

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
July 17, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

Board Members in Attendance:

Adam Arthur (Alt.) City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair
Lee Pinkerton, (Alt.) Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair
Gary Aitken, Jr., Chair, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) & KVRI Co-chair
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry
Ed Atkins Jr., Corporate Agriculture/Landowner
Kevin Knauth, (Alt.) US Forest Service (USFS), Bonners Ferry Ranger District
Chip Corsi, (Alt.) Idaho Fish & Game Commission
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation District/Ag Landowner
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Karen Roetter, Senator Mike Crapo's office
Mitch Silvers, Senator Mike Crapo's office
Judy Morbeck, Congressman Raul Labrador's office
Norm Merz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Kurt Pavlat, Bureau of Land Management
Jonathan Luhnnow, Idaho Department of Lands
Dave Gray, (Alt.) Social/Cultural/Historical Interests
Greg Becker, NRCS Boundary/Bonner County
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group
Billy Barquin, KTOI
J. J. Teare, Idaho Fish & Game

Opening:

Co-Chair, Gary Aitken, Jr. opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting; introductions followed.

The June 19, 2017, KVRI meeting draft notes were approved by consensus.

Committee Updates:

Forestry Committee: CFLR Program Review- July 24th and 25th -Patty Perry

Patty reminded everyone that Forest Service staff from the Washington Office, Regional Office, Supervisor's Office and the District will be here on July 24th and 25th for the CFLR Program Review. A meeting in Coeur d'Alene on July 24th at 8:00 a.m. will start the two day visit. They will travel to Boundary County and to Black Mountain Lookout/20 Mile Project to look at the whole landscape area, talk about the CFLR project and the approach that has been taken. Dinner/BBQ at the Kootenai River Inn and a video presentation by the Forest Service on Stewardship will complete the first day. The next

morning, July 25th, will begin with a meeting at 8:00 a.m. at the Kootenai Tribal office with a showing of the KVRI presentation as well as talking about the Forestry Subcommittee and the CFLR Project. The list of questions will be emailed to the Board again for a refresher before the meeting. All are welcome to come to all or any of these events. An email will be sent with the agenda and an RSVP will help in the planning of travel arrangements and the lunch count at Brush Lake on Tuesday. We also hope to at least have the group see the Moyie Springs mill; the infrastructure that means so much economically to our community. They will then head on to Kalispell.

Discussion followed with Tim D. explaining road safety in the areas the group may travel, the opportunity to see some logging activities in the Brush Lake area, hand slashing, tree thinning, and how they protected the bike trail in the area. Patty hopes to be able to add to the discussion that continuation of the CFLR Project is important, as there is still more to be done on this District.

Patty asked Gary and Billy to update the Board on their trip to Washington D.C. last week. Billy shared that there is a lot going on with Forestry issues in Congress; the Westerman Bill; Farm Bill; Old and new Forestry provisions; conservation provision in the Farm Bill; and the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act are all topics of discussion at this time.

There are no meetings scheduled for the Forestry Committee in the near future as the Forest Service in a busy field season right now. And the target for the Draft EA to go out on the Boulder Project is November FY17.

Patty reported that the Tribe had asked for a discussion (which took place earlier in the day, 7/17) with the Regional Forester and Mary Farnsworth, Forest Supervisor, about the Boulder Creek Restoration Project. She reminded the Board that Mary had visited with KVRI in May and informed the Board that she had pulled units from that project; we had asked if there was any opportunity to reconsider & add any units back in, to which the reply was "no".

In the discussion with the Tribe early today, Mary asked Patty to convey to the KVRI Board that she would reconsider approximately 350 acres that contained those units along the road, if there were a different silvicultural prescription. She could not consider a regeneration harvest prescription in that area. But she could consider something else if KVRI wanted to reopen that dialogue. Patty's response was that KVRI does not choose the prescriptions for the projects; the Forest Service specialists do that. The Forest Service determines the kind of prescriptions of each unit on the ground and then talks it over with the group. Patty encouraged her to talk to Kevin K. and the team leader and find out from the specialists if there were other opportunities for treatment there; if there were things we could accomplish by putting those units back in. If the District specialists think that we could do some good work there then Patty would hold a KVRI meeting and have that discussion and we could move forward. Mary did caution that changes could delay the project...Patty expressed the District staff specialist will be the best source to determine the value of any changes vs. the benefits to the project – in order for Mary to weigh the options in decision-making.

During this KVRI meeting update, Patty asked Kevin to please talk to Doug and Ed to see if we were to look at the 350 acres and do something different; what could be done, is it worthwhile, what delay could be expected and is it substantial?

Kevin added that he would discuss all possibilities including the impact that would occur with a different prescription. Sometimes less impact would be fewer trees removed. The challenge would be that the same specialist are on the ground at Camp Dawson and Robin Hood right now and cannot be delayed.

Kevin assured the Board he would look into it and let us know the results.

Caribou Update- Norm Merz, KTOI

Norm reported the results of the Caribou spring survey:

- 11 Caribou were reported on the British Columbia side
- 1 radio collared animal has died from unknown causes, (adult bull)
- Total remaining caribou are estimated at 6 female, 2 calves, 2 bulls

The work is continuing on the recovery plan and making good strides with that. That work will wrap up this fall.

Also working toward getting a maternal penning operation set up in British Columbia in which they will capture as many female & yearlings as possible from the Selkirk herd, move them to protected pen for calving, let the calves grow 1 month then release them back into the wild. That technique has been used in the Revelstoke/South Peace area of British Columbia with positive results. This operation will depend on funding. It costs about \$200,000 to \$250,000 USD. It is the only option to get more animals in the population at this time.

As for British Columbia wolf removal, BC has only removed 5 wolves this year. Chip asked about lion removal and Norm stated that nothing is being done at a large scale other than recreational hunting and a real liberal season. Lions are harder to control than a pack of wolves. A lion that killed a caribou would be removed from the population by management agencies.

IDFG-Wildlife Management Area Update- Chip Corsi, IDFG

A letter of support was signed for a Grant application from the Wildlife Conservation Society (around \$250,000). Their focus is to buffer species believed to be at risk from climate change. We could use the funds to meet management goals on the Boundary/Smith Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The proposed work to be funded is consistent with the WMA management plan, and what the citizen management committee and the Department have been working on. The direct pass through NGO is Y2Y. (NGO = non-government organization; Y2Y = Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative.) What they want to make clear is when they are working on Fish & Game WMA lands they are going to follow Fish & Game management plan for that project. They don't know if they will be awarded the grant or not but the application is in and Chip will keep us posted on the status.

Boundary/Smith WMA will continue to get stewardship funds from BPA which helped fund the whole program. But in the future it does not look like there will be funds to do enhancements. That money seems to be drying up; BPA is in a tight spot these days.

They are also looking at timber removal on Hwy 95 on the MacArthur WMA.

Chip also reminded everyone that the Idaho Fish and Game Commission will be meeting in Bonners Ferry next week. The public meeting is Wednesday, July 26 at the Kootenai River Inn. Please bring public comments for the Commission to this public meeting. They will be taking the Commission on a Field tour prior to public meeting. The General Commission meeting is Thursday, July 28 beginning at 8 am, at either the Middle School or High School.

Fair Booth ideas-Patty Perry

The Fair Booth ideas were distributed to the Board; banner and decoration ideas were discussed. The theme this year is "What's Cooking at the Boundary County Fair". The August KVRI meeting will be the decorating of the Fair Booth at the Fairgrounds on August 14, at 5:00 p.m. The Board will have dinner together following.....a reminder will be sent out to all of the Board.

Senator Crapo Office Update- Mitch Silvers

Mitch shared a little more about the BPA issue. BPA is not able to sell all the power they used to sell in the California market. California now through renewables is generating excess electricity and is selling to the market. BPA's revenue is down. That can potentially impact a lot of us in a lot of areas. We will be following this in the next few months.

As Billy mentioned the items being discussed in Congress are: the Westerman Bill and the Emergency Fuels Reduction Act Bill which was introduced almost 4 years ago. It was going to be an amendment to Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA). What they were going to do was borrow from the Farm Bill. So through HFRA projects if you had the same type of insect and disease, you could also use the same 3000 acre Categorical Exclusion (CE) that's in the Farm Bill under the Governor's Authority; it could be used in HFRA. We will see if that bill gets introduced.

Also there is the Forestry reform talk in the Senate; Wildland Fire Disaster; funding is a big tug of war, some folks want to see a component of different ways to work in the forest, probably in the manners of loosening some of the NEPA requirements and trying to speed the process up; the desire to make wholesale changes to NEPA is long gone. He doesn't see that happening.

In the House Budget Committee Meeting, it looks like the Forest Service should be in pretty good shape compared to the Administration numbers for the rest of the budgets. That Forest Service budget may be kept pretty even for this fiscal year. And they are still talking about funding the 10 year average for fires.

Patty asked about CFLR funding; Mitch replied he is not hearing anything yet as there is still 2 years before it expires. He believes the conversation will probably be closer to the expiration date.

Secure Rural Schools: no action there at this time.

Announcements

Dave Gray announced the 50 year Commemorative Observance of the Sundance and Trapper Peak Fires. (1967-2017)

August 26, 2017, 2:00 p.m.
Boundary County Museum
Presentation on the Trapper Peak and Sundance Fires

September 2, 2017, 9:30 a.m.
Pack River Bridge
Memorial to Fallen Firefighters
(Sundance Fire Behavior; Pack River Bridge Site; Sundance Burn Salvage Logging and Reforestation)

Jonathan Luhnnow, IDL, added that there are pamphlets at the IDL offices in Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint and T-shirts are available at the museum and IDL offices with proceeds going to fund the commemorative plaque.

NRCS Update- Greg Becker

They are working on TMDL projects under Section 319 funds for both counties. They have a lot of good proposals.

In late September or early October they will be putting together the local Working Group. This is an opportunity for everyone here and private landowners to influence the Cost Share Program. They would love to have everyone's participation. Patty added that the Tribe has always attended and participates and we will get the word out.

Next KVRI Meeting

The next KVRI meeting will be the Fair Booth Setup Night at the Fairgrounds on August 14, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. Dinner will follow.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.
Sherrie Cossairt,
KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant