

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
March 23, 2017, 1:30 p.m.
Board Meeting – With Mary Farnsworth, Forest Supervisor
Kootenai Tribal Office

Board Members in Attendance:

David Sims, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair
Gary Aitken, Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) & KVRI Co-chair
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry
Kevin Knauth, (KVRI Alt.) Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group
Ron Abraham, Kootenai Tribe (KVRI Alt.)
Mary Farnsworth, USFS-Idaho Panhandle Nat. Forest, Forest Supervisor, KVRI
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Dave Gray, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests (KVRI alt.)
Stephen Howlett
Billy Barquin, KTOI
Meghan Oswald, USFS
Jody Pliley, USFS
Ed Koberstein, USFS, Bonners Ferry District

Opening:

Patty Perry opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting; introductions followed.

Patty began the meeting stating that Kevin Knauth and Mary Farnsworth had asked to meet with the KVRI Board to have a work session to sort through the CFLRP Report; where we are currently with accomplishments, where there may be adjustments and how we will move forward.

Mary thanked everyone for taking the time for a mid-day meeting; recognizing that everyone's time is valuable.

What she plans to talk about:

- The place we find ourselves in meeting the responsibilities of the CFLRP.
- Details about the accomplishments.
- CFLRP money, where it's gone and where it's going.
- Talk about the other things on our horizon.

Regarding the Data they brought today she will talk about:

- The opportunity for adjustments on the CFLRP; expires in 2019.
- Rumors of potential to extend; what does that look like, how do we feel about that.
- The report to the Washington Office to state the place we find ourselves.
- The proposal for adjustments included in the spreadsheets.

The ultimate goal is to have conversation about where we find ourselves, do we need to do some adjustments, and to have honest feedback and conversation about the status of the CFLRP. She will share her feelings from the Forest level, and she is interested in what we have to say about that. And are we in alignment.

Mary asked her department for a review of the target accomplishments and the money distribution of the CFLRP Project thus far and the result is the data on the reports they brought today. The data shows how we will meet our responsibilities in FY2018 and FY2019, and how we project as we move forward. They have a plan and want to present it to us and see what we think about it.

Mary explained that their tracking mechanisms are poor at best. CFLRP was authorized for the Bonners Ferry District with KVRI in 2011. In 2012 their budget tracking mechanism changed. They used to have a bin of money each for timber, wildlife, aquatic, engineering, etc. Then it changed to a lump of money to be distributed between those activities. What also changed was how and what you could count as accomplishments. It is just an internal issue they deal with. They have done their best to provide us with those accomplishments although they are not as easy to understand as they used to be.

What they will show is what we, KVRI and the Forest Service, get credit for; Mary is graded on these numbers. KVRI will be held up against other collaborative groups and the measurements are exactly the same nationwide. These will be the numbers used to look at efficiency.

Mary stated that in review of the data, we are not meeting our responsibilities in the following areas:

- Biomass: The economy crashed, the industry did not come to fruition, and they cannot subsidize as in the past.
- Planting: In order to plant, timber needs to be harvested, things have to happen in sequence, but ultimately it will happen as soon as harvest takes place.
- Road Decommission: The original proposal had a lot in it; lot of possibilities why we did not meet it; but they are not relieved of that target.

They have some thoughts about ensuring that from here on out we are able to meet what we say we are going to do; we can take some corrective action and to make sure that we are all in alignment including the Washington Office expectations.

Presentation of the KVRI CFLRP Proposed Changes- Ed Koberstein, USFS

Ed began the presentation reviewing the handout “KVRI CFLRP Proposed Changes”. He explained that the program was authorized for 10 years yet we didn’t receive funding until 2 years after that. To set the framework of what we will be discussing, the numbers we see are normalized for 8 years. In column 3 “Original proposed target”, that is going to be reduced by 2 years (26%). “Units accomplished” to date are as of the close of FY2016; those *projected* are by the end of FY2019. The last 3 columns show the *proposed changes*, *projected % accomplished with revised target* and the *justification/rational for those proposed changes*.

Volume of Timber sold –CCF/Million BF:

Patty asked that, even though we exceeded the target in this area, can we note, in the justification column, something that explains that we had one year that this project did not get any attention, because of the Tower Fire. And to explain, with that one year loss, we actually met that target in 7 years not 8.

Mary agreed it is fair to say we can put a sentence that stated “this target was affected by adjusting priorities due to salvage efforts on the forest”. It’s not a 100% crossover match though.

Mary asked “Did anyone think the Forest Service would meet its timber target over ten year?”

Tim D. replied that he has said this before, that Bonners Ferry and Kevin’s group has the gold standard up here. Thank goodness for the job that you folks are doing and the acreages you are treating. We would be in a different ballpark given the surrounding forests of the Panhandle that are under producing. It is exceptional here. And he asked Ed, how can you back down the acreage to such a significant portion yet still have your long target.

Ed explained that they’ve converted into a lot more regeneration type harvest mechanisms, trying to accelerate the seral species component across the landscape and with that we need more daylight on the ground. We have an overabundance of shade tolerant and fire intolerant species, with regeneration, we get more volume per acre. The acres treated annually haven’t changed a lot but the prescriptions have. Consequently, we are seeing more health and resilience restored in the landscape.

Mary added that they are also asking for opening of more than 40 acres.

Patty stated that Art Zack helped put this in perspective when he pointed out to us that over a ten year period we had agreed to treat only 40,000 acres on a 419,000 acre piece of ground.

Acres of forestlands treated using timber sale:

This target was affected by Biomass issues, small diameter material utilization, and helicopter logging. The rational explains that they cannot accomplish this target without additional subsidies, which isn’t our best investment. They are looking at reducing that target by about 7000 acres. The roadside salvage is another issue, the volume per acre is not there, it’s not economically feasible, and there are access issues. The idea is to adjust the number to a more realistic target. Currently our commercial timber sales have a strong proportion of regeneration harvest which is a higher volume per acre.

Ed continued, that one other thing to remember is that our accounting system is delayed, we don't get credit for acres treated until it's actually done on the ground; we have sold sales in 2012 that we still haven't got total accomplishments achieved from yet, all the acres haven't been cut. You will see that throughout this spreadsheet. What we are trying to say with this proposal is let's use real numbers, what we think we can actual accomplish, and take credit for that.

It was asked to consider adding and identifying those acres that will be eventually harvested even if they won't be counted. Ed stated that the one thing we are looking at in our tracking, is trying to identify sales sold and acres under contract not necessarily harvested and to be able to represent it that way.

A question was if the 1110 helicopter acres reduced included the helicopter acres in Boulder. If you are projecting out to FY19 wouldn't we want to include those acres in Boulder? They are analyzed under NEPA; targeted for helicopter, although not feasible at the time something could change by FY19.

The answer was it's not included. The helicopter acres were in the original proposal, the Boulder acres would be above and beyond the original, we can only offset what we originally proposed.

Patty asked if there were any the ramifications of reducing the targets. The answer was no other than it shows we did not get the work done on the ground we predicted. Megan also added as long as we are up front in conveying the proposed adjustments there are no penalties in reducing the targets as far as they know.

Patty asked why is the "proposed % accomplished" column still only at 56%.

Ed stated that's what we feel we will actually achieve on the ground, as in acres treated. We may still have lots of timber sales sold under contract but the acres are not treated yet. We want to qualify that additional amount and that will bring it much closer to 100%. Right now, there currently is no performance metric in the database to assign it to but they will articulate that in the final report.

Mary realizes it is very important for us to project out all the things that have been done and that will be on the horizon. The Washington Office is in full acknowledgement that things do change. They just want to know that we are being accountable. Other Collaboratives have already done this adjustment process, but this is our first opportunity.

Biomass/green tons: Keep the original target, knowing we will under achieve it because of market issues; it is what it is, no change there.

Forest Vegetation Established: Our reforestation efforts that occur after harvest is complete, low projected accomplishment at 45%, reduce to a more realistic number putting us to 97% at the end of FY2019.

Forest Vegetation Improved: In the original proposal this number included numerous activities combined into improved performance methods that we can't get credit for; this is an integrated target with numerous performance measures feeding this one metric. When we go back and input it in, it doesn't work. So, we break out those activities and those are some of the adjustments we need to do to get credit for in the right places.

Hazardous Fuels: A lot of activity now is in non-WUI, so we broke these out to better reflect where we are doing the treatments in WUI vs non-WUI.

Ed continued noting there were no changes on the following line items:

Noxious weeds, rangeland vegetation improved, acres of terrestrial habitat restored..., miles of system trail maintained ..., miles of system trail improved, number of bridges replaced, miles of stream habitat restored..., numbers of stream crossings constructed..., miles of passenger system roads..., miles of passenger car system....

The next area of adjustment is:

Road Decommission: What we tried to do is to identify the other component which is “road storage”. The original proposal was specifically for decommissioning and we do not have a mechanism to count road storage. But we’d like to propose it.

What you see under projected units accomplished by end of FY19 is 22.8 miles; based on the original proposal that would only give us 18%. What we are currently projecting is 42 miles of road storage, which gets us a lot closer. This number does not include Bog Creek, although there is a large amount of potential road storage with that project too.

Under road decommissioning we think we should portray exactly what we have accomplished; 24 miles that we have under NEPA, which we can implement by end of FY19. This is still far less than the original 128. But if we can identify the additional metric of road storage and take credit for that, Mary gets an A on her report card.

It was asked if that included non-classified roads because there are a lot of them in Deer Creek and Boulder Creek. It does not, but in Deer Creek some of the roads identified as system roads, we have agreed to store. We can take credit for those, once we get them through the decision and put them on the books and store them.

Kevin added that if a road is unclassified; it’s not in the system to give us the opportunity to call it decommissioned. We have to add it to the system then decommission it. What we did do, is if we utilized one of those unclassified roads, made it safe to move logs along it, we used it, added it to the system, then we decommissioned it afterwards.

Patty suggested adding along with the road storage, the unclassified roads identified and the number of miles decommissioned, because it did change the landscape.

Mary agreed to adding details where we have the ability to convey that information, it won’t count to compare CFLRP’s but it will speak to the true work we are trying to do.

Billy asked if there will be a narrative to describe this report.

Dan D. added the other thing we want to be clear about is the “miles per year of roads” to be decommissioned in the original proposal was incorrect. There was a decimal point in the wrong spot and

no one agreed to do that amount. So is it better to do the mechanism you are looking at, or is it better to say that there was an error in the original proposal.

Mary would argue that we should do both. We should have a small narrative, that there was an issue between KVRI and the Forest Service saying that this number doesn't seem to be correct, etc., and at the same time here's the work we've done, here is the work we are going to do and here is the change we would like to propose; she thinks we should do both for full transparency.

Acres of Water... This was tied to previous road decommissioned-15 acres per mile –if we reduce the road decommission target this one needs to reduce proportionally.

It was asked if there would be an economic report that goes with this. And Kevin explained that in 2015, we had the University of Idaho do an economic analysis, which told us based on volumes and types of wood products, locally what direct and indirect jobs would be produced as a result of that. The Forest Service also does a similar analysis using the TREAT tool. It generates a report showing both direct and indirect jobs as a result of the volume they do, and the contract opportunities and that type of contract work they do.

Patty suggested that the Social Economic Study, created for us by the University of Idaho, be used instead of the TREAT tool. It demonstrates what the Collaborative did and paid for to have done as part of the CFLRP Project.

Bob B. stated that from the business industry perspective, we should take credit for the goals we accomplished that contributed to the community sustainability.

Mary asked the group if the proposal made sense, and if we understand what they are trying to do.

Patty responded that we understand what you are doing. We realize you are between a rock and hard spot, and that's what you have to do. We agree with Tim and others have said it doesn't make sense to not take credit for what's under contract, which shows that you've actually met all those targets and exceeded them. But we understand because it is the way the system and the data base works.

Mary expressed she is proud of the accomplishments that we have done. And overall she is astounded at how perceptive KVRI has been in the original proposal. Because she thinks we came close. Who projects out accurately ten years?

Patty added that Linda McFadden (District Ranger at the time) and some of the others that worked on this project did an amazing job and deserves a lot of credit for how close we came. Kevin added they also had a short window to work in.

Mary said she wants to make sure in the next couple of years that we get done what we can get done. The proposals are tied to projects, we have a program of work to do, we know exactly what project that will be done in the next couple of years and it is a direct link to what we intend to do. The only caveat to that is will the funding continue to come? We are planning on it and planning on those projects happening. That is a big work load for the next couple of years for everyone. How do you all feel honestly about that?

Patty stated that aside from the accounting issues and the typo on road decommissioning in the original proposal, and if the storage is noted, we actually did an amazing job. She added that we should have insisted the typo be corrected right away. Dan remembered they were told there was no way to correct it in the beginning. Mary added but we can do it now.

Patty continued we keep talking about the landscape scale and how big it is; it would do us well to have the acreages of the watersheds that were analyzed to come up with the treatment acres. I think we would be surprised at the percentage of acres on the District that have been considered in the whole scheme of things for work. Mary agreed to take a look at that.

Billy asked as to how this report may be portrayed in a way that will be understood, by the Washington office and the other people that may see it. To others it may look like we did really well on timber but they may ask where the restoration is.

Patty added that she thinks to her, it does just the opposite. If you look at this, the one we fell short on the timber sales, but the restoration exceeds all targets.

Mary explained that this is a report that the Forest Service and KVRI need to do that goes to the Washington Office. This is not conveying of information for the sake of conveying information to the world. This is a very specific targeted letter from me to the Regional Forester and then from the Regional Forester to the Chief of the Forest Service, that is it.

If we to choose to convey to others the work that KVRI has done, that is a completely different product; there is no way to explain an integrated target in a way most people would understand. That's the dilemma; this is not a public affairs document. This is a targeted reply due to the Washington office that allows us to report what we've done and ask for an adjustment. This is the first chance that we truly have had to adjust targets; to adjust the proposal.

To answer Billy's question, this is an internal document to the Forest Service, we are in partnership, we need to do this, we believe it is wise for KVRI to do this so that we can say we are going to be transparent and here is the scoop.

And I think it would be very wise of us to develop a public affairs document to toot our horn. I would like to work purposefully to say, as we are looking at two years to ending this, how successful this has been, not just in numbers but in our relationships and what we choose to do for our communities.

Mayor Sims asked how well are we doing compared to the other Collaboratives in reaching our goals.

Mary has heard that other Collaboratives have spent all their money, they are not meeting their responsibilities repetitively, and they don't know the cumulative status of things.

The first couple of years other Collaboratives were getting large amounts of money and didn't know what to do with it, they weren't ready for it. But this Collaborative was very strategic in how they approached the first couple of years, we said we don't want a large amount of cash, because we weren't ready for it, that was the wisest things, the group that put it together did. We asked for a modest amount to get going and that made all the difference. We are doing fantastic, we are vigilant and do not avoid our responsibilities on an annual basis.

Megan added that this report is hugely helpful. Others do not have the level of detail such as this template that Mary is going to work on to send to the Regional Forester. There is also some dialogue between Megan and the Washington Office CLFR coordinator; the more dialogue we have before it goes to the Regional Forester the more prepared we can be, to make sure we are set up nicely to get the proposed change. There is a lot of opportunity; the Washington Office is receptive.

As the template was handed out to the group, Mary explained that it is similar to what we have gone over already. What she proposes is to take what we've talked about on the spreadsheet and transform it into what we will send to the Washington Office.

And what Mary has heard in this discussion, very specifically, are some things we would like to do in addition to what they have proposed. They have to submit this none the less, but they can make additions. It is also important to add the caveats; stored roads, can't plant until we cut; cutting hasn't happened yet, and those items they have projected. It would also be good to add the economic information that KVRI has done. That would be an advantage, to be proud of the work that's been done. Once we do that, she will send it back; she and Patty will connect, have it for review, and talk about it again.

Mary answered Patty's question about a timeline for this report. It is soon, although there is no requirement, it is their choice, but waiting wouldn't be beneficial. The sooner we get clarified the sooner we will know what we are going after, but having the clarity, having the dialogue with the Regional office and the Washington Office is beneficial.

Especially for what is coming in July: the Washington Office review of the CFLR projects. She would like to work with us to have a fantastic show and tell; it would be nice to have this report into the Washington Office before they arrive in July.

Patty stated if we as this workgroup, can agree that we understand what is in this report, what it needs to look like, understand that the Forest Service will attach the social economic report from University of Idaho, and also include the details that we have asked to have included in this approach, we could then discuss at a KVRI meeting in May. That way the full community could be made aware of the process & changes and it could still be submitted to the Washington Office by the end of May. They will then have a chance to review it before they come at the end of the July.

Mary and Megan explained that we are just part of the tour, they are coming to see three Collaboratives and we are hoping to be first. They would also like us, KVRI, to help plan the visit.

Ed restated back to the group what additions we would like to have included in the report:

- Acres under contract.
- Project planning area, acres analyzed under NEPA.
- Road Storage- breakout-road decommissioning.
- The error in the number of miles of road proposed for decommissioning in original proposal.

Mary explained to the group how the template came to be. The Forest Service has been communicating with the Washington and Regional office regarding CFLR every year. The fact that they weren't meeting

these targets, that there was an error in the proposal etc. and other Collaboratives in the country were saying the same things. They realized they needed to do something, hence the template.

Kevin added that all along there was the ability to adjust the project spatial parameters (GIS layers), but not the targets in the proposal until now.

Steve Howlett raised the question; how does your success compare to those less successful, are they going to change formulas nationally, are they going to have to come up to our level? If the others aren't achieving their targets, do they lower the standards because we've exceeded them or are they going to stay the same and they have to make the grade? Is this the guideline to make the National Forest Project goals?

Patty added that the CFLR proposal is an authorization that we, the Bonners Ferry District on the Idaho Panhandle with KVRI, competed nationally for in order to get this funding and designation. There are only 20 in the entire nation that competed and got money to do this.

Through this reporting process and through the Washington Office, it will go to our congressman and senators and show what we did with the money they awarded these groups. It is important for us to show that we did what we said we would do. And it may affect funding authorization in the future. It is important for all the Collaboratives to get an A on this report.

Mary also added that when we do what we say we are going to do, we develop a reputation for delivery, and if she were the Regional Forester or the Chief of the Forest Service, she would invest where people deliver; that reputation is very important to her and it helps our forest and helps us get money to help our local communities and improve forest health, which is all of our goals.

Another item Patty asked Ed to remember to include is the acknowledgment that we had the interruption of the wildfire, Tower Fire, so basically the 8 year targets were accomplished in 7 years.

Dan brought up the point, that the collaborative process also brings the license to do things. It is important to note that it is the first time in 17 years that projects from the Bonners Ferry District have not been litigated. It's proof that the collaborative process works.

Mary added that if we are not being litigated, litigation is costly; we can invest that money into doing more work which is why our timber target has gone up in the last 5 years, that is how we are able to do more.

Jody added that in working with the Washington Office they have stressed that it will be important to work closely with them because they have experience with projects that have moved up and gone through smoothly because of that coordination. They know the language that should be in the request regarding the project and they can advise us. With all of us working together we can get things done.

Billy asked if KVRI would need to meet with the Regional Forester or the Washington Office, to explain some of this and be the face behind it, or is it just a paper exercise.

Mary replied that it is intended to be a paper exercise but how cool would that be.

Mary's team handed out a Funding Report to the group.

The CFLRP Funding handout showed the:

- CFLRP Request per agreement; the money KVRI asked for.
- CFLN, budget line item; a bucket of money.
- Supplement Non- CFLN, is because the Forest Service did not have enough money in the bucket, they went to other money to fill the need, this is the money that is hard to track.
- Total Received: Combines the first 3 columns.
- Difference: the difference between what we asked for and received.
- We've asked for 2.9 million in the next 2 years (FY18 and FY19)
- For FY20 and FY21, (we are not scheduled to get those monies, but what it represents are the 2 years we did not receive)

Important to note that we received almost what we had requested, that doesn't always happen.

Mary stated that if there is an opportunity to extend, she would ask for the 2 year extension to get the money we were supposed to get originally. And spend it not on planning, but on implementation. If there is an opportunity to extend after that, this is where we may not agree.

Mary explained that she is not overly interested in extending beyond the 2 extra years because the Idaho Panhandle National Forest on a whole has a lot of projects that may be more of a priority than just Bonners Ferry. She has a forest wide look; KVRI's look is up here, and she gets that, but she wants us to know what she is thinking.

There will still be projects in the Bonners Ferry District but it will be proportionate to the other four Districts; which is not a surprise because that has been discussed in the 5 and 10 year planning process. The Forest would plan to move away from the larger EA's and focus on the smaller CE's on the Bonners Ferry District and the other Districts who have work to do would step up and get their work done.

Patty stated she could see another 4 year extension to do some significant things on the Westside, where we haven't had a lot of projects yet or treatment, and would make an argument that we should be looking at it as a collaborative whether we get the money or we don't.

If the opportunity existed, without reapplication, for this program to be extended beyond FY21, for another 4-5 years, there are things KVRI should be doing on the Westside. Knowing the fire prone nature of the Westside, and also the diverse opinions of what should happen on the Westside, there could be some challenges. It is a place where WUI is largely affected and there is a lot of good reason to keep talking about that.

Patty continued having said that, is there another way, or should there be some consideration for somehow partnering the Collaboratives so that the Forest then could maybe use this track record to pull in the Panhandle Forest Collaborative, to maybe pull in some partnerships of a Collaborative forum across the Forest, that might allow us to start moving forward and help some of those areas that didn't get their targets accomplished in the first place. I don't know that question; I don't know if it is even something to consider, how it might look. Mary stated that just because you don't have CFLRP does not mean the Forest Service will not invest in projects on Bonners Ferry. You can absolutely move forward with some of the Westside fuels projects; they are looking into getting additional fuels money.

The problem she has is in envisioning the longer time period is the match the Forest Service needs to do and taking it away from other places in order to focus up here. The urban interface in the Coeur d'Alene area is equal to if not more than the Westside. She would like to balance that.

Patty added we realize it is equal and the Forest Service has to balance that. But there may be some inability to do some of those things in those places, where we may be able to bring the license to the table.

Mary agreed that that is an interesting idea. She would like us to have that dialogue as we go along and be honest with each other as to what that looks like that; we don't have to determine anything today.

She wants to have these conversations, and if the opportunity is not to extend, her priority in Bonners Ferry is still to finish the things that we've done. The fuels might be a little different, because of the additional fuels schedule.

Mary and Meghan added that this financial report does not show the match dollars; they are implementation dollars not the planning dollars.

Tim shared his concern that the Moyie mill relies on every log coming out of this Forest and this District is crucial to its future success. Everyone agreed that it is rare for this county to still have 2 lumber mills.

Patty stated that we are in alignment through FY2019, and through FY2021, so we are actually in alignment for 4 years out and we should have further discussion.

Mary welcomed that idea and to make a point about FY20 and FY21, it's not more NEPA, it is implementation, tidying up and what that does is it reduces our match.

Mary summarized what we have talked about:

- The final plays.
- The report we want to develop.
- The May time frame to put on our calendars; the KVRI meeting May 15.
- That they will start working on the report.
- CFLRP extension possibilities.
- And the final place we see ourselves.

Patty asked Ed to send her an email of the items they think are going to be addressed so that she can send that out to the KVRI Board so that they can quickly cover this work session at the next board meeting in April as a quick overview of what we did and what is coming in May.

Mary stated that she would like us to help with the public document we had talked about and Patty agreed that once we get to that place, it would be good to sit down with the Forest Service Public Relation department and KVRI to put that document together like they have done in the past. Patty also added that when we have this all ready to go, to send out a release saying that this document is going to the Washington Office and that we will have visitors in July, in order to keep everyone informed.

Discussion followed about the July Washington Office visit and some ideas about the planning process and what everyone might like to see. Kevin Knauth will be the point of contact.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Sherrie Cossairt

KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant