

Draft Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
April 15, 2013 – 7 p.m.
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

Board Members in Attendance:

Ron Abraham, (Alt.) Kootenai Tribe of Idaho & KVRI Co-Chair
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-Chair
David Anderson, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-Chair
Robyn Miller, Conservation
Tony McDermott, Idaho Fish & Game Commission
Ed Atkins, Corporate Agriculture/Landowner
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical
Linda McFaddan, (Alt.), U.S. Forest Service – IPNF
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation District

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

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Colleen Trese, Idaho Fish & Game
Joel Fenolio, USACE, Seattle District
Scott Lawrence, USACE, Seattle District
Greg Hoffman, USACE, Libby Dam
Karen Sjoquist, Idaho Dept. of Lands, Forest Legacy
Ed Robinson, Idaho Dept. of Lands, Pend Oreille Lake Area
Lee Pinkerton, Boundary County Commissioner
Laura Roady, Bonners Ferry Herald
Mac Lefebvre, Idaho Forest Group/Timber supply
Aaron Calkins, U.S. Congressman R. Labrador
Alan Flory, Community Resident
Dave Gray, Alt. KVRI Social/Cultural/Historical
Harry Miskovich, Kootenai Valley Sportsman's Association
Kennon McClintock, The Nature Conservancy
Doug Evans, Moyie Springs, Mayor
Sid Smith, U.S. Senator Jim Risch
Kurt Pavlat, BLM
Bob Steed, IDEQ (conferenced in by phone)

Opening:

Ron Abraham opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting; introductions followed.

The group approved the draft meeting notes from March 18th and the April 1st special meeting, by consensus.

Committee Updates:

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Committee – Patty Perry & Bob Steed

Patty introduced Bob Steed, State of Idaho, Coeur d'Alene office of the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ-on phone), who has been working with the committee to put together the draft 2013 Addendum to the TMDL (Assessment of Water Quality in the Kootenai River and Moyie River Subbasins). Bob stated that the committee requested several changes be made to the document, and they have been addressed & that DEQ would like to proceed with the 30 day public comment of the addendum.

Patty discussed the criterion (under the Clean Water Act) that was used when the original 2006 TMDL was written. Across the state the streams were measured for their most beneficial use, in this case, cold-water fish (i.e. bull trout) with an optimum temperature for that use. The committee chose not to write a document that would try to come into compliance with criteria that wasn't achievable in this basin. The TMDL committee has been deploying monitors for six years in different tributaries across the basin to develop a base & understand the range of temperature variability so that the committee could establish with DEQ the recognition that not every stream in the system was going to meet the bull trout criteria, but also to determine the approach to meet the intent of protecting our water resources. Since the basin had several streams that did not meet the temperature criteria then TMDLs were required.

It was decided to use potential natural vegetation (PNV) criterion which is based on soil types, topography, solar input and other factors in the system along the stream, and when DEQ submitted the plans to the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) they approved the TMDLs.

The committee did a lot of ground-truthing of the streams for DEQ. Bob discussed a few of the corrections that are needed, and he was very appreciative of the committee's commitment to making the TMDLs a good product.

The KVRI board approved that the draft addendum, with corrections, may be submitted for public comment.

Forestry Committee Update – Patty Perry and Linda McFaddan

The scoping letter for comment is out on the Idaho Buckhorn Project and the Twentymile Creek EA is out for a 30 day comment period as well. The scoping letter for the Kreist Project should go out by the end of this week.

The next forestry sub-committee will be meeting on Friday, April 19th to continue the Hellroaring Project discussion.

Several KVRI board members, partners, and Patty will be traveling to Missoula to meet with Faye Krueger, USFS, Region 1, Regional Forester, to update her on the KVRI CFLR project achievements and to discuss the targets for this year and 2014.

Presentation:

Joel Fenolio, P.E., Upper Columbia Senior Water Manager, Seattle District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presented a PowerPoint presentation of the forecast for the Kootenai Basin Runoff. The presentation will be made available on the Kootenai Tribe website www.kootenai.org at KVRI – Documents.

This year the Kootenai Basin is tracking near 100 percent of average snowpack and just under five percent of average for the volume going into Libby Dam. Climate prediction for precipitation and temperatures are normal for May-June. Operations at Libby Dam will be at minimum flow except dam operations may need to increase the flow by the end of April.

The Dam still has a sturgeon pulse but they do not have to spill for the seven days at 10,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) this year as was required in the past. The pulse will still be 14 days of peak release (25,000 cfs).

There will be target elevations, coordinated through the whole Columbia River system, in support of the Kootenai Tribe's habitat work. Eight thousand cfs maximum will be coming from Libby Dam for the month of September and 4,000 cfs in October.

Models show a moderate flood risk to Bonners Ferry this spring – based on no unforeseen additional precipitation.

A discussion of the 'period of record' to produce forecasts goes back to 1985 using select monitoring sites and flow calculations of Libby Dam.

New Business:

Tony McDermott, Idaho Fish & Game Commission, advised that he will ask the Commission to take a position at their meeting in May on the north Idaho grizzly bears in the Selkirk and Cabinet populations, and they will be recommending that these populations be delisted at the same time as the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE). The NCDE is located in the Bob Marshal - Glacier Park complex. The Yellowstone population is about to be delisted after resolving issues, and Montana is in strong favor of the NCDE being delisted. The bear populations in Idaho and NCDE travel back and forth and provide biological diversity. The State of Idaho would be in charge of management of the grizzly bears if this is accomplished.

Wolverine presentations have been held by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concerning the possibility of listing the Wolverine as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in a part of their range within the ten western states. Tony discussed the Fish and Game and the Commission's concerns about incidental trapping, climate change, health of the wolverine population, and wolves and wolverines. Discussion was also held on critical habitat, management activities, and interactions between predator/prey.

Kennon McClintock, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), introduced the Hall Mountain FY15 Forestry Legacy Project which includes 4,271 acres and nine landowners. If the grant application is successful, Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) will use Forest Legacy funding from the U.S. Forest Service to purchase a conservation easement from the landowners. The goals of conservation easements are to maintain lands as active working forests and farms. Karen Sjoquist, Idaho Forest Legacy Program Manager, and Robyn Miller, TNC, were also available to answer questions.

A description of the proposed TNC project and a map will be made available on the Kootenai Tribe website www.kootenai.org at KVRI – Documents. After a lengthy discussion, the KVRI Board agreed by consensus to support the Hall Mountain project as it moves ahead in the grant process. Patty will prepare a letter of support for the KVRI co-chair's signatures.

Correspondence:

Patty advised that an open house on the Columbia River Treaty will be held May 14th, Sandpoint Community Center, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

The annual meeting for the Libby Dam operations is scheduled for May 30th, 6 or 7:00 p.m. at the Kootenai River Inn.

The wildlife-auto collision (WAC) committee will meet on the 24th of April, 2:30 p.m. at the Kootenai Tribal Office. A humorous observation of the road crossing habits of deer and elk in the northern portion of the county was shared....are they smarter north of town?

Closing Comments/Meeting Announcements:

The next meeting of KVRI will be held May 20th, 7:00 p.m., at the Extension Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Janet Satchwell
KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant