

Draft Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative – Special Public Meeting
April 1, 2013 – 6 p.m.
Kootenai River Inn – Ktunaxa Room

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 (KTOI) & KVRI Co-Chair
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation District/Landowner
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry
Tony McDermott, Idaho Fish & Game Commission
Kennon McClintock, (Alt.) Conservation

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

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Ben Conard, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Brian Holt, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Laura Roady, Bonners Ferry Herald
Bill Lefebvre, Boundary County Citizen
Michael Gondek, Boundary County Citizen
Scott Soultz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Norm Merz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Molly McClintock, Graduate Student, UM
Skyler Suhrer, Student, UM
Don Banning, Bonner Co. Sportsmen
Liz Sloom, Boundary County Citizen/Chairs Boundary County's Tea Party Movement
Sara Hall, Boundary County Citizen
Lee Pinkerton, Boundary County Commissioner
Pam and Carl Stout, Friends of Idaho
Jim McReynolds, Bonner County Citizen
Ed Robinson, Idaho Dept. of Lands
Pat Seymour, Idaho Dept. of Lands
David Sims, Boundary Economic Development Council
John O'Connor, Boundary County Citizen
Allen Rose, Moyie Springs Area Citizen
Ree Brannon, U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Services
Mike Nielsen, Bonner County Commissioner

Opening:

Dan Dinning opened and welcomed everyone to the special informational meeting; introductions followed. Dan thanked those in attendance for coming and welcomed Ben Conard and Bryon Holt from the Northern Idaho Field Office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as this evening's guest speakers.

Dan provided information on the "USFWS Community Conversations – The Service wishes to discuss the proposed North American Wolverine listing and other fish, wildlife, plant and habitat conservation issues with you". The Community Conversations will be held: April 9th – Coeur d'Alene; April 10th – Lewiston; April 16th – Rexburg. For more information: Megan Laxalt Mackey, 208-378-5796, margaret_laxalt_mackey@fws.gov.

Presentation:

Ben Conard, Northern Idaho Field Office Supervisor introduced Bryon Holt, Senior Biologist on staff. Ben welcomed the opportunity to visit with residents on the multi-state proposed listing of the wolverine under the endangered species act. They will discuss what is being proposed, what it means, and to provide answers to any questions.

The official proposal was published in the Federal Register the end of January and the comment period was open from that date and closes May 6, 2013. Public hearings were/are being held in Boise, Idaho, Lakewood (Denver), Colorado, and Helena, Montana. It is important to know that testimony given at a public hearing does not carry any more weight than written comments that are submitted. It is also important that comments submitted be substantive and should address rationale being proposed by providing reasoned explanations and viewpoints for handling one's concerns. In other words, just being "for" or "against" the proposal will not be helpful since it is not a vote.

Ben began the discussion with the history of efforts to list the wolverine, which began in 1994. His PowerPoint presentation will be made available on the Kootenai Tribe website www.kootenai.org at KVRI – Documents. Other topics included the current proposed "threatened" species listing, a special rule in the proposal that exempts most human activities like snowmobiling and backcountry skiing from prohibitions under the Act (known as a section 4(d) rule); the proposed nonessential experimental population (NEP) under section 10(j) (not affecting Idaho), critical habitat (none proposed; not determinable at this time), habitat maps, and web links for additional information and how to comment electronically or by U.S. mail.

The wolverine covers a vast territory, and eats about anything including vegetation, dead and live animals. The wolverine's limiting factor is for denning in that they need persistent snow into the spring - April and May – in which to have their kits.

Discussions included the incidental take during trapping for other animals; direct trapping of wolverine (Montana has the only open trapping season) which would be prohibited; habitat loss due to declining persistent spring snow caused by climate change; population and range of wolverines; consultations with the feds or state agencies; recreation effects; international and states cooperation; wolverine population trends (increased); critical habitat (which is not determinable at this time); general wolverine habitat maps included in the PowerPoint; and distinct population segment (DPS) policy.

Closing Comments/Meeting Announcements:

On behalf of KVRI, Dan thanked Ben and Bryon for being available to come to the community for this discussion. The handouts provided by USFWS and a copy of the PowerPoint presentation will be available on the Kootenai Tribe website www.kootenai.org at KVRI – Documents.

The next KVRI board meeting will be April 15th, 7:00 p.m., at the County Extension Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Janet Satchwell
KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant