



WHISTLER

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF FOREST & WILDLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020, STARTING AT 3:00 P.M.

In the Flute Room

4325 Blackcomb Way, Whistler, BC V8E 0X5

PRESENT:

Name	Meetings to Date: 3
Present:	
Member at Large, Melanie Tardif, Chair	3
AWARE, Claire Ruddy	1
Member at Large, Christine Bilodeau	3
Member at Large, Rhonda Millikin	3
Member at Large, Derek Bonin, Co-Chair	1
Member at Large, Dan Raymond	2
Councilor, Arthur DeJong	2
Recording Secretary, Heather Beresford	3
Regrets:	
Member at Large, John Hammons	2
Member at Large, Colin Rankin	1
WORCA, Seb Kemp/Matt Cooper	1
Member at Large, Trevor Burton	0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by R. Millikin

Seconded by D. Bonin

That the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee Agenda of March 11, 2020.

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by C. Bilodeau

Seconded by R. Millikin

That the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee Minutes of February 12, 2020.

CARRIED

D. Raymond arrived at 3:04 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS

Updates

AWARE:

- Planning Climate Action conference
- AGM April 22

WORCA:

- N/A

RMOW:

- Applied to Community Resiliency Investment program and new Wildfire Risk Reduction program.
- Spruce Grove project will resume when snow allows followed by work on east side of Nesters Hill

Trail Planning Working Group:

- Last met in October, nothing new.

Cheakamus Community Forest:

- Wildfire fuel thinning project underway along Cheakamus Lake Road (C04)
- Basalt valley road connection being discussed by FLNRO and CCF

A. DeJong arrived 3:30 p.m.

Council:

- New CAO, Virginia Cullen, starts April 20
- Covid-19 preparation, RMOW working closely with VCH

Commercial Recreation Tenure Application

A presentation by Tracy Napier, RMOW Planner, regarding a commercial recreation tenure referral from Big Mountain Bike Adventures.

Presentation Summary:

- CR-98 Licence of Occupation, Adventure Tourism, Multiple Use
- Proponent is an existing business seeking a licence of occupation for a term of 10-30 years for permission to conduct commercial mountain bike guiding activities on the existing trail network in Whistler, Pemberton and Squamish
- FWAC considered a similar application in March 2019 and made recommendations.
- RMOW is developing a commercial recreation permitting process and business licence requirements applicable to area within RMOW boundary so that the extent of use and impacts can be better monitored and managed

Discussion:

- Commercial recreation is allowed within RR1 zoning. No rezoning efforts to manage commercial recreation are underway at RMOW. Pursuing business licence approach to managing.
- RMOW permitting process would track trails used, user numbers, cumulative effects. Consider coordinating with Pemberton and Squamish.
- WB trails are not included. Managed under the BC Alpine Policy focused on skiing.
- FWAC maintains position on points made in March 2019, and has concerns over using existing trails for commercial use: conflicts with public; over-crowding; maintenance, environmental impacts as use increases; impacts to neighbourhoods at trailheads; creation of increasing need for enforcement and monitoring
- RMOW Recreation Trail Strategy may address many of those points.
- Request a shorter term if approved, e.g. 5 years max.
- Whistler Interpretive Forest objectives do not allow commercial use.
- Ebikes and commercial use on alpine trails above Flank Trail now supported in the Human-Grizzly Bear Conflict Mitigation Strategy. Province holds authority to implement and enforce.

Human-Grizzly Bear Conflict Mitigation Strategy

A presentation by Heather Beresford, Environmental Stewardship Manager, regarding the Human-Grizzly Bear Conflict Mitigation Strategy (CMS).

- CMS was completed in autumn 2019. Key recommendation was to complete a vegetation/habitat study to understand how grizzly bears use the Sproatt/Rainbow alpine area. RMOW hired Grant MacHutchon, grizzly bear specialist, to undertake the project in Q4 2019. Recommendations incorporated into the 2020 RMOW trails workplan.
- CMS going to RMOW Council March 17 for approval
- 2020 workplan:
 - Himmelsbach Hut from Russet Lake will be flown over to top of Into the Mystic for use as a ranger station, emergency support; not for overnight use by public.
 - Monitoring equipment deployment including wildlife cameras and counters. RMOW extending support and equipment to Alpine Club for Skywalk trail system
 - Increased Alpine Ranger presence
 - Plan new route for South Flank trail
 - Include applicable CMS recommendations in RMOW Recreation Trail Strategy
 - Recommend Rec Sites & Trails BC use its authority to ban e-bikes, dogs and commercial events from alpine trails
- FWAC supported the CMS approach and recommendations. Suggested doing similar exercise for Jane Lakes area and developing the Recreation Trails Strategy with a grizzly bear lens.

Forest Management in Whistler

A presentation by Dr. Rhonda Millikin, PhD regarding old growth and wildfire forest management in the Whistler area.

- There is an opportunity for Whistler to lead in forest management
- Whistler's Forest is not like the dry fuel-driven forests that dominate publications & recommended fire management regimes. Questions

efficacy of current wildfire fuel thinning treatments. Methods are based on interior, fire regenerated forest types.

- Old growth forest harvesting does not adequately consider all forest values. The opportunity costs of harvesting old growth is negative meaning the trees are worth more if left standing.
- OG forests exhibit greater stores of carbon in tree stems, tree roots, organisms other than trees, and dead organic matter. Much of this carbon would be released to the atmosphere if an OG forest were logged, and the replacement seedlings would not grow fast enough to replace it fully.
- Access should be managed to maintain ecological integrity at a landscape scale and managed to protect ecosystem services
- Has the ecosystem based management plan been replaced by wildfire fuel management?
- Dr. Millikin recommends to cease fire thinning and harvest of OG; focus on increasing fire resilience in urban interface with native tree planting; and monitor treated forests.

OTHER BUSINESS

April field trip will be organized by a doodle poll.

UPCOMING AGENDAS

- April – Further discussion of old growth and wildfire forest management

MOTION TO TERMINATE

Moved by A. DeJong
Seconded by D. Bonin

That the Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee Meeting of March 11, 2020 be terminated at 5:12 p.m.

CARRIED

Chair, M. Tardif

Recording Secretary, H. Beresford