

2019 Sustainable Forest Management Newsletter

Sustainable Forest Management Committee – Year in Review

In 2019, the public advisory committee met four (4) times, with an additional day in September. The first quarter meeting was held in February. The SFM Committee met to discuss general business, community reporting, public and Indigenous concerns, committee ground rules and any other new business. Other topics of discussion were the activity and continued interest on FireSmart and NFMC having some discussions with other groups about participating if they desire. FireSmart is a Wildfire Protection project that will use a combination of on the ground field data collection and Geographic Information System (GIS) tools to identify areas of exposure to risk, the likelihood of occurrence and a plan for the elimination of minimizing of the hazard. This project will be used for education and training related to the use of GIS and the collection of field data (forestry and municipal). The project will start with an education and training component related to understanding contributing factors to wildfires that negatively impact a community (learning what it means to be “FireSmart” in your community).

The second quarter meeting was held in May and had two (2) guest speakers and a representative of the Manitoba Metis Federation. The topics of discussion were of the same format as the first quarter meeting. A request was put forward to invite a member of the Manitoba Metis Federation for a future meeting to discuss Metis culture and distinctive values. The committee’s general business gave updates on the mill and harvesting operations as well as NFMC’s involvement of the Envirothon. Another topic discussed was the Outland Youth Employment Program (OYEP); this would be a great opportunity and beneficial to Indigenous Youth throughout Manitoba. The two (2) guest speakers were from the FireSmart Program, sharing information of good reviews of the Thompson FireSmart strategic plan and development and expressing interest in having NFMC provide some assistance.

In September, the Committee held a two (2) day session. The committee went on a Field Tour of the Interlake to observe on harvesting operations. This helped the committee comprehend the effects, cause and results of the Jack Pine Budworm issue. The Harvesting Superintendent of CKP and a contractor conducted the tour with the committee and provided reassurance that CKP and NFMC are working on the best possible solution. A report on the success of the Outland Youth Employment Program that ran for eight (8) weeks at Egg Lake; CKP, NFMC and Outland hope to carry on with the program next summer. A discussion of concern with regards to reaching out to the Nekoté communities, presenting the NFMC objectives, while reassuring the respect of their traditional lands and beliefs. The Nekoté Liaison and NFMC continue to brainstorm ideas and the best possible way to reach out to the correct groups of the Nekoté communities.

The final meeting for 2019, the SFM Committee participated in Indigenous Awareness Training presented by NFMC’s General Manager. The training consisted of a video of a panel for discussion, the intent of Treaties and the Treaty relationship. Later, all SFMC members shared thoughts and discussed what stood out most from the video. The committee continued with all regular agenda items and concluded the meeting by nominating and re-electing Ron Black as Chair for the SFM Committee. This will be Ron’s 10th year serving as the Chair for the SFM Committee. Congratulations Ron, we look forward to your continued support in 2020.

A year with Nisokapawino Forestry Management Corporation



This year NFMFC has added two (2) new employees; an Administrator and a Forest Technician. Currently, NFMFC consists of seven (7) employees.

The NFMFC team have been hard at work in fulfilling obligations and completing tasks as outlined in the partnership agreements, as well as contract work. Whether these tasks are completed or on-going, either way, the team continues to ensure the success of NFMFC.

Recently, the Administrator reported in writing to the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, with the information being provided by the NFMFC team as a whole.

As NFMFC progresses through the new processes for discussion of forest use, particularly the discussion around the Bignell development and the other blocks such as HY-1; NFMFC can offer these examples of instances where the Opaskwayak Cree Nation (and other Nekoṭé) members are benefitting directly from the existence of a forest industry.

At present, Moose Lake Loggers, a Nekoṭé contractor, is harvesting timber in Mosakahiken Cree Nation traditional territory. That timber is being hauled to the mill by Bob's Hauling, a second Nekoṭé contractor. Each of those contractors have Opaskwayak Cree Nation members working in their operations. The owner of Bob's Hauling indicates all the drivers are members of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Moose Lake Logging (Ehman Ventures) indicates all Nekoṭé employees, that consist of OCN and MCN members.

Spruce Products Limited, a chipping contractor, working in the Interlake area, indicates there are Opaskwayak Cree Nation members working for one of their hauling subcontractors (Under Pressure Mechanical) and that SPL is working with another OCN member to see them run their own truck on the haul, as opposed to just driving.

On a more seasonal basis, we saw an initiative this summer to employ Nekoṭé members (OCN had several hires) on the tree-plant operation, the renewal survey operation and more recently, a Nekoṭé contractor with OCN members working at a cone picking project in the prospector black spruce cone orchard.

The Outland Youth Employment Program (a program that is only for Indigenous Youth) had 5 out of 24 youth participants that were OCN members. Nekoṭé youth represented 10 of the 24. The remaining 14 were Indigenous Youth throughout Manitoba. This program was supported financially and with kind support by CKP and NFMFC. It was also supported by Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Arctic Gateway and others.

While CKP doesn't explicitly track statistics regarding Nekoṭé member presence in its workforce, it is estimated that among CKP and NFMFC directly employed people, at least 10% or 40 people could be confirmed as OCN members. NFMFC is working on developing an appropriate self-declaration form to better capture and understand the representation in our workforces.

Additionally, NFMFC offered \$500.00 scholarships to the seven (7) Nekoṭé First Nations, contributed to the Northern Manitoba Trappers Festival Youth Board and hosted a National Forest Week activity for Grade 4 classes in The Pas and OCN.

More recently, NFMFC assisted OCN and CCN in the development of FireSmart funding applications. NFMFC employees worked with OCN staff and helped scope and organize a potential project and we were able to introduce opportunities for Employment and Training that take advantage of NFMFC and CKP's expertise in GIS and forestry field work. If the funding is successful and OCN and CCN decide to engage NFMFC in the project, there will be tangible long-term skillsets developed and maintained that can benefit OCN in many areas outside of FireSmart, such as applying the use of GIS and digital data management to public infrastructure.



Finally, NFMC and CKP have been working with the Northern Manitoba Sector Council to create a training program that will target 12 OCN members to undertake training to be fully prepared to come to work for CKP at the mill as vacancies become available. We have been in discussion with OCN Employment and Training and anticipate the launch of information sessions for OCN members in April 2020.

NFMC thanks OCN for their continued support, while NFMC works to travel a new path of relationship and continues to strive in bringing business and employment opportunities within OCN and other Nekoté communities. Our planning staff and the Nekoté Liaison enjoy the consistent working relationship with the OCN Natural Resource Council to supply any and all information that we can deliver, with a goal of providing the value expected for the use of the natural resource.

Certification

CKP and NFMC underwent their first joint audits this past June. SAI Global was onsite for 5 days to accomplish the necessary activities to re-certify us to the PEFC Chain of Custody, the CSA Z809 Sustainable Forest Management, and ISO 14001 Environmental Management System standards. The audits were conducted in office and in the field. Auditors attended the harvesting operations in the Interlake at the Jackpine Budworm Salvage, and renewal operations and cutblocks in the Root Lake and Namew areas. The results were quite good, with only one Minor Non-Conformance being recorded. We conducted the appropriate Corrective Action Plans for the non-conformance and were issued our certificates. Recognition to the NFMC and CKP staff that worked hard prior to the audit to ensure that this new structure of forest management service delivery would meet the requirements of the standards. Great job!



Left: An auditor from SAI Global conducting audit field work



Right: The review of findings at the end of the audit

20 Year Forest Management Plan

NFMC has been working with Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development (Forestry Branch) and Manitoba Environmental Approvals Branch to develop the Terms of Reference for the new 20 Year Forest Management Plan. This will be a major project to undertake requiring significant effort of staff and engagement of external expertise over a period of 5 years. That sounds like a long time, however, the magnitude of this project requires that much time to conduct the data analysis related to all of the aspects of a Forest Management Plan and turn that into a long term plan that appropriately identifies and reflects all of the values and uses of the forest in a way that also sees continued fibre use. A major component of the Terms of Reference is the Communications Plan, and we are confident with the establishment of the NFMC processes, we will be able to build a plan with Communities, as opposed to building a plan on our own and presenting it to Communities.

Professional Development

Tansi! Many of the staff at NFMC and CKP participated in a Beginner Cree class offered by UCN in the evenings and on a Saturday. It was great to have so much participation and we hope to continue with the development of this skill as time passes and training is available! Staff also participated in a training session about residential schools, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission work, and the Calls to Action that resulted. Truly a learning experience for all, and one that we will continue to build on as we move forward in our professional development. Ekosi.

Field Season

This year we planted nearly 1.2 million black spruce and white spruce seedlings renewing over 800 hectares of harvested area. The majority of the 2019 tree plant occurred north of The Pas and Wanless area. Our scarification program took place primarily in the Interlake area, north of Devils Lake and covered over 1100 hectares. Scarification targets the renewal of jack pine forests by preparing a suitable microsite for jack pine seeds to successfully grow in. Our vegetation management program executed the treatment of 2400 hectares of plantations with glyphosate. This program's objective is to release conifer seedlings from competition. Lastly, 13,000 hectares of our plantations were successfully surveyed with a Forest Renewal Assessment to achieve renewal certification from the Government of Manitoba. Once a plantation reaches the age of ten, it receives a Forest Renewal Assessment to determine whether or not it has been successfully renewed to government standards.

Forest Management Operating Plan

Throughout the months of January and February NFMC staff held community information sessions in 14 communities in conjunction with the development of the Forest Management Operating Plan (FMOP). Meetings were held in Flin Flon, Cranberry Portage, Wanless, Opaskwayak Cree Nation – The Pas, Wabowden, Thompson, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, Snow Lake, Cormorant, Sherridon, Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation, Chemawawin Cree Nation, Misipawistik Cree Nation and Mosakahiken Cree Nation. The FMOP outlined the proposed forestry operations that may take place between June 1, 2019 and May 31, 2021. Lots of useful information was exchanged, questions were answered and discussions took place. The Nekoté Community Liaison was present at most of the meetings in Nekoté Partnership communities. We were not able to line up dates that worked in a few communities; but hope to be able to get to these this winter. The FMOP was submitted to Manitoba for review on February 27th, 2019 and was approved on May 27th, 2019.

Land Resource Management (LRM)

As many are aware, we have recently signed a contract with Trimble Forestry to replace our aging Cengea Planner software with Trimble's new Forestry Inventory Management System called Land Resource Manager (LRM). Mike Paddock is heading up our Project Team working closely with Andrew Forward, Jeanne Besaw, Geoff Wright, Shane Steele, Martina Tekelova and Ame Wunderle. It's great to see how much functionality we will be gaining once the system is operational (target is September 2020). Currently, we are in the database design phase, setting up how we wish the system to look and house our data. This step is set to be completed in February 2020. Next steps will include extending functionality that will help to improve overall workflow and reduce time needed to complete them.

The screenshot displays the Land Resource Manager (LRM) software interface. The window title is "Land Resource Manager - Example Company". The interface includes a menu bar (File, Home, Version, Tools, Data), a ribbon with various tool icons, a tree view on the left showing a hierarchy of stands and cruises, a header panel with a breadcrumb trail, a data view table for "Stand" with columns like Stand Objectid, Stand Number, Established Date, Stand Class, Strata Label, Cover Type, GIS Acres, Best Land Use, % Productive, Predominant Species, and Stand Origin. Below this is another table for "Stand Volume Species Product" with columns for Volume Type, Species, Product, BA, TPA, Tons Per Acre, Volume, Volume UOM, Comments, Documents, and First Created. The status bar at the bottom shows "Ready", "User:ATL_ADMIN.DEFAULT", "No edits", and "12/18/2019".

A sample of the User Interface the LRM login screen

