

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative  
April 17, 2017 – 7:00 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  
Gary Aitken, Jr., Chair, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) & KVRI Co-chair  
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry  
Ed Atkins Jr., Corporate Agriculture/Landowner  
Kevin Knauth, (Alt.) Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)  
Jim Cadnum, Landowner (Industrial)  
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation District/Ag Landowner  
Brad Corkill, Idaho Fish & Game Commission  
Kennon McClintock, (Alt.) Conservationist/Environmentalist  
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI  
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

**Agency/Others in Attendance:**

Dave Gray, (Alt.) Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
Dianna Ellis, Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge  
Sid Smith, Senator Jim Risch's office  
Karen Roetter, Senator Mike Crapo's office  
Judy Morbeck, Congressman Raul Labrador's office  
Kurt Pavlat, Bureau of Land Management  
Jonathan Luhnnow, Idaho Dept. of Lands  
Russ Hegedus, Idaho Forest Group  
Doug Nishek, USFS  
Chip Corsi, Idaho Department of Fish & Game  
Dave Wenk, Boundary County Weed Dept.

**Opening:**

Co-Chair, David Sims opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting; introductions followed.

The March 20, 2017, KVRI meeting draft notes were approved by consensus.

**Committee Updates: Forestry Committee-Boulder Creek Restoration Project**

Doug Nishek, USFS, presented an overview of the updates given to the Forestry Committee regarding the Boulder Creek Restoration Project. Topics included a review of the Purpose and Need, Summary of Roads and Scoping Comments.

**Purpose and Need Objectives for the Boulder Creek Restoration Project**

- Aquatic Resources: Maintain and improve the aquatic ecosystems in Boulder Creek and its tributaries.
- Vegetation Resource: Restoration of white pine, ponderosa pine and western larch; reduce lodge pole pine stands; maintain and restore old growth stands; increase patch size of forest openings; and conserve existing white bark pine populations to enhance restoration.
- Fire and Fuels: Protect the communication site infrastructure and Black Mountain lookout tower from potential wildfire damage. Return the role of fire back into the ecosystem.
- Recreation: Maintain and improve recreational sites and experiences in the Boulder Creek area; provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the local history; and protect off road areas and connecting trail systems.
- Wildlife Habitat: Contribute to meeting the standards of the Grizzly Bear Access Amendment for the Bear Management Units by increasing core habitat.
- Economic Potential: Provide opportunities to bolster local economy by maintaining and improving the recreational visitor capacity and potential and utilizing any forest products that may be produced as a result of the restoration activities.

During the discussion of the restoration objective of planting white pine alone, Kennon expressed strong concern about only planting white pine, it's disease problems and the need for pruning, instead of planting white pine and larch.

Doug stated that on North Creek where they have access, they will regenerate as they did in the 80's; shelterwood, seed tree, burn it and get the larch and white pine back in the system. And where they don't have access to those ridges, they have 7000 acres of burning planned to reduce the fuels in the middle of the drainage.

Doug discussed the project briefing that was sent out and the comments received using the Scoping Comment handout. Fourteen letters were received, most all supporting the project. Discussion followed concerning the comments. Alternative proposals for this project are based on the objection letters received.

Roads Summary: Doug used the handout and map to discuss the roads summary.

- Road Decommission: Road 4801; .70 mile; it was never designed as a system road.
- Road Added to National Forest System: Road 472 UH; 0.99 mile; mining access road; unidentified road added to the system.
- Road Storage: This total brings the area into compliance with the Grizzly Bear Access Amendment.
  - Reconstruct and Store Roads: 2110, 1304D, 1304A, 1403C=2.54 miles
  - Store Roads: 2662, 2113A, 628, 628A, 628C, 1304G (proposed use for a mountain bike trail), 1304 H= 9.85 miles

- Total change in Road Storage: 12.39 miles
- Unidentified roads: Non-system Road Decom: 3.38 miles (old roads not accessible, or possibly not needed; inventory cleanup for the books)
- Road Change: Open Seasonal Road 2209-currently closed April 1 thru November 30- proposing to close April 1 thru June 15 only.

Doug also stated that the Draft EA for Boulder Creek Restoration Project will go out in the next few months allowing the public another chance to comment. Kevin added that the implementation timeline for this project is 1<sup>st</sup> qtr. FY 19 for the first sale planned as a stewardship sale, 2<sup>nd</sup> sale will be FY20 as a regular timber sale.

Patty stated that this presentation was an opportunity for KVRI not only to remind everyone why we are going into Boulder Creek but more importantly, to explain the roads issue and how we are addressing those roads issues. When it comes out in the local newspaper that they are closing, storing, or decommissioning a road in this project, we need to be clear that there is only one short road segment of .70 miles that will be decommissioned. We do have to meet the access amendment, so in order to accomplish that we will be storing roads after the project is complete. By storing roads it preserves the ability to go back and be able to use those roads if needed....while providing for Grizzly Bear requirements.

Dave W. asked about the plans for the Boulder Bridge. Patty stated that the Federal Highway Department is working on that. Kevin added that it looks like a contract won't be awarded for that project before next spring.

Patty asked if there is anything we can do to help move it along any faster. She said the person in charge of engineering has been in contact with the Tribe and she could follow up on this concern. Kevin reminded everyone that that road segment is instrumental in their ability to layout and prepare for implementation of this project. If the crew is unable to layout the sale units none of the restoration will happen. Also most of the volume of the sale is in that area of access. At this time, it is anticipated Federal Highways will undertake the Bridge Repair in 2018.

*Doug's handouts are available on the KVRI website at kootenai.org.*

### **TMDL Committee Update: Patty Perry**

The next TMDL Meeting will be on Wednesday, April 19 at 8:30 a.m., at the Kootenai Tribal Office. We will be going over some drafts of our TMDL's (Deep Creek & Boundary Creek). Everyone is invited to attend.

Our last meeting included a presentation by Hawk Stone, Idaho DEQ, on the audit that Idaho DEQ and Idaho Department of Lands undertook to evaluate implementation of the Idaho Forest Practices Act for 2015-16. The compliance rate was about 96% overall which was phenomenal.

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

### **Letter of Support-IDFG : Patty Perry**

Idaho Department of Fish & Game is requesting a letter of support from KVRI for a grant proposal they are submitting to the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation to purchase bear-proof garbage cans for folks living in close proximity to occupied grizzly bear habitat, as another tool to reduce potential bear-human interaction.

Patty read the letter drafted for the request. The Board agreed to sign and send the letter in support as requested.

### **Meeting with Forest Supervisor, Mary Farnsworth - March 23, 2017: Handouts, overview and discussion**

Patty explained that several the members of the Board were able to meet with Mary Farnsworth to discuss the 2016 CFLRP Report and the CFLRP review. The Forest Service put together the performance measures of the CFLRP report to show where we are and how we may want to adjust targets and why we might want to consider that. In 2012 the Forest Service changed the database they used in their tracking system and how they account for things. Our CFLRP was just beginning. Consequently, we fell short on some of the targets due to this change in the tracking system. According to Mary, this is the first time the Forest Service has been allowed to make comments or adjust targets on what we have or have not achieved concerning the original CFLRP proposal.

When you say in ten years we are going to do something and in year 8 things change, as well as the landscape of some of the things you said you were going to do changes, you need to be able to change your plans.

As the details in the handout show, most of our targets we overachieved, but there are some we fell short on – partly because contract work often has a 10 yr. window, and we can't accomplished the goals ahead of the contract implementation (i.e. replanting follows as timber sale contract).

The targets that we fell short on are as follows:

- Timber sales- Helicopter logging changed and is not feasible any longer.
- Biomass- The market didn't take off as predicted
- Acres of Forest Established and Reforestation- those numbers are low because they follow harvest and the replanting and reforestation may not be accomplished by FY 2019
- Road Decommission- there was an error in the original target number; we have opted to store roads to achieve the goals, but there are not accounted for

Mary is available to meet with the Board and can attend our next meeting to go over this report in more detail, as well as the draft letter to send to the Washington office to make our request

Kevin Knauth added that most likely the details Mary may address will be things such as; when we initially made the proposal we believed that these activities counted towards the target so the target was artificially high with that expectation; now that we see how the reports are generated in the Washington Office, we find that these things do not actually contribute to the total target; knowing that, we want to reduce by this many acres to account to the fact that we are not getting credit; etc.

So rather than generalize, it will be an opportunity to explain exactly what those activities are, line by line.

Gary Aitken and Sandy Ashworth both added that Mary's presentation was informative and gave us a good feeling of where we are with things, and that she was very complimentary on our achievements.

After discussion, it was decided that Patty will have Mary on the agenda for the next meeting and she will let the Board know if it required to meet earlier or not to accommodate that presentation.

### **Committee Updates:**

#### **Congressman Labrador- Judy Morbeck**

Congressman Labrador is Hosting a Town Hall Meeting:

May 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in Coeur d'Alene

Place: TBA

All are invited and it will be in his newsletter and the local papers.

#### **Senator Risch's Office- Sid Smith**

It was asked if there was any news on the Continuing Resolution (CR). Sid reported that they will address that when they return, the week of April 24. The Continuing Resolution expires April 28, 2017. The discussion is that they will try to get an Omnibus done that week. They would prefer to have an Omnibus Bill to get them through the rest of the year as opposed to a CR. It would be a welcome development. It could then move the discussion to appropriations for fiscal year 2018.

The Senate has scheduled a confirmation vote for Sonny Perdue for Secretary of Agriculture on April 24.

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

This year's timber sale called Sandstorm will be sold June 7th, it includes 8,185 thousand board feet, 930 acres.

Timber sale set up for this year will be about 1800 acres, recon, over 5 different sales; a lot of work and volume for the local office, these projects will clean up the overstory removal needs that were backlogged; after that there will be several subsequent years of pre-commercial thinning that will keep them busy.

Jonathan talked to the TMDL subcommittee about their work with DEQ on class one stream FPA study sites; two are in the Sandstorm timber sale. He will talk to TMDL on Wednesday about setting up a tour to look at the pilot area - one site is on Trail Creek and one on Twenty Mile. Everyone is invited to see what IDL and DEQ are doing. (Subsequent emails with Patty firmed up the date for May 24<sup>th</sup> at 9am, meeting at IDL office for the Trail Creek site. Another site visit may be set up for the Twenty Mile one later; a notice will follow).

#### **BLM- Kurt Pavlat**

Secretary Zinke has made it clear that their three priorities this year are: Commercial, Recreation and Conservation; in other words, Multiple Use.... be good neighbors. He added that BLM has always been a very efficient organization and now it will be even more efficient for a government agency. BLM is one of the few government agencies that actually make money for the taxpayers. BLM receives 1.2 billion dollars in appropriated funds and brings back into the U.S. Treasury between 4 & 5 billion dollars; primarily oil/ gas but also timber sales, grazing receipts, etc. So "Multiple Use" is the mandate this year.

### **Fish & Game Commission-Brad Corkill**

Big game regulations have been set. There is a return of a limited, either sex hunt for A & B Elk tags. Moose tags in unit one have been drastically reduced. Bear baiting regulations have changed; they have gone from 200 yards from the road for bait to 200 feet.

The July Fish & Game Commission meeting will be here in Bonners Ferry.

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

Project update: the objection period closed today for Deer Creek; 2 objections- Barry Wynsma talking about goshawks concerns and another one today from AWR (Alliance for the Wild Rockies).

Process of objection: The Forest Service has 30 days to go to their specialists, have them look through them, and draft a response to those objections. Then the reviewing official at the Regional Office will look at the objections and responses and decide if there is merit or not. If it moves beyond that point, the reviewer at the Regional Office may choose to find resolution, by a one on one meeting with the objector, via a phone call with the objector, or an open meeting. It may involve those with standing; and consider the collaborative process used in the project.

Kevin also provided an update on the NEPA team: They had a Kick off meeting with the hosted NEPA team from Coeur d' Alene. They have a core team (team leader, hydrologist, silviculturist, fishery, soils, etc.), and the District provides the other support (archeology, botany, engineering, fuels, etc.). This team accelerates our ability to get projects ready. This team will help the Forest Service with the Camp Dawson and Robinhood projects. Both projects are expected to be Categorical Exclusions (CE's) and with the help of this team the two projects could be done in 10 months. These projects are being done under the Farm Bill CE process, not only can they treat 3000 acres in each project area but there is no objection period involved; comments are up front during the scoping process.

The next KVRI meeting will be on May 15, 2017 at 7 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.  
Sherrie Cossairt, KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant

