**FINAL Minutes: Tanana Valley State Forest**

**Citizens’ Advisory Committee Meeting**

April 16, 2020; 6:00 PM

Teleconferenced via WebEx

**Attendees:**

State Employees:

Nick Carter, DOF

Kevin Meany, DOF

Matt Stevens, DOF

Jeremy Douse, DOF

Tom Paragi, ADFG

Alison Arians, DOF (minutes)

CAC Members present:

Tom Malone, Chair (Forest Science)

(Mining)—Milt Behr passed away last week.

Brad Cox (Value-Added Processing)

Reed Morisky (Tourism)

Tom Nerbonne (Upper Tanana)

Dan Rees, by phone (Private Forest User)

Fabian Keirn, by phone (Native Community)

Mike Spindler, (Fish & Wildlife)

Chris Stark (Environmental)

Kristin Timm (Recreation)

Jon Underwood (Lower Tanana)

Jason Knowles (Forest Industry)

Public:

Geoff Orth, Stray Dogs Consulting

Dave Lutz, Dartmouth College

Tom Malone called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

Members and guests introduced.

**Minutes**

Minutes from the April 25, 2019 meeting were approved without corrections. Dan Rees made the motion, Kristin Timm seconded.

**Announcements**

CAC members willing to be reappointed?

Kristin Timm—yes

Tom Malone--yes

Brad Cox—~~no response yet~~. yes

Thomas Nerbonne—~~no response yet.~~ yes

**OLD BUSINESS**

Update on project: ‘Investigating Changes in Forests Across Alaska and Canada,’ with CAC involvement – Dr. David Lutz, Dartmouth College, Department of Environmental Studies.

Project is NASA funded project using computer models to model AK and Canada, using remote sensing. Use stakeholders to identify what outputs would be useful for 10-year and 20-year plans. ABoVE meeting. Annual meeting should have been May 10, but travel has shut down, and now the meeting is virtual. Will need to reschedule. Right now, model is being calibrated. Can share a PDF with Alison and can show results of how the model is working w/o harvest in there yet. USFS is about to provide their crews and inventory data for central AK. Make public. Will be in touch about communicating. Probably in the fall or next spring when we can meet in person. NASA is understanding about delays. Canceled all the LIDAR and central missions. A lot of chaos. Can reschedule when everyone is ready.

Kristin: when you can travel, would be great to meet—have a guest seminar at UAF when you’re here.

David: yes

Mike: If a guest seminar happens, please let the whole CAC know and can attend or attend by webinar.

Alison: Will do.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Election of committee Chair and Vice Chair:** Chris Stark nominates Tom Malone, Chair and Dan Rees, Vice Chair. Fabian seconded. All voted in favor.

**+ Using DOF GIS online maps of timber sales – Doug Hanson**

[AK DNR Forestry Viewer](https://arcg.is/08be40)

* CAC requested timber sale info online, so we created a website that contains our timber sales and FYSTS.
* Weblink on the agenda—resources viewer. Click on that. All timber sales for the whole state. Only contains the FYSTS in the northern region. Gray are harvested, colors are different years proposed to be harvested. Zooming in even further, polygon will show attributes. Management block, etc. You can also just look at timber sales. Can query by a sale number, by the FYSTS.

Questions:

Spindler: Is there a way to include a layer on timber type?

Doug: Yes, inventory website that has timber types for each area.

Kevin: Link to that inventory on the top of the page. Can click on polygons. Can see all the timber types. Can circle polygons and spit out total volume. For example, filter to show just spruce within 5 miles.

Doug: Retiring at the end of the month.

Chris Stark: Retrospectively, how comfortably can you go with what previous state forest harvest has been? How much of this state forest harvest is represented in the system? How often do we propose a sale and then it doesn’t get cut?

Doug: Timber sale layer, you can add up all the acreage that we have cut. Veg layer will revert back to reprod. Acres of what has been cut.

**Rosie Creek Recreation & Forestry Partnership – Alison Arians & Jon Underwood**

$100,000 grant received. PPT explaining process, including public meeting.

This project is a precedent-setting partnership in Alaska between recreation interests and a working forest, by making the following recreational improvements to a system of scenic forestry roads in the Rosie Creek management area of the Tanana Valley State Forest:

1. regrading and resurfacing an 18-mile system of existing forestry roads to reduce ruts and erosion;
2. clearing brush from portions of existing forestry roads;
3. regrading a portion of a material site on the Parks Highway to provide parking at the trailhead, and removing junk cars and other garbage from the site;
4. constructing and installing a map kiosk near the trailhead to detail the forestry road system and explain land ownership and timber management in this working forest;
5. installing signs to
   1. indicate directions to stay on the maintained route,
   2. inform users of seasonal trail conditions that branch off from the road system, and
   3. inform users when they enter and leave State Forest land, and what restrictions exist on adjacent land ownerships (such as Mental Health Trust and Fairbanks North Star Borough); and
6. provide a link to a downloadable GPS map on TrailForks.com.

The Division plans for the work to begin this summer and be finished in time for the winter season. The Rosie Creek area offers an opportunity to combine a working state forest with a well-signed and well-maintained recreational trail. Forestry roads in the area are already used as trails by bikers, skiers, hunters, snowmachiners, dogsledders, runners and other users. The trail signs, maintenance and improved parking will make it easier and safer for trail users.

The Division of Forestry welcomes the opportunity to help provide more well-maintained and easily navigable trails not only in the Fairbanks area, but around the state.

Kristin: Press release? Excited to share that!

Alison: Will do.

Tom Malone: Signage needs to say that this is a working forest. Conflicts are real. USFS has had problems with conflicts.

Jon Underwood: Hadn’t been there for a long time—was shocked to see how nice it was in there. Just as nice as Chena Rec. Fun to have this resource so close to Fairbanks. Disclaimer—a likely bidder on this project. Wanted to point this out.

Tom Malone: Everyone was excited a year ago. It isn’t like you were the tiebreaker for whether we approved. Doesn’t seem to be a conflict.

Mike Spindler: This is a great idea for a multiple use forest.

**“Long Trail” idea: Fairbanks to Nenana – Jon Underwood.**

Oriented to map. Idea—forestry roads toward Nenana.

Kristin: more cabins is a great idea. Hard to rent cabins. Trail is a good idea, also cabins.

\*\*Chris Stark: might want to add the grouse projects P-R on that same grant application. Harvested the way they did according to ADFG for grouse.

\*\*Fabian: Really good idea to have Togothele on board. Looked at where their lands are located. Doesn’t look like it goes there. Some Native allotments. Look into that. Western 3 cabins get within a mile or two of Native allotments. We would try to get those better marked boundaries for Native allotments.

Jon: Meant to be completely within TVSF. A lot of the land on the western edge—I didn’t have access of the GIS, but Doug sent it to me and some of it is on their land. Togothele might think it was cool—or might need to work around it. Would need to work on this. Developing this and start on the eastern edge.

Fabian—willing to help. I like the idea. Would be cool.

\*\*Note: Jeremy Douse later noted to Alison that DOF is not at this point ready to embark on managing cabins. We will start with building more forestry roads.

**Review the Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales (FYSTS) – Jeremy Douse**

3rd year we are publishing the FYSTS. Last year talked about putting all the areas in NRO into one document. Kevin did that. All FYSTS on Resource web app. Historic and reforestation forestry. Won’t go through sales. You’ll have the document to review.

Far below sustained yield (market conditions). Introduce Matt Stevens. Paul Keech has moved on, Jeremy is new Regional Forester. Matt used to be FIA coordinator here. Year one, 4 sales. Not a lot of volume. 77 acres throughout the area. Years 1-2 are pretty solid. Further out years are not as solid. Sale only has to be on the FYSTS for one year before offer. Years 3&4 are more, with biomass project in Galena. About 2,400 acres for Year 3.

Delta—spreading the sales for where we have operators working now.

Tok—Years 1,2,3 have units on river blocks, hazardous fuels reductions, and Lookout Tower. Spreading out folks. We want to have wood out in front of our operators. CAC will be getting a copy soon. Kevin and Nick working super hard on that.

AREA UPDATES

Fairbanks/Delta Area Update – Matt Stevens, DOF. Day 2. Resources: Fbx. 10 sales were closed out. Public firewood areas were able to keep open all winter. [get notes from Matt]

Tom Malone: 3 firewood areas in Fairbanks—where were they? Was one the Salcha River crossing?

Kevin: one was the Salcha River crossing, 2 timber sales for University of Alaska. When they closed out, there was a lot of wood left on the landings. One on Standard Creek Road plowed, one on Cache Creek Road plowed.

Chris Stark: what sort of harvest would require the public to come back in?

Matt: whole tree harvest system—slash piles—things they can’t fit on the log truck. In accordance with the harvest technique. We don’t always get the opportunity to offer to the public on mainline roads.

Tok Area Update – Nick Carter, DOF. Has been here about a year. Get notes from PPT. Creating a firewise subdivision in Tok. Can cut down on aesthetic problems, be firewise.

Kristin Timm: What does a “safety zone” look like?

Nick: clearcut. Could have grass for 40 acres. Don’t have to move. Would be safe from a fire if it was coming. No one more than a mile away from the safety zone. It would be comfortably safe in that area. Large area that MLW was questioning, but looking at 30 families—would want not to worry.

JEremY: Biologist was interested in lekking sites for sharptailed grouse. Some wildlife benefit. Looking at this from a public safety standpoint.

Fabian: Who would maintain the safe area? Community could put in a park. Initially, DOF would plant with native grass species. Want them to be fairly devoid of vegetation. Would be on DOF to maintain this.

Statewide update – Jeremy Douse, DOF Regional Forester. Lots of transitions lately, retirement, new leadership. Hans Rinke was KKAF, now RF. Diane Campbell is AF. Lots of new people division-wide. Fire program—Norm McDonald relatively new. Admin section also has a lot of turnover. Cooperative program lead is new, but staff is stable. Lots of people figuring out their jobs. All heavily engaged in how to do our jobs in light of COVID 19. Focusing a lot on mitigations to protect our employees. We have a response team to try and address the issues—so time consuming. Mitigations on how to protect people while able to accomplish our missions. At a national scale, trying to figure out how to respond to wildfires. We will have to rely on our own resources more than in the past. Norm is heavily engaged at a national level and in Alaska to try and figure this out.

Previous session: had HB 219, Governor proposed bill. FLUPs non-appealable. Governor was interested in making it just one appealable document—BIF. Also, 3 different types of negotiated sales—would combine them into one authority.

Coastal Region issues—GNA sales—we get a % of the stumpage. Koskiusko Island and Vallenar. BayView on POWI, and finishing up inventory work on SESF to find allowable cut. Some big projects going on.

Market conditions are slow right now. Excess of fiber from central Europe is starting to wane, may be some opportunities later. Domestic sales of red cedar is carrying market now.

Southcentral: Bark beetle—trying to salvage, putting some funding into mitigation on lots of different land ownership.

Northern Region: Access in TVSF is challenging in Tok. Tanana River, pipeline, proposed RR. Have been asked to ID all our crossings that we would use—would require a lot of planning. Since 2010, worked on Pete Simpson memorial road. 2 requests about a white paper, but Tammy Wilson no longer Rep. DMLW also asked for a white paper during legislative briefing. State and Borough lawyers trying to figure it out. Having to subdivide a lot for public access easements—disagreements. Borough doesn’t believe it’s possible to give us access into the TVSF. No tool.

Firewood continues to be a hot commodity in TVSF. Personal use permits—sold 1200 cords last year.

Last year 18 sales to 11 businesses. 3000 cunits. Most spruce, most sawtimber. Most in Fairbanks.

FRPA inspections—221 BMPs rated in the last year. Consistently over 4 since 2014. Last year 94% were over 4. Mitigating erosion, protecting water quality.

Last year big fire year. 25 million acres 900,000 in state protection areas. Not a big year, but where the fires were—close to communities—lots of communities at risk. May 1 will be a burn permit suspension in light of COVID. Suspending fees on firewood permits. Still need a permit. Some fuels money to do some work around Delta, trying to get more.

Tom Malone: A FIA in interior Alaska this summer?

Jeremy: Yes, we do—they are figuring out their mitigations. Willow, Lake Minchumina, and McGrath proposed. As a backup plan, could finish some of the military lots—road accessible. USFS was OK with that. Essential infrastructure. Statewide hiring freeze. Trying to get a waiver to hire Doug’s position.

Fabian: Statewide coordinator ?

Jeremy: Kevin Breitenbach.

8:45 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Tom Paragi: brochures with main topics, and publication ready to go. Documents are there on the web, and Alison sent your link.

Alison & Tom Paragi: trappers. Bring in area biologists on Long Trail to make sure that is covered.

**CAC MEMBER COMMENTS**

Brad: Doug Hanson: wish you the best of luck—we will miss you. Have dealt with him for 26 years. We will miss you. Thanks for all of DOF for keeping us going. Kudos.

Fabian: Good luck to Doug Hanson on his retirement. Doesn’t get you off the hook.

Doug: Chris Maisch wants me to do a Siri app and put it on my desk.

Tom: I’m glad that we’re looking at trails projects. Interested in Dr. Lutz’s project, and how changes might change timber harvest. Thanks to Alison for coordinating. I’m surprised how smoothly this went. I hope we never have to do it again. Thanks to all

Mike: Thank you for the meeting.

**SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING** April 15, 2021?