

Mistik Management Ltd.

Spring 2022 Public Advisory Group Field Tour

The 2022 spring field tour of Mistik's public advisory group (PAG) was held in the Beauval area. The theme for the tour was woodland caribou and renewal after harvest.

The first tour stop focused on the provincial range management plan for caribou for western Saskatchewan (SK2 West). The location was adjacent to a wetland example of caribou habitat along highway 965. The group discussed how the plan overlaps the Mistik license area the impacts it will have on forest operations as well as how it hopes to improve caribou habitat and populations in the area.



Tour stop location along Highway 965



Mistik staff member Joe Silva outlining caribou habitat tier areas and how they relate to the Mistik license area.

Caribou Habitat/Wetland (Pringle approx. 8 Km west of Jct.)

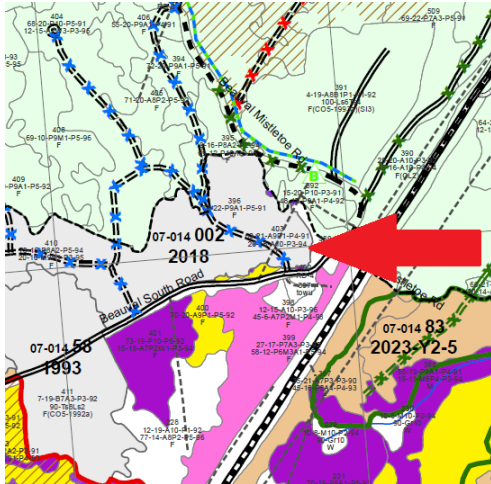
There are many wetlands on the Mistik FMA. Here we have a treed poor fen. The saturated soils mean only certain plants can grow here. Trees are tamarack and black spruce, shrubs include Labrador tea and leatherleaf, ground layer is primarily sphagnum mosses. Due to high soil moisture, decomposition is slowed creating thick peat layers. Peat stores large amounts of carbon- boreal wetlands are major carbon stores. Protecting wetlands is important for regulating water levels and mitigating climate change. Mistik has a partnership with DUC to implement practices that reduce our impacts on wetlands and identify priority areas for protection.

Wetlands are home to many wildlife species including cranes and waterfowl. Treed bogs and fens like the one here are also important caribou habitat. Peatlands are difficult to move through and have relatively poor browse for moose and deer, so they serve as a refuge for caribou to avoid wolves, their main predator. Caribou in the Boreal Plains spend a lot of time in peatlands as a result. In treed bogs and fens, arboreal lichens often cover the trees. These are an important food source for caribou. Caribou especially like peatlands with patches of upland forest where they can also forage for ground lichens (often jack pine at these sites). Mistik is currently amending the FMP to be consistent with the SK2 West Range Plan (show map of Tier areas).

Tour stops along Highway 155 included a naturally regenerating jack pine block (recent harvest) and a mixedwood block from 1994 where white spruce was planted. Mistik renewal techniques used on different sites were discussed as well as regeneration survey timing and the data collected.

Block 7-14-02 (newer harvest area just south of the cell tower on the right).

This block was harvested in 2018-19. The majority of the block had jack pine and the renewal method was to leave it for natural regeneration. The jack pine slash is spread throughout the block after harvest so the cones are distributed and they can open in the heat of summer



Block 7-14-02

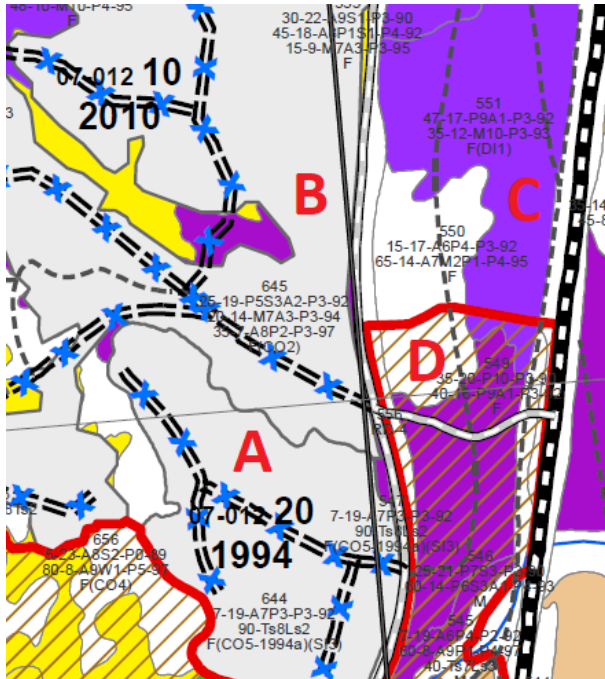


Jack Pine seedling germinating from seed



Looking for jack pine seedlings in a recently harvested area.

Durocher Area (multiple stops)



A – 1994 Harvest Area

Had some tree planting (white Spruce in the north-west part) but was mostly leave for natural (jack pine/trembling aspen). It was surveyed in 2000. Block was sufficiently regenerating. No free-to-grow survey (not required on blocks this old).

B – 2010 Harvest Area

Block was leave for natural (trembling aspen). It was surveyed in 2017 and was sufficiently regenerating.

C – Jack Pine area (unharvested)

This is another example of Caribou habitat.

D – New Harvest (Block)

This block was harvested this past winter.

One of the final tour stops was at a previously cleared area south of Beauval. In the 1970s, a pulp mill was planned for the site but it was never built. We had an interesting discussion about the forest industry of that time.



Mistik would like to thank all participants for taking part in the tour and for the great conversations and perspectives that were shared.