

NORTHEAST ROUNDTABLE VIRTUAL – MEETING NOTES

Date: June 3, 2025
Time: 9:00 AM – 3:15 PM (MST)
Location: Virtual MS Teams

Attendees:

Municipal:

- Lisa Thompson (NRRM)
- Terry Cavaliere (NRRM)
- Lisa Scott (District of Tumbler Ridge)
- Brent Taillefer (Mayor of Taylor)

First Nations:

- Jim Webb (WMFN)
- Katherine Wolfenden (FNFN)
- Ryan McKay (Saulteau First Nation)
- Tammy Brown (WMFN)

Stakeholders:

- Jim Little (NE Stakeholders)
- Gerry Paille (BC Wildlife Federation)
- Antonio Pega (LP)
- Darin Hancock (LP)
- Andrew Tyrrell (Canfor)
- Johnny Mikes (CPAW/MKAB)
- Derek Brown (Restoration)
- Amber Lane (BCSF)
- Mark Phinney (West Fraser)
- Erik Wannop (Ecora)
- Josh Wild (Wild Sheep Society of BC)
- Melony Catana (Ecora)
- Krista Philips (CAPP)
- Trina Koch (Ecora)

Government:

- Jason Lawson (WLRS)
- Shayla Blue (WLRS)
- Tara Forest (IRR)
- Joelle Ward (WLRS)
- Anna Regnier (WLRS)
- Naomi Saukila (IRR)
- Uelun Tuvshinjargal (WLRS)
- Robert Warner (FOR)
- Penny Vanderwekken-Dunn (WLRS)
- Ian Curits (WLRS)
- Marianne Johnson (WLRS)

- Duncan Blagdon (WLRS)
- Sheri Connolly (FOR)
- Kai Elmauer (MIRR)
- Aviva Jones (WLRS)
- Heather Wiebe (WLRS)
- Tyler Muhly (WLRS)
- Heather Onsong (WLRS)
- Laura Peliciari Fajardo (WLRS)
- Scott Schilds (WLRS)
- Alanna Schroeder (MIRR)
- Michael Bridger (WLRS)
- Sue Campbell (MIRR)
- Al-Nashir Charania (WLRS)
- Michelle Clyde (WLRS)
- Beth Eagles (FOR)
- Elizabeth Johnson (EMLI)
- Suzan Lapp (WLRS)
- Yvette Lizée (MIRR)
- Rudi Mayser (WLRS)
- James Morgan (WLRS)

Welcome, Agenda, Minutes

- Jason Lawson welcomed all and performed a territorial acknowledgement and agenda review.
- Meeting minutes from the last meeting have been posted online.
- Shayla Blue led participant introductions, and they shared a word/action that helps them recharge

1. Treaty Land Entitlement

- Tara Forest and Naomi Saukila Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
[TLE presentation](#)
 - **Q:** Are the new parcels online yet?
 - **R:** They will be posted to the govTogether website following this presentation, sometime in the next few days (**now live**). We wanted this opportunity to share with the Northeast Roundtable first.
 - **Q:** For the Halfway Trail does that include a route South across the Halfway River?
 - **R:** It does not include a route South across the Halfway River. We did have some work done that demonstrated that the cost for a route going South would not be something that we could contemplate, especially in addition to the North route. So, we are looking at a route north of the Halfway River, considering the existing route or a rerouting of the existing route.

- **Q:** Will the existing access be maintained?
 - **R:** No, we are not looking at the South access. We do have an oil and gas road that goes through the South that has been carved out of the parcel. So, it's possible to follow that road up, but we don't have access to the river from the South.
- **Comment:** For the last Outstanding Lands Phase 1 parcels presented there are a number of accesses that will have to be dealt with. Hopefully these will be excluded.
 - **R:** The Province is aware of many of the roads and accesses; and comments are also helpful in identifying trails or other accesses that may not be identified in our status reviews.
- **Q:** Is there a timeframe for comments?
 - **R:** We are requesting comments by fall 2025 (mid October), but as we are still scheduling potential open houses or community meetings we may have to adjust depending on scheduling.

→ Presentation and [comment form](#) to be shared with participants. Completed form can be sent to mirr.northeast@gov.bc.ca.

2. Drought

- [Marianne Johnson](#) – Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship [Drought presentation](#)
 - **Q:** What organizations are represented on the working group and what areas are represented?
 - **R:** We have members from DFO, WLRS fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, local First Nations from Northeast BC, municipalities including the city of Dawson Creek, BCER, Emergency response, and other government agencies.
 - **Comment:** Wildlife should get some priority in here as well.
 - **R:** I'll take that back up to the provincial team and add that as another element we can investigate.
 - New portals and information page on drought:
 - [BC Drought Information Portal](#)
 - [Drought preparation and response - Province of British Columbia](#)

3. Public Advisory Group (PAG)

- [Darin Hancock](#)– Louisiana Pacific- [PAG Recruitment document](#)
 - The Fort St John Pilot Project Managing Participants are actively seeking members to join our Public Advisory Group as interest representatives for:
 - Commercial Recreation
 - Forest Contractors/Workers
 - Labour
 - Energy
 - Non-Commercial Recreation – Non-Consumptive

- How to get involved:
 - Anyone who is interested in joining the PAG or getting more involved in Forest Management in the Fort St. John TSA is encouraged to partake in an upcoming PAG meeting (no date set yet) to sit in as an observer.
 - To ask for more information or to be added to the meeting invite list, please contact Andrew Tyrrell (Canfor) at Andrew.Tyrrell@canfor.com or Ethan Brandt (LP) at Ethan.Brandt@lpcorp.com.
 - More information can also be found at <https://www.fsjpilotproject.com>

4. Fish and Wildlife

- Heather Onsorte and James Morgan – Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship – [Fish and Wildlife presentation](#)
 - **Comment:** Related to bison, when we first got a bison season here there were authorizations that were for bulls, and then authorizations for cows. What happened was hunters, including a government employee who had a bull authorization harvested a cow and government determined that especially young ones, they were too hard to distinguish. So, it just became a bison season. If the cow harvest is too high, maybe we should be looking at that split of authorizations.
 - **Comment:** Participant reported that his access to a 2009 Moose Inventory Survey was now denied when he previously had access to it.
 - **A:** Thanks for sharing. This might be because of an update of the system. We introduced a whole new data management system, and we might need to renew all those previous authorizations. I will also pass that along to branch with regards to the accessing of data.
 - **Q:** We saw an overall decline in harvest of Plains bison in those slides, as well as an increased proportion of cow harvest. And yet what we saw in one year was a drastic decline in the bull population 2024-2025 survey there seemed to be ½ to 1/3 the number of bulls detected. Just wondering if you could explain that.
 - **A:** We had different teams out doing the surveys for the 24 and the 25 and potentially there is some discrepancy in some of the classification around some of those numbers and anytime we are dealing with low or declining populations, it's a snapshot in time.
 - **Q (cont'd):** You can only have so many snapshots before it becomes a trend. Depending on what they find this coming winter, is this herd a conservation crisis? Do we need to scale back harvest? What do we need to do?
 - **A:** It comes down to the classification and designation of what that herd is. That herd is not a native herd to the environment; it's a herd that was a domestic escape that became established on the landscape. So, part of that species management planning hope is that it will give us some new goals and objectives of how we want to manage for that herd on the landscape.

- **Q:** There is a pretty rosy picture being painted there in terms of moose numbers increasing. Are there any places that you would want to see an opposite to that? Realistically the less moose, the better off for Caribou. Is that in the management plan?
 - **A:** This topic will be discussed after lunch and this question will be answered by the caribou team.
- **Q:** Is there any update on Wood Bison in the Fort Nelson Area?
 - **A:** Wood bison would tie into the species management planning process. There was an estimate done in collaboration with the territories this winter to get an estimate on the overlap between the BC and the territory border about what's going on.
- **Comment:** There needs to be a plan for the Fort Nelson Area herds. Currently there is a need to increase range burns in the area to control where these herds should live.
- **Q:** Why are bison not included in the big game harvest stats?
 - **A:** James Morgan will get back on this question.
- **Comment:** The number of authorizations LEH and quota for bison has decreased enormously in the last two years including another big decrease for this LEH Synopsis and guides are essentially not using their quotas at all.
- **Q:** Following back on the Fort Nelson herd. There seems to be sparse information despite multiple times trying to get information for the two herds, the Liard and the highway 77. What planning process is going to be undertaken or is there anything planned for those two herds?
 - **A:** We have plans to do a wood bison species management plan, which would give us those goals and objectives and target objectives for us being able to figure out where we need to focus.

5. Caribou Program

- [Joelle Ward](#) Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
- [Duncan Blagdon](#), [Caribou Fieldwork presentation](#)
- [Mike Bridger](#), [Predator Control to Support Caribou Recovery presentation](#)
- [Scott Schilds](#), [Caribou Restoration](#);
- **Q:** Have you guaranteed continued access for the hiking clubs around Mount Speaker and Mount Reesor?
 - **A:** Yes, that's something that was identified from our original prescriptions and where this mapping is through our conversations with Geopark and the Ridge Riders. And I think there's a hiking club out at Tumbler Ridge. I can confirm hiking access; the established ATV and snowmobile trails are maintained.
- **Q:** Are you using camera traps in conjunction with the fecal DNA study?
 - **A:** No, we haven't been using camera traps with the DNA study. I know there is one camera trap project in Pink Mountain that is ongoing, but I'm not super involved with that so I'm not 100% sure on the status update of that.
- **Comment:** The data from the Muskwa herd certainly indicates that it would support a licensed hunt and even if it was an LA chant and they'll just leave it at that.

- **Q:** Just wondering if any population inventory work has been done on those animals on the BC side South of Kelly Lake. They've been sort of ignored for ages. I know it's difficult because they're in a forested environment, but is anybody looking after them?
 - **A:** We're potentially planning surveying narrow way next year and those bear hole red Willow Caribou would be part of that survey. Like you said, it's elevation tree and that's hard to hard to survey. Alberta has a few collars out there, so they visit those Caribou during their recruitment surveys annually.
- **Q:** Do we have a reasonable idea of the number of moose taken by indigenous hunters?
 - **A:** At this point I'm not aware of the numbers. Moving forward it is key to collaborate with the indigenous communities to develop some support opportunities to harvest moose to meet their needs or their treaty rights.
- **Comment:** In the South Peace, Saulteau and McLeod Lake communities did harvest surveys. The reports show that the indigenous population is taking, probably less than 1/5 of what recreational hunters are taking out. They also show that their harvest represents less than one moose per family of five per year. For the areas where these population increased, First Nations are saying we don't want increased competition from recreational hunters until there's a sufficient moose population for the First Nations to meet their needs. And we believe that that's a provincial responsibility.
 - **A:** One of the challenges is the disconnects between what we're seeing in most populations and what the community's seeing. Despite what we see as very high moose densities; communities are still struggling to put moose on their table.

6. 30 x 30

- Heather Wiebe – Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship [30 x 30 Presentation](#)
 - **Q:** In your opinion do target 10 areas count to 30x30?
 - **A:** No. Only target 3. Target 3 has two components: protections and OECMs. Active landscapes do not count. They'll be captured within Target 10.

7. Public announcement: Land Use Plans in the Northwest

- Rudi Mayser– Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
- One year planning project to update and modernize the land use picture in the Kaska area.
- <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025MCM0025-000535>
- <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/kaska-land-use-planning/>
 - **Q:** What plan will take precedent?
 - **A:** This is an opportunity to update the existing plans. The new plan will then replace or amend or partially complete what the existing plans are.
 - **Q:** Do you have any sense yet how the engagement is going to be structured?
 - **A:** There is the intent to offer a land use planning webinar (an orientation session) on land use planning, and then more specifically the four projects. A survey is open from today until July 25th. Then what's also likely going to occur is sort of targeted stakeholder engagement. There were already some pre-

engagement sessions prior to today's public announcement with mining sector, conservation organizations, local governments or their regional districts.

- **Q:** What are you expecting realistically from people by July 25th?
 - **A:** This deadline is for the survey. It's just an initial opportunity for anyone with an interest in the plan area to flag that and to respond in a manner that will help the planning team.

8. Water Management Basin Planning

- Ian Curtis – Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship [Water Management Basin Planning Presentation](#)
- **Q:** The plan mention objectives like “raise awareness”, but how are you going to measure that? There are no details about impacts on wildlife, for example, which are measurable.
 - **A:** Totally. Our intent is to come out with initial drafts or initial thinking and kind of validate that in a public forum and draw on some of the wisdom and knowledge of folks that have been in this space for a while and know the region.
- Contact info: Ian Curtis – Director of Strategic Initiatives 778 693-3033
Ian.Curtis@gov.bc.ca

9. Red Creek fire risk reduction treatment

- Bob Warner – Ministry of Forests [Red Creek fire risk reduction treatment presentation](#) –
- **Q:** Are the Red Creek folks pleased with the outcome?
 - **R:** Yes, I think they are. When we started this project, they were appreciative of being included in the plan. We know it's not perfect and it's going to have its downfalls, but I think for the most part they are happy.

10. Meeting Closure

- Next NE Roundtable meeting: **September or October 2025**