



April 2, 2014

Dear Chilako Residents,

The goal of this letter is to provide an update on Government, Industry and Non-Government Organization actions resulting from the October 28th 2013 Chilako Watershed Public Information session at the Beaverly Fire Hall.

October 28th Session Summary (revised April 2, 2014)

- The Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society presented an overview of their programs. Their vision is to improve the health of the watershed, particularly in the agricultural belt.
- The current equivalent clearcut area (ECA) is estimated at 60%, and this is expected to continue to drop in future years.
- Harvest levels in the Chilako watershed have decreased in the last 5 years (from peak levels).
- Pine salvage is nearly complete in the watershed (approximately 3 years of low-level salvage harvesting remains).
- Hydrological recovery is expected to accelerate in the next few years due primarily to the regeneration of the dead pine stands with green growing trees. A large area of pre-salvage cut blocks in the watershed is maturing and will contribute to increased hydrologic recovery.
- There was expressed community concern for hydrological impacts across private and public land as a result of current watershed conditions (natural and anthropogenic).
- Prevention and mitigation of the hydrological effects of the current watershed conditions were key focus areas of community concern.
- A targeted sample hydrological assessment indicated that an additional landscape level assessment might be warranted in order to strategize potential management activities.
- Landscape level planning was identified as a required consideration for future activities.
- *Contact: Terry Robert, Senior Regional Manager, troberty@fraserbasin.bc.ca*

Resulting Actions

Local Government – Regional District of Fraser Fort George

- In January 2014, the Regional District of Fraser Fort George Board of Directors, approved a Community Grant-in-Aid of \$10,000.00 to the Fraser Basin Council.
- This grant will be divided between two projects: the first, to provide seed money to support establishing a water monitoring station; the second project, the Chilako Watershed Assessment Development Plan, will provide a landscape level assessment of the context, risks, and recommendations for potential management activities in the Chilako Watershed and along the banks of the river.
- It is anticipated that several agencies will contribute funding and in-kind support to both of these projects.
- *Contact: Lara Beckett, Director, druid@pgweb.com*



Province of British Columbia – Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resources Operations

- The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations (FLNRO) purchased two hydrometric stations for the Chilako watershed (one on the main stem and a second to be installed on a high hazard peak flow and erosion tributary to the Chilako following spring freshet). This marks the initiation of their commitment to long-term monitoring on the Chilako main stem, as well as, investigation of Chilako sub-watersheds to inform planning (including restoration activities).
- FLNRO activities in the Chilako are intended to complement ongoing efforts to formalize and initiate a watershed health assessment framework to assess watershed function following Mountain Pine Beetle and salvage harvesting. The framework is intended to complement existing efforts with the University of Northern British Columbia, Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society and others to support the management of the Nechako basin.
- FLNRO is committed to continued engagement and consultation with British Columbia Timber Sales and Canfor on harvesting plans in the Chilako watershed.
- *Contact: Chelton van Geloven, Source Water Protection Hydrologist*
Chelton.VanGeloven@gov.bc.ca

Non-Government Organization – Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society

- The Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society (NEWSS) is actively identifying expressed concerns related to the impacts of minimal landscape level planning on all watershed (including the Chilako) within the mountain pine beetle harvested areas with MLA John Rustad, Minister Thomson and the Assistant Deputy Minister for Omineca Kevin Kriese. NEWSS has also scheduled meetings with Minister Bond and MLA Mike Morris for mid April 2014.
- NEWSS feels strongly that the immediate concern is the Chilako Watershed. However, the findings in the Chilako may be indicative of many watersheds within the mountain pine beetle infected area.
- NEWSS reports that a comprehensive evaluation of the issues, in the Chilako, must be undertaken to understand what remedial actions are required/applicable, who will lead them and most importantly how they will all be financed.
- The BC Cattleman's Association (Lee Heskith) Farmland Riparian Interface Stewardship Program will also help identify some of the current and major issues within the agricultural belt this coming spring. They will work collaboratively to ensure that proper investments in areas that ensure long-term success are made.
- NEWSS's next steps include a further meeting with British Columbia Timber Sales, Canfor and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations to understand issues and how a recovery plan can be moved forward.
- NEWSS would like to invite residents to review the Chilako file on their newly launched website http://newssociety.org/newss_aboutus.html.
- *Contact: Wayne Salewski, President, salewski@telus.net*

Industry – British Columbia Timber Sales and Canfor

- Canfor met with a hydrologist to discuss the issues in the Chilako and to gain some scientific perspective on Peak Flow as it relates to salvage harvesting of dead pine. Canfor and British Columbia Timber Sales are working together with the hydrologist to develop



recommendations specific to the Chilako on potential future development opportunities for high priority mountain pine beetle damaged stands.

- Canfor and British Columbia Timber Sales are working on verifying and refining the Peak Flow Index calculation for the Chilako watershed. The methodology was created for a smaller, sub-basin level. Thus, there is a substantial time investment required to verify the results of the analysis for a watershed as large as the Chilako. Once this analysis is complete, they plan to run scenarios to properly evaluate their outcomes as it relates to Peak Flow Index.
- When harvesting in applicable watersheds, Canfor and British Columbia Timber Sales utilize Best Management Practices that have been developed by a hydrologist. The deactivation recommendations help to minimize sediment delivery to watercourses. The retention recommendations help protect stream function and health. The reforestation recommendations are aimed at maximizing the speed of hydrologic recovery. Canfor and British Columbia Timber Sales will treat all sub-basins in the Chilako watershed as sensitive, and utilize these Best Management Practices.
- Canfor, British Columbia Timber Sales and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations (British Columbia Timber Sales was unable to attend) are studying snowpack plots at selected sites throughout the Chilako watershed. The recent overview flight provided valuable information on the recovery of past harvesting activities at a landscape level.
- British Columbia Timber Sales has completed reconnaissance work on high priority mountain pine beetle stands in the Chilako Watershed. As per the meeting of October 28, 2013, British Columbia Timber Sales will provide the results of this work to the Chilako residents to gather further input for consideration for all future development.
- Canfor and British Columbia Timber Sales continue to express a commitment to working collaboratively in the Chilako watershed. They have taken the concerns expressed, seriously, and have prioritized the work required to complete an accurate and useful analysis. Once they have completed this work they will have the tools to help determine future harvesting plans in the Chilako watershed.
- *Contacts: Lee Evans, Planning Forester, British Columbia Timber Sales, Lee.Evans@gov.bc.ca and Jon Erikson, Planning Supervisor Jon.Erickson@canfor.com, Canfor Forest Management Group*

If you have questions or concerns related to these identified actions please direct them to the agency responsible (contact information provided above).

In order to provide regular updates on progress to the Chilako residents, the Fraser Basin Council, is requesting that participating agencies and members of the public submit written information on actions; as well as, concerns and recommendations by September 30th, 2014. The Fraser Basin Council will then release an additional update to residents in October 2014.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Terry Robert
Senior Regional Manager