

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative  
July 15, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.  
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Adam Arthur, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair (Alt.)  
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair  
Gary Aitken, Jr., Kootenai Tribal Chairman and KVRI Co-chair  
Don Allenberg, Corporate Agriculture/Landowner (Alt.)  
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation/Landowner  
Tim Dougherty, Business/Industry (Alt.)  
Chip Corsi, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game (Alt.)  
Kevin Knauth, District Ranger, US Forest Service (USFS) (Alt.)  
Kennon McClintock, Conservationist/Environmentalist (Alt.)  
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
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  
Dave Gray, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests (Alt.) KVRI Board  
Carol Kriebs, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Environmental Director  
Kent Rotchy, Boundary BackCountry Access  
Karen Roetter, Senator Mike Crapo's office  
Tim Kastning, Congressman Russ Fulcher's office  
Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services  
Jonathan Luhnnow, Idaho Dept. of Lands  
Matt Philbrook, Boundary BackCountry Access  
Kurt Pavlat, Bureau of Land  
Charlie Holderman, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI), Fish & Wildlife Biologist  
Wally Cossairt, Boundary Co. Commissioner (Alt.) Co-chair  
Jake Garringer, Office of the Governor

**Opening:**

Dan Dinning opened and welcomed everyone to the monthly meeting; introductions followed.

Dan asked for comments or changes for the June 17th KVRI Board Meeting Minutes. Notes were approved by consensus.

**Presentations:**

**Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project - Nutrient Program - Charlie Holderman, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho**

Charlie, a Biologist with the Kootenai Tribe since 1999, presented on this project which began in 1994.

- Program is managed by the Kootenai Tribe Fish & Wildlife Department

- Aimed at improving the nutrients of the Kootenai River for the purpose of positively affecting the entire ecosystem. The Nutrient Program is not directed towards any particular species.
- Funded by Bonneville Power Administration.

The river was once one of the most productive watersheds in the Pacific Northwest. The two biggest challenges to the ecosystem have been losses and changes caused by the development of the Libby dam, a large hydropower and flood control facility, and, the loss of thousands of acres of wetland habitat to farming during the early to mid 1900's.

- Both actions were devastating to key ecological functions
- Sampling revealed a significant drop in Phosphorus below the dam.
- An Agricultural grade fertilizer of 10-34-00 Liquid Ammonium Poly-Phosphate is being added to the Kootenai River.
- Seasonal additions averaging thirteen thousand gallons of nutrients are being added each year.
- Sampling done following the additions from 2003 to 2014 show a significant increase in aquatic insects, bio-mass and, as a result, fish numbers, size and catch rate.

These results are overall thought to be satisfactory with the downside being that they are possibly not adding enough nutrients because the effects are limited to about 15 miles below treatment site. The area downstream of Bonners Ferry is not benefiting much. Some discussion is in process regarding the placement and timing of adding more nutrients.

Discussion was had regarding the overly high levels of nutrients found in most rivers. Carol Kriebs, Environmental Director for the Kootenai Tribe, discussed the benefits that may be seen when/if the Libby Dam is able to begin releasing from the bottom door versus the top. It is hoped that current efforts to dredge the area around the door will result in its functionality and will reduce the amount of flushing of nutrients currently being seen.

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

### **Committee Updates:**

#### **Forestry Committee Update:**

Kevin Knauth, USFS discussed ongoing projects

- Sale activity
  - Two actively being logged
    - Deer Stew is ongoing; expect work to go through end of July for harvest/haul
    - Hell-Roaring has started the timber felling operations and will be hauling soon
- Road Projects
  - Saddle Pass reconstruction continues; gravel being hauled from the pits in Grass Creek. Contractor continues the grinding of asphalt on Smith Creek road. Road will then be treated with calcium chloride and rolled.
  - Blading and Brushing work continues on other roads
- Westside Road Restoration project is in the planning stages. Data is being collected this summer with a possible November scoping and a draft decision by July 2020. Final Decision likely in

October, 2020. Timber Sales thought to be planned for 2021, 2022 and 2023. Not hearing much input yet - A field trip/meeting is planned for this August. We are hopeful that the field trip will generate more ideas from the public for this project.

- Grouse BMU road project in objection period. Objections will be accepted until August 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Prescribed burn in the Buckskin project area may be implemented in late August this year.
  - This earlier than normal burn window is necessary to meet the objectives of the project
  - We've been staggering the burning in this project area so that one burn unit can have time to recover before we burn the adjacent units.
  - Decision of when to do this is based highly on the measured fuel moisture. 1000-Hr Fuel Moisture is higher this year (at 21% now versus 16% in 2017) meaning it might be a good year for an early season burn.
  - Process is geared towards improving forage (huckleberries) for big-game and grizzly bears and to improve general forest condition.
  - 3 areas are being looked at for early season burning on the Idaho Panhandle - Buckhorn area has the highest probability of happening due to its remoteness and low impacts from smoke.

Shared Stewardship update provided:

**Concept:** Forested lands in Idaho are broken into ownerships (USFS, IDL, BLM, private). These different lands usually have different management missions. Instead of each agency focusing strictly on their own missions, Shared Stewardship seeks to bring these ownerships together under certain shared purposes.

- Governor Brad Little asked for two identified areas (One North, one South)
- The northern area is on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests
- Goal is to double the number of acres treated on Federal Forest lands by 2025.

**TMDL update:**

Rhonda Vogl KVRI Facilitator:

Noted we received a letter from the EPA approving The TMDL for the lower Kootenai and Moyie Subbasins. Rhonda discussed the Potential Natural Vegetation (PNV) method used in this temperature TMDL. Thanks to Bob at DEQ and the Citizens monitoring group for the data to support the decision process.

Subcommittee Meeting for TMDL scheduled for November 7th at 8:30 a.m. at the Tribal Office

**Grizzly Bear Subcommittee meeting update:**

SubCommittee Meeting for Grizzly Bear Recovery is scheduled for November 18th at 10:00 a.m. at the Tribal Office. Wayne Kasworm will be there and then will be presenting at the KVRI meeting that evening.

**Wetlands/Riparian Subcommittee**

In the near future, we will be scheduling a meeting for this subcommittee as well.

### **Fairbooth:**

No KVRI Meeting in August - instead the KVRI Board is invited to join us at the Fairgrounds on August 13th - 5pm to help set up the fair booth followed by dinner. Please RSVP to Karen by August 5th.

**Correspondence:** Zoe McAlear, summer fellow in college in Salt Lake City in the Environmental Dispute Resolution Program requested an interview with a KVRI Board member or members for a case study. Dan Dinning has offered to facilitate this. Board was asked to approve. Approval given.

### **Old/New Business:**

Dan discussed the Riverside Project public meeting.

- To be held on July 23rd at 6pm at the Boundary county Fairgrounds, Memorial Hall.
- Residents and those with use and interests for that corridor urged to attend and supply input.

### **Karen Roetter, Regional Director for Senator Mike Crapo**

- Senator Crapo will be in Boundary County Aug 6th and 7th for Townhall meetings. Locations/Times for Naples and Eastport will be emailed to Rhonda Vogl.

### **Tim Kastning, Regional Director for Congressman Russ Fulcher**

- Congressman Fulcher's Chief of Staff, Cliff Bayer, will be in the District Wednesday and Thursday, July 16 & 17.
- Locations are Sandpoint and Shoshone County.

### **Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife**

- Greg Hughes, State Supervisor, has retired. Chris Swanson is acting State Supervisor. Kathleen Hendricks is filling Chris's vacancy. They are expected to hold these temporary positions for an extended period while identifying Greg's permanent replacement.
- Discussion regarding the release of White Sturgeon recovery draft revision plan article in the newspaper. Dan emphasized the importance of advance notification to KVRI board members allowing the opportunity to support. Reiterated that that type of shared cooperation is why KVRI was formed, allowing for all three chairs to hear the same thing at same time. Agreed.
- Caribou Lawsuit update - Notice of intent to sue. This is pending litigation so there is nothing we can talk about. It is about a missed deadline on critical habitat. We are referred to headquarters office for any questions. Same thing for the bear baiting lawsuit; we cannot talk about pending litigation.

Jake Garringer, North Idaho Field Director, Office of the Governor was thanked for coming tonight. Jake was invited to participate in KVRI meetings as well as any KVRI subcommittee meetings

### **Chip Corsi – Idaho Fish and Game**

- Reported 4 more animals out of Libby, MT tested positive Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Reminded group that no evidence as of yet indicates the disease crosses from animal to humans, but Center for Disease Control recommends game meat from animals harvested in areas where CWD occurs be tested, and that meat testing positive not be consumed. IDFG will be doing an already planned full sampling regimen in northern Idaho this year; expecting to collect samples from 150 or more deer from around the region for testing. Discussions followed:

Where will sampling occur? (Eastern part of Boundary County/ Bonner and MT border will be heavily sampled)

- How long CWD lasts in an area? (Once present, this remains viable for decades).
- Many questions remain regarding how this manifests and what options should be considered for reducing it.
- Inquiries about what Canada is doing regarding CWD. It is unclear and there are a lot of uncertainties.
- How long does outbreak typically last? (Modified Protein (a “prion”) is viable for decades, still unknown how the MT outbreak will manifest itself).
- Augmentation bear (2018) update Travelled from Clark Fork back to Montana - then back across to Idaho and is heading south and is now down in Lochsa.
- McArthur Lake drawdown continues, for the purpose of wetland revitalization.
- IDFG and other state and federal agencies are in a lawsuit filed to prevent baiting bears for hunting; the suit cites concerns over attracting grizzly bears and possibly increasing grizzly bear mortality.
- Question asked regarding the proposed approved hunting of Tundra Swans. Still needs to go through NEPA; if approved will be a controlled hunt (limited number of tags) rather than a general open season, and not likely until 2021.

**Closing Comments/Meeting Announcements:**

There will be no formal meeting for KVRI in August. Instead KVRI Board will be at the Fair. Board is invited to Booth setup on August 13th at 5PM at the fairgrounds on the slab followed by dinner. RSVP is requested by August 5<sup>th</sup> to recording secretary Karen Schumacher.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 P.M.

Karen Schumacher  
KTOI/KVRI Administrative Assistant