



Mistik Advisory Group October 26th, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Location: Studio Three, 102 4th Street West, Meadow Lake, SK

Meeting Facilitators: Brenda Nightingale, Niska Hodgson

Meeting Attendees:

The following parties were represented at the meeting:

Buffalo Narrows Co-management Board:	Bill Pedersen
Buffalo River Dene Nation:	Louis Chinalquay, Terrance Byhette
Cold Lake First Nations:	Fran Desjardin, Billy McLaughlin
Flying Dust First Nation:	Roderick Bear, John Mazuren
Île-à-la-Croix/A La Baie Métis Local #21:	Alex Laliberte, Louis Gardiner, Tavio Morin
Makwa/Loon Lake Métis Local #32:	Irvin Beaudry
Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp:	Dwayne Mysko
Meadow Lake Area Residents/Interested Parties:	Bob Wilson, Jeremy Nightingale
Métis Nation SK – Northern Region 3:	Mervin Bouvier
Ministry of Environment:	Nadine Penney, Emily Poloni
Mistik Board of Directors:	Brenda Nightingale
Mistik Management:	Niska Hodgson, Robert Follett, Kevin Gillis April Lesko, Denise Bayko, Joe Silva, Clifford McLaughlan
NorSask Forest Products:	Eric Weibel
Northern Hamlet of St. Georges Hill	Philomene Cummings
Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation	Kevin Guttormson
Thunderchild First Nation	Linda Okanee, Deland (Jerry) Okanee
Village of Goodsoil	Marie Klassen

Note that Mistik maintains records of all parties who were invited to the meeting.

Proceedings:

The meeting was called to order at 10:00AM by Brenda Nightingale.

An opening prayer was offered by Elder J. Okanee from Thunderchild First Nation.

The minutes from the last meeting (Fall, 2022), were adopted – moved by J. Okanee, seconded by K. Guttormson.

The meeting agenda was adopted – moved by T. Morin, seconded by J. Nightingale.

Current Affairs and Mill Updates:

Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp (D. Mysko)

Mill fibre use is based on things like an increased demand on packaging materials (like what Amazon uses). They cannot control the market but can focus on local opportunities. Prices have seen a recent downturn but are now stabilizing and coming up.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) Regarding cultural impacts, they are ready to get together with all groups, provincial and federal government, Mistik and other industries. The last 20-year plan may not have been completely understood. (Response) We have family ties and history with forestry/mills in Meadow Lake. Mistik is here to learn.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) Need to rewind and review Métis concerns. MLTC owns Mistik. (*Post-meeting clarification – Mistik is owned by NorSask Forest Products and Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp*).

NorSask Forest Products, NorthWind Forest Products, MLTC BioEnergy (R. Follett)

NorSask is operating at about 75%. They use approximately 470,000m³/year. MLTC BioEnergy is up and running and working on improving efficiency. Northwind uses smaller material such as posts and poles. They use 70-80,000m³/year. Staff turnover has been an issue in the past year.

Mistik Operations (R. Follett)

Basically it's been business as usual. The Shaw and Vermette fires burned 13% of the Annual Allowable Cut this year. There may be a small amount of salvage but most stands burned too hot/intense and the wood has too much char on it. There was also a small fire by Keeley Lake. There will be some fire salvage done in this area. The fire there was 20-30 ha.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) The areas being done, are they coming back and how do we know we are doing it right? (Mistik) Forest regeneration is measured at 7 and 14 years under provincial standard requirements.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) Concern around the Rainbow Lake trail area (Sakaw Askiy). (Response): It's NorSask's area on the PA FMA. A commitment was made. Trails were discussed with C. Hood. If there is still an issue, please let Mistik know the name of the trapper impacted.

(Buffalo Narrows Co-management) Does Mistik do aerial surveys of the fires? (Response) Yes, and we can share the data. There would be third party volume available. Mistik can provide contact information about permits.

Post-meeting information – contact the Ministry of Environment in Meadow Lake for permit requirement information for salvage harvesting in the fire areas.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) The Métis local is a rights-bearing organization. ICS-4 is local leadership. They are looking for balance between environmental, caribou, 20-year deferrals, Beyond the Trees project, fur block boundaries, IPCA project.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) There also is education, boundaries/jurisdiction. Let's put our ducks in a row. MN-S is massive. (Response) We welcome the interaction and input.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) We are managing this together, there is a current land claim "management strategy".

Mistik – There is ongoing discussion with rights-holders and stakeholders throughout the year and we want to cooperate in ways that are beneficial to all parties. We are listening to perspectives. There is a Board of Directors meeting in November and all of these parties are invited to attend. There was some discussion about what's happening in various communities (Thunderchild, Buffalo River Dene Nation, but then discussion went to other questions). Some communities would like the information we got from the fires when we flew them (burned areas, etc.).

Fire presentation (J. Silva)

2023 was a record-breaking fire year. 2022 was a dry year leading up with a dry spring in 2023.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) With regard to the "Let it Burn" policy, what is Mistik's plan for the future? (Response) Provincial resources are low. Mistik lost \$1 million worth of wood. We are looking at how the business is done and options to protect Mistik resources.

(Île-à-la Crosse) Community safety is the priority, putting together a plan that works. (Response) We participate on a Wildfire Mitigation Committee and can follow up on this after the meeting.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) Where is Mistik with the Wildlife Act or research? (Response) Fish and Wildlife branch would deal with that. Mistik has selected species that we monitor habitat for such as Moose.

(Buffalo Narrows Co-management) The fire started in Île-à-la Crosse and moved to Buffalo Narrows area, then back to Île-à-la Crosse. How is it managed? Why the low response and lack of action. Why no crews doing active firefighting? (Response) Management of fires and firefighting are not Mistik's responsibility, these lie with the province.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) During the Shaw Fire there was understanding of cabin ownership, logging companies, health, and safety. They used to work 21 days in a row, now it's only ten. They are stretched thin all over and it doesn't depend on the current conditions in the forest. Some fires couldn't be actioned because they were too intense. Timber values north of the Churchill River are low. (Response) We are a low priority when it comes to fire equipment/resources. We have some of our own equipment and used equipment to protect our wood stockpiles.

(Buffalo Narrows Co-management) Industry has paid for training in communities in the past. There should be more meetings with communities. Lands were never given up. All areas should be walked before they are harvested to ensure we are doing the right thing for the next generations.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) A good strategy is the key. It's important to include the Métis. Our people have done lots of firefighting in the past and may have a better plan.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) The Incident Command System is about money and creates division. We should try to do something. The money needs to be spent properly. No one is working together.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) Weather patterns, climate change, and harvesting have impacts. Weather is more of an impact. Fire breaks like muskeg are no longer a barrier. Roads should be left open if salvage is going to happen.

(Cold Lake First Nations) Federal money is being spent on climate change issues. Going to communities prior to harvest is important for building relationships. Ceremonies could be done. We need to adapt. Now is the time because the feds are listening.

(Buffalo River Dene Nation) For setting up private sawmills, who do you speak with?

(Response/Ministry of Environment) Third party processes are easier with less requirements depending on the volume/size of operation. You need an operating plan and there are limits on how much can be cut in each area. Dues reduction is available for damaged/burnt wood but you have to apply. The best place to start is at the Meadow Lake office.

(Buffalo Narrows Co-management) Mills are no longer allowed to set up in the bush due to poor practices by those in the past. We are now paying the price for those operators.

(Response/Ministry of Environment) Processing facility licenses are now issued by the Environmental Protection branch of the government. They may issue dispositions and there are stricter compliance measures in place.

(Cold Lake First Nations) Cold Lake has a stockpile site on their land. Perhaps a percentage of the wood moved could be available for other uses. They are still owners of the land. Perhaps a stockpile site could be set up in other communities affected by fires that would allow access to wood products for personal use. Firewood, small mills, or any other use. It would have to be off the forest area and in a designated area.

Annual Reports presentation (N. Hodgson)

Note: the Mistik Annual Reports can be found at www.Mistik.ca

The questions and responses below were asked during various parts of the presentation.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) You have been around for 40 years, what have you accomplished?

(Response) The annual reports have information on things we keep track of to monitor our progress and performance. We have specific targets that we need to meet. These are set between the government and Mistik and are based on legislation and provincial standards.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) What do you give back to communities? (Response) There are benefits such as Co-management Fees, contracts are held by community members, and overall employment at the mills and our operations.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) Sitting on Co-management Boards, how does that come about? (Response) The communities structure the boards the way they need to so they will work for the community. They are all slightly different. Mistik prefers this as they are supposed to be community boards. Ideally, they have representatives from interest groups in the community (such as trappers, etc.) that take the information back to their respective groups.

An overview of the Co-management Terms of Reference and Agreements was given.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) Are there penalties for not meeting environmental compliance targets ?

(Response) Yes, depending on the severity of the situation. Sometimes voluntary compliance opportunities are given. An example of this would be not submitting a report on time (no actual environmental damage done). There are also notices of violation and administrative (financial) penalties.

(Cold Lake First Nations) Garbage and sewage/grey water violations are unacceptable. (Response)

Yes, all issues that have been found have a story and are fully documented, including what was done to fix the problem.

(Cold Lake First Nations) Do you harvest in Alberta? (Response) No, our license area for harvesting is only in Saskatchewan.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) How much for scholarships and donations were paid to communities?

(Response) The direction that has been given to Mistik is to pass requests for donations on to the parent mills (NorSask and Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp). Mistik does not keep records of how

much the mills donate.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) Wildlife such as cougars are dangerous. Is there tracking done?
(Response/Ministry of Environment) Wildlife branch has processes for data collection.

(Buffalo Narrows Co-management) What about endangered species (not just moose and deer)?
(Response) We have a program for endangered species but Mistik manages the habitat not wildlife populations. The government has monitoring programs for Caribou. (Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local)
We are aware of the program but have not seen anyone in the air.

(Cold Lake First Nations) Some First Nations do their own power and are self-sustaining.
(Response) MLTC owns and operates the BioEnergy Center (<https://mltcbioenergy.ca/>).

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) Is there training within the mills, environmental, or apprenticeship training?
(Response) Mistik contractors and staff receive environmental and safety training every year. The mills would look after apprenticeship training. Mistik looks after harvest and haul only and is working with SIIT and other organizations to do additional training for truck drivers, etc.

(Buffalo Narrows Co-management) What about people from impacted areas? (Response) Individuals from local communities have most of the equipment and contracts for Mistik work. There is ongoing employment and training for community members working for these contractors. Mistik works with individuals to get equipment. There have been training programs through SIIT, Waterhen Forestry (operator training), capacity building, and efficiency training for contractors and their operators. This creates opportunity in local communities.

(Buffalo Narrows Co-management) Mistik stepped away from the north. There should be job fairs, etc. (Response) Specific training is geared toward answering a need (truck driver training for example); where there are shortages or improvements needed.

Public Advisory Group Roles & Structure (N. Penney)

Discussed the role of an advisory group in forest management

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) The 10-20 year plan was not negotiated properly, when do changes happen? (Response) The 20-year plan is renewed every 10 years. This is not a negotiation process. I think you may be referring to Mistik's 20-year license with the province. All timber supply areas have licenses (Mistik, Tolko, Sakaw, Island Forest, etc.). They can be renewed every 10 years.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) What is the amount of harvest allowed in the 20-year plan? It seems to be happening rapidly. (Response/Ministry of Environment) The sustainable harvest limits are calculated. Mistik is only using around 55% of the annual allowable cut.

(Île-à-la Crosse/Métis Local) Flying will show what's happening. If you look around you will see if the animals are in the patches or not. The cutting is out of hand. There will be nothing left out there. (Response/Ministry of Environment) the forest must be renewed. It changes over time. It takes about 80 years for trees to reach maturity.

(Buffalo Narrows Co-management) What happens when there is a non-compliance?
(Response/Ministry of Environment) There may be an opportunity to voluntarily comply, or in more severe circumstances, a notice of violation or penalty may be issued.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) There needs to be better communication. There may be language barriers and information sharing is a problem.

Mistik has a Terms of Reference for the Public Advisory Group that is part of the 20-year Forest Management Plan.

(Métis Nation SK-NR 3) Maybe we should be getting together in smaller groups. (Response) Mistik meets with individual communities and First Nations. We need to all get together at this PAG meeting once or twice a year. It's important to hear each other's perspectives.

Other Items (B. Nightingale):

Mistik has a planning team that works on the 20-year forest management plan and annual reports. There is a PAG representative and an alternate representative in that group. A new alternate has to be chosen.

Bob Wilson nominated Mervin Bouvier as alternate, seconded by Bill Pedersen. All were in favor, motion carried.

Feedback about the meeting location, time, format:

- Suggestion to have the meeting earlier in the fall.
- If there are concerns regarding overall impacts by the industry, these can be raised at the political level. These may include long-term utilization and policy.
- Mistik should invite more political leaders to the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:45 by Mervin Bouvier.