

Meeting Notes  
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative  
January 13, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.  
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Angela Cooper, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Vice-Chair & (Alt.) KVRI Co-chair  
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair  
Dick Staples, Mayor, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair  
Chip Corsi, Idaho Fish & Game Commission  
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry  
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
Kevin Knauth, (Alt.) Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)  
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation/Landowner  
Ed Atkins Jr., Corporate Agriculture/Landowner  
Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)  
Kristin James, Acting Recording Secretary KVRI & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

**Agency/Others in Attendance:**

Jake Garringer, Office of the Governor  
Carol Kriebs, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
David Gray, (Alt.) Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County Commissioner & (Alt.) KVRI Co-chair  
Jonathan Luhnnow, Idaho Dept. of Lands  
Ken Homik, Idaho Dept. of Lands  
Scott Soultz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Norm Merz, Idaho Fish and Game  
Jane Jacoby, Yaak Valley Forest Commission  
Douglas Jones, Dept of Water Resources  
Anita Hanson, US Forest Service  
Mike Klaus, City of Bonners Ferry  
Bob Smathers, Idaho Farm Bureau  
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group

**Opening:** Dan Dinning opened the meeting at 7:02p.m. Minutes from November were passed with the agreement to clarify a sentence that Bob Blanford mentioned was unclear.

Dan noted that the KVRI group was formed 19 years ago. It is a unique group with very little turnover. The group was asked to adjourn for a few moments to enjoy the Anniversary cake and to have someone take the annual picture of the board.

**Presentations:** John Ailport was introduced. John is a consulting forester out of Sandpoint with Inland Forest Management(IFM) . His presentation on the Firesafe Program is available on the KVRI website (<http://www.kootenai.org/main.html> ).

When the program was first started in 2001 the focus was on defensible spaces for individual homes. The first grants were from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) & Idaho Department of Lands ( IDL) in

2003. In 2005, the Stevens grant shifted the program from just homes to fuel breaks and hazardous fuel treatments (HFT). The focus now is to create fuel breaks around communities. Since the implementation of the HFT program focus, approximately 3,000 acres of private land has been treated in Boundary County.

Landowners contacting IFM are often driven by the threat of being dropped by insurance agencies. Most of the work completed is at no cost to landowners. A contract states the landowner agrees to maintain the area for 10 years.

**Committee Updates:**

Forestry Subcommittee: Kevin Knauth and Anita Hanson reviewed the annual Community Forest Landscape Restoration Project (CFLRP) report as well as the report on ecological indicators. These reports are available on the KVRI website (<http://www.kootenai.org/main.html>).

10 years ago, the group applied for a twelve-million-dollar grant for use over a period of 10 years to help speed up the pace of restoration. The end of that period is approaching, but annual reports are still due that outline what was accomplished for the year towards the 10-year goal for each project. These reports help convince Congress to continue to support efforts. The bottom line is that progress is shown.

Anita stated that a two-year extension has been granted due to positive growth. She reviewed accomplishments in the following areas:

- Aquatic Organism Passages
  - Completed over district
- Forest Vegetative
  - Pre-commercial thinning and pruning
- Non-Wildlife Urban Interface (WUI) Fuels and Fuels Burning
- Noxious Weed Control
  - Herbicides along roads and Range allotment
- Timber Sale Treated Areas
  - Difficult to reflect credit for this because it is based on logging sold when the work is completed
  - They have sold a lot that is still not completed
- Road Decommissioning
  - Change of Philosophy resulted in this being changed to road storage
  - Road decommissioning makes the road hydrologically inert but allows for future use if needed
  - There is no credit for storage of roads yet
- Targets for Bioenergy and Firewood
  - Small trees go to pulp
- Timber Volume Sold
  - Above target in this area

- Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)
  - The first GNA sale in Boundary County was last year
- Trails and Recreation Improvement and Maintenance
- Stream Habitat
  - Aquatic Organisms are a part of that
- Restoration around High Mountain Lakes
  - Laying logs, planting where people/horses have impacted

Anita concluded by saying the dollars from CFLRP allow for all of these objectives to be accomplished. They have succeeded beyond almost all goals. Previously timber sales provided funds but that would not have allowed for completion of all of these. It is hoped that the relationships and communication built as a result of CFLRP will continue.

Volume under contract in the North Zone, which also includes Sandpoint/Priest Lake, is 79 million board feet sold, but not harvested. 50 million of that is out of Bonners Ferry.

There are eight active sales.

Completed last year are:

- Deer Stew
- Deer Placers
- Double Bar D TS
- Black Boulder (GNA)

Coming up:

- Robin Hood
- Hartwall
- Timbuk Stew
- Boulder Dash\*

\*The roads in this unit are not quite within standards for bear management. It was suggested that a year be taken to help accomplish this. They will advertise again in the summer & fall. There is 3.2 million board feet available to prospective buyers.

Dan Dinning commented that the annual report shows that jobs have been created and maintained with and without CFLRP funding through the years. This is valuable to our community. The US Forest Service is to be commended that through all these projects there has been no litigation.

Anita was thanked for all her hard work and congratulated for her retirement (and welcomed as a contractor!)

Kevin Knauth provided update on the following:

- Westside Road Restoration Project is in the scoping phase.
  - Letter and Summary of plans created
  - Plans are being created for rerouting trails that cross private lands to help ensure that they are available in the future
  - There are three timber sales planned
  - There are lots of plans for recreation
- Bog Creek should have a decision signed by the end of this month
  - Decision will give permission to reconstruct the road allowing use by primarily border patrol
  - This will also allow for the ability to do road storage within the Blue Grass BMU to bring it into standard
  - There will be no vegetative treatment
  - The contracts are prepared, but no work will be done until summer

Trout/Ball Creek has been delayed. The roads can not be utilized until the other BMU's are into compliance. That is another reason why the Blue Grass BMU is so important.

Katka Fuels is an area that some vegetative management was done to in the past and now it is time to go back. It is termed a categorical exclusion because no more than 3k acres will be treated. It is a project that helps to create a more continuous line of treatment.

Winter travel planning for the entire North Summit of the Idaho Panhandle is part of the Forest Service consultation with Fish and Wildlife Service. It is expected that the decision date will be FY2023. The delay in the finalization of this is attributed to the priority of bringing Bear Management Units into compliance.

Grizzly Bear Subcommittee Rhonda Vogl provided information on the next meeting which will be on January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00am at the Boundary County Fairgrounds in Memorial Hall. Kim Annis will be describing the program(s) being used in Montana. Wayne Kasworm will be giving information about the intended USFWS 5-year Grizzly Bear Review. There has been nothing since 2011 and new science is needed.

Dan Dinning mentioned the need to discuss the phone tree and notification process at the Grizzly Bear Meeting. It was noted that it is less than three months before we may start seeing Bears.

Chip suggested that if a phone tree to alert people about the known presence of grizzly bears is implemented, it is also important that land and home owners be reminded that there are a number of bears that are not collared, so that even if the phone tree is not activated, it doesn't mean that there are not bears in the area.

Chip Corsi addressed the public land lawsuit involving bear baiting that is most likely an outgrowth of the Montana augmentation bear that was moved to Spar Lake over a year ago that then hit a legal bear bait in Idaho south of the Clark Fork River. Federal agencies have asked the court to dismiss parts of that suit. The intent is that Idaho and Wyoming will be intervening.

IDFG is voicing concerns that the NCDE (Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem) gets delisted without the rest of the lower 48, it is likely that it will be difficult to get the much smaller Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak recovery zones to reach delisting. NCDE, in northwest Montana, is the third largest in the area of the six established grizzly bear recovery zones, potentially harboring the greatest number of grizzly bears.

Doug Jones, Idaho Dept of Water Resources: Shared that there were public information meetings last summer and fall. They were well attended and illustrated that perhaps the communities up here have been under surveyed with respect to jurisdictional programs and water rights. There is an opportunity to carry office capabilities up here on an appointment basis to allow individuals to receive advice on water rights, stream channels, etc. It was noted that this also extends to the City and other agencies that have expressed interest to meet. Doug can be contacted at: (208)762-2800 and emailed at: [doug.jones@idwr.idaho.gov](mailto:doug.jones@idwr.idaho.gov).

Idaho Department of Lands Jonathan Luhnnow provided update on the logging sale on Peterson Hill. They expect to finish this summer. There is a WUI meeting this Thursday at 10:30 at the USFS office.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Christy Johnson-Hughes was unable to attend but asked Rhonda to share an email (copy provided to the board) regarding the initiation notice for public inspection placed today on Grizzly Bear 5-year review. The document will publish in the Federal Register on January 14<sup>th</sup> (tomorrow).

Idaho Fish and Game Chip Corsi shared that the Commission meets next weekend in Boise to consider, among other things, upland game, furbearer and turkey regulations. They are proposing to add another month (January) to turkey fall season to help address conflicts created by the abundance of turkeys and to provide more hunting opportunity.

Rainbow trout population in the river is as high as been seen since studies began back in the 1990s. The success is attributed to several things including the tribe's habitat restoration projects, nutrient restoration and fishing regulations.

#### **Updates from Representatives:**

Jake Garringer of the Governor's office The Governor mentioned the Good Neighbor Authority and Shared Stewardship in his state address in regards to creating jobs and resource issues. He also mentioned Idaho's ability to bring diverse interest together and address natural resource issues.

U.S. Senator Jim Risch's Office Dan received a phone call from Senator Risch's office representative out of Lewiston. They have selected a replacement for Sid effective January 21<sup>st</sup>. Stefany Bales, who is currently with the University, will assume the position. Stephanie helped with the first KVRI CFLR proposal.

**Old Business:** Reappointment letters were sent to board members and alternates asking them to commit to another two years of service with KVRI. Appreciation was expressed for the commitment each has made. All but four signed letters agreeing to continue to serve on the board have been received. We are waiting on the letters from Jim Cadnum, Tim Dillon, Brad Corkill and Kennon McClintock.

It was agreed by consensus that all board and alternates be reappointed.

Two items needed signatures prior to sending the preliminary CFLR application to the region.

- Letter of commitment from three collaboratives, Panhandle, Shoshone/Benewah and KVRI
- Joint collaborative Memorandum of Understanding

Rhonda was able to gather the needed signatures and ensure that they were signed by the co-chairs prior to the December deadline. Copies of each were provided to the board and KVRI consensus was reached. Cooperation and collaboration is already being seen.

**Correspondence:** Letter of Support has been requested by Boundary County Road and Bridge in support of the writing of a grant for the Skin creek Bridge Project. The Board approved by consensus and the letter was signed.

**Next Meeting will be February 10, 2020. Meeting adjourned at 8:47pm**

Minutes taken by Kristin James and prepared by Karen Schumacher, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho