

Public Advisory Group (PAG) for PA FMA Area Brief on the Meeting of October 14, 2020

20 participants attended the meeting, from organizations in 8 interest categories.

PAG Terms of Reference. A revised version was adopted with the concurrence of participating members.

Updates. Next week a letter will be sent to all contacts in the PA FMA area about safe options for reviewing draft forest operating Plans for 2021/22 in light of COVID guidelines, and the start of work on a second amendment to the FMP to align with the caribou range plan and reflect direction about excess hardwood retention. Carrier has requested and been approved to use sawlogs (for lumber) to a 12.5 cm top size instead of a 10 cm top size for the current operating year.

Forest Management Plan (FMP) 2020 Annual Report (on the 2018-19 Operating Year). The rest of the meeting was used to review 18 selected highlights from the inaugural 2020 FMP Annual Report, which is still in draft form. The final reported will be posted publicly. Discussion points included:

Engagement: A more structured process to respond to concerns brought forward at open houses was requested, in light of concerns that local input is not being heard. Examples used were concerns about the impact of harvesting on water levels in Whiteswan and Nesslin Lakes. If there was improved documentation of issues raised it would enable some of them to be picked up at a different level by people who can address them. A mechanism to respond to concerns expeditiously by the right people needs to be examined.

Distribution of the Harvest: This Indicator is aimed at distributing the harvest across the FMA area and in all stand types, for predominantly social reasons. However for environmental (wildlife) reasons the Indicator on caribou habitat is aimed at reducing disturbance in caribou areas and clustering the harvesting. There is a conflict between these indicators; the right balance between them needs to be found.

Harvest Events: (natural forest patterns): A harvest “event” is composed of one or more cut areas and a matrix of other areas between them. Targets are to create a range of harvest event sizes (with 65% in the 100-1,500 ha range) and have >9% retention within an event. It will take years to reach the target sizes.

Harvested vs Estimated Volumes: Harvest volumes predicted by the wood supply model were extremely accurate in this first year of data collected under this Indicator.

Economic Impact: Economic multipliers are used to calculate the direct, indirect and induced impacts from harvesting each cubic meter (m³) of wood.

Compliance Indicators: (for Soil Disturbance, Road Reclamation, Watercourse Crossings, Riparian Areas): A mix of data from Sakaw and the Forest Service was used to break out the details needed to report on these Indicators. Non-compliances do not necessarily have an environmental impact; they can be related to administrative, operational and safety issues. Actions used for educating, informing, and communicating with people to improve compliance (“remedied”, “no action taken” and “voluntary compliance opportunity”) are differentiated from those where enforcement action was taken.

Silviculture – Maintenance of Species Groups (stand types): The goal is that stands predicted to be in the landscape at maturity will reflect those that were harvested. There was not a close correlation between the harvested and predicted future stands based on the first year of data. Work to improve the predictions of future stand types is likely needed.

Environmental Assessments of FMPs. Today FMPs still undergo an environmental assessment, but the environmental assessment requirements have now been incorporated right into the Forest Management Planning Standard.

Next Meeting: Possibly early in 2021 to discuss information from work on FMP Amendment #2 (caribou).