

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative  
February 25, 2019 – 7:05 p.m.  
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

**Board Members in Attendance:**

David Sims, Mayor, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair  
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair  
Angela Cooper, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Vice-Chairman & (Alt.) KVRI Co-chair  
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
Ed Atkins Jr., Corporate Agriculture/Landowner  
Kevin Knauth, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, US Forest Service (USFS)  
Norm Merz, (Alt.) Idaho Fish & Game Commission  
Bob Blanford, Business/ Industry  
Kennon McClintock, (Alt.) Conservationist/Environmentalist /Industrial/Forest  
Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)  
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)

**Agency/Others in Attendance:**

Dave Gray, (Alt.) Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
Greg Becker, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Boundary/Bonner County  
Cassie Olson, Boundary Soil Conservation  
Kurt Pavlat, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
Evan DeHamer, Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG)  
Jonathan Luhnnow, Idaho Department of Lands  
Alice Hanley, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Acting Manager of Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge  
Sid Smith, Senator Jim Risch's office  
Karen Roetter, Senator Mike Crapo's office  
Tim Kastning, Congressman Russ Fulcher's office  
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County Commissioner  
Marty Martinez, Citizen  
Scott Soult, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Carol Kriebs, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Environmental Director

**Opening:**

Co-Chair, Angela Cooper opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting; introductions followed.

The January 14, 2019 KVRI Board Meeting Draft Notes were approved by consensus after an amendment was brought to our attention by Bob Blanford.

(In the 9B Trail presentation it was stated that Burlington Northern Railroad was working with the City and the County, when in fact it should have been Union Pacific Railroad)  
With the change the notes were then approved.

## **Fleming Creek Clean Water Act: Section 319 Grant Project- Cassie Olson, Boundary Soil Conservation**

Cassie Olson from Boundary Soil Conservation presented an update on the Fleming Creek Project.

### **Fleming Creek Project**

- Located in District 5, Fleming Creek Road, 6 miles north of Bonners Ferry
- To restore fish passage, replace some culverts
- Broke ground on November 26 and it was completed in a week and a half
- After all the costs were tallied, able to reimburse the county for all equipment costs

Cassie reported that they will pursue Phase 2 of this project and move up the road with another 319 Grant. The deadline to DEQ is July.

***Cassie's full slide presentation is available on the KVRI website at [www.kootenai.org](http://www.kootenai.org)***

### **How America Uses it's Lands presentation, Kennon McClintock, The Nature Conservancy**

Kennon shared an article he received entitled "How America Uses It's Lands" published by Bloomberg News. (Dated 2018)

The article used surveys, satellite images and categorizations from various government agencies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture divided the U.S. into six major types of land.

The 48 contiguous states have a total area of 1.9 billion acres divided as follows on the survey:

- Pasture/range 654M acres
- Forest 538.6M acres
- Cropland 391.5M acres
- Special Use 168.6M acres (National parks, wildlife areas, highways, railroads, & military bases)
- Miscellaneous 68.9M acres (cemeteries, golf courses, marshes, deserts & other areas of "low economic value")
- Urban 69.4M acres

A few highlights of the article:

- Urban areas are growing at an average rate of about 1 million additional acres a year
- US urban areas have more than quadrupled since 1945
- Agriculture land takes up about a fifth of the country
- Americans imported 15 percent of their food and beverage products in 2016
- More than 30 percent of fresh fruits and vegetables come from predominantly Mexico and Canada
- More than one-third of the U.S. land is used for pasture; 25% of that land is administrated by the federal government, open to grazing for a fee
- Major occupant on all this land is cows; 41% of U. S. land revolves around livestock
- Forestland constitutes a quarter of contiguous U. S.
- According to the USFS, timber harvest typically occurs on about 11 million acres each year

- Weyerhaeuser Co. is the largest private owners of timberlands in the U.S.

Kenyon reported that Idaho is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest lumber producer in the country, Oregon is first and Washington is second. He also shared that Canadian forest product companies own about 60% of the lumber mills in the U.S.

Kenyon's presentation can be seen at the following website:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2018-us-land-use/>

### **Forestry Update-Kevin Knauth**

#### Camp Robin

- Objection period closed; working through objections with Regional office
- Decision within the next week

#### Bog Creek

- Draft Record of Decision released; Objection period began Feb 16
- Printed copy of EIS is available upon request

#### Grouse BMU

- Purpose & Need is to bring BMU into compliance with grizzly bear standards
- No vegetative work will be done only road storage

#### Winter Travel Planning on North Zone-EIS

- Attempted to get detailed input from focus group
- Will develop proposed action internally
- Public meetings will follow for feedback
- Forest Plan encourages motorized recreation across the forest including winterized but not at the detriment to wildlife

#### Update on Timber sale offering in Bonners Ferry District

- FY19 25-30mmbf of timber sales
- FY20 25mmbf offerings
- Coming primarily out of Camp Robin and Boulder Project

#### Farm Bill/CFLRP update

- Still awaiting interpretation and direction
- Funding for the 2 years we lost is a priority
- There are opportunities for additional funding in project areas

Rhonda added that KVRI will be offering a letter of support, in hopes to get the 2 years of additional funding that we missed out on as well as additional funding if it is available.

### **WAC Update-Rhonda Vogl**

Rhonda reported the sale of the animal detection sign that was on the highway and payment has been received from Sloan Security Group. Total received was \$4000. The funds will be managed by The Nature Conservancy and used for maintenance and batteries on the warning signs used on the highway.

### **TMDL Update-Rhonda Vogl**

- TMDL meeting on February 7 with Bob Steed and the committee
- Charlie Holderman, Ecosystem Project manager for the Tribe, gave a presentation of the nutrient program on the Kootenai River
- Bob Steed reported a call for data from EPA but it was determined we would not be giving additional data at the moment
- The 2016 Integrated Report as not yet been approved by EPA
- Spring Monitors will be going back out; Bob will be bringing monitors, cables and a laptop for use by the Citizens monitoring team
- Next meeting will be May 15

### **McArthur Lake Update--- Norm Merz and Evan DeHamer**

Norm began with a brief explanation to address the potential for misunderstanding about pending management actions at McArthur Lake. He stated Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) routinely draw down their wetlands to aerate the soil and allow vegetation treatments. McArthur Lake is in that rotation.

Evan DeHamer continued to explain that at McArthur Lake there is a scheduled draw down this coming spring, summer, and early fall. The biggest reason is to aerate the soil to kick start the nutrient cycling that improves the amount of forage for the wildlife. It is done every 5-7 years and the last draw down was in 2012.

They are still working out what that will look like on the landscape and timing. They are also working with their fisheries department to make sure the fish ladder at the dam continues to operate through the bulk of the trout migration & spawning season. They just opened an angling opportunity on Deep Creek for trout and IDFG doesn't want to interfere with that new opportunity if it can be avoided. By the end of summer the lake will look mostly dry with Deep Creek and Dodge Creek flowing in-channel throughout the summer. The drawdown will be gradual to maximize wildlife benefit and avoid downstream flooding issues. Fishing access will become limited as the lake level drops, but a salvage fishing period may be offered if feasible.

While this drawdown is a stand-alone, standard wetland health treatment unrelated to the conceptual management changes that have been rumored in the recent past, IDFG didn't want to pass a unique opportunity for data gathering. They have temperature data loggers that were placed last spring to see what impact the shallow rapidly warming lake might have on what should be a cold water system. Data

will be for a 3 year span and will inform future management decisions on how they approach McArthur Lake, its current and future benefits to wildlife and sportsmen, and its potential impacts on the Deep Creek system.

Evan asked the KVRI committee for help in getting this information out to the community in order to keep the Boundary Co community properly informed of the temporary changes they'll see over the summer, and to direct any questions to him and he would be glad to explain in detail. He also added that the last draw down resulted in bigger fish in the lake for several years following the drawdown.

Norm added that if any major changes to any management on the WMA were to occur there is a public process to go through. Evan added that they would want plenty of public input before a decision to make any permanent changes are made. At this point, no permanent management change is being proposed.

### **Fair Booth Update-Sherrie Cossairt**

- Fair Booth is reserved
- Changes this year include a fee increase and set-up time has changed to Tuesday not Monday as before
- Fair Theme this year--- "It's all the Buzz"

### **Burbot Radio Interview-Rhonda Vogl**

Sue Ireland asked Rhonda to let us know that Shawn Young and TJ Ross will be on a radio interview in the morning on Panhandle radio KFRY at 8:00 a.m. talking about Burbot. If you miss it, we can go to the KFRY website, download and listen to the podcast.

### **Fish and Game Commission Update- Norm Merz**

Burbot update:

- IDFG have talked to about 550 anglers
- Calculated out about 1950 hours of fishing time for Burbot
- Satisfaction is high; success rate is low
- Data still coming in; no harvest rates or numbers, yet

Big Game Season Update:

- Changes recommended to the commission in mid-March
- Unit 1 recommended changes include:
  - Reducing the number of permits for controlled hunts for elk
  - Changing the rule for the one mile public land season to within 1 mile of agriculture fields; not all private land
  - A reduction in length of the mule deer season; shortening the season by 10 or 11 days off the back end to reduce the vulnerability of mule deer bucks during the rut

### **Senator Crapo's office - Karen Roetter**

Karen reported that the reauthorization of the Land and Conservation Water Fund passed the Senate in S47 and should be up for a vote in the house shortly.

### **Senator Risch's office – Sid Smith**

Sid added that both Senator Risch and Senator Crapo have been working on improved access to public lands for hunting and anglers and to improve permitting and leasing for shooting ranges on Forest Service and BLM lands. They were pleased to see that bill go through the Senate. They will keep us posted.

### **Representative Fulcher's office-Tim Kastning**

- Congressman Fulcher supported the bill that funds government through the end of FY 2019
- In that bill 1.375 billion dollars that extended about 55 miles of border wall
- Also in the bill, it fully funded the PILT (payment in lieu of tax) for the State of Idaho -about 30 million dollars
- He doesn't expect Idaho to follow the lawsuit against Pres. Trump on the state of emergency for more border wall funding
- Border security concerns are the increasing number of Middle Eastern immigrant apprehensions
- Supports the increase of a third Federal Judge in Idaho
- Selected to serve on the Natural Resource Committee and Education and Labor committee
- Grazing fees have been reduced from \$1.41 per animal unit to \$1.35 per month

### **Idaho Department of Lands Update- Jonathan Luhnnow**

- Timber sale auction on Monday for property near Smith Lake road
- FPA (Forest Practices Act) rate increase was passed in the Idaho legislature from 10 cents to 12 cents an acre.

### **National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Update -Greg Becker**

- Received 80 new applications in FY2019 from private landowners between Bonner and Boundary County
- Over 70% this year are forestry related
- Staffing is short between the two counties, lost 2 to promotions and have hired one
- Cassie reported tree sales are going good and they are working on starting their own tree program

### **National Wildlife Refuge-Alice Hanley**

- Construction work starting this summer to replace the Myrtle Creek Pump in July. Construction is expected to last through September.
- Auto Tour route will be closed for that due to safety reasons
- Manager position is still vacant with no timeline for replacement. Alice Hanley is the contact until further notice and can be reached at 509-559-3020.

- Please be patient when calling the Kootenai Refuge office. Due to limited staffing, there may not be someone there to take the call. Please leave a message and someone will get back as soon as possible.

**Next KVRI Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Boundary County Extension Office.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Sherrie Cossairt,

KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant