

**NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF FORESTRY AT THE SUMMER 2019 BOARD MEETING**

**DRAFT MINUTES, Board of Forestry Meeting  
April 3, 2019**

**Location and teleconference sites:**

Anchorage – 550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1450

Juneau – 400 Willoughby Ave., 4th floor, conference room A

Fairbanks – 3700 Airport Way, Large conference room

Ketchikan – 1900 First Ave., Suite 310 (LIO, conference room 2)

**Call to Order and Roll Call.** Chris Maisch, State Forester, called the meeting to order from Fairbanks at 8:06 a.m. Teleconference sites were connected in Anchorage, Juneau, Fairbanks and Ketchikan. Chris Stark called in from Florida. Chris Beck called in from Oregon from 1:00pm to 2:45pm. Jim Tuttle (sitting in for Jaeleen Kookesh, Ketchikan), Bill Morris (Fairbanks), Fabian Keirn (sitting in for Will Putman, Fairbanks), Eric Nichols (Anchorage), Denise Hertzog (Fairbanks), and Mark Vinsel (Juneau) were on the teleconference. A quorum was established.

Also present telephonically:

**Anchorage teleconference:** Tim Dabney, Deputy Director Division of Forestry; Alison Arians, Division of Forestry; Will Frost, ADFG; Jerry Kilanowski, University of Alaska.

**Fairbanks teleconference:** Paul Keech, DOF Regional Forester; Doug Hanson, DOF Forest Inventory.

**Juneau teleconference:** Joel Nudelman, DOF; Kyle Moselle, OPMP; Gretchen Pikul, DEC Water; Greg Albrecht, ADFG Habitat; Kate Kanouse, ADFG Habitat.

**Ketchikan:** Greg Staunton, DOF; Chere Klein with Senator Sullivan and Murkowski's offices.

**Public Meeting Notice.** The meeting was noticed by issuing public service announcements and press releases (handout in packet), emailing announcements to interested parties, and posting a notice on the state's Online Public Notice System and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website.

**Approval of agenda.** The agenda was approved. Tim Dabney will step in while Chris Maisch is gone from 9:30 to 12:00 for a meeting with the Governor and Commissioner.

**Approval of Minutes.** By unanimous consent, the Board reviewed and approved the November 14, 2018 minutes with 1 correction: on page 2, change from "Afognak Native Association" to "Afognak Native CORPORATION." Mark Vinsel made a motion to approve, Bill Morris seconded.

## **Announcements**

- Chris Maisch: Next week Fairbanks is hosting a statewide biomass meeting, SE Conference. April 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> at the Wedgewood. Meeting will include Canadian participants from the Yukon. Conference will highlight successful projects statewide, and lessons learned. DOF is one of the sponsors.
- Chris Maisch: New hires in DOF past couple of weeks: Fairbanks Area Forester: Jeremy Douse. Mat-Su Area Forester: Stephen Nickel. Still open: Tok Area Forester, since Derek Nellis resigned. Interviews for that position are coming up. Tom Kurth retired in January, and we have interviews for his position next week. Tom is back as Alaska Type I IC for the summer, and will be transitioning with Norm McDonald to mentor him, as part of DOF's succession planning.
- Alison Arians: Bryan Quimby, Acting Community Assistance Forester, obtained permission from the International Olympic Committee to include the 2018 PyeongChang Games emblem on the commemorative plaque for Kikkan's Tree, which is a beautiful pink crabapple tree planted at Kincaid in honor of Kikkan's gold medal by her 2-year-old son, Breck.

## **Forest practices budgets, legislation and regulations**

Chris Maisch, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Forestry (DOF):

There have been reductions in budget levels in several divisions, but DOF has no reductions proposed at this point in the budget process except that we have had 50% of our travel budget cut. Fortunately, the Governor's Office exempted travel for fire activity and fire preparedness, and also for the Roadless process, GNA and other federal collaborative work. That will enable us to still perform the work necessary to ensure we meet our obligations. We lobbied for that, and we are happy to see that they agreed with our assessment.

Activity codes: three components. Forest management & development, fire suppression & preparedness, and fire suppression & activity. Historically fire suppression should be budgeted at 10-year average. It hasn't ever been budgeted that high, though, and we are down to \$5.2 million. One large project fire can cost \$8 million. We are spending a lot of time asking for emergency supplementals, which takes a lot of time. As an efficiency and truth in budgeting measure, we suggested that they raise the budget to at least the average of the lowest 3 years in the last 10 years, which is about \$8.4 million. That will bring the account up to a more acceptable level, and will eliminate the problem with applying for emergency funds in the middle of fighting fires. The fiscal year splits the fire year, which takes a lot of explaining when you're asking for an emergency funding when there hasn't been much fire activity yet.

Other good news. In the Governor's amended budget from last Friday, one of our firefighting crews, Pioneer Peak, was converted from temporary to permanent positions. We have three agency crews, containing 20 people each. They have been classified as temporary employees, so every year we have to hire them back, which is a lot of work to rehire that many people. Having to rehire has effected the turnover rate, which has gone from 20% to 60%. Much of their salaries is covered by federal and other state codes, so now we have 20

new PCNs, even though it's not growing the budget much. We are pleased that we were able to get that through.

Federal budgets continue to help us with GNA projects and FIA program. We continue to find additional funds, and were successful with competitive grants. Alaska was very successful this year for fuel reduction grants and fire prevention. We got five projects funded for a total of about \$2 million, reaching the maximum amount. Thanks to staff members writing those proposals, and to Arlene Weber-Sword who does peer review on each of them, grading them and improving them.

We are trying to identify funding to deal with the spruce beetle problem in Mat-Su and Kenai, and looks like we might have found \$2 million from USFS to deal with that.

Legislation: Nothing currently forestry-specific that affects the Division. We have two items being discussed at the Governor's office, but will talk about these later in the day. They could still see the light of day by the end of the session, since it's the first year of the two-year session. We will bring this to the Board if any of these things happen. Some consolidation and streamlining of timber sale authority, FLUPs and AS 38.05.118 negotiated sales. We are still having internal discussions about this.

Modernization of wildfire regulations. We are in the final home stretch, almost ready to adopt. Then will work on the bail schedule and present it to the Alaska Supreme Court for approval. The focus is on education and prevention. After Corri (DNR Commissioner) adopts the regulations package, we send it to the Dept of Law's Regulation Section, and they review and submit it to the Lt. Governor's Office for filing. 30 days later, the regulations go into effect.

Mark: There is a bill on the Senate side, but not sure of the number, to create a process for nomination for Tier 3 waters. That happened last week or perhaps the week before. I wasn't there, but I heard that there were some concerns by Senator Giessel. Not sure whether the legislature will move forward on it.

Chris: DMLW might be tracking that one. I'll have to look that up.

*Note: The Senate resources committee introduced Senate Bill 51, which would delegate authority over Tier 3 (Outstanding National Resource Waters) nominations to the state's Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Natural Resources. All three agencies would need to agree on a Tier 3 designation before recommending it to the legislature. Alison asked Dan Saddler to add DOF to the list for tracking that bill.*

Gretchen Pikul, for Andrew Sayers-Fay, Director, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Division of Water (DOW): Don't have a budget update. Andrew is leaving state service and going to a different job, so he's very busy, leaving in the next few days.

Chris: If you would, could you please submit a brief written report. We could include that to the Board in the minutes. Just a general sense of what the budget process might do to DEC, especially for FRPA activities.

*Alison asked Gretchen if she has gotten anything from Andrew, and Gretchen has reminded him a couple of times, but I don't have anything from DEC yet.*

Greg Albrecht for David Rogers, Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) Division of Habitat: Don't have a final budget, but the Governor's budget removed the Habitat director position. We have a deputy director, but think that will be replaced by the legislature. Nothing else is on the chopping block. We have some adjustments to travel, and need to plan it out in advance, but we are still able to travel. We have a good amount of grant money coming in from the Sustainable Salmon Fund. We are still able to survey areas before timber harvest, so if harvest happens before we've had a chance to survey, we are out in advance of the harvest.

**Fire Prevention Regulations update.** Alison Ariens, DOF: Proposed wildland fire regulations were written to make specific HB 355, new wildland fire statutes. HB 355 includes penalties to improve understanding, compliance, and enforcement. The goal is to decrease the number of uncontrolled, human-caused wildland fires, thus reducing risks to human life, loss of homes and structures, extensive property damage and to lessen fire suppression costs to the state.

Proposed wildland fire regulations went out for 30-day public review in February, and by March 27th, the deadline for comments, only one person had made substantive comments. We published our responses to these comments online. Senator Showers had some concerns about the regulations, specifically about allowing fire prevention personnel access to private property if a fire appears to be threatening neighboring lands. Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of DNR, Corri Feige and Brent Goodrun, met with Senator Showers last week to allay his concerns, and Corri has asked him to let us know about any continuing issues with the regulations by the end of this week. We hope that we can get the regulations adopted by Corri at the end of the week or early next week, and can continue to move forward with the process. All the paperwork is ready to submit to the Department of Law after Corri has signed the adoption order.

Once the regs are adopted, we will submit a bail schedule to the Supreme Court for approval, so that tickets for violations may be issued.

Other parts of the process include

- educating the public on new rules,
- writing new Policies & Procedures for implementing new statutes, and
- training DOF employees, which has already begun.

Comment-response documents are online.

## **Annual Reports & Research Priorities**

**2018 Compliance Monitoring and road condition survey report.** Joel Nudelman, DOF:

We visit every private, municipal and trust harvest operation, and these numbers are for the 2018 calendar year. All inspections have best management practices (BMPs). Ratings work well, as operators are graded on these 1-5 ratings for each BMP that applies to their operation. We train our resource foresters to rate them consistently.

Since 2003, the Division has compiled more than 28,000 individual field ratings of best management practices. In 2018, the agencies conducted 78 field inspections on forest operations statewide and compliance monitoring score sheets were part of every inspection. The data shows solid implementation rates in all regions. Overall, Regions I averaged 4.53 out of 5.0 on the ratings, (93% compliance); Region II scored 4.31, and Region III scored 4.26. Figures 1 and 2 show the mean scores for each region and the percentage of BMP scores that are equal to or higher than 4.0.[See report for complete numbers.]

BMPs below 4 were discussed in the field with the operators and rectified and improved.

Chris: Why is cable yarding rated “xxx” for Region I?

Joel: That BMP was not rated in Region I.

The ratings for each of the three regions were down from the previous year. Region I compliance was very good, although there were individual BMPs which required corrective action. In Southeast, those BMPs were related to yarding near surface waters, classification of surface waters and adequate number of draining structures. Active road maintenance and road closures were excellent. Operators were quick to rectify all deficiencies as they were discovered. Three training sessions were held in Southeast. Operations at Afognak and Kodiak were excellent regarding all BMPs. Region II had very little activity with only three inspections and adequate compliance. Only problem areas were ditching. Region III had 100% compliance in 2017 for the first time ever but it dropped to 82% for 2018. A wet summer contributed to lower scores in the road drainage and road maintenance categories.

New construction work last year was done with high-quality rock and brushing and clearing. A lot of that work has held up pretty well, but a lot of wet weather, plus road systems in TVSF have a lot of public use from hunters and recreators. Lack of fires did help; we had an equipment operator available to us more often than when they are busy with fires. Road construction and drainage scores were down a bit. Will need to try and bring these scores up. The biggest issue in RIII is keeping up with public use. 300 miles of road in the TVSF area. Sampling here is just where there is active timber harvesting, not the whole 300 miles of road.

These scores allow the Division of Forestry to evaluate deficiencies and understand where corrections are needed. It also identifies areas where training could be beneficial and what measures could be taken for improved results. Ratings below 4.0 on an individual BMP or on an annual BMP average are nearly always followed up with higher scores, demonstrating the importance of the compliance monitoring program.

We held three training sessions this year.

## Questions

Chris: Thanks for that thorough job.

Bill Morris: About RIII culverts, because of the greater availability of equipment operators, were some of those issues able to be addressed last year?

Joel: Paul might be able to answer that.

Paul: Last year they dug out a lot of culverts on one road, and dug out others that were filled and perched. It should be an improvement for next year with the work done.

Mark Vinsel: Are there problems with beavers and culverts on maintained roads?

Joel: Not uncommon, but didn't have that this year.

Mark: Has there been an increase over last 10 years?

Joel: Hasn't really seen a trend—more cyclical.

Chris Maisch: Beaver activity took out an abutment on Cache Creek. That bridge has been repaired and is once more functional. That was the most damage in recent past. That was an expensive repair.

Greg Albrecht: Talking with our wildlife folks, beavers are really expanding, coming out of a heavily-trapped time. We have a much higher population in Haines and Juneau.

Chris Maisch: The monitoring report always a key piece of information that we include in our annual report. Great to have that history to see what's happened over time. Thanks to the staff for keeping that up, Joel and others.

**Road Condition Survey (RCS):** In 2017 we did one RCS in Wrangell in Pat Creek drainage and found that it had multiple fish passage issues. As a result, that road was closed in June of 2018. Following the road closure, we did another survey. The contractor did an excellent job reestablishing the natural drainage and blocking the road to vehicle traffic. In 2015 we received a SSF grant for a Tyonek road closure and culvert replacement that was completed in 2017. That operation restored four miles of upstream habitat. The second part of the project was replacing a culvert with a pipe arch. That opened up two miles to an anadromous lake, then quite a bit of an upstream creek above the lake.

## Questions:

Chris: Work plan going forward?

Joel: Nothing on the docket for RCS, as we are limited by funding and staff. We've been able to do the other projects with SSF grants and other grants. We don't have anything on line now. The project in Wrangell was from timber sale receipts, and was brought up by the SE Watershed Coalition. We decided to take that on and make the needed repairs.

## Annual agency reports to the Board

**DEC Division of Water. Gretchen Pikul, DEC:** We have limited presence and participation on inspections, but in 2018 we did receive timber harvest plans and performed summary reviews on some FRPA activities that would affect water, to make sure they would comply with water regulations. Budget reductions made field inspections impossible, but DOF and ADFG did do inspections to make sure BMPs were followed and effective. We did summary reviews, and some more intensive review on the Second Waterfall Creek Bridge Collapse, in Ketchikan, and on Chijuk timber sales in Mat-Su. We have also administered Alaska Clean Water Action Grants, and have worked with DNR and ADFG since 2002 to give away 19

grants. We either do a specific to a single waterbody project, or a stewardship project. We also do BEACH Grants (monitoring marine beaches for bacterial pollution), which has been going on since 2006. These grants include the Kenai River and coastline of Ketchikan. We have recently adjusted that to two calendar years because it's difficult to finish our grants at the end of the FY in the middle of the summer. This year's grant begins in March 2019 and ends February 2021, which should work much better for reporting. Two-year projects mean we won't be doing our usual solicitation until 2020. Our funding sources are Alaska Clean Water Act and BEACH Grants.

In 2019, DEC expects to keep working with DOF and ADFG to monitor projects. We would like to participate in Effectiveness Monitoring next year. Would like to update the MOU between DEC and USFS. DEC doesn't recommend any changes to FRPA at this time.

Gretchen Pikul is moving back East and hopefully will be working with in DEC in Massachusetts. Not sure who will replace her here in Juneau, but she will let us know what happens.

### **Questions**

Mark Vinsel: Can you describe the Kenai River beach project?

Gretchen: It's a turbidity and runoff project. We have been doing it since 2010, and have good data. We have before and after data from bacteria (fecal coliform) up and down the gradient with a bridge reference site. We take microbial source tracking data to see what hosts are there. We've noticed that there is very little human source, very little dog source, but a huge source is gulls. It's anthropomorphologically enhanced, though, when people don't dispose the salmon remains back into the stream. Kenai has increased their trash cans, etc., and also has been handing out information about how to put the fish remains back into the stream, and about how you shouldn't use the river water to rinse your fish because of elevated bacteria levels. Also, we've used radio ads about how to treat your fish safely.

**ADF&G Division of Habitat.** Greg Albrecht, ADF&G: Mark Minnillo is out on a FRPA inspection, so asked me to report. We reviewed inspections on different land ownerships. On federal lands, we had general concurrence 11 times on bridges and culverts, which allows USFS to do stream restoration using hand tools.

SSF projects here in SE and in Kodiak are in their final year. Juneau office surveyed 181 drainages, made updates to Anadromous Waters Catalog, and identified 10 miles of new buffered rivers.

Staff changes: See page 3 of the report. Kate Kanouse was hired recently to replace Jackie Timothy, and 2018 hires are listed in the report.

### **New Hires**

Ron Benkert, Southcentral Regional Supervisor, Anchorage  
Jesse Lindgren, Habitat Biologist I, Douglas  
Chad Bear, Habitat Biologist I, Fairbanks  
Ben Landes, Seasonal Fish and Wildlife Technician, Douglas

Jonathan Kirsch, Mat-Su Area Manager, Palmer  
Sarah Wilber, Habitat Biologist III, Palmer  
Scott Graziano, Habitat Biologist II, Anchorage

### **Resignations**

Jackie Timothy, Southeast Regional Supervisor, Douglas  
Johnny Zutz, Habitat Biologist II, Douglas  
Ron Benkert, Area Manager, Palmer  
Jonathan Kirsch, Habitat Biologist III, Palmer  
Sarah Wilber, Habitat Biologist II, Palmer  
Jim Durst, Habitat Biologist III, Fairbanks

FRPA remains effective. In the future, for surveying research activities, we would like to continue stream cataloging through grants and FRPA site visits. We are still engaging with DOF and landowners to resolve issues that come up.

### **Questions**

Chris Stark: Are you employing eDNA yet?

Greg: Not yet, but will be a useful tool in the future. We can get useful information, but there are so many issues with contamination, and also it doesn't necessarily confirm that fish are truly present. Could be something passing through fecal matter. The method has value, but using traditional sampling methods is the way to go at this point.

Chris: Could you describe eDNA?

Greg: Essentially it's taking a water sample, and identifying any species that are present. Amazingly, if you put a few fish in a cage, up to 240 meters downstream, a small water sample would show the fish. If you are in a transition area, and just at the upper end of the drainage, you might find fish a little farther upstream. It's a good tool, but there are so many issues with contamination and possibility of evidence of fish being there only because of bear scat in the stream.

Chris Stark: Researchers are now suggesting that eDNA can be used to predict salmon passage abundance through the season, so detection levels could be very valuable. This is a way that DOF could get better information than with traps.

Fabian Keirn: What is the processing time for getting results from a sample?

Greg: It varies from a couple of hours, to a couple of weeks. You can also preserve the sample so that you can read it right away, but could also read it later for other species. They are also developing backpack units that can get results in a couple of hours. This technology is in its infancy now, but we expect that in the next few years it will be much more efficient and faster and smaller.

### **DNR Division of Forestry. Tim Dabney, DOF:**

- The State forest practices program budget was static this year, and the Governor's FY19 budget for forest practices remains level.
- Forest operations remained low on non-state land. Activity declined somewhat in Southern Southeast but increased in Northern Southeast, the Mat-Su, and Kodiak-Afognak archipelago. Given the low level of forest activity, DOF provided sufficient



field presence to ensure that FRPA was effective in protecting water quality and fish habitat in 2018.

- Southern Southeast forest practices inspections again focused on state operations this year; next year there will be renewed emphasis on non-state operations if activity increases.
- Compliance monitoring scores decreased slightly but remain strong in all three regions.
- DOF sold 8.0 MMBF of timber, a decrease from last year.

Reforestation: In 2018, the DOF surveyed 45 acres for regeneration in Tok and scarified 64 acres for natural regeneration in the Fairbanks Area. Ten acres were pre-commercially thinned and ten acres were pruned in the Haines State Forest. There was no planting because we were unable to award a contract, but 40,000 seedlings have been ordered for the summer of 2019.

Demand for saw log spruce remains stable in Region III with three primary mills operating in the interior: Northland Wood in Fairbanks, Logging and Milling Associates in Dry Creek, and Young's Timber Inc. in Tok. Superior Pellet Fuel remains the largest purchaser of pulp and pole timber in the interior and the newly opened Tok Biofuels is now producing compressed fire logs.

In the Mat-Su, a progressive three-year spruce beetle epidemic has caused significant white spruce die-off throughout the Mat-Su Valley. Spruce beetles killed most of the mature white spruce from Anchorage to the foothills of Denali. The Area Office responded by making more beetle-killed spruce available to the public for firewood and saw timber, and by planning for wildland fuels mitigation projects in coming years. The division also galvanized the many landowners under an All-Lands, All Hands working group to mitigate growing threats caused by forest fuels and hazardous trees.

State field crews successfully completed the three-year "ramp-up" phase of the Interior Forest Inventory and Analysis Program. This work is under a joint venture agreement with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). In future years, the state will operate more autonomously with less involvement by the USFS, which will continue to provide funding, quality assurance, and logistical and IT support. In 2018 staff finished sampling in the Tanana Valley unit with the completion of 290 plots. In 2019, inventory will continue by installing plots in Copper River.

Tongass Young Growth Inventory. A second inventory project in the Tongass National Forest is funded by a contract from the U.S. Forest Service State & Private Forestry to DOF through a Challenge Cost Share Agreement. State crews completed the field work for this three-year project in 2018 and successfully inventoried 30,000 acres of second growth timber in the national forest.

DOF continued three major cooperative efforts with the US Forest Service – Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) in Interior Alaska, a cost-share agreement covering young-growth inventory and work force development in Southeast Alaska, and a Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreement to provide forest management services on national forest land.

- The 30 MMBF young-growth timber sale on Kosciusko Island was the first sale sold under the GNA in the Tongass National Forest, and is currently being harvested. Alcan is the purchaser. That contract is set to end on December 31, 2023 and it remains on schedule.
- The DOF recently entered into a supplemental project agreement on the Tongass National Forest to manage a GNA timber sale (Vallenar) that has been combined with a timber sale on the Southeast State Forest for a total of about 16 MMBF (13.4 MMBF old growth and young growth in the SE State Forest + 2.8 MMBF young growth in the Tongass National Forest). The Vallenar GNA Timber Sale was awarded in February, 2019.
- On August 29, 2018, the DOF and the USFS entered their third GNA supplemental project agreement in Alaska and their first for the Chugach National Forest. This agreement will begin spruce beetle mitigation work in the Chugach; this is not a timber sale, but a forest health improvement project. DOF will conduct thinning there to help reduce risk of beetle infestation. \$95,000.

Legislation. During its 2018 session, the Alaska Legislature passed House Bill 355, the “Human Caused Wildfire Reduction Act.” HB 355 modernizes the division’s Wildland Fire Prevention and Investigation Program on state, municipal, and private lands under its protective jurisdiction. The primary objective of HB 355 is to reduce the number of human-caused wildfires in the wildland urban interface. Currently, more than 80 percent of the wildland fires that occur in Alaska on state protected lands are caused by humans as a result of unattended campfires, escaped brush piles, unextinguished land clearing fires, improper use of fireworks, and a host of other fire-related activities that are easily preventable.

In addition to updating the state’s wildland fire statutes and regulations, HB 355 authorizes DOF to issue tickets, up to \$500, for non-criminal, minor burning violations. It also authorizes designated DOF personnel to cite individuals for more serious criminal violations of the revised forest protection laws, which may include cost recovery for a fire, extensive fines, and the possibility of jail time.

While HB 355 officially takes effect starting on Jan. 1, 2019, the DOF Wildland Fire Prevention Office began drafting revised regulations and compliance components in the fall of 2018. Due to the extensive nature of the revisions and steps involved to finalize them, it is anticipated that these efforts will continue into the late spring of 2019.

The DOF public information and prevention offices will embark on a major public education campaign prior to and during the 2019 wildland fire season to make the public, shareholders, and cooperators aware of HB 355. The slogan for the campaign is “Take the Time to LEARN before You Burn.” Once launched, the campaign will continue into future wildland fire seasons and DOF will monitor its efficacy and identify strengths and weakness of wildland fire prevention efforts with a focus on high-risk wildland urban interface areas.

**Negotiated timber sales to local manufacturers.** Updates to the negotiated sale regulations went into effect in June 2018. The regulation changes:

- Extend the maximum time period for negotiated timber sales under AS 38.05.115 from one year to two years.
- Clarify that a best interest finding is needed for a negotiated sale under AS 38.05.118
- Delete the requirements for .118 sales to be in areas of high unemployment, underutilized manufacturing capacity, and underutilized allowable cut. This is consistent with the changes to AS 38.05.118 made two years ago.
- Clarify that a negotiated sale under .118 can be made to local manufacturers of wood products or users of wood fiber at appraised value.
- Specify that a negotiated sale under .118 is at appraised value.

Staff changes. In 2018, DOF

- Promoted Tim Dabney from Regional Forester to Deputy Director.
- Hired Martin Schoofs as a Forest Health Forester.
- Hired Joel Del Rosario as Administrative Operations Manager.
- Hired Alison Arians as Board of Forestry Liaison.
- Promoted Paul Keech from Fairbanks Area Forester to Northern Region Forester.
- Promoted Ed Soto from Mat-Su Area Forester to Coastal Region Forester.
- Promoted Mary Gaiser from an Admin Assistant II in Kenai-Kodiak to Accountant III in Anchorage.
- Two Forester IIs resigned from Ketchikan, but one was rehired recently.
- We are currently advertising a new position, a Forester IV, planner and federal programs manager. Combination of Jim Schwarber and Jim Eleazer positions. I'ts on Workplace Alaska now.

### Questions

Eric Nichols: You mentioned pruning 10 acres in Haines. What's that for?

Greg Staunton: This was a grant given to us over several years, and it was due to expire last year. It was for forest health, protection from beetles.

Buck Lindekugel: Question on Tongass Good Neighbor agreement. \$800,000 stumpage was due under contract. Is that purchaser funded? Roads credited?

Tim: The purchaser will be expending that money and will get credited on the stumpage for constructing the road.

Chris Stark: What is the total amount of the sale that Buck is asking about?

Tim Dabney: \$2.8 million total.

### **Effectiveness monitoring research priorities update.** Alison Arians, DOF:

By statute [AS 41.17.047(c)]: Together with DNR, DEC, ADF&G, other affected agencies and parties, and the forest-dependent industries, conduct an annual survey of research needs related to forest practices. Review research proposals and promote research projects that would address these needs to the governor and legislature. **This has not been done since 2012.**

Reinstated process for a streamlined annual survey.

- Contacted USFS, USFWS, Sealaska, and ADFG,
- Gathered a list of research priorities,

- Scheduled a teleconference for September 25, 2019 to discuss research topics for BOF review.

Possible research topics for discussion, suggested by USFS and USFWS:

- Closed (stored/inactive) roads: erosion monitoring, efficacy of road closure methods at minimizing erosion & sediment transport, stream diversions, etc.
- Fish passage through road/stream crossings: there is a list of research needs prepped by state and federal agencies and the SE Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership
- Invasive plant species control, detection, and mitigation
- Stream buffer windfirmness: buffer windthrow has been and is being studied, emphasis in future on measures to predict windthrow risk and minimize windthrow
- Management of young growth riparian/floodplain stands
- Evaluate FRPA regulations for culverts and water crossings compared to more modern aquatic organism passage guidelines (USFS, USFWS, ADOT) for fish bearing streams.

## **Public Comment**

Fairbanks: none.

Anchorage: none.

Ketchikan: none

Juneau:

Buck Lindkugel, SEACC. Question to Tim. Struck by report, funding is flat for all the divisions. According to the Governor, we understand that agencies should pay their own way. I don't see what stumpage was provided to the state for the timber that was sold. That seems to be a gap. Agencies need to inform the governor of their needs. We can't tell whether the stumpage is sufficient to cover the cost of enforcing the FRPA.

Jessica Plachta, Lynn Canal Conservation: I am the executive director of Lynn Canal Conservation, a grassroots conservation organization based in Haines, Alaska, with approximately 300 members. LCC members are typical Alaskans—active in the outdoors, fishing, hunting, gathering wild foods from our fertile landscape, and adventuring in every season. We support the increased development of recreational opportunities in our local Haines State Forest. Tourism and fishing are the major economic drivers in our community, and intact forests with abundant wildlife, healthy salmon runs, and well-developed trails will support our community for the long term.

We appreciate stream side buffer strips, but they are inadequate, as natural hydrology is still impacted by logging and logging roads, and streams often change course and leave their buffer zones. Our watersheds have already been degraded by decades of intense clearcut logging; we do not support additional large clearcuts with their additional cumulative impacts. We have already seen reduced resilience in our fisheries. Indeed, in 2017, the Board of Fisheries listed Chilkat Chinooks as a “stock of concern;” an emergency listing that restricted the fishing industry regionwide, impacting a broad sector of the economy in Southeast Alaska.

Our community is concerned to see the Haines State Forest proposing new large-scale, raw log export timber sales, destined for overseas markets. We would like our local resources to

stay local, and support small-scale, value-added processors. We prefer our forests to provide all the ecosystem services we rely on: filtering our pure water, harboring our robust salmon runs, feeding our local families, and sustaining our diverse economy.

For decades, Lynn Canal Conservation has tracked the activities of the State Forest. Using your own documents, we have compared State expenditures to receipts from timber sales, and have found the State Forest to be operating consistently at a loss to taxpayers. We do not support additional subsidized, below-cost timber sales, which would further bankrupt our state.

Instead, we propose the Department of Forestry seriously consider entering our remaining primary forest into revenue-generating carbon banks, to benefit from the rapidly maturing carbon credit markets. Temperate forests are the single best carbon sinks on earth, and multiple entities in Alaska are making hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue annually by simply letting the trees grow.

Just yesterday, on Alaska News Nightly, the report came in: this March was again the hottest March on record. In many parts of Alaska, temperatures were 20 degrees above average for the entire month. Southeast Alaska, famous for its precipitation, is in a prolonged drought. Some of the topics on your agenda today—“new wildland fire prevention statutes... salvage harvest potential of beetle-killed spruce”—these also are direct results of a rapidly changing climate.

15,000 scientists from 184 countries recently issued a joint statement published in the journal *BioScience*, warning humanity that we have just 12 years to reverse course, or face irreversible, catastrophic changes to the life-sustaining systems we rely on for our very existence. One of the most important things we can do is leave our forests standing. Stop widespread deforestation, and preserve biodiversity— so that life has its best chance of weathering the dramatic shifts in climate that are already underway.

The Chilkat Valley is unique in Alaska for its exceptional biodiversity. Plants, animals, birds, and humans have traveled the low passes here at the end of the Inside Passage for millennia, through many natural climatic shifts. Over time, the Chilkat has become a refuge for biological diversity from every kingdom of life. As ecosystems all over the planet become endangered by rapid climate change, resiliency refuges such as the Chilkat become even more crucial to conserve.

We ask simply that you consider the best possible science when making land use decisions for our shared resources. And, unavoidably, that best science now contains stark facts regarding climate change and its impacts on Alaska— our fish, our wildlife, our way of life. Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the conversation.

Teleconference line:

Karen Peterson: Would like to make an announcement and extend an invitation. The Alaska Wood Energy Conference is being held on April 15-16, with a fieldtrip on April 17<sup>th</sup>. You can find all the conference information at [www.alaskawoodenergy.com](http://www.alaskawoodenergy.com) Take a look at what

people are doing around the state with biomass, and where opportunities might lie for others. Still taking registration. \$135 for 2 days. At Wedgewood in Fairbanks. Forwarded agenda to Alison for inclusion. [See Appendix for agenda.]

10:15 public comment period closed.

## **Forest Management**

**Roadless Rule: Division of Forestry/USFS joint effort.** Kyle Moselle, OPMP: Summary of where DNR is on Roadless. Contact information is 465-6849 or [kyle.moselle@alaska.gov](mailto:kyle.moselle@alaska.gov). DNR, DOF and OPMP are coordinating state's participation, which is occurring on several fronts. This presentation will be on the EIS that USFS is heading up, and on the corresponding Roadless Rule rulemaking. In 2018 January, the state submitted a petition to USDA, asking three things: 1) USDA permanently exempt Tongass from Roadless Rule, 2) USDA start a revision for amendments of 2016 Tongass forest plan to remove Roadless revisions, and 3) reconsider state's objections that weren't addressed in 2016. The Secretary of Agriculture offered to initiate a rulemaking for Roadless Rule. Asked secretary if state would be cooperator, and in August 2018, we signed a cooperative agreement. Also five Alaska Native Tribes have signed the agreement.

The state also initiated a public process to inform our input into environmental review. In September, we established the RR Citizens Advisory Committee, and met in Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka. In November, the initial report described four options. State included all those options in comments to USDA.

Proposed a rulemaking for managing roadless areas in the Tongass. Preliminary draft EIS was provided in February 2019 and state provided comments on March 31. Right now, USFS is waiting for Secretary to decide on preferred alternative. I checked in with USFS lead, and a decision had not yet been made. Once the Secretary has selected a preferred alternative, they can write the draft rule.

They will have no-action alternative, plus a range of alternatives that would meet the purpose and need in the notice of intent. We expect the decision any day. Once that happens, draft rule will go through OMB clearance, since it's a significant rulemaking, before it goes out to public comment. It takes 90 days for OMB clearance.

USFS draft rule and draft EIS describing potential effects will be published in July 2019. USFS anticipates a 60-day public comment period, and they will go to same communities. There were meetings in 17 total communities during the scoping. If that all goes as planned, final EIS would be expected in April 2020, with final RR rulemaking published in June 2020. Much of this information is available on USFS web page and newsletter. USFS Region 10 website on RR page.

## Questions

Mark Vinsel: Is there any further role for the advisory committee?

Kyle: Yes, I think so. Nothing is officially scheduled, but I hope there will be some kind of opportunity for the state to check in with the committee on the draft EIS. Role of CAC is to advise state of Alaska, so that we can have more complete input into USFS process. Any time we can get additional information from the CAC is a benefit. Next check-in point with new information would be during public notice and review of draft EIS.

Chris Stark: What was the general sense from the public on taking it away RR or tweaking it?

Kyle: From CAC or public to CAC?

Chris: Both.

Kyle: I didn't attend all of the meetings, so I don't know what the public said at all of them. Input from CAC is contained in their report. Took a lot of time and care to look at roadless area characteristics that are unique to the Tongass. Interesting evaluation, and expressed to the state that they wanted RR characteristics moved forward to the USFS. Pressed hard for USFS not just to carry 2001 forward, but allow them to consider what the CAC recommended. Developed options for managing roadless areas. I think you'll see that USFS has done a good job with aligning a reasonable range of alternatives that the CAC made. They don't match up perfectly, but good continuity between the alternatives.

Chris Stark: Do folks in SE want it to open up? Or remain the same?

Kyle: Can't really answer that.

**Spruce beetle strategy update.** Alison Arians, DOF: In late November in Palmer, DOF hosted an interagency, all-landowner spruce beetle strategy meeting for Mat-Su. It was well attended by agencies, Native corporations, and community groups. DOF presented and invited speakers to present different options for pursuing funding sources to mitigate hazard trees from the beetle outbreak.

Since the meeting, DOF has worked with DPOR to try and help them mitigate some of their hazard trees in campgrounds, as well as with MEA to try and get permission from DMLW for MEA to remove hazard trees that could fall on powerlines. Shout-out to Stephen Nickel (new Mat-Su Area Forester), who, despite limited efforts by DPOR to obtain outside funding, has been trying to assist DPOR as much as possible with scheduling chainsaw trainings for firefighters in DPOR campgrounds. If hazard trees aren't removed from the state campgrounds, they are going to have to be closed for the season. This is problematic because of the huge loss of revenue to DPOR, but also because when campgrounds are closed, people seek campsites elsewhere, and start campfires in areas that don't have designated and cleared fire rings and other fire safety features.

Alison drafted a charter for the agencies, landowners and interested groups to sign to become a formal Task Force, and they will be meeting on April 9th. Stephen Nickel will be working with Sue Rodman (ADFG) and Ray Nix (Mat-Su Borough) to encourage the group to work together to apply for grants and obtain funding.

Hopeful development: Recently, Chris Maisch spoke with USFS about using \$2 million that was originally earmarked for roadless project. We submitted an updated issue paper to USFS on

Monday and hope to hear from them soon about using this funding to take care of the hazard trees and create fuel breaks in DPOR campgrounds.

#### Questions

Chris Stark: Can you get paid for the harvested trees?

Alison: There are rules against getting payment for trees from State Parks, so we'll be lucky if we can just get the hazard trees down and out of the parks.

Eric Nichols: What is going to happen with the carbon associated with all this dead spruce?

Alison: Not sure how carbon cycle is impacted with the dead spruce.

Fabian: Other landowners represented?

Alison: Yes, Native corporations and village corporations also on the Task Force.

#### **Salvage harvest potential of beetle-killed spruce.** Tim Dabney, DOF:

The epidemic has been going on for 3 years. Surveys show there is about 1 million acres of mortality. Trying to figure out a way to deal with this. Alison spoke to hazards to life and property, also fuels are in some cases easier to light, as well as harder to fight the fire from jackstraw trees. Also changing ecosystem—grass is successional stage afterwards. Definitely a concern for both of those increased fire hazards.

Potential for salvage: Within the last two years, at least three operators come to us to ask to be an answer to the problems. As you know, we have a process associated with timber sales, including noticing in the FYSTS. If it's a salvage sale, we don't have to notice it. However, the way that the forest type is in the area, we have spruce as roughly 1/3 of the tree component across the landscape. To call clearcutting of a block of land a "salvage" harvest, when a majority of the trees aren't dead or dying, we can't really do that. There is about 2,000 acres near Hatcher Pass that would meet the definition of a pure salvage harvest. The first effort didn't work because we couldn't put together the kind of acreage that the party wanted. Then we had a larger interest.

All of these interests are for export, since there isn't infrastructure to deal with this large amount of wood in the Mat-Su. Export components include two other problems. 1) exporting to China involves tariffs, so not economically viable (round logs). Logs are decaying as they stand dead. 2) Japan is interested in biomass. But Japan needs to have 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification, but none of these lands are certified. That's a process in itself.

All of those efforts seem to have run out of steam. Commercial harvesting of this area doesn't look good, as much as we'd love for someone to come up with something viable. So now we're just dealing with hazards of fuel and also of life and property. Doug Hanson is preparing a forest prospectus for Mat-Su to help with commercial interest, within 50 mile radius of Port McKenzie. Will include state and borough timber, and port capabilities. Maps show 78,000 acres, and 2.8 million tons of biomass.

Doug Hanson: Meeting with Mat-Su Borough on April 4. One issue with the port is that it's under lease with former NPI, which was exporting chips out of the valley. Any potential user will have to come with an agreement with NPI, and the port needs about \$200,000 of work to get it up and running. There is also continuing work that needs to be done with the railroad extension, which is still in limbo.



## Questions

Mark Vinsel: Regarding the potential for biomass sales with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification—do you mean FSC? Seems like it's not sustainable because we hope we don't have continuous beetle infested dying trees. Isn't there a waiver for a salvage situation, similar to if you wanted to eradicate an invasive species?

Tim: We believe that FRPA should substitute for FSC, but the talks have fizzled out.

Eric: Let's put the numbers in perspective. 1/3 of it is spruce, so there is about 15 million tons of dead and dying carbon. I was in a particle board mill in China. They use 1,000 tons per day. It's a lot of wood to salvage in a short period of time. The problem is that the value on the worldwide market is less than it's worth to get it there. \$600,000 million in subsidies is what you'd need to get it to the market. All these people very concerned with carbon credits—here's an opportunity to try and put it into a product. But it's very expensive.

Chris Stark: Did you pencil in what carbon would cost to get it there?

Eric: Cost to get it from the woods to the marketplace.

Chris: Are we putting more carbon out there than we're saving by removing it?

Eric: It probably doesn't cost 15 million tons of fossil fuel to get it to the marketplace. This would be on a massive scale. Fiber is in pretty balanced supply now. 15 million tons added to the world marketplace is a lot of volume, and it would require new capacity to be processed.

**Southeast timber, tariffs and sales.** Tim Dabney, DOF: Greg Staunton provided me with good information for this report. Tariffs are still in place, and the can has been kicked down the road in terms of increasing them. They have not been decreased. Tariffs are still an issue in terms of making export to China cost out. In Southeast, this is the planning that has occurred this winter:

1. Sumez Island and reconnaissance from 2018 has been updated, and has changed our perspective. We have a quote for services for layout and cruising. Some internal financial systems are inefficient, but we are close to having that procurement fixed, and we will be able to get that done as soon as possible. We need to have SHPO do a field review of the area.
2. Heceta Island: We have had a discussion with a USFS Geologist on karst land that we need to cross to access the timber sale. They haven't been as responsive as we'd like, since they are working on POW landscape analysis. They will hopefully be able to look at it by the end of the month. Inventory crew will cruise that in April.
3. North Thorne Bay. Last week a crew worked on road location and unit lines. We have one more week of layout work, another week of reconnaissance level work and then will be able to write a BIF for public disclosure of our plans on adjacent settlement lands.
4. Whale Pass and El Capitan. Requested site visit for 2020 by SHPO. Inventory crew will work on that in summer of 2019.
5. Edna Parlay: Working toward selling it as a purchaser layout, preferably this summer with Heceta.
6. Exploring practical use of inventory crew for cruising listed sales.

A number of efforts that we have in place to get some sale value out in SE. We continue to have issues with filling and retaining foresters in SE. We are pursuing purchaser layout opportunities, contractors like Mike Cooney, and three cooperative agreements between DOF and Alaska Forest Association that will help with getting sales out on the street. Also considering two 10-

year contracts. One of those may be negotiated, one may be competitive. We are considering all of those options and pursuing as many as we can.

**Mental Health Trust exchange update & forestry activity.** Alison Arians for Paul Slenkamp, MHT: MHT has finished Phase 1 of the Land Exchange, 2400 acres. Viking filed the DPO for the Naukati Exchange Timber sale and began operations the first of March. Hauled first load of logs from Naukati to Viking in Klawock last Monday.

Paul is starting the appraisal on Phase 2. Icy Bay is operating. Paul is working on the Land Owner Group with Jim and Chris.

**Landowner Group.** Tim Dabney, DOF: Met on March 6<sup>th</sup> in Juneau and group includes MLW, DOF, UA, USFS, ALCAN, Sealaska, AFA, MHT.

Log transfer update: University coordinated this last year. Update of LTF ILMA is a priority request, and the list will be continued. Icy Bay will be updated. Edna Bay and Leask Cove will be worked on next. Marty Parsons, Director of MLW is a former forester, and is working with us to help address these LTF ILMAs better in the future.

Helicopters: Columbia Helicopters is liquidating its Alaska assets. Some discussion about how reliant the USFS will be to log its volume with helicopters. That dialog is continuing. Not a good answer to that, but will continue.

Membership: MLW and AFA are 2 latest new members.

Staff: Reduced staffing levels; several programs have been started to increase training for job applicants.

**Vallenar GNA Authority project.** Tim Dabney, DOF:

Division of Forestry (DOF) and the U.S. Forest Service have partnered to award a second timber sale in Southeast Alaska under a Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreement. Signed the \$2.1 million Vallenar Bay Timber Sale contract with ALCAN Timber Incorporated of Ketchikan on February 13.

The sale covers approximately 481 acres on State and Federal land on the north end of Gravina Island. The sale includes a mix of old- and young-growth. The total volume of the sale is approximately 16 million board feet.

Good Neighbor Authority empowers the Forest Service to contract with states and work across land ownership boundaries to restore watersheds and manage forests on National Forest System lands. The Vallenar Bay sale is the second GNA timber sale in Alaska. The first occurred in September 2017 on Kosciusko Island near Edna Bay, also in Southeast Alaska. ALCAN Timber Incorporated purchased that sale for \$2.6 million. Each agency conducted its own scoping, analysis, public review, and decision process for their respective portions of the sale. The DOF conducted the site-specific layout and sold the sale for both agencies, and will administer the sale contract. The DOF adopted a Forest Land Use Plan for its portion of the sale in July 2018. The

sale area is located within the Southeast State Forest and the Tongass National Forest and is accessed by the newly constructed Vallenar Bay Road.

Funds generated from the sale of federal timber cover the federal administration costs incurred by the State and restoration projects on the Tongass National Forest. State sale revenue is budgeted for statewide forest resource responsibilities of the DOF.

GNA projects are a real benefit to DOF and to USFS. Caveat to good news: some things aren't perfect. When we work on National Forest system lands, we have to adhere to USFS NEPA decisions, which takes a lot of time to coordinate with USFS. I hope we can do better in terms of getting some decisions implemented on the ground more quickly.

**FLUP and BIF appeals and potential statute change.** Tim Dabney, DOF: Both FLUPs and BIFs are subject to appeal and request for reconsideration. If we do them together, that's one appeal opportunity. When we split those out, and do a BIF first, that's subject to appeal, and then the FLUPs would be done later, and those FLUPs are also subject to appeal and request for reconsideration. Interest by DOF for the FLUPs written after the BIF to be seen as similar to DPOs, and not subject to appeal. It's possible that there could be some sort of statutory change, not subjecting FLUPs to appeal. We'll see whether it has any legs, but that would be certainly an efficiency improvement in our sales, without potential appeals. The process itself would save time.

## Questions

Bill Morris: The intent wouldn't be to do away with the FLUP, correct?

Tim: Right. The vision DOF has is that the preference is to do all the FLUPs in combination with the BIFs. That works for smaller sales. But for a larger sale, it would be better to do the BIF, and perhaps one or more of the FLUPs. Any additional FLUPs would be done later, but wouldn't be subject to appeal.

Chris Stark: What was the logic for separating these in the first place? Why are they separated?

Tim: On these long term timber sales, it's not practical to do all the FLUPs at the time of the BIF. When you can't do all the FLUPs at the time of the BIF, the subsequent FLUPs are appealable. Mike Curran would know the answer to that. Paul Keech?

Paul: It's really the scale of it. To contain the level of detail that we need in a FLUP, it's very difficult if the units are more spread out. The BIF is a broader document. In Fairbanks we do a combined BIF and FLUP, but in SE when considering a 10-year contract, we don't have the time and personnel after about Year 5 to include in that FLUP. Get the first series out in the BIF/FLUP combination at first, but the remaining wouldn't be there.

Chris Stark: My take on this: one FLUP would happen, then several years later, another FLUP would happen. In the interim, owners of the forest would see something they didn't see the first time. The BIF came out, but 4 years later, people have a different attitude.

Eric Nichols: On larger timber sales, you don't have access. FLUPs need layout, road ribbons, unit layout, and that takes on-the-ground, on-foot layout. It's very costly when you don't have road access, because you need helicopters. If you do them in a systematic order, as you develop access to a site, it makes layout and FLUP preparation more efficient. But if you take it in sections, then it's appealable. We do FLUPs each year, as we develop infrastructure, but if it's appealable, and I've already bought the timber sale, that causes problems for me.

Chris Stark: When you do the BIF, you don't know what is going into the FLUP. The other side of the coin, now people are seeing more closely what you're doing, and interested in specifics.

Eric: BIF is the general decision that it's in the best interest of the state that they sell the timber. The FLUPs should be treated more like a DPO, with on-the-ground details.

Chris Stark: Yes, but access and roads are what people are concerned about.

Eric: We know generally where the roads are going to be.

Chris: Depends on my interest, whether I'd like the road to be where. What if I don't want your road going through my trout pond.

Eric: You should have written a letter about the trout pond when the BIF came out.

Bill: It doesn't make sense for some FLUPs to be appealable while others are not.

Tim: Potential change is associated with the appeal part, not the public and agency review. The public and agencies would still have the opportunity to provide input on the FLUPs.

Mark Vinsel: Last year we increased the fee on appeals for BIFs and FLUPs. The purpose was to reduce nuisance appeals. Is there time for a track record on the effects of that fee? I'm concerned, because the devil is in the details. I don't think there is enough details in the BIF for people to know what is happening on the ground.

*Note: Effective July 1, 2018, under 11 AAC 02.030, appeals and requests for reconsideration filed under 11 AAC 02 must be accompanied by the fee established in 11 AAC 05.160(d)(6), currently \$250. Effective July 9, 2018, under 11 AAC 05.160 (a) and (b), this fee will be reduced to \$200.00 for each appeal or request for reconsideration.*

*Since July 1, DOF has not had any appeals. Alison asked Peter Caltagirone, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, if there seemed to be any reduction in appeals/requests for reconsideration since the fee went into effect. He said "We are still regularly receiving appeals in our office, but we haven't run any kind of analysis to correlate how many with the new fee requirement."*

After lunch, the Fairbanks computer locked up and took a very long time to restart and get Bridgit going again. Alison has since purchased an SSD card to replace the hard drive in the computer in the Large Conference Room, and Cole Vanderbilt will install it.

## **Research**

**Blowdown prediction/reduction modeling.** Greg Albrecht, ADFG:

Windthrow in Southeast Alaska.

- Factors affecting windthrow
  - Individual tree characteristics (bole morphology, crown, rooting depth)
  - Stand level characteristics (height, density, species, silvicultural Rx)
  - Soil characteristics (depth, drainage, composition)
  - Wind exposure (topography, slope position, aspect)
  - Meteorology (wind speed, duration, precipitation)
  
- Environmental consequences of windthrow
  - Biggest windthrow risk is within first 3-4 years of cut
  - Not all windthrown is bad
  - Windthrow is a natural process and wood recruitment is good

- Consequences vary by site specifics and stream type
- Transport
  - high gradient (>6%), contained channels
  - Function is to meter sediment, provides immediate habitat primarily for resident fish, effects downstream
- Transitional
  - Moderate gradient (2-6%), alluvial fan, mixed control
  - 2-4% = floodplain habitat, 4-6% = often incised, spawning gravel retained by wood features, upper end of anadromous rearing habitat, step pools
- Depositional
  - Low gradient (<2%), floodplain channels
  - Wood controls pools, creates complexity, habitat for rearing and spawning fish, as well as sediment retention and metering, bank recruitment
- Long term supply dynamics
  - Loss of a few trees vs. whole sections of the buffer (catastrophic)
  - Catastrophic blowdown = high wood loading, followed by era of low recruitment
  - Overloading (can) = reduced gravel transport for a period, then accelerated transport following wood decay
  - Accelerated transport (can) = aggradation, channel fracturing, transport reduction, unstable low value fish habitat.
  - Some streams would have minimal impacts from reduction in long-term supply
  - Wind-sheltered “wood-poor” streams could benefit from some windthrow
- FRPA riparian regulations
  - General Variation 11 AAC 95.240
  - General variation small streams (<6.5 ft wide), no trees within 25 ft
  - 25% standing qualifying (12”, includes trees <25ft) and 25% qualifying downed
  - Preference for crown, lean, wind
  - Directionally felled away, no log dragging in riparian
  - No tracked vehicles within 33 ft of OHW
  - Minimize damage
  - Individual tree variance: AS 41.17.087 (more common, based on values listed at AS 41.17.115(a))
  - Slope stability standards at 11 AAC 95.280
  - Road building 11 AAC 95. 285
- Windthrow prediction studies
  - Martin and Shelly (2017).
    - 14 stream reaches monitored 1994-2012
    - Found significant correlation between occurrence of windthrow and the Rollerson et al. (2009) Wind Exposure Index (WEI)
  - Rollerson et al. (2009). Variable retention windthrow monitoring project, 2001 to 2009
    - WEI resulted from 8 year study to document spatial extent of windthrow in BC timber lands and identify key contributing factors
    - Identify first and second most common prevailing storm wind directions

- Assess the aspect (exposure) of buffer strip segments to winds from these two directions
  - Rank and score segments
  - Account for increase in wind damage as fetch within cutblock increases
- Martin and Shelly (2017).
  - 14 stream reaches monitored 1994-2012
  - Found significant correlation between blowdown and the Rollerson et al. (2009) Wind Exposure Index (WEI)
  - Fetch distance not considered
- Potential approach to reduce windthrow within existing regulatory framework in Region I
  - No action
  - Use the simple Rollerson WEI with fetch during DPO review
  - Fine tune using local conditions and indicators (known wind patterns, past blowdown from field, aerial, and LIDAR observations)
  - Agree on workable BMPs for the site to mitigate high risk
  - Record in monitoring list
  - Evaluate in the future
- Strategies for reducing windthrow
  - Leave low merch timber on windward side of high ranking buffer segments
  - Avoid straight-lines, feather, and thin (percentage is of some debate)
  - Pruning and topping (less economic?)
  - Evaluate equipment operations within buffer
  - Operability must be a consideration

### Questions:

Denise: Am I right that in the purple book (BMPs), buffers are pretty generic.

Chris Maisch: Yes, based on stream type and whether the streams are anadromous.

Denise: Making things more site-specific for the DPO, would we have to change the purple book to make it more flexible?

Greg Albrecht: Could you do something on a voluntary basis?

Chris Maisch: Hard to get the staff able to do this. This would add a work load to do this more detailed planning. What is the end result? Does it make a difference to fish habitat and water quality? For a private landowner, does that limit your harvest further? This would be a significant change to how the buffers have worked so far.

Denise: On our fieldtrip to Kodiak, we looked at some buffers there. Windthrow is a fact of life on our buffers.

Bill: Thanks for giving the presentation, Greg. It is something that happens, and the little I know about trying to evaluate it beforehand would mean on-the-ground effort. This is a lot lower effort.

Greg Albrecht: This is a way to get some low-hanging fruit. Martin's work showed that 11% of the time, the whole side of the buffer would blow down. That is what we're trying to avoid. USFS evaluates buffers with a lot of checklists, soils, etc., but they are focused on not wanting ANY trees blowing down. The concept of how simple this is could be a way to avoid the big

catastrophic blowdowns by applying the models. Would only take minutes on GIS. ADFG could do this, and then would have to discuss with the landowner.

Chris Maisch: In the documentation from Doug's work where catastrophic events have happened, how has that impacted the streams?

Greg Albrecht: Martin's research does have that information, but it's focused on the site where it has occurred, not downstream of the event. USFS also has good information about this on their sites.

Chris Maisch: Looking at fetch and % blowdown, curious what the time frame is. First year, five years?

Greg Albrecht: Cumulatively over time in the Rollerson study, but I'm not sure what the time frame is.

Eric Nichols: I don't know how many miles of buffer I've laid in, but it's a lot. Sometimes we leave buffers and we know there's going to be blowdowns—we can see trees already blown down, etc. I was involved in harvest in BC where there were a lot of spiral cut branches. A lot of blowdown happens from one tree tipping into another. Maybe you could consider removing non windfirm timber from the stand, to keep them from tipping other trees over. On leeward side, leave a thinner buffer, wider buffer on the windward side. Trees from one side of the stream pushing trees over and away from the stream.

Chris Stark: If the wind is blowing it away from the stream, it's not going to fall into the stream anyway.

Eric: Try to windfirm the leeward side better.

Greg Albrecht: Good things to consider. Another thing is for SE, especially on POW, we have LIDAR imagery and USFS evaluating windthrow over years. A person could apply that approach on the whole landscape and ground truth it. Apply a simple model, and do what Doug did but across a big landscape. Could ground truth it and see if patterns hold up.

Eric: Each drainage has its own wind pattern. Get funneling up draws that changes wind direction. Old growth timber has patterns that you'll see in the timber itself.

Chris Maisch: Jim Tuttle: any thoughts?

Jim Tuttle: I agree it's a shame to see some of these buffers laying on the ground a year or two after harvest. I'm not saying we're totally opposed to doing something about it, like leaving low merch timber adjacent to areas susceptible to windthrow. I'll follow up with a phone call to Doug Martin.

Chris Maisch: Greg, you have seeded a conversation on the topic. Question about the photo of harvest unit pre- and post-blowdown. Was that for water quality buffers?

Greg Albrecht: Yes, water quality buffers, not fish streams.

Eric: When I look at this stuff, I see it in young growth. Are we really doing water quality when we have 100% blowdown?

Chris Maisch: This is the role of the BOF. I don't know if intuitively if it's all blown down, does it make a difference for water quality?

Eric: When we walk them, we can see thin buffers on high steep slopes that don't hold rooting well to start with.

Chris Maisch: Greg, you have gotten the BOF thinking about this. This could fit into one of our other topics at the Effectiveness Monitoring meeting in September.

Chris Stark: What do you mean by low hanging fruit?

Greg Albrecht: Trying to work on the buffers that would all fall down—catastrophic events. Identifying the areas where there won't be any buffer left.

Chris Stark: Catastrophic events? At some point when is that a problem?

Greg Albrecht: It's bad for long-term supply of large woody debris if it all blows down at once.

Chris Stark: How long does a tree of 2 or more feet in diameter last in the stream? About 50 years if not a lot of agitation. Windthrow is being caused by big trees opened up to wind, caused by harvest. I'm struggling with the idea of moving buffers to zero to keep wood out of the stream. Was the Rollerson project done on the coastline?

Greg Albrecht: Yes, Vancouver Island. Some coastal, some mainland. Different prevailing wind direction than what they have here.

*Note: Greg clarified with Chris Stark by email later that he was advocating for a broader buffer, not eliminating the buffer.*

Chris Stark: Would like to see both studies and read them before more questions.

Chris Maisch: Could be in research monitoring topics.

Chris Stark: Have Eric talk about how you can tell when there is going to be windthrow. Would love to hear more about what they say. Also, it would be good for someone to boil down the Rollerson study to something we can digest.

Chris Maisch: What is economic impact, impact on water and/or fish?

Chris Stark: I want to hear what values are impacted.

**Possibilities for Alaska timber lands to support Trails/Recreation.** Chris Beck, Agnew::Beck, LLC: Enthusiasm for mountain biking and hiking, and equally invested in the future of the Alaskan economy. These are turbulent times. Travels to New Zealand and Oregon recently brought up some thoughts on those topics. Places that combine timber harvest and trails and mountain biking in interesting ways.

Building a Stronger Alaskan Economy: Alaska Trails Initiative

Working Landscapes: Integrating Outdoor Recreation with Resource Development

1.Context: Quick Overview of Statewide Trails Initiative

- “So much opportunity, so little infrastructure....”
- Alaska has barely tapped our state’s remarkable outdoor resources. Because of this chronic under-investment, we are missing our chance to build a stronger, more durable Alaskan economy.
- How to get there... Statewide Trails Initiative. **Actions and Products**
  - Economic impact: today, future
  - Coalition: users and user groups, agencies, businesses, organizations
  - Trail projects inventory
  - Feature projects
  - Land and resource management strategies

When will it be done?

- A continuing, open ended process
- But, initial draft product April 2019
  - New KesugiKen campground and Curry Ridge Trail;
  - Denali State Park –“Build It and They Came”
  - Snowmachine couch with a view
- What kinds of users? All-inclusive, Non-denominational.
- Lots of partners.



What new policies and investments are needed?

- Trails, huts, cabins/comfort
  - “Missing middle” accessible adventure
  - Handful of long trails
- Marketing: More robust, more helpful descriptions of AK trail opportunities
- Information: Radical ideas like trail signs
- Land management
  - “Curating” outdoor recreation resources
  - Support for “working landscapes”
  - Stewarding our attractions, maintaining what makes Alaska Alaska

Economic benefits: “The outdoor recreation industry is the sleeping giant of the US economy”

What Makes up the Outdoor Recreation Industry?

Remarkably Diverse

- Activities*: tours, food, lodging
- Manufacturing*: (in AK) fat tire bikes, pack rafts, clothes..
- Equipment*: sales of snow machines, bikes, hiking boots
- Support services*: equipment repair, fuel sales, construction

Why “Sleeping”?

- Fragmented, diffuse
- Not well documented (NAICS codes recently amended)
- Dismissed in AK as poorly paid, seasonal, too “green”

National Impact: \$412 Billion of US GDP, equaling/exceeding other better known sectors.

**Note:** Hatcher Pass, McCarthy, the Iditarod Trail and other Alaskan outdoor recreation favorites exist only because of mining. This chart doesn’t say no to mining, it just gives more reasons to say yes to outdoor

Economic impacts of outdoor recreation in AK:

Source: UAA Center for Economic Development, March 2019. Note: this excludes equipment purchases, and excludes travel less than 20 miles.

- \$3.2 billion in annual participant spending
- 38,100 direct, indirect and induced jobs

Fiscal impacts of out of state visitors to Alaska: \$187.8 million in State & Local gov’t revenue

What could expanded, smarter investments in outdoor recreation do for the AK economy?

One More Day: “OMD”

Average length of stay for visitors to New Zealand –19 days

...for out of state visitors to Alaska –9.1 days

What if smart AK outdoor recreation investments lead to “OMD”?

- Total 2017 out-of-state visitor spending –\$2.5 billion
  - \$2.5 billion divided by 9.1 days = \$275 million/day
  - Say we can only convince half... adds an extra \$137 million in spending in Alaska
- Trail users spend more, stay longer.

## TRAIL INITIATIVE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### Improved public land management

- oWorking landscape partnerships
- oRegulatory reform –better ways to reserve trails
- oResource stewardship

### 2. Working Landscapes Case Studies

- Nelson, New Zealand
- Rotorua, New Zealand, Mtn bike mecca
- Queen Charlotte Track, hotel to hotel walk
- Bend, OR: Mountain bike trails in active USFS timber harvest area
- Waihi Martha Pit – Pit Rim Walkway around mining operation.

### 3. Discussion: Relevance and Implications for Alaska, and for Alaska forest-designated lands

BOF thoughts? New and better options for trails—contexts for recreation in design of harvest plan? Might there be timber roads sustainable for recreation? Worth pushing more on this? Places that have done this in other place, have generated major increases in tourism and spending. Does this seem relevant?

Chris Stark: I'm on board. If there is some way to get a road to remain. As an industry, usually we close the roads down. University lands are all gated. I see that this is something we should get after. I can see Eric having a way for the public to go look at a cut and see it—it's a reality and it's cool. A shift of mindset about timber sales. Change a working landscape into a tourist attraction. A great idea!

Mark Vinsel: This came up a lot in the Roadless Rule committee discussions. I'm familiar with the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail—a network of old forest roads that have been kept in place and maintained and provide access all the way up and down the coast. Forest Service roads are marked with a little number, maps are pretty good. Allows those huge population centers access into the mountains, and gives people places to park. During the Roadless committees, a lot of people talked about having a lot of nature close by, but no way to get to it. This is public outreach and publicity that BOF hasn't taken up. There are a lot of people who would like to see Alaska locked up and not visited by people, but I disagree. I think we are part of nature and we need to use it and experience it. It's not likely to be preserved in the long term unless we use it and encourage people access to it. I'm on board. Logistics are more difficult in Alaska, risk is a little higher (bears). 200 or 300 years ago, people would walk, and those paths became roads. It takes a lot of thinking, but managing our resources sustainably is in our Constitution. Taking timber and then closing up roads isn't the best use for everybody. If we do think of ways to benefit communities and visitors. Juneau has a great trail system, people use it a lot. I'm with you, Chris (Beck).

Chris Beck: Some people do want to see Alaska locked up. Alaska does have pristine scenic wilderness—but there aren't just two options: put the blade down or lock it up. It's a mix of both. If you like having your kid having a job, and eating at the restaurants you like, and oil is not going to drive the economy, we can use recreation to backfill what we're missing.

Denise: Cautionary note: all of this sounds great, but as an example, some of the places in SE where we've built roads and used them for recreation, people get used to using those roads for recreation. Then if we want to use them again for more harvest, people can get upset about it.

Chris Beck: in each of those places I showed, I thought there might be those problems—but peace had been made. Expectations had been set—there were trail closures. There were options to go other places because the area was big enough.

Chris Maisch: Challenge from an agency standpoint. 300 miles of roads in Fairbanks, only 20 miles plowed in the winter. Built-in snowmachining and mountain biking. We do zero to promote any of that. There could be a map. We can't even find \$\$ for the map.

Chris Beck: We just had a good meeting in Anchorage with the Visitors Convention Bureau about finding money to publicize what's already there. It would be nice if visitors would stick around and spend money another way. I don't have the map in my pocket yet, but sounds like they could maybe get some funding to make a map.

Chris Maisch: Maps and management: signage.

Bill: Are there different maintenance standards if you want to keep them open for the future?

Chris Maisch: Mainline long term road have different standards than small roads. Marking the trails so people can find them. Now, people have to explore on their own. Hunting, but not many mountain bikers out there. Some potential problems: silvicultural exemption for wetlands. You have to be sensitive of that—primary use is forest management.

Fabian: 300 miles of road—how much of it is maintained?

Chris Maisch: Actively maintained, about 100 miles of it—but sporadic, as necessary.

Fabian: I was thinking about a wet year, where it got a lot of use, would it get a lot of use and need maintenance?

Chris Maisch: There might be some maintenance issues. Could harden some of those routes a bit more.

Chris Beck: Most of the single-track trails were built and maintained by volunteer groups. I hate to end on difficult subject, but I will. Fiscal disconnect is a subject we're trying to bring up gently. I don't have to pay a fee to ride the bikes, but I spent a lot of money on food and lodging and transportation. That money, some of it, is pumped back into that system. We don't have taxes to harvest some of that tourist money to construct, maintain, and publicize these things. That's a big complicated issue. Figuring that one out.

Chris Maisch: We can talk about this more later.

## **Board Business**

### **Board of Forestry Report to Governor.**

Cover letter: Ask the board what issues they would like to communicate for FRPA and oversight. What have we done or discussed over the last year that we want to highlight?

Chris Maisch: DEC's inability to be in the field. Number of DPOs are down, but that could change. Now they are feeling that they are adequately represented.

Bill: Agreed. Some nods to water quality data collection other than specific effectiveness monitoring. Funding for Effectiveness monitoring work should be reinstated and continued.

Mark: Compliance monitoring. Make sure to say that the collaboration of the three agencies are essential to the implementation and monitoring of FRPA. While there is a lot of news and research and science on salmon, none of the science points to the land and aquatic habitat being a

significant part of these declines. It's just as important that we hold onto those regulations and monitoring and compliance so we give the fish their best chance to recover.

Chris Maisch: Economic importance of healthy timber and fish industry; FRPA helps with both.

Eric: Cooperating with federal gov't: GNA. Very supportive of that. It's a way for the state to get additional income and be more flexible with what we can do with a timber sale. Local forest service has increased exponentially.

Denise: MHT?

Chris Maisch: Land exchange has occurred, helping domestic side of industry survive in the short term. Also, Governor is focused on spruce beetle. Worth mentioning that. Trying to find innovative ways to deal with that issue.

Chris Stark: SE tourist industry is also up—they are here to view natural resources. FPRA: not just the oceans going on. Could also mention tariffs—problems with access to markets.

Mark: Changing this board to teleconference twice a year and one in-person meeting: we have done some cost-cutting. Wise to not cut further into forestry on FRPA or fire side.

Bill: Coordination with DEC, ADFG, DOF. Everyone's budgets have been cut so much that we're at the edge of effective coordination.

**FLUP and BIF appeals and a potential statute change.** Chris Maisch. Discussed this with Governor, about the appealability of the documents. FLUP is about a 5-year window with lots of site-specific details. I will discuss details as soon as I can. Some of the FLUP details would be addressed in BIF, and FLUP would go more toward a DPO model. How this fits in with timber harvest areas that have area plans, forest management plans, state forest plans, and areas that don't have any plans. How to classify them for timber sales. A lot of different pieces, and we are continuing to have a discussion on that.

#### Questions

Bill: So some aspects of current FLUPs would move into BIFs, and FLUPs would become more like DPOs, and we would seek comments from public and agencies.

Chris Maisch: Yes.

**As 38.05.118 authority.** Have been working with Dept of Law on this. Underlying statute talks about locally manufactured product. Not sure if that would stand up to a challenge if we used .118 for an export sale. We would need to change it to be for export and/or domestic sale.

BOF is the next step when we find out whether something would get introduced. As soon as we can share these briefing papers, we will do that.

**Review of draft Strategic Plan for BOF.** Alison Arians, DOF:

Chris Maisch: DOF strategic plan is in packet. One-page plan. Do something like this, brief and goes to the core mission. Set ourselves two goals for the next 12-24 months. Alison should write a straw man ahead of time. One round of edits before face to face meeting. Topics we talked about today, plus annual report.

Windthrow and Chris's recreational piece. Could just be legislative stuff. FLUPs and .118.

Alison & Chris Maisch will work on this together. Good to give a new board member when they come on. Also good as an educational tool for new members.

Bill: Big issue for me: every year there should be a focus on research needs. You're moving forward with that, something to talk about at future board meetings.

Chris Stark: Go for everything you can get on economics. Look at whatever we can. How to make money, and express that to the Governor.

Chris Maisch: A strategic plan is also good for incoming administration on what the Board does.

### **Wrap-up**

- Summer meeting date and agenda items, fieldtrip ideas  
Mat-Su for spruce beetles. Week of 26<sup>th</sup>: Tuesday & Wednesday (August 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>).  
Alison will check with Jaeleen and Tim and Chris Beck.  
*They have agreed to the meeting date.*

### **Board comments**

Chris Stark: Joel Nudelman, great job with monitoring. I appreciate exchange of ideas.

Mark Vinsel: Thank staff, Alison for minutes and like to see compliance reports with as little yellow as possible. Interesting to hear that Tok is finding a market in the state for biofuel logs. Impressed with what was going on in Tok. Interesting—lot of local ambition. Have never heard Tok in news story. Fieldtrips are a really valuable part of this board.

Jim Tuttle: Thank you for inviting me. Very interesting. From Sealaska's point of view, we are looking forward to another good year—plenty of challenges. Markets are stable, could be better but could be worse.

Eric: Unique things—on buffers with ADFG. Standard is, wider buffers. Really appreciate scientific efforts on this. We don't like to see wood all coming down in a catastrophic event. We're all for finding a way to do that that protects fish. Recreation: Tourism—Cape Fox is leasing road system. Ability to put that into a working forest. I'm all for it; whatever we can do as an industry, I'm all for it.

Fabian: Thanks for having me substitute. Informative.

Denise: Thanks to Alison, organizing it. Thanks for the authors of presentations, more to chew on.

Bill: Thanks Alison, Chris and Tim for good meeting. Thanks go Paul for coffee. Good discussions. Interested in working on more with windthrow with the Board. How can we work on this with the industry. Enjoyed thinking about recreational opportunities. Economic infrastructure is a challenge. How do you convince everybody on the opposing side that these things can coexist. Has been successful in some places. Looking forward to working on specific items in the strategic plan as we move forward.

Eric: Statistic on NZ: supplies 38% of the timber into China, where Alaska supplies 1%.

Adjourned at 3:20pm.

### **Agenda items proposed for August meeting**

- Recreation & Trails plan
- Strategic plan: spruce beetles, windthrow, trails initiative, legislative: FLUPs & .118
- Windthrow (with more info at winter meeting—check Greg's availability in winter)
- Spruce bark beetle strategy update

- Yellow-cedar Endangered Species Act update (Erin Knoll)

**Tasks:**

Letter to Governor

Send spruce beetle briefing paper to BOF.

Add windthrow to Effectiveness Monitoring meeting in September.

Write a strawman for strategic plan, with one round of edits before August meeting.

**Appendix:**

Wood Energy Agenda

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