

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative  
Special Meeting - Senator Crapo  
August 29, 2017 – 11:30 a.m.  
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair  
David Sims, Mayor, City of Bonners Ferry & 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  
Kevin Knauth, (Alt.) US Forest Service (USFS), Bonners Ferry Ranger District  
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation District/Ag Landowner  
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI  
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

**Agency/Others in Attendance:**

Senator Mike Crapo  
Ron Abraham, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) & (Alt.) KVRI Co-chair  
Lee Pinkerton, (Alt.) Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair  
Karen Roetter, Senator Mike Crapo's office-Coeur d'Alene  
Mitch Silvers, Senator Mike Crapo's office-Lewiston  
Dave Gray, (Alt.) Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
Walt Kirby, Boundary County Commissioner  
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group  
Julie Smith, Senator Mike Crapo's office-Coeur d'Alene  
Doug Nishek, USFS  
Sue Ireland, KTOI

**Opening:**

Co-Chair, Dan Dinning opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting; introductions followed.

Patty gave a brief history of KVRI and Senator Crapo's partnership. The City, County, and Tribe began discussions of forming KVRI in 2000 working toward developing a collaborative for Boundary County. At the same time Sen. Crapo and his and staff were working with the folks putting together the Owyhee Initiative, encountering the same things we were. He directed his staff to come along side of us and help us grow this into something.

In the growing years a lot of the agencies that are participating fully now were not at the beginning. But with a few calls from the Senator's office those agencies became willing to participate. Those reluctant agencies have joined KVRI and we have all learned that we can do this with a different approach and people can sit down and talk civilized to each other and move forward.

Senator Crapo was also instrumental in funding by helping to get money through US Fish and Wildlife Service budgets to the Kootenai Tribe to help carry out the planning for the Recovery Strategy for Burbot. Our Senator has had a hand in helping us move forward with many of the things we are involved with, including our CFLR Project. We are grateful; I don't know what other collaborative has had the honor of having a Senator's staff at every KVRI monthly meeting and the Senator to be here annually to say hello and check in, making sure we are firmly rooted in what we are doing.

### **Collaboration-How's It Going? Patty Perry**

This was Karen Roetter's question to us. When you get comfortable sometimes you hit a road bump. And we did with our Boulder project, some of that is history now and we are working through it but it was a road bump for us. Karen asked me to touch briefly on this issue.

KVRI worked closely with Kevin Knauth and Doug Nishek and others from the Bonners Ferry Ranger District staff on this project with lots and lots of meetings from prior to the scoping letter, to project development (what will the project look like), in coordination with the project ID (Interdisciplinary) team providing information for our committee to understand & consider (what will work, what do we want to see on the landscape, and how will it all come about). As we moved along in this process, the Forest Supervisor didn't have the opportunity to engage with us as a committee.

At the end of the day (a check-in point with the Forest Supervisor) some of the units were removed from the project –without any committee involvement or discussion. It was a set of circumstances we hadn't faced with any prior projects, and it was very frustrating.....are working through it & moving on.

The Forest Supervisor coordinated with the District staff (Kevin and ID Team) to determine if any of the units could be re-considered for treatments that would be acceptable (under an EA – with a FONSI determination) while meeting the purpose and need for the project. The ID Team and the District staff looked at it and said there isn't anything we can do that's going to meet her desire to issue a FONSI that will get us to the purpose and need of why we are going in there in the first place.

So where we are right now...many of the project units in the Inventoried Roadless Area have been dropped, understanding they are completely allowable under the Idaho Roadless Rule. At this point it would slow down the process and delay the project about 4 months to do an EIS rather than an EA. We've discussed back and forth about what the value was of delaying the project 4 months and we have come to the agreement it makes sense to leave those 350 acres out even though it's sad to walk away from it because it does need to be treated. We've learned a lesson that next time if we are developing a project that could include an Inventoried Roadless Area the Forest Service will likely plan to do an EIS. We will put together a better set of legs under the project. We being the KVRI Committee in working with the ID Team, they do the work.

Kevin Knauth also stated that what we have gained from all of this is we have a better sense where the Forest Supervisor stands on the Roadless areas. And to be honest she had to do some soul searching and research and establish where she stands. That is a plus.

Patty added that another thing we may need help with is that the Regional office is re-writing a draft white paper that guides what can be accomplished in Inventoried Roadless Areas. They have put a draft document format and will be working with the Idaho Roadless Rule Committee. Jim Caswell, Co-Chair

of the Committee has it and will determine the approach by the Roadless Rule Committee – as it is considered. Consequently, the protocol at the Regional Office will be revisited for Idaho.

Kevin stated that in order to make this work we have to have a solid process in a project we can live with. Should we run into objections/litigation we need to know that the Region has our back. They are a critical piece to this.

### **Senator Mike Crapo**

Senator Mike Crapo thanked Patty for the wonderful introduction and said it brought back lots of wonderful memories for him.

He began by saying he had a couple of observations. Collaboration is one of the things I have committed to fighting for in terms of our land management and environmental management policies nationwide. This goes back to the early 90's, when I first started my strong push in Washington for collaboration. I was getting help from Dan Kemmis, former Mayor of Missoula, who wrote a book about this. The focus of his book was really the focus of what I have advocated for; that the current system, even today, focuses too much on decision making through conflict management, primarily litigation. That system of deciding how to manage land is bad for both the environment and the economy and yields low results. My point is there are results that are better; there are win-win results. The way we find those results is that we let the people who live where the issue is collaborate and find solutions.

Another part of the problem with the system we have is that distant decision makers make decisions about local management. We heard that right here today; we had a regional decision making process that was different than the one that was generated locally. In their defense, some of those distant decision makers are themselves under litigation threat or under certain legal requirements to do what they have to do. So, it's not all their fault, even those decisions made by Congress or by some litigation entity are decisions coming from the outside in and interfere with the ability of honorable people from all different perspectives to collaborate.

Having said that, we spent 8 years getting the Owyhee Initiative legislation put together and worked through. We got every single stakeholder involved, had broad support for it and they all had a better result. We are still fighting to this day with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Department of the Interior (DOI), over some parts of that agreement that they just won't do. Part of that is that the Administration for the last 8 years had a different mindset about that agreement and just wasn't going to let us implement it. Part of that is that they have laws they feel need to be changed; even our local BLM officials feel that there are restrictions on them that didn't get fixed to be able to move forward. We have all those things going on still. It highlights the fact that for collaboration to work, there are solutions needed on a lot of different levels.

For one thing, our law needs to be changed so that collaboration has a status equal to what an EIS has or something else has. Those collaborative efforts don't just have to go hand in hand to some agency whether it's the Forest Service or BLM or whoever. Instead they go with an authoritative result that has weight in the decision making process and weight in court. We need a lot of different fixes.

We are working to try to change the rules and laws so our Regional Forester can have more flexibility to work with us in ways that we want and work to encourage our agency management to be more flexible.

The Forest Service itself, more than any agency in the Federal government, has embraced collaboration and worked to facilitate that.

While we get to that point where we actually empower the collaborative decision making to be the decision-making process rather than litigation, we do these kinds of collaborations (KVRI). And, you are to be commended. I have said this over the state for the last decade, the example in Idaho of how to do collaboration right is KVRI. The other examples are growing but you have led the pack. The Owyhee Initiative and KVRI were the two ground breakers in Idaho. You have shown how to get it done and have made phenomenal progress over the years. I am mostly here to be a cheerleader and tell you thank you and that I will continue to help you in any way I can.

### **KVRI FUNDING**

Patty asked about CFLR funding. She expressed the desire to carry out 2 more years in CFLR because we were shorted two years in the front end of it. She asked the Senator if he had a feel for that or the long term of CFLR.

Senator Crapo responded that we are in a terrible situation because of our debt. There is a big fight looming in Washington over the budget. If you look at entitlement spending and add into that interest on our National Debt which is now approaching 70%, it is more than 2/3 of our budget. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of our budget is what congress actually votes on for spending. That percentage has been reducing every year because entitlement spending is growing so fast and the interest on the national debt is growing so fast. As the other parts of our budget grow they squeeze the rest out. So everything in government other than Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and the interest on the National Debt face the squeeze.

That is why I have a hard time answering your question. That being said, we still have plenty of waste, fraud and abuse in our budgeting system in the government and we are still finding a lot of places where we have lower priority functions that are getting a bigger than they should get share of the shrinking budget. The kinds of issues you are talking about here are not on that list.

Both parties have a high prioritization for the kinds of programs that we have here. So I believe after we go through a really huge fight we are going to be able get some adequate funding. I use adequate with caution there because everything is just getting hit. I can't give you a better answer than that. You are in the game and we are in the fight to being able to get the adequate funding for the Forest Service to continue these projects. I do not know how the fight is going to turn out this fall. I can say after a brutal fight we will not have a government shutdown. Hopefully, we will have some significant reforms showing steps in the right direction to get a handle on our debt.

### **Burbot Success Story-Sue Ireland, KTOI**

Sue began her presentation stating that through a lot of collaboration, KVRI and Tribal commitment, they went from a species that was estimated at less than 50 fish in the Kootenai River in the late 90s and a potential ESA listing to the development of a KVRI group and the ability to have this collaboration and a KVRI Burbot Subcommittee and everybody working together to develop a conservation strategy for this fish.

Some of the elements in the conservation strategy had never even been done before such as aquaculture. We went from that in early 2000 to developing this strategy by 2005 having a memorandum of understanding that was signed by 16 agencies and entities to commit to work together and make this happen outside of whether or not they got listed. In the end they did not, which gave us so much more flexibility.

And with the Tribe working with University of Idaho to develop the aquaculture techniques, the collaboration of KVRI and the agencies, the development of the tribal hatchery and the first release of fish from the Tribal Hatchery in 2015 which exceeded expectations, by the end of this year we will have over 450,000 fish that were released from Twin Rivers Hatchery at the age of 6 months (along with all the other experimental releases). The co-managers, who work together and monitor the progress of these efforts, include Idaho Fish and Game, the Kootenai Tribe, Montana and British Columbia, are now all discussing that the survival rates and the way that the fish are doing, and are discussing talking to Tribal Council and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission to make a plan to open a fishery in 2019!

Senator Crapo replied that he says this is the shining star example for the State of Idaho. That is phenomenal in terms of collaborative efforts.

Sue continued by saying thank you for his support. We have so much appreciation for the fact that Senator Crapo came in the early days and every year thereafter to help support the efforts of the tribe and the community and the collaboration of KVRI.

Patty added that Fish and Game wanted us to share that Burbot success story with the Senator.

Senator Crapo also added that one of the wonderful things about collaboration in addition to everything we have said is that it develops friendships among people often who were enemies before. But at a minimum it develops phenomenal bonds in the community among people. This collaboration just proves that.

### **Wildfire funding and Secure Rural Schools- Senator Crapo**

Senator Crapo stated that both are complicated issues. I am a complete advocate for Secure Rural Schools; in fact I believe that the counties ought to be able to tax the Federal Government. That is what this is all about. The Government exempts itself from property tax.

I believe Secure Rural Schools is an obligation of the Federal Government to replace what it refuses to step up for. That is how I feel about it. It falls into the bailiwick of politics. There are a lot more people east of the Mississippi than live here. We fight this. This is one of the beautiful parts of the wisdom of the constitution to let small population states have 2 senators.

Population counts for so much of the power in the House and the Senate, that's why we run into these problems. Remember that with a shrinking budget there is not a Congressman or Senator who objects to the Federal Government stepping up and paying their fair share, unless it starts taking out of their money. We are at the point now where any funding for anything is challenged by anybody who it doesn't benefit.

We have a lot of rural communities in Idaho and we have the ability to filibuster even though we are in the minority on these kinds of issues. This is a yearly battle and the best I can promise you is that I, your delegation, and many other members of Congress are absolutely committed to making this happen. But we are in an ever increasing battle.

### **Secure Rural Schools**

I can't predict what will happen to Secure Rural Schools. We have won it every year and I expect we are going to win it again. We are fighting our hardest. My fight is to make it a permanent authorization so then we just have to fight on budget allocation. I will continue to do that. I wish I could give you a better answer but I am not going to try to fool you. It's a rough fight but we will keep fighting.

### **Fire Fighting Funding**

You all know the history of the last 5 years on firefighting, but let me make sure we all are on the same page. Ron Wyden and I introduced this bill 5 or 6 years ago and it was simple and straightforward. One percent (1 %) of all fires account for 30 % of all firefighting costs, catastrophic fires. What we basically said in the bill is we will pay for the catastrophic fires, declare them to be an emergency which opens up spending and authorizes spending to fight these forest fires so the Forest Service and the BLM doesn't have to go to fire borrowing; really simple and straightforward. Both the White House OMB (Office of Management and Budget) and the Congressional Budget Office said this isn't actually going to cost more money because we fight the forest fires anyway. We go into debt, do fire borrowing than go backwards, and boost up the budgets to bring them back again. It's a ridiculous way to do it. It doesn't cost anymore to actually pay for it as you are doing it.

Paul Ryan, then the Chairman of the Budget Committee, disagreed that it was not going to cost more. I said am not going to authorize increased spending at a time when we have a 20 trillion dollar National Debt. So he alone stopped us in the House although we were successful in the Senate. Then he became Speaker of the House, we went to him and said this isn't going to work, we've got to fix this problem. He said I'm with you on that I'm not against fixing this problem I am against spending more money on it.

He said there is a fund we have to deal with emergencies it's called the Federal Emergency Management Administration ( FEMA ) and it has enough money that we have already put into it to cover not only the floods, hurricanes etc., but fires as well. So let's just authorize that in FEMA and we're good. So we agreed. The House actually passed that twice but it got stopped in the Senate on the last day of Congress a couple of years ago, I won't go into all the reasons.

The next year when we brought this fight forward, we had FEMA and the Budget route and the folks who want to change the law the way I want to change the law, to allow a more active management of the forest and give that flexibility that I talked about earlier in our legal structure. They said this is a really good bill and everyone likes it so we want to put these provisions on that bill. And those provisions were controversial and generated a filibuster in the Senate. So we lost the bill again. Year after year after year, there is a reason we have lost this.

So I am now the Chairman of the Banking Committee and I have the Flood Insurance Bill in my jurisdiction. That's FEMA and it expires at the end of September. I told the Flood Insurance community, which is a huge part of our economy in many states as you might guess that I will be glad to run the

reauthorization of that bill but we are going to put a firefighting fix in it. And FEMA is going to take care of fires too. So I did. You can imagine the fire fight I have started by doing that.

FEMA itself opposes it because they don't believe we will put the necessary funding into FEMA to do this. FEMA is a part of Homeland Security and Homeland Security has backed FEMA saying this will jeopardize our efforts on hurricanes and floods etc. The Secretary of Homeland Security is now the Chief of Staff at the White House so we've got some issues there. That being said, the Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of the Interior are in support of what I am doing. So there is two in support of me and one next to the President in opposition of what I am doing. Also the Head of the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) Mick Mulvaney is one of the House members that sided with Paul Ryan in stopping the Bill previously.

And yet, Republicans, Democrats, Environmental and Multiple Use community folks are behind some bill. It is a fight. I am also asking the Western Governors Association and folks like you to weigh in as heavily as you can with everybody you can. I can't tell you how it's going to turn out but I can tell you we will have a heck of fight.

Meeting was adjourned due to time constraints.....KVRI expressed much gratitude for the visit and opportunity to discuss challenges and progress, as well as looking forward to another visit whenever it might be possible.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.  
Sherrie Cossairt,  
KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant