

Final Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
September 21, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance:

Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner and KVRI Co-chair
Angela Cooper, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Vice-Chair & (Alt.) KVRI Co-chair
Chip Corsi, Idaho Fish & Game
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry
Jeanne Higgins, U.S. Forest Service-IPNF
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests
Ed Atkins Jr., Corporate Agriculture/Landowner
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation/Landowner
Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Karen Schumacher, Recording Secretary KVRI & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Kevin Knauth, (Alt.) Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service
Jeffrey Lau, North Idaho Shared Stewardship Coordinator, IDL
Carol Kriebs, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Victor Martinez, Bonners Ferry Herald
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group
Jonathan Luhnow, Idaho Dept. of Lands
Norm Merz, Idaho Fish and Game
Karen Roetter, Senator Mike Crapo's Office
Marc Kilmer, Representative Russ Fulcher's Office
Jake Garringer, Office of the Governor
Shannon Ehlers, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Wally Cossairt, (Alt.) Boundary County Commissioner
Robert Akens, Idaho Fish and Game
Christy Johnson-Hughes, Fish & Wildlife
Regan Plumb, Kaniksu Land Trust
Gregory Hoffman, U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers
Lynda Fioravanti, Private Citizen
Heather Fuller, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Bob Smathers, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation
Mitch Silvers, Senator Mike Crapo's Office
Brandon Diller, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Brandon Glaza, U.S. Forest Service

Opening: Rhonda Vogl opened the meeting at 7:00P.M

Introduction of board members present was done.

July 20 KVRI minutes approved by consensus.

Jeff Lau, Coordinator for North Idaho Shared Stewardship was introduced as the presenter. Jeff explained that his was a new position designed to move shared stewardship along. His presentation can be found on the KVRI website at:

https://ce80e3bb-ef95-4104-a7b6-c14e4894f6aa.filesusr.com/ugd/f73fd8_a22452c97ba0442a8145824228fc3e8b.pdf

In December of 2018, Governor Little, USDA Under Secretary Hubbard, Regions One and Four Foresters and Idaho Department of Lands Director signed the US Shared Stewardship agreement intended to increase the work done together for forest health across the state. Additional information can be found at:

<https://www.idl.idaho.gov/forestry/shared-stewardship/>

Jeff focused his presentation on the North Idaho landscape which is approximately two million acres in size. Approximately 51% is privately owned, 41% is publicly owned and 8% is combined Tribal and other. This highlights the need to coordinate with our cross-boundary partners for meaningful, measurable outcomes across the landscape.

Goals Reviewed:

- Jointly work with other Stakeholders...
- Collaborate on mutually agreed upon projects...
- Jointly identify 2 meaningful-landscape areas to focus efforts...
- By 2025, **DOUBLE** the annual acres treated on National Forests and **PROMOTE** cross- boundary work on other lands within the priority Landscapes

Jeff discussed the steps designed to help meet these goals:

- Communicate
 - Developed stronger relationships and ways to best use each other's resources to maximize the collective good
- Collaborate
 - Forest health needs identified
- Define/Identify Common Land Management Objective(s)
 - We can't focus everywhere at once

- Anchor in to things already invested in
- Short, Mid and Long-term goals were needed
- Make use of 5-year action plans already developed/identified
- Share
 - Each agency's 5-year plans were shared and reviewed
- Plan
 - Focal Areas
 - Project areas that all partners have agreed to focus on

Southwest Bonner County Focal Area

- *FS-Scattered Old House (NEPA-Cleared)*
- *FS-Backlogged PCT/Fuels (NEPA-Cleared)*
- *FS-Scattered Lands (Pending Decision FY21)*
- *IDL Timber Sales & Fuels*
- *Bonner County-Hoodoo Valley Project*
- *Stimpson LLC-Clagstone Meadows*
- *NRCS's EQUIP Projects*

Proposed Greater Honey Badger Focal Area

- *FS-Kootenai Fuels (NEPA-Cleared)*
- *FS-Backlogged PCT/Fuels (NEPA-Cleared)*
- *FS-Honey Badger (Pending Decision FY21)*
- *IDL Timber Sales & Fuels*
- *Kootenai County*
- *NRCS's EQUIP Projects*

It was noted that a focal area for Boundary County has not yet been identified and this is more due to timing then intent.

And the last step – Implement:

1. The effect of focusing on areas across multiple agencies in a collaborative manner is highly productive.

Examples that KVRI has set have helped them in their processes.

Cross boundary management is just good land management. This is an easy sell to folks that are investing collaboratively and want a larger scale impact.

Tim Dougherty supported the use of shared stewardship and gave the Westside Restoration Project that includes the Caribou and Snow Creek as a real good example for focus.

Jeanne Higgins commented and stated her appreciation to Tim for bringing up the Westside Project. Based on work going on and the various ownerships of land, Jeanne felt it would be really helpful if we could add that as a focal area and that it is time to get that put on the map. She mentioned that the possible grant opportunities would be especially helpful to private landowners wanting to treat their lands but perhaps not having the funds to do so.

It was agreed that Jeff would move forward with adding the Westside project as a focal point with the assistance of Dan Dinning in working with the newly appointed Emergency Management person.

Appreciation was voiced for Jeff's presentation and the topic on the KVRI agenda by Jeanne Higgins.

Sub-committee Updates:

Forestry Update – Kevin Knauth

Active Sites include:

- Camp Robin
 - Active Timber sale
- Hellroaring
 - Active Timber sale (until winter moves in on us)
- DeerStew
 - Should be complete in a couple of weeks

Of note is the completion of the work done on 20-mile road up to Black Mountain and over to Boulder Meadows which is a vast improvement and all are encouraged to take a trip up to see.

It was mentioned that due to limited capacity it is difficult for them to be everywhere and get all things done. Idaho Department of Lands has been very helpful in this as well as with the Westside Restoration. They have helped to do layout and fine tuning of units as we move through NEPA.

- FY20 Timber Sales

- Boulder Dash
- Robin Hood
- FY21 Expected- Both out of the Boulder Creek Project
 - Timbuck Stew
 - Idamont

KVRI Forestry Sub-Committee meeting is planned for Thursday, 9/24/2020 at 1:15. The public will be able to ask questions on the Westside Restoration Project. A packet will be sent out via email by KVRI prior to the meeting.

- Bear Management Unit Updates
 - Grouse Creek
 - This is a three-phase project starting this year
 - Idaho Department of Lands has been very helpful with contract packages
 - Phase One of the road restoration is being completed now
 - Phase Two will be awarded in FY21
 - Phase Three will be awarded in FY22
 - Bluegrass – tied to Bog Creek EIS
 - FY21 looking at awarding contract for road storage on the Priest Lake system of roads
 - FY22 looking at awarding contract for road storage in Bonners Ferry area

Rhonda Vogl thanked Kevin and asked if there were any questions. It was mentioned that Jonathan Luhnnow of the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) was with us in the meeting and that it was important to recognize the fact that there were several mentions of IDL during our meeting and noting that they are greatly appreciated.

Tim Dougherty voiced appreciation for the job done on the Black Mountain Roads.

Dan Dinning asked if the changes of acreage in and out for the Westside Restoration Project would be highlighted in the packet Keven was sending out. Kevin confirmed that they would.

Dan also asked for confirmation for the number of board feet sold.

- Two Sales in FY20

- Boulder Dash
- Camp Robin
- Estimated volume
 - FY20 9 million
 - FY21 26 million

TMDL update – Rhonda Vogl

The TMDL meeting will be held tomorrow, September 22nd via zoom at 8:30a.m.

- There will be a graph showing the stream monitoring done.
- The need for new monitors will be discussed.
- It is vital that monitors be picked – up and New Citizens Monitors receive training so this program can continue. Our current Monitors are ready to retire.

Dan Dinning shared that the WAC (Wildlife Auto Collision Committee) will meet on September 29th at 10a.m. via Zoom and that the McArthur Lake Project will be discussed.

It was clarified that the work and IDFG work there will not interfere with the road work scheduled to be done.

Chip Corsi of Fish and Game clarified that the new bridge will be high enough to serve as an underpass for game.

CFLR Update – Jeanne Higgins

CFLR Update – Jeanne Higgins

Jeanne reviewed the letter from Karen Hardig giving KVRI information on the CFLR proposal submitted.

Committee noted several strengths about this proposal, including:

- Strong interagency capacity to use prescribed fire and manage wildfire for resource benefit to reduce wildfire risk
- Strong forest products markets in the area provide social and economic benefits
- Strong collaborative history and evidence of functioning collaboratives

Jeanne noted that there were also some areas of improvement suggested such as no clear governance of the three collaboratives, but this was deliberately not addressed until/if funded. The project was recommended for funding; however, project funding will be dependent on an appropriation from Congress. We may or may not be funded depending on the amount of appropriation (which could be between 40-80million dollars). If on the higher end, we could expect to be funded. If on the lower end then we would not likely see any funding in Fiscal year 21. Rhonda Vogl reminded the group that our proposal was ranked 10th in the nation.

Dan Dinning reminded the group the International Joint Committee Meeting via zoom regarding the regulation of Kootenai Lake would be held at 6p.m. Ed Atkins was asked to provide input.

Ed voiced concern for the farmers. Appreciation was given for several years of managing water levels, but that we should be aware it could change. Any raising of the water elevation impacts everyone. Stated the importance of maintaining current management status and encouraged all to be on the call.

Idaho Fish and Game – Chip Corsi

- Grizzly Bear
 - Brian Johnson has responded to multiple calls
 - Believes the calls are likely all the same bear
 - A Grizzly sow with cubs attacked two Bow Hunters when surprised
 - Both were ok with the exception of 2 stitches required.
 - Grizzly recovery zones under review
 - Idaho is pushing hard to rethink Recovery zones and recognize the Bear population here is, and historically has been, an extension of the Alaska and Canada populations
 - A student at the University of Idaho College of Natural Resources studying the social aspects of Grizzly Bears may be interested in meeting with KVRI and accessing more information.
 - It was noted that IDFG contributes ½ the funding for a social sciences Professor at the College of Natural Resources
- Pheasants will be stocked in two areas of our region
 - Boundary / Smith creek area
 - Coeur D'Alene River area
 - The cost of stocking the birds is expensive

- An additional fee will be required with the Upland Bird Card
- Restriction of two birds per day
- Hunting hours will be restricted beginning at 10a.m.
- Youth pheasant hunt begins Saturday October 3, general hunting begins October 10

Added to that from Norm Merz, IDFG:

IDFG is extending the pheasant stocking program to include Boundary Smith Creek WMA (and Coeur d'Alene River WMA.) 50 birds will be released before the youth hunt (Oct 3-9) and 100 birds every other week through the general season (Oct 10 - Dec 31) at each WMA. Any questions on the Boundary-Smith WMA, please call Robert Aikens.

US Fish and Wildlife – Christy Johnson-Hughes

Caribou update sent out but there is limited information due to work on-going with Canada.

They are working with the Tribe to schedule the next Selkirk Caribou International Technical Working Group (SCITWG) meeting.

Several staff changes were noted:

- Kat Sarensen will be moving to the Eastern Washington Field Office.
- Megan Kosterman and Sean Sweeney will be moving to Minnesota to be in two different offices in FWS Legacy Region 3.
- Shannon Brinkman is replacing Kat as our grizzly bear lead.
- Ken King will be starting with our office on Oct. 11.
- We plan on hiring a fisheries biologist to work on sturgeon issues sometime this calendar year.

IDL – Jonathan Luhnnow

Jonathan voiced thanks for the mentions made of and for the appreciation for Idaho Department of Lands and he will pass this along to GNA staff. He also reiterated the new focus on the Westside Restoration Project and that follow up on this would be provided in the November/December timeframe.

Dan complimented Idaho Department of Lands on the work done on Peterson Hill.

Senator Crapo's Office – Karen Roetter

Indicated the focus right now is on the death of **Supreme Court Justice** Ruth Bader Ginsburg and hearings for a new justice.

Office of the Governor – Jake Garringer

- The governor appointed Jess Byrne as director of the Department of Environmental Quality near the end of August.
- On 3 September, Governor Little and Oregon Governor Kate Brown—as vice chair and chair, respectively, of the Western Governors’ Association—sent a letter through the public comment process to FWS and NOAA. The governor’s request federal and state cooperation as a regulatory definition of ‘habitat’ is developed.
- He will pass along that IDL was mentioned positively a number of times in the meeting.

Next meeting October 19th

Called Close of Meeting at 8:33