

Tenas Project – Working Group Meeting (Virtual)

Wednesday, May 27, 2020 from 1:00-3:30pm

Meeting Summary Notes FINAL

Meeting Participants

Provincial Government

Heather Noble, Environmental Assessment
Office (EAO)

Terry Pratt (EAO)

Matt Rodgers (EAO)

Jillian Zavediuk (EAO)

Teresa Morris, Energy, Mines and Petroleum
Resources (EMPR)

Morgan Dyas (EMPR)

Nikki Dodd (EMPR)

Adrienne Turcotte (EMPR)

Tara Cadeau (EMPR)

Liz Freyman (ENV)

Lorna Green (ENV)

Trina Orchard (ENV)

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

Heidi Schindler (FLNRORD)

Cheryl Mackenzie (FLNRORD)

John Stevenson, Agriculture (AGRI)

Office of the Wet'suwet'en (OW)

Mike Ridsdale

Northern Health

Paula Tait

Village of Telkwa

Debbie Joujan

Councillor Leroy Dekens

Town of Smithers

Gladys Atrill

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN)

Jason Llewellyn

Federal Government

Kathryn Marshall, Environment and Climate
Change Canada (ECCC)

Rachel Canham (ECCC)

Proponent and Consultants

Angela Waterman, Telkwa Coal Limited (TCL)

Megan MacCallum, TCL

Kirsten Roberts, TCL

Dan Farmer, TCL

Trevor Welton, Hemmera

Mark Milner, Hemmera

Cathy MacKay, EDI

Anna Sundby, ERM

Leslie Shelley, ERM

Meeting Objectives

1. For Tenas Project working group members to ask specific questions about and to discuss the May 4, 2020 draft Application Information Requirements (dAIR); and,
2. For working group members to discuss moose mortality and rail with TCL.

Welcome/territorial acknowledgment, agenda overview, introductions

- The EAO welcomed everyone, provided a territorial acknowledgment and led the round of introductions of meeting participants and provided overview of the agenda.
- OW welcomed the group and stated that the proposed mine site is on CasYex House territory of Gitumden Clan and the proposed rail loop is on Kwen Bea Yex House territory of Laksilyu Clan. OW noted that they provide regular project updates to Houses.

1. TCL Presentation: Environmental VCs/ICs Discussion

- **Terrestrial Resources ICs/VCs**
 - **Terrain and Soils**
 - **Vegetation**
 - **Wildlife**
- TCL started by providing an acknowledgment of the project being on Wet'suwet'en Territory.
- TCL asked if anyone wanted to review the mine plan again from the presentation that was given to the WG on May 6, no response to review the mine plan was received from the WG.
- TCL moved on and provided a brief summary from the presentation they provided to the WG on May 6, 2020 for the VCs/ICs for Terrain and Soils, Vegetation, Wildlife and Avian.
- TCL noted that the Wildlife subcomponent will consider moose, specifically moose mortality.
- TCL received no questions from the WG on the Terrestrial Resources.

2. TCL Presentation Moose Mortality and Rail Discussion

- TCL provided a specific presentation on the moose subcomponent, which is under the Wildlife VC.
- The baseline report for the Moose subcomponent is not yet complete. Existing information summary will include data related to population. Baseline work for the project focused on habitat suitability mapping and includes data from winter track survey, amphibian and reptile surveys and wildlife cameras.
- TCL will include an interaction table and any potential effects that are: alteration or loss of habitat and change in mortality, which includes direct and indirect mortality and for moose is primarily influenced by potential for collision with rail and vehicles.
- Potential effects that are not fully mitigated are carried forward as residual effects, which are assessed for significance and are carried forward to the cumulative effect assessment.
- TCL summarized the approach on habitat modelling for moose. TCL needs information on rail traffic for data, have looked at existing data. Look at published data and regional data. Existing data on population includes aerial surveys completed by FLNRORD, with the last completed in 2018, and, prior to that, in 2012. TCL asked if OW has moose data that they could share, such as sustenance harvest level, which would help contribute on background data for the baseline information. OW responded that they would look into information to share.
- OW noted that most moose are expected to be seen around lakes and rivers and that they are aware of another survey that was completed as an index count (not a stratified random block (SRB) type as the 2012 and 2018 surveys were and is the standard method). This aerial moose survey was done in the winter along the Telkwa River. These data might add to population level estimates.
- OW discussed how the provincial hunting allocation does not use current information from OW because FLNRORD is using old information that pre-dated current OW wildlife management strategies. The Province spoke with OW in 1999-2000 when cows and calves could be hunted, skewing the current study numbers for bull cow composition as the numbers given to the Province included the hunting of cows (female moose) and calves from 1999-2000, OW does not hunt cows or calves anymore, so the numbers need to be re-examined.
- FLNRORD brought up that now there is 3-day general open season for moose hunting and it is bull only, cannot hunt cows or calves. There are three 3-day limited entry hunt (LEH) sessions for bull harvest done by lottery system every year. Only those hunters who have drawn tag are able to hunt moose.
- There has been a decline in the Bulkley Valley, in 2018, 24 bulls for 100 cows, have been reducing harvesting on bulls.

- FLNRORD noted the provincial objective of 30 bulls for 100 cows and that for most populations, this ratio declined between the 2012 and 2018 estimates. Guide outfitters are experiencing reduced quotas. Calves are most susceptible to environmental conditions (e.g. harsh winters), which means the cow to calf ratio is more variable from year to year.
- TCL asked OW where they can find this data for them to use.
 - OW will look into finding study for TCL. TCL will look at archives from previous owner for additional information. OW mentioned a McElhanney report from 2018 that has some useful information but is very short.
- FLNRORD noted that the CN Year 10 report that was released in 2018, has some information in it as well that would be useful to TCL.
- FLNRORD noted to TCL that caribou matrix habitat was missing from the wildlife maps in the dAIR.
 - TCL acknowledged that it was oversight that it was not included and would add it in.
- TCL talked about the Indicators for moose that would measure potential effects: habitat and mortality.
- TCL noted, the number of trains is more relevant than number of cars.

For moose mortality, vehicle and train collisions are the prime factors, can use calculations to show an example of how use the metric for analysis. Used data on collision rate from Ontario and showed an example applying the data to traffic in the Tenas project RSA. There will also be collision rate from ICBC to use for vehicles.
- FLNRORD estimated quantification on moose, group does annual moose mortality flights, has been going on since 2007 and can contribute data set done in Telkwa sub-division.
- TCL commented they understand there is exclusion fencing.
 - FLNRORD WG started in 2007 based on moose mortality in 2006 due to large snowfall in that year. There was 4.6 miles of fencing put up a few years ago, which has reduced mortality along the rail line. As more traffic on railbeds, CN is replacing with newer bridges and they cannot set up fencing. Work has been done in Banff National Park where Teflon sheeting has been trialed to stop sheep crossing railway. Hoofed animals do not want to step on it because it is slippery.
- OW noted that the cold weather is harder for moose and they're more likely to head into areas easier to walk on. 2006/2007 was a particularly harsh winter and 169 moose were killed. The crust on snow digs into moose legs and they move to road and rail ways. Moose are in decline, with a 13% reduction in population between 2012 and 2018 and a 38% reduction from 2004 to 2018. Need to get moose population levels back to where it's good for the Wet'suwet'en and the general public.
- OW listed a number of times there have been recent derailments in the area and in OW territory and would like the province to get CN to the table to have a broader discussion.
 - EAO noted OW's concerns and would look into this and how to address going forward.
- FLNRORD noted that the Telkwa caribou herd has increased from 13 to 32 animals, but the population is still deemed to be at imminent risk of extirpation, and recovery efforts are ongoing. Monitoring of the Telkwa caribou has demonstrated that mortality due to wolves is currently not a significant cause of mortality. High populations of moose will elevate wolf populations, which is a key driver of population decline for many caribou herds. Given the lack of evidence that wolves are currently impacting Telkwa caribou, control of wolf or moose populations is not being considered at this time.
- OW noted there is a wildlife habitat area for caribou right now with limited access not open for industrial development such as logging.

- FLNRORD noted that the province is looking at all potential impacts to caribou, which includes the motorized vehicle closure and the Wildlife Habitat Area.
- OW want to have CN table for broader traffic area to have a good discussion and also bring in the Village of Telkwa.

3. Aquatic & Atmospheric ICs/VCs

- **Groundwater**
- **Surface Water**
- **Aquatic Resources**
- **Fish and Fish Habitat**
- **Atmospheric**
- TCL asked the WG if they have any questions on the aquatic and atmospheric. In the coming weeks, TCL will be willing to have sub WG meeting if necessary and there have been sub WG meetings on Aquatic in the past for the Tenas EA.
- OW brought up a 1997 baseline sampling Dave Bustard work in the area and asked if environmental DNA sampling has been done. Environmental DNA sampling is a good indicator for life in the streams.
 - TCL is aware of Dave Bustard's work in the area. Benthic invertebrate studies have been done, but not sure if Cabin or BIDI was used. ERM gathered all of data and can get back to OW and the WG on the type of data that was collected and how it was collected.
- TCL went through an overview of the Aquatic Resources IC, RSA looking at ground water limits instead, currently looking at making a small change. Larger RSA is important for input for fish. Will be able to look at site specific mitigation eventually, key for fish is understanding footprint for different life stages, and appropriate offset measures.
- OW thought that it would be good to have the Northern Habitat Solutions come and give a presentation to the WG. Under the BC Environmental Stewardship initiative (ESI) there was a presentation given on peak flow sensitivity which provides a clear picture of sensitivity and vulnerability of watersheds.

WG broke for 10 minutes, restarted at 2:45pm.

- TCL provide an overview of the Atmospheric VC from the presentation that was given on May 6, 2020.
- ENV asked if coal storage at the rail load out will be included in the modelling for air quality.
 - TCL said yes, they will be in the air quality, and will be included as source.

4. Economic, Social, Heritage and Health VCs/ICs Discussion

- **Economic ICs/VCs**
 - **Labour Market**
 - **Economic Development**
- **Social ICs/VCs**
 - **Demographic**
 - **Visual Quality**
 - **Infrastructure and Services**
 - **Land and Resource Use Community Well-Being**
- **Heritage Resources VC**
- **Human Health VC**

- TCL provided an overview from the May 6, 2020, presentation that was given to the WG on the Economic, Social, Heritage and Health VCs/ICs Discussion.
 - TCL discussed the visual quality, OW had brought up a viewpoint. TCL noted that OW had previously brought up a cabin viewpoint to be added. TCL has included this.
- For the Heritage VC, the RSA is done by house group boundaries with input from OW. Archaeology work is done to a full extent and is ongoing with data analysis. Cultural Use Study is near complete but due to Covid-19 it has been postponed.
- No questions from the WG on the VCs and ICs were received.

5. Closing and next steps

- The EAO reminded the WG that comments on the dAIR are due by June 15, 2020 and can be found on the EAO SharePoint. If anyone is having issues accessing SharePoint please inform the EAO Tenas team.
- RDBN asked if they could submit after that date due to their approval processes.
 - EAO acknowledged that this isn't an issue.
 - TCL also mentioned that they can be emailed any time regarding any questions on the dAIR and the project.
- The EAO also let the WG know that there will be two virtual public open houses on the dAIR on June 17 and June 23, 2020. Information will be found on the EAO website.

Meeting ended at 3:30pm