

Tanana Valley State Forest Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting

January 26, 2017; 6:00pm-9:00pm

DNR, Large Conference Room

Fairbanks

APPROVED Minutes

Attendees:

State Employees

Tim Dabney (teleconference)
Jim Schwarber
Paul Keech
Peter Talus (teleconference)
Kelsey Stybr (DMLW)

Public

John O'Brien
Glen Holt
Carl France

CAC Members (Representing)

Dan Rees (Private Forest User)
Milt Behr (Mining Industry)
Jason Knoles- alternate for Al Pagh
Fabian Keirn (Native Community)
Brad Cox (Value-added Processing)
Reed Morisky (Tourism Industry)
(phone)
Paul Karczmarczyk (Fish and Wildlife
Interests)
Kristin Tim (?) (phone)

Dan Rees chaired the meeting, as Tom Malone not available

Minutes from the previous meeting October 27, 2016 were approved.

Announcements:

- None

New Business:

- Tom Malone and Dan Rees re-elected Committee Chairperson and Vice Chairperson
- Presentation on drone use in forestry and resource management by John O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien and partner Carl France gave two PowerPoint presentations that went over drone basics and the types of projects they have worked on. Mr. O'Brien is a researcher who employed Mr. France and his company Aquilo to conduct drone footage for fish surveys. Aquilo is contracted by various industries for different projects ranging from road construction, to volumetric surveying, to fish population studies, to pipeline maintenance. Various ideas were thrown out for forestry applications including: fire hot spot screening, tree species, tree counts, etc. For the power points or more information contact Jim Schwarber. Aquilo's contact information: www.AquiloAlaska.com; carl@aquiloalaska.com; (907) 371-0843.
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- gave an update on the Galena Biomass District Heat project. It is the first district biomass heating project in Alaska. The project will heat 7 or 8 former air force buildings. Formerly heated by steam boilers but now will be heated with hot water from locally produced chips. DOF conducted an inventory and found a large resource close to town. They are currently harvesting

birch, and letting previously harvested wet poplar dry. Galena has also requested biomass from adjacent State lands. The State lands are not currently classified however, so DOF has submitted a request for classification. Once the lands are classified, DOF can move forward with resource sale with Galena. The boilers have been installed and the hope is for them to be running by the middle of November.

Old Business:

State/Region update by Tim Dabney

- Staff presented handouts for Tim's update.
- The first handout was an introduction to the structure and functions of DOF. The DOF now consists of 3 geographic regions consolidated to 1 along with 9 areas combined into 5. DOF has two missions: to manage forest resources and the suppression of wildfire.
- The next handout was a tri-fold DOF summary sheet for 2016. One side summarized resources and the other side summarize the 2016 fire season. The tri-fold includes information on the current budgets and implications. For example, the southeast had historically low financial numbers in 2016, and contributing factors were two vacant forester positions, retirements and reorganization, as well as time consuming administrative appeals and reconsideration requests that prevented progress on some projects.
- Tim also gave an overview of the current budget for DOF. The legislature is currently in session. An overview of DNR has gone to the resources house committee, and DOF leadership reports that things are going well. The governor's budget proposal didn't cut any more from DOF, so hopefully the legislature doesn't cut any more from DOF either.
- There was also a handout that went over reports given to the legislature.

Update on the Fairbanks /Delta Area by Paul Keech

- Kevin Meany is now the Forster III. Paul hopes to have a posting out the first week of February for the now vacant Forester II position.
- Mike Goyette in Delta is transitioning to working with small timber sales. He also helps Kevin and has been plowing roads.
- Delta had 3 timber sales over the counter; 5 timber sales will be going to auction by the end of February; 11 operators and 30 active contractors currently. (Mississippi salvage area, Healy area, and Healy Lake which has already had the best interest finding written for).
- Joe Chapman's shop burned down in Delta, and he is struggling to pull things back together.
- DOF has an agreement with Delta Soil Water Conservation District to expand the Delta River West Road to tie in with military lands two miles outside of Delta. The contract for that will be going out soon. They plan to deck all the spruce and sell to the public next year. It will be a winter road across the river.
- The Whitestone Crossing might be moved upstream due to ADF&G reports of a significant salmon population.
- Delta sold 69 firewood permits in 2016 compared to 83 permits in 2015.
- There is one prescribed burn – Bison Range

- Fairbanks is waiting on the right of way decision for the Hastings Fire Sale. There are 19 over the counter timber sales and one best interest finding. There are approximately 32 operators and 105 active contracts in the Fairbanks area. 372 firewood permits were sold in 2016, which is also down from 2015. Twelve permits have been sold so far in 2017.
- The new equipment operator will start around March and will be clearing snow from roads before breakup.
- Five bushels of spruce cones were collected and sent to Palmer to supplement the seedling supplies.
- The Interior FIA is beginning its second year with a crew of 14 working the east side of Fairbanks and down the west side of Delta.
- There are several biomass projects being proposed in the area. The Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation has met with DOF about grant money ideas. The borough has also applied for the Forest Service Wood Integrations Grant for a gasification system. No word on whether they have received anything yet.
- While out flying on other projects, Paul visited the new “record” white spruce on the Teklanika River. He did not have a measuring tape to measure the tree, but he did take pictures with it. The pictures were shown at the meeting. Paul is not sure if the tree is a 42” diameter.

Tok Area Update by Pete Talus

- A forester position should be posted soon and a technician position will close in February.
- 110 personal use firewood permits and 964 cords in 2016. Five permits and 32 cords issued this year.
- There are commercial operators in Moon Lake Salvage (1 operator with expectations of 2-3 more), Tok River (1), Porcupine Ridge (1), Johnson Slough (1), Dry Creek (1), and the old 90’s burn (a couple).
- The five-year schedule for timber sales will be out in February. It will consist of both the Tok and copper River area.
- Update on Tok school biomass project: the welding on the low-pressure side is complete. The high-pressure side is up and running. A specialist was brought in to evaluate the system and the specialist found they were running hot, but tweaks to the system has reduced the gasification.
- Reese and Earl went out to the Tok River and for the trencher.

Public Comments:

- Glen Holt has reconstituted his forestry consulting business. He handed out business cards.

CAC member comments:

- Paul Karczmarczyk would like follow up and updates on the drone work.

- Jim Schwarber will also follow up with question on pipeline access road from the October meeting.

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for **April 20, 2017** in Fairbanks.

Meeting adjourned about 8:15 pm.

TVSF CAC website: http://forestry.alaska.gov/tvsf_committee.htm