



WHISTLER

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF FOREST AND WILDLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 14, 2018, STARTING AT 3:00 P.M.

In the Piccolo Room

4325 Blackcomb Way, Whistler, BC V0N 1B4

PRESENT:

Name	Meetings to Date: 3
Present:	
Member at Large, Derek Bonin, Chair	3
Council, Cathy Jewett	2
Member at Large, Trevor Burton	1
Member at Large, Candace Rose-Taylor	2
WORCA, Todd Hellinga	3
Member at Large, Mac Lowry	2
Member at Large, Johnny Mikes	3
Recording Secretary, Heather Beresford	
Regrets:	
Member at Large, Kathi Bridge	1
Member at Large, Colin Rankin	1

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by T. Hellinga
Seconded by T. Burton

That the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee Agenda of March 14, 2018 as amended.

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by T. Hellinga
Seconded by C. Rose-Taylor

That the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee Minutes of February 14, 2018.

CARRIED

PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS

Updates

AWARE: N/A

WORCA:

- Working with Lil'wat Nation and CCF re: Whistler Interpretive Forest trails
- Sproatt alpine trails – discussing safety issues with Search & Rescue
- Events policy under discussion re: trail maintenance responsibilities of race organizers

C. Jewett arrived at 3:12 p.m.

Council:

- Budget passed
- Community Forum held regarding vision and OCP, public input options
- Preliminary policy for infill housing introduced

RMOW:

- FWAC terms extension submitted for March 20 closed Council meeting
- Wildfire thinning projects at Alpine Meadows, above cemetery, along Kadenwood Road and Callaghan FSR to resume when snow melt allows

Cheakamus Community Forest:

- Road-based access management plan in a final draft
- Open house planned for May

RMOW Biodiversity Conservation Planning

A presentation by H. Beresford was given regarding RMOW biodiversity conservation planning and a discussion was held.

FWAC reviewed biodiversity conservation planning objectives; the draft matrix identifying priority species and habitat to include in the monitoring program; and the draft map showing priority sensitive habitats. RMOW staff is considering using the priority sensitive habitats map in the OCP's Development Permit Area for the Protection of Sensitive Ecosystems. Replaces an older map that was more general and did not identify specific priority habitats.

Discussion points:

- Add a metric related to the amount of RMOW input and resources expended on the monitoring project
- Formalize a system for acquiring sensitive areas that need protection
- Develop a protected areas network that identifies all areas that need to be protected over time.

Whistler Interpretive Forest

A presentation by D. Bonin was given regarding the Whistler Interpretive Forest and a discussion was held.

D. Bonin shared history of Whistler Interpretive Forest (WIF), current recreational use, and interpretive sign and trail maintenance activities that

Rotary is undertaking in the area. Forest education and interpretation is a stated objective in the WIF documentation, but is not well served at present.

FWAC discussed various options for improving management of the WIF. Currently many players involved but none taking a strong leadership role. Recreation Sites & Trails BC is the provincial agency responsible for WIF but lacks resources. WIF is within CCF tenure and RMOW boundary.

ACTION: D. Bonin to draft a discussion piece with recommendation which will be circulated by email to FWAC for comment. Continue discussion at April meeting.

Trail Planning
Working Group

A presentation by H. Beresford was given regarding the Trail Planning Working Group and a discussion was held.

FWAC reviewed TPWG fall 2017 newsletter. T. Hellinga assisted by sharing information about various trail updates and proposals. Highlights:

- Trail building in 2018 toward Beverly Lake
- Another trail near Madely to ski jumps
- Parking lot to be built at top of cardiac hill on Alta Lake Road to reduce parking on Stonebridge road.
- Climbing trail from Flank Trail

Discussion regarding what planning is underway regarding camping in the alpine? Concern with creating human-bear conflicts and fragmenting habitat. Based on unanticipated high use in 2017, concern that unintended negative consequences may be created.

Suggestion that TPWG newsletters and plans be made public and shared with Council.

Moved by M. Lowry
Seconded by J. Mikes

That the Trail Planning Working Group newsletters be made public and shared with Council.

CARRIED

Moved by C. Rose-Taylor
Seconded by M. Lowry

That future alpine trail planning should include a stakeholder dialogue regarding alpine camping to avoid negative impacts.

CARRIED

OTHER BUSINESS

Attach FWAC's Official Community Plan Natural Areas chapter input to March 14, 2018 minutes.

Peter Ackhurst's letter to editor (February 8, 2018): "Just Curious." Message needs to get to CCF that people are looking for tangible benefits to the community.

MOTION TO TERMINATE

Moved by J. Mikes
Seconded by T. Hellinga

That the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee Meeting of March 14, 2018 be terminated at 5:02 p.m.

CARRIED

Chair, Derek Bonin

Recording Secretary, Heather Beresford

FWAC Comments on draft OCP Natural Areas Chapter

Chapter 6 Natural Environment

Our Shared Future

Whistler's natural environment is one of the resort community's greatest assets, and residents and visitors continue to understand its importance to Whistler's success and to the health of current and future generations. Whistler's stewardship ethic has informed land use decisions to maintain healthy ecosystems, beautiful landscapes and a close connection between developed and natural areas.

Sensitive ecosystems with high biodiversity values are protected through legal and policy tools. Native plants continue to thrive in the Whistler valley. Invasive species are, wherever possible, eliminated and prevented.

Residents enjoy clean water thanks to a municipal strategy that focuses on the entire water system from sourcing, through distribution and use, to treatment and disposal, as well as the state of infrastructure and management practices. Whistler's air quality exceeds provincial guidelines, due in part to a reduction in particulates and other emissions from transportation, industry, home heating and other human-created sources. At night, residents can enjoy the night sky through conservative use of lighting that still meets safety needs.

Current Reality

Protecting Whistler's natural beauty and environmental resources has been identified as a priority since Whistler's creation as a resort municipality. Through significant development over the last 40 years, Whistler's natural areas and local biodiversity are challenged by land conversion and habitat fragmentation but the municipality is committed to mitigating the impacts and restoring habitats where possible by careful land management and better understanding of the species that live here. Whistler identified its most sensitive and important ecosystems, and developed rational guidelines and planning practices to protect and support local biodiversity and ecological functions. This is part of the ecosystem based management approach that the municipality has adopted for protection of the natural environment.

The Sea to Sky Corridor also enjoys relatively clean, healthy air but trends indicate that air quality could deteriorate if emissions are not proactively managed. To offset the trend, the municipality has partnered with the Sea to Sky Clean Air Society in planning and implementing the Sea to Sky Air Quality Management Plan which identifies priorities and goals for air quality to protect the airshed throughout its growth and development. The management plan actions include integrating corridor transit systems, reducing vehicle idling, encouraging transit providers to reduce emissions, and promoting opportunities for residential and visitor access to public transportation and transportation initiatives.

Whistler works to maintain, protect and enhance ecological assets such as water quality, biodiversity, clean air, ecosystems and viewscales. The community acknowledges that water quality in lakes, streams and groundwater sources are vital to safe drinking water supply, recreational use, and the protection of functioning ecosystems. The municipality is engaged in reducing human-bear conflicts

through partnership with key organizations, as well as actively managing and protecting ecosystems and viewsapes through initiatives such as the Cheakamus Community Forest.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1.1 Implement an ecosystem-based management approach that identifies and maintains ecosystem functions and processes as a primary element of Whistler's commitment to the environment.

Objective 1.1.1 Recognize that ecosystem mapping and the development permit area guidelines for protection of the natural environment are the foundation to Whistler's ecosystem-based approach to protecting the natural environment during land development.

Policies

Apply an ecosystem-based management approach that focuses on maintaining the interconnected components, functions and processes of local ecosystems.

Review development permit applications against objectives, documented best management practices and guidelines to identify potential conflicting values or activities, and to ensure that any proposed development is ecologically appropriate.

Update the municipal ecosystem mapping as new information becomes available.

Review the development permit area guidelines periodically (every two years or less) against current best management practices.

Policy TEXT BOX: The Resort Municipality's Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping identifies the location of Whistler's sensitive and important ecosystems that are most important to local biodiversity and ecological function: wetlands; riparian areas; old growth and mature forests; early succession forests; high mountain ecosystems; and avalanche tracks. See the Development Permit Area chapter in this OCP for applicable designations and associated guidelines.

Goal 1.2: Maintain and prioritize healthy ecosystems, maintain beautiful viewsapes, and recognize the interconnections between developed and natural areas in the land use planning process.

Objective 1.2.1 Recognize the ecological, social and economic values of the natural environment and the interconnections with Whistler's built and modified elements.

Policies

Identify and characterize important natural areas in Whistler for protection and maintenance of biodiversity, recreation and aesthetic values.

Seek and apply best management practices to new development, significant redevelopment, and operations/maintenance of existing infrastructure.

When considering changes to the landscape, ensure that new development or significant redevelopment assesses the cumulative environmental effects of the proposal and uses the information to minimize negative environmental impacts.

Limit development to the least environmentally sensitive lands within the Whistler Urban Development Containment Area.

During development or significant redevelopment, follow provincial environmental mitigation policy and procedures for mitigating impacts on environmental values, and other documented best management practices. .

Policy TEXT BOX: The RMOW will clearly identify its preference for avoiding negative environmental impacts and require a qualified environmental professional to conduct an assessment in all significant development or redevelopment proposals. In determining whether to grant permit approval, the municipality shall determine whether less-intrusive methods have been adequately evaluated and shown not to be feasible.

To promote long-term ecosystem integrity and human health, land use decision-making shall apply the Precautionary Principle.

Support sustainable forest harvesting using ecosystem-based management (EBM) in the Cheakamus Community Forest, in partnership with Squamish and Lil'wat First Nations.

Apply targets, indicators, monitoring and evaluation to maintain the integrity of the natural environment and to reverse negative environmental trends.

Reduce the use of night-time lighting and contain glare to retain the quality of the night sky, while meeting safety needs.

Promote a stewardship ethic and awareness of environmental issues through public education.

Objective 1.2.2. Support understanding of biodiversity values ecosystem functions and processes, and the roles of native species and habitats in maintaining biodiversity.

Support the development of a Whistler biodiversity protection plan

Encourage the use of native plant species for development and significant redevelopment as a means of protecting local biodiversity and minimizing watering requirements, subject to policy 6.2.3.1 and avoidance of wildlife attractants.

Protect biodiversity by prohibiting the use of invasive plant species and support eradication of existing invasive plants.

POLICY TEXT BOX: An invasive plant has the potential to pose undesirable or detrimental impacts on humans, animals or ecosystems. Invasive plants have the capacity to establish quickly and easily on both disturbed and undisturbed sites, and can cause widespread negative economic, social and environmental impacts. Second to habitat loss, invasive species have been identified as the most significant threat to biodiversity. Controlling invasive plant species in the Resort Municipality assists in protecting the natural environment that is integral to the success of our community.

Protect and, where possible, restore the habitats, ecosystems and connectivity that sustain biodiversity including populations of species at risk.

Apply an ecosystem-based management approach that focuses on maintaining the interconnected components, functions and processes of local ecosystems.

Minimize habitat fragmentation during development and significant redevelopment by maintaining the linkages and corridors identified in the Biodiversity Protection Plan/Protected Area Network.

Objective 1.2.3 Minimize human/wildlife conflict.

Policies

In landscape plans requiring municipal approval, avoid approving plants in areas of concentrated human use that are known to be highly attractive as food sources for bears.

Ensure that the municipal solid waste management system is inaccessible to wildlife.

Collaborate with community partners to continue minimizing human/bear conflicts.

Goal 1.3 Protect water quality and quantity in local water bodies, streams and groundwater.

Objective 1.3.1 Maintain water quality in Whistler's water bodies and groundwater to provincial standards or better.

Policies:

Continue to monitor Whistler streams and lakes, compare results to provincial water quality objectives, and take action to improve trends when necessary.

Implement the recommendations in the RMOW *Groundwater Resource Protection Plan* (2008).

Continue to monitor and implement best management practices to protect Whistler's surface water supply zones as identified in Schedule L.

Objective 1.3.2 Promote water conservation to achieve Whistler2020's water consumption targets.

Policies

Develop a "Whistler Water Wise" policy that meets the provincial government's Living Water Smart program commitments.

Encourage the use of native landscape plants, xeriscaping and water conservation technologies.

Collaborate with relevant agencies and stakeholders to implement water conservation technologies and programs.

Objective 1.3.3. Maintain overland and in-stream water flows during development and significant redevelopment.

Policies

Maintain natural stream channel alignments and riparian areas unless a significant environmental benefit can be gained through alteration.

Maintain pre- and post-development groundwater recharge and stream base flow rates.

Evaluate the use of the Water Balance Model or other appropriate model as a land use decision-making tool for assessing effects of development on streams and the watershed.

Require a stormwater management plan for development and significant redevelopment that balances pre- and post-development surface flows.

Control access to watersheds used for municipal water supply, and seek cooperation from relevant agencies and stakeholders to comply with access restrictions.

Goal 1.4 Protect air quality.

Objective 1.4.1 Maintain Whistler's air quality so that it is within provincial air quality objectives and standards.

Policies

Reduce particulates and other emissions from transportation, industry, building heating and other human-created sources.

Continue to partner with the Sea-to-Sky Clean Air Society in planning and implementing the Sea-to-Sky Air Quality Management Plan.