



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

Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 3:00 p.m.

Remote Meeting via Zoom

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

		Mtgs: YTD (6)
PRESENT:	Councilor, A. De Jong	6
	Chair, Member at Large, M. Tardif	5
	Co-Chair, Member at Large, R. Millikin	6
	Member at Large, J. Areshenkoff	4
	Member at Large, D. Raymond	4
	Member at Large, C. Young	5
ABSENT:	WORCA, N. Koshure	2
	Member at Large, V. Cole	0
	AWARE, C. Ruddy	1
STAFF	Acting Manager of Climate and Environment, T. Schaufele	
PRESENT:	Recording Secretary, O. Carroll	
	RMOW Environmental Coordinator, T. Symko	
OTHERS:	Mike Coulthard, Diamond Head Consulting	
	Austin Tahiliani, Diamond Head Consulting	
	Nick Soverel, Frontera Solution	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Melanie Tardif recognized the Resort Municipality of Whistler is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Líl'wat People, known in their language as Líl'wat7úl, and the Squamish People, known in their language as Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh. We respect and commit to a deep consideration of their history, culture, stewardship and voice.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved By R. Millikin

Seconded By C. Young

That Forest Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Regular Committee Meeting agenda of Wednesday, June 14, 2023.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved By D. Raymond

Seconded By R. Millikin

That Forest Wildland Advisory Committee adopt the Regular Committee Meeting minutes of Wednesday, May 10, 2023.

CARRIED

4. VERBAL REPORTS

4.1 Updates

Updates were given by Council, WORCA, CCF and RMOW. AWARE Representative was not present in meeting to provide new updates. There were no new updates from Trail Planning Working Group (TPWG).

WORCA

- Most of the trail staff crew are all back to work, however, have been challenged by the dry conditions and high/extreme fire hazard ratings.
- Trail crew have hosted the Whistler Secondary School and Waldorf School over the last month working on trails in the 'No flow Zone' and 'Flashback' in Cheakamus. Also hosted the Whistler Adventure School Sustainable Trail Building Course on 'Flashback'. Trail crew spend a lot of time in May (approximately 2-3 weeks of work) repairs damages to the trails by BC Hydro thinning work over the winter.
- Events: WORCA hosted the 'Back 40' over the weekend which was a great success. Friday, June 16 the TransBC race is coming to town racing on similar trails to the 'Back 40' to minimize impacts to the trail network. Crankworx will be coming in July. There will be no WORCA managed trails used for the Crankworx event.
- CCF posted their 5-year harvest plan along with a community survey. Some of the proposed polygons of interest overlap with WORCA trails in the Cheakamus and West Side area. Dan and Nicole met with Heather Beresford, CCF Executive Director and Abe Litz of Chartwell Associates to discuss their harvest plans and how to move forward to create a process where WORCA could be more involved in planning process. Aiming to do site visits with the CCF and WORCA Trails Committee this summer.
- Received Section 57 approval for the D'Arcy Burke Memorial trail in the Jane Lakes area.

RMOW

- On track with fuel thinning works in Alpine Meadow and Rainbow, May 15 – September. 'Howler' likely still close for June. Trails next to 19 Mile Creek will be affected.

CCF

- CCF released 5-year harvesting plan after April board meeting. Heather Beresford held three pop-up information booths in mid-May, which received many questions and concerns from public.
- Signs went up on Cheakamus area trails. Heather Beresford, Abe Litz, Nicole Koshure (WORCA) and Dan Raymond (WORCA) met on May 23rd to discuss concerns over concerned 2026 harvesting plans and CCF agreed to do a site walk with WORCA sometime mid-July.
- Many responses received from community survey. Overwhelming amount of concerns regarding Old Growth harvesting and Cheakamus sites that overlap with recreational trails. CCF still has a moratorium on harvesting old growth and

will be revisited when the Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation conclude their discussion with the Province on harvesting of Old Growth.

- FWAC expressed concern over goshawk habitat and wondered if additional surveying had been conducted in CCF since 2016. T. Schaufele confirmed that Bob Brett would have conducted survey within Whistler boundaries and that the 'Comfortably Numb' trail sites was surveyed in 2022 and no active nest or breeding site was confirmed, but it was very possible or even probable that this area included a breeding pair in 2022.

A. *De Jong joined meeting at 3:10pm.*

Council

- Whistler Bear Advisory Committee (WBAC) discussed grizzly activity including the recent relocation of a female grizzly by Conservation Officers back to the Callaghan. Conservation Officers noted that like Black Bears, we will strive to coexist with Grizzlies versus closure. With more green up the mountain, bears will be starting to move upslope taking pressure off the valley.
- Council approved the purchase of a new Fire Rescue Pumper Truck. The current trucks is approaching 25 years of use.
- Canada Day parade will not be held this year due to staff shortages and too short on time, but strong consideration to bring back for 2024.
- NOAA has officially declared we are now in an El Nino weather pattern predicting warmer dryer summer than average.
- Hike for Health on the Ascents on Sunday, June 18 to support the Whistler Healthcare Foundation.

4.2 Priority Habitat Strategy

RMOW Environmental Coordinator Tina Symko introduced Mike Coulthard and Austin Tahiliani of Diamond Head Consulting who have been contracted by the RMOW to assist in forming the Priority Habitat Strategy, which aims to be a high-level strategy that will help Whistler protect its most important natural habitat areas.

Mike Coulthard presented to the committee on the current strategy framework.

Strategy Objectives:

- Reviews existing policy and programs
- Summarizes the existing knowledge of habitat and species that inhabit Whistler
- Identifies constraints and emerging threats
- Identifies five goals with high level recommendations to achieve them

Goals & Recommendations:

1. Clearly define and map Whistler Priority Habitats
2. Protect and restore an ecological network of Priority Habitats
3. Develop and update policies and other planning tools to protect and enhance Priority Habitats during land use planning and development.
4. Minimize the impacts of outdoor recreation on Priority Habitats (this may be integrated into Goal 3)
5. Improve public understanding and foster stewardship of Priority Habitats

Public and Stakeholder Engagement:

- May 24, 2023 – Meeting with Staff and Stakeholders (AWARE, SSISC, Bob Brett, Heather Beresford, Whistler Naturalists) provided great insights.
- Continued stakeholder engagement including First Nations.
- Plan to update and present the Priority Habitat Strategy to Council in the fall.

Top Priorities for Implementation:

- Clearly define and map of Priority Habitats
- Update policies and planning tools to protect Priority Habitats
- Increase invasive species management
- Identify and restore degraded sites
- Develop guidelines for trail development and maintenance.

FWAC appreciated information presented and posed several questions on defining habitat strategy; weighting habitat types; managing unsanctioned trails; using community group data; and using user fees on natural areas as a protection tool.

T. Symko, M. Couthlard, and A. Tahiliani left meeting at 4:17 PM.

4.3 Fuel Thinning Monitoring Program

Nick Soverel of Frontera Solutions presented to the Committee a secondary update of the RMOW Fire and Fuels Monitoring Plan.

Frontera Solutions has been contracted by the RMOW to help monitor effects of fuel thinning on a variety forest attributes. The data and research hope to be able to address the following questions:

1. What are the measurable differences between forest attributes, particularly those that relate to fire threat (canopy base height, canopy bulk density, fuel loading), and in-stand weather when comparing fuel thinned stands versus untreated (control) stands?
2. What are the measurable differences in tree regeneration, forest health and understory vegetation when comparing fuel thinned stands versus untreated (control) stands?
3. At what year post-treatment will different treatment intensities require fuel management maintenance activities?

Plot Installation

- Permanent plot installation started in May 2023 and is wrapping up this week.
- There will be 60 permanent sample plots installed within four separate study areas.
- Paired plot design – 30 experimental plots and 30 control plots.

Data Collection includes:

- Percent cover – shrub/herbs/mosses
- Percent cover – rock/woody debris/forest floor/mineral soil
- Duff/litter depth
- Chip decomposition
- USFS Photoload method
- Percent moisture in dead fuels, focusing on small size classes <7.5cm

Next Steps:

- Ongoing monthly data collection at each plot through August and into September 2023.
- Beginning mid-September, Frontera will compile all initial monitoring data from 2023.
- Will work with FPIInnovations to request their meteorological data
- Build a report of findings for 2023 and present to FWAC.

T. Schaufele left meeting at 4:45 PM.

Committee Comments:

- Very excited about this project and look forward to next presentation to FWAC with findings.
- Would be interested in incorporating soil moisture into data collection. Nick is still investigating this possibility, and will be following up with Committee member, R Millikin.
- Hopeful that this project is supported by RMOW long term for long term monitoring of effects of fuel thinning.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Brief discussions over concerns of rogue planting of Sequoia trees by Old Growth activists, including in BC Parks tenure, which is deemed illegal activity.

6. TERMINATION

Moved By R. Millikin

Seconded By A. De Jong

That the Forest Wildland Advisory Committee terminate the Regular Committee Meeting of Wednesday, June 14, 2023.

CARRIED

Chair, M. Tardif

Recording Secretary, O. Carroll