

Draft Meeting Record
KVRI WAC Subcommittee Meeting
April 11, 2024 10:00 a.m.
Boundary County Annex Building

Attendance:

Aimee Kessler, Idaho Fish & Game (IDFG)
Brittany Morlin, US Fish & Wildlife Services (IDFWS)
Dave Gray, Citizen
George Shutes, Idaho Transportation Department (IDL)
Kennon McClintock, Conservation/Environmentalist
Kierstin Cox, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, (KTOI) KVRI Reporting Secretary
Merritt Horsmon, IDFG
Norm Merz, IDFG
Robert Akins, IDFG
Sarah Thompson, IDFG
Shelby Therian, KTOI
Sue PaDelford, Citizen
Tanner Williams, Vital Ground Foundation
Theresa Wheat, KTOI, KVRI Facilitator

- Welcome and introductions at 10:00 a.m.

Norm Merz, IDFG led the meeting, focusing on McArthur Lake as the next project for the group in Boundary County.

- **WAC Committee Background:**

- Established in 2011, following studies on roadkill densities funded by the Yellowstone to Yukon initiative.
- Initial projects included discussion on a wildlife crossing at McArthur Lake and assessment of a mobile animal detection system aimed at reducing roadkill.

- **Mobile Animal Detection System:**

- Discussed the effectiveness and challenges of the system.
- Noted good performance in detecting animals but failed to alter driver behavior.

- **Wildlife Underpasses and Fencing:**

- Review of the Copeland underpasses installed in 2004 and wildlife crossing data.
- Recent repairs and extensions to the Copeland fence to improve barrier integrity.

- **Current Projects and Planning:**

- Focus on extending fencing at McArthur Lake to funnel wildlife underneath the new bridge.
- Detailed planning for extending the fencing at McArthur Lake by about 0.75 miles north and 1.75 miles south, incorporating feedback from past measures.

- **Interaction with Private Landowners:**

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- Discussions on how to manage access to properties affected by new fencing, including considerations of gates versus cattle guards. Emphasis on the need to coordinate with private landowners regarding the fence installation. Plans to contact landowners proactively before applying for funding, with an aim to handle any concerns regarding property access and maintenance.
- Proposed method of initial formal letters to introduce the project and set up a personal contact with landowners to address concerns and seek cooperation.

- **Financial and Logistical Considerations:**
 - Addressed the costs associated with fencing extensions and the practical challenges of installation and maintenance.

- **Fence Placement and Maintenance:**
 - Discussion on placing fences at the end of clear zones to prevent timber from damaging the fences. Concerns were raised about the need to manage timber near fences, especially in dense areas that could lead to maintenance challenges.

- **Community and Stakeholder Engagement:**
 - Importance of community support and stakeholder engagement underscored. KVRI will be asked to write a support letter later when soliciting grants.
 - Discussions on the efficacy of face-to-face meetings versus written communications in building relationships with landowners and other stakeholders.

- **Railroad Coordination:**
 - The need for coordination with railroad companies discussed, as their operations can affect wildlife movement and safety. The group expressed a desire to establish better communication with railroad authorities to integrate their infrastructure with wildlife crossing plans.

The meeting emphasized continued efforts to enhance road safety and reduce wildlife-related accidents through strategic infrastructure improvements.

Meeting was called at 11:20 a.m.

Meeting Record Prepared by Kierstin Cox