

Final Meeting Minutes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
October 18, 2021
7:00 p.m.
Hybrid Board Meeting Armory Building

Board Members in Attendance:

Gary Aitken Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Vice Chair, KVRI Co-Chair
Carl Petrick, U.S. Forest Service
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County Commissioner, (Alt.)
Chuck Roady, Landowner (Industrial)
Kevin Knauth, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service, (Alt.)
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests
Kennon McClintock, Conservationist/Environmentalist (Alt.)
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation/Landowner
Don Allenberg, Corporate Agriculture/Landowner, (Alt.)

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Bob Smathers, Idaho Farm Bureau
Britt Madison, Stimson Lumber
Carol Kriebs, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Dave Gray, Social, Cultural, Historical (Alt.)
Frank Edelman, Idaho Fish & Game
Hilary Whitcomb, U. S. Fish & Wildlife
Jacob Hinrichs, BBCA
Jake Garringer, Office of Governor Little
Jeff Gilberg, Boundary County Citizen
Jeremy Gaffield, Idaho Fish & Game
Karen Roetter, Office of Senator Crapo
Kim Pierson, U.S. Forest Service
Leon Basdekas, U.S. Corp of Army Engineers
Marc Kilmer, Office of Representative Russ Fulcher
Marty Martinez, Boundary County Citizen
Michael Robinson, Idaho State Parks & Recreation
Mike Ward, U.S. Forest Service
Olivia Drake, BBCA/ 9B Trails
Paul Upshaw, Boundary County Citizen
Robert Akins, Idaho Fish & Game
Sarah Hendricks, Office of Species Conservation
Sarah Straub, U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Scooter Drake, BBCA
Stefany Bales, Office of Senator Risch
Tim Bertling, Boundary County Commissioner

Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group, Business/Industry, (Alt.)
Todd Wernex, Idaho Dept. of Lands
Tom Fleer, Idaho Dept. of Lands
Trevor Anderson, Idaho State Parks & Recreation
Tyler Nimke, Stimson Lumber
Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Karen Schumacher, Recording Secretary KVRI & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Meeting Called at 7pm by Gary Aitken, Jr., Rhonda Vogl facilitated introductions of all Zoom attendees and those attending in person.

Britt Madison of Stimson Lumber Britt Madison of Stimson Lumber Company presented an overview of their International Selkirk Forest Legacy Project FY23 of which they are in partnership with the Trust for Public Lands and the Idaho Department of Lands. The Legacy Project is located in Boundary and Bonner County and will protect approximately 10,883 acres of timberland of which 2,477 acres are in Boundary County and 8,406 acres are in Bonner County. Purchase of the conservation easement will help prohibit subdivisions and development while allowing for continued sustainable forest management, fish and wildlife habitat protection, and public access. Stimson's ability to own and manage these lands long-term is a benefit for providing local forest-based jobs that contribute to the local economy. The ownership by Stimson also maintains the local tax base, the property remains in private ownership and is taxed as such, this helps protect the base for roads, schools, emergency services and other community needs.

The easements are located:

- In the Northern block
 - McArthur Lake Corridor
 - Ruby drainage
 - Rapid Lightening drainage
- In the Southern block
 - Careywood area
 - Lake Ponderay

This presentation can be accessed at [KVRI | KVRIID \(kvrivid.com\)](https://kvrivid.com) by scrolling to the October 18th meeting block.

Mike Robinson of Idaho Parks & Recreation (motorized vehicle division) provided a presentation on the purpose and scope of their work. The division began in 1970 mostly because of dirt bike users asking for trails to have maintenance.

The Idaho ATV/Motorbike program is funded through registration fees purchased by the enthusiast. The cost of the registration is \$12.

The registration fees are used for:

- Trail maintenance by the IDPR Trail Ranger program
- Trail maintenance and construction by the IDPR Trail Cat program
- ATV and Motorbike education & public outreach programs
- Online OHV trail mapping application
- Grants for OHV trail construction, maintenance, signing and trailhead facilities

This presentation can be seen on the KVRI website by scrolling to the October meeting block at: [KVRI | KVRIID \(kvricollaborative.com\)](http://kvricollaborative.com)

Following the presentation Mike addressed questions.

Q: Gary Aitken Jr. asked if they were looking to expand trails versus just upkeep.

A: Mike said they address maintenance only but are looking at increasing signage and possible some kiosks.

Q: Christy Johnson-Hughes asked why there has been a decrease in trails.

A: Mike thought a lot of the decrease could be attributed to the increase in Federal and social issues with wild life. Also of consideration is that there is a degree of redundancy in trails (2 go the same way).

Q: Carl Petrick asked about the increase of electronic mountain bike usage and the impact that may have.

A: They are looking at that within the non-motorized division. That division is very small and consists of 2 people for the whole state and they are looking at more money for non-motorized trail use.

Tim Bertling added that there are 3 classes of Ebikes with very different attributes and speed capabilities making it important to differentiate.

Q: Olivia Drake asked if IDPR can work with agencies such as 9B trails for funding purposes.

A: It was answered yes, they are more than happy to if it deals with motorized access.

Subcommittee Updates

Forestry - Kevin Knauth – USDA Forest Service shared that the Westside Restoration Project is waiting for the letter to be signed approving the 15 units with openings greater than 40 acres. Once received the decision will be signed. This is not expected to impact the first scheduled timber sale. The change in weather means the agency will be commencing pile burns. Reconstruction of the Bog Creek road is 75% completed. All construction has ended for the season and can restart any time after July 16th of next year.

TMDL – Rhonda Vogl - KVRI shared that the TMDL meeting was held on October 13 with a really great turn out. There were some good discussions following the input given by both Sue Ireland and Bob Steed on the Elk River Mining. There are 5 total projects in the environmental assessment process in Canada

which is similar to our NEPA process in the United States.

There are Several entities involved with keeping track of what is going on which include Idaho and Montana DEQ, EPA and the Tribe. The tribe is testing fish and finding exceedances.

The harmful algae bloom on Solomon lake was discussed as well. Public input alerted DEQ to this and it is very dangerous to animals. It is thought that the high temperatures (25° above normal) have a role in this.

Stream monitors were checked by Jerry and Chuck and found to have some at or upwards of 60°. Air temperatures on the monitors were thought to have affected this. The failure of some batteries was discussed and Bob Steed offered to contact the manufacturer in an effort to have these replaced at no charge.

Rhonda added that it is hoped to schedule a WAC (wildlife auto collision) meeting soon.

Agency Updates

Christy Johnson-Hughes of U.S. Fish & Wildlife extended thanks to Rhonda Vogl for putting together the upcoming G2G meetings offering an opportunity for agencies to share input. Christy shared that they are closing out the field season and taking the time to review Amber's (Grizzly Bear Specialist) program and use of conflict reduction tools. Christy welcomes any thoughts and/or comments.

Robert Akins of Idaho Fish & Game said that the waterfowl season had started and there was an encouraging number of ducks seen at McArthur Lake but at Boundary-Smith creek hunting numbers appeared down with the suspected reason of decreased water levels.

Pheasant season is underway and it appears that hunters who are on to the scheduled releases are doing well but those who are not aware of release times are not faring as well.

Carl Petrick of the U.S. Forest Service shared that over snow vehicle planning is in progress and a virtual meeting will be happening this fall. The agency will be giving a presentation this Friday to the regional forester evaluating salvage opportunities across the entire region and trying to prioritize them.

(Salvage logging is the practice of logging trees in forest areas that have been damaged by wildfire, flood, severe wind, disease, insect infestation, or other natural disturbance in order to recover economic value that would otherwise be lost.) An answer is expected within the week.

A resolution meeting was held for the Honey Badger sale. A priority remains to further educate the public on the benefits of good forestry practices.

Kim Pierson of the U.S. Forest Service addressed the pending infrastructure money of which the amount is not yet known. Kim believes it's important to be strategic and to consider that with great money comes great expectations. They are trying to assess the 10-year strategy for reducing risk from wildfire

across landscapes and changing the mentality of how they approach more on the ground to result in meaningful changes.

Carl added that he is wanting to make sure they look at all available tools in the tool box for treating acres and improving forest health. They will be looking to increase the amount of work done and believe working with NGO's will help with that.

There were no questions and Gary asked to hear from our congressional attendees.

Federal and State Partner Updates:

Karen Roetter of Senator Crapo's office had no information for this meeting.

Stefany Bale of Senator Risch's office shared the hope that the division between folks can be bridged for the December 3 dead line for the debt ceiling. Stefany also shared that Senator Risch co-sponsored the veterans in parks (VIP) act making national parks and federal recreation pass areas available without charge for members of the armed forces, veterans and gold star families.

Marc Kilmer of Congressman Russ Fulcher's office echo'd the importance of an agreement needed prior to the December 3rd debt ceiling deadline. Marc also mentioned the support that Congressman Fulcher lent to the VIP act.

Jake Garringer of Governor Little's office had nothing to add.

Sarah Hendricks from the governor's Office of Species Conservation made an announcement that the wolf conflict funding program is open through the end of December. There are two programs.

Wolf Depredation Compensation

Livestock ranchers experiencing depredation as a result of wolf

Ran through [Joshua Uriarte](#)

Livestock Depredation Prevention Program

Producers interested in proactive prevention

Ran through [Jace Hogg](#)

Sarah shared the link for more information: [Wolf Conflict Funding | Species Conservation \(idaho.gov\)](#)

Tim Dougherty shared that earlier this month, the Alliance for the Wild Rockies filed a lawsuit against the United States Forest Service's Kootenai National Forest over the Ripley Project. The collaborative, Kootenai Forest Stakeholders coalition, will be intervening or joining in either as a friend of the court or by Amicus brief filing with both Lincoln County and AFRC (American Forest Resource Council) as the stakeholder group commented favorably on the project.

Chuck Roady shared that the Department of Natural Resources is intervening as

well.

There were no questions or further comments.

The meeting was called at 8:36

Karen Schumacher, KTOI/KVRI Recording Secretary