

**Draft Meeting Notes**  
**Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative**  
**March 18, 2013 – 7 p.m.**  
**Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-Chair  
David Anderson, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-Chair  
Ron Abraham, (Alt.) Kootenai Tribe of Idaho & KVRI Co-Chair  
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical  
Linda McFaddan, (Alt.), U.S. Forest Service – IPNF  
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation District/Landowner  
Don Allenberg, (Alt.) Corporate Agriculture  
Jim Cadnum, (Alt.) Landowner (Industrial)  
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry  
Chip Corsi, (Alt.) Idaho Fish & Game Commission  
Robyn Miller, Conservation

Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI  
Janet Satchwell, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

**Agency/Others in Attendance:**

Laura Roady, Bonners Ferry Herald  
Dianna Ellis, USFWS- Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge  
Wayne Wakkinen, Idaho Department of Fish & Game  
Aaron Calkins, U.S. Representative Raul Labrador  
Karen Roetter, U.S. Senator Mike Crapo  
Sid Smith, U.S. Senator Jim Risch  
Mac Lefebvre, Idaho Forest Group, Timber Supply  
Michael Gondek, Boundary County Citizen  
Scott Soultz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Nancy Kertis, U.S. Forest Service (FS)  
Ben Conard, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Joe Madison, U.S. Forest Service  
Kennon McClintock, The Nature Conservatory  
Doug Nishek, U.S. Forest Service  
Harry Miskovich, Kootenai Valley Sportsman's Association  
Lee Pinkerton, Boundary County Commissioner

**Opening:**

Dan Dinning opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting; introductions followed. Dan thanked the staff members of Senators Crapo and Risch and Representative Labrador's offices for attending these meetings and many other meetings that are important to this area – stating "we greatly appreciate it".

The group approved the draft minutes of the February 11, 2013, meeting by consensus.

## **Committee Updates:**

### **Forestry Committee – Linda McFaddan, U.S. Forest Service (FS)**

Presentations were given on the Kreist Creek and Hellroaring proposed CFLR projects. Each is at a different stage of the planning process with the Kreist Creek project having the purpose and need and proposed action reviewed by the KVRI Forestry Sub-Committee, and Hellroaring Creek project has had the purpose and need for the project presented to the sub-committee.

When the proposed Kreist Creek project was presented to the KVRI board in February of 2013 neither the Transportation Analysis Plan (TAP) nor the wildlife issues were discussed, so they will be reviewed this evening.

Draft maps, the proposed purpose and need, and the PowerPoint presentations for both projects will be available on the Kootenai Tribe website at [www.kootenai.org](http://www.kootenai.org) ; KVRI – Documents.

**Hellroaring Creek** draft map shows possible treatment areas within the analysis area. Doug Nishek, FS, discussed the proposed purpose and need as outlined on the PowerPoint presentation. This project is not at the proposed action stage.

Main purpose and need points include:

- Maintain and improve forest landscape resiliency
  - Increase the acreage of stands where western white pine and western larch is a significant component.
  - Where feasible regenerate, maintain and expand the dispersed aspen clones.
  - Allow appropriate mature stands to trend toward old growth.
  - Reduce the acreage of lodgepole pine at risk from bark beetle attacks.
- Promote forest conditions that reduce fire hazards and potential impacts of wildfire
  - To protect resource values and private lands in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas as designated by the Boundary County WUI map. WUI is a zone where natural areas and development meet.
  - Reduce surface fuels and crown densities.
  - Develop and maintain stands with fire-tolerant species such as western larch.
- Where feasible, use forest products produced in this project to benefit the local economy
- Improve fish passage at Hellroaring Creek and road 2266
- Improve forage production for big game
- Contain or control noxious weed populations, minimize new infestations
- Improve parking at the recreational Hellroaring Creek trailheads for motorized recreation
- Examine road / trail systems to determine long-term transportation and resource needs
- Maintain the scenic integrity of areas adjacent to Highway 95 and work to naturalize the geometrically shaped edges of existing openings

The proposed Hellroaring project findings were developed from analysis accomplished during the 2012 field season. See the PowerPoint presentation for the findings in the following areas: archeology, fish, hydro, recreation, fuels, silviculture, wildlife, botany, and engineering. Also, the project timeline is outlined on the presentation.

Linda advised the Transportation Analysis Plan (TAP) will be presented during the next Hellroaring Forestry sub-committee meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>. The FS specialists are also studying hydraulic issues in this area by considering a variety of factors as well as a canopy closure guideline model. The last big fire

through this area was around 1910 so doing nothing is a concern. The board and guests were encouraged to address ideas or opinions about the proposed project.

Nancy Kertis, FS, is filling in for Shanna Kleinsmith on the proposed **Kreist Creek** project. Nancy distributed two maps, the purpose and need and details of proposed actions. This information was included in the PowerPoint presentation.

The proposed project analysis area is 11,000 acres and within this project is treatment areas proposed for 2,317 acres.

The economics of helicopter use and the possibility of using private access into the eastern portion of Unit 3 were discussed and further information will be sought from the FS silviculturist.

Discussion was held about the strategy of having separate projects when proposed projects are in close proximity with similar needs for the landscape. Linda mentioned the combining of proposed CFLR projects had been discussed during a forestry sub-committee meeting. Considering the analyses by other FS specialists and the watershed analysis that needs to be done when two or three different drainages are involved it complicates the process when you try to put them together. For projects scheduled in different years the ground work would not be completed in order to combine the projects.

The proposed Boulder and North Creek projects have been combined so it will be a larger project involving landscape burning, vegetation treatments, grizzly bear issues, and road densities. Where the District can they would like to analyze larger landscape projects.

Robyn Miller was asked about the Clearwater CFLR. Discussion was held that they have some larger analysis areas (in acres), not necessarily treatment acres, and more integrated projects coming forward. In some areas it makes sense, and in others it does not based on resources and the lay of the watersheds.

Discussion was held and questions answered by Joe Madison, FS, concerning wildlife topics for this proposed project. In the Bears Outside Recovery Zones (BORZ), no increase in open or restricted road miles is allowed (a portion of a temporary road will be constructed and then removed – this is allowed in a BORZ area). As necessary there may be spring time restrictions when treatments could be accomplished.

Designated lynx critical habitat as a whole was remanded by a judge last summer. There is an area of lynx critical habitat within the project area, but outside a Lynx Analysis Unit (LAU). The area is dry site ponderosa pine, not what is considered as good lynx habitat nor is it linked to any lynx habitat. When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service re-issues the critical habitat ruling, this area is expected to be removed as critical habitat. The area of the project within the Deer-Skin LAU, which is also designated critical habitat, was modeled and subsequently field validated to determine what portions were considered to be lynx habitat which is sub-alpine fir and spruce fir in close proximity to sub-alpine fir.

There were 20 acres of mature, multi-story stands of lynx habitat dropped from the proposed project, and the partial units that were removed are nine acres of Unit 18 and eleven acres in Unit 27. The lynx sightings were in the American-Canuck LAU to the north of the Deer-Skin LAU. In the pre-commercial thin units, 135 acres were taken out of proposed treatment within lynx habitat (also designated critical

habitat). The only lynx habitat that is proposed for treatment is 25 acres in the north portion of Unit 17 consisting of low quality forage (small diameter dense lodgepole and relatively young grand fir).

Two goshawk territories have been active in the past five years within the project area; one generally in the middle of the project area and one in the northern portion. None of the most recent active nests are in a proposed treatment unit, and when active nests are located this year, a 500 acre post fledgling-family area (PFA) would be delineated, so some of the units may need to be modified. There would also be timing restrictions within one-half mile of the active nests.

There are suitable flammulated owl habitat stands in the proposed project and treatments would maintain these suitable areas of dry forest ecosystems.

No modeled wolverine denning habitat is located within this area. There is a small island of year-round wolverine habitat based on spring snow persistence models. It is a long jump from any other area and records show only one year out of seven as having persistent spring snow, so it would not be considered an area that you would expect wolverine use. The treatment in that area would not preclude wolverine from using the area in the future.

A landscape area nearby this proposed project was discussed, and the group was advised it will be included in a proposed Deer Creek project which is scheduled for a date in the future. The field work has not been accomplished for that project.

Discussion was held on the Kreist Creek Transportation Analysis Process (TAP) map which shows the existing status and the proposed recommendations. There would be a temporary road (approximately one-half mile) proposed in Unit 25.

Total road decommissions in this project is .99 mile. Proposed for decommission is .09 mile at the end of road 2262, and the last .9 mile on road 2517C. This section of road on 2517C would be decommissioned due to hydrological issues with failing gabions, and pipes in poor condition, plus it is a stacked road so the area to be treated may still be reached from 2517. The first portion of 2517C will be barrier-stored for future resource use. Questions were asked about the road decommissions and maintenance on some FS roads. Further discussion will be held at the next forestry sub-committee meeting (April 19<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 a.m., Tribal office) along with the already scheduled meeting topics (Hellroaring project).

The timeline for the Kreist Creek project is to scope in April, EA in September, and expect a decision in December of 2013.

#### **WAC Committee – Patty Perry**

A WAC committee was held March 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss the options available to use in the identified wildlife-auto collision hot-spots. Wayne Wakkinen, IF&G, also gave a presentation on the collared bears around the McArthur area.

The National Fish & Wildlife grant is \$100,000 available to use with matching cash funds or in-kind match (dollar for dollar) until October 31st of this year. Currently there is approximately \$11,000-\$12,000 in matching funds. TNC will be working on a \$30,000 grant application due April 22nd, and they will check if the development of the data base & documentation of roadkill work performed by ITD and the IF&G web tracking program could be used as in-kind match. The next committee meeting will be held April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2:30 p.m., at the Tribal office.

### **Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Committee – Patty Perry**

A meeting of the TMDL committee was held March 8th. Montana neighbors on the upper Kootenai River are looking at the TMDL's on their tributaries to the River.

Also, discussion was held on the temperature monitoring results-based on the citizen monitoring effort the committee has taken on the past five years, and although the quality of information was not what they had hoped for they did get information they needed on reference streams. DEQ will be providing new & updated monitoring equipment that will take year-round temperatures – they will be deployed this field season.

The committee reviewed Section 5 of the TMDL and did a lot of ground truthing on the streams – and the section on Blue Joe Creek was updated for nutrient information. The next meeting will be a review of Sections 1-4 on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 9 a.m., at the Tribal Office.

### **Correspondence:**

A letter to the FS Supervisor, Mary Farnsworth, was read and approval was given for the KVRI co-chairs to sign & mail.

### **Closing Comments/Meeting Announcements:**

The Idaho Roadless Commission reviewed the Buckhorn Burn project, and concurred that it meets the intent of the rule.

KVRI will request an informational briefing from the USFWS on the multi-state proposal to list the North American wolverine as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The preference is that the informational meeting be held in Boundary County. After discussion, it was determined that Ben Conard would present information on April 1st, 6 p.m., with a location to be determined (has been scheduled at the Kootenai River Inn).

The next KVRI meeting will be April 15<sup>th</sup>, (7:00 p.m., Extension Office) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be providing the spring runoff forecast.

May 13<sup>th</sup> is the Libby Dam Operations meeting in Bonners Ferry (this has since been rescheduled for May 30<sup>th</sup>).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, publication “The *Northern* Region, 2012 Year in Review” contains an article “CFLR – Lower Kootenai River Watershed Restoration” on Page 4. Copies of the publication are available at the FS District office.

Patty advised there may be a possibility for the KVRI co-chairs to meet with Senator Risch and Senator Crapo this weekend to go over the CFLR projects that KVRI is working with the FS on developing.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.