

**Spray Lake Sawmills  
Public Advisory Committee  
SLS Boardroom  
April 21st, 2016**

**Present:** Ken Birkett, Erik Butters, Doug Collister, Daniel Grant, Scotty Many-Guns, Jacqueline Nelson, Denise Nickel, George Roman, Judy Stewart, Corey Stoneman, Gord Lehn, Matt Denney

**Guests:** Fred Breaker (Siksika), Marie-Pierre Rougeau (Fire Disturbance Expert)

**Absent:** Liz Breakey, Tim Giese, Patrick Brady, Mike Korman, Bette Beswick, Harvey Buckley

Meeting kicked off at 4:06

**Agenda item – Miscellaneous housekeeping items**

- Spray Lake Sawmills annual open house is coming up, it is Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at the Cochrane Ranchehouse, from 3-7 p.m. The C5 open house is in Blairmore the next day (May 5<sup>th</sup>)
- Passed out info on the collaborative planning session for the Jumping Pound Compartment (informant also available on SLS's Blog & facebook site)
- Passed out a new brochure on how SLS's operations protect water and air. Brochures will be released to the public soon

**Agenda item – Presentation on Traditional Knowledge from Siksika Nation**

- Presentation from Fred Breaker – Siksika name that translates to Holy Rider
- Fred described his clan's origin, was from the Vermilion area and how they followed the buffalo,
- Society was largely ceremonial
- Big Society was the Horn Society. Was also the warrior society's themselves (one was Crazy Dogs). The warrior societies were not active in recent times because most clans were at peace.
- Last war party was in 1883, which stole horses from south of here
- When the treaty was signed Chief Crowfoot, honored treaties and returned the horses
- Clans would winter in Banff and the High River area (called Spitzee).
- Traditionally there was three big bands for the Blackfoot and they would occasionally intermingling
- For Sundance ceremony all three bands came together

- Plants were a large part of society because of the diversity of uses; medicinal, substance, prayer
- Society was tied very close with animals
- Animals served as indicators for where to find plants as well as what to expect for the day or even the coming season
- Bad storms (called wolf cats) could be predicted by the actions of certain animals
- Thirteen moons in a year, six in summer, six in winter, and one in the middle
- Siksika still practices gathering for various uses:
  - Bearberry is mixed with tobacco to increase the flavor,
  - Sage was used as a cleansing,
  - Cedar was used for smudges,
  - Bear root – medicinal and ceremonial,
  - Wild turnips for substance in stews and also ceremonial,
  - Sweet grass in smudging,
  - Okra in ceremonies for paints,
  - Paint pots in Banff and other areas for colouring
- Fred currently collects raw stone, or Pipe Rocks, and makes smoking pipes out of them
- He has a secret way of coloring the pipes black
- Baculite fossils, which are called buffalo stones, were used to bring in the buffalo by praying with the rock, white ones are very rare
- Buffalo runners were also used
- Siksika's traditional territory is south of the North Saskatchewan river, along the mountains, extends south into Montana and out into eastern part of Saskatchewan
- Controlled a lot of the mountain passes
- Fred describes some of the society oral story
  - One about a mastodon, which was called a water bull
    - Two children were trying to escape a witch, came to a river and the water bull gave them a ride over the river on its back. Also gave a ride to the witch across the river but rolled halfway, killing the witch.
  - Storey about Blood Clot boy
    - Baby became a man after being touched to teepee poles in a teepee. He then protected members of the tribe who were being exploited. Blood Clot boy then left the tribe and marked medicine wheels across their territory to keep evil out.
- Fort Calgary – Napia – was where the first people were made
- First marriage was by Cayley, south of High River
- Ponoka was where the first Sundance woman came from

Marie-Pierre – How was traditional burning part of the culture?

Sikskia

- Burning was the power, creator would sometimes use lightning to rejuvenate areas

- Sometimes in the spring areas tribes would burn areas in preparation for growing tobacco
- Burning would warm the soils
- Would use snow as a fire break to keep the fire in an area
- Blackfoot name came from walking through a fire
  
- Animals (mostly buffalo) would sacrifice themselves for their being (Ee-Nee – for your benefit through sacrifice)
- Offering of tobacco is left out of respect
- Now Canadian law restricted taking certain animals, but 150 years ago there was not a shortage or any endangered species. Chemicals and air pollution are moving into the cycle of life. Water is very important. Society is geared to living off the land and paying respect for that.

SLS – What are some of the differences between Siksika and neighboring first nations?

Siksika

- Culture largely remains intact; a lot of the traditional ceremonies are still the same today
- Blood are fairly similar – still have a Horn Society.
- Stoney Nation is similar to Sioux and the Tsuu T'ina is similar to the Dene Tha Nation

SLS – how did the reserves affect the tribe?

Siksika

- Still have treaty right to crown land
- Currently providing consultation at sites in Saskatchewan
- Signed the treaty in 1877, which created a lot of problems for the Nation
- Permit system and the Indian agents would have to sanction everything and was often corrupt, and is a big reason the Nation is struggling today
- This ended in 1960s
- Indian act - went as far as preventing members from getting a lawyer or opening a bank account

PAC member – how does the tribe accommodate growing population?

Siksika – are actively buying more land

PAC member – how should we consult, what conversations should we have?

Siksika – focus on crown land, assess what will be impacted, be it sacred areas or plants

### **Agenda item – Presentation on Fire Regimes in Southern Alberta**

- Started off the presentation describing what a fire regime is
  - Cause, frequency and mean fire return interval (FRI), fire severity and type, season are all metrics used to describe what a fire regime is for an area
  
- Why learn about fire regimes?

- Has applications in protected areas, logging (requirement of FSC and current planning standards), for fire smarting a community, and public education – with knowledge comes understanding and acceptance
- Marie-Pierre’s research focused on two questions: Are fire return intervals (FRI) significantly different between Natural Sub-regions and by how much has current fire exclusion practices affected fire regime conditions in comparison to the pre-industrial era
- Study area focused on the FMA which is in mostly montane, upper foothills, and sub alpine
- Describe sampling techniques, including finding fire scarred trees and taking cross sections to find fire evidence in tree rings
- Described fire activity on the landscape in the pre-industrial era and how it created complex stands with fire refugia generally being in a lightning shadow or an area that has a natural rock barrier
- Describes results about Fire Return interval – showed significant differences between natural sub regions
- As low as 26 years in the Highwood area and as high as 85 years in the sub alpine area of the Elbow
- Talked about lightning strike shadows and how some of the Fire Return Interval can be explained with traditional burning.
- Shows departure of Fire Return Interval, except in the Elbow sub-alpine where the return interval was very high naturally.

PAC – How does this relate to Edward Johnston research?

MP - He focused on the Kananaskis Valley, which is somewhat of a different area so the data is not to similar

PAC - How do you reduce the risk to communities?

MP - Reducing hazard. Will not eliminate fires but will reduce the fuel loading which reduces the magnitude of a fire and allows firefighting action

- Education was highlighted as a tool for the social acceptance of what is considered natural

PAC –One of their biggest risks to City of Calgary’s water supply and treatment plant is wildfire. Current water treatment plant cannot handle hydrophobic chemicals that are generated in the soil from a fire.

SLS – Will try and schedule next meeting before summer break starts

SLS – Reforestation, certification and management plan presentation were moved to the agenda for next meeting

## **Adjourn**

- 6:50 p.m.