

**MEETING NOTES:  
TELECONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL FOREST STRATEGY  
ABORIGINAL CAPACITY WORKING GROUP**

February 2, 2007

2:00 – 3:30 pm EST (Ottawa time)

Attending

Don Sharp – Métis National Council

Dan Bulloch – Manitoba Conservation

Lori Borth – BC Ministry of Forests and Range

Lorraine Rekmans – National Aboriginal Forestry Association

Tanya Schlossek – Newfoundland & Labrador Department of Natural Resources

Bob Stevenson – Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Gary Anka – Natural Resources Canada

Kareen Holtby – First Nations Forestry Program

Stuart Wuttke – Assembly of First Nations

Marie Gosselin – Cree-Québec Forestry Board

**1. Review of action items and decisions from meeting of Dec. 14, 2006**

**Reference: Meeting Notes, December 14, 2006**

Mark summarized the decisions and action items as shown in the Meeting Notes of December 14, 2006.

**2. Progress report on action items and deliverables**

**Reference: Meeting Notes, December 14, 2006**

Mark reported progress on the action items that are recorded in the notes from the Dec. 14, 2006 meeting of the Working Group.

- A draft vision statement was circulated on January 11, and responses will be discussed in the next agenda item.
- We are likely going to complete 3-4 out of 7 potential case studies for the March 31 deadline; the rest can be completed after that date.
- The editorial team has been continuing to work on narrowing down and drafting the deliverables for March 31.
- Larry S. and Dan B., with the support of Jean-Francois Gravel, have initiated the discussion about the piece regarding a description of the provincial perspective of changes. Progress has been slow, however.
  - To date, Mark has done little on the score of commissioning a similar product regarding Aboriginal, federal, and industry perspectives.
  - Harry's commitment to write up a history of trends and how NAFA has addressed them would serve to provide at least a part of the Aboriginal (First Nations) perspective.

- Kareen noted that Laura Mackenzie at FNFP has been developing a paper that may serve well for the federal perspective in this area.
- The prioritization exercise will be discussed in the next action item.
- The report on Action Item 3.4, as well as the other action items of Theme 3, is in progress. Working Group members will be asked very soon to help fill gaps in the information, and to review the report for accuracy.
- The Métis Working Group will have a teleconference on Tuesday Feb. 6 to discuss the potential for writing up a piece about the Métis-specific issues in capacity building for the forest sector.
- A discussion paper is also underway to outline the rationale and options for a longer-term system to track and report on Aboriginal forestry in Canada.

### **3. Vision statement: Revised draft for approval**

**Reference: Compilation of comments on draft vision statement, Feb. 1, 2007.**

The Working Group reviewed comments and suggested edits that were received on the draft vision statement, circulated on January 11. It was agreed that the original wording, particularly the idea of “supporting” Aboriginal peoples, failed to represent a vision of independence and self-reliance by Aboriginal peoples. It was also decided that the vision should focus on the capacity of Aboriginal peoples, while the capacity of other parties may be considered a means to achieving that vision, and therefore is better to include in strategic workplans, etc., rather than the vision statement.

### **4. Ranking of priorities for capacity building: Exercise results, what it means**

**References: Results of ranking exercise: priorities for capacity building, Feb. 1, 2007**  
**Suggested short-term steps for capacity building priorities, Feb. 1, 2007**

The Working Group reviewed the results of an exercise to develop a ranking of priorities in capacity building, which had been conducted in January via email. This exercise was one step in the process to develop consensus recommendations of the Working Group. The next step will be to use the results of the exercise, together with the results of other discussions and exercises of the group, as a basis for a first draft of the recommendations.

10 people responded to the exercise - 4 provincial and 6 Aboriginal. One other person responded late, so is not represented in the documents yet. The results are shown in two documents: One document is a set of tables that convert the responses into a combined scoring and ranking of the 13 potential priorities. It also highlights differences in priorities between the provincial and the Aboriginal groups. The second document compiles the respondents’ suggestions for incremental steps that might be pursued over the next year to advance the various priorities, as well as several general comments and concerns that were received.

#### The rankings

The combined ranking seems to represent a fairly robust consensus across groups responding. However, the tables do indicate some significant differences in results between provincial and

Aboriginal respondents. Most of the items that were ranked very differently between the two groups are those that are near the bottom of the list in the combined totals. However, two of the top-ranked items in the combined list – community-level plans and a measurement framework – also were ranked very differently between the groups. When drafting the recommendations based on this exercise, we will need to understand and account for these differences. It may be quite likely that the differences are due to differences in how the meaning of the items is understood – an issue that can be dealt with as we attempt to put definitive wording to the recommendations. Also, several of these items are closely related/complementary to each other, and further development of the ideas may show a way to accommodate differences in rankings. In addition, these items are not all the same type of issue. For example, the items dealing with culture and with linking the concept of capacity with the concept of sustainability are perhaps most appropriately applied as a necessary component of any of the other items. In fact several people noted this as a reason for ranking these items fairly low on the list.

#### Incremental steps towards achieving the priorities

Several of the comments shown in the second document are already being addressed to some extent. For example, one person suggested that one of the first steps in promoting increased access to forest resources should be to do a study of existing access, who has access, and options for influencing trends. This suggestion is partly addressed in NAFA's update of their 2003 survey of First Nations-held forest tenures, which will be completed for March 31.

One repeated concern is that capacity-building is largely a grass-roots, or bottom-up, process in which the communities hold the primary responsibility – yet our Working Group is a national-level, top-down process. Are we really able to promote a bottom-up approach? Potential recommendations such as the need for communities to develop their own capacity-building plans, and for other parties to provide financial and other support for this kind of activity, may be one way to resolve this tension.

Another comment was that we need to develop a simple, agreed definition of capacity. This is actually done in one of the discussion papers, “Paper #1 – Rationale, Needs, and Model of Capacity Building”. The paper also will elaborate a more detailed model of capacity building. However, although the definition and model have been the subject of much discussion in past teleconferences and meetings, we were not planning to attempt to gain consensus on the paper itself, due to the lack of time. Perhaps the simple definition should be extracted and circulated for consensus.

It was agreed that in drafting the consensus recommendations of the Working Group, we need to be sure to provide clear indication of the data and experience on which the recommendations' credibility rests. The data and experience will be represented in the discussion papers and case studies that form other parts of the total package of deliverables under development. We need to make the linkages clear.

It was also suggested that the challenge of fulfilling the governments' and industry's duties to consult, which has emerged to be one of the dominant practical concerns in the sector, would be a good issue to use as an illustration of the need for capacity building and how it should be done.

However, this may not be best addressed in the recommendations of the Working Group – perhaps better to do this in the discussion papers and in conference presentations.

## 5. Wrap-up

The next steps for the Working Group, in addition to ongoing work on action items from the Dec. 14 meeting, are:

- **Mark** will incorporate comments from this call, as well as suggested wordings to be forwarded by others, into a new draft of the vision statement, and re-circulate it for comment to the email list. The aim is to have the vision statement finalized by February 16.
- **Mark** will circulate the short definition of capacity from Paper #1 to the email list to attempt to get consensus on it.
- **Mark** will develop a first draft of the Working Group's recommendations, based on the priorities ranking exercise and other past discussions. The recommendations will include a list of activities to include in the Working Group's workplan for the next year. The aim is to achieve consensus on these recommendations by March 31.
- **Working Group members** will be prepared review the many draft deliverables that will be produced in the coming month: the discussion papers, the report on Action Item 3.4, the consensus recommendations, the vision statement, the definition, and so on.
- **Mark** will schedule the next Working Group teleconference, probably in the week of March 5<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>.
- **Kareen** will forward the piece on trends in the federal perspective's role when it's ready.