

Framework Committee Report
September 11, 2007 Round Table Meeting
Petersburg, Alaska

Since the last meeting of the full roundtable in April, the Framework Committee has met via teleconference eight times. All but one of these meetings were in the spring between April and early June. A summer recess was taken and the first meeting since the break was on September 6. This was a joint meeting with the Mapping Committee and Dave Albert gave a web based demonstration of the new mapping tool that has been recently developed.

Most of the Committee's efforts were focused at trying to reach an agreement on a "time out" for a period of 8 to 12 months to allow for additional deliberation and work on solutions to the ongoing Tongass timber sale problems. While we were not successful in reaching consensus on a time out agreement, we did realize that there was a desire to collaborate on individual timber sale projects, to better reflect the needs of the different constituent groups. Two familiar points of concern being expressed by committee members were better conservation and an economic flow of adequate timber volume.

In our discussions over a time out agreement, it became apparent that timber sales already in the EIS process were difficult to modify or change in any significant way. To really be effective, a collaborative process needed to begin at the planning stages of a sale, long before it enters the EIS pipeline.

Keeping this in mind, committee members suggested several areas for consideration. They were Highbush-Fools Inlet, Winter Harbor, Kosciusco and the Thorn project. A sub-group chaired by George Woodbury began working on the Highbush-Fools sale and preliminary work and data collection was completed by the forest service. Work on this effort slowed over the summer due to fire assignments to the L-48 by a key member of the forest service staff. The committee had hoped to have a field trip associated with this meeting of the Roundtable to view and discuss concepts utilized in this effort, but more work needs to be completed before a meaningful field trip can be arranged.

The Committee also discussed or heard updates on several other topics of interest, but rather than discussing the details of each, I will list them here and interested members can read Committee notes and related information items that are posted on the website.

- Forest Service Budgets
- Potential Collaboration Projects
- Forest Service Export Policy
- Deer Model
- Chabot Amendment and FY08 Appropriations
- Perspectives on the Timber Base on the Tongass

Two additional topics deserve a brief update, these are:

Collaborative Timber Sale Funds

The Alaska Division of Forestry received a \$100 thousand increment from the legislature this year to apply to state participation in Tongass timber sale planning, with an emphasis on collaboration among interests. The intent is for this to be an annual funding item, and the hope is at these funds can be used by conservation interests and others to leverage similar collaboration funds from private and non-profit sources. The emphasis of the state effort would be on developing collaborative, economic timber sale layouts that are consistent with conservation measures. A forester has been hired and is working with the USFS on a number of projects, mainly in the Thorn Bay District Office.

In addition, John Schoen reported at our most recent meeting, that the conservation community had prepared and submitted to the Packard Foundation a request for funding for a conservation forester. This request is pending and Audubon Alaska and The Nature Conservancy have been working on this topic.

Depletion Schedule

The most recent depletion schedule for timber sale volume is attached. Sale offerings and volume continue to decrease; this is a critical issue to the industry. George Woodbury can address any questions that members may have on this item.

Attachments:

Committee Purpose Statement
Depletion Schedule