

**Draft Meeting Minutes Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative**  
**October 17, 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  
Chuck Roady, Landowner/Industry  
Dan Dinning, Boundary County, KVRI Co-Chair Dave Bobbitt,  
Idaho Fish & Game  
Dick Staples, Mayor, City of Bonners Ferry, KVRI Co-Chair  
Ed Atkins, Corp. Ag/Landowner  
Eric Olson, Soil/Conservation  
Kennon McClintock, Conservationist/Environ. (Alt.) Sandy  
Ashworth, Social, Cultural, Historical

**Agency/Others in Attendance:**

Ashley South, Yaak Valley  
Austin Terrell, Office of Species Conservation  
Barb Moore, Idaho Fish & Game  
Brittani Rosas, Vital Ground  
Caleb Davis, Office of Rep. Fulcher  
Carson Watkins, Idaho Fish & Game  
Cassie Olson, Boundary Soil Conservation District Chris  
Bachman, Yaak Valley  
Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Darcy Lammers,  
Private Citizen  
Dave Wattenbarger, Private Citizen  
Debe Vanderlip, Private Citizen  
Frank Edelman, Idaho Forest Group  
Jeff Gilberg, Private Citizen  
Jeremy Gaffield, Idaho Fish & Game  
Joshua Uriarte, Office of Species Conservation Karen Roetter,  
Office of Senator Crapo  
Ken Vanden Heuvel, Private Citizen  
Kevin Knauth, U.S. Forest Service (Alt.)  
Leon Basdekas, U.S. Army Corp. Engineers  
Lucas Schell, Private Citizen  
Marc Kilmer, Office of Senator Risch  
Mark Sauter, Private Citizen  
Micah Ellstrom, Idaho Fish & Game  
Mike Sheppard, Private Citizen  
Rob Morris, Idaho Fish & Game

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Scott Soultz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Shannon Brinkman, U.S. Fish & Wildlife  
Shelby Hunter, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Tanya Kraus, Private Citizen  
Tim Bertling, Boundary County Commissioner  
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group  
Wayne Kasworm, U.S. Fish & Wildlife  
William Barquin, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Dan Dinning Called the meeting to order at 7:00 and facilitated introductions in the room and Theresa Wheat assisted zoom attendees in their introductions

Following introductions, Dan asked if there were any corrections or comments for September 19th Draft minutes. None were had and the minutes passed by consensus.

Dan introduced Barb Moore, Regional Wildlife Biologist with Idaho Fish & Game, out of the Coeur D'Alene office to provide an update on the Grizzly Bear activities this season and to discuss plans for the future. Barb's presentation can be found on the KVRI website under the October meeting block at: <https://www.kvricollaborative.com/kvri>.

Barb acknowledged the help of those with "boots on the ground work" done by Jeremy Gaffield, Rob Morris and Shane Robinson for responding to landowners and in dealing with conflicts.

Before reviewing 2022 information, Barb gave an overview of the process followed when livestock is involved in a grizzly bear incident. They first conduct an on-site investigation to determine what predator might be involved and then, when it's determined that it was a grizzly bear, a plan is made jointly for how they are going to respond. The plan developed was done so with Wildlife Services and in consultation with USFWS, Wayne Kasworm.

Part of the plan in response to livestock depredation is to consider and implement some or all:

- Temporary Electric Fencing
- Traps
- Remote Cameras

Cost-share programs are available for landowners to establish a permanent electric fence to protect their livestock or other attractants.

During 2022 there were 21 depredation events (17 in Boundary, 4 in Bonner County) compared to an average of 2 depredations per year over the last 5 years.

Although it is supposed that a lesser number of bears are responsible for the greater number of incidents, it was acknowledged that incidents are increasing.

Incidents from 2022 were:

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- 15 Livestock
- 4 Beehives
- 2 Grain Bins

2 male grizzly bears were euthanized this season due to repeated offenses on livestock.

Bear awareness and conflict avoidance information was provided to landowners experiencing conflict and numerous community groups and organizations during the 2022 season.

Tim Dougherty asked about the state of Idaho's position on compensation to the landowner for depredation killing from grizzly bears and or wolves.

Carson Watkins responded with the information that compensation should be sought through USDA [Farm Services](#).

Dan Dinning asked if the issues experienced with NIXLE alerts this summer were fixed. It was stated that the issues were corrected, and Dan went on to provide historical insight of the perception of grizzly bears being that when we go back to when the grizzly bear was listed in this community, they were despised because they were blamed for creating road closures and limiting access. But there's been somewhat of a social change to accepting them with the idea that we are waiting for some indication that we are nearing the success of the protection measures.

Karen Schumacher asked about work possible for very large landowners. Scott Soultz responded saying that there is work on the eastern front (Montana) with Grizzlies and large property owners with a lot of history of how to work with grizzly using electric fencing, dogs, you name it. The history is out there in this country, and we have a real opportunity to learn from all those who have done past work. Scott also made the point that our community would benefit from having a permanent, long term FTE position for Grizzly Bear management.

In closing Scott wanted to convey that the Kootenai Tribe currently, and historically has provided labor and materials (electric fencing) towards the mitigation of grizzly bear incidents but that they were not contacted at all this past summer during the numerous incidents.

Discussion followed regarding the mechanisms and hoped for solutions for getting a full-time employee.

Wayne Kasworm of U.S. Fish and Wildlife was introduced to provide a brief background on the bears of the season. His presentation can be found on the KVRI website, under the October meeting block at: <https://www.kvricollaborative.com/kvri>

It was asked if the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk regions were considered separate units for consideration of delisting. Wayne said that at this time it is because it wasn't believed that bears interacted between the two regions. He went on to say that now they know that grizzly do interact between the two and that it is interesting information to consider for delisting.

Christy Johnson Hughes of US Fish & Wildlife shared that USFW had met with the Fish and Game offices and talked about how to be more proactive in moving forward with getting the Grizzly Bear delisted.

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In the recovery plan we have recovery criteria that we have to meet so one of the things that will be discussed at the upcoming The Interagency Grizzly Bear (IGBC) Selkirk Cabinet Yaak Subcommittee meeting is on November 29th and is about the management plan for after delisting and some of the steps that we need to take for management in order to achieve those recovery goals. The proposal is to do a conservation strategy to outline this to help answer some of these questions we're bringing up here that we have also talked about internally and with other partners:

- Fencing
- Range Riders for large acreages
- Education and Outreach

Christy concluded with stating we have bears on the landscape we have more people on the landscape and there is a potential for a continuing trend of increased conflict over time.

**Sub-Committee Updates:**

*Forestry- Kevin Knauth- U.S. Forest Service updated all on current work:*

- Busy in the woods at Twenty Mile with continuing education work there
- Katka work continuing
- Initial work being setup for timber sale on the Westside project
- They are hoping to do pile burning so that units are ready for planting in the spring but are waiting for a little bit of snow to get on the ground before doing that

**Before moving on Dan wanted all to know that the Pacific Northwest Trail Management Plan is up for public input. A significant amount in Boundary County – restriction implemented could impede some activities.**

**Congressional Updates:**

*Karen Roetter of Senator Crapo's office:* Nothing to report

*Marc Kilmer of Senator Risch's office:* Their office, in conjunction with other congressional offices, are working at getting the Port Hill hours of operation expanded past five o'clock. We are hoping that they will understand how detrimental the decision to keep the closing at 5:00 o'clock is for the those that entry.

*Caleb Davis of Representative Fulcher's office* echoed what Marc had said and supported any of the general public who might have further input regarding personal experiences that the early closure of Port Hill has impacted.

**Agency Updates:**

*Carl Petrick, U.S. Forest Service* The national deer association hired a local person, Brad French, who will be starting to work on doing the pre commercial thinning. Carl stated that their office is trying to figure out how to cobble together bits and pieces of money to get that thing off the ground because even though we're promised lots of money we haven't seen any yet and we're still under continuing

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resolution. They are hopeful that they will see money later in the year.

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*Kevin Knauth – Fire update:* The fire is currently at 24,000 acres and change right now. Conditions are still favoring active behavior up high where the fire is exposed to sun and wind.

We are looking at a forecast that's going to bring a weather change, both cooler and wetter weather, it is expected to see it Friday evening into Saturday producing snow above 6000 feet on Saturday and lightly Sunday at the 2500-foot elevation meaning that it won't be down on the valley floor but pretty much right at the bench line.

The team is assessing the continued need for the hoses that are down in people's yards and up on the dozer lines. The incoming weather signals that we can start to pull a bit more of the hoses out of the lower areas where we're not really seeing a lot of fire advancement downhill towards homes and private lands. The goal would be that that by the time that weather event moves in, we can remove a good deal of those pumps and that hose before it gets wet and covered by snow.

*Carson Watkins, U.S. Forest Service* Gave an update on the on-going pheasant stocking and also stated that since hunting seasons are in full swing, a lot of staff are out in the field. Carson updated efforts that will occur in response to the on-going Chronic Wasting Disease concern. Biological check stations will occur in November for CWD surveillance. CWD was detected in Idaho for the first-time (central Idaho) and then also have it to the east of Idaho over in Libby Montana.

Carson also mentioned that there are concerns that are affecting the habitat in the lower priest river downstream of priest lake. They are looking at why and then also looking at remediation actions that that are supported by the local community.

*Leon Basdekas of the USACE* stated current level to be at 4K

Next meeting will be November 21.

Tim Dougherty spoke as a private citizen, extolling the great works that KVRI has done in the past with our community, community partners and agencies. Tim expressed his concern about the future of KVRI with respect to the upcoming election. He asked that all make an effort to vote.

There were no further questions and the meeting was called at 8:55 p.m.