

Tenas Coal Project Terrestrial Sub-Working Group Meeting
Wednesday, July 10, 2019 from 1:15pm – 4pm (PST)
Nora Building, 2nd floor Caribou Room (3726 Alfred Avenue, Smithers) and
Teleconference (1-888-952-9304, 439795#)

Summary Meeting Notes

Participants

Federal Government

Stephen Sheehan, Environment and Climate
Change Canada (ECCC) - by phone
Kathryn Marshall, ECCC
Kim Dohms, Canadian Wildlife Services (CWS)
Jayme Brooks, CWS - by phone

Provincial Government

Terry Pratt, Environmental Assessment Office
(EAO)
Matt Rodgers, EAO - by phone
Anita Threlfall, EAO - by phone

Chris Schell, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural
Resource Operations and Rural Development
(FLNRORD)

Laura Grant, FLNRORD
Sean LeRoy, Ministry of Energy, Mines and
Petroleum Resources (EMPR) - by phone

Proponent and Consultants

Angela Waterman, Telkwa Coal Limited (TCL)
Frank Doyle - consultant
Irene Ronalds – Ardea Consulting
James Henderson - TCL
Kirsten Roberts - TCL
Cathy McKay – EDI Dynamics
Anne McLeod – EDI Dynamics
Katherine Gitzikoff - by phone

Meeting Objectives

- For TCL to provide an overview of their terrestrial baseline report, candidate terrestrial intermediary components (ICs) and valued components (VCs), and initial potential project effects on terrestrial ICs/VCs;
- For TCL and the working group (WG) to reach agreement on caribou study area boundaries for the environmental assessment (EA);
- For WG members to ask questions and raise issues and concerns regarding terrestrial resources to help inform their input on the EA review; and
- For the EAO to outline next steps in the EA processes with an opportunity for WG members to ask questions about process.

Welcome, Agenda Overview & Introductions

- The EAO opened the meeting by acknowledging being on the Gitdumden Clan territory of the Wet'suwet'en Nation.
- The agenda was reviewed and approved with the addition of federal and provincial jurisdictional roles and responsibilities following the lunch break. This was followed by round of introductions of Working Group members in the room and those calling in.

TCL overview of terrestrial baseline report

- TCL acknowledged their commitment to the Wet'suwet'en. TCL's next step with the Wet'suwet'en is to put together a project assessment agreement.
- Current proposed surface discharge outfall is into the Telkwa River with the Bulkley River being a remote second possible option.
- Acid rock drainage (ARD) would be contained by storing spoils under water in management ponds. Main management pond will be built in phases over the life of the mine. Southwest

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corner of mine is phase one. All water features flow to the north into the Telkwa River, which flows east into the Bulkley, then north out of the region.

- Project is currently a joint venture between Allegiance Coal (Australia) and ITOCHU (Japan). Currently owned 90% by Allegiance, with ITOCHU planning on owning more as the project progresses. ITOCHU will handle marketing to east Asia.
- A question was raised around the potential for the project to expand into deposits in the surrounding area.
 - TCL has coal licences around the Tenas Project, including Goathorn Project and Tenas North Project. At this time, Goathorn and Tenas North aren't on the table but if they are pursued, TCL would re-engage with the EAO and EMPR. TCL is looking at incremental expansion and before going to other deposits, could look at going deeper into the Tenas deposit, which has the simplest geology and best quality coal.
 - The EAO noted that any changes to the Certified Project Description or EA Certificate conditions, should an EA Certificate be issued for Tenas Coal, would require an amendment or a new EA.
- A brief discussion around the mine footprint followed, with TCL noting that the entire footprint, including the rail loadout, would be approximately 1,000 hectares. The mine pit itself would be approximately 700 hectares. Mining of the pit would allow for three undisturbed tree islands and progressive reclamation so at any given time the area of disturbance would be less than 1,000 hectares.

TCL overview of Terrain and Soils IC

- Bioterrain forms the basis of Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping. Areas assessed include rail loadout, coal haul route, drainage pipelines, and ditches.
- TCL explained the difference between bioterrain and terrain stability mapping:
 - Bioterrain mapping provides correlation of bioterrain and soil management units for vegetation, and surficial geology.
 - Terrain stability mapping focuses on land stability risks such as landslides. Terrain stability mapping was conducted on Goathorn Creek slopes.

TCL overview of Vegetation VC

- 49 vegetation samples analyzed for trace metals between 2017-2018 with further analysis of plants planned for 2019.
- Plant surveys of 2017-2018 revealed no rare species but several invasive species such as thistle species, St. John's Wort, Tansy ragwort, western goat's beard, Tatarian honeysuckle, among others.
- Vegetation Resource Inventory data points to possible project impacts on timber.

TCL overview of Wildlife VC

- Ecosystem data collected from 746 plots from 2017-2019 included bat roost, amphibian, and bird point counts.

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- Surveys of terrestrial invertebrates from 2017-2018 by way of various trapping methods revealed 67 species, including listed yellow banded and Western bumble bees, butterflies, beetles, and dragonflies.
- Amphibian survey conducted from late June to late July during 2017-2018 using eDNA analysis of the habitat water included western toad, coastal tailed frog, Columbia spotted frog, and long-toed salamander.
- Reptile surveys conducted in steep rocky areas, wetlands and meadows revealed western garter snakes within the project area.

TCL overview of Avian Species VC

- Avian surveys were conducted via 251-point counts for breeding birds during late June to early July in 2017 (107) and 2018 (144) revealed 63 species that included Olive-sided Flycatcher, a listed species.
- Four Automatic recording units (ARU) from 2017-2019 collected in mine pit and rail loadout areas found owls and nighthawks after sunset, and migratory birds during dawn hours.

Questions and discussion

- ECCC asked if TCL has contacted a provincial invertebrate expert regarding bumble bees and how the identification of bumble bees not from the region was handled. ECCC noted that an interaction assessment was missing for Western bumblebee.
 - TCL needs to confer with terrestrial team members not in attendance.
 - **NOTE:** Following the meeting, TCL's invertebrate expert reviewed the BC Conservation Data Centre and ECCC data for listed terrestrial invertebrates. Due to the difficulty in identifying the bumble bee specimens to sub-species, they were sent to independent entomologists, experts in bumble-bee identification, for review.
- The EAO asked about logging in the area.
 - TCL responded that a significant portion of scaled logging has been done.
- A discussion around the assessment of amphibian breeding and overwintering habitat followed.
 - TCL noted that they will be looking at the areas covered by the migration of amphibians in the assessment.
- ECCC asked about the habitat types that were looked at for nocturnal studies.
 - TCL responded that nocturnal studies were conducted for night hawks and owls and night hawks were observed in the farmland or gravel pit located outside of the project area. Cameras were set up in open areas for night hawks and more forested area with cavities for owls.
- ECCC asked about the habitat types for owls and how many point counts were done for owls.
 - TCL responded that owls were in the area adjacent to the lower suitability area of the landscape and that a total of two point-counts were done for owls.
- A discussion around bats followed with ECCC asking if risking habitat had been considered for bat hibernacula sites and maternity sites.

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- TCL is going to sites that may have habitats where bats are located such as trees with snags and cavities and rocky areas where there could be hibernacula sites.
- ECCC asked about wildlife cameras put out in the winter time.
 - TCL noted that they conducted snow tracking instead of using cameras in the winter months as a complimentary action to the camera data collected in the spring and summer.
- A brief discussion on historical and current data for caribou followed. TCL noted that they are looking at all the data available and have recently received provincial telemetry data. Some caribou in the area have collars but this dataset is not yet available.

15 minute break; meeting resumed at 2:45pm

- The EAO asked if what TCL has presented today differs from what was included in the January 2019 draft VC scoping document. Do any subcomponents differ from those in the draft VC scoping document submitted?
 - TCL noted that they've made a few changes to the January 2019 draft VC scoping document based on comments received, such as comments on owls.
- ECCC asked about baseline data collection for coastal tailed frog aquatic habitats.
 - TCL worked with their wildlife consultants to identify habitats. Work on Goathorn Creek has been done and work on Swift Park has not been done yet. There were no detections for tailed frog using the eDNA method.
- ECCC asked about baseline data collection for bird interactions.
 - TCL needs to confer with terrestrial team members not in attendance.
- A discussion around wildlife study areas followed.
 - The wildlife Local Study Area (LSA) includes a 250-meter buffer around infrastructure and either side of the proposed coal haul road and the wildlife Regional Study Area (RSA) includes a 5km buffer around infrastructure and either side of proposed coal haul road.
- The EAO asked when a draft of the Terrestrial baseline report will be available.
 - TCL responded that their consultants are currently working on it. Delivery of Terrestrial baseline report TBA.

EAO update on next steps in the EA process

- The EAO issued a s.11 order on June 25, 2019.
- In January 2019, TCL submitted the draft VC scoping document. The EAO is collecting comments from agencies on the VC scoping document and working with TCL to address these comments. The next 3 weeks will focus on one on one meetings with key agencies and TCL to resolve comments.

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- The EA will have a public comment period (PCP) on the draft Application Information Requirements (AIR) document, which will be informed by the VC document. TCL anticipates preparing the AIR in the fall. A 30-day PCP will be held on the draft AIR.
- TCL's Application for an EA Certificate could be ready in spring of 2020.

FLNRORD update on the caribou recovery program and the Telkwa caribou herd

- A caribou recovery program was started two years ago in response to Federal pressure on the province. The Section 11 Agreement applies to Southern Mountain caribou. The Telkwa herd is part of the Southern Mountain Caribou's Northern group.
- Herd planning for 51 herds is underway. The Telkwa herd has a specific plan with engagement from the public. The herd planning process will inform next steps.
- Telkwa herd numbers have increased from 13 to 25 after habitat management was established in 2015. Six caribou calves out of the total 25 caribou in the herd have been collared. Priority restoration areas will be established over the next month or two.
- The caribou recovery program has identified four priority herds from the Omenica and Skeena Regions initiated for the Southern Mountain Caribou. The Telkwa herd is not one of these four priority herds.

Meeting ended at 3:50 pm