

NORTHEAST ROUNDTABLE HYBRID – MEETING NOTES

Date: June 05, 2024
Time: 09:00 -02:50PM (MST)
Location: Pomeroy Hotel and Conference
[Virtual MS Teams](#)

Attendees:

Municipal:

- Steve McLain (District of Chetwynd)
- Bev Vandersteen (Fort Nelson Chamber of Commerce)
- Mayor Dober (Dawson Creek)
- Brent Taillefer (District of Taylor)
- Tiffany Hetenyi (FSJ Chamber of Commerce) *in-person*

First Nations:

- Jim Webb (WMFN)
- Tammy Brown (WMFN)
- Ryan McKay (Saulteau First Nation) *in-person*

Stakeholders:

- Jim Little (NE Stakeholders) *in-person*
- Kristine Bock (Canfor)
- Helen Gilbert (School District 60)
- David Morrison (Petronas)
- Andrew Tyrrell (Canfor) *in-person*
- Krista Phillips (CAPP)
- Darryl Kroeker (FSJ Trappers Assoc) *in-person*
- Ray Ensz (FSJ Trappers Assoc) *in-person*
- Gerry Paille (BC Wildlife Federation) *in-person*
- Wayne Sawchuck (Env Cons)
- Antonio Pega (LP Dawson Creek) *in-person*
- Darin Hancock (LP) *in-person*
- Danielle Roscher (BCSF South Peace & Untamed Tours Inc.)
- Tim Burkhart (Y2Y)
- Jocelyn Paul (BC Hydro)
- Donegal Wilson (BC Snowmobile Federation)
- Korey Green (Enbridge and Wild Sheep Society)
- Kari Sawatzky (Todd Energy)
- Rahul Lakhote (BC Hydro)
- Heather Lui (CAPP)
- Andy Ackerman (NE Stakeholders)

Government:

- Jason Lawson (WLRS) *in-person*
- Shayla Blue (WLRS) *in-person*
- Kelly Cook (WLRS) *in-person*
- Tara Forest (IRR) *in-person*
- Aviva Jones (WLRS) *in-person*
- Joelle Ward (WLRS)
- Anna Regnier (WLRS)
- Garth Thoroughgood (BCER) *in-person*
- Naomi Saukila (IRR)
- Michelle Clyde (WLRS)
- Susan Campbell (IRR)
- Darius Low (FOR)
- Lyle Goldie (BCER)
- Ken Dobb (WLRS)
- Angela White (WLRS)
- Uelun Tuvshinjargal (WLRS)
- Karilyn Vince (FOR) *in-person*
- Bob Warner (FOR)
- Tim Turner (EMLI)
- Andrea Somerville (BC Parks)
- Alanna Schroeder (IRR)
- Laura Peliciari Fajardo (WLRS)
- Shane Ford (WLRS)
- Anthony Eagles (BC COS) *in-person*
- Daryl Struthers (BC COS) *in-person*
- Lori Phillips (BCER)
- Kristine Ciruna (FOR)
- Doug Bourhill (EMLI)
- Lavona Liggins (AF)
- Al-Nashir Charania (WLRS)
- Cheryl Gilbert (JEDI)
- Laura Peliciari Fajardo (WLRS)
- Trevor Campbell (FOR)
- Melanie Webster (FOR)
- Sandra Jupp (WLRS)
- Beth Eagles (FOR)
- Brenna Schilds (AF)
- Kristen House (WLRS)
- Sanjay Tewari (WLRS)
- Carolyn Gibson (WLRS)
- Christine Taylor (FOR)
- David Muter (WLRS)
- Alison Poste (EMLI)

- Roari Richardson (WLRS)
- Shane Greenless (FOR)
- Vanessa Foord (FOR)
- Inge-Jean Hansen (WLRS)
- Tamara Danshin (JEDI)
- Duncan Blagdon (WLSR) *in-person*
- James Morgan (WLRS) *in-person*
- Agnes Pelletier (WLRS) *in-person*

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?
 - Comment: No comments on minutes from last meeting.
- Shayla Blue conducted introductions (in person and virtual).

1. Treaty Land Entitlement

- Tara Forest: [Review of Northeast Land Transfers presentation](#) for Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) and Site C Tripartite Land Agreements (TLA)
 - The Province is continuing to work through transferring parcels.
 - Discussions:
 - Q: Can you tell us why the Blueberry River First Nation (BRFN) does not have a Site C component?
 - R: The Province has been discussing this with Blueberry, but does not yet have a signed agreement with BRFN on the impacts from the Site C project.
 - Q: Access to the parcels is one of the many issues. What happens to lands that were committed to FNs? Are we committed to finding something else for parcels that have been burnt.
 - R: The Province will continue to work with First Nations regarding their interests in their TLE and Site C TLA land selections, for example if a First Nation raises any concerns about a parcel that has burned or partly burned in a wildfire.
 - Q: Stakeholder is interested in a selected transfer process what stage it is at.

- *R:* All the parcels in the TLE Lands Agreements, and some of the TLA parcels are in the implementation phase. The Province will engage on new parcels once they have been identified and initially reviewed. The best place to see the status (closed, new, in process) is in the [Land Transfers in Northeast British Columbia - govTogetherBC](#) website has all the parcels engaged including, maps, etc, and any further new updates are going to will be posted when and as parcels become available for engagement.
- *Q:* In the Fee Simple Land Transfers who is the title holder?
 - *R:* The FN will be the owner through an entity for designated agreement.
- *Q:* Regarding access to trails.
 - *R:* The There is a need to engage about the Halfway Rier Trail.
- *Comment:* There are also Forst Nations elections coming up this year to consider.

2. NE Cumulative Effects Legal Order

- Carolyn Gibson: [NE Cumulative Effects Legal Order presentation](#)
- Discussions:
 - *Q:* Will it cause delays in decision-making?
 - *R:* There will be that learning curve. In time it will create a more streamered lined process, now our decision makers are developing guides.
 - *Q:* Will the general public be involved in these decisions?
 - *R:* This order does not chance how government engages with the public on decisions.
 - *Q:* What happens when the decision makers don't follow the statutory order? And when the decision makers are not following the CE order?
 - *R:* The first is a legal matter, Carolyn can't comment further. As per the order, decision makers must incorporate documentation of CE considerations.
 -

3. Caribou Program

- Joelle Ward: General Caribou Program updates.
 - [Caribou Partnership Agreement Zones map](#)
 - Implementation of Boreal Caribou GAR – WHA Order, UWR Order
 - [Boreal Caribou Management map](#)

- Finalizing the language of the Order with FN, practices that can and cannot occur within those areas.
 - Presented to the Decision-Maker.
 - Boreal Caribou:
 - Interim Habitat Protections
 - Aligned with other LUP and LUO. Liard Water and Land Stewardship Forum.
 - Part 13 of the Forest Act – has to go to cabinet. And there is a long waitlist. So, going with the GAR.
- Duncan Blagdon: [NE Caribou Population Monitoring Surveys presentation](#)
 - Agnes Pelletier:
 - Non invasive monitoring via collection of fecal pellets and genomics analyses. Four ranges sampled so far, and results from analyses are pending. We will be providing information on population estimates, kinship and disease risk thanks to these samples.
 -
 - Discussions:
 - Q: Has there been economic benefit study done in these areas?
 - R: Multiple socio-economic study has been done by Northern Rockies , Province, Chief of Foresters Office, EMLI.
 - Q: Will these counts be shared in a printed document?
 - R: On the Caribou Recovery website (can also reach out to Duncan or Agnes). There is a time lag between reports and data being provided to WLRs Knowledge Management Branch and getting docs uploaded to the system.
 - C: The information is outdated on the website when checked for other herds last month and it would be great if the reports can be updated.
 - Q: Why is there LEH and there is no season, and region six is going to LEH? I don't think you have any evidence that can really support that move. So, the hope is we will be spending some time on the ones that aren't federally listed and immediate action is required, and we can get that sorted out.
 - R: The current closure is not directly related to the bull cow ratio. The decision is way above their power. I think that would probably work for engagement, I don't know exactly with whom, but right now, if you have a couple of bulls that are taken out of these populations, it won't affect it in a negative way.

- Q: Related to predator control, did you provide any information on how much was spent and effectiveness? Maybe to do with how many numbers of wolf was taken?
 - R: I don't have the specific dollar amounts,. In Chinchaga there were no wolves removed due to marginal conditions. Pink Mountain received removal of 16 wolves. The South Peace region with the Central Mountain populations 50 wolves removed. The Graham had one wolf removal. So, all those populations are below the target of under three wolves per thousand square kilometers. All aerial.
- Q: The federal government has declared that there's a go-no-go population level for sustainable hunting. How close to that number are we, or are we there?
 - R: Not 100% sure what that number would be. We're trying to recover caribou to self-sustaining status. It seems like in region 7b the caribou hunt was shut down for more social reasons than it being able to continue due to bull-cow ratios.
- Q: So, are you telling me that the science is outgunned literally by the politics?
 - R: I think it's important to remember that we have a signed agreement with Treaty 8 nations around certain aspects that ensure for treaty rights moving forward. We did lose a court case. We have infringed, and one of the requests that came through was a closure. The parties recommend the closure of all caribou hunting in 7b for at least two years. I do want to remind everyone it's important that we remember that there are other aspects that get considered when we're having these discussions, and it won't always come down to just sustainable hunting populations from that traditional hunting lens. We also are now looking at other factors.
- Q: My question was, and in my day when we managed wildlife, we had a sustainable number, right? And you didn't have a hunting regulation unless you could sustain the hunting season.
 - R: Your sustainable number will depend on the habitat, the pressures, the number of hunters that are in those areas. I wouldn't see it as a as a blanket threshold over all populations.
- Q: I'm talking about specific areas. Northern Rockies, for instance, their populations are good. Is this a shutdown because of the political stuff or is it a shutdown because of the science? I think that's an important thing to ask because you can't justify to the Wildlife Federation or anybody else. If you keep building, and you pass that line of sustainable hunting a long time ago, it's hard to justify to the folks out there why we don't have hunting season.

- *R:* You're separating the science from the social aspects. But at the government level for decision making, those are merged to make those decisions. They'll be using other types of information to make their decision and that specific decision is associated with a court case.

4. LP Building Solutions

- Darin Hancock: [Re-introduction to Louisiana Pacific presentation](#)
- Discussions:
 - Q: With lack of permits how are you sourcing the fibre?
 - *R:* Private land. Deciduous private land from BC and AB.
- **Implementation Agreement HV1 Plan**
- David Muter: Provincial and BRFN Approval of Gundy Complex HV1 Plan
 - HV1 Gundy Plan approved by Minster Osborne and the Chief through Blueberry River Implementation Agreement. These plans are operational and specific to Oil and Gas sector (conditions for development). Working with industry and EMLI, consultation with First Nations.
- Discussions:
 - Q: Heard neighboring First Nations had concerns?
 - *R:* Given the area is Gundy, we worked with Blueberry River First Nation. We have gone through and worked with Halfway River FN and Prophet River FN to make sure that they're aware and are okay with what's being proposed here.
- **Action: Share Jim Little's info with David Muter for follow up.**
 - Q: The Blueberry Implementation Agreement talks about wildlife workshops. Now we've got an agreement and the BCWF was not involved at all in being able to engage on the Gundy plan. It seems contrary to the Blueberry Implementation Agreement by not involving hunters and guide outfitters and others.
 - *R:* Gundy plan is directional only to Oil and Gas sector. Those constraints and limits on development are only applicable to the oil and gas sector. They don't affect any other sector. They don't affect any aspect of wildlife management that we would be undertaking

through those other measures in the Blueberry River Implementation Agreement.

- Q: Wouldn't oil and gas impact or possibly impact wildlife density objectives and things like that? Or did we go through this activity and not even consider wildlife?
 - Well, you're absolutely right. It could. And the idea here is this is a constraint. This is limiting oil and gas to a greater extent than what would have happened without this plan. In general, that should improve habitat, that should improve ecosystems and therefore opportunity for wildlife populations. So, we see it as being generally positive in that regard. Exactly where and exactly how and what that might mean for wildlife management going forward is something that I think together we're going to have to watch. And through, you mentioned the wildlife working group, through those places and other activities.
 - Q: A few years ago, we were looking at modernized land use planning for the Fort St. John LRMP and other areas in the Northeast, and I recognize that the Blueberry Implementation Agreement has sort of shifted the focus there, but I guess I'm just curious if you see a path for stakeholders like us here at the Roundtable to provide input into the planning processes going forward, sort of where that mechanism is for groups like here to engage.
 - R: We haven't started the broader watershed basin planning process. That's envisioned to start very soon. As we begin that, we'll be reaching out and chatting with folks at this forum here..
 - Q: Is this not a backwards approach to resource management? Where first of all, you come up with a plan to manage oil and gas without considering plans in place for water, fish and wildlife, all the other stuff that's on the land base. Normally, you put those plans in place first, then you talk about resource management.
 - R: No, I don't think it's backwards. But you're making a very good point. These things do have to fit together. The reason for this being done this way was because of the findings of the court and the expectations that Blueberry River First Nation had for high value areas and the most immediate impact on their treaty rights. And that was in Gundy and that was oil and gas sector specific. The way we catch the rest of it, as you're getting at, is that the entire watershed will go through a planning process to address those things. And as we go through that broader watershed planning, if there's a need to change things here, that's available to us.

6. Wildlife and Stewardship

- Aviva Jones: [NE Wildlife Update presentation](#)
- Inge Jean: [Moose Winter Tick presentation](#) and [Chronic Wasting Disease presentation](#)
 - *Comment:* Noted 2 positives in wild mule deer, white tailed deer in BC while the far NW Alberta CWD positive case was in farmed elk, but that does not remove the threat. As for bison, look at Northwest side of the Liard as you may be missing animals there. Do not see any on-the-ground actions regarding wildlife and wildlife habitat. There is lots of work on surveys and studies being done though.
- [Peace River Bison presentation](#) prepared by Chris Lewis
 - C: Can you share the information on bison at the Northern Rockies? Issues are apparent to the residents of the north and local knowledge is not being tapped.
 - Issues appurtenant to them.
 - R: All the presentations will be posted on the [NE Roundtable website](#). (*Update:* They were posted June 7th and a follow-up phone call was held with the chairs of the Northern Rockies Roundtable.)
- James Morgan: [Fish and Wildlife presentation](#)
 - Introduction to the members and current work being done and planned for the NE region.

7. Wildfire Update June 2024

- Shane Greenlees: BC Wildfire Service projections and preparation presentation **Outstanding**.
 - Discussions:
 - Q: There's a significantly sized area restriction north and to the east of Fort Nelson that folks might not be aware about. If people need to do work in that area restrictions, they can request a pass, does that sound accurate? Parker Lake Fire is under control.
 - R: Yes, can request an exemption.
 - Q: Could you just shed a little light on that on the training aspect of the S100. Who offers that? And what's the criteria to get the training? Training is restrictive, a quick response to man-power.
 - R: The S100, the basic firefighting course is required to be on any wildfire. We don't have staff that go out and provide it to the public. We do provide some training early in the season to some of our partners, other agencies, as we have capacity to deliver some of it.

Colleges a lot of times will arrange for those courses, but I'm not aware of any way other than paying for it for the general person to get it. Sonja did the course through Fort Nelson.

8. Climate change, drought and wildfire in NE BC

- Vanessa Foord: [Climate Change: Understanding of drought and wildfire risk presentation](#) Climate variability and change relate to drought and wildfire risk.
 - Land and Ocean Temperature anomalies (the hottest 10 years on record have all occurred within the last 10 years).
 - Northern BC has seen an over 3 degrees Celsius increase in mean annual temperatures.
 - Recently, the NE region has been in abnormally dry conditions, related to natural climate variability patterns exacerbated by climate change, which have directly influenced recent record-breaking drought and wildfire conditions.
 - Climate Change projections: temperature is predicted to rise over the next few decades and precipitation is predicted to increase. However, the increased precipitation is not enough to evaporation demand. For example, the climate moisture deficit projections (a variable that considers evaporation) indicate summer moisture deficits in the future for the NE.
- Discussions:
 - Q: Are there drought tree species modeling for NE?
 - R: We have the climate part figured out, but the modeling depends on having good ecosystems mapping and that is still in the works. We are working on it.

9. BC Parks

- Andrea Somerville: [Backcountry Protected Areas in the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area: Strategic Management Plan presentation](#)
 - Let's Talk BC Parks – engagement on planning and management plan will go live in late June and engagement will be open until September 6).
- Discussions:
 - Q: Kaska have their own conservation area they're also doing study on. Have you interfaced with them or what's happening with that?
 - R: Kaska has been very involved with this plan. The IPCA that they have declared excludes all of these parks.

- Q: Has the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board been consulted?
 - R: Yes, when we initiated the plan, we were in full contact with them and set the tone as to how they were going to be involved in it and what not. They reviewed the draft plan before it is released publicly.
- Q: Were any user groups, anybody that's using the MKMA consulted on anything at this point or is that next steps? What kind of impact will they have?
 - R: Yes. When we initiated the plan in 2020, the public and stakeholders were engaged with. We offered and did interviews with some interested user groups, specifically guide outfitters. Once this draft plan gets released then we're happy to be having more of those conversations.

10. Other discussions:

- Northern Rockies Roundtable next meeting was to be May 29 but postponed because of fires so is June 12, 2024.
- Jim Little provided an update on activities related to Skook's landing.-Email is posted [Skooks Landing archaeology update](#).
- Jason: Restoration Tracker tool in development phase ([NE Restoration Tracker Overview App in Development presentation](#) will be attached to the Minutes). Type of information that could be available on restoration and visualisation to provide feedback.

Meeting Closure

- The next roundtable meeting is scheduled for **December 11th, 2024**.