



**REGULAR MEETING OF
FOREST WILDLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Wednesday, April, 12, 2023, 3:00 p.m.

Remote Meeting via Zoom

For information on how to participate: <http://www.whistler.ca/fwac>

		Mtgs: YTD (4)
PRESENT:	Councilor, A. De Jong	4
	Chair, Member at Large, M. Tardif	3
	Co-Chair, Member at Large, R. Millikin	4
	Member at Large, C. Young	4
	Member at Large, J. Areshenkoff	3
ABSENT:	Member at Large, D. Raymond	2
	WORCA, N. Koshure	2
	Member at Large, V. Cole	0
	AWARE, C. Ruddy	1
STAFF PRESENT:	Manager of Climate and Environment, L. Burhenne	
	Recording Secretary, O. Carroll	
OTHERS:	Cheakamus Community Forest Executive Director, H. Beresford	
	Chartwell Resource Group Ltd., A. Litz	
	Chartwell Resource Group Ltd., A. Kwan	
	WORCA, Ben Hryciw	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Melanie Tardif recognized the Resort Municipality of Whistler is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Lílwat People, known in their language as Liíwat7úl, and the Squamish People, known in their language as Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh. We respect and commit to a deep consideration of their history, culture, stewardship and voice.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved By A. De Jong

Seconded By R. Millikin

That Forest Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Regular Committee Meeting agenda of Wednesday, April 12, 2023.

CARRIED

3. AMEND MINUTES PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED

Moved By A. De Jong

Seconded By R. Millikin

That Forest Wildland Advisory Committee amend the Regular Committee Meeting minutes of Wednesday, February 15, 2023 previously adopted.

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved By T. Young

Seconded By J. Areshenkoff

That Forest Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Regular Committee Meeting minutes of Wednesday, March 8, 2023.

CARRIED

5. VERBAL REPORTS

5.1 Updates

Updates were given by Council, RMOW, and Trail Planning Working Group (TPWG). AWARE Representative, C. Ruddy and WORCA Representative, N. Koshure were not present in meeting to provide new updates.

Council

- Council received 2022 summary budget. Just a few percentages below budget on expenses, but above budget on revenues, most notably MRDT revenues.
- Council passed a bylaw amendment which forgoes existing parking requirements for additional parking stalls as part of the permitting process for Whistler Blackcomb's upgrade to the Fitzsimmons Chair. Instead of additional parking, the amendment specifies Whistler Blackcomb will make an annual contribution of \$200,000 which will go towards transit until such a time that paid parking is implemented into parking lots 6, 7, 8. Part of the Whistler Blackcomb parking revenues will continue to support whistler transit.
- Council went to Housing Summit in Vancouver. The housing crisis exists through the province. Key points include money; faster zoning; higher density zoning; more staff tradespeople to build the housing. It is a challenge that is not going away.
- Staff presented to Council in April on waste reduction analysis. In 2000, 19% of waste was diverted; now up to 47% diverted in 2022, with a goal of diverting 80% of waste in 2030.
- A. De Jong attended Whistler Bear Advisory Committee that noted bear activity will be increasing and challenging us.

RMOW

- Karen Elliot was hired as the new General Manager of Community Engagement and Cultural Services, a new fourth division of the RMOW. Karen served eight years on the Squamish Council, most recently as Squamish Mayor, and as a

Council member. She brings a wealth of knowledge in local government, and her professional background includes consulting in the public and private sectors focused on strategy development, organizational management, leadership development and change management. Her first day with the RMOW will be April 17, 2023.

- Fuel thinning will begin next week along Riverside.
- Committee review is currently underway to ensure all committees have a clear purpose and that the input from committees is captured and considered in the municipality's work. Further updates will be provided in time.

TPWG

- Recreational Trail Strategy community engagement is open online until April 15th after which the community feedback will be compiled and shared with FWAC at a future meeting.

5.2 Cheakamus Community Forest Update

CCF Executive Director, Heather Beresford, and Chartwell Resource Group Ltd., Abe Litz and Andy Kwan joined meeting at 3:30pm.

H. Beresford, A. Litz, and A. Kwan presented to committee on CCF 5-year harvest plan highlighting potential harvesting areas with maps of CCF tenure.

CCF summary updates:

- Roughly 54% of CCF area is operable. The rest is constrained by provincial Old Growth Management Areas, Wildlife Habitat Areas, riparian reserves, voluntary EBM Reserves, etc. in addition to areas that are non-productive land base, such as rock and ice. Of the 32,989 hectares, only 17,945 hectares are actually operable (54.4%).
- 15,869 hectares of old growth in CCF, of which 6,190 (39%) is harvestable within the operable area. Roughly 61% of old growth are in constrained, no-harvest areas.
- Two key pieces of information are needed before CCF can determine if/where old growth may be harvested in future: determining where old growth deferral areas will be located and carbon modelling scenarios outcomes
 - Current negotiations ongoing between the province and Squamish and Lil'wat Nations regarding old growth deferral areas. The Nations are going through a land use process to determine where deferral areas should be located. Once this is completed, the CCF will know where is acceptable to First Nations to potentially harvest old growth on their territories.
 - Carbon scenarios are being developed to identify how best to manage the forest for carbon sequestration and forest management.
 - Once these items are finalized, the information will be incorporated into the CCF's harvest planning.
- The CCF is planning to harvest ~17,000m³ in 2023 and the full 21,000 m³ annual allowable cut (AAC) in 2024. This is up from previous years, however, note that the CCF was not successful in securing permits in last two years, and AAC is still 50% under Ministry of Forestry guidelines.
- H. Beresford noted the effects of under-harvesting from a business point of view. The CCF is a business, and the priority is to keep it running, therefore it needs revenue. If the CCF fails, this area reverts to 'business as usual' under the

Forestry Act and would be open to a number of other commercial operations who would jump to harvest these areas, and without restrictions or community input.

- There is strong movement from the provincial level for change in forestry to better include First Nations voices and values. Forestry is in a state of flux in many respects. Hopeful for a better model with a shift to more community control of our local forests.
- CCF is coming to the end of the 5-year carbon verification cycle. In 2024 will be undergoing an analysis to determine how many carbon credits CCF will have for sale for the next 5-year cycle. Can only sell as many carbon credits as identified by spatial analysis of the forest according to provincial criteria. CCF will be selling all the carbon credits from the current cycle, and plan to continue to sell all future credits. May have the opportunity to renegotiate the price of carbon with the province in next agreement.
- Any area that is identified by RMOW as a wildfire risk that is within the CCF tenure will be directly awarded to Lil'wat Ventures or Squamish Forestry.

FWAC Comments:

- On average, CCF is pulling in \$100,000 per year, which is roughly 4,000 carbon credits per year at \$25/tCO_{2e}. This is a low carbon price that if renegotiated to a higher price might decrease the amount of logging to be done to supplement; and then this could be split between the Nations. With a higher price, and a greater income from carbon credits, the pressure to log the CCF may be lessened.
- Committee member posed whether the proposed operations of Function Junction cut block R04 will affect the wetlands in this area.
 - Chartwell Resource Group maintained that the area is well above the wetlands, on the hillside. Further, soil/water/wildlife considerations will be managed at site level and supporting professionals will be brought in to mitigate the risk of these values.
- In terms of long-term harvesting plans, how do we proceed while anticipating climate change?
 - Chartwell Resource Group noted that this is a question everyone has with very little guidance. A lot comes down to adaptive management and a professional alliance to strive towards best practices by projecting into the future on a site level and trying to create a resilient forest.
- Committee member stressed the importance of considering retention levels that keep moisture content in the soil to help prevent forest fires; versus cutting down 70% of a block.
- Committee would like to see the annual allowable cut (AAC) renegotiated in 2024

5.3 CCF Field Trip Planning

CCF, Chartwell Resource Group, and the Committee discussed options for the annual spring field trip. The Callaghan areas P03/P04/P05 as well as Function Junction area, R04 were decided on as the field trip location. A Doodle poll will be sent around to the Committee to find a day in May to visit these sites over a three-hour field trip.

5.4 Adopt Annual Report

The 2022 Annual Report directed towards CCF and RMOW highlights the priorities identified by FWAC and call for urgent action by both parties (Appendix A).

That Forest and Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the 2022 Annual Report and that Council considers these recommendations.

Moved By T. Young

Seconded By R. Millikin

CARRIED

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Following the presentation from CCF in this meeting, the committee would like to pass a resolution in the next meeting regarding renegotiations with the province.

7. TERMINATION

Moved By T. Young

Seconded By J. Areshenkoff

That the Forest Wildland Advisory Committee terminate the Regular Committee Meeting of Wednesday, April 12, 2023.

CARRIED

Chair, M. Tardif

Recording Secretary, O. Carroll

Forest and Wildlands Advisory Committee

2022 Annual Report

This year the FWAC committee prepared the Annual Report for 2022 in the form of a SWOT analysis to convey our urgent messaging to the CCF Board, RMOW Council and Municipal Staff, who presumably will also be reading this report from our meeting minutes as an appendix. This report includes an outline of our Resolutions to Council which will be moved at the Regular FWAC meeting on April 12th, 2023. As well as a report card section, in keeping with FWAC's historical methods of reporting to the CCF.

SWOT

Directed at Heather Beresford, the CCF's new Executive Director and spokesperson for the CCF Board, with an urgent message that the opportunities of ecosystem-based management far outweigh the threats. Trees left standing in the CCF provide lucrative carbon credits and are a natural asset, it's time to take action on this statement.

Strengths:

1. The community forest allows for collaboration between the positions of taxpayers, First Nations, municipal, provincial & federal government.
2. We have established partnerships with Sea to Sky Indigenous communities.
3. We have lucrative natural assets and an ability to influence the management of them. The RMOW is a world class resort with an explicit value of the natural assets.
4. We can simultaneously address RMOW commitments under the Big Moves, Official Community Plan, Firesmart, and wildfire mitigation and monitoring, with a shift to management for a climate resilient forest.

Weaknesses:

1. A current lack of clarity, direction, vision, or transparency in the management of our community forest.
2. Lack of financial transparency.
3. Lack of planning. For example, what are the objectives of Cheakamus Community Forest (CCF) – is it logging or ecosystem-based management?

4. No clear leadership.
5. RMOW is doing only what they must under the provincial guidelines, without monitoring for efficacy or appropriateness in Whistler's Forest.

Opportunities:

1. RMOW has the potential to be a world class leader in climate solutions
2. A change in focus from logging to ecosystem-based management will meet the CCF and RMOW's commitment to reduce carbon emissions.
3. With Heather Beresford as the new Director of CCF, we can expect a new management direction that is aligned with ecosystem-based management, with an emphasis on monitoring to track the reduction of carbon emissions and increased climate resilience of the forest, increased involvement of partners, and improved direction from FWAC as a representative of the RMOW community.
4. To recognize the economic value of our forest beyond timber sales, by defining our carbon emission target using accurate, local data on carbon sequestration both above and below ground. The value must be from a current market position, where we include other ecosystem services and the potential carbon sequestered under ecosystem-based management compared to logging.
5. To update the purchase agreement. We can pursue a partnership with the BC Forest Ministers to update carbon accounting. We need to clarify who owns the forest.
6. To embrace Indigenous employment outside of a focus on Annual Allowable Cut (AAC), as a positive step towards reconciliation, thus enabling shared gains for RMOW and the Sea to Sky Indigenous community. We can move beyond "old iron" and non-Indigenous contractors. All logging must be put up for auction to ensure the best value, requiring that the selection prioritizes forest health (no tree damage, no soil compaction, no erosion).
7. To move beyond compliance to a voluntary market. We can work with the UN Conference of the Parties (COP 27) to get in front of credits for biodiversity (of specialist species that indicate an intact ecosystem) and wildlife.
8. To focus on Callaghan as a pilot diversion of funding from fuel breaks, that the province agrees is ineffective, to instead install ecosystem actions, monitor for efficacy and the impact on carbon sequestration (above and below ground), biodiversity of specialists, and then adjust as needed (adaptive management).
9. To optimize spending of the \$10M from federal government for fire management, to forest that is most at risk to fire, by thinning overgrown plantation forest instead of healthy naturally regenerated forest.
10. To continue not logging at the AAC instead of fearing pressure from the provincial government to change this.

Threats:

1. Climate change and the associated risk of fire, flooding, soil erosion and extreme heat.

2. Loss of natural assets.
3. Loss of biodiversity.
4. Commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 2030. The current focus on logging (AAC and fire management) is increasing carbon emissions.
5. Community opposition and negative publicity.
6. Uncertainty of a new approach.

RESOLUTIONS

Directed at the FWAC chair to be carried forward to Council, with an urgent message that it's time for bold action.

FWAC resolves that RMOW must:

- Modify the FWAC Terms of Reference to require from RMOW, an annual review of targets for ecosystem sustainability, and for all meeting minutes, a reviewable summary of decisions and actions required, by whom/when, before the minutes are finalized in pdf.
- Move from the current unthinking implementation of provincial prescriptions and annual reporting on that plan, to long-term thoughtful planning for ecosystem management.
- Renegotiate the carbon offset purchase agreement between the provincial government and CCF to reflect a more accurate price on current and future carbon markets. Apply the increase price in carbon to CCF operations and partners, as an offset to possible financial input from commercial logging.
- Renegotiate the AAC to reflect no commercial logging in the region.
- With the CCF, quantify and apply a monetary value, on ecosystem services of unlogged forest to include cultural significance, tourism value, energy savings, wildlife habitat, water filtration, soil and bank stability, and natural diversity; thus, strengthening the EBM plan.
- Allocate funding that is dedicated to ecosystem management with complete (includes natural assets and below ground carbon sequestration) accounting for carbon offsets, as well as other metrics of climate change mitigation (flood, heat, health of forest and community well-being) and natural asset sustainability (retention of old-growth and attributes of an intact forest ecosystem), instead of the traditional financial recovery through logging. Validate with local data, whether our trees are worth more standing or not. Annual reporting on spending and results.
- Monitor for loss in biodiversity of species that indicate intact ecosystems compared to biodiversity of disturbance-related species. Annual report on targets for biodiversity credits.
- Integrate ecosystem-based management with Firesmart and fuel-thinning programs so funds can be properly allocated to long-term management of our forests for climate resilience.

REPORT CARD

FWAC’s report card on the CCF’s performance on forest management, directed at the FWAC chair to be brought forward to the CCF Executive Director and Arthur De Jong Council Representative, with the message that we need to end the history of poor performance (2016-2022) on recommendations from FWAC.

Below is a list of RMOW’s four key objectives followed by the 2022 FWAC ranking (Excellent, Pass, Fail or Unknown), and the reason for this ranking.

Provide economic benefits to their communities & to BC.	Unknown due to a lack of transparency
Provide social benefits of community involvement & worker safety, to their communities & to BC	Fail due to the poor use of on-line GIS capability, confusion of multiple disjoint plans, and zero use of citizen science.
Promote communication & strengthen relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities	Unknown due to a lack of transparency.
Community forest management is consistent with sound principles of environmental stewardship that reflect a broad spectrum of values.	Pass due to a commitment in 2021-2022 to fund monitoring for the efficacy of fire management, but only a pass due to a lack of leadership in long-term planning that recognizes Whistler’s unique opportunity to value natural assets over logging and to fully account for the carbon benefits of not logging.