

Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
Forestry Committee
September 24, 2020
Boundary County Fairgrounds

Attendance:

Kevin Knauth, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, US Forest Service (USFS)-District Ranger
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner and KVRI Co-chair
Ed Koberstein, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, US Forest Service (USFS)-Timber Management
Beth Bigelow, North Zone, US Forest Service (USFS) - Archeology
Brandon Glaza, USFS, Hydrologist
Steve Petesch, USFS - Recreation
John Ailport, Inland Forest Management/Boundary County Fire Safe
Jonathan Luhnnow, Idaho Department of Lands
Jen Anderson, USFS - Project Leader
Matt Philbrook, Boundary County Back Access
Paul Sieracki, Landowner
Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)
Karen Schumacher, KVRI Recording Secretary & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)
Ron Feickert, Boundary County Back Access
Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League
Shannon Ehlers, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Sara Straub, FWS, Kootenai Wildlife Refuge
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County Commissioners
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group

Opening:

Rhonda Vogl opened the meeting at 1:27pm and welcomed everyone. She informed the group that the meeting would be covering the Westside Restoration Project.

Kevin Knauth updated everyone on the progress of the project and said specialists had completed the analysis. The Draft Environmental Analysis (E.A.) document will be released to the public for a 30-day comment period in mid-October. It was emphasized that public comments made during this period will give each person standing and allow them the opportunity submit an objection, if desired, during the objection period. The public is encouraged to be specific so that at objection time they can tie back to previous comments.

Introductions of those in attendance followed.

Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
Forestry Committee
September 24, 2020
Boundary County Fairgrounds

Jen Anderson of the Forest Service was introduced as the project manager and outlined where they were at now and what had changed. This document is available at:
<https://www.kvricollaborative.com/forestry>

Summarized:

Purpose and Need

- Improve forest landscape resiliency
- Reduce fire fuel
 - Approximately 98% of area is WUI including Myrtle Creek
 - City of Bonners Ferry Drinking Water Source
- Improve motorized and non-motorized recreation experiences
- Improve scenic quality of the the project area
 - Restoration will focus on providing a natural appearing landscape
- Improve habitat for grizzly bears and mule deer
 - Increase the amount of open-forest structure while maintaining /improving security for grizzly bear
- Decrease sediment sources
 - Road Maintenance
- Control non-native, invasive plants
- Determine long-term transportation needs
 - Focus on meeting needs with the goal of being able to maintain them
- Benefit the local economy
- Proposed Actions
 - Timber Harvest
 - Decreased by 1,500 acres since scoping
 - Prescribed Burning of Natural Fuels
 - Increased the acreage by approximately 100 acres
 - Precommercial Thinning
 - Increased by approximately 240 acres
 - Recreation Management
 - *Discussion was had regarding the recommended warming hut east of Roman-Nose. Stated in the report is that the hut is contingent upon local user groups acquiring adequate funding.
 - Treatment of Non-Native, Invasive Plants

Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
Forestry Committee
September 24, 2020
Boundary County Fairgrounds

- Herbicide indaziflam has been dropped from consideration due to incomplete information on the potential risks.
- Expanded treatment acreage better defined
- Aquatics Opportunities
 - Most specific to road work and drainage improvements
 - 1 AOP on Snow Creek Road – no changes since scoping
- Road Treatment
 - Fewer miles of road reconstruction, maintenance and temporary road construction for this project

The WSR project is analyzing for two snowmobile trailer parking areas along the Snow Creek road and also the site for a potential user funded/built warming hut near Roman Nose. This new infrastructure will be included in the EA, but not in the final decision. It's more appropriate to include this infrastructure in the planning and ultimate decision associated with the Winter Travel Planning NEPA that will occur in FY21.

Some discussion was had regarding the construction of new roads and the rulings under CFLR.

Question was posed regarding access to non-motorized trails, specifically one that crossed through the refuge.

Dan asked about any work being done by the refuge. New manager is just coming up to speed and agreed the area needs fuel attention. The idea of the Forest Service partnering with the refuge for treatments was discussed and thought to have significant possibilities.

- Draft Effects to Threatened and Endangered species and Critical Habitat
 - Grizzly Bear
 - Short-term adverse impacts to BMU followed by long-term improvements

*Brad Smith asked for a map which displays the roads used to calculate TMRD and OMRD. This request was communicated to the wildlife biologist after the meeting. A map showing all project roads and the BMU was available for review at the meeting.

- Canada Lynx
- Selkirk Mountains Caribou
- North American Wolverine
- Bull Trout

Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
Forestry Committee
September 24, 2020
Boundary County Fairgrounds

- An effects determination for bull trout and bull trout critical habitat will be established once consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been completed and will be included.
- Draft Effects to Soils and Hydrology
- Draft Effects to American Indian rights and Concerns

Timeline:

- Draft EA for 30-Day comment Period Oct – Nov 2020
- Final EA and Objection Period Dec '20 – Jan '21
- Hoped for Release of Final Decision April 2021