

April 30, 2007

Amy Wotton
Moderator
Slave Lake Forest Public Advisory Committee
P.O. Box 1222
Slave Lake, Alberta
T0G 2A0

Dear Moderator:

This letter is written to you on behalf of Alberta Plywood Ltd., Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd. and Tolko Industries Ltd. in response to the Regional Environmental Action Committee's presentation given to the SLFPAC on January 18, 2006.

The Slave Lake Forest Public Advisory Committee (SLFPAC) has been an excellent avenue to address and discuss the concerns outlined in this presentation. The SLFPAC has spent a considerable amount of time reviewing and learning about topics such as compaction, herbicide use, blowdown, fiber utilization, value added products, research initiatives, endangered species management, climate change and selective logging. Information presented on these topics has been made available on the SLFPAC website for further reference and sharing.

Within the REAC presentation and subsequent letters to the companies a proposal for a selective logging pilot project was requested. The SLFPAC supplied informative presentations by leading researchers and a field trip to observe some of the current selective logging practices. Below, we have outlined a brief summary of comments and conclusions from these presentations.

Potential positive attributes of a selective logging system are:

- retention of variable amounts of older trees,
- can provide a visual screen for aesthetic purposes,
- some selection systems allow the removal of mature overstory allowing the understory to release,
- may maintain some older forest characteristics,
- selectively logged areas vs. clear cut areas become ecologically similar to fire originated stands sooner.

Potential negative aspects of selective logging are:

- increased harvesting costs,
- increased development of road infrastructure. (increased access, soil disturbance, long term footprint),
- increased incidence of blow down is a concern,
- many boreal tree species such as aspen, balsam poplar, lodge pole pine and jack pine are not shade tolerant and do not work well in selective logging operations,
- multiple re-entries into the same stands over a relatively short period of time,
- boreal forest stands and associated flora and fauna have evolved to rejuvenate following complete stand disturbance. Removing very young forest from the landscape will likely be reducing a specific habitat type.
- partial harvest systems require a larger area to be harvested compared to conventional harvesting in order to remove the same volume of timber.

The companies feel that selective logging is a valuable tool in forest management. We would like to acknowledge that the companies have and will continue to utilize components of selective logging in their operations. We visited an example of Vanderwell's selective harvesting on a field tour last summer. At this time we will not be initiating any additional large scale selective logging trials. We echo Dr. Stan Boutin's comments that a variety of forest management tools should be utilized to better address the variety of values on the landscape. The use of selection logging strategies will continue to be utilized when appropriate to address specific values.

We feel the concerns that were brought forward by REAC have resulted in valuable discussions and information exchange within the SLFPAC and the companies. We encourage members to continue to bring forward questions and concerns. If you have any other comments or concerns please feel free to contact one of the company representatives.

Sincerely,



Trina Vercholuk
Tolko Industries Ltd.



George Duffy
Alberta Plywood Ltd.



Amy Slack
Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.

Cc: Regional Environmental Action Committee