government. Advisors & Resource People	AC Forestry (Sakaw Shareholder)	Ken Thomas
12_Government. Advisors & Resource People	Carrier Forest Products (Sakaw Shareholder)	Ed Kwiatkowski
12_Government. Advisors & Resource People	Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp	Taneal Brucks
12_Government. Advisors & Resource People	Tolko Industries Ltd. (Sakaw Shareholder)	Michelle Young
12_Government. Advisors & Resource People	Sakaw Askiy	James Fischer Diane Roddy Michelle Thompson

**Meeting Convened:** 2:03 pm

**Introductions:**

Conducted a round table where everyone on the call introduced themselves.

**Review of Agenda:**

Agenda was reviewed and approved as presented

## **PAG Purpose (from Terms of Reference):**

James Fischer, Sakaw, outlined the general responsibilities of PAG members:

To provide input on the development and implementation of the FMP and to act as a forum for information exchange between Sakaw & Regional organizations who share interest in the forest.

## **Previous Notes and Action Items:**

November 9, 2021 Meeting

- Follow up Action was a field visit in spring/summer to look at regeneration of harvested sites.

## **Updates:**

Development of 2023/24 Operating Plan

- Close to being finalized
  - This will be the first year using Harvest Event approach
  - A 3-minute presentation created by the Forest Service Branch on harvest events can be found on the Sakaw.ca website home page.
- **A Forest Inventory Project is also being implemented to improve data used in Forest Management Planning**

Last summer's planned reforestation tour

- Cancelled due to weather.
- Two subsequent field tours were held with LLRIB who had raised the reforestation concern at the last PAG meeting, to look at the sites of concern together
- Clarine Lake Open House/Forest Tour (September 23). Public event, all PAG members were invited. Opportunity to view draft Operating Plan maps, visit a 28 year old harvest site and a current harvest site.

## **FMP 2022 Annual Report (on the 2020-21 Operating Year):**

This year's annual report on progress in implementing the strategies in the Forest Management Plan (FMP) has not yet been approved.

The amount of excess hardwood retention (standing green trees) left in harvest areas on the east side of the Timber Supply Area are something new being reported on in the 2022 report. Sakaw is still working with the Forest Service on how to calculate this.

The summary table at the front of the report showing the status of the 33 indicators reported on was reviewed. Participants were asked to identify indicators that were of specific interest to them for discussion.

- Peter Friedrichsen, Prince Albert Model Forest requested discussion regarding Caribou Habitat and Reclamation Process
- Crystal Rinas, Whelan Bay Cottage Association, inquired about the commitment to stay under 20% disturbance within the watershed, calculated from previously harvested areas being within 10 years from the year the harvest started. From the EIS section 5.4.2.2: "from a hydrological perspective, a site is considered regenerating for up to 20 years." Also, the first year of harvest is used as the date the site is disturbed, but it takes several years for the harvesting to be

completed and for replanting to occur. The commitment to stay under 20% disturbance should be determined from the year the site is considered decommissioned and 20 years thereafter.

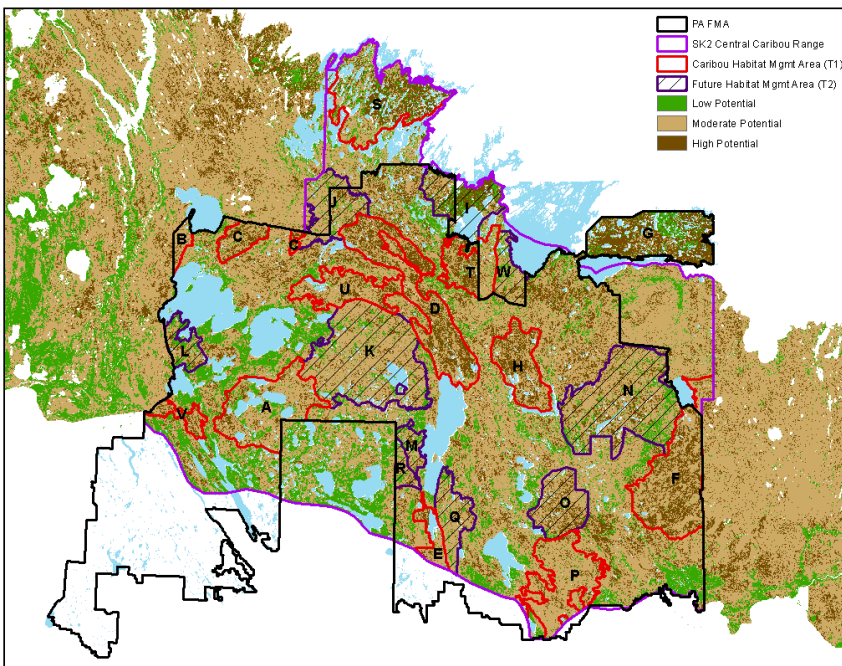
- Diane Roddy, Sakaw, indicated that that the 10 year period starts at the beginning of harvest as that is when the initial disturbance on the water shed occurs. The overall impact is reduced by year 10 with full recovery by year 40.
- Michelle Young, Tolko Ind., indicated that there are blocks within an event and those roads are also reclaimed during the harvesting of an event. This is a compliance indicator that in-block roads are reclaimed within 2 years

### Caribou Habitat (Indicator 7c)

Reporting under the current FMP caribou habitat management strategy was discussed. The habitat management strategy in the next FMP will need to take into account any new information that has become available, which may be different than the current strategy.

The calculation of disturbed area under this indicator uses variable width buffers around disturbances, instead of the blanket 500 m buffer the federal government used for all types of disturbances.

The strategy is to create a shifting mosaic of good caribou habitat in the landscape over time. Tier 1 areas are considered good habitat now, and Tier 2 areas are being planned as future key habitat areas.



- Peter Friedrichsen, Prince Albert Model Forest, asked what scientific data are used to validate the buffer widths used around disturbances
  - Diane Roddy, Sakaw, indicated that a Risk Based Approach was used. For example a permanent highway is a higher risk than an in-block road that will be reclaimed within 2 years. She will circulate the specific approach to all PAG Members (**see Appendix A**).

- Peter Friedrichsen, Prince Albert Model Forest, indicated that when various Caribou siting's occur within the FMA, such as Unit 18 (Hall Lake/Besnard Rd area) not currently designated Tier 1 or 2 why is it up to the NGO's to prove the presence of Caribou. Sakaw should be responsible for contacting the Conservation Officers to validate and monitor for the presence of Caribou prior to the resumption of harvesting.
  - Diane Roddy, Sakaw, indicated that the province is the manager of the wildlife populations while Sakaw is the manager of the habitat component. The province has identified the Caribou Management Areas which ultimately identifies and/or restricts harvesting activity.
- Peter Friedrichsen, Prince Albert Model Forest indicated that the Habitat Map does not accurately reflect Caribou population locations and he would like to see some corrective action on this.
- Mark Kornder, Ducks Unlimited asked how long does a caribou habitat area remain as habitat?
  - Diane Roddy, Sakaw, indicated that the habitat areas are typically old or very old forest now. In the PA Timber Supply Area the strategy is for Tier 1 areas to be unavailable for harvest for 20 years. They would then become available for harvest again, hopefully before they start to breakup and while the wood can still be used.
- Doug Allan, Provincial Association of Resort Communities, indicated that habitat is not a crop. Using 40 years as mature is what we hear at most meetings. 40 years may be a good time line for habitat but it is not a good indicator for allowing harvesting.
  - Diane Roddy, Sakaw responded that the timeline of 40 years was set by the federal government. The 40 years is used when calculating the amount of disturbance in a caribou range, as the time when an area that has been disturbed (e.g. by fire or harvesting) is no longer considered disturbed.
  - Michelle Young, Tolko clarified that the harvest age of trees is much longer than 40 years. Stands are mature (e.g. 80 years old for jack pine, older for white spruce) or older before they harvested. The rotation ages of trees in Saskatchewan has been added to these notes, in **Appendix B.**
    - Doug Allan, Provincial Association of Resort Communities responded so when does habitat become harvestable? We need clarification so if 40 years is the timeline for habitat, what is the timeline for harvesting? When is habitat no longer habitat?

#### Harvested vs. Estimated (Yield Curve) Volumes (Indicator 13)

Numbers reported in the 2 previous years were skewed by including pulp, which is not currently being harvested in any significant amounts. Pulp was removed from all 3 years of reporting, and the differences between the predicted volumes and the actual volumes is now greater. This indicates that the forest inventory information is not as accurate as it looked previously.

#### Compliance (Soil & Water): Ind 17 Road Reclamation

There were 2 non-compliances with road reclamation requirements in 2020-21. One was due to the road reclamation taking longer than 2 years to complete. The other was related to not meeting reclamation standards, and a Voluntary Compliance Opportunity was issued, meaning that the company likely found and reported this themselves.

#### Harvest Distribution by Planning Areas and Species Grouping (Indicator 24)

This target aims at distributing the harvest geographically, and by forest type. It conflicts with strategies

to cluster the harvesting in events (to create larger patches of intact forest in future) and manage caribou habitat zones (stay out of Tier 1 areas for 20 years, clean up Tier 2 areas for 10 years, then stay out for 20 years).

Using actual harvest information for 3 years and estimates of what was or will be harvested for 2 years, it is predicted that the limits on harvesting softwood-leading mixedwood stands will be exceeded by a small amount (68 ha) in 2 large harvest events in the Glew Lake and Dore Lake areas. Data about this will be included in the 2023/24 Operating Plan for the Forest Service's review.

#### Indigenous Communities Review of Operations/Strategic Plans (Indicator 25)

Sakaw engages with people throughout the year and particularly in the fall when the next Operating Plan is being prepared. The engagement with affected First Nations and Métis communities gives Sakaw an opportunity to become fully informed about the potential implications of forestry plans on a community's ability to hunt, fish and trap for food or carry out traditional uses. If necessary, forestry activities can then be adjusted to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts.

Information about all discussions and commitments or changes to plans made as a result of engaging with people about forestry plans is submitted with the Operating Plan, and helps to inform the provincial government's duty to consult with the leadership of Indigenous communities.

#### Economic Contribution of the Forest Industry (Indicator 28)

Three years of information on the impact on GDP, jobs, income, and taxes paid was reviewed. Harvest levels were lower in 2020-21 than the previous 2 years, and the economic benefits were correspondingly lower.

- Peter Friedrichsen, Prince Albert Model Forest asked if there is an indigenous breakdown of their economic participation in the FMA
  - Diane Roddy, Sakaw, indicated that the development of Sakaw included indigenous participation and leadership. Forestry in Saskatchewan has the highest level of indigenous participation and partnerships in Canada
    - Ken Thomas, AC Forestry added information about the formation of Sakaw and the involvement of First Nations in Saskatchewan's forest sector, which is the highest in Canada with First Nations being allocated 44% of the wood from the PA TSA. Those communities are benefiting from and are proud of notable successes from participating in this industry. Economic reconciliation is important and the Saskatchewan Forest Industry is a good example.

### **Closing Comments**

Update on Potential New Mills in Prince Albert

- Mark Kornder, Ducks Unlimited asked about an update on the One Sky OSB plant and the Paper Excellence Pulp Mill
  - Don Cody, Councilor, Prince Albert indicated that One Sky had just finished their environmental impact study and Mayor and Council are pleased with the partnerships One Sky has formed as part of this project. The Paper Excellence Pulpmill in Prince Albert has not yet applied for a building permit so it will be a bit of time yet for that project. When the Pulpmill starts they would like to see a sawmill associated with it (residual wood chips from sawmills to the Pulpmill would help make both more successful).

## Final PAG Member Comment

- Doug Allan, Provincial Association of Resort Communities indicated he would like to see more terminology using sustainable forests & ecosystems not sustainable harvest.
- Jaime, Saskatchewan Commission of Professional Outfitters agrees with Doug's point/request (about terminology, above) – **From Chat Message**
- Peter Friedrichsen, Prince Albert Model Forest indicated Biodiversity is only measured as tree species composition, however CFS standards say maintain biodiversity more broadly, thus I am also quite critical of the notion of "sustainable harvest" as a coverall for sustainable forest management - **From Chat Message**

## Meeting Summary and General Comments:

Meeting Notes have been recorded including member concerns and follow up. A Meeting Brief will also be developed and shared with members.

- Taneal Brucks, Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp - Thank you Diane, for your years of support and service to Northern Sask – **From Chat Message**

Meeting Adjourned 3:30 pm

## APPENDIX A

### Risk-rated Variable Buffer Widths Used in Calculating Disturbance in Caribou Range

Taken from FMP Volume II, Version 2.3, pages 34 – 35:

#### Assessing Disturbance

The definition of ‘disturbed’ is integral to the calculation of the disturbed area target used in this plan. Sakâw is using 40 years as the time when an area ‘disturbed’ by natural or human-causes (including harvested patches and roads) can be considered undisturbed again. This is aligned with what was used in the federal Caribou Recovery Strategy and the provincial Range Plan for Woodland Caribou in the SK2 Central caribou area. Stands that are  $\geq 40$  years old provide less attractive forage for moose and deer<sup>1</sup>; thus, reducing the amount of alternative prey and predators in the area<sup>2</sup>. Linear and patch disturbances  $\geq 40$  years old do not offer the same travel and line of sight advantages compared to new disturbances<sup>3</sup>. There is some question about whether using 30 instead of 40 years would align better with the historical natural conditions and the targeted age class structure for the FMA area, and that is an area where further discussion and research is warranted. Studies have also shown that terrestrial lichens recover within 21-30 years after a fire in jack pine stands and that a higher biomass of lichens regenerates in reforested harvest areas than naturally burnt and regenerated stands<sup>4</sup>.

The federal Caribou Recovery Strategy also uses a single 500m buffer width around disturbed areas when calculating the amount of disturbance, to recognize there is less desirable habitat and increased predation success next to disturbed areas. Sakâw has chosen to use a range of buffer sizes because disturbances of varying types and ages impact caribou differently<sup>5</sup>. Sakâw is ranking disturbances based on the perceived risk to caribou (Tables 16 and 17) and buffering them according to the risk rating (Table 15). The types of risks associated with each type of disturbance and the intensity of the disturbance is used to guide risk rating assignments. Predation is considered the main limiting factor on caribou in the SK2 caribou range<sup>6 7</sup>.

**Table 1. Disturbance risk rating and buffer distance**

Risk Rating	Buffer Distance (m)
High (1)	- 500
Medium (2)	- 250
Low (3)	100
Negligible (4)	0

<sup>1</sup> Timmermann, H.R. and J.G. McNicol. *Moose habitat needs*. The Forestry Chronicle, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Wasser, S.K., J.L. Keim, M.L. Taper and S.R. Lele. *The influences of wolf predation, habitat loss, and human activity on caribou and moose in the Alberta oil sands*. Frontier Ecological Environment, 9(10), 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Skatter, H.G., J.L. Kansas, M.L. Charlebois, and B. Balicki. *Following wildfire in the boreal shield of Saskatchewan: Early seral forage availability for Woodland Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou)*. Canadian Wildlife Biology and Management, 3(1), 2014.

<sup>4</sup> McMullin, R.T, I.D. Thompson, and S.G. Newmaster. *Lichen conservation in heavily managed boreal forests*. Conservation Biology, 27(5), 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Sorensen, T., P.D. McLoghlin, D. Hervieux, E. Dzus, J. Nolan, B. Wynes, and S. Boutin. *Determining sustainable levels of cumulative effects for boreal caribou*. Journal of Wildlife Management, 72(4), 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Wittmer, H.U, A.R.E. Sinclair, and B.N. McLellan. *The role of predation in the decline and extirpation of woodland caribou*. Oecologia, 144, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Rettie, W.J. and F. Messier. *Hierarchical habitat selection by woodland caribou: its relationship to limiting factors*. Ecography, 23(4), 2000.

**Table 2. Linear disturbance risk rating and buffer distance**

Disturbance Type	Risks to Caribou	Risk Rating	Applied Buffer
Highways Rail Lines Utility Lines with brushing <7 yrs.	Vehicle collision; increased access for hunters, predators and alternative prey; decreased predator search time; noise	1	500
Groomed snowmobile trails	Increased access for hunters, predators and alternative prey; noise; packed snow allows for increased mobility	2	250
Low traffic highways/all season roads	Vehicle collision (lower); increased access for hunters, predators and alternative prey	2	250
Utility lines with brushing >7 yrs.	Limited increased access for predators and alternative prey; limited predator search time advantage	2	250
Secondary and Tertiary haul roads	Limited increased access for hunters, predators and alternative prey	3	100
Trails, in-block roads	Very limited access for hunters; less advantage for alternative prey and predators; revegetation occurring	4	0

**Table 3. Patch Disturbance Risk Rating and Buffer Distance**

Disturbance Type	Risks to Caribou	Risk Rating	Applied Buffer
Permanent logging camps, mine sites, communities, etc.	High noise levels; increased likelihood of caribou avoidance; no access barriers	1	500
Fresh harvest block <7 years old	Good habitat for alternative prey; decreased predator and hunter search time	1	500
Spruce leading harvest blocks 7-20 years old Other leading species harvest blocks 2-14 years old	Good habitat for alternative prey; limited predator search advantage; spruce is slower growing so needs additional time	2	250
Spruce leading harvest blocks >20 years old Other leading species harvest blocks >14 years old	Lower habitat potential for alternative prey; limited predator search advantage	4	0

In addition to the 20-year deferral areas, NFP strategies, and limiting disturbance, Sakâw will implement the following BMPs in their forest management across all caribou zones:

- Use winter roads whenever practical to limit linear feature creation<sup>9 11 15</sup>;



- Reclaim roads as soon as practical after harvest<sup>158</sup>;
- Reclaim other roads near any roads currently being reclaimed where funding and approvals are provided by the government;
- Avoid fire salvage adjacent to treed peatland/peatland complexes <sup>119</sup>;
- Log large patches instead of multiple smaller ones<sup>21</sup>;
- Prioritize harvesting in areas already disturbed<sup>15 21</sup>;
- In Zone 2, use planting prescriptions that promote rapid re-establishment of caribou habitat<sup>9</sup>; and
- Manage access to limit hunters and poachers on roads<sup>10</sup>.
- Within MoE identified critical calving habitat areas, strive to reduce sensory disturbances between April 1 – July 15. other roads near any roads currently being reclaimed where funding and approvals are provided by the government;

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<sup>8</sup> Smith, K.G., E.J. Ficht, D. Hobson, T.C Sorensen, and D. Hervieux. *Winter distribution of woodland caribou in relation to clear-cut logging in west-central Alberta*. Canadian Journal of Zoology, 78, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> James, A.R.C., S. Boutin, D.M. Herbert, and A.B. Rippin. *Spatial separation of caribou from moose and its relation to predation by wolves*

<sup>10</sup> Brown, K.G. *Ecology of woodland caribou in central Manitoba: implications for forestry practices*. Thesis, Department of Biology, University of Saskatchewan, 2001.

## APPENDIX B

### Typical Harvest (Rotation) Ages of Saskatchewan Trees

Taken from Table 5, FMP Volume II, Version 2.3, page 16

Stand Type	Typical Rotation Age (years)
Aspen	50-60
Aspen / Jack Pine	60-80
Jack Pine / Aspen	70-80
Aspen / Spruce	80-90
Spruce / Aspen	80-90
Black Spruce	70-90
Jack Pine	60-80
Jack Pine / Black Spruce	70-80
White spruce / Balsam Fir	70-90
Black Spruce / Tamarack	70-90