

Tanana Valley State Forest Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting February 12, 2015; 6:00 – 9:00 PM

DNR, large conference room
Fairbanks

MINUTES

Attendees:

State Employees

Al Edgren
Jim Schwarber
Paul Maki
Kevin Meany
Doug Hanson
Jeff Hermanns [phone]
Julie Hagelin (ADF&G)
Jonathan Hutchinson (DOTPF)

Public

Anthony Lee
Stacy Snyder
Gary Lee
Theo DeLaca

CAC Members (Representing)

Dan Rees (Private Forest User)
Thomas Nerbonne (Upper Tanana Valley)
John O'Brian (Mining Industry) [phone]
Jacquie Goss (Lower Tanana Valley)
Fabian Keirn (Native Community)
Jacquie Goss (Lower Tanana Valley)
Brad Cox (Value-added Processing)
Chris Stark (Environmental Interests)
Reed Morisky (Tourism Industry)

CAC Members Absent

Tom Malone
Al Pagh (Forest Industry)
John Rusyniak (Recreation)

Vice-Chair Dan Rees chaired the meeting due to the absence of the Chair, Tom Malone

Minutes from the previous meeting of December 11, 2014 were approved.

Announcements:

The State Forester reappointed four members to three-year terms on the CAC: Fabian Keirn, Native seat; Chris Stark, Environmental seat; Al Pagh, Forest Industry seat; and Paul Karczmarczyk, Fish & Wildlife seat. All 12 seats on the CAC are filled.

Society of American Foresters State to meet in Fairbanks March 25-27, 2015 at Pikes.

New Business:

CAC Officer elections took place – Tom Malone was re-elected Chair and Dan Rees re-elected Vice Chair for 2015.

The CAC voted to provide a letter of support for HB87/SB32 to the legislature. These bills would allow the Division of Forestry more flexibility in using negotiated sales for timber sales.

Paul Karczmarczyk and Jon Hutchinson (DOT Engineer) provided a detailed presentation on the new road being built from Manley to Tanana, costing \$11 million of state money. Despite the rain last summer, about 2/3 of the road's 35 miles were constructed. This "Stage 1- Pioneer Road" is being built as a year-round, single lane road with turnouts. At the Yukon River end of the road, a staging area for merchantable wood & firewood is being built. Timber from the ROW across Tozitna, Inc. lands will be placed there for the use of Tanana. An estimated 30 cords of firewood is coming off each acre cleared. The City of Tanana passed a resolution in support of the road in 2013. There is also an MOA between DOT and Tanana. The road is expected to be completed in 2015. In winter an 8 mile ice road down the Yukon will tie the new road to Tanana; in summer boats or barges will complete the link.

Jacque Goss presented on the City of Nenana's 12 miles of new road leading west from Nenana. The City needs more money to complete the final 10 miles of road to the Kantishna, and to construct a bridge over the Nenana River.

Kevin Meany (DOF) and Stacy Snyder (TWDMA) discussed efforts of the Two Rivers Dog Musers Association to improve trails in the TVSF. Better communications are leading to improved trail conditions; though traffic is still a safety concern on shared roads.

Doug Hanson provided an update on the Salcha Flood Salvage Sale for 300 acres of combined personal use firewood and commercial uses. This sale area includes islands in the Tanana that are eroding quickly and hold recently killed white spruce with about 25 cords to the acre of dry spruce firewood. DOF is about to let a contract for construction of a road off of the Old Valdez Trail to open access to these areas in March to the public. In recent years river erosion has taken 100 acres of island timber.

Al Edgren provided the Delta Area report. He said the Delta timber auction on December 17th offered 13 sales, of which 8 sold, bringing in \$45,000 for the fire killed timber. The Mississippi Salvage sales are a mostly white spruce and are being sold by the harvester to Superior Pellet Fuels. It's good to harvest this timber before it degrades and be able to put it to good use. Al Edgren is resigning on April 30, 2015. DOF will be combining the Fairbanks and Delta Area Offices into a single administrative one.

Paul Maki provided the Fairbanks Area update and information on budget adjustments by the Division. Fairbanks is preparing six sales for spring and is completing the Best Interest Finding step for the Salcha Salvage Sales prior to putting in access. The Best Interest Finding for a biomass sale will go to the DNR Commissioner for his signature, due to its size. The Tok and Copper River Area Offices will be combined, as will the McGrath and Palmer/Mat-Su Forestry Areas as part of the FY '16 budget. Details of proposed changes will be announced later. So far no cuts are specified within the current FY '15 DOF budget; nor any holds on hiring or travel. In the proposed FY'16 budget, DOF loses 18 positions statewide, though none in the Northern Region. FY'17 bodes a possible 8% further budget cut; though no plans yet how that would look. All Area Offices will remain open for now.

Jeff Hermanns reported on the Tok Area. They are just completing the Best Interest Finding process for the 6,000 acres Eagle Trail Fire and Blow-down Salvage sale; and DOF just reached

agreement with Tanacross to cross their lands to reach the sale area. Tanacross will receive \$10 for each cord of wood transported across their lands. Jeff completed five negotiated sales in the past three weeks for a total of about 2,000 acres. Joe Young is logging green timber; though most Tok sales are salvage of fire killed or blow down timber. Jeff estimates nearly 40 people in the Tok area are currently employed in timber activities. About 25 acres of fire-prone hazard fuels treatments took place within the Tok community this year. Forest health projects are monitoring the upper Tanana for possible bug outbreaks associated with the blow down; "So far so good," with no outbreaks identified. Possibly the wet summer helped.

Public Comments: Theo DeLaca concerned over the trend in less tree planting over time, and with the decline in DOF staffing. The huge increase in salvage sales do not lead to regeneration requirements or tree planting. Anthony Lee from Tok mentioned there are a lot of positive Forestry impacts in the Tok area. Stacy Snyder of Two Rivers had a question about possible loss of trails from logging activity and whether the logged areas will be regenerated.

CAC member comments at the end of the 3 hour meeting were few – though Brad Cox & Tom Nerbonne stated the cutbacks at DOF are "disconcerting" and a threat to the viability of their 25 years of investments in their timber business. The wood industry also helps rural communities survive.

Chris Stark requested a presentation on "Reforestation" at the next meeting – by Doug Hanson?

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for **April 23, 2015** in Fairbanks.

Meeting adjourned about 9:05 pm.

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