



## Mistik Management Public Advisory Group (PAG) October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Location:** Grace United Church, Meadow Lake

**Meeting Facilitators:** Niska Hodgson, Kevin Gillis

### Meeting Attendees (name and affiliation):

Interested Party	Participant Name(s)
Beauval Co-management Board Inc.	Participant did not attend
Big Island Lake Cree Nation	Participant did not attend
Birch Narrows Dene Nation	Participant did not attend
Buffalo Narrows Co-Management	Bill Pedersen, Ron Pedersen
Buffalo Narrows Metis Local #62	Participant did not attend
Buffalo River Dene Nation	Participant did not attend
Canoe Lake Co-Management Board	Participant did not attend
City of Meadow Lake	Participant did not attend
Cold Lake First Nations	Fran Desjardin, Mike Desjardin
CPAWS	Participant did not attend
Divide Forest Advisory Council Corporation	Participant did not attend
Ducks Unlimited Canada	Mark Kornder
English River First Nation	Participant did not attend
Flying Dust First Nation	Tara Dull, Kole Norman
Forestry Contractors	Participant did not attend
Independent/3rd Party Forestry Operators	Dean Millard
Île-à-la Crosse ICS4 Group	Participant did not attend
Interested Party – Bob Wilson	Participant did not attend
Junior Forest Wardens	Participant did not attend
Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nation	Participant did not attend
Makwa/Loon Lake Metis Local #32	Irvin Beaudry
Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp	Taneal Brucks, Lorne Neale
Meadow Lake Métis Local #31	Participant did not attend
Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC)	Participant did not attend
Métis Nation SK - Environment Minister/NR 3	Participant did not attend
Métis Nation Saskatchewan (Provincial)	Participant did not attend
Ministry of Environment Forest Service ML	Morgan Blenkhorn, Joshua Barnes
Ministry of Environment Forest Service PA	Baburam Rijal, Nadine Penney
Ministry of Environment Wildlife Unit ML	Participant did not attend
Ministry of Government Relations	Participant did not attend
Mistik Board of Directors	Participant did not attend
Mistik Staff	Robert Follett, Max Kurjata, Niska Hodgson, April Lesko, Kevin Gillis, Denise Bayko
Moosomin First Nation	Participant did not attend
NorSask Forest Products - Management	Participant did not attend
NorSask - Union Employees	Participant did not attend
NorthWind Forest Products	Participant did not attend
Northern Hamlet of Michel Village	Tim Laplante, Helena Couillonneur
Northern Hamlet of St. Georges Hill	Philomeme Cummings, Violet Herman
Northern Lights Snowmobile Association	Participant did not attend
Northern Village of Green Lake	Joe Gardiner
Northern Village of Île-à-la Crosse	Participant did not attend
Rural Municipality of Loon Lake #561	Participant did not attend
Rural Municipality of Meadow Lake #588	Blair Mysko
Saskatchewan Environmental Society	Participant did not attend
Outfitting	Participant did not attend
SK Public Safety Agency, Ops Div. (Wildfire)	Participant did not attend

Interested Party	Participant Name(s)
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency	Participant did not attend
Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation	Participant did not attend
Saulteaux First Nation	Participant did not attend
Silvacom	Ryan Spooner
Thunderchild First Nation	Participant did not attend
Town of St. Walburg	Tony Leeson, Merrill Leeson
Village of Loon Lake	Participant did not attend
Waterhen Lake First Nation	Participant did not attend
West District Stakeholder's	Participant did not attend
Zone 8 Trappers	Leonard Greenhough

### **Proceedings of the October 27, 2022, Mistik Public Advisory Group Meeting:**

Participants had lunch from 12:00-1:00 before the meeting began

Niska Hodgson gave a welcome, general housekeeping, and an opening prayer was offered by Fran Desjardin from Cold Lake First Nations. A round-table of introductions was also done.

A motion to approve the meeting agenda was made by Ron Pedersen, seconded by Joseph Gardiner. Motion carried.

Note: Questions are designated "Q," answers "A", and comments "C"

### **Current Affairs (Robert Follett, Mistik General Manager):**

- Logging in Canoe Lake, Beauval, Waterhen...
- Pulp mill gave up their allocation on the PA FMA
- More of a presence on the Mistik FMA and L&M FMA
- On the NorSask side - Bio-energy plant is up and running
- Beehive burner no longer burning
- Expensive to do business
- Struggling for operators in machines and truck drivers
- Working on truck driver training course
- Industry is struggling to find foresters
- Looking at summer students for next year
- Would like to have community students that can partner up with the forestry summer students
- Hopefully will entice more young people to go after a career in forestry
- If you know anyone that is interested in working in the forest industry, let us know

C – Ron Pedersen (Buffalo Narrows Co-Management) - out of all the forestry that happened in the north, he was the only contractor to have to pay for a license. He's the only guy he knows that had to pay it and no other companies were asked to do this. Robert wasn't sure about the history around this and asked Ron to bring it up at the meeting next week (board of directors meeting).

Q – Bill Pedersen What is the harvest style now? Stump to dump?

A – Robert Follett – We have a mix of contract types. Only Waterhen and P&E Logging are stump to dump.

C – Bill Pedersen (Buffalo Narrows Co-Management) - back when he was hauling, NorSask flooded the haul with so many trucks from PA and everywhere else and he was no longer allowed to go to NorSask. With no meeting, they switched to short wood and he was out of the picture. Robert - has apologized for that.

Apologized again. If they were to go back to Buffalo Narrows, he would work with the community to ensure that type of thing wouldn't happen again and that things will look different.

C - Bill also voiced some other concerns he had with what happened in the past. That was 17 years ago and he almost lost everything. What has Mistik done for us in the last 17 years? Meadow Lake is thriving and Buffalo Narrows is struggling. Robert - we need to understand what the community wants. When Mistik and the community can agree, we would want to have as many back stops in place as possible to ensure that those past problems don't happen again. Bill talked about how his kids are looking for opportunities and the forestry opportunity sits there but why would he tell them to work in forestry with his experience

## **Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp (Lorne Neale)**

- Lorne noted that he was honored to be in this place of change and that we were honoring the creator at the start of the meeting.
- Lorne explained his history with MLMP and how he was one of the first supervisors at the mill.
- They got new evaporators to improve pulp quality, and have had issues with the supply chain
- One of the projects they are working on is around water supply intake. This is to ensure they have enough water coming into the pulp mill. They don't let any water out; they just replace what evaporates
- They have a new general manager
- A lot of the people he started with have retired and there is lots of change
- They used to make pulp for writing paper and now they make board grade pulp
- Quality is much improved, and productivity remains the same
- They want to be able to respond to changing markets and to reduce CO2 emissions.

## **2020/21 Mistik and L&M (NorthWind) Annual Reports (Niska Hodgson, Mistik Planning Manager)**

Note that the Mistik and L&M 2020/21 Annual reports can be found on the Mistik website at <https://www.mistik.ca/forest-management/2019-fmp> (look on the Forest Management page under Annual Reporting).

- No harvesting in the north Management Units in 2020/21
- No new public concerns added to the registry document
- The presentation includes the highlights. Full reports are on the Mistik website
- Niska explained the way the annual report is set up and how to understand the summaries
- For forest management plan (FMP) targets that were formally assessed, 8 of the 9 indicators were on target and the other one was partially on target.
  - The one that was partially on target was Indicator 23 - Aboriginal Community Involvement in the planning processes. Birch Narrows was missed when the invitations for the 2020 fall PAG meeting were sent. Niska confirmed that they were invited to the 2021 and 2022 PAG meetings so the target will be back on track going forward.
- For not formally assessed targets, Niska went through some that were off target
  - Indicator #2a - a bit low on the "very old" mixedwood. Good on other species groups (hardwood, softwood). Good on "old" forest in all species groups

Q – Bill Pedersen had a question about how the harvest timing works and if Mistik comes back to the Buffalo Narrows area will they take everything and not come back for 80 years?

A – Niska – we plan and distribute our harvest around the license area over time and as the forest grows.

- Niska explained harvest events and how they try to mimic wildfires and natural disturbances.

C - Bill expressed concern that clearcutting removes so much of the minerals and nutrients and the forests will grow back there much slower than after a fire. Niska, Ryan, and Nadine talked about the research and monitoring that happens to measure growth rates and that harvest areas are regenerating as expected (meeting provincial growth rate requirements).

C - Fran Desjardin raised concerns about garbage being left after harvesting occurs. This was noted in the Beauval area where we had the spring PAG tour. Why not close off the roads after harvesting. Niska agreed that there is a lot of garbage and it's unacceptable but it was not from Mistik's operations. Mistik cannot leave any garbage. The ministry of environment does many inspections to make sure nothing is left. Kevin Gillis added that there are multiple cabins at the end of the road in question and the owners need access to them. The road pre-dated Mistik, and even though they used it for a period of time, they can't close it because those folks need the access (it's what's known as a "pre-existing access"). If it's strictly a Mistik-built new road then we have to reclaim it. Bill P. suggested that Mistik put up signs about not dumping. It was agreed that this might be a good idea to help raise public awareness.

C – Dean Millard – understands this frustration as he is aware of garbage. Open roads can also lead to

vandalism of equipment.

- With regard to harvest events, Mistik now aggregates harvest blocks to ensure disturbance is concentrated in less areas. This helps to minimize road networks. Niska showed an example map and image.

C - Ron Pedersen brought up a concern around harvesting too close to Niska Lake and that hunting zones are 400m. Niska explained that that Niska Lake has a 200m buffer on it and explained the normal buffer categories they have on different water bodies and watercourses (15/30/90m). The 200m buffer was implemented based on a request from the Community of Buffalo Narrows and it exceeds the minimum requirements of the province (which would normally be 90m on this lake). Ron asked that we speak to Leon McCallum as he is very familiar with and uses this area. Niska said that she had spoken to him several times, including just in the past week or so.

- An indicator that is a bit off target is tree retention after harvest, Mistik recognizes that they need to do a bit better job of leaving retention in the blocks. Over the last two years, they have been working really hard with operators to leave some larger patches. Kevin added that they are aiming to leave at least one large leave patch about every 100m.
- Niska went through some examples of non-compliances and what Mistik is going to do to minimize them.
- The group discussed the indicator that relates to Mistik seedlings not being from "improved" seed sources. They should have worded this indicator differently. It is actually okay to use improved seed. Improved seed just means it comes from a tree orchard, from strong parents. It's the genetically modified seed that we don't want to use.

C - Taneal Brucks – it makes sense to be open to improved stock. GMO is off the map anyway through our certifications. Kevin - FSC outright disallows GMOs. Niska suggested that we re-word this indicator.

- Taneal made a motion to revise the wording to: "No tree seedlings planted on the Mistik FMP area shall be from GMO sources, and the amount of seedlings from improved sources will be tracked separately." Seconded by Blair Mysko. Motion carried
- Softwood HVS is not being fully utilized. About 70% of the softwood the mills need comes from the license areas and the rest from other sources (private land, PA license area). Hardwood HVS is not being fully utilized either.
- Mistik has a commitment to work with communities to lower wildfire risk if requested by a community. To date, no requests have been made.
- Indicator to ensure that harvest is distributed across the FMA and by forest type.
- Impacts of climate change on Mistik FMP Area. This is done by monitoring ice conditions (length of time frozen) for local lakes. They also monitor operational days lost due to abnormal environmental conditions.
- Using local resources and local workforce. There are 9/13 communities represented in 2020, which is lower than target. This is due to a lack of operations in the north part of the license area.
- Stakeholder engagement is on track.

Q (Ron Pedersen) – I got a letter for Île-à-la-Croix, where do I send my concerns.

A (Niska H) – we take input in any format. You can e-mail, call, meet in person, etc.

Q (Taneal Brucks) – Do you use communication via any other methods like social media?

A (Niska H) – we don't use social media. We use letters, e-mail, and phone calls primarily. The letter going out is just a starting point.

- FMP register is maintained to track various commitments and issues
- Regeneration survey results are good. There are two measurement times - Establishment and Free to Grow surveys done typically in year 5 and 14, respectively. All blocks surveyed in 2020 "passed" and are growing as required. Stem densities and tree heights are above minimums.
- Contractors who have annual environmental training - target is 100% and they were a little low in 2020. A couple of contractors did not have documented training.
- Caribou sightings – Mistik does field monitoring and produces a map of caribou sightings each year. They purchased and installed trail cameras this year and are also monitoring for bison.
- Downed woody debris. It's important to leave some out there.
- Net Carbon uptake (upland and lowland) is reported on.
- Working with Ducks Unlimited Canada to work with a formula to try to assess carbon in the lowland (peatland) areas
- Total area of wildfire is reported annually.

## **LiDAR and it's use in Forestry (Ryan Spooner, Silvacom)**

- Lidar stands for Light Detection and Ranging
- You can think of it like radar or sonar but with light (lasers), used to tell how far something is away
- When a pulse is reflected off the top of the trees, the reflection that is measured by the lidar sensor is called a return
- Portions of the same laser pulse can reflect off branches in the middle of the canopy and even make it to the ground
- Once all of the returns are collected, they are assembled into a point cloud
- Lidar resolution is measured in pulse density - pulses per square metre (PPM)
- Lidar data requires processing
- Two main types of collection are aerial and terrestrial
- Some Lidar derived outputs:
  - Digital Elevation Models (DEM)
  - DEM Hillshades
  - Canopy Height Models (CHM)
  - Canopy Cover
  - Digital Surface Models (DSM)
- Lidar does not replace boots on the ground. Need field data to get quality results.

## **Caribou and Mistik's amendment to the 20-year Forest Management Plan (Niska Hodgson, Planning Manager)**

- Mistik is amending the 20 year FMP to gain alignment with the provincial SK2 West Caribou Range Plan which was finalized last fall.
- The goal of the range plan is to achieve and maintain a self-sustaining caribou population while allowing for continued economic activity
- Niska went through the map of caribou habitat tiers and Nadine Penney explained that the goal is to minimize disturbance in the Tier 1 areas but still allowing for economic use. Ideally Tier 1 areas would be left undisturbed for longer timeframes (20-50 years)
- We know that forests change so there will be movement in the Tier locations over time
- Will continue to review and revise plans to ensure there will be enough habitat out there
- Mistik is modelling wood supply with deferrals in the Tier areas. They are also modeling to understand habitat disturbance levels.

C (Nadine Penney) – Mistik is working with the province on this (forest service and fish, wildlife, and lands branches). The ultimate goal is to be in alignment with the federal caribou strategy and to make improvements. There is a timeline for industry to get this done.

- Niska walked us through a recent modeling scenario. The next step is to run more scenarios to find the best balance between harvest levels and habitat improvement.

C (Ron Pedersen) – The uranium mines are also affected.

Q (Taneal Brucks) – What is the responsibility of other industries involved?

A (Nadine Penney) - All sectors of industry are considered under the provincial caribou plan. Anything that creates disturbance is addressed. Mitigative offsets are not being considered for forestry at this point, only for smaller scale type operations (such as exploration). Forestry is being asked to avoid Tier 1 (deferrals). Offsets are still under development and the plan will be reviewed regularly.

Q (Kole Norman) – Is it the same for everyone?

A (Niska) Yes, all FMA holders have to amend their plans.

Q (Bill Pedersen) – This is for bigger companies, what about smaller groups?

A (Nadine P) – This applies to all sectors operating in the areas identified in the caribou range plan.

Q (April Lesko) - Has the government used any of the research or information that Mistik had acquired on Caribou in the past.

A (Nadine P) – She doesn't have all of the details but research is being used to identify areas. Mistik has

been helpful and the government is "filling in the gaps" with additional research.

C (Dean Millard) - These constraints will conflict with the push from government to "use it or lose it". You can't say we'll give it to someone else if you don't use it, but then say also you can't use it here or can't use it there at the same time.

Q (Kole Norman) – Could we see something similar for Bison habitat?

A (Nadine P) – Hopefully not. The approach being used is to try to manage habitat biodiversity for all species, rather than implement range plans for individual species.

C (Fran Desjardin) asked if she could get the map or shapefile of the caribou tiers. **ACTION** - Niska will provide that to Fran (done on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022).

After the group had some time to review the minutes of the fall 2021 PAG meeting, a motion to adopt the minutes of the October 2021 meeting was made by Leonard Greenhough, seconded by Taneal Brucks. Motion passed.

### **Certification Update/Protected Area Strategy (Kevin Gillis - Mistik Certification Coordinator)**

- Kevin showed the group some items before starting the presentation:
  - Finger jointed board made in SK by Pivot out of aspen - they are making furniture. NorSask is doing some trials with aspen through the sawmill. They don't get great recovery because you never know where the rot starts so it's tough to make an 8 foot 2x4. That's why the finger jointing option is important.
  - A small old chainsaw from the 70s
- Protected Areas –In FSC, there is a requirement that Mistik must conserve at least 10% of their area. This is important also for the betterment of the environment overall.
- Reasons for protected areas:
  - Cultural values
  - High conservation value areas, archaeological finds/historic information
  - Wildlife habitat
  - Caribou and other species at risk
- Mistik partnered with AIPac, DUC, and CPAWS on this exercise. Kevin showed a map of the project area. They did a gap analysis of potential conservation areas. There is good protection along the Alberta/SK border but missing good connectivity between the two areas.

Q (Bill Pedersen) – Is Île-à-la-Crosse still part of the Mistik FMA?

A (Kevin G) – that's a good topic to bring up at the board meeting next week. I can't speak to that.

- Lots of moose habitat in this area (high lake edge density)
- OECM = Other Effective Conservation Measures
- Long-term deferral of forestry operations within a defined area such as woodland caribou range plan management strategies
- ICL - Indigenous cultural landscape
- IPCA - Indigenous protected and conserved area
- Migratory birds' convention act - what has changed
- Specific species named whose habitat cannot be impacted
  - Great Blue Heron. Nest in colonies (multiple nests)
  - Black Crowned Night Heron. They might not be around here
  - Pileated Woodpecker. If we find a tree with a cavity nest, we must leave it standing now. Also, other birds' nest in cavities created by pileated woodpeckers

The meeting concluded at 4:50 pm and supper was served.