

Nipissing Forest Local Citizens Committee Meeting
Location: MNR District Office Boardroom-Trout Lake Road
Date: Tuesday April 19, 2011

INTEREST	Primary Member	P/A	Alternate Member	P/A	Others Present
Access groups, Anglers/Hunters	Lloyd Anderson	P	Peter Foy	A	<p>MNR Staff: Phil Hall Randy McLaren Guylaine Thauvette</p> <p>SFL: Support Resources Ric Hansel – support resources NFRM</p> <p>Guests: Tom MacLean - NFRM</p> <p>Observer:</p> <p>Recorder: Gerry Van Leeuwen</p> <p>c.c. Peter Street, NFRM Inc. Dave Payne, MNR</p>
Cottagers	Dave Minden	P	Derek Stewart	P	
District Aboriginal Working Group	Dave Joannis	A	Clayton Dokis	A	
Education	VACANT	N/A	VACANT	N/A	
Environmental Groups	VACANT	N/A	Brennain Lloyd	P	
Independent Loggers	Elwyn Behnke	P	Blayne Behnke	A	
Local Cultural Heritage Groups	Roy Summers	P	J. Fred McNutt	A	
Municipalities, Chmbrs of Comm, Econ. Development	Chris Mayne	A	Sarah Campbell	A	
Naturalists	Lorie Reed	P	Roy Summers	P	
Prospectors, Mining/Aggregates	Frank Tagliamonte	P	Mike Roxborough	A	
Public at Large	Tracey Cain	P	Tim Toepfner	A	
Silvicultural Contractors	Andy Straughan	A	Rod Hanselman	A	
Sustainable Forest Licensee – Nipissing Forest R. Mgmt. Inc.	John McNutt	P	Peter Street	A	
Tourist Industry	Johnny Matthews	P	VACANT	N/A	
Trails	Jennifer McCourt	P	Tracey Cain	P	
Trappers & Baitfish	Heinz Erb	P	Johnny Matthews	P	
Wood Workers/Trade Unions	VACANT	N/A	VACANT	N/A	

AGENDA

1. 5:30 P.M. Call to order.
2. Approval of the agenda.
3. Review and approval of the minutes of February 15, 2011.
4. Water Level Management by Phil Hall of the MNR (30 min)
5. Measuring and Monitoring of Regeneration by Tom MacLean of NFRM (30 min)
6. Independent Forest Audit – Mark Lockhart and Guylaine Thauvette (20 min)
7. Review of LCC Purpose, Role, Responsibilities by Guylaine Thauvette (20 min)
8. Coxey's Road Bridge (5 min)
9. EBR – Brennain Lloyd (10 min)
10. LCC Forum – Timmins Sept 9, 10, 11. (5 min)
11. Correspondence (5 min)
12. May Field Trip - Where and When (5 min)
13. LCC Members – open discussion (10 min)
14. Next meeting date: Chair Chris Mayne
15. ADJOURNMENT

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Lorie Reed called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as distributed with no add on items requested from the floor.

3. **Review and approval of the minutes of February 15, 2011**

Dave Minden pointed out that the highway reference on page 7, paragraph 2 of the Minutes should have read Highway 533 and not Highway 544 as indicated. The minutes were then approved as amended.

4. **Education - Water Level Management – Phil Hall (MNR)**

(See attachments 1 and 2 – Sturgeon-Nipissing-French Water Management)

Phil presented a slide presentation on water management conducted within the Sturgeon River, Lake Nipissing and French River watershed, a 19,100 sq. kilometer area regulated by many dams. A posted map displayed the direction of water flow throughout this watershed and the dams used to control the flow rates within the area. Dams are owned and managed by five different agencies within this watershed namely Public Works Canada, Ontario Power Generation, the Municipality of West Nipissing the local Conservation Authority and the Min. of Natural Resources.

Lake Nipissing itself drains a watershed of 12,300 square kilometers. Of note is that 60% of the water reaching Lake Nipissing flows into it from the Sturgeon River. Several other rivers also flow into the lake including the South River, which has seven hydro producing facilities along its length. All the water in Lake Nipissing discharges into the

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French River, a river controlled by three dams operated by Public Works Canada of the federal government. (Big Chaudiere, Little Chaudiere and the Portage Dams). There are also two natural free flow channels near the Chaudiere dams.

In 1947, serious flooding of the lake prompted then mayor Jack Garland to have a natural outflow channel blasted and deepened to allow water to leave Lk. Nipissing more quickly in future, through the newly constructed Portage Dam. The following year, property owners on the French River below the blasted channel, suffered major property damage due to flooding, resulting in a massive lawsuit in 1951. After the Portage Dam event, Public Works Canada realized it could not just simply open dams wide to drain Lk. Nipissing without concern for residents in the water discharge area. (French River).

Lake Nipissing has always been prone to periodic flooding events...and dry events... both before and after dams were built on the system.

The serious flooding of Field in 1979 resulted in MNR and Environment Canada completing a flood reduction study for the area and in 1982 a Sturgeon-Nipissing-French (SNF) Advisory **Board** was created. Using the flood reduction study information, the board completed the SNF Water Management Plan in 1992 and was disbanded. That plan made numerous recommendations, most having been impractical to implement. Some of the better recommendations resulted in creation of the Lake Nipissing-French River operating guidelines in 1995 and a SNF Citizens Advisory **Group** was formed. The group is comprised of representatives from local municipalities, First Nations, dam operators, the Conservation Authority and tourist and lake associations.

The SNF Water Management Objective is;

"To achieve a balance of water level requirements to prevent flooding, benefit fisheries, navigation, recreation and hydro-electric power generation." The group follows a philosophy of fairly sharing the available water under both desirable and undesirable conditions.

Phil then went on to show our group how Lake Nipissing water levels are managed within a desired upper and lower lake level, which varies between seasons to meet the shared needs listed previously. Starting after Thanksgiving day in October, the lake is slowly drawn down to its lowest level by mid March of each year in anticipation of managing melt water inflow and spring rains. Some of this water will be retained to bring the lake up to normal summer levels by mid April, facilitating walleye spawning and summer navigation needs. The management group attempts to keep the lake at the spring-summer level until fall draw down begins again in October. Snow depth is monitored by MNR at 14 stations to help predict how much run off there may be. MNR also monitors 9 water gauges to help forecast flow rates. While such tools are helpful, nothing can accurately predict weather events throughout the watershed. Coupled with the knowledge that a dam can't just lower a lake's level by opening it up... one can see that there are times that runoff will exceed the ability to control flows. This is akin to pulling the drain plug in a bathtub while the taps are still running...it all takes time. While 25% of the water inflow is anticipated from snowmelt run off, the remainder of water needed must come from March rainfall each spring. In 2010 no March rainfall occurred within the entire region...leaving most lakes below normal levels... regulated lakes and unregulated lakes alike. Phil received lots of complaints over low waters on

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Lake Nipissing in 2010 but again; it was weather and not dam management that caused it. Despite the lack of spring rains in 2010, minimum water flows had to be allowed to leave Lk. Nipissing into the French River to facilitate walleye spawning and hatching of eggs in the river during a three week period. (fairly sharing in good times and bad). To co-ordinate the management of dams in the watershed, weekly conference calls take place between the dam regulators to ensure everyone is on the same page. Phil mentioned that dams cannot entirely eliminate all chance of flooding but are useful in helping to regulate the peaks and valleys of water flow.

The SNF Advisory Group has decided to regulate Lk. Nipissing at the desired upper range of its capacity in 2011 in an attempt to avoid a second summer of low lake levels. Phil stated that the lake level was still rising at present and that we were currently on track.

Member Derek Stewart commented that the presentation shed a new light on the difficulty of managing water on such a broad scale and thanked Phil for the clarification given today.

5. Measuring and Monitoring of Regeneration - Tom MacLean - NFRM

(See attachment 3 – Regeneration Management and Tracking)

Tom described the methods now in use to monitor the various forest regeneration techniques used in the Nipissing forest. Separate techniques are in use for planted areas (plantations) vs. natural regeneration areas and he described the differences for each.

Planted areas - In planted areas, 10 metre by 10 metre square survey plots are laid out. (Min. 1 plot per 15,000-20,000 trees or when fewer trees have been planted, one plot per block). The blocks are laid out at the time of planting and planting techniques are recorded, each tree in the plot is pinned and numbered and plot boundaries are marked for follow up survey work. Plots are then revisited 1, 2 and 5 years after planting to help determine how various planted stock is performing, what tending may be necessary at various stages, the effects of herbicide use as well as inspecting buffer zones. The year five inspection helps determine if the new forest has successfully reached "Free to Grow" status where on going tending no longer necessary. The evaluation for free to grow status is done using the **SOI** (Site Occupancy Index Survey), which will be described a bit later in this presentation.

What we have learned to date:

In plantations surveyed, it was determined that root pruned red and white pine planting stock had poorer overall survival rates (white pine transplant shock) than stock not requiring root pruning. Non root pruned seedlings, which were boxed, and frozen showed higher survival rate and first season height growth than root pruned stock.

Natural Regeneration Areas – These sites receive a different survey approach as planting has not been done here and therefore this does not need to be evaluated through the establishment of permanent sample plots. Only Shelterwood status and Free to Grow surveys are needed for these areas.

Shelterwood status survey - The first surveys in such white pine shelterwood and yellow birch shelterwood stands are conducted some 2-7 years after the first regeneration cut. At this time, random survey clusters of plots are generated by computer and down

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loaded into surveyor's GPS units to create a non-biased approach to the survey. The plots are actually clusters of eight small (1.99 metre radius) circular plots touching each other in a straight line for a distance of 32 metres. One cluster is laid out for every 1.5 – 3 hectares of forest and is used to evaluate treatment results or future needs and the effects of scarification site prep that may have been carried out since the first regeneration cut. All trees within each small plot are documented as are competing vegetation types and quantities. The technique may also later be used to determine the efficacy of herbicide use as well as to inspect buffer zones. In addition, white pine shelterwood areas receive additional survey attention 8-12 years after the regeneration cut to determine how the natural regeneration is progressing and to assess tending rationale in such stands.

What we have learned to date:

In natural regeneration areas minimum regeneration standards were only met on 39% of surveyed white pine shelterwood stands while sites where scarification had been done, enjoyed higher success, meeting minimum regen standards 43% of the time. Preliminary conclusions indicate that more monitoring of regen after the initial regen cut should occur to help monitor tending needs, that more tending needs to start earlier. (Estimate we should be tending 40-60% of the area instead of the 13% done to date and that there should be increased use of scarification followed by tending operations.

Site Occupancy Index (SOI) surveys are used to determine if the forest has reached **Free to Grow** status for both **Planted areas** as well as **Natural Regeneration areas**. Cluster plots as described above are laid out in the survey area and each plot is evaluated to determine if it is occupied by a tree having a diameter at breast height (**dbh**) of from 10cm – 22cm ("occupied" plot). If a plot is so occupied, the next plot in the cluster is evaluated. Where plots are not deemed "occupied", all species of tree and competing vegetation (min. 0.3 m height for conifer and min. 0.8 m height for hardwood) are recorded as well as the height of the tallest tree on each plot. To determine "free to grow status", an imaginary cylinder standing on end is superimposed 2m above the tip of the tallest tree on the plot. That cylinder has a radius of 1.13 m. (diameter of 2.26 m). The cylinder is divided along its length into quarters and all branches from adjacent vegetation found occurring inside each quadrant of the cylinder are recorded to determine the level of competition existing with the tallest tree in each plot. At the midpoint of the cluster, basal area, light level and mid-storey interference is also assessed/recorded in shelterwood stands, so that an evaluation may be made to declare the site as Free to Grow (no more tending required) or to identify future tending needs.

Where no regeneration occurs on a plot, the reason must also be recorded. (Gravel pit, road, wet, trees greater than 22 cm dbh (diameter at breast height), etc.)

NOTE: dbh or "diameter at breast height" is a common measure used in forestry. Many "on the ground" surveys of standing trees require that field staff measure the diameter of trees. The surveyor carries tree calipers for this purpose and measures each tree's diameter at 4.5 feet above ground level, deemed average breast height, or the level where a surveyor can most easily take such repetitive measurements in a day of survey

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work. (Beats the heck out of bending over to ground level to measure each tree where it's flared butt generally doesn't give an accurate reading of the overall main stem diameter anyway).

What we have learned:

Surveys in plantations have shown that while 100% of the 988 hectares surveyed in 2010 had been regenerated, only 54% were deemed to be free growing. 46% were therefore found in need of tending, some of these for a second treatment. More tending done sooner would have ensured a higher conifer presence on these sites.

Tracking

Regeneration processes are now tracked within the GIS (Geographic Information System) database employed by NFRM Inc. This mapping technique records information into seven mapping layers so that the user of the electronic map can access specific information on cuts, site preparation, regeneration, tending, free to grow info. and shelterwood harvest monitoring for each site of interest on the map.

These programs show tremendous improvement in assessing regeneration techniques for future forest management.

6. Independent Forest Audit – Guylaine Thauvette (MNR)

(See attachment 4 – Independent Forest Audit Process and Protocol)

The independent forest audit is a legislatively mandated requirement of all forests managed on Crown lands in Ontario. Audits must by law be conducted every five years and Nipissing Forest Resources Management Inc., the **SFL** (Sustainable Forest Licence) holder, was first audited in 2001 and again in 2006. An audit is therefore required this year.

An independent auditing company (non-government/non-industry) has been contracted to audit work conducted in the Nipissing Forest from June 2006 to June 2011, so part of the current forest management plan (2009-2019) will also be audited.

Guylaine outlined the purpose of the audit and its scope. (See attached document for details...approximately 100 pages long). Section 2.9 on page 13 of the document states what LCC's role in forest management planning should be and requires that LCC assist in monitoring the performance of plan implementation.

Critical dates;

June 28, 2011 at 12:30 p.m., Nipissing Forest Resources Management Inc. will hold a pre-audit meeting at their office in Callander and LCC members are invited to attend.

September 19-23, 2011 will be the week that the audit actually will take place.

Sept.19 there will be an opening meeting (location and time to be determined).

That week will see one day dedicated to the auditing of office functions and the interviewing of various people, including some LCC members.

That week will also see three or four days of field audits taking place. Again, interested LCC members are invited to participate.

An end of field audit meeting will occur on the Friday of that week (Sept.23) when preliminary findings of the audit team will be discussed. (Again, LCC members welcome).

The audit findings will determine if the SFL will be extended to Nipissing Forest Resources Management Inc. for an additional five year term. (Failed audits result in loss of 5 year licence terms each time until the 20 year licence is removed).

At a later date, the final auditor's report will be created but won't be accepted until the legislature does so in law. This may take some time but the audit team will be prepared to present the report to the LCC upon request, prior to legislative approval/acceptance of their findings.

The audit is funded from public funds obtained from the Forestry Futures trust fund, a fund created by earmarking some of the stumpage fees paid to the Crown by harvesting companies.

There's lots of specific detail on each of these items contained in the attachment.

Note: This audit should not be mistaken for the annual inspection NFRM Inc. undergoes to retain its certification as a sustainable forest products supplier.

7. Review of LCC Purpose, Role, Responsibilities - Guylaine Thauvette

(See attachment 5 – LCC History, Role and Responsibilities)

Guylaine presented a slide show to benefit some new members on LCC. She had last given this presentation in 2008 so we were due for a refresher.

HISTORY : In 1975, the Environmental Assessment Act was created by Ministry of the Environment, requiring that an (**E.A.**) environmental assessment be done for every activity that might impact the environment. Due to the length of time these assessments took, MNR decided to apply for a "class environmental assessment" to cover activities that were repetitious by nature. Logging in the forest in many different locations would require separate environmental assessments for each harvesting operation unless a class EA was granted. Public hearings took place over this issue from 1988 – 1994 resulting in the approval of a Timber Class EA with 115 Terms and Conditions. Term and condition #4 required that LCCs be created. The Timber Class EA was reviewed in 2003 and replaced by a Forest Class EA Declaration Order with 54 conditions. Forest management planning manuals have been updated regularly as a result of the requirements of the Declaration Order. The latest review began in 2009 with MNR requesting changes. If approved, the [review of the forest management planning manual](#) will [begin](#) in the fall of 2011. There have been no requested changes to the role and responsibilities of LCCs during this entire time.

LCC ROLE: The primary purpose of the LCC is to assist in the preparation and implementation of the forest management plan. This plan includes access, harvest, renewal and maintenance activities. (see detailed list on page A-90 of the Forest Management Planning manual).

LCC members are appointed by the local MNR district manager from nominations submitted by local interest groups and LCC members.

MNR provides administrative support to LCC by ensuring that members are reimbursed for out of pocket expenses, that a per diem is paid to the LCC planning team member selected to attend forest management planning team meetings, by providing clerical

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support to LCC and by providing any information requested by LCC needed to conduct their business.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible for a wide variety of program delivery. These include;

- Energy (renewable, wind and water energy),
- Fish and wildlife population management (surveys and licences),
- Forest management (FMP, wildlife habitat, forest pests, private land forestry),
- Public lands (occupation of Crown land, aggregate extraction, tax incentives, Crown and municipal planning).
- Enforcement (Conservation officers, permits, licences)
- Maps and Geographic Information group
- Parks and Protected areas (provincial parks, wetlands, endangered species)
- Public Safety (forest fires, flood, bear wise)
- Science and Research (climate change, natural resources inventory)
- Water (dams)

Due to their original establishment under the Timber Class EA in 1995, the primary role of LCCs were to assist and provide input into MNR's forest management mandate above. Some overlap with other program areas may occur from time to time out of general interest, but LCC's primary responsibility will be to its forestry mandate in an advisory role to MNR. (More information available in your LCC manual and handbook).

8. Coxey's Road Bridge – Dave Minden

MOTION: That in light of relevant information provided by Roy Summers, the LCC recommends that the MNR reconsider its prior decision to close Coxey's Road and to work with local property owners and road users to find a way to reconstruct the water crossing and open the road. – Moved Dave Minden/ seconded Frank Tagliamonte.

Discussion: Chair Lorie Reed asked if this could be considered LCC business. It didn't seem to fall within our defined role.

Dave M. agreed that it might be considered outside of our scope but that we have discussed non LCC recommendations in the past. He suggested that we consider table 13 of the FMP, which states that the density of forest roads should be maintained. Dave stated that he has no objection with the closure of certain forest roads that now merely provide increased public access to hunting and fishing once forest industry no longer has an interest in them but he asked us to consider that;

1) Coxey's Road wasn't a road built by the SFL for one year of operations...it is a long term road whose history predates all of us (circa 1885) and was created to provide public access to the Ottawa River which it has done continually since it was built and must therefore have some historic value.

2) Roy has learned that Min. of Northern Development, Mines and Forests have a provincial road funding program available to help fund primary and branch forest access roads not limited to forestry interests alone.

As a result of these points, Dave felt that MNR acted too hastily in closing the road despite the fact that Roy had attempted to go through all the required hoops.

Lorie Reed again asked how this was related to forest management planning. Guylaine felt that it was not.

Roy Summers agreed that the bridge issue was not an LCC matter, more an access matter given the number of users an informal survey discovered using the access point before the bridge was removed. Roy also provided the group with information on another way to access his camp with a newly proposed route named the Crocan Road which would have to be built to access some forest stands slated for harvest before 2019 of the current FMP.

Lorie R. – How does LCC feel about making a recommendation to the MNR on this issue?

Derek Stewart asked if this discussion might lead to other roads being considered for reopening?

Guylaine T. clarified that the FMP process does not determine access issues or not. That is covered in a separate process under Land Use Management Planning. The premise is that Crown land is accessible to everyone, but not necessarily by way of a vehicle. If a land use plan closes a road in existence, that is done through an entirely different process and generally has nothing to do with forestry issues.

Tracey Cain – Can MNR just close a colonial road?

Randy McLaren – We consulted our Legal Services Branch lawyers on this issue and they stated that the Road Access Act does not apply in this case.

Frank T. – Can MNR not go back and revisit this issue?

Randy McL. – If someone wants to come forward to put a crossing in, MNR can consider it but MNR will not put a bridge in at its cost.

Lorie R. - Asked for a show of hands from dissenters of the proposed motion. No hands came up so the motion was carried.

Lorie R. – How should this be communicated to MNR?

Randy McLaren offered to await the write up of these minutes and then discuss the LCC recommendation with district manager Dave Payne.

9. EBR – Brennain Lloyd

Brennain had to leave before she could present the EBR updates so Lorie Reed had them passed around and mentioned that LCC should pay particular note of items;

011-2951 - regarding a proposed prescribed burn in Phelps Twp., North Bay district.

011-2628 – regarding a proposal to extend the time period of conducting independent Forest audits to 7 years instead of the 5 year interval currently in place.

10. LCC Forum – Timmins Sept 9, 10, 11. – Lorie Reed

Lorie announced that one or two LCC reps could attend the forum in September from our board and that costs were covered by MNR. Lorie feels that he will likely be going as our chair. If any other folks are interested, please send an email directly to Lorie and he will determine if we have to draw names. Elwyn Behnke would also be interested in attending again, but only if no one else is interested in going.

ACTION: - Let Lorie know by email ASAP if you would like to attend.

11. Correspondence - All

No written correspondence has been received since our last meeting.

Ric Hansel announced that NFRM Inc. would again be hosting the annual forest compliance meeting for forest licence holders and staff on May 10, 2011 at the Davedi Club hall (Airport Road) from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. LCC members are welcome to attend. The morning will consist of training presentations, lunch will be provided and the afternoon session will likely take place up the Weyerhauser Road system, on Tembec operations, for field inspections of 3-5 sites.

ACTION: - Let Lorie Reed know if you would like to attend this session and he will get a head count to Ric.

12. May Field Trip - Where and When

Our May field trip will occur on our regular meeting date, Tuesday May 17th and will leave from the MNR parking lot at 1:00 p.m. Tom Lockhart and Ric Hansel will organize a number of stops to visit and we'll likely inspect some regeneration and some Area of Concern (AOC) sites that might be near by.

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It was decided to hold a more detailed inspection of Areas of Concern (comparing them on the ground to the paper prescriptions provided) until our fall field trip.

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There will be no business meeting during this field trip. Drinks and snacks will be provided.

13. LCC Members – open discussion

Several members attended Nipissing University for the workshop on invasive species presented by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters on April 8th. They said it was very interesting and there was a good mix of students and LCC on hand for it. It was recommended that we try to get invited to more sessions such as this in the future. Elwyn was still looking for clarification on what made noxious weeds bad in some areas and protected in others. Not covered in this particular presentation.

Elwyn Behnke also announced d that he would be manning a display at the TD bank in Pembroke for Earth Day (April 24th). As part of his Earth Day celebration, Elwyn is bringing in 100 young Butternut trees for planting in the area. He would like to offer a free tree or two to any LCC members interested in planting a butternut tree in the area.

ACTION: Gerry Van Leeuwen will co-ordinate orders for trees from LCC. Please contact Gerry by email or phone if you would like a tree or two reserved in your name.

14. Next meeting date: June 21 - Chair Chris Mayne

Then we will adjourn for the summer months.

15. ADJOURNMENT – 9:00 p.m.