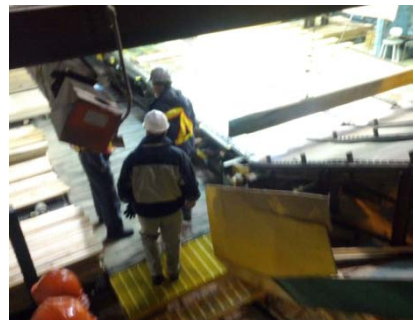


**Forest Certification Advisory Group  
Z809-08 Meeting #2  
Hidden Valley Hotel, Huntsville  
March 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012  
Minutes**

**Present:** Deb Cumming, Barry Bridgeford, Anne Mundy, Emmett Godin, Dana Shaw, Danny Janke, Terry Mullin, Joe Yaraskavitch, Irvin Yateman, Lacey Rose, Shaun Dombroskie, Nathan Mieske, Steve Deon, Tom Clark

**Regrets:** Richard Zohr, Randy Malcolm, John Doering, Tom Ballantine, Bob Craftchick, Dave Commanda, Doreen Davis, Matt Demille, Don Spring, Clifford Bastein

**DAY 1: Thursday March 1 - 10:00 am - 11:00 pm - Mill Tour – Tembec Huntsville**



**1:00 - 5:00 pm - Bush Tour – Brule Area – Arrowhon Pines Road**



## **DAY 2 - Friday March 2: 8:30 - 3:00 pm**

Meeting - 8:30 am - 3:00 pm Algonquin Room

Gord- provided an update that Shari Sokay will be the new representative for OFAH and is planning to join the group at the next meeting.

Terry Mullin is filling in for Don McCormick at this meeting.

Steve Deon – provided a career introduction to the group.

Meeting 2 information package was handed out and members inserted it into their binder. Pages were overviewed by section. MNR LCC introductory handbook was highlighted to provide background to forest management conducted in Ontario. The Algonquin Park Forest Management Plan Long-term Management Direction summary was introduced to group and emphasized. FMP Table 3 is also included to help provide the description of forest units. Page 1 of the proposed revised VOIT Matrix was provided to have in hand when Criterion 1 is to be discussed – new mandatory indicators have been highlighted.

### **1. Approval of Feb Minutes**

**Omissions:** Tom Clarke and Emmett Godin names were not recorded in the attendance.

Lacey – wondered why some individuals' career backgrounds were included and others were not? Gord clarified that only new members to the group had their backgrounds included.

Joe – identified a few other potential corrections – a SAR reference and a spelling mistake.

Gord – indicated that he revised the Public Consultation Plan Table 1 and 2 following the environmental group discussion at meeting 1.

Minutes were adopted by group and there were no objections.

### **2. Approval of Terms of Reference**

Tom – provided a brief revisit of the Terms of Reference. Terms of Reference were adopted.

### **3. Participatory Decision Making**

Tom provided a brief presentation on Participatory Decision Making. He emphasized that the group is not here to change public policy. Also, the standard recognizes the provincial forest management planning process (the FMP) and the direction it provides.

The idea behind Participatory Decision Making is to start with a new topic and at the end to reach a decision point. There is going to be divergent thinking and it is encouraged. Understanding each other's views is a key part of the process.

#### 4. Review of AFA Certification Website

Gord provided a brief overview of the Algonquin Forestry Authority website, and the Certification section of the website and how to access the public participation questionnaire. This questionnaire is to be used by those that wish to participate through the broad public consultation process. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were reviewed to provide the group a sense the values information that will be collected through this process.

Terry – since this is new have you received any response to date? Gord – not much response yet - one individual from Toronto requested a background information package.

Steve – asked if there is a question on what peoples impression of Algonquin Park are based on? Is it based on personal experience or hear-say? Gord – no, but could consider adding a question like that to questionnaire. This information can be partially determined from section 6 of the questionnaire.

Joe – What is the direction for Aboriginal consultation through this broader process? Gord – as outlined in the in the Terms of Reference and Public Consultation Plan. Joe –do you keep track of “hits” to the website? Gord – yes a report is provided weekly and is spatially referenced.

Gord also reviewed the “Bid Opportunities” section of the website. This section of the website is used to advertize all bid opportunities for work for the AFA.

#### 5. 2010 – 2020 FMP Long Term Management Direction (LTMD)

Gord – referred the group to the Summary of the LTMD that was distributed (Appendix H from the 2010 FMP). This provides a summary of the process involved when developing a LTMD, to decide on a Selected Management Strategy. Understanding this process and the Selected Management Strategy in the FMP will help prepare us to get through the VOITs that are in the CSA Standard.

Gord delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the development of the 2010-2020 FMP LTMD.

There was an emphasis that **FMP Table 13 – Assessment of Objectives** has a lot of common elements to **CSA VOIT Matrix**.

The natural benchmark (or null run) is run to understand how the forest would grow without forest management/ fire suppression (human intervention). By removing fire suppression (i.e. extending the fire cycles to natural levels) older forests that are susceptible to fire are left to burn and return to a pre-sapling condition.

Steve – how do you model for things like white pine blister rust? Gord – in the model a factor is applied (ha/yr - based on science) to account for losses to insect and disease (and blowdown and fire).

Deb – how are you determining the harvest level? Gord – the harvest level is an output of the SFMM model – after you have met all of the ecological constraints for things like wildlife habitat and old growth.

Joe – we use a combination of provincial and local statistics to develop natural disturbance rates for the SFMM model. There is discussion about incorporating natural fires in natural zones to encourage young pre-sapling forest in area where logging is not permitted. Development of an Algonquin Park Fire Management Strategy is ongoing.

Lacey – explain how you determined your minimum targets where the normal => 75% of the natural benchmark target was not used? Gord – in these rare cases (e.g. pre-sapling forest landscape class and black bear summer habitat) the target was set at the highest level possible that could be sustained by the proposed management strategy which balances social, environmental and economic objectives. The planning team chose to take a consistent approach to ecological target setting as much as possible (=> 75% of the natural benchmark target) and deal with these anomalies on a case by case basis.

Deb – what are the economic factors that are considered? Gord – available wood supply volumes (both total and at the species/product level) and level of employment and are some of the factors considered.

Joe – the selection of wildlife species to model is normally provided by MNR. 19 species were modelled this time. Gord- several of the species modeled prefer old growth forest conditions - some of these species were included from a list requested by Algonquin Eco-Watch.

Tom – emphasised that this is a coarse filter approach to demonstrating management of habitat for wildlife populations. It is important to know that it is up to the biologist to verify in the field the occurrence of these wildlife species and their population levels in these modeled habitats.

Steve – the base model run is primarily modeling natural forest succession in the natural zones (fire suppression is active). Can we tease out the effect that fire suppression has of the sustainability of the natural zone forest? Gord – yes we can compare the SFMM results between the selected management strategy and the null run to see the effect of fire suppression.

Joe – A lot of discussion on fire at planning team meetings. Approach that is gaining interest is with the application of prescribed burns within the natural wilderness zones. AFA also has mapped areas where natural fires could let burn in R/U zone areas where harvesting has occurred in the past.

Danny – is there a wildlife management plan for the park on wildlife population numbers in modelled habitat (black bears/sq. km)? This would be very useful to validate modeling results. Joe - no formal plan and no guide out there. Gord – hopefully Stand/Site Guide effectiveness monitoring will address this.

Gord – we create a lot habitat from the management of forests, but, the missing link sometimes is the population numbers that are using the habitat. There are many other factors that affect populations, besides level of preferred habitat that we model.

Joe- the mixedwood and spruce/fir forest unit SFMM modeled outputs have limitations because the pre-sapling forest is not created in the model after harvest – this area moves right to a sapling forest after a uniform shelterwood removal cut.

Barry – is the age of old growth dependent on species? Gord – yes it varies by forest unit. Barry – was a baseline amount only determined on what is to be maintained in the RU zone? Gord – no, contribution

to the total old growth forest condition is being made from both the managed and the unmanaged forest.

Deb – Does old growth supply get banked if not cut? Gord – no model assumes full utilization, therefore we currently are underestimating the level of old growth forest condition based on current utilization levels.

Lacey – did you complete a scoping exercise to compare planned versus actual harvest level? Gord – yes.

Dana – concerns over the years when wood is looked at and generalized as fibre. For a product like poles, the wood fibre is very specific...very unique. If red pine stands are preserved the product is gone. When we keep chipping away and preserving red pine stands it has an impact on the business. It is better to have local supply of poles than a supply from elsewhere. A lot of time you have Pr/Pw mixed in the stand. A high amount of light is needed to the forest floor to facilitate the growth of red pine. These mixed stands are not opened enough and provide the light conditions to facilitate the growth of red pine.

Irvin – is there more opportunity to plant red pine trees? Gord – we have paid close attention to planting and tending red pine stands now, to dampen any future projected pole shortfalls that appear in the model. Also managing the red pine forest unit as a seed tree clearcut forest unit to ensure adequate light conditions.

Barry – how do you factor in the disturbance effect on tolerant hardwood and other forest types? Wind damage? Gord – based on the best available science, natural disturbance numbers are calculated for each forest unit. Refer to the analysis package in the FMP for complete details.

Lacey – graph on pg. 18 of Summary of LTMD shows disturbance frequency distribution by size class, are those related to the recent blow down events? Gord – yes , 1999 and 2006 events are reflected here and may have been lumped together as one disturbance due to their proximity.

Barry – how frequently are the inventories updated? Gord – before each FMP all recent disturbance areas are updated and the rest of the forest is age updated.

***Discussion items included:*** *Local and regional protected areas and integrated landscape management, Forest fragmentation and forest loss, Management in the context of natural disturbance regimes and patterns and the range of natural variation, Maintenance of populations and communities over time, Silvicultural regimes and tools such as plantations, pesticides (including integrated pest management and pesticide-use regulations), Structural retention, and timber harvest practices (including clear-cutting), Locally available processes and methods for identifying sites with special biological and cultural significance.*

## **6. Missing Values - any identified?**

Joe – fisheries could be highlighted more in the VOITs due to their importance.

## **Watched Video - Wood is Good**

Lunch

## Watched Video - Patrick Moore - Forest Management and Using Wood

### 7. VOITs - Criterion 1

Gord – idea is to produce an updated VOIT matrix at every meeting after we work through each indicator. Gord’s focus so far has been on indicator revisions - it hasn’t been on the objectives. Some of the new mandatory indicators are nested under current objectives. At the end of the process we want to have a nice flow of the elements listed in the VOIT Matrix. The wording in the VOIT Matrix is to be kept brief and more elaborate explanation will be provided in the SFM Plan text.

Joe- does the new standard have the same criterion? Gord- same criterion and elements but additions are the mandatory indicators.

#### Element 1.1 Ecosystem Diversity

##### 1.1.1.1.1 Indicator: Ecosystem area by type

*Discussed - Maintenance of populations and communities over time, Local and regional protected areas and integrated landscape management.*

Gord – the Selected Management Strategy SFMM model for the 2010 FMP had ecosystems tracked that could be extracted to use for this VOIT. Ecosystem definition was read for the group from the Ecosite Manual and from the CSA Standard definition included in the binder. New FRI and inventory updates are taking more of an ecosite approach. There is a strong correlation between forest cover and ecosite type.

Lacey – Can FMP Table 1 listing forest, water, rock levels be used in the measure this indicator? Tom – Lacey’s suggestion is within the standard, but is a coarser scale than what Gord is suggesting. Tom – explained that the scale that we select to measure diversity indicators should be consistent if possible. Steve – suggested we go to a large scale also. Joe – suggested somewhere in between, hardwood forest ecosystem found to the west and pine forest ecosystem found to the east. Deb – what do you suggest be the scale, Gord? Gord – suggest we measure at a finer scale by 25 ecosite types – this way it is quantifiable and can be forecasted.

Gord - Went through and showed the group the work that was done to use SFMM to produce graphs to project levels overtime by ecosite type. It is a fine scale measure. Lacey – suggested that the work is done and we should move on. Gord - this is a planning type indicator and we need to set variance based on long term projections in relation to the natural benchmark run (+/- 25% of the natural benchmark run). Ecosite 15 will need a slightly greater variance (+/- 30% of the natural benchmark run) to address the loss of this jack pine forest type in the unmanaged part of the park - without disturbances jack pine areas are succeeding to other forest types. Felt that is important to be consistent with FMP and set minimum target levels the same for the SFM plan as much as possible.

Deb – is it important to set the variance consistently for all ecosite types? Gord- would prefer to revise the variance for this anomaly (ES15) rather than for all ecosites. This additional variance can be rationalized – and it is out of our control to address it. Biggest reason why levels are dropping is due to jack pine natural succession to other forest types in the natural zone. Deb -there is a paradox because the ecosites in the natural zone contribute to help us meet most of the planned objectives but does not help to meet all of the planned objectives.

**VOIT Matrix** – Adjustment made to text under Target column following Irvin’s suggestion to add “s” to area to clarify the measure of ecosites by type.

Lacey – suggested the terms “*bounds of natural variation*” and “*natural benchmark*” be synonymous.

#### **1.1.1.1.2 Indicator: Forest area by type**

***Discussed*** – *Forest loss, Management in the context of natural disturbance regimes and patterns of natural variation, Local and regional protected areas and integrated landscape management.*

Gord - suggested that it is logical to use forest units as the measure of forest “type”, while displaying a map of Algonquin Park showing the distribution of the 12 forest units on the land base (reference FMP – Table 3). There is a strong correlation between Ecosites and Forest Units. All stands are lumped into their respective forest unit, forest unit descriptions are provided in FMP- Table 3. SFMM is modeled using forest units. Suggestion was made to the Advisory Group that the same modifications be made to variation level (+/-30% of the natural benchmark value) for PjCC forest unit as is needed for Ecosite 15.

70% versus 75% minimum target level discussion:

Gord- two ways of going about it, one is lowering the target, the other is maintaining the target but allowing greater variance. Lacey – suggested change the modelling term to 80 vs. 100 years for PJCC forest units? Gord – I did consider changing the term because that is the time (~80 yrs.) the level drops below the target level, but I decided not to in order to be consistent with the FMP approach. Steve – jack pine biological life cycle is on 80 year rotation. Trees begin to die due to nutritional issues. Steve – prefer to make them all 70%. Gord – doesn’t agree – why lower every target because of 1 anomaly? Dana – a lot of the Pj that is left to grow to an older age and harvested is of poor quality, too much rot. Lacey – learning quickly while working for the County that jack pine is not suited to grow on most sites due to being at the southern limit of the range.

Gord – showed graphs of poplar and jack pine levels dropping in natural zones after 80 – 100 years due to lack of disturbance and natural succession.

**ACTION: Gord to ensure the correct wording is inserted in SFM plan text to describe the anomalies and the rationale for revising the variances for ES15 and the PjCC forest unit.**

### 1.1.1.1.3 Indicator: Forest area by seral stage

*Discussed - Forest fragmentation and forest loss, Management in the context of natural disturbance regimes and patterns and the range of natural variation*

Graph shown – Area by Seral Stage produced for the SFMM model. Seral stage is age class and is tracked overtime by the SFMM. Seral stage age ranges vary by ecosite (pre-sapling, sapling, immature, mature, over mature seral stage classes). The issue that is creating a challenge for AFA (and the entire southern region) is the shortage of the pre-sapling forest condition.

Barry – how much early successional forest is browsed? Joe – not a complete stand would succumb to browsing, only small % is affected.

Gord – suggested that landscape classes be the surrogate for seral stages and it is consistent on how we did it in the FMP. Plan is to take the same approach in Table 13 and built it into the VOIT Matrix. This is another mandatory indicator and there is a good correlation between seral stage and landscape classes. Landscape Classes definition was read from landscape guide.

Gord – this approach also recognizes the inclusion of two stories created in uniform shelterwood forest units (T-stage condition) and is beneficial habitat for wildlife. Old growth stage is at the top end of seral stages. They are not landscape classes per say, and would have their own separate targets.

Deb – Pre-sapling forest condition looks to be well below the natural benchmark levels?

Gord – this issue is well explained in the FMP and will be explained in the SFM Plan text. There is not enough clearcutting being done in the Algonquin Park forest and restrictions are placed on existing clear cut forest units due to other values (i.e. SAR values). Suggested to the group we maintain the area target from the FMP (maintain  $\geq 6,400$  ha by term for the pre-sapling landscape class). Plan to actively create more pre-sapling condition, operationally, by creating more group openings in shelterwood forest units.

Deb – existing management strategy may be a miss and suggest that you might want to identify an alternative strategy that will address what appears to be a strategy that it is not favouring the promotion of the pre-sapling stage condition. When can the long term strategy alternative be re-opened and up for discussion? Gord – really the only alternative would be to promote more clearcutting in Algonquin Park and/or to create more clearcut forest units – this has many other implications. The Year 7 annual report (2017) will revisit strategic direction and will be the next opportunity.

Tom – What you need to decide as an Advisory Group is to agree on the classification of age classes. According to the direction in the CSA Standard, the classes that Gord is suggesting is a good classification that works. The second decision is the group needs to agree on an area (ha) target amount of pre-sapling condition maintained in the forest each year.

Deb – is the impediment to setting the target is the stigma around the use social/political sensitivity around implementing clear cuts? Lacey – it is a bit of a problem because there is not enough clear cutting... and only about 1% of the total land base is cut per year. People value old-growth forest more



than pre-sapling forests. Gord – strategically not as big of a problem because in the model when uniform shelter wood forest unit is implemented the sapling forest is created not a pre-sapling condition, but on the ground the condition is fairly similar. This is a regional issue and natural disturbance patterns create way more pre-sapling condition.

Lacey – it is hard to get people to agree on the value of pre-sapling forest and harvest more. Barry – is there an alternative term that could be used in place of the term clearcut? Lacey – I have heard them called ‘*Liberation Cuts*’ in other jurisdictions. Deb – empathetic and realize the need for a huge public education piece, but it seems like a strategy we need. Joe – suggested that somewhere we indicate an attempt to increase the amount of pre-sapling area in the future. There is more pre-sapling condition out there than what we are getting credit for and I believe that it is more of a modeling/inventory issue. Gord agreed.

**ACTION: Include wording in SFM Plan to identify strategies being implemented to increase the presapling forest component levels in the future.**

Steve –if you have a lot of SEM going on out there and collecting understory information will help determine levels of pre-sapling condition in forest unit. Also pointed out that if you don’t adjust the target/variance to address these anomalies we could fail all the first three indicators right off the start. How was the 75% benchmark target set? Gord –doesn’t like the idea of lowering the target for all indicators to 70% because it lowers the bar for the SFM plan for one unique condition when most other indicators are fine, and we would also not be consistent with the FMP.

Gord – the 75% target was carefully selected after much consideration on all aspects of sustainability by the planning team (this was discussed in the LTMD presentation). The details of the scoping and sensitivity analysis are in the supplementary documentation of the FMP.

**ACTION: Advisory Group to decide to either agree with Gord to be consistent with FMP and measure landscape classes against natural level to quantify this indicator over the long term. The other approach is to set targets around actual seral stages (as quantified in SFMM) over time.**

**1.1.1.1.4 Indicator: Total area (ha) by even-aged forest unit in the old growth development stage by the start of each planning term**

*Discussed - Conservation of old-growth forest attributes.*

Gord - Changes in the new FMP have been made to include old growth assessments for all even-aged forest units. Separate objectives have been set for each even-aged old growth forest unit in the new plan. Each forest unit has been modeled to forecast old growth levels overtime in relation to the natural benchmark levels. Gord displayed these graphs.

Barry – every forest unit has old growth planned and forecasted? Gord – yes, the SFMM model has been constrained to ensure these levels are maintained over time. This old growth constraint in the model was the most sensitive ecological indicator, and had the most significant impact on wood supply over time.

Joe – suggested revising to account for variance for no less than 25% below the target level. Often said that it goes above there is no problem. Suggest editing text in VOIT Matrix. This applies to many of the indicators.

**ACTION: Revise the variances to indicate -25% as the allowable variance (instead of +/- 25%)**

Gord – we are achieving a significant amount of old growth across all forest units in this plan compared to the last plan. Steve – is the jack pine forest units contributing to old growth stage because it could be preventing the amount of pre-sapling stage jack pine? Gord – yes I agree - this is the same for all of the clear cut forest units. It is a trade off - old growth vs. pre-sapling forest – society seems to prefer old growth.

#### **1.1.1.2.1 Indicator: Range of disturbance patch sizes within the Bounds of Natural Variation (BNV)**

*Discussed - Management in the context of natural disturbance regimes and patterns and the range of natural variation, forest fragmentation and forest loss.*

Gord - The indicator that speaks to forest fragmentation and range of Natural Disturbance Pattern Emulation is consistent with indicator from the last plan. The “box and whisker” graph shown earlier in the LTMD presentation provided the results of area planned to be harvested in patch sizes to emulate the range of patch sizes created by natural disturbance produced using the NDPEG tool. The patch sizes planned in the FMP demonstrates movement toward the median patch size values in 5 of the 6 size classes needed on the landscape over the long term.

#### **1.1.1.1.4. Indicator: Degree of within stand structural retention**

*Discussed – Silvicultural regimes such as structural retention and timber harvesting practices (including clear cutting).*

Gord – explained degree of within stand structural retention is an indicator geared to boreal type ecosystems, where clear cut harvest systems are prominent. Province has put restrictions on size and shape of clear cuts (Natural Disturbance Pattern Emulation Guidelines - NDPE) and this indicator will be easily met for forest ecosystems where partial cutting is prominent (i.e. selection stand harvested by partial cutting system that we visited yesterday). Clear cut harvest system is prescribed on less than 5% of the total harvest area planned in Algonquin Park, and controls are in place through the NDPE Guide.

Gord - Suggested that this indicator be quantified through the use of tree marking inspections because of the connection to structural retention is covered off in the tree marking form under residual stocking and wildlife tree retention sections. Proposed to the group that the wording in indicator be “no tree

*marking inspection failures associated with residual stocking and wildlife tree retention, at final inspection.*” Final inspections are stated because if we do an inspection and it does not pass we do send the tree markers back to get it correct.

Barry – there is a re-inspection program after the marking but before the harvest? Danny – yes, there is a lot of re-marking and re-inspection that goes on.

Joe – suggested the wording in VOIT Matrix be changed to positive wording. Gord – I agree.

**ACTION: Revise the wording on this VOIT to a positive context**

Given the time of day, Gord wrapped up and thanked all those for their help getting through the first Element in the VOIT Matrix and working through the first few mandatory indicators.

**8. Other Items:**

The Algonquin of Ontario office on Riverside Drive in Pembroke will be the location of the next meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April. Those arriving on Thursday can participate in a Pole Yard tour hosted by Dana Shaw, details to follow.

Adjourn