

Tanana Valley State Forest  
Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting  
November 12, 2013  
6:00 – 9:00 pm  
UAF IARC Building, Room 501  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**Welcome and Introductions:** Tom Malone, CAC Chair

CAC Members Present

Tom Malone, Chair, Forest Science  
Brad Cox, Vice Chair, Value-Added Processing  
Thomas Nerbonne, Regional Representative-Upper Tanana Valley  
Al Pagh, Forest Industry  
Jim Sackett, Regional Representative-Lower Tanana Valley  
Chris Stark, Environmental Interests

CAC Members Absent

Jack DiMarchi, Mining Industry  
Paul Karczmarczyk, Fish and Wildlife Interests  
Kathy Morgan, Native Community  
Dan Rees, Vice Chair, Private Forest User

Division of Forestry (DOF) Staff

Mike Curran, Regional Forester (via phone)  
Al Edgren, Delta Area Forester  
Doug Hanson, Resource Forester  
Jeff Hermanns, Tok Area Forester  
Chris, Maisch, State Forester  
Kathryn Pyne, Fairbanks Area Forester  
Mike Reggear, Resource Management Forester  
Jim Schwarber, Forest Planner  
Julie Smith, DNR Staff, Scribe  
Brian Young, Resource Forester

Guests

Marty Bonnet (phone)  
Matt Cronin, Board of Forestry  
Marty Freeman  
Pam Goode (phone)  
Jaime Hollingsworth  
Glen Holt, UAF Cooperative Extension Service  
Glenn Juday, UAF  
Brian Kleinhenz  
Erin McLarnon, Board of Forestry  
Tom Paragi, ADF&G

Cassie Pinkel, Superior Pellet Fuels  
James Squyres (phone)  
Clarence Wood  
Joe Young, Young's Timber

**Review and approve minutes from April 25 meeting.**

Due to technical difficulties, meeting notes were lost and no minutes are available for the April 25, 2013 meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alaska Wood Energy Conference, April 15 – 17, 2014

Glen Holt provided a brief overview of the conference and said he would get more information to the CAC.

Society of American Foresters (SAF) technical session schedule

November 20: One Tree Project, Jan Dawe and John Manthei

December 11: Looking for presenter

DOF Staff Announcements

Mark Eliot has accepted a job in Idaho.

Brian Young leaving in a few days for a job in the Lower 48.

NEW BUSINESS

**DOF's Large Project Team and Projects – Mike Reggear**

Mike reported that the new DOF Large Project Team will be helping the areas with extra staffing as needed. The Team is a five member group including Mike and four GIS staff. The goal is to help areas respond more quickly to area demands. The team will go where they are needed.

**New DOF Roads Unit – Mike Curran**

Mike reported that the new DOF Roads Unit has hired 2 road assistants/ engineers who have experience with logging roads and bridges. DOF will also be hiring a stamped license engineer. The new unit is needed because DOT is paying DOF to take on some of their workload, including two RSA's with DOT reimbursable service agreements. One of the projects is in Ketchikan near the airport. The other is for winter road construction near Mat Su. DOT has other resource roads they want to turn over to DOF. Resource roads are not built to highway standards. These are access roads that DOT will take over later to meet federal highway standards. DOF is setting up an office to handle the projects. Engineers will be working with the areas on their existing bridges that need to be maintained or replaced.

In response to questions, Mike clarified that the state owns the road. As long as silviculture is the primary use, the road is a DOF road. If DOT upgrades the road later, Corp of Engineer permits will be required any wetlands areas. Timber sale operators will be maintaining the roads.

### **Forest Road changes in Fairbanks area – Brian Young**

Brian reported that Fairbanks Area Forestry is responsible for 335 miles of roads, with new roads being built all the time. 11 AAC 95.315 defines maintenance on forest roads. Maintenance is required on active roads (maintained by operator) and inactive roads (maintained by DOF). No maintenance is required for closed roads. 11 AAC 95.320 provides mechanism for closing roads.

DOF has closed the Rosie Creek Road and is now is proposing closing Zazada Road. The road is narrow and steep and had major erosion last summer. There are no active timber sales and no planned timber sales. DOF doesn't have the time or money to maintain the road.

Zazada Road is now being used for recreational use, hunters, and to access the experimental forest. Chris Maisch said the active research related to the experimental forest keeps the road within the silvicultural exemption, but the question is how to maintain the road and who pays for the maintenance.

Brian said he doesn't know the cost of maintaining the road. He hasn't been able to find anyone to deliver rock on another project. He said similar questions come up for spur roads after timber harvesting is done.

### **Superior Pellet requests additional spruce timber – Kathryn Pyne**

Timber sales are using new terminology. Spruce pulpwood is part of the new terminology. Spruce pulpwood is not quality wood, not saw log wood. Superior Pellet has requested a certain size that is not saw log, but is a lower quality that has been termed spruce pulpwood. The Offering is open now. There may be another offering in Delta.

Kathryn invited Cassie Pinkel to talk about Superior Pellet Fuels. Cassie described the briquette system currently being installed that processes compressed logs that are 3" diameter and 12" long. The logs are made from the same mixture as pellets. The logs will cost-effectively heat homes while reducing particulates in existing systems.

Chris Stark requested an information sheet detailing the type and quantity of forest products being used by Superior Pellet Fuels. Cassie estimated the company is harvesting 12,000 green tons per year and creating 6,000 tons of products.

Tom Malone asked about the pulpwood designation. Brian said sites are assessed for the quality of the logs in the area. Even bigger trees might be stunted, twisted, or rotted.

Tom asked about the price difference between saw logs and pulpwood. Brian said the spruce pulpwood price is half way between the price for saw logs and firewood.

### **Volkmar Lake Natural Area Trail – Tom Malone**

Tom reported that a trail was built in the Delta area through the State Forest. The person who built the trail has petitioned DNR to designate the trail as an official non-motorized trail. Glenn Juday offered comments saying the trail is not detrimental to the natural area.

OLD BUSINESS

### **CAC recruitment for open seats – Tom Malone**

Tom reported that the Mining, Native, Recreation, Tourism chairs are open. He has approached many people to fill these seats, but hasn't found people to serve. Several people had ideas about additional networking that could be done and offered to help spread the word.

Chris Maisch clarified that Mark Eliot will be departing in January. Jim Schwarber is the point person for the CAC.

### **By-Laws amendment to limit discussion**

The CAC lacked a quorum. The vote for the bylaws amendment was tabled to the next meeting.

BREAK

### **Delta Area Update – Al Edgren**

Al reported about the May 24 Tanana River flooding in the Gerstle Agricultural Area. Homes and farms had the river going through their homes and farms. It was good that there were no active timber sales on this road system. They laid down silt on the roads, and they firmed back up.

Al reported on public fuelwood sales:

Quartz Lake Ext – 1.2 miles of road, 200 cords, \$8,000.

Delta River West – 3.3 miles of road, 411 cords, \$12,068.

He said the material was easy to access. The public purchased decks from the road building. Delta Forestry also sold 367 cords for personal use permits for \$4,310. These sales were great public relations for Delta Forestry, very positive program.

Al also reported on commercial timber sales:

Salvage Timber Sales

Saw log & Fuelwood sales – 5 sales, \$25,214

Small Fuelwood Sales – 3 sales, \$3,600

Green Timber Sales

Delta River West #1 – 117 acres, \$56,539 value. Auction in December.

Mississippi Range Fire is still not out. So far it has burned 67,425 acres. There will likely be crews back there this summer. Forestry has completed the Preliminary Best Interest Finding to do salvage harvest. The BIF has been out for public and agency review. Of 41,703 acres, 6,800 acres are proposed for harvest, including 26 miles of road. Forestry is in the process of writing the FLUP, aiming to complete this in January. In Delta, Forestry has been chasing salvage. Fire and wind throw has dominated the efforts there.

Al said fire and wind throw present challenges including the need to deal with large areas. It's tough to deal with 6,800 acres, but the clock is ticking. They have to take their best shot at it. There are serious challenges. Staff are chasing from one crisis to the next, making it difficult for actual management to occur.

The Ft. Greely biomass project with the Department of Defense and Department of Energy is not continuing because the Siemens Corporation contract did not allow construction of new facilities. Alaska has the second highest heating and utilities costs for US military bases, but DOD will not tie themselves to something that one bomb could take out. Jim Schwarber added that Siemens is moving forward with the Phase 1 efficiency upgrades at Ft Greely, but they can't make leap to full conversion.

**Fairbanks Area Update – Kathryn Pyne**

Kathryn reported on the wildland fires in the area - Skinny's Road Fire, Rosie Creek, Mosquito Creek last fall. They are seeing more human caused fire.

The area has 200 miles of logging roads. The Fortune Creek Bridge needs to be replaced at a cost of \$100,000. Installation will be \$80,000. DOF has installed signs and replaced signs.

The area has sold 650 Fairbanks Personal Use Permits this year so far, for a total of 2326 cords. Demand for firewood is high. Sales from Delta are common.

**Tok Area Update – Jeff Hermanns**

Jeff said the Tok Area DOF is trying to keep making wood available. They've made significant progress with blow down wood in Dry Creek. Lots of the wood went to Superior Pellets. The Johnson Creek Slough BIF is done. They are working with Tanacross for blow down wood there. There is firewood galore. The timber sale will be easy. He hopes Tanacross will also be included.

Jeff said the Eagle Trail Fire burned 20,000 acres several years ago. Then there was the blow down last year, and then the Moon Lake Fire last year. The land has been pummeled. DOF faces logistical difficulties with the Tanana River running through the area. They need an ice bridge to get across the river. There is a mix of state land and Tanacross Corporation land. Tanacross is worried about access to their land from state land. There is lots of wood. But they need roads. Fire-killed wood is \$350/cord in Fairbanks.

Chris Stark asked if people are concerned about new roads. Jeff said Tok residents are very interested in having more roads. They want access through state land to firewood. The difficult thing is access. Working with Tanacross is critical.

Brad Cox asked if the roads have more gravel and less silt, and therefore less maintenance. Jeff said yes, there is lots of rock near the river. DOF tries to lay out roads on the ridgeline in upland areas. Road layout and placement and design make a big difference. They don't want water to run more than 100' before kick it away from the road.

Glen Holt asked if they were seeing bugs in the blow down areas. Jeff said he didn't know. Some bug activity had been noticed on Tanacross land. This was a big concern.

Brad said it was a remarkable season for bugs. No bugs. This spared a lot of saw value.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

James Squyres (Delta area resident) commented about the 5 year schedule of timber sales. He said he hasn't heard anything about that at this meeting. He saw on the internet that it was approved. He wasn't sure if the timber sales went through the proper process. The area includes 43,000 acres, much more than previous timber sales.

Referring to Mike Reggear's comments about Siemens, he said that since DOF scoped lots of areas, there is a need to address the stretch along the original Alaska Highway. He said he provided multi-page comment expressing his concerns about area. DOF is including an area that is not addressed in the body of their report. The Alaska Highway is on the list of historic places between MP 382 – 384. Wooden culverts are still in place there, providing a sense of how things were before. He is concerned that modern logging trucks will damage the road, will widen the road beyond the original standard, and will exceed the weight limit of the historical road.

Mr. Squyres expressed concern that we don't know what hasn't been discovered. He said DOF drew a lasso around an area as a potential logging road. In scanning the five year report for legal descriptions, the area on the map is not included in the description. He wonders if proper notice was provided if the legal description didn't include the area. He is also concerned that the tourism seat is not represented on CAC. He said the road is privately maintained by local landowners, not just for private access but also for recreation (trout fishing). Some people are concerned that if logging is done on both sides this will create all the problems for roads that have been discussed at the meeting. He has talked with DOF before. He said he hasn't finished with his points, but will stand down.

Mike Reggear said he has met with James and Marty in the past. The 5 year schedule is a scoping document, not a decision document. The area of concern is looked at as a salvage area because of blow down. The area is mostly birch. The overstory spruce took a hard hit. The legal descriptions they used are areas that a predecessor looked at for biomass sales. Mike expanded the area because of the wind throw. DOF looks at this as a scoping document, to provide everyone an opportunity to know what areas DOF is looking at. Specifics are included in FLUP decision documents, which go through agency and public comments. DOF looked through public comments, adopted the 5 year scoping document, and will utilize public comments in the FLUP process.

Marty Lautert (?) commented that he has the same issues as James regarding the original Alaska Highway. DOT didn't want anything to do with the original Alaska Highway, so it is up to private landowners to maintain the road. The road was built in 1942, and is not up to today's traffic. He would like the road removed from the 5 year plan. His concern is maintenance of the road and timber harvest close to residences. He has a home there that will become his retirement home. He is not a NIMBY, but doesn't want to draw attention to a nice quiet little subdivision, and wants to preserve the road.

Pam Goode (Deltana resident) – commented that she is an elected member of Delta Community Corporation. She said that now that they have a historical landmark, it's important to preserve it. They don't need loggers in there tearing it up. The road is a special road for the people of Deltana and Alaska. The road is 2.5 miles long and is the only existing part of the original Alaska Highway. She said many locals are not in favor of logging in the area.

#### CAC MEMBER's COMMENTS

Brad Cox thanked the Division of Forestry for adapting to recent events that are unparalleled and for doing the best they can for the public and companies.

Chris also thanked DOF. He said things keep getting better. He also thanked public members for bringing issues forward. CAC will do their best to address the concerns, and confident the Division will do the right thing.

Tom thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He appreciated the Board of Forestry's presence, the presentations, and the public comment. The CAC will take all that into consideration as DOF moves forward with their planning process.

Next meeting – Thursday, February 27 (later changed to March 3).

Adjourned at 8:33 pm.