

Draft Meeting Minutes Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
May 15th, 2023 7:00 p.m.
Hybrid Board Meeting Boundary County Annex Building

Board Members in Attendance:

Carl Petrick, US Forest Service
Chuck Roady, Landowner/Industry
Dick Staples, Mayor, City of Bonners, KVRI Co-Chair
Gary Aitken, Jr., KVRI Co-Chair
Kennon McIntok, Conservation/Environmentalist
Tim Bertling, Boundary County, KVRI Co-Chair
Tim Dougherty, Business & Industry

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Aaron Lawrence, USACE
Austin Terrell, OSC
Barb Moore, Idaho Fish & Game
Ben Robertson, Boundary County
Bill Lillibridge, Idaho Soil and Water Conservation
Caleb Davis, Office of Rep. Fulcher
Chris Bachman Conservation Director, Yaak Valley Forest
Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Darcy Lammers, Citizen
Eddie Whitcomb, U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Emily Barns, IDWR
Ethan Cheng USACE
Greg Hoffman, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Heather Shuravloff, WSU Bear Center
Heiko Jansen, WSU Bear Center
Jake Garringer, Governor Little's Office
Jenna Ditzel, SWC
Jonathan Luhnnow, IDL
Kierstin Cox, KTOI
Kyle Cooper, Stimson Lumber
Leon Basdekas, U.S. Army Corp. Engineers
Marc Klimer, Office of Senator Risch
Michelle Richman, IDWR
Richard Smith, USACE
Rob Morris, IDFG
Robert Akins, IDFG
Ryan Bart, FWS
Theresa Wheat, KTOI, KVRI Facilitator
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County
William Barquin, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

- Introduction and Roll Call at 7:00 p.m.

Heiko Jensen and Heather Shuravloff with the WSU Bear Program Presented on *Conditioned Food Aversion with Odor Association to Mitigate Human-Bear Conflict*.

A study from WSU focusing on using odor association. The study found that a single treatment with TBZ or Ivermectin paired with lemon oil was most effective in creating the aversion, to condition bears to avoid certain food sources. The goal of this strategy is to reduce human-bear conflicts without resorting to population control measures. The results were promising, particularly with wild bears, but did show variations in success rates depending on the timing and season of the study.

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A key proposal was the establishment of base stations equipped with cameras to monitor bear behavior and assess the efficacy of the odor association treatment. Several concerns were raised, including potential harm to humans and farmers using the treatment, the timing of deployment, cost considerations, and individual variations among bears. Additionally, the challenge of managing bear populations in areas where they are not currently present was discussed.

Leon Bedeskas Presented the water management at Libby Dam in relation to the upcoming year's plan. This includes shaping outflow to mimic natural hydrology while balancing refill needs and avoiding double peaks in the river. Concerns were raised about low snowpack levels potentially affecting sturgeon bowls, but plans are in place to adjust to real-time conditions.

Richard Smith, the dam safety program manager for the Seattle District Army Corps of Engineers, provided valuable insight into the management of Libby Dam. He shared the intricate balance between the benefits and potential risks of dam construction, emphasizing the importance of risk assessment, management, and communication in ensuring dam safety.

Jeremy LaGoo from the Weather Service in Spokane concluded with presenting the 2023 seasonal outlook for the Kootenai River Basin. The team discussed online inundation maps for emergency preparation and response, emphasizing the importance of these tools in managing risk associated with dams.

Forestry Updates

Carl Petrick shared updates on several forestry initiatives: Acting Ranger Matt Davis is temporarily absent due to surgery but will resume duties shortly. The work the National Deer Association is doing is Precommercial Thinning (PCT). The Categorical Exclusion (CE) is being worked on by the Bonners Ferry staff to satisfy NEPA requirements to conduct the PCT.

Petrick also revealed that he's been requested to take on a new role as the Forestry Advisor on the Black Hills, given significant issues the region has been facing. This new appointment brings both honor and regret, as he will leave behind valued relationships and ongoing projects.

Regarding staffing changes, Jason Bray is set to start as the permanent Deputy Supervisor in early June, and Heather Degeest will join on a 120-day detail from mid-June. The search for a new Bonners Ferry Ranger District position is underway, with the potential for a lateral re-assignment if a suitable candidate emerges. Petrick concluded by expressing confidence in securing a strong candidate for this role.

Marc Kilmer, from Senator Risch's office, provided a brief legislative update. He highlighted the status of Senator Danes' legislation from Montana, designed to address the Cottonwood decision. The bill is currently under review in the Senate's Energy and Natural Resource Committee, of which Senator Risch is a member. While the bill has passed committee review in previous years, it has yet to secure full Senate approval. The legislation is slated for consideration on Thursday

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- Discussion on Changing Meeting Times, and requests to change the meeting times were discussed to 6:00 pm instead of 7:00pm. Members were in agreement that the time should be changed.

Meeting was called at 8:45 p.m.

Meeting Record Prepared by Kierstin Cox