



Wetzin'kwa Community Forest Corporation
Annual General Meeting
November 17th, 2022
Telkwa Chamber Office
Available via Zoom

Present

Gary Hanson, David de Wit, Colin MacLeod, Jennifer Moyle

In Attendance

In Person: Aurora Lavender – General Manager, Michael Mehr – Accountant (Edmison Mehr), Crystal Trembelas – Recording Secretary, Jaya Freeman – Enhanced Stewardship Coordinator

Community Members – Will George (Town of Smithers), Anne Hetherington, Debbie Wellwood, Dawn Hanson (BVRC), Don McMillian (Smithers Golf and Country Club), John Howard (Smithers Golf and Country Club), Sybille Haeussler, Irene Ronalds (BVRC), Eric Becker (Community Resources Board)

Via Zoom: Kira Westby, Inge Tersago

Regrets

Lindsay Lange, Margaret Olmstead

Call to Order

Co-chair, Gary Hanson, called the meeting to order at 12:10pm welcoming everyone to the meeting acknowledging the traditional territories of the Wet'suwet'en, Laksilyu and Gitdumden Clans as well as the Gitksan territory on which the meeting took place.

Gary reviewed the agenda for the meeting as presented.

- Jennifer motioned to approve the agenda
 - None opposed

MOTION PASSED

October meeting minutes were presented via e-mail prior to the AGM.

- Jennifer motioned to accept the minutes
 - None opposed

MOTION PASSED

The 2022 AGM was presented both in person and virtually over Zoom as pandemic limitations have lifted. WCFC continues to offer attendance via Zoom to allow for those unable to attend in person.

At this time, Gary invited all attendees to introduce themselves and their affiliated groups if applicable.

The Annual Report was presented through PowerPoint by the Board members and WCFC management team collaboratively, with the financial review presented by Michael Mehr (see attached).



After concluding the Annual Report, Gary invited those in attendance to present any questions or comments at this time, the following questions were presented;

Sybille expressed concern with the reporting and communication surrounding Ecological Values. How does the community ensure this core value is being upheld? What is the community forest doing to ensure these values are being maintained? Sybille expressed that there were clear financial benefits to the community from Wetzin'kwa, but that the focus on community benefits and recreation was much stronger than the focus on ecological values. What have the environmental effects of logging been on the community forest, and what reporting is being done to communicate these values?

- David responded confirming that this has been highlighted by the community and the province through Old Growth Deferrals, which turned our attention to the information we have to represent values; Do we have the right information and are we using it for planning? Discussions and options are being explored for a Land Use Plan to enhance ways to engage with House members to better understand and incorporate their interests and values into planning for the tenure. The RUG group has also been reactivated to have discussions with resource users within the Community Forest.
- Colin agreed, the Board consistently discusses the expression of core values in all operations; however there have been many years of clean up from the mountain pine beetle epidemic. Protecting the community has and will always be at the forefront of discussions, which also relates to the current Wildfire Risk Reduction program. Community forests as a whole strive to look at the long term cycles of how to sustain the forest over many years to come.
- Aurora shared that Wetzin'kwa commits to upholding ecological values through its Forest Stewardship and Management Plan, and often exceeds the required limits set by the plan. Although Wetzin'kwa's AAC is set to sustainable levels of harvest utilizing the best provincial data available, WCFC is always seeking ways to improve at the landscape level, including investment in technologies to help improve forest inventory.

Dawn Hanson shared ways WCFC has impacted her life personally and as part of the BVRC. Although it is easy to measure and report on the financial contributions and expenses, reporting on the less tangible things are more difficult to communicate and measure. She encouraged the Board and community members to keep having the difficult conversations to find ways to better communicate.

Anne Hetherington shared of her experience in the community forest suggesting a way to monitor values based on the types of habitats present. An example of this is the two Goshawk territories which have been identified on the tenure. For many birds to survive in an area, the ecosystems beneath them must be successful in order to support that prey. WCFC has a unique opportunity around the two goshawk territories to plan for a range of forests long term, to evaluate the current state of the forest and to discuss where we want it to be in the short and long-term future.



John Howard thanked WCFC for the work they do and for the benefit they provide to the community both on the small and large scale. It has been an inspiration to many other groups who seek to help within the community.

Anne inquired as to the Old Growth Deferrals and if they have been ground-truthed?

Aurora confirmed some areas have been ground-truthed, however the current strategy is to avoid the areas identified. WCFC has invested in updates to LiDAR Technology and Land Use Planning with the ultimate goal of enhancing forest inventory by looking at the current composition of the forest and improving the management of old growth on the land base. Ground-truthing will take place before proceeding in any areas of concern.

Collectively those in attendance discussed and agreed the need for ongoing conversation and importance of coming together to share, to learn and to grow our connections with the land and with each other both now and for the future.

Gary expressed thanks to everyone for attending the 2022 AGM and for the questions and comments presented, concluding the meeting.

Wrap Up

The next meeting will be discussed via e-mail.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 2:06pm.