

March 10, 2014 Protected Areas Design Workshop-Results

On March 10, 2014 Spray Lake Sawmills held a Protected Areas Design Workshop. Four participants were present including a representative from Sundre Forest Products, Nature Alberta, The Ghost Watershed Alliance and a FMA neighboring landowner.

SLS provided an overview of the process identified in the July 2013 Protected Areas Gap Analysis Report. A workshop plan was shared, which suggested subcommittees, approaches to mapping potential candidates, the need to develop a protected area reserve criteria and an assessment approach.

Participants made the following suggestions:

- 1) SLS is to contact Mukwah Rafting to see if they have an interest and is awaiting a response.
- 2) Have the AESRD known pure West Slope Cut Throat Trout and Bull Trout stream reaches been verified since the great flood of 2013?
- 3) Is SLS deferring harvest in the Red Deer River ESA?
- 4) SLS to ask FSC Canada if they have an established protected areas program approach.
- 5) Should Graduate students or researchers be involved with data collection?
- 6) Is the oil and gas development activity finished adjacent to the Red Deer River ESA and Burnt Timber Creek confluence?
- 7) What does the Draft SSRP suggest for additional protected areas for the Dormer Sheep PLUZ?

SLS's responses to stakeholder suggestions

- 1) SLS has contacted Mukwah Rafting Company to learn if they are interested in participating.
- 2) SLS has contacted the AESRD to learn of any new SARA fish studies including the potential effects to known habitat from the 2013 flood event. The AESRD stated: *We have no evidence to suggest anything different and intend to manage as per pre-flood conditions. It's much too early to say if there have been any significant changes in use of various habitats.*
- 3) SLS confirmed it is deferring harvest in the Red Deer River ESA.
- 4) SLS has contacted FSC Canada to learn of any formal protected area programs or approaches they may have used in the past. SLS to follow-up with stakeholders after hearing from FSC.
- 5) SLS has been in contact with some University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge stakeholders who have shown an interest in the process, including a U of C graduate student in the Environmental design program.
- 6) As the process develops SLS will be in contact and consultation with industrial stakeholders and disposition holders etc. that have an interest in the FMA.
- 7) The draft SSRP does recommend additional protected areas in the dormer Sheep PLUZ identified as the Don Getty Extension, primarily in the Montane Subregion.

Candidate Protected Area Reserves identified by stakeholders:

With the assistance of SLS's Geographic Information System and members of our Woodlands staff, stakeholders delineated the following, preliminary protected area reserve candidates within the Foothill Subregion found on the FMA.

Red Deer River & Burnt Timber Compartment:

A stakeholder representing Nature Alberta identified opportunities to link existing riparian buffers, known fish habitat areas, diverse wildlife areas, possible old growth forest, ESA's and the existing Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park.

The Ghost River Compartment:

A stakeholder representing the Ghost Watershed Alliance, identified opportunities along Johnson Creek, and joined wetland areas, considered connectivity to the Waiporou, known fish habitat, and connectivity with the Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park. Another area adjacent to Horse Lake was identified. This area was described as being a unique headwaters area, having mixed wood forest, and limited access to OHV's, and a good wildlife area with possibly some heavy grazing.

SLS Protected Areas Next Steps:

- 1) SLS is scheduling a makeup session for interested parties who couldn't attend the March 10, 2014.
- 2) The ecologist and operations team will carefully consider areas mapped from the workshops and follow-up with participants- workshop 3 (summer 2014).
- 3) Review proposed final PA polygons with committees and provide feedback to stakeholders; participants and SLS to develop PA criteria and field assessment inventory-workshop 3 (summer 2014).
- 4) The ecologist and operations team to review and carefully consider criteria and field assessment approach and share results (fall 2014).
- 5) The ecologist and operations team to design remaining passive land base, permanent reserves using participant based criteria and micro stand inventory to fill PA gaps (winter 2014/15).
- 6) Identify polygons meeting criteria and share the polygon information- workshop 4 (winter 2015).
- 7) Conduct field assessments for the polygons meeting criteria (summer 2015/16).
- 8) Identify and rank potential protected area reserve candidates based on field assessment criteria (fall 2016).
- 9) Share ranking reports with committees and obtain feedback- workshop 5 (winter 2016/17).
- 10) Carefully consider feedback, update reports and maps and begin public consultation with stakeholders, landowners, industry disposition holders, First Nations and the Alberta government (winter 2017).
- 11) Carefully consider public consultation feedback and integrate potential protected area reserves and designed passive land base into the 2018 Draft, Detailed Forest Management Planning process, share results with committees- workshop 6 (spring 2018).