

## NORTHEAST ROUNDTABLE HYBRID – MEETING NOTES

**Date:** February 28, 2024  
**Time:** 09:00 -02:50PM (MST)  
**Location:** Pomeroy Hotel and Conference  
[Virtual MS Teams](#)

### Attendees:

#### Municipal:

- Steve McLain (District of Chetwynd)
- Danielle Veach (Mayor of Pouce Coupe)
- Allen Courtoreille (District of Chetwynd)
- Jordan Kealy (Area B PRRD)
- Deanne Ennis (District of Chetwynd)
- Lisa Thompson (NRRM)

#### First Nations:

- Jim Webb (WMFN)
- Tammy Brown (WMFN)
- Brian Milakovic (DRFN)

#### Stakeholders:

- Jim Little (NE Stakeholders)
- Sarah Curtis (LP)
- Mark Phinney (Canfor)
- Elizabeth Abbs (Summit Lake Resident)
- Johnny Mikes (MKAB / CPAWS)
- Helen Gilbert (School District 60)
- Julie Bourdon (Petronas)
- Katie Mitchell (Duck Unlimited)
- Andrew Tyrrell (Canfor)
- Krista Phillips (CAPP)
- Stephanie Killam (MKAB)
- Scott Fraser (Dawson Road)
- Darryl Kroeker (FSJ Trappers Assoc)
- Ray Ensz (FSJ Trappers Assoc)
- Gerry Paille (BC Wildlife Federation)
- Barry Holland (North Peace Rod and Gun Club)
- Joyce Smith (Red Creek Steering Committee)
- Wayne Sawchuck (Env Cons)
- Alanna Brunet (LP Dawson Creek)
- Antonio Pega (LP Dawson Creek)
- Alexis Jorgensen (Northeast BC Wildlife Fund)
- Danielle Roscher (BCSF South Peace & Untamed Tours Inc.)

- Lynda Neufeld (ConocoPhillips)
- Heather Tanaka (Petronas)
- Jonathan Buchanan (AMEBC)
- Tim Burkhart (Y2Y)
- Tim McEwan (Mining)
- Tom Horvath (Petronas)
- Jocelyn Paul (BC Hydro)
- Ron Long (Pink Mtn)
- Tom Fulton (Northern Rockies)
- Donegal Wilson (BC Snowmobile Federation)
- Bridget

**Government:**

- Jason Lawson (WLRs)
- Shayla Blue (WLRs)
- Kelly Cook (WLRs)
- Tara Forest (IRR)
- Aviva Jones (WLRs)
- Joelle Ward (WLRs)
- Scott Schilds (WLRs)
- Megan Watters (WLRs)
- Dale Morgan (IRR)
- Anna Regnier (WLRs)
- Garth Thoroughgood (BCER)
- Naomi Saukila (IRR)
- Michelle Clyde (WLRs)
- Susan Campbell (IRR)
- Darius Low (FOR)
- Lyle Goldie (BCER)
- Ken Dobb (WLRs)
- Katie Kehl (WLRs)
- Adian Lehtinen (WLRs)
- Angela White (WLRs)
- Marianne Johnson (FOR)
- Uelun Tuvshinjargal (WLRs)
- Karrylyn Vince (FOR)
- Colin Ward (WLRs)
- Bob Warner (FOR)
- Tim Turner (EMLI)
- Viva Wolf (EMLI)
- Andrea Somerville (BC Parks)
- Alanna Schroeder (IRR)
- Laura Peliciari Fajardo (WLRs)
- Heather Onsrge (WLRs)

- Stephen MacIver (WLRS)
- Shane Ford (WLRS)
- Kiara Gannon (WLRS)
- Sheri Connolly (FOR)
- Anthony (BC COS)
- Daryl Struthers (BC COS)

## Welcome, Agenda, Minutes

- Jason Lawson as facilitator welcomed, territorial acknowledgement and agenda review.
- Meeting minutes from the last meeting have been posted online. Feedback and response to minutes is also posted. Questions/comments from last meeting?
- Shayla Blue conducted introductions (in person and virtual).

### 1. Northern Rockies Roundtable

- Presenters: Darius Low and Jim Co-Chairs
  - The Northern Rockies Roundtable was established to offer a public engagement opportunity specific to topics unique to the Northern Rockies.
  - At the time of its formation, the NE Roundtable was being hosted as a face-to-face session and participants had to travel to Fort St John. As the NE roundtable is now being delivered as a hybrid meeting (in person and virtual), travel to FSJ is no longer necessary.
  - While some topics may be unique to the Northern Rockies, often government presentations are delivered by government officials that manage issues that span the entire NE and due to timing and availability, presenters may not be available to present in both forums and if time has lapsed, the information may be out of date. So, for consistent and up-to-date messaging and to make the process more efficient, Darius Low is stepping down as co-chair of the Northern Rockies Roundtable and requesting that topics be brought to the NE Roundtable for public engagement.
  - Stakeholder collaboration and coordination is encouraged, and we look forward to continuing to utilize the NE Roundtable to share information about not only government decision making process, but also the great projects being proposed and implemented across the region.
  - Jim: Locals from the Northern Rockies regions brought different concerns/issues to the table. The issues that are brought to the Northeast Roundtable may not represent the people. So, planning on continuing the process (Northern Rockies Roundtable) without co-chair. The next meeting is March 13, 2024.
- Discussions:
  - Q: Will there be commitment from the Province for representation on the agenda and topics for Northern Rockies Roundtable?
    - R: The Northern Rockies Roundtable can request a presentation from a government official. The government official will determine how to respond to the request.

- C: Meetings should be in-person, hybrid makes it difficult to know who is participating, what the body language is like, and confidentiality vs who else is listening in.
- C: The Northeast Roundtable are locals bringing local issues. The Northeast Roundtable Agenda is big. The Northern Rockies Agenda may not overlap with NE Roundtable. The Northern Rockies Group/Roundtable will continue the process and welcomes any government support they can get.
  - R: The NE Roundtable content has been mostly government heavy. But we have had some interesting updates from the BC Wildlife Federation about what their work has been. So, the NE Roundtable welcomes any information sharing from groups, including the Northern Rockies.
  - R: As for changing the NE roundtable to just in-person we have received some positive feedback about the hybrid option, and it has provided opportunities for more participants and allowed for many presentations by people that wouldn't be able to attend in person.

## 2. Treaty Land Entitlement

- Tara Forest: NE Land Transfers for TLA & Site C Updates
  - Work to transfer the land parcels where engagement has closed is ongoing.
  - Public engagement for Saulteau TLE and Site C TLA land selections is closing on March 17, 2024. The engagement is available on GovTogether website publicly: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/land-transfers-in-northeast-bc/>
  - A What We Heard Report will be provided for the Saulteau TLE and TLA parcels after engagement closes.
  - We are committed to engaging the public & NE Roundtable on new parcels, once First Nations identify new parcels and the Province confirms the identified lands.
  - MIRR remains committed to engaging the public & NE Roundtable on the Halfway River Trail, and we recognize that the interest has not gone away.
  - BRFN is working on some field work from a geotechnical perspective. The technical report is anticipated to be completed sometime this spring, and we may seek to engage later (potentially June, but that timeframe could be pushed back).
    - A couple of stakeholders have been identified so far: Muskwa Kechika Advisory Board, Northland Trailblazers Snowmobile Club, Moose ATV Club, North Peace Rod and Gun Club, BC Wildlife Federation.

- Please reach out, if we missed any interest groups, and if you know of any such as horseback organized groups.
- Discussions:
  - Q: what about parcels at the Sikanni? Saulteau has dropped the existing parcel at the Sikanni, though there could be new parcels selected by other First Nations in the future.
  - C: Public access is important.
  - Q: Where are the parcels and land claims? What stages and status are they are at? Can we get a thorough update on this? Maybe in June?
    - R: The information are available on the GovTogether website. It is a transparent and open approach. MIRR will share a status update in a slide deck at the next NE Roundtable meeting.
  - Q: Older Fort Nelson FN Land Transfer or Land Claims, where are they at?
  - R: Fort Nelson does not currently have agreements that provide for land selections. Q: Site C Land Selections – is it still happening? The general public wants to know.
    - R: Halfway and Saulteau have made their parcel selections. New lands identified by First Nations with Site C Tripartite Land Agreements will go through provincial review and confirmation before the parcels are presented to tenure holders and for engagement to the NE Roundtable and the public. Doig River, Prophet River, West Moberly and/or other First Nations with Site C Land Agreements have not yet identified land parcels to the Province.
  - Q: Do maps show affected tenure holders? Not all uses are tenure holders. Some have historical uses. So, we want to be informed about the process and updates. We want to be included in the engagement.
    - R: Crown Lands could have tenure holders. There could be other overlapping interests, which can be identified during stakeholder engagement. The process takes time, because we have to go through thoroughly.

### **3. Restoration and Development Plans**

- Viva Wolf: Operational Planning Update – [HV1 Plans and Landscape Planning Pilots](#) presentation.
  - High Value Plans are operational plans that will provide direction/rules in provincial decision-making HV areas. They are PNG focused. No commercial forest harvesting allowed in HV1.

- Protect at least 60% of the Plan Area. Conditions under which development could occur in 40% of the Plan Area.
- Gundy Plan current status is third party engagement underway concurrent with final drafting. Seeking consensus with both BRFN and HRFN. Targeting shared decision in mid-March. Anticipate plan to take effect in late June.
- Landscape Planning Pilots:  
Focus on cultural, restoration and development interests seeking balance and long term predictability for both the exercise of treaty rights and the regional economy.
- i. Saultea First Nations in South Peace – target shared decision in June 2024; anticipate 3<sup>rd</sup> party engagement to begin in early May 2024.
- ii. Halfway River First Nation: resume the process this spring; target shared decision in June 2024.
- iii. Prophet River First Nation: target shared decision in Fall, 2024.
- iv. Fort Nelson First Nation: project plan agreement March 2024; target shared decision in fiscal Q4.
- v. Anticipate further discussions re landscape planning pilots with DRFN, WMFN and MLIB through 2024/25 FY.
- Discussions:
  - Q: They apply to all activities?
    - R: They only apply to new Oil and Gas development disturbances. Electrification of the oil and gas sector will be subject to many of the provisions of the plans but may have some exceptions as transmission lines are not considered New Disturbance in some areas under the BRFN Implementation Agreement.
  - Q: Maybe a question for MOF. What is considered commercial harvesting? Fire mitigation? What was done to determine impacts to economics?
    - R: Economic analysis relative to PNG opportunities in HV1 Areas.
    - R: Commercial forest harvesting is defined as licensee harvesting under a TFL, forest license or other commercial tenure.
    - R: Donnie Creek Recovery Table is figuring out the salvage opportunity.
    - R: Woodlot harvesting will continue in the Gundy Plan.
  - Q: Are the Forest Landscape pilot areas spatially defined areas?
    - R: Yes, they are spatially defined areas.
  - C: Wayne Sawchuck I have been appointed as a Blueberry River First Nation Restoration Society member and will like to liaison between this NE Roundtable group and the Society.

## 4. Caribou Program

- Joelle Ward: [Caribou Recovery Program](#) presentation
  - Quick overview on staffing and structural updates
  - BC Caribou Recovery Team & Environment and Climate Change Canada cosponsored the “Growing the Restoration Economy Workshop” on January 16, 17, 2024 in Vancouver.
  - 20 tangible action plans across the 4 pathways were identified.
  - Goal of the workshop: Restoration Roadmap for BC
  - Four Core pathways: building capacity and training, reducing regulatory and policy barriers, achieving co-benefits, and monitoring outcomes.
  - The emergence of consistent and important actions:
    - A need for clear & consistent monitoring and data standards;
    - Education and training;
    - Consistent and efficient regulations, policy and authorizations;
    - Long term fund stability to support year-round employment and program implementation;
    - Restoration that achieves multiple objectives/co-benefits;
    - Recognition of the critical role Indigenous Nations play.
  
- Megan Watters: Partnership Agreement Updates
  - Legally binding agreement West Moberly and Saulteau FN, Federal, provincial leadership, Chiefs and Councils
  - Schedule 5 - Commitment to Action on Racism
  - Interview (dense report), recommendations and lessons.
- Restoration Implementation Planning
  - Open houses to share restoration implementation plans delayed due to resource constraints. Aiming for Fall 2024
  - Prior to any restoration activities, we will send out an info package to affected stakeholders.
  - Draft plan:
    - Refining prioritization areas
    - Improving our ability to efficiently implement restoration, improving permitting, and gaining capacity on the ground.
  - Caribou Recovery-Related Land Use Objectives
    - Drafted Land Use Objectives
    - Awaiting Cabinet mandate to initiate engagement with stakeholders and FN



- CRP collaborating with MOF on a timber harvesting focused socio-economic assessment of ongoing FN agreements, wildlife management/protections, and proposed caribou management
- Bringing on a third-party contractor to lead a collaborative socio-economic impacts with inputs from stakeholders and FN
- Winter Motorized Recreation – C&E:
  - No notable infractions
  -
- Scott Schilds: Boreal Caribou:
  - Interim Habitat Protections are being worked on, aligned with the Boreal Caribou protection and Recovery Plan, engaged on last year.
  - Interim so that long-term measures will be aligned with other LUP and LUO. Liard Water and Land Stewardship Forum.
  - Forest Protection: Designated area under Part 13 of the Forest Act, No forest harvest with exceptions.
  - No new disturbance – working with EMLI and BCER. Ministerial or Commissioner Direction to meet development intent. The tool is more time bound.
  - Consistent with previous plans.
- June – 2024 targeted date for habitat Protection
- Fort Nelson FN – Restoration Planning.
- Guidance, HV areas for Caribou. Feeding to other initiatives.
- Recruitment survey, mortality – updated number will likely become available in September (information gathering delayed due to lack of snow). 30 GPS collar on wolf to monitor pack activities and have more up-to-date information.
  - Boreal Caribou Protection and Recover Plan (BCPRP) endorsed by cabinet July 2023. Implementation Priorities: Habitat Protection, Restoration Planning, Alignment with Liard Water and Land Stewardship Forum, Population and Predator Monitoring
- Discussions:
  - Q: Caribou have no heightened sense for predators. When introducing them to the land base, what is being done?
    - R: Caribou are not being introduced to the landscape, our priority is maintaining populations where they live now, which is reduced from historic extent. The survival strategy for Caribou has always been spacing out from each other and their predators. The landscape has been altered with seismic and linear features, which have made it easier for wolves to travel and the caribou not being able to space

away. It's about trying to reset that balance from a predator-prey dynamic relationship, but also from a habitat side, and that takes a very, very long time on the habitat side.

- C: Predator management is predation from wolves
- C: There are increased bear activities, wolverines etc. They could be driver of population decline.
- C: Restoration - Partnership Agreement. In regard to road deactivation would like to ensure that the Snowmobile Club is on the list to be notified.
  - R: We can notify for caribou-driven restoration. It should be noted that road deactivations are not always linked to caribou recovery initiatives and is often undertaken by licensees for engineering or economic reasons.
- Q: When will the summary of the Wosk Centre report be released?
  - R: The Parties to the Partnership Agreement are currently working on how to summarize the Wosk Centre work. We don't have a specific date identified at this point, but I would imagine it'll be by spring. Feel free to contact Jennifer Meilleur ([Jennifer.Meilleur@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Jennifer.Meilleur@gov.bc.ca)) for more details - Jenn is managing the Wosk centre work.

## 5. Wildlife

- Aviva Jones: Wildlife and Stewardship
  - Bison crew heading out tomorrow to Pink Mountain to get head number count for Plains Bison;
  - Provincial Vet. Species management plan, collaring project
  - Reinitiated the Road Mortality Group for Wood bison (working with the Yukon government and the Nations)
  - Donnie Creek research: if Bisons burned use area
  - 747, 717 – 3 out of 5 Moose survey for field season (due to weather conditions)
  - Mineral licks project working on with UNBC. It will be multi species interactions and a long term project.
  - Sheep Survey ; big horned sheep project (sheep health, habitat use, ), we'll share more collaborative project
  - Conservation Officers will share in June meeting
  - Predator management project
- Discussions:
  - Q: Is there a study of watershed on these animals due to wildfire?
    - Assessment stewardship initiatives; there are number of ideas on the table

- C: Mineral Licks: different sulphur blocks and garlic blocks can be used for ticks and parasite (moose)
- C: Predator Management Program: caribou and moose and in the interior of BC in cut blocks starving, sometimes it isn't predators.
  - R: These are conversations about what might be possible, gather the data, and see what is available.
- C: We talked about doing a study on wolverine. Are you also going to include the sheep range in northeastern BC? Because I've probably seen 20 or 30 wolverines over the year when I've been sheep hunting.
  - R: I will talk to Inge-Jean. Let her know what you're shared.
  
- Stephen MacIver: Hunting Regulation Changes and Updates
  - Every 2 years, we create Hunting and Trapping Synopsis. It is more than hunting.
  - A week ago proposed regulation changes were posted online: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/fishing-hunting/ahte/hunting-trapping>
  - These are proposals:
    - Iver Lake – one access
    - Remove the Antler Moose Restrictions LEH,
    - Big horned sheep – LEH for these herds
    - Other types of sheep like (thin horned sheep...) – LEH
  - Deadline to review and provide feedback is **March 22, 2024**
  
- Discussions:
  - C: The proposals we saw from 7D were totally lacking in the rationale and supporting data. Changes made to 736, 719 is lacking in rationale or supporting data with sheep. For enforcing the law around wildlife collisions most people don't know that it's illegal to not report a collision with an animal.

## 6. Wildfire Recovery and Restoration

- Bob (Robert) Warner: [Fire Rehabilitation and Recovery in the NE Region](#) presentation
  - Brief Summary of 2023 Fire Season
    - Approximately 1.83 million ha of fire area in NE in 2023 (2.8M ha Provincially)
    - 5 of 10 largest fires in BC History occurred in the NE Region this year
  - ~20M m<sup>3</sup> of merchantable timber impacted
  - Significant impacts to areas and values identified in Agreements
    - BRFN HV1s, FRRA's, WMBs, Traplines

- Treaty 8 Consensus Protection and EMA
- 572 km fire guard constructed and 50km of range fence burned
  
- Wildfire Land-Based Recovery (WLBR): we're more on the land, repair the land-base affected by the wildfire, impacted ecosystems.
  
- Rehabilitation vs Recovery (terminology)
  - Rehabilitation: component of WLBR, mitigating and repairing damage done by fire suppression activities,
    - legislated under s.65 of the Wildfire Act, crown land,
    - Work Is implemented by MOF,
    - Post Wildfire Natural Hazard Assessments (PWNHA) carried out to identify areas of public safety or high environmental concern, guides the recovery process,
    - on larger fires will take 1-2 years to complete
  - Recovery: applies mitigating and repairing or restoring damage done by wildfire on the land,
    - includes access management,
    - range improvements,
    - wildlife enhancement,
    - and studies to determine impacts of large-scale fire ,
    - salvage harvesting is a tool recovery,
    - not a legislated activity, funding is not defined
- Fire Holdovers: BCWS planning outreach to communities to hear concerns and communication preparedness/response.
- Wildfire Timber Salvage:
  - Get to the wood before it deteriorates,
  - Working with Nations and Licensees to target priority areas,
  - Avoiding green wood where feasible,
  - Burn Severity mapping done early and targeting medium to high burn severity areas for salvage.
- Post Wildfire Silviculture Prescriptions/stocking
  - 60,000 silviculture openings lost to the fires
  - New policy and legislation allows for catastrophic funding by area
  - Working with Nations and licensees to identify high priority areas to reforest
  
- Discussions:
  - Q: Do you work with other industries to preserve water?

- *R:* Yes, BC Wildfire Service. There are some legislative tools to stop water use.
- *Q:* What are the guidelines to access for Salvage logging?
  - *R:* Use existing roads; consideration into where we are doing harvesting. If we go in and out, we have requirements for rehabilitation within specific timelines.
- *Q:* What is the percentage of water permits? The permit costs are low.
  - *R:* Rarely have to cut down. We can observe water levels, and local staff may be able to provide more information on the stats.
- *Q:* Wildlife Federation: Lots of science available logging after wildfire that is friendly to wildlife, soil degradation, what is the status of things? What principles are being used?
  - *R:* Supporting salvage: considering wildlife, invasive weeds, all of the values being considered, challenges and approaches that have been working.
- *Q:* Red Creek Clean Up. In 2021 significant wind blowdown 10-30 feet of blowdown. We have asked FOR to clean up. Red Creek residents want minimal invasive action they don't want new roads pushing in. Want to get it started and using existing roads.
  - *R:* Safety is a priority. Wildfire on Crown Land needs qualified forester prescription. We have been actively working on addressing some of the concerns brought forward by the committee, and we're very hopeful that we'll be able to find solutions moving forward.
- *Q:* I saw a map of snowpack in your presentation for February, and that leads me to the question, whether or not anybody from here is actually showing you how much snow they have. Because I haven't got a total of over one foot of snow for this whole winter so far, yet it shows that we're a longer range for that snowpack. How is it listed as that?
  - *R:* Snow pillow readings are done by the River Forecast Center: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c15768bf73494f5da04b1aac6793bd2e>
- *Q:* Would you consider the rather extensive back burn areas created by the fires service there to be candidates for rehabilitation or recovery? Because one might argue that that is actual damage done through suppression activities.
  - *R:* I'll get back to you on that.
  - *C:* There were significant amounts of area that were subject to back burning. Potentially, I think you quoted 20 million meters of timber.

If you think of the consumption locally between the two mills, it's 2 million meters a year. We can extrapolate that that's 10 years worth of consumption taken care of. It is a short opportunity, especially for a lumber manufacturer, it's really the first year for spruce. It's not like the Kootenays where you could go and log fir for maybe two or three years after. It's really, this winter and maybe next summer. It's truly, it's a tiny and really unfortunate amount that we're going to actually be able to salvage it. It's a really big challenge ahead of forestry.

## 7. WLRS and FOR Structure

- Shane Ford and Karrilyn Vince: [Ministries of WLRS and FOR Changes presentation](#)
  - October 19, 2023 – public announcement on Transfer of Natural Resource Ministerial responsibilities. Build both ministries capacity to respond to increasing complexity on the land base, partnership with First Nations, sustainability of resources and broader ecosystem management
  - WLRS: Front Counter BC & decisions for land, water, hunting and fishing
  - FOR – decisions for forestry, range and archaeology
  - WLRS – Revitalization of NE Regional Management Committee
  - FOR Organizational Change:
    - Outlines: key components of MOF mandate, MOF goals and priority objectives
  - WLRS Organizational Change:
    - WLRS leading BC's land stewardship: Reconciliation, ecosystem health & biodiversity, conservation of wildlife & habitat, economic diversity & sustainability
- Discussions:
  - Q: Has there be an office of biodiversity and ecosystem health portfolio?
    - R: See if Shane can find further information. **Update:** We are in the process of hiring and seeking approval to fill vacant boxes post re-org. Currently, hiring for a F/T Wildlife S/H. Posting for a DRM in NE region and will be posting some wildlife and ecosystem positions shortly.
  - Q: In the budget what is available for BC Wildfire and training opportunities for locals etc.
    - R: Ministry of Forest did receive a strong budget with respect to BC wildfire.

- *R:* This is being addressed as part of the [Premier's Expert Task Force on Emergencies - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#) which was created last fall to “determine how the Province can better support people in the front line of emergencies, enhance support delivery for evacuees and apply lessons the Province has learned in preparation for the next emergency”. Specifically, 2 of the focusses include
  - Planning for incorporation of local volunteer resources for wildfire response
  - Improving integration of rural and municipal fire departments into the BC Wildfire Service response in the wildland urban interface

Training is supported, details on how this will roll out is underway. Local Fort St John Fire Zone Officer, Jame Bergen, [james.bergen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:james.bergen@gov.bc.ca) will answer any specific questions.

- *Q:* Why do you need to be vaccinated to be a contractor to make BC Bid for Wildfire?
  - *R:* Going to find information on this if PSA has updated the rules for contractors. **Update:** Firefighting contractors **no** longer need to be vaccinated.
- *Q:* Trapping is not included in the structure. Are there any plans to replace/fill local positions?

*R:* Trapping may be included through authorizations and fish, wildlife, and trapping is the responsibility of WLRS. Guide outfitters, trappers, or the hunting community are reflected in the functional org charts. The focus is on the value or resource managed by the ministry. WLRS is going to decide how they're going to build both the Director of Resource Management and the section head for Fish and Wildlife.
- *C:* To offer a perspective, if you have locals with knowledge of the Forest Industry; they are ready to go to fight wildfire. Many local foresters and contractors worked on the Donnie Creek fire.

## 8. Proposed Land Act Amendment

- Colin Ward: [Engagement: Enabling Declaration Act Agreements for Land Act decisions](#) presentation
  - The Minister, in a statement a week and half ago, recognizes the need for additional time on engage BC site; so, we will not be proposing the Land Act Amendment in spring session of cabinet.

- Minister also recognizes the negative impacts that resulted in some tensions between local communities, and that it was not intended with the roll out.
- Proposal to enable Land Act:
  - Background on the Declaration Act (2019)
  - Section 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act enables the Province to enter into agreements with Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGB), which can give IGBs a formal role in the decision-making, and modify how a decision is made under another Act.
  - The Declaration Act does not give legal effect to these modifications to decision-making power(s) so amendments are required to the Act the legislation containing the decision-making power(s).
  - Land Act allows for access and use of public land for 25 separate programs to support industry, recreation and research and includes such things as grazing, communication towers and clean energy projects
  - Land Act contains several other aspects related to administration of Land Act tenures and land management, as well as other operational matters
  - The proposed amendments will not lead to broad, sweeping or automatic changes. There is no impact from the proposed amendments to the public's ability to access Crown Land, to existing tenures or existing decision-making processes.
  - There are no changes contemplated to any provisions of the LA beyond the proposed amendments that enable decision-making agreements
  - The proposed amendments to the LA enable the use of the tools set out in the Declaration Act. (Nothing requires the Province to enter into a decision-making agreement. The public interest will be a critical part of any provincial government decision to enter into a negotiation of an agreement.
  - Joint of consent-based decision-making Agreements are an important tool in the Declaration Act that
    - Brings stability to decision-making with First Nations partners;
    - Improves predictability and transparency for how decisions are made;
    - Can improve competitiveness and economic opportunities.
  - Agreements do not provide a "veto" and require due process.
- Discussions:
  - Q: What is your position in the government?
    - R: Assistant Deputy Minister, Reconciliation, Lands & Natural Resource Policy, WLRS



- C: This created a division in Northern areas. There is lack of transparency, reconciliation, consultation, engagement. Province is leaving too many holes for speculation. Speculation and rumour is being put on the local Indigenous people to answer questions when even their consultation is subpar. So, I guess, going forward, you could tighten up those holes so that you're not creating more division and more speculation isn't being continued.
  - R: The roll out of what was being proposed, was not good. It created divisions, which was not intended.
  - Updates and engagement should be brought sooner to the public to eliminate uncertainty and have clearer timelines and processes.
- C: Consultation and timing is important.
- Q: With Rory Richardson's new role. Are there any comments you want to make about that, how that might change things, improve things?
  - R: Rory Richardson (NE)- stakeholder engagement, recognition of importance of having communication, agreements spaces where there are potential for impacts. There needs to be that clarity and the understanding and the opportunity to provide perspective.
- C: Consultation is lacking. Information needs to be communicated effectively. And when you get to a topic like this, you're, you're creating a very hostile environment for people in regions where the land where we're reliant on the land for how people live and how they work. Government is trying very hard to build and foster relationships with First Nations. And when that transparency isn't in place and something like this happens, it makes it very difficult for communication to happen back and forth. And unfortunately for me, I'm just being a local representative. I'm a punching bag for when you make decisions like this. And it makes my life very difficult.
  - R: While it wasn't intended, I understand the impacts are real. And so, you know, for us, if we look to do work in the future, I think for government, we'll need to look to do better.
- Q: During a meeting with Minister Cullens, there was an idea in the Lands Act to incorporate compensation or recourse for guides
  - R: Regardless of whether it's under the Land Act or other statutes, it's something that government does take seriously and is looking to understand.

## 9. BC Parks

- Andrea Somerville: [Klinse-za Provincial Park](#) presentation

- Klinse-za Provincial Park Expansion - Park expansion is a commitment of the Caribou Partnership Agreement (2020)
  - B3 portion of the proposed protection will add 168,000 ha Twin Sisters Park and Protected Area
  - 203,200 ha (B2 and B3) of protected land
  - June timeframe is established for initiating a Park Management Plan for establishment of the Park and Protected Area. A park management planning process will be initiated once the park is established. The plan will be developed with Saulteau First Nation and West Moberly First Nation. We will be engaging with the stakeholders and public on the Park Management Plan.
- Discussions:
    - Q: Can you comment on the Silver Sands Recreation area? Is it within this new Park and what will be happening to it?
      - R: Rec areas will be incorporated into the park. BC Parks has no intent to change any compatible activities with the Park, however, that will be determined through the park management planning process.
      - R: BC Park's stance on reclamation work – regenerate on its own.

## Meeting Closure

- The next roundtable meeting is scheduled for **June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024**.