

NORTHEAST ROUNDTABLE MEETING NOTES

Date: December 7, 2022

Time: 9:00 AM – 11:45 AM MST

Location: Virtual MS Teams

Attendees:

Municipal:

- Kathleen Connolly (DC Chamber of Commerce)
- Allen Courtoreille (District of Chetwynd)
- Bev Vandersteen (FN Chamber of Commerce)
- Dan Rose (PRRD)
- Brent Taillefer (Mayor of Taylor)
- Leonard Hiebert (PRRD)
- Lilia Hansen (Mayor of FSJ)

First Nations:

- Naomi Owens-Beek (SFN)
- Kara Green (HRFN)
- Jim Webb (WMFN)
- Nathan Prince (MLIB)

Stakeholders:

- Jim Little (NE Stakeholders)
- Charles Friesen (LP)
- Athena Andritz (LP)
- Antonio Pega (LP)
- Sarah Curtis (LP)
- Mark Phinney (Canfor)
- Jonathan Buchanan (AMEBC)
- Elizabeth Abbs (Summit Lake Resident)
- Donegal Wilson (BC Snowmobile Federation)
- Johnny Mikes (MKAB / CPAWS)
- Helen Gilbert (School District 60)
- Ron Long
- Julie Bourdon (Petronas)
- Katie Mitchell (Duck Unlimited)
- Peter Andreasen (Mining)
- Mike Whalley (Resource Municipalities Coalition)
- Lynda Neufeld (Conoco Phillips)
- Andrew Tyrrell (Canfor)
- Nicolisa Blatchford (Y2Y)
- Mike Millard

Government:

- Jason Lawson (WLRS)
- Shayla Blue (WLRS)
- Tyler Annand (WLRS)
- Kelly Cook (WLRS)
- Tara Forest (IRR)
- Katie Connah (WLRS)
- Aviva Jones (WLRS)
- Joelle Ward (WLRS)
- Tara Forest (IRR)
- Dale Morgan (IRR)
- Chris Pasztor (EMLI)
- Nicole Edginton (EMLI)
- Karrylyn Vince (WLRS)
- Angela White (WLRS)
- Ali Seyed (WLRS)
- Anna Regnier (WLRS)
- Sara Dickinson (OGC)
- Garth Thoroughgood (OGC)
- Naomi Saukila (IRR)
- Penny Vanderwekken-Dunn (IRR)
- Darcy Peel (WLRS)
- Michel Lavalée (WLRS)
- Michelle Irwin (WLRS)
- Shane Ford (WLRS)
- Susan Campbell (IRR)
- Michael Bridger (WLRS)
- Micaela Burton (WLRS)

Meeting Reference Materials Available Online at [NE Roundtable website](#):

Welcome, Agenda, Minutes

- Jason Lawson conducted welcome, general housekeeping and territorial acknowledgement.
- Shayla Blue conducted participant introductions.

Collaboration with Treaty 8 First Nations in the Northeast

- Dale Morgan provided a general update.

- Comment: We have had some concerns that the Halfway trail may be eliminated or become inaccessible. We need a better definition of what is happening, a lot of the public is willing to do battle if government won't.
 - Response: They will be making a trail. It's a requirement of the TLE agreement.
 - Response: Thanks for question. What we are seeing is with the land transfer process things are taking a long time. We are committed to engaging with stakeholders. We did say we were hoping to come out this winter but it's probably going to take longer. There is commitment between BRFN and the Province to relocate the Halfway trail. We're working with rec sites and trails with the Ministry of Environment to identify what can be done to trail standards. There is commitment and intent to have trail access through all parcels to the lands beyond and the relocation of the trail is happening prior to transfer. It will be some time before we are able to engage, but we will be engaging, communicating, and providing updates to the roundtable.
- Sara Dickinson provided an update for the Oil and Gas Commission (OGC)
- Karrylyn Vince provided an update for the Ministry of Forests (FOR)
- Question: Has discussion ever moved off to rural communities and cumulative effects on rural communities and development? Residents have concerns about cumulative effects.
 - Response: We are thinking about cumulative impacts across the landscape. In addition to concerns First Nations have raised, there is certainly a broad concern about impacts and the level of impacts. Restoration is something the Province and First Nations are committed to. When we are reviewing applications on crown or private land, the consideration of impacts to land and impacts to treaty rights is top of mind for statutory decision makers. As government, we are looking across the land base in the applications under consideration. We don't have a perfect system for addressing cumulative effects.
 - Response (OGC): We look at cumulative effects based on values on the landscape. We consider impacts on values on the land base such as wildlife, vegetation and things like that. We are monitoring the activity level on private land and not seeing a major increase.
- Question: With a cabinet change coming it is important that we consider it as a topic at the next round table. Decisions are affecting private land. Tenures are outstanding because of BRFN. We have a hard time understanding how something existing for 30 years affected the Burke decision.
 - Response: The results of the cabinet shuffle are pure speculation. With respect to the example, I think that whether the impact is new or existing it's still an impact on the land base. The length and duration of impact is something we have to think about as decision makers.
- Question: We live close to other First Nations, such as WMFN. Has there been any other requests from First Nations to have their say in what BRFN has to deal with? It's going to affect First Nations locally.
 - Response (OGC): To confirm, you were asking if the other nations in Chetwynd were involved in the discussion on applications? OGC continues to consult with all Treaty 8 First Nations, that practice has not changed. We continue to work with WMFN and SFN on application review and making decisions on applications.

- Comment: As a community they involve First Nations. We deal with the aftershock of what comes through the government. It's important for us in Chetwynd at least have an answer to the community.
 - Response: Are you asking if the Province is engaging with other Treaty 8 First Nations the same as BRFN? We have a table with everyone but BRFN, called the consensus table and are going through a variety of things. The biggest piece is how to address the findings in the Burke decision. Specifically, how to address cumulative effects and past disturbance, what does going forward look like in a space where you have to manage way of life and the treaty first? We are close to having some announcements, most work is around restoration and what it looks like going forward.
- Comment: Caution. I've seen commercials online and television that support the Burke decision. We strongly recommended the Province be aware that when south of the Peace River, you are in a different land for making resource decisions with Treaty 8 members. There should be strong caution against paying too much attention to one Nation when trying to reach consensus. In particular, WMFN, SFN and MLIB are in this area.
 - Response: Thank you, good point. What we're doing is recognizing the variety of Treaty 8 First Nations and important and unique interests and considering how to bring those together. It's not easy but is something we have to do. We are absolutely engaged with MLIB.
- Comment: We know the DRIPA action plan was released earlier this year. What is the process to weave in those recommendations to work that government is doing around resources?
 - Response: Thanks for raising that. The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) and all of government is accountable. There is a ton going on to make sure we're doing the work. Alignment of laws is a good example, taking a look at work that needs to be done to become aligned. Annually, MIRR will be putting out a "how did we do" evaluation and updating the action plan.
 - Response: There are significant commitments the Province has made with respect to moving the process forward. There was an announcement by the health authority that certain things are moving back to indigenous communities. Government is working on the *Wildlife* and *Heritage* Acts. There are commitments the Ministry of Forests has made for transforming the forest sector.
- Comment: Never forget that McLeod Lake Indian Band is a part of Treaty 8 and this is our Traditional Territory as well.

Together for Wildlife

- Aviva Jones provided an update on Together for Wildlife.
- Comment: Why does the Northeast have the lowest funding for these initiatives?
 - Response: We have to have capacity to pull projects off. They never said no for funding. We run into problems executing projects, with having staff and talent. We try to partner with other regions or First Nations. We are open if folks want to collaborate.

- Question: There was a letter from the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality Council on the bison that are making their way down to the Alaska Highway from the Northwest Territories. Have you seen it? Is there any conversation happening about that particular herd?
 - Response: We are working with Chris Lewis and are aware of what's happening. The Province is working with Yukon and Alberta. We are looking at what some ways we can enhance bison habitat, support communities and cohabitate with bison. They are a species at risk, and there is an initiative to increase the population. We are working with Fort Nelson First Nation as they have interest in bison populations in the Fort Nelson community.
- Question: Does this tool track movement with all animals?
 - Response: No this is not that tool. It tracks projects and spending. Collaring data is not available online as it's tricky as folks would know where bison are.
- Aviva Jones provided a Treaty 8 Wildlife Working Group Inventories presentation
- Question: Will you be sharing a link to your ArcGIS site?
 - Link: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1f077552bed941759392fdf3c2bb913a>
- Question: What wildlife management units are proposed to be inventoried?
 - Response: Perhaps it is better to report after. By next roundtable, all should be completed and wrapped up.
- Contact for Aviva Jones: Aviva.Jones@gov.bc.ca
- **Action Jason Lawson:** Will reach out to Aviva Jones and Chris Lewis on bison work presentation.

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

- Tara Forest provided TLE and Site C Lands agreements update, as well as an overview on TLE land transfer context. [Presentation link](#) to the NE Roundtable Website.
- Question: What are the things that overlap between the maps of WMFN and SFN? Are we going to be able to look at that? Are we going to be able to see maps together, so we have better understanding of each location?
 - Response: We don't have a map to share with all parcels. Maps are posted to the Government Together website. We have heard there is very strong interest in understanding how accesses will be affected by parcels around the lake. We are working on a response to that question, and it will take some time.
- Question: In the last meeting you talked about Site C land acquisitions for DRFN and PRFN. When will we get update on what is happening with Prophet regarding concerns about trails to the lake? Hopefully everyone is considered in the process and appreciates the need to resolve Site C land for First Nations.
 - Response: We still don't have selections for DRFN and PRFN. When they are provided, we can look at what we have and engage. When we do receive those selections then there will be a detailed update.
 - Response: Once we get parcel information and start stakeholder engagement all maps will be on the Government Together site.
- Comment: Is the process flexible enough that the public has input before maps become solid?

- Response: Yes, there will be a review of overlaps and how to address them, as well as seeking feedback through stakeholder engagement.
- Note: If you have the Government Together site bookmarked it may be a good idea to refresh the bookmark as there has been some technical issues with existing bookmarks following an update.
<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/land-transfers-in-northeast-british-columbia/>

Predator Management

- Michael Bridger gave a presentation on predator reduction efforts to support caribou recovery.
- Comment: Mussi, we do have good caribou numbers this year for sure.
- Comment: Is your team trying to erase all the wolves in northeast BC?
 - Response: That is certainly not the objective. Provincially we are only doing this in 13 of 54 caribou herds and only a subsample of caribou herds in the Northeast. We recognize the importance of wolves in a broader ecosystem. There are no conservation concerns for wolves in the Northeast as they tend to be abundant and their populations are resilient.
- Question: Did you say it was 700 wolves in the Klinse-za and Quintette area?
 - Response: Over the past 8 years 700 across Narraway, Quintette, Kennedy siding and Klinse-za.
- Question: How many wolves do you plan on collaring (in the Boreal wolf collaring project)?
 - Response: We have 29 collars and are looking to collar 14-15 wolf packs (a couple per pack) across the Maxhamish and Snake-Sahteneh boreal caribou ranges.
- Question: When doing wolf reduction do you notice the wolves move to other areas away from caribou herds? For example, moving into specific private lands and communities.
 - Response: This is hard to monitor. We certainly see dispersal from wolves from treatment areas to other areas. For the most part wolves in treatment areas are removed over winter before they can move to another area. Doing wolf reduction creates a vacuum which pulls wolves from other areas to vacant territory. More wolves move into treatment areas then move out. Wolves are dynamic and in flux with their areas. It's not something we are tracking specifically.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/natural-resource-policy-legislation/fish-and-wildlife-policy/4-7-0406 - aerial_wolf_reduction_procedure - september_16_2021.pdf

General Updates

- Joelle Ward provided an update on the Partnership Agreement. Included on the website is the [South Peace Mackenzie Trust Newsletter 2022-11-17](#).
- Question: Are these measures being applied to other Partnership Agreements?
 - Response: Is that referring to the antiracism topic?

- Comment: You named off a couple measures and items. Just wondering if it applies to other partnership agreements.
- Response: Currently we don't have other formal partnership agreements. The antiracism piece will be applied to other engagement. We expect those recommendations will be applicable to other types of engagement, even broader than caribou. The restoration implementation plan is going to be a very specific plan to the central group.
- Question: Regarding the peace on the antiracism component of this, do you have any resources that are available on how you address that? Any frameworks that can be shared with partners?
 - Response: I am not directly involved. **Action: Joelle will look into it and report back through Shayla.**
- Comment: About the antiracism piece. We don't know what is publicly available as contractor is still conducting interviews with people. Many interviews have been completed and they will continue into March, so maybe there will be something after.
 - Response: You're right. They have dozens of interviews. We are anticipating draft recommendations by end of February with final reporting end of March. We can say that this isn't the only antiracism initiative. MIRR is also undertaking antiracism initiatives. It is broader than caribou.
- Alireza Seyed provided an update on the bullmoose marsh project and moose winter tick survey. [Presentation linked](#) here on the NE Roundtable website.
- For further information on these projects please contact:
 - flnrmooseticksurvey@gov.bc.ca
 - 778-576-8899

Meeting Closure

- The next meetings are tentatively scheduled for **March 8th, June 7th, September 27th then December 6th, 2023**. If anyone knows of a conflict around those dates at this time let us know.
- Transitioning back to hybrid meetings and is the plan for next year. In person and virtual format. Maybe early we will introduce reviewing the terms of reference and updating as appropriate.
- Is there interest in having opportunities to present specific projects and work that goes on in the region? We are looking for comments and suggestions for future topics.
- Question: There will be new Ministers. Should we not update prior to March?
 - Response: I don't know that that in itself would trigger an early meeting for the roundtable. The announcement was starting today at 11:00 our time. For anyone interested please go to the government webpage and check out the update. We are coming into the holidays here and with winter field work I don't think there will be many broader updates available prior to March.
- There was a request that came in for an update on the FSJ LRMP. It wasn't on the agenda today because there is no update newer than the last update provided, which is essentially that the FSJ LRMP update process has been on hold since the Burke decision and at this point we're not certain on what the land use planning process will look like in the future. Know that all work on the previous LRMP update process will be valuable for future processes that we undertake.