

**Meeting Minutes Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative  
January 10, 2022  
7:00 p.m.  
Hybrid Board Meeting Boundary County Annex Building**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Bob Blanford, Business/Industry  
Carl Petrick, U.S. Forest Service  
Chip Corsi, Idaho Fish & Game  
Chuck Roady, Landowner (Industrial)  
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner, KVRI Co-Chair  
Dave Gray, Social/Cultural/Historical(Alt.)  
Dick Staples, Mayor of Bonners Ferry, KVRI Co-Chair  
Ed Atkins, Corp. Ag/Landowner  
Erik Olson, Soil Consv/Ag Landowner  
Gary Aitken Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Vice Chair, KVRI Co-Chair  
Kennon McClintock, Conservationist/Env (Alt.)

**Agency/Others in Attendance:**

Carol Kriebs, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Dave Wattenbarger, Boundary County Citizen  
Gregory Hoffman, USACE  
Hilary Whitcomb, U. S. Fish & Wildlife  
Kevin Knauth, U.S. Forest Service (Alt.)  
Kim Pierson, U.S. Forest Service  
Leon Basdekas, USACE  
Michelle Caviness, USDA  
Sara Straub, Kootenai Wildlife Refuge  
Sarah Hendricks, Office of Species Conservation  
Scott Soultz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Shawn Young, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Tim Bertling, Boundary County Commissioner  
Tim Patton, Boundary County Citizen  
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County Commissioner, (Alt.)  
Karen Schumacher, Recording Secretary KVRI & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Rhonda Vogl opened the meeting at 7:03pm and gave the floor to Dick Staples who called for introductions. Thanks were given to Dave Wattenbarger for his many years of service on the KVRI board and a welcome was given to his replacement, Erik Olson. Following introductions Dick asked if there were any changes or comments regarding the November KVRI draft minutes. None were had and the minutes passed by consensus.

This meeting marks the 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary for KVRI. Rhonda asked all to move to the front of the room (around the screen showing zoom attendees) for a photograph after which Happy Birthday KVRI cake was served and enjoyed! As a tribute to this occasion, those who had been involved with KVRI since it's inception shared memories. Chip Corsi wrote and

shared a poem that brought smiles and chuckles to all.

Dick gave the floor to our presenters from the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers. The presentation can be found at [KVRI | KVRIID \(kvrivcollaborative.com\)](https://kvriv.kvriid.kvricollaborative.com) by scrolling down to the January 10, 2022 block.

Greg Hoffman introduced Leon Basdekas, who is new to his position with USACE. Leon has 29 years of experience in water and shared his background with us. He is excited to meet us in person.

Leon reviewed the geography of the waters impacted by operations at the Libby Dam. He went on to give a brief overview of the final Columbia River Systems Operation (CRSO) environmental impact statement (EIS), which was finalized September, 2020 and can be found at: [CRSO Home \(army.mil\)](https://crso.army.mil).

The CRSO EIS includes several adjustments to Libby operations:

The general concept and shape of Libby Dam operations are similar, but some of the specific calculations have been adjusted.

- Winter: “Modified Draft at Libby”
- Spring/summer: Changes to VarQ refill calculation method.
- Summer: Sliding scale for Kooconusa end-of- September target elevation

Greg reviewed several graphs showing projected and actual flows as well as temperature, flow and elevation information.

Following the presentation questions included:

- Dan Dinning asked about the concern for space during operational run off. Are they building in extra space now or later? It was answered that they are guiding decisions with consideration of volumes respective of each month’s activity and responding with consideration of that and historical models.
- Ed Atkins asked if they had considered seepage as a part of the flood stage numbers. Ed provided the information that water above the 1750-mark results in surface water (seepage) and has duration that is significant to the fields. It was stated that while they are aware of the variances, they had not heard it explained like that and agreed that we live in a complex basin. Leon looks forward to being able to come out to our area to familiarize himself with this and other related events.
- Bob Blanford asked if there was coordination happening with Canada for the flow / backflow events with Kootenai Lake. It was answered that ideally there would be and that there are negotiations still in process. The 38<sup>th</sup> order treaty is in need of updating and that coordination is just getting started to make updates. They are looking forward to this process ramping up.

### **Sub-Committee Updates:**

*Forestry – Kevin Knauth – U.S. Forest Service*

There are no current NEPA projects

- Westside Restoration Project
  - FY22 – 1 to 2 sales depending on volume
    - Expecting 13mmbf

- Recreation Project Activity will begin
- Road Work associated with projects will begin
- Winter Logging
  - Robinson Lake
    - Snow has made it possible to operate more safely in sensitive areas
- Over Snow Vehicle Planning is in process
  - Jessie Berner heading this up
    - Priest Lake
    - Sandpoint
    - Bonners Ferry
  - Kick Off meeting was held before Christmas
    - More site-specific meetings to be scheduled

Kevin said that Jessie had asked if there might be a good location for a site-specific meeting for the Bonners Ferry community and also for a working group meeting. It was suggested that KVRI could act as a general facilitator prior to the community meeting to help with spreading the word and generating local support. Dan Dinning thought that the Armory building would work. Kevin agreed that local support was key to the success and he would pass on the suggestion and let us know.

Kevin added that the other things going on were:

- The Great American Outdoors Act and Infrastructure Bills with hoped for funding to the community. While there are still a lot of unknowns, they are preparing to utilize any funds received.

Dan Dinning asked if we are at the end of the CFLR dollars.

- Kevin explained that yes, the project ended in FY21 (September). The Idaho Panhandle National Forest submitted a proposal with the backing of the collaborative group and made the list of selected projects. The Forest is hoping to receive some funding in FY22 to allow the continuation of good restoration work across the forest, including Boundary County.

Dan also asked if Kevin had a ball park figure for the commercial volume over the last 10 years.

- Kevin estimated between 19 – 20 mmbf per year coming to approximately 190 – 200 mmbf. Kevin confirmed to Dan that timber was sold out of Boulder Creek.

There were no other sub-committee updates.

Chuck Roady, acting on his own personal behalf, provided a brief overview of the Myrtle Creek Preserve and stated that he and David Anderson were working on a proposal to restore active management to the preserve which would allow for hunting and fishing on the approximately 24,000 acres in the drainage.

Chuck explained that the original reason for creating the preserve and the fact that it is a municipal watershed are not connected.

Increased numbers of predators and concerns about diseases such as Chronic Wasting Disease, EHD, and Blue-tongue were named as reasons to again actively manage the wildlife

in the Myrtle Creek drainage.

Chuck said he understands that this proposal could move forward by two different processes:

- Legislative – via the Idaho Legislature
  - It is too late to introduce for the FY-22 Legislative Session to use this avenue
- Rulemaking – via the Idaho Fish & Game Commission

Chip Corsi of Idaho Fish and Game added that there is a third option

- Written Permission
  - This is year by year and offers a bridge for a long-term solution

### **Agency Updates:**

*Idaho Fish & Game – Chip Corsi*

Of note was that last month the State of Montana submitted a petition to delist the NCDE recovery zone for grizzly bears. This may raise some concerns about the long-term potential of being able to delist the Selkirk and/or Cabinet Yaak recovery zones. Recommendations are being worked on to present to the Fish and Game Commission at the January meeting to be held at the end of the month.

Also noted to Chip from Norm Merz was that Idaho Dept. of Transportation is accelerating on the McArthur Lake highway project. As a result of the clearing, a small timber sale is anticipated.

Dan Dinning asked for an update on the CWD testing. Chip said that although the 9-day hunt tags sold quickly, the hunting wasn't as successful as anticipated. Despite that, they feel they have a large enough sample to get a good perspective on the distribution of diseased animals. They are still waiting on lab results but know that there were 2 more deer identified from the same area as the previous case was.

There were no other agency updates.

### **Congressional Updates:**

There were no congressional updates

No other updates were had and the meeting was called by Rhonda Vogl at 8:40 pm

Karen Schumacher, KTOI/KVRI Recording Secretary