

**LEVEL OF DESCRIPTION:**

Series

**No.:**

AU023.022S

**FORMS PART OF:**

AU023 Martha Kostuch fonds

**TITLE:**

Sunpine Forest Products Limited series

**CREATOR:**

Kostuch, Martha

**DATE RANGE:**

1977-2004

**EXTENT:**

3.18 meters of textual records and other material

**ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY/ BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

In 1988 the Government of Alberta and Sunpine Forest Products Ltd. (Sunpine) entered into an unpublicized, tentative agreement in which the Natural Resources Conservation Board would grant a large Forest Management Area (FMA) to Sunpine, if they agreed to process the wood within the Rocky Mountain House, Alberta area. Sunpine spent several years searching for a site and eventually chose land within the Municipal District (MD) of Clearwater. The MD of Clearwater rezoned the land from agricultural to industrial in order to allow Sunpine to build a sawmill and veneer wood processing plant seventeen miles south west of Rocky Mountain House near the community of Strachan. The rezoning violated the municipal plan that had been negotiated at public hearings and Members of the Friends of the West Country Association (FOWC) began legal action, claiming the MD had broken its own by-laws and the *Alberta Planning Act*. The FOWC also began legal action to stop the construction of both the sawmill and plant because an environmental assessment of the area had not been done and truck routes would be on inadequate roads and would pose a danger to the public. In early 1992, the FOWC lost their court battle and their legal action was overturned; however, Sunpine and Alberta Environment decided that the land was not environmentally suitable to build the veneer plant, and therefore only the sawmill would be approved for construction on the original site and, in the future, a separate site would be chosen for the veneer plant.

In May 1992, it was announced that the 7,000 square kilometer Forest Management Area #9200030 was awarded to Sunpine and the FMA agreement would allow Sunpine

to clear cut and to harvest 80 million board feet of timber each year in an area on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains which, was considered a unique stretch of boreal forest by environmentalists because it offered shelter to wildlife that had already been forced out of other areas by industrial development.

After the sawmill was constructed, Sunpine began applying to the Alberta Natural Resources Conservation Board for timber harvesting permits for areas within the FMA. Wanting to ensure that all regulations and environmental concerns were being adhered to, Martha Kostuch asked for copies of the applications, annual operating plans and FMA plans, but was denied. She made multiple applications under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* for these reports and was told her fees would be astronomical. When she applied for fee reductions or waivers and was denied, she sought the assistance of the Alberta Ombudsman. She eventually won her case, and was given copies of all the reports.

Members of the Friends of the West Country Association were concerned about the construction and use of Sunpine's Mainline Road to be built through the foothills to haul logs to the plant. They felt it would devastate wildlife in the area by disrupting animal migration routes, destroy habitat by allowing increased access to off road vehicles, hunters and recreation seekers in the area, and destroy spawning beds if the bridges and temporary water crossings were not constructed properly. Kostuch and FOWC brought legal action against the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Sunpine Forest Products to pre-empt the building of bridges over Prairie Creek and Ram River as part of Sunpine's Mainline Road, unless valid environmental impact assessments of the areas were carried out. FOWC won this action and were able to ensure the proper environmental impact assessments were conducted and adhered to during construction.

By April 1993, a multi-stakeholder location committee was convened, charged with finding a location for building the veneer plant. Kostuch, other members of FOWC and members of the public met with Sunpine to establish the criteria for the location and then put forward their recommendation for the plant location. Once construction began, Kostuch, on behalf of several public consultation committees, met with Sunpine to ensure they adhered to regulations and kept the public informed of progress. Over the years, Kostuch continued to monitor Sunpine's operations to ensure their forestry practices followed environmental regulations.

#### **CUSTODIAL HISTORY:**

In April 2008, Martha Kostuch signed an agreement with Athabasca University to have her records digitized but she passed away before this work could be started. After her death on April 23, 2008, her records went into the custody of her son Edward and in July 2008, he donated the records to Athabasca University, Athabasca, Alberta.

#### **SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

The series consists of material pertaining to the construction of a sawmill and veneer plant by Sunpine Forest Products Ltd. and to its logging operations in FMA #9200030, near Rocky Mountain House, Alberta.

Textual records in this series consist of Sunpine's annual operating plans and forest management plans for areas within FMA #9200030 including; maps, applications from Sunpine to Alberta Natural Resources Conservation Board with attached reports, material received under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, agendas, meeting minutes, correspondence, legal documents, newsletters, brochures, notes, newspaper clippings and posters depicting poorly constructed bridges. As well, much of the material has been annotated by Martha Kostuch.

The photographs, negatives and transparencies depict images of silted in, filled in, polluted and washed out creeks and ditches. As well, there are many images of clear cut logged areas, the Strachan Plant and veneer plant, the Mainline Road, pollution damage to tree tops, aerial photos of logged out foothills, bridges constructed by Sunpine and photos taken during construction. The videotapes were made by The Friends of the West Country about Sunpine. The electronic records include Sunpine's 2004-2006 Annual Operating Plan.

**SOURCE OF TITLE:**

Title taken from the contents of the fonds.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

Series also contains ca. 447 photographs. – ca. 119 negatives. – ca. 100 transparencies. – 68 maps. – 2 videotapes. – 2 posters. – 1 site map. – 1 CD.

**CONSERVATION:**

Conservation copies have been made of some of the newspaper clippings, thermal fax paper and mimeograph paper.

**ARRANGEMENT NOTE:**

Series have been based on the major topics identified from the creator's arrangement, though some records may pertain to a number of series.

**LANGUAGE NOTE:**

The material is in English.

**ACCESS CONDITIONS:**

None.

**USE CONDITIONS:**

Permission for use required. Subject to *The Copyright Act*.

**FINDING AIDS:**

Box list and file list are available. Some of the material is available in electronic form.

**INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING ACCESSIONS:**

2008.015

Further accruals are not expected.

**GENERAL NOTE:**

Information for the administrative history was obtained from the records and from *The Edmonton Journal*, *Calgary Herald* and *Red Deer Advocate* newspapers.

**SUBJECT HEADINGS:**

Actions and defenses  
Environmental impact analysis  
Water - - Law and legislation  
Environmental law  
Forestry law and legislation  
Forest products industry  
Lumber trade  
Log transportation