|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Board Members in Attendance:** | | | |
| Dick Staples, Mayor, City of Bonners Ferry, KVRI Co-Chair | | | |
| Dan Dinning, Boundary County, KVRI Co-Chair | | | |
| Kevin Knauth, U.S. Forest Service (Alt.) | | | |
| Chuck Roady, Landowner/Industry  Dave Bobbitt, Idaho Fish & Game | | | |
| Ed Atkins, Corp. Ag/Landowner | | | |
| Bob Blanford, Business & Industry | | | |
| Sandy Ashworth, Social, Cultural, Historical | | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Agency/Others in Attendance:** | | | |
| Caleb Davis, Office of Rep. Fulcher | | | |
| Carson Watkins, Idaho Fish & Game | | | |
| Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish & Wildlife | | | |
| Dave Wattenbarger, Private Citizen | | | |
| Frank Edelman, Idaho Forest Group | | | |
| Jake Garringer, Office of Governor Little | | | |
| Karen Roetter, Office of Senator Crapo | | | |
| Leon Basdekas, U.S. Army Corp. Engineers | | | |
| Marc Kilmer, Office of Senator Risch | | | |
| Mike Roetter, Private Citizen | | | |
| Bob Smathers, Idaho Farm Bureau | | | |
| Jessie Berner, Idaho Forest Group | | | |
| Robert Akins, Idaho Fish & Game | | | |
| Norm Merz, Idaho Fish & Game | | | |
| Wally Cossairt, Boundary County Commissioner | | | |
| Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group | | | |
| Theresa Wheat, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI Admin. Dir. | | |  |
| Karen Schumacher, KVRI Recording Secretary | | | |

Dan Dinning Called the meeting to order at 7:01 and facilitated introductions in the room and Karen Schumacher assisted zoom attendees in their introductions. Dan then introduced Theresa Wheat as the new KVRI facilitator and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Administrative Director. Theresa shared a brief background and said she looked forward to getting to know everyone.

Following introductions, Dan asked if there were any corrections or comments for the July 18th Draft minutes. None were had and the minutes passed by consensus.

Dan introduced Jessie Berner, Sandpoint District Ranger, to provide an update for the Kaniksu Over-snow Vehicle Proposed Action. The Forest Service’s 2015 Over-Snow Vehicle Rule made designating trails and areas mandatory for over-snow use as well, and established guidelines for how it should be accomplished. Winter travel planning is the process by which the Forest Service designates specific trails and areas for OSV use. Jessie’s presentation can be found at: [KVRI | KVRIID (kvricollaborative.com)](https://www.kvricollaborative.com/kvri) in the September meeting block.

Jessie explained the project includes the areas of:

* Bonners Ferry Ranger District
* Priest Lake Ranger District
* Sandpoint Ranger District

It was made clear that the proposed action is a starting point for the agency to make the plan. It is not a decision and allows them to review and consider the comments from the public. The deadline for comments to be submitted was September 15. They have received, roughly, 135 comments and could receive more via mail from those that postmarked their comments by the 15th.

The comments received have been initially categorized into these areas:

* General
* Special Access
* Recreation
* Recreation Areas
* Social/Economic
* Wildlife

The next step is the effects analysis at which time they will review the proposed approach forprioritizing potential problems and their resolution.

Norm Merz commented that he had been a part of the working team putting together this proposed action and felt it was one of the very best efforts he had experienced in his career. The group successfully bridged differences to find common ground.

There were no questions and Dan introduced Kevin Knauth to provide an update on The Kootenai River Complex Fire.

Kevin shared a map of the fire and explained that four different fires had merged into one. Eneas Peak, Russell Mountain, Scotch Creek, and Trout Creek Fires started out separately and are now one. Those fires, in combination with the fire on Katka, are now the Kootenai River Complex fire.

The fire coverage area is now at 21,000 acres and carries a suppression cost of 7.47 million.

The primary value was, and continues to be, homes. They are also including efforts to protect private timber. The Bureau of Land Management was consulted about the timber holdings they have in that area and prefer to have the fire spread as opposed to dragging lines through their stands.

Kevin went on to explain that they are looking at re-establishing the road access to Ball and Trout Creek. Blackened trees are falling at a pretty consistent rate so they are exercising caution. When it is feasible, they will assess the area for possible harvest. The first goal is to cut hazardous trees and get the roads back open for the public. They hope to leave some of those burned trees down on the ground to help stabilize the slopes.

Q: Do they have an estimate of the amount of timber base impacted by the fires?

A: No, that they do not have good access yet.

Dan Dinning asked that consideration be given to bringing in community members to participate in discussions to look at the way in which the forest service manages resources allocated to fire. He suggested that going forward the KVRI Subcommittee for Forestry could serve as the forum for those discussions.

Chuck Roady spoke about the amount of timber in the complex area that had been targeted years ago for harvest but not harvested due to restrictions. He suggested the consideration of using the now available state of emergency funds to assist with time sensitive salvage efforts.

Kevin stated that while they are certainly not closing the door on that idea, they have had no recent luck in selling “black timber”. He expressed the need to find a balance between giving up green product to salvage.

Dan suggested further exploring these options at the next Forestry Subcommittee meeting.

**Sub-Committee Updates:**

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

Alta Lumber, out of Naples, Idaho got the bid on the first timber sale out of the Westside Restoration Project. They are working on the lower portion of Snow Creek at this time.

Kevin Knauth was asked of the status of the Bog Creek Road project, which he stated due to a culvert failure on the road, that it was going to have to be re-engineered and re-installed, that it was doubtful the project would be finished in the Fall of 2022.

**New Business:** Proposed 2023 KVRI meeting dates are available for consideration and were printed and available. Karen will send out the dates to the board as well.

**Congressional Updates:**

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

*Marc Kilmer of Senator Risch’s office:* Nothing to report

*Caleb Davis of Representative Fulcher’s office* Wildfire recovery act passed the house and is now on to senate with the focus being cost share for fire management system stating that the federal share not less than 75%.

*Jake Garringer of Governor Little’s office* Nothing to report

**Agency Updates:**

Christy Johnson-Hughes of U.S. Fish & Wildlife had no particular update but did share that funds were forthcoming to allow for increasing staff.

*Dave Bobbitt of Idaho Fish & Game* shared that in July the Commissioners voted unanimously to open the Myrtle Creek watershed.

Dave turned the updates over to *Carson Watkins.* Carson stated his appreciation for Rob Morris, our grizzly bear conflict management resource, for his efforts in a time at which more bear incidents then ever are needing mitigation. It was reported that two adult male grizzlies were recently euthanized due to repeated incidents involving livestock loss.

*Robert Akins* of Idaho Fish & Game updated the group on the latest Bees to Bears efforts in knocking back weeds and planting native species. He noted that the plants are growing and things are looking good.

Robert also noted that the Boundary Wildlife Management Area (WMA), [Boundary-Smith Creek WMA | Idaho Fish and Game](https://idfg.idaho.gov/wma/boundary-smith-creek) is very dry. Part of that is due to aging/faulty water structures. Funding is available for repairs and they hope to have that done in a couple of months. A new parking area has been constructed and will increase safety.

The hunting blind at McArthur Lake will be available again and ADA repairs have been made. The area has been popular and ADA access well received. Reservations are suggested.

*Norm Merz* of Idaho Fish and Game provided an update on the upcoming Pheasant Youth Hunt scheduled for October 1st. The week after is when pheasant is open to all and goes through December 31st. They will be doing weekly bird releases.

*Leon Basdekas of the USACE* provided an update on water flow and the Libby Dam. Flow is 113% of average (June 144%, July 152% and August 110%). The dam is now at 8300CFS. Outflows will remain at 6.3 kcfs through Friday, September 30 and will begin decreasing to a minimum flow of 4.0 kcfs following the conclusion of September operations. The projected end of September elevation is expected to fall within the range of 2448.75-2449.0 feet. Outflows are expected to remain at 4.0 kcfs for the month of October. Additionally, projected inflows and reservoir operations at Libby Dam through the fall can be found here: <https://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nws/hh/www/kot_esp.html>

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

Karen Schumacher – Recording Secretary