

Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
November 18, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

Board Members in Attendance:

Gary Aitken Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Chairman (KTOI) & KVRI Co-chair
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair
Adam Arthur, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair (alt.)
David Gray, (Alt.) Social/Cultural/Historical Interests
Chip Corsi, Idaho Fish & Game Commission
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry
Doug Nishek, (Alt.) Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation/Landowner
Ed Atkins Jr., Corporate Agriculture/Landowner
Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)
Karen Schumacher, Recording Secretary KVRI & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Angela Cooper, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Vice-Chair & (Alt.) KVRI Co-chair
Jake Garringer, Office of the Governor
Sid Smith, US Senator Jim Risch's Office
Clinton Daniel, Congressman Russ Fulcher's Office
Carol Kriebs, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County Commissioner & (Alt.) KVRI Co-chair
Wayne Wilkerson, Kootenai Wildlife Refuge
Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services
Jonathan Luhnaw, Idaho Dept. of Lands
Debbie Paul, Bureau of Land Management
Wayne Kasworm, United States Fish & Wildlife Service
Scott Soultz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Russ Hegedos, Idaho Fish and Game
John Kellogg, Boundary County Farm Bureau
Bob Smathers, Idaho Farm Bureau
Mitch Silvers, US Senator Mike Crapo's Office
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group

Opening:

Dan Dinning opened and welcomed everyone to the monthly meeting; introductions followed. The October 21st minutes were approved by consensus.

Prior to the beginning of the meeting, Dan acknowledged the 11 years of support that Sid Smith of Senator Jim Risch's office has provided KVRI and offered appreciation on behalf of the KVRI board. Sid offered his words of heartfelt thanks for the work we do and for the way in which we do it. *"Other groups collaborate, but what you guys do is truly different. So, thank you for what you do -- what you do for your community, the example you set -- I will take that with me wherever I go."*

Dan opened the meeting by letting the group know that the subcommittee for Grizzly Bear had met and that they saw the presentation by Wayne Kasworm. One of the topics the committee will pursue, going forward, is a way they can work within agency guidelines to create a process to notify people when there is a bear that could get into trouble. These discussions came out of the depredation that occurred last summer. Going forward there will be more discussion. However, tonight's presentation is about grizzly bear population estimate and Wayne's ongoing research.

Presentations: Wayne Kasworm, of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, shared a PowerPoint presentation on the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Monitoring and Cabinet Mountain Augmentation. This presentation can be found on the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho [website here](#).

Following the presentation, Wayne let the group know that British Columbia resident, Michael Proctor, an independent researcher, is wanting to get a population estimate in the same way as it was done in the Cabinet-Yaak, using corrals. Michael hopes to do this in the summer of 2020. USFW is trying to give him support by providing some cameras so that he can get females-with-cub information. Knowing an estimate of reproductive females is important because it allows us to be in a better position to know where we are in the recovery process. Our goals target the number of females with cubs of the year. By looking at pictures and data, we can estimate how many there are in a given year. The recovery plan is for an average of six females with cubs of the year over a running six-year period. We are currently at 3.5 for the average. We don't get much data from British Columbia. With the added information that Mike can supply, we can improve that number and get closer to identifying recovery. We also look at distribution. It is helpful to know where the bears are and if females are distributed over various areas. Also important is the criteria of keeping mortality under control. We don't want to see mortality to the extent that it is causing a decline in the population.

Questions followed. What are the impact roads have on bear population? Wayne responded that the information they have indicates that motorized access limits bear uses of that area. Heavily used roads were often where dead bears were found in the past. The fact is that in many locations with a high density of roads, we see less use by bears. There are enough locations with a high density of open roads that we have a motorized access plan for our forests. The motorized access plan for the National Forest lands was based on best available science and should provide sufficient habitat for bears when fully implemented. At this time that plan is not fully implemented and a new schedule is being prepared by the Forest Service.

Tim Dougherty discussed the pending notice of intent to sue by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies (AWR) regarding Bear Management Unit road closure effectiveness. Wayne addressed the timeline of the bear management program and how the various methodologies used served to keep motorized vehicles from causing habitat displacement for bears, especially female bears.

Today vehicles have been designed to go and climb anywhere. The gating program began prior to those capabilities. It was acknowledged that the roads were needed for the purpose of fire suppression and to access timber sale areas. At this point there is no known method to preclude vehicle access.

Scott Soult, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, presented information on the recent installation of animal-resistant heavy-duty trash receptacles at local boat ramps accomplished by the Kootenai Tribal Wildlife Program and Boundary County Waterways Board. The full media release can be found on the Kootenai

[Tribe website here](#). Concrete pads were built and the receptacles, funded by the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, were installed at the Search and Rescue dock, Deep Creek, Copeland and Porthill boat launches.

Scott let the group know that the next Grizzly Bear Subcommittee meeting will be January 23rd at 10:00am at Tribal headquarters.

One of the big things is that the Tribe has enabled the wildlife department to help out landowners by putting up temporary fencing when there is a human-bear conflict potential. Scott noted that the North Bench had 6 bears this year and it is the most he has seen at one time. The subcommittee is trying to work with the community to establish notification processes for not just when there are problems but also for before problems occur. Options being explored include a possible phone tree. It is important for Landowners to know about and to be a part of the process. KVRI will send out a notice prior to the meeting.

Committee Updates:

Forestry Subcommittee update provided by Doug Nishek. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 21st at 9am at Tribal headquarters at which an update will be given on the Westside Restoration Project. USFS is hoping to scope for this project in December. KVRI, with the list provide by the Forest Service, sent out over 160 letters to landowners giving them notice of the upcoming meeting to help ensure KVRI and the Forest Service has the involvement of public stakeholders. It is hoped that the public can help design the project from the ground up.

FY 19

- GNA Black Boulder 5 mmbf
- Camp Stew 19 mmbf

FY 20

- Boulder Dash 4.6 mmbf
- Robin Hood 5.5 mmbf
- Hart Wall 3.0 mmbf

Current Volume under contract is for 8 timber sales is 50.3 mmbf.

TMDL Subcommittee update provided by Rhonda Vogl. The TMDL subcommittee last met on November 7th. One topic of discussion was the citizen monitoring for local streams. Dave Wattenbarger, Jerry Garten and Kevin Greenleaf have been doing the monitoring since 2008. The question posed at the meeting was how important is this monitoring and the data collected? Overwhelmingly it was agreed that this historical data is very important especially as it pertains to climate change issues.

DEQ has promised to preserve this data for future use. The data is used to describe current conditions and to determine averages. It is important for writing total maximum daily load (TMDLs) for our streams and to help us determine whether or not our streams are impaired. At some point, our current monitoring team may want to retire. They are willing to train new volunteers. It was agreed that we should steer clear of using Agencies for this purpose to avoid the perception of a conflict of interest.

Wetland Riparian Subcommittee updates by Rhonda Vogl: It's time to revive this subcommittee. It has been over a decade since the last Wetland/Riparian meeting occurred. It served a purpose then and now it's time to revive it and serve the same purpose in new ways. As those of you who attended the last KVRI meeting know, the Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program (KRHRP) is moving their efforts into the Meander Reach area of the Kootenai River. The Meander Reach is a huge project that will involve wetland and riparian areas, as well as other projects of interest that are occurring in Boundary County. KVRI serves to provide public outreach, information and education. We want to ensure we are reaching out and keeping our community informed. This subcommittee will address economic, social and natural resource reasons, all of which are equally important. We all have an interest in the health of our waterways and streams. The first meeting will most likely be in January or February.

Grizzly Bear Subcommittee will be meeting on January 23rd at 10:00am at Kootenai Tribal Headquarters.

Idaho Fish and Game Chip Corsi provided an update saying they have reached their goal for sampling Deer for CWD. They will continue to sample to get more of a geographical spread. They would like to get more from the closest proximity to the known occurrences of disease. Noted that Montana did discover a CWD positive Moose from Troy. Chip reminded the group that getting a deer checked is free and it will take 3 – 6 weeks to get the results back.

F&G is considering modification for upland game, turkey and fur bear rules that would allow for an extension of turkey hunting of fall season through the month of January.

Idaho Department of Lands Jonathan Luhnnow provided a brief update.

- There is a new Bridge on Trail Creek
- The sales plan for 2021 is 28 million board feet

The hoped for sales plan in the next few years is 34 million board feet

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Christy Johnson-Hughes updated by saying litigation is still ongoing limiting what she can discuss but they are hoping to be able to provide a January report. She would like to report on Caribou rules and what it means moving forward. Sean Sweeney has taken over for Jason Flory for the Kootenai River White Sturgeon. In 2020 they will begin the Sturgeon implementation plan and go forward with Caribou work.

Updates from Representatives:

Jake Garringer of the Governor's office had nothing to report.

Clinton Daniels of Congressman Russ Fulcher's office thanked Sid and acknowledged what a great resource he has been. He also thanked the KVRI group at large for their ongoing participation in collaborative efforts. The Congressman is introducing a bi-partisan bill that catalogs different easements that the federal agency has entered into with landowners. If passed, this bill will allow for cataloging of those easements for easy online access by the general public.

Mitch Silvers of U.S. Senator Mike Crapo's Office referenced and agreed with Sid's comments about the great collaborative efforts of KVRI and how they do it right noting that it is truly a community wide effort and it is appreciated.

Sid Smith of U.S. Senator Jim Risch's Office provided the information that last week the Senator signed on as a co-sponsor for Savannahs Act. This legislation seeks to improve the tracking of data for missing and murdered indigenous women by the Department of Justice (DOJ), standardize law enforcement and justice protocols, improve consultation with Tribes, and provide Tribes and law enforcement agencies with training and technical assistance.

Sid continued with the information that the funding situation is reaching the end of current continuing resolution. The status right now is that we will probably be entering into another one. It is unknown how long the new one will last, but maybe to December 20th. They are trying to avoid a shut-down before Christmas.

New Business: - January, 2020 will be the two-year mark for reappointing KVRI board and alternate board members. We will get letters out to each board member and alternate asking if each of you can commit to the next 2 years.

Closing Comments/Meeting Announcements: There will be no December meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for January 13th, 7pm, at the Boundary Co. Extension Office. Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

Minutes prepared by Karen Schumacher, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho