



Mistik Advisory Group October 29th, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Location: Grace United Church, Meadow Lake, SK

Meeting Facilitators: Brenda Nightingale, Niska Hodgson

Meeting Attendees:

The following parties were represented at the meeting:

Cold Lake First Nations
Flying Dust First Nation
Independent Forestry Operators
Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp
Meadow Lake Area Residents/Interested Parties
Métis Nation SK – Northern Region 2
Métis Nation SK – Western Region 1
Ministry of Environment (Meadow Lake)
Ministry of Environment (Prince Albert)
Mistik Board of Directors
Mistik Management

NorSask Forest Products
Northern Hamlet of St. Georges Hill
Northern Hamlet of Michel Village
RM of Meadow Lake
Sakitawak IPCA
Village of Goodsoil
Village of Île-à-la-Croix
Zone 8 Trappers

Fran Desjardin, Billy McLaughlin
Roderick Bear, Kole Norman, Tara Dull
Dean Millard
Christine Overvelde, Lorne Neale
Bob Wilson
Raymond Laliberte
Loretta King
Gerry Kuzyk
Nadine Penney, Emily Poloni
Brenda Nightingale
Niska Hodgson, Robert Follett, Kevin Gillis,
April Lesko, Clifford McLaughlan, Stormy
Kytwayhat, Steve Hankey, Coleton Ethier,
Logan McMahon
Eric Weibel, Jarrett Ouellette
Donna Janvier
Allison Janvier
Ashley Russell, Andrew Barrie
Peter Durocher, Bill Graham
Don Eckel, Marie Klassen
Gerald Roy, Alex Laliberte
Leonard Greenhough

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

Proceedings:

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 AM by Brenda Nightingale.

Brenda Nightingale offered a land acknowledgement and an overview of Mistik's expectations for respectful interactions during the meeting, as well as safety and housekeeping items.

The agenda was adopted (moved by Don Eckel, seconded by Leonard Greenhough, carried).
The field tour notes were revised. Niska H. outlined the change made in relation to information about Mountain Pine Beetle (adopted by Eric Weibel, seconded by Peter Durocher).

Mistik's 2023/24 Operating Year Annual Report – Niska Hodgson

An overview presentation was given on the indicators Mistik uses to measure how well they are doing as well as areas to improve on related to 2023/24 operations. Note that this annual report is still under review by the Forest Service. Final annual reports can be found on Mistik's website at www.Mistik.ca.

Question: What about fire salvage? You said you could but the data says you didn't.

Response: We look at areas that have burned to see if fire salvage is possible. If the wood has too much char (black), the mills can't use it. No salvage is planned from the fires that burned in 2023 or 2025 at this time.

Question: When was the last forest inventory done?

Response: Our current inventory was done over several years. It's now all over 20 years old.

Question: How much is climate change affecting the forest?

Response: There are changes. We see it in the weather patterns. There is also additional risk for forest insect and disease effects.

Question: Some areas have a lot of slash? Why isn't it spread out?

Response: In spruce stands, we pile the slash and burn it. If it is layered too thick, the block will not regenerate well. Hardwood and pine slash are spread throughout the harvest area. It's important that the pine cones get distributed well because they contain the seed for new pine trees.

Question: Why would logs be mulched? Is it because they were left too long?

Response: Mistik doesn't do any mulching. Others may do it to clean up a site or for other reasons.

Question: Does the pulp mill leave logs to dry out (so it's cheaper)?

Response: No, they do not require that the logs be drier to use them or try to manipulate the weight to their advantage.

Question: When roads are reclaimed, can you leave roads open for quads?

Response: If there was a quad trail there before we made a road, yes. We cannot leave new/additional trails if they weren't there beforehand.

Lunch break – Logan McMahon did a presentation of how Mistik is using drones in our work.

Niska continued with the annual report presentation after lunch.

Question: Can you see where roads are reclaimed?

Response: Yes, we can see this in our imagery (aerial photos) and in our new LiDAR layer.

Question: How do you distinguish boundaries on the FMA areas?

Response: We have lines provided by the government in our GIS layer. We use GPS/iPads to navigate on the ground. There are iPads in most harvest equipment now also. We use digital and paper maps.

Question: How are fuel reductions determined/planned?

Response: Mistik will collaborate with a community if they make a request for a fuel break. The wood has to be okay for the mills to use and there has to be enough of it.

Question: Do you calculate areas that don't grow trees?

Response: All areas we harvest must be regenerated and cannot be converted for other uses. We do regeneration surveys and measure the trees to make sure they are growing as they should. The only areas we have that don't grow trees would be gravel pits. When we are done with them, we have to also regenerate those.

Question: What types of trees are allowed for firewood?

Response: Firewood can be taken from top piles (slash) in Mistik's blocks. If it's for your own use, you can take dead or down wood without a permit (no green standing wood). If you want to harvest green wood or sell it, you need a permit.

Question: What is the time allowed for salvage and firewood?

Response: For salvage, we only have about two years before the wood dries out too much or is damaged by insects. For firewood, there is no time limit but we do have to close roads within two years which may limit access to some areas.

Question: When you go into an area for timber, can local people have access?

Response: While our roads are open, yes, you can access those areas. But we can't leave roads open for longer periods if we don't need them any more after that. If you want to have a road left open (to a cabin or rice lake for example), you would have to get a disposition for that road from the Ministry of Environment.

Question: Do you put back an equitable amount of forest that we take out?

Response: Yes, from an area (hectare) perspective we are required to do that. In terms of the number of trees, there would be a higher number of trees growing back after harvesting (when the stand is young) than were there when we harvested (fewer, larger trees at that time).

Question: Are you planning to salvage any fire areas?

Response: No, not at this time.

Question: Who is the renewal trustee?

Response: The trustee for the renewal trust fund is a lawyer in Saskatoon.

Question: Does the board oversee the trust fund?

Response: No, the trustee makes sure all withdrawals are eligible expenses. The fund is audited by an accounting firm and the ministry of environment every year.

Question: Do you know the value of the trust now?

Response: The amount varies throughout the year. Money goes in based on what was harvested, and money comes out to pay for things such as tree planting and surveys. The idea is that there will always be money available to regenerate the forest regardless if Mistik is operating or not.

Question: Regarding diversity, spruce is the worry. Are some areas coming back differently?

Response: Climate is the hardship. Muskegs are drier. We are seeing extreme conditions. We are monitoring to make sure our blocks are growing back as expected. Sometimes we do fill planting if needed (where they are not).

Comment: In June we toured regenerating blocks and seeing what is coming back was very positive!

Operations & Current Affairs – Steve Hankey

- It's been a challenging year for both NorSask and MLMP with the current market conditions. Both mills are working hard to remain competitive.
- NorSask has shifted their market to more domestic sales rather than into the US. No significant reduction in volume at NorSask, just challenging pricing.
- MLMP has been dealing with poor pricing and poor orders and has reduced what they need for deliveries of hardwood. This has resulted in lower volumes for our contractors to cut, putting stress on their business.
- There was a large fire at MLMP last week consumed 105,000m³ of wood under the crane. This was a significant loss. It is hoped that this volume will be replaced with additional harvest this year (but it's still below a typical year for harvest volume).
- Mistik is doing our best to keep contractors viable to ensure our contractor fleet is there when market conditions turn around so we have the capacity to respond to the mills requests for volume.

Question: What was the value of the 100,000m³ that burned?

Response: It's in the millions.

Question: What all burned at the mill?

Response: Just the wood under the crane. No other piles in the yard or mill structures.

Question: Are you anticipating a downturn at NorSask?

Response: The current situation with tariffs is challenging right now. But as far as we know today, things will continue as usual. NorSask has already shifted their sales to more national buyers.

Question: The number of employees in the annual report – is that just at the mills?

Response: That is mill employees, Mistik staff, and contractors combined.

Question: We need more information about how Mistik runs. Can we see an org chart?

Response: We can come do a presentation on who Mistik is and what we do. Please see one of us after the meeting.

Question: Do you have any plans to come north soon?

Response: No, not at this time.

Question: Do you have plans to operate in the air weapons range?

Response: No, we are not permitted to operate in the range.

Question: How many harvesting contractors are there?

Response: About 6 major ones, there are others for tree planting, road construction and maintenance and log hauling.

Certification Update – Kevin Gillis

Kevin gave an overview of the CSA certification standard changing to PEFC. He also did an overview of Mistik audits and chain of custody.

PEFC certification has replaced what was CSA. We've been transitioning our systems over to meet the requirements of PEFC (they are very similar so few changes are needed). Some of the changes are related to alien species, worker safety, wording improvements for clarity in the standard, and measuring how we are doing. There are specific topics that have to be discussed with the PAG. There is a three-year rolling table so not every item has to be discussed every year.

Comment: Mistik does a good job engaging with Indigenous communities. It's appreciated.

Comment: With regard to UNDRIP, the PEFC standard should include appropriate language.

Moose Surveys and Hunting Seasons – Gerry Kuzak

Gerry gave a presentation about how important moose are. Numbers are low right now and are declining across Canada. Low density is considered anything less than 400/1000 Km² and the population growth is relatively static. These low densities can persist for decades.

Question: Which is the better sex animal to shoot?

Response: Shoot the bulls, the cows are the ones to let live.

Question: Why is the season in WMZ 70-76 so long?

Response: It's because of low resident hunter interest and low moose abundance.

Question: Can Indigenous knowledge be added to the moose management plan?

Response: The management plans undergo a review every 5 years. As this plan was recently published, the next review is scheduled for 2030. However, wildlife biologists are always interested in incorporating Indigenous knowledge into wildlife management and would encourage anyone with knowledge they would like to share to reach out.

Question: Who is more responsible for decline in populations – humans or predators?

Response: There are direct and indirect causes. An example of a direct cause is starvation or predation. An indirect cause is landscape change as landscape change may facilitate efficiency of hunters and predators to locate moose.

Question: Do you collect fecal samples?

Response: No, we do not.

The meeting was concluded at 3:00pm.