

An emotionally charged meeting was held Feb. 17 in Glade regarding plans for Kalesnikoff Lumber and Atco Wood Products to log in the Glade watershed. About 60 people turned up for the meeting, the primary purpose of which was to hear a report on the hydrogeomorphic assessment of the watershed.

The report was completed by Kim Green P.Geo., PhD, of Apex Geoscience Consultants Ltd. The purpose of the investigation was intended to assess the likelihood of adverse cumulative impacts to water quantity, quality and timing of flows at the Glade Irrigation District intake and to provide guidance for forest development to limit the risk of such impacts occurring.

The detailed report covers physiography; geology and soils; aspect, slope and elevation distribution; climate and hydrology, historical forest development, disturbance and recovery; and hydraulic geometry.

According to the report, "... the most sensitive portion of the watershed to hydrological impacts associated with forest development is the 1224 ha area south of the north fork stream channel. This area has predominantly west to north aspects and appears to be the source area for extreme floods that are triggered by late-season rain-on-snow events."

The report also states that the proposed harvesting of Atco in the north fork tributary represents no change to the existing risk of a damaging flood event. The block is situated on south aspect slopes along the northern boundary of the watershed.

The report's summary states that, "A total ECA [equivalent clear cut area] of less than 25% in total and 15% for the area south of the north fork channel, when situated on slopes with aspects other than north or northwest and over a range of elevations will not increase the existing risk of a damaging flood at the intake."

When asked by Castlegar News if the companies considered the recommendations in the report as binding and would keep within that 15 to 25 per cent recommendation, Tyler Hodkinson, woodlands manager with Kalesnikoff, stated, "If I went outside Kim's report, and I was brought before my peers, I would be in trouble. What Kim's recommendations are is what I follow." He also explained that her report has a life span of ten years.

Several residents attending the meeting expressed skepticism about the report since it was commissioned by the lumber companies. Disparaging murmurs and comments from the audience forced Green to defend her credentials and 20 years of work in the field of studying watersheds. A group of residents is working toward gathering money in order to pay to have their own assessment done, and even asked if the lumber companies would consider helping to pay for the cost of retaining their own experts.

Kalesnikoff and Atco share the timber rights in the Glade watershed. Both companies are responsible for forest management within the watershed. Forest management is concerned with administrative, economic, legal and social aspects, as well as scientific and technical aspects, such as environmental values, sustainability, silviculture, fire protection and forest regulation.

An issue of contention between the logging company and the residents of Glade revolves around the formation of a working group or committee that would work with the companies during the planning process. At a previous meeting held in September, the companies issued an invitation for residents to form such a group. To date, Glade residents have been unwilling to participate in this manner.

Speakers from the audience were not required to state their names, so cannot be identified in the following quotes, but one speaker summed up the attitude behind the refusal to form the group, "If somebody was to get with you on that working group, they are going to be seen as the guy from Glade that facilitated the logging."

The opposing plans resulted in a circular cycle of residents stating they want to see the plans before they give input and the lumber companies stating they would like the input before they finalize their plans.

Hodkinson explained the next step in a statement after the meeting, "As there was no interest from the residents to participate in the planning process, Kalesnikoff plans to carry out pre-harvest field work this spring and will refer all forest development plans to potentially affected Glade residents later this summer. The objective of this referral is to provide Glade residents an opportunity to identify areas of concern to ensure that concerns are addressed to the extent practicable prior to primary forest activities."

Many residents expressed the hope that somehow the planned logging could still be stopped. In fact, the loudest response and applause of the night came when a speaker stated, "The fact of the matter is, the vast majority of the people in Glade — nobody wants you logging in there at all."

Both companies reiterated this was not a possibility and that logging would commence some time in 2017.

Watershed issues topped the residents' concerns as one speaker stated, "This is our drinking water you are talking about."

Other concerns stated during the meeting had to do with the building of roads including the potential of damage being done in the process and the long term effects of opening up an area including future use such as sledding, quading, dirt biking and other recreational activities that may encroach on the area.

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