



# WHISTLER

## MINUTES

### REGULAR MEETING OF FOREST WILDLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2021, STARTING AT 3:00 P.M.

Remote Meeting  
Held via Zoom

PRESENT	Mtgs. YTD (2)
Councilor, A. DeJong	2
Member at Large, M. Tardif, Chair	2
Member at Large, C. Rankin, Co-Chair	2
Member at Large, D. Bonin,	2
Member at Large, R. Millikin	2
Member at Large, T. Burton	1
Member at Large, J. Hammons	2
WORCA, N. Koshure	2
AWARE, C. Ruddy	2
RMOW Manager of Environmental Stewardship, H. Beresford	2
Recording Secretary, O. Carroll	2

  

REGRETS	
Member at Large, D. Raymond	1

### ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by R. Millikin  
Seconded by C. Ruddy

**That** Forest Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Regular Agenda of February 10, 2021.

CARRIED

### ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by A. DeJong  
Seconded by R. Millikin

**That** Forest Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the amended Regular Committee Minutes of Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

CARRIED

### PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS

Council

- Covid update with Whistler numbers curving upward.
- Cheakamus Crossing 'Parcel A' construction underway.

Updates

- Council spending considerable time reviewing Nita Lake employee housing proposal.
- Whistler Recovery team working closely to take lessons from Covid and “build back better”

#### AWARE

- Currently working on strategic planning and spring grant writing.
- Snowmobilers circulating petition; concerned with losing access.

#### WORCA

- Nicole Koshure started mid-January as WORCA Trail Administrator.
- Upcoming trail proposals include a shorter loop trail on Lord of the Squirrels, D’arcy Burke memorial trail near Loggers Lake, and Flank access in Alpine.

#### RMOW

- Council makes decision on new FWAC appointee on Feb 16. Report to Council included term extensions for D. Bonin, C. Rankin, and T. Burton.
- Natural Assets Management – developing an inventory of all natural assets that provide municipal services and a road map for incorporating them into RMOW assets management plan.

#### TPWG

- Waiting for spring meeting date to be set.

#### CCF

- Close to finishing Cheakamus Lake Road wildfire thinning project – waiting for snow to melt.
- Board of Directors meeting scheduled for March 4, 2021.
- Simon Murray, CCF Forestry Manager, will be updating Council at February 16, 2021 council meeting regarding CCF 2021 Harvesting Plans.

#### 2021 FWAC Priorities

##### Top Priorities

- Old Growth Protection/Old Forest Review Strategy
- CCF Engagement and public communication improvements
- Wildfire management approach

##### Other Priorities

- Community involvement in FWAC
- Recreation Trail Strategy – providing input
- Better understanding of values of all aspects of forest. For example, economic and employment value associated with a range of activities around the forest – nature-based tourism.
- Aquatic environment
- Seek earlier FWAC involvement in development of CCF plans – providing input beyond harvesting plans.
- Wildlands and wildlife habitat values included better in planning

Committee to review the FWAC Terms of Reference to ensure the top three priorities fit into the context of the current Terms of Reference. Going forward, Committee would like these ideas and priorities to be included on future agendas.

CCF Overall Planning Framework

Background, FWAC recommendations, and draft resolution prepared by C. Rankin, J. Hammons, and D. Bonin. Refer to Appendix A.

FWAC recommends **that** the RMOW, with the support of the CCF Board, and before 31 March 2022, initiate an update of the CCF Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) Plan to incorporate current climate and forest ecosystem knowledge, and current and emerging uses, values and objectives for management of the CCF and surrounding landscapes.

Moved by C. Rankin  
Seconded by J. Hammons

CARRIED

Wildfire Program

C. Rankin, J. Hammons, and D. Bonin present draft recommendations and resolution to Committee regarding RMOW wildfire protection program, which is a key issue for the RMOW, but also very relevant for CCF.

FWAC suggests assessing options for varying the intensity of fuel removal to lower costs such as consider leaving more fuel on the ground after treatment. Risk of leaving wood debris behind varies depending on location and ecosystem. Different areas may be treated with different approaches; consider site by site treatment methods to include green fuel breaks.

FWAC recommends engaging additional wildfire mitigation expertise to help establish options and trial plots for debris management.

Committee agrees to consider and review recommendations further before passing a resolution for Council. The intention would be that these recommendations would also be included for discussion at the spring wildfire workshop. Committee will discuss this topic further in March meeting.

Committees & Working Groups

FWAC is concerned that planning within various committees is isolated despite the overlapping priorities.

FWAC moves **that** Recreation Leisure Advisory Committee (RLAC), Trail Planning Working Group (TPWG) and Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee (FWAC) meet at least once annually to jointly discuss strategic recreation and forestry plans.

Moved by C. Rankin  
Seconded by C. Ruddy

CARRIED

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### Upcoming Agenda Items

Next Meeting: March 10, 2021  
Provincial Old Growth Strategy

- Invite representative from FLNRO to present regarding Old Growth plans.

## **MOTION TO TERMINATE**

Moved by C. Ruddy  
Seconded by N. Koshure

**That** the Forest Wildland Advisory Committee meeting of Wednesday, February 10, 2021 be terminated at 5:05 p.m.

CARRIED

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Chair,

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Recording Secretary,

**Appendix A.**

**RESOLUTION TO COUNCIL TO UPDATE THE CCF'S ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Proposed Resolution:**

FWAC recommends that the RMOW, with the support of the CCF Board, and before 31 March 2022, initiate an update of the CCF Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) Plan to incorporate current climate and forest ecosystem knowledge – and current and emerging uses, values and objectives for management of the CCF and surrounding landscapes.

**Rationale for the Resolution – Whereas:**

- The CCF has committed to: “produce a review of strategic plans to ensure the CCF is aligned with issues such as climate change, carbon capture and wildfire hazard mitigation [and] the CCF will prepare a timber supply analysis to update the AAC [that] will need to incorporate wildfire reduction treatments, recreation/tourism economic values, carbon initiatives and climate change adaptations”;
- The CCF Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) plan commissioned following formation of the CCF in 2009 and finalized in 2012 has formed a foundation for the CCF's first Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) and subsequent FSPs and harvesting plans under provincial regulation;
- Many of FWAC concerns such as supporting ecosystem health, addressing cumulative impacts, trail corridors and trailhead infrastructure, and planning for nature-based recreation and tourism are best addressed at the landscape level;
- The RMOW has committed to preparing a Recreation Trails Strategy that includes the CCF land base;
- The EBM approach and themes: ecological integrity; hierarchical context; ecological boundaries; data collection; monitoring; adaptive management; interagency cooperation; organizational change; humans embedded in nature; and values – remain relevant and applicable to the CCF; and
- New information, management issues and uses have come to the fore since preparation of the CCF EBM Plan more than a decade ago, including:
  - Increased understanding of the scope of climate changes and modeling of impacts on forest ecosystems – globally, regionally and specific to the CCF,
  - Increased understanding of wildfire risks and management in light of changing climate, and consequent shifts in objectives and priorities for fuel management, and harvesting and silvicultural practices, as well as tourism and recreation and RMOW Community Wildfire Risk Reduction planning,
  - Increased commercial and non-commercial recreation demand and use, and growth of emerging recreational activities (such as mountain biking and e-assisted and heli-assisted “non-motorized” uses),
  - Provincial Old Growth Strategy review and recommendations, and
  - Provincial Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's Act (recognizing the UNDRIP) and efforts toward reconciliation.

**Recognitions and recommendations for approach to updating the EBM Plan:**

- FWAC understands the difficulty of funding this first recommend and suggests that, as far as possible, it be done as a community-based effort like that used for the Integrated Resource Mapping initiative. Like the Integrated Resource Mapping initiative, First Nations concerns, and values should be fully included.
- FWAC recommends that as far as possible, this update be based on the structure of the original 2011 EBM plan rather than redoing the plan.
- FWAC recommends that a more complete monitoring strategy be included in an updated EBM plan.
- FWAC recommends that a more detailed “gap analysis” be considered for the updated EBM plan based on the distribution of ages groups by groups of similar ecosystems. This could be considered optional subject to available funding.
- FWAC understands that a facilitator and possibly some additional conservation biology expertise would be needed for this update. The CCF Forest Manager may play the role of facilitator, but considering the RMOW’s focus on nature supported tourism, the RMOW may want to independently supply a facilitator and conservation biology expertise and possibly supply RMOW GIS and report production support.
- FWAC understands that an update of the EBM plan should be integrated with the CCF’s initiative to prepare a timber supply analysis to update the AAC.

**Background:**

The Cheakamus Community Forest was established in April 2009, when the Lil’wat and Squamish First Nations and the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) jointly signed a 25-year tenure with the provincial Ministry of Forests and Range. The RMOW’s primary interest in the CCF is managing the local landscape to support the RMOW’s world-class tourism economy, while the two first-nations partners are more focused on employment and economic benefits. More specifically, the RMOW’s interest is focused on maintaining and enhancing landscape level and on the ground visual quality and as well as overall ecosystem health.

To support this vision, the RMOW retained Ecotrust Canada, a consultancy that specialized in supporting the development of conservation-based economies. At the time, Ecotrust was heavily involved in the Clayoquot Sound and the North Coast ecosystem-based management initiative. After extensive local consultation and consideration of First Nations land use plans for the two tradition territories that overlap the CCF, Ecotrust produced a final “*Cheakamus Community Forest Ecosystem Based Management Plan*” in 2011.

This world-class EBM plan was based on basic conservation biology principles and included specific guidelines for managing the CCF in a manner that would support long-term ecosystem health based on an adaptive management framework. Ecotrust recognized the principle that ecosystems function at a landscape level and based the analysis that underlies the EBM plan on conditions in the Whistler Landscape Unit which surrounds the CCF.

**EBM and CCF Plans:**

The CCF EBM plan formed the basis for the CCF’s first Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) which is required by the Province for each forest tenure as well as a 2012 condensed and broaden version of the EBM plan produced by the CCF better suited for the general public. The required FSP is focused on ensuring that each tenure is following Provincial regulations, while the 2012 condensed version of the EBM plan was focused more broadly on a Sustainable Forest Management framework. The Province has mandated a revision of the original CCF FSP to reflect changes over the last decade and a revised FSP was recently submitted to the Province.

A major difference between the widely used “Sustainable Forest Management” approach to “high-level” planning and the Ecosystem Based Management approach is EBM’s emphasis on underlying ecosystems and explicit attention to “adaptive management.” This involves an explicit recognition that forest management decisions are based on assumptions intended to achieve specified objectives. An EBM plan is not intended to “sit on the shelf” or be used in perpetuity. An essential element of EBM is monitoring, learning and adapting based on the results of monitoring – i.e., a formal process of “learning by doing,” where review of and changes in management practices are based on increased understandings of ecological and human systems – and their interactions.

The original work for the CCF’S EBM plan was completed over ten years ago – sufficient time to compare actual accomplishment to those recommended in the plan in the spirit of learning and adaptive management. In addition to ongoing forest management activities (largely cut block and harvest planning, road planning and construction, and timber harvesting), several other factors should be addressed in a review of the EBM plan:

- Additional land use zoning work has been completed, namely the Integrated Resource Mapping initiative. This RMOW driven project used community input to further identify areas with timber harvesting restrictions.
- The RMOW wildfire fuel reduction program.
- The CCF’s carbon credit initiative implemented in response to of the seriousness of global warming and climate change.
- The Provincial Old Growth Strategy review and recommendations.

Some components of the original EBM plan also need strengthening:

- Although monitoring is a central requirement of effective application of the EBM approach, the 2011 Ecotrust EBM plan did not address this issue in any detail. The Province requires ground based monitoring of all harvested areas to ensure adequate regrowth. With adequate requirements for public reporting, this information could form an important part of a monitoring protocol. Other treatments such as wildfire fuel reduction and other silvicultural interventions should also be included.
- Although the analysis that underlies the Ecotrust EBM plan was based on the distribution of five broad “biogeoclimatic” units and four broad forest age groups (seral stages) within these units, the plan did use the detailed ecosystem mapping available for the area to identify specific rare and endangered ecosystems. These ecosystems were generally limited in geographic extent and the Ecotrust EBM plan suggested that the ecosystem mapping should be used to expand the analysis to drill down to the distribution of age groups by grouping of similar ecosystems.