

**Cranbrook West Recreation Advisory Committee  
Minutes  
January 15, 2007 7 – 10 pm  
Prestige Inn, Cranbrook**

**Present:**

Pam Cowtan, ILMB - Chair	John Bergenske, WildSight
Sangita Sudan, ILMB	Ken Philpot, Cranbrook Snowmobile Club
Andy Balcom, Koot.Wildlife & Wilderness Club	Larry Hall, EK Hunters Association
Daryl Calder, Backcountry Skiers	Leanne Colombo, Grassland Conservation Council
Dave Miller, BC Snowmobile Federation	Maurice Hansen, Rocky Mtn. Trench Soc.
Dave Quinn, EKBCA	Norman Walter, RDEK Director "E"
Donna Morrison, Kootenay Livestock Assoc.	Peter Davidson, Rocky Mountain Naturalists
Earl Tatlow, Cranbrook Rod & Gun Club	Rob Bishop, EK Wild Turkey Federation
F J Hurtak, Kootenay Wildlife Heritage Fund	Tom Blom, BCWF/EKWA
Rick Hammond, Kootenay Quad Club	Bob Faiers, Cranbrook Archery Club
Jeanette Sissons, Cbk Chamber of Commerce	Jim Campbell, Purcell Hut Association
<b>Notes:</b> Leslie Askew, ILMB	Rick Olsen, Koot. Mush & Berry Pickers

**Presenters:**

Pat Field, Species at Risk Coordination Office	Steve Byford, BCTS
Lisa Cox, MTSA	Al Pollard, BCTS
Doug Martin, Ministry of Environment	Eirik Pighin, Tembec
Dave Grieve, MEMPR	Randy Byford, Galloway Lumber
Bruce Reid, MEMPR,	Ken Gibbard, MOFR

**Observers:**

Dave Reeves

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- The Chair thanked everyone for their RSVP to the meeting and noted the excellent attendance.
- Bill Adair was not available tonight but would be chairing the next meeting.
- Introduced Leslie Askew (recorder)
- The Chair thanked presenters for attending and welcomed Dave Reeves as an observer.
- It was noted that a Quorum (19) was present.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**AGREED (all members present): The agenda be approved with no additions or deletions.**

**3. Approval of Minutes from previous meeting**

- Jeanette Sissons pointed out that the wording of a statement in Item 6 "Feedback from Committee members (round table)" under bullet 7 "*with respect to degradation, she suggested*" was unclear. The Chair clarified that the "she" referred to was the Chair. The reference will be corrected to read the "Chair".

**AGREED (by all members present): The Minutes of November 1, 2006, distributed as draft to the Committee by email on November 14, 2006, be approved with the above noted change.**

#### 4. RDEK Presentation – Norm Walter

- Norm Walter advised that he will be resigning from the table, and read his letter to the Committee (*Attachment 1*).
- The Chair expressed her appreciation and on behalf of the committee for all the time and energy Norm has put into the plan and on the CWRAC.
- Norm Walter left the meeting.
- Earl Tatlow suggested the Chair write a letter to the RDEK thanking Norm Walter.

**ACTION: The Chair will write a letter of thanks to Norm on behalf of the Committee.**

#### 5. Business Arising from the Minutes

##### a) Review of Action Items (*Attachment 2*)

- The Chair noted that all Action Items had been followed up except working group topics because the agenda for this meeting was full. It will be the focus for the next meeting and suggestions for groups will be sent out in advance.
- Item 5b) Canadian Mountain View Paradise base camp location: The Chair responded in writing to Bob Johnstone's letter and this was copied to all CWRAC members. Letters were also sent to ILMB Regional Executive Director and MTSA advising of the amendment to the Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> recommendation (copies sent to CWRAC). No responses have been received to date.
- Item 5c) Road Closures: Lisa Cox, MTSA informed that the blocks at Cooper Lake might be located in the best place they could find. Lisa will clarify this further. Ken G will look at removing the blocks if CWRAC/Tembec/MTSA no longer want to have them there. The Chair noted that VAHCs/AMAs were on the agenda and MoE was at the meeting to discuss them. Discussion of roads was on the agenda and representatives of the forest industry, MOFR, MEMPR, MTSA and MOE were at the meeting to provide information and answer questions.
- Item 5d) Working Groups: The Commercial Recreation Tenure (CRT) Working Group met Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> and this is on the agenda.

##### b) Report from Commercial Recreation Tenures Working Group meeting

- The Chair reviewed the Dec 19<sup>th</sup> meeting which included agreement on the Terms of Reference (TOR). This group will meet annually and as needed. Harry Mitchell from MTSA attended the meeting and told the group that on average they receive 1 or 2 applications per year in the plan area. He has made the commitment to update the Working Group on new and amendment applications, who will advise CWRAC.
- Jeannette Sissons said that the group will work on building a template for reviewing commercial recreation tenure applications. This will help to maintain consistency and enable recommendations to be provided to CWRAC that are rationalized by criteria set out in the template.

- Larry Hall pointed out that the Working Group should also address applications on private land such as the one at Kooacanusa where a large and significant area will be removed from the ALR and turned into home sites.
- The Chair noted that the plan is dynamic and any significant changes in land use might require consideration of plan designations to ensure objectives are being met.
- When the draft Meeting notes and TOR are finalized by the CRT Working Group, they will be brought to CWRAC for their discussion and agreement.

**ACTION: CRT Working Group Terms of Reference will be added to the agenda for the next CWRAC meeting.**

## 6. New Business

### a) Caribou Recovery Strategy – Pat Field, SARCO

- Pat Field from the Species at Risk Coordination Office (SARCO) a branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, gave a PowerPoint presentation (*Attachment 3*).
- He informed that government approved a recovery objective in Jan 2004 to halt the decline of mountain caribou. In order to meet their goals, an independent provincial government Mountain Caribou Science Team (MCST) was also established.
- SARCO is conducting stakeholder consultations until end of February regarding this strategy.
- 5 options were developed by the MCST and presented to government, each with goals and complementary (related) actions necessary for recovery.
- Both the South Selkirks and the South Purcell herds need augmentation through transplant. First Nations support is needed to do this. Animals for the transplants will come from the Cariboo area of BC. In the Selkirks, recovery may require the purchase of private land.
- Each Mountain Caribou unit is complex. Federal involvement in caribou recovery is possible if BC government doesn't demonstrate effective work.
- Public meetings are being held to assist SARCO in making a recommendation to government that mostly meets MCST recommendations and allows government to make a decision and get on with implementation.
- Federal involvement is possible if BC government fails to demonstrate effective work of recovery by 2008. It will trigger a COSWIC status assessment.
- SARCO is asking stakeholder groups three questions:
  1. Do you understand the draft strategy? What needs to be clarified?

2. Is this the appropriate way forward? Are there potential alternative or innovative solutions/actions that could be used to implement the Draft Strategy?
  3. What would be the impact on you and/or your sector if the Draft Strategy was implemented and how could these possibly be mitigated?
- It is requested that all comments be received by the end of February. SARCO will collate this information with recommendations by the end of March, and a decision will be made by June.
  - The Science Team is prepared to move forward with CWRMS plan zonations for Caribou and put closures into regulation. Ken noted the Caribou Closures in the Plan are recreational closures that the Table recommended for total closure. However the current outcome is that the motorized sector is the only sector affected.

**ACTION: ILMB will email out the SARCO website link to CWRAC.**

- Pat answered a number of questions from the group, as follows:

**Q** – There is a trans-border herd that spends time in the US. Idaho is planning a wolf cull. **A** – This is all part of the information going out to the science team who agree that predator control is important to recovery. The intent is to manage predator-prey balance, not to manage any populations to extirpation.

**Q** – Is managing down ungulates, specifically whitetail deer, part of the strategy? **A** – Yes, but has to be logically set out, based on science and implemented through a pilot.

**Q** – What about transplant? **A** – It is too late for this year. Need to inventory the Ulgatcho herd this year to ensure there are enough animals to transplant ie. so population, and hunting opportunities on this herd, can be sustained.

**Q** – Will the federal government be taking over land use issues? **A** – This is a grey area but want to make sure we are working with the federal government and they know what BC is doing. They are also working with Alberta.

**Q** – How much habitat loss can be sustained e.g. Lamb Creek fire or forest harvesting encroachment. **A** – Harvesting has been addressed by the Science Team with incremental habitat requirements to KB Higher Level Plan. One of the issues to caribou recovery is the fire suppression policy of MOFR. Maybe this needs to be changed.

**Q** – Do the Caribou areas have to remain untouched? **A** – Some percentage may be open to harvesting (eg. for Mtn Pine Beetle) Recovery is not just habitat; it is also managing human behaviour and human use on the lands. The animals are not starving, and very few have died of starvation.

**Q** - Concerned will eventually result in total closures. **A** - Commercial tourism should not be slated for further tenuring in Caribou areas. For public recreation, the Science Team is supporting CWRMS plan zonations. John Bergenske wanted it noted that WildSight supports the CWRMS plan zonations for Caribou.

**Q** - Are you planning on using maternity pens in the south Purcells? **A**- Maternity pens have been successful in other places. Some trials were done in the south Selkirks but found that there was a need for higher posts due to deep snow depths. Scientists are trying to be successful with soft release of transplanted animals.

**Q** - How is foot traffic dealt with in this plan? Trevor Kinley, caribou biologist on the Science Team, told them there was a higher stress level for the caribou from someone hiking or cross-country skiing than from motorized activity. **A** - It has been discussed. No clear indication for things like hiking, other than from the commercial viewpoint. Studies are on-going and seem to show that much of the stress is being caused by weather changes.

**Q** – What large plot of private property might be purchased? **A** – Darkwoods. But there may be others.

**AGREED (by all members present): A Working Group will be struck to review SARCO's Caribou Closures map against the CWRMS plan and bring responses to the 3 consultation questions back to the CWRAC. The Working Group is made up of Ken Philpot, Earl Tatlow, Dave Miller, John Bergenske, Rob Bishop, Dave Quinn, and Bob Faiers.**

**ACTION: ILMB will organize a meeting of this group for Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6:30 pm.**

- b) Review of Current Road practices in the plan area (joint panel: MOF, MEMPR, MTSA, MOE, BCTS, Tembec, Galloway)

**Ken Gibbard, Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR)**, provided information on roads under MOFR jurisdiction (*Attachment 4*). He noted that, if a road is no longer required and it costs less to deactivate it than fix it, they will deactivate. He said that generally they are a year behind in doing this because of budgeting.

**Question** - Are all roads open to the public? Where are there closures on individual roads? When do licensees apply for gates on some roads? **Answer** – The licensee needs to apply for a road deactivation permit from MOF to close a road and gates are put in usually for environmental reasons, or if there are safety concerns or a need to protect equipment.

**Q**- What are your deactivation standards? **A** – There used to be standards under the Forest Practices Code, but under Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA), it is more results based.

**Q** – Why do some roads have tank traps in the middle of the road that are 30 cm wide by 3 meters deep? **A** - It is the intent of MOFR to construct cross ditches to a 2 Wheel Drive standard but there are several in the District which are not.

**Dave Grieve and Bruce Reid, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (MEMPR)**, provided information on mining roads. New mining roads generally are not as long as MOFR roads and are temporary in nature. They are only as wide as needed to get equipment in and they are not as wide as forestry roads. Bruce Reid, MEMPR, said proponents have to apply for a Mines Act permit and Notice of Works to

authorize construction of a road. If there are any concerns the proponent is asked to modify his plan to address concerns and conditions can be put in the permit. Companies are required to close roads at the end of the season at which time it must be left in stable condition and, once reclamation is complete, their deposit is returned. MEMPR discourages recreation use of mining exploration roads due to safety issues (roads are generally not 2 lane or radio-controlled) and encourages gating roads. Generally road building is discouraged if companies can use helicopters for exploration.

**Question** – In the Cranbrook watershed there is a road open for a mining that is gated. The City is very strongly opposed to the mine and the Province was informed of their position in three letters. **Answer** – Bruce said it sounded like there might be some misinformation.

**Q** – Is the *Mining Act* under review? **A** – The *Mineral Tenure Act* is under review where it relates to private land.

**Lisa Cox, Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts (MTSA)**, was present to answer questions on roads. The Chair clarified that Lisa works for the Recreation Sites and Trails division of MTSA which was formerly a program in MOFR. Ken Philpot noted that he wants to discuss with Lisa the club agreement with MOFR for winter snowmobile use at Cooper Lake. The issue of the placement of the cement blocks at Cooper Lake was again discussed.

**ACTION: Lisa will get back to the Committee respecting reason for placement of the cement blocks at Cooper Lake.**

Q- How often do they review regulated trails such as Cooper Lake? A – MTSA has only recently taken on sites and trails from MOFR.

**Doug Martin, Ministry of Environment (MoE)**, said their role in industry roads is to respond to referrals from MOFR and MEMPR. He said for short roads, most of new access is for mines and in high alpine where traditionally there has been no access. They recommend gates and closing roads in this case and work with MEMPR to ensure roads are stabilized to limit environmental degradation. For MOFR roads that are unstable, they recommend cut to grade to stabilize and this makes the road not very accessible for ATV use.

Larry disagrees with VAHCs and AMAs. They are not areas available to handicapped, seniors, and people with young children. Larry pointed out that it appears everybody is doing their own thing with the road system in CWRMS and Rocky Mountain Forest District. The table made a recommendation in their plan to have an integrated resource management plan for the Trench. It was recommended that we do not proceed with that. He thinks managers should get together and figure out how they are going to manage this road system. There is no consultation. It seems to be piecemeal and there seems to be no overall plan. The Chair responded that we have a plan and ministries look at it. Doug said that MoE reviewed their VAHCs and got rid of Bloom, Tunnel and Cotton tie. Ken G noted that a *Road Resource Act* is being investigated by head office.

**Question** – If ENGOs don't make comments on FSPs, then there is no environment input to new roads? **A** - That is right.

**Q-** In the last meeting minutes it said the road at Meachen falls was going to be closed. **A** – It was noted that this is a new bridge and new road. Ken Philpot said there are 6 new bridges on Meachen. They are not closing the road.

**Steve Byford and Al Pollard, BC Timber Sales (BCTS)** provided information to the group about their road policies (*Attachment 5*) and distributed FRPA's Appendix 8 – Summary of Current Legislation on Forest Roads (*Attachment 6*). They operate like a licensee ie. they have a Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) approved by the District Manager.

**Q** – Twin Lakes closure was apparently closed at request of local rancher. And the road was upgraded by BC Hydro, BCTS did some logging and then ditched it.

**A** – Steve B said he can't speak to what happened many years ago there.

- John B. noted that more roads are being built than are being deactivated.

**Q-** When licensees expedite salvage, (say for pine beetle), what is the process? They would like to have input. **A** – Once a year they would be willing to come to a CWRAC meeting. It was noted that the main concern is where roads are closed and that industry needs to refer to the plan ie: the plan map shows what was agreed to be restricted to motorized, everything else is open.

**Q-** Can FSP's be brought to the table for review? **A** – Under FSP's, licensees rely on strategic planning. They don't specifically identify where roads might be and they ask for comments on values that might be impacted. If the FSP was referred to the table, it likely wouldn't answer any questions for them and to refer roads on a monthly basis runs counter to the results-based model of forest stewardship. However, they would be prepared to come to the table on an annual basis. And they refer to the CWRMS for guidance.

**Q-** Will BCTS sit at the table? **A** – No, however they use the CWRMS for guidance.

- Randy Byford said industry was asked to leave the table when the plan was being developed. Donna recalled that this was to reduce the size of the group.
- Larry Hall suggested that the industry representatives come to the table once a year to give us a brief update on what their plans are.

**Eirik Pighin, Tembec**, advised that, once they are given a road permit, they are responsible for carrying out maintenance and assuming the liabilities that go along with that permit. There are several levels of deactivation. Current Mountain pine beetle issues have been driving them. A Committee member suggested Tembec operators needed a training session during spring break up to teach them how to put in cross ditches. Eirik said that their operators have a wide range of experience and they deal with individual operators as required to address such issues.

**Randy Byford, Galloway Lumber**, described their operating area and said they have been chasing pine beetle for the last 4 years. He said that they can get in and out in a few days if they need to for beetle and they use existing roads when they can. He noted that industry argued against the planning framework of the FRPA model. In their FSP they are legislated to notify through ads in the paper and referral letters going to government agencies. They can, in future, send a direct referral to the committee. There are several places where they have closed roads for environmental reasons and they prefer temporary bridges which have less impact on a stream. They take MoE

direction – they will close roads where there is a wildlife issue. They are liable for these roads, so if they need to put in a cross-ditch to close the road to protect them from liability, they will do it. They will continue to let the group know when they close and deactivate roads. When they build a new road, the information is available through government (in the Land & Resources Data Warehouse).

- c) Discussion of *Wildlife Act* closures – Doug Martin, MoE
- Doug distributed a summary of regulated closures in the East Kootenay (*Attachment 7*).
  - He noted that MoE is looking at 2 changes to access in the Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan (SRMMP) area and this is being discussed by the SRMMP Advisory Committee. They also would like to transfer some VAHCs to AMAs but this needs more discussion and won't happen this year. They are going to put a closure around Sulfur Creek to protect the game lick and eliminating the parking – there have been problems with camping there by rock-climbers.
  - Larry said he opposes any VAHCs becoming AMAs.
  - Chair requested that Doug's agenda item be added to the agenda for the next meeting once everyone has a chance to review the spreadsheet handed out at tonight.

**ACTION: CWRAC will review the AMA/VAHC summary and it will be put on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.**

7. Feedback from Committee members (round-table)
  - Given the lateness at this point in the agenda, it was agreed that the group forego the usual Round Table.
8. Next meeting Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>
9. Meeting adjourned at 10:02 pm.