

Draft Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
April 21, 2014 – 7 p.m.
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

Board Members in Attendance:

Gary Aitken Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) & KVRI Co-chair
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair
David Anderson, Mayor, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair
Sandy Ashworth, Boundary County Library, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests
Tom Daniel, (Alt.) Boundary County Soil Conservation District
Brad Corkill, Idaho Fish & Game Commission
Jim Cadnum, Landowner/Industrial
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry
Robyn Miller, Conservation

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

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Stan Galloway, Idaho Dept. of Lands (IDL)
Kurt Pavlat, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Dianna Ellis, USFWS, Kootenai NWR
Judy Morbeck, U.S. Congressmen R. Labrador
Jason Flory, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Greg Hoffman, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Libby Dam
Becky Blanchard, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Laura Roady, Bonners Ferry Herald
Judy Morbeck, Congressman Raúl Labrador
Scott Lawrence, USACE
Joel Fenolio, USACE
Lee Pinkerton, Boundary County
Mike Faler, USFWS, North Idaho Field Office
Matt McGrath, USFS
Lynda Fioravanti, Citizen
Kennon McClintock, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League (ICL)
Wayne Wakkinen, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game
Chip Corsi, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game

Opening:

Gary Aitken Jr. opened and welcomed everyone to the monthly meeting; introductions followed.

The group approved the draft meeting notes from the March 24, 2014 meeting, by consensus.

Presentations

Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail – Matt McGrath, Trail Administrator, USFS

The Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail is one of eleven National Scenic Trails (five administered by the Forest Service and six administered by the Park Service). In 1968, the National Trails System Act called for these trails to be located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential as well as the conservation and enjoyment of the scenic, historic, natural, and cultural resources in the areas through which these trails pass. National Scenic Trails are designed for long distance hiking, equestrian use, and sometimes mountain biking while National Historic Trails are generally auto tour routes tracing historic routes.

The Pacific Northwest Trail was designated by Congress as a National Scenic Trail in the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009. Under the administration of the Forest Service long-term management plans were started in 2013. Minor changes may be made in the Congressional route that was drawn on the map.

The National Scenic Trail status does:

- authorized the Forest Service to collaborate with partners to manage the Trail as one linear unit
- provides additional resources for management of the Trail and helps improve adjacent trail systems
- can be a valuable promotional tool for local communities

What the status does not do:

- does not grant access across private lands or affect private landowner rights
- does not prohibit motorized use on existing motorized routes
- does not take away the decision authority of local land managers on the trail within their area

Planning requirements of the Act include management, development and use of the trail along with integrating the trail in other agencies plans. To write the management plan an interdisciplinary team will involve local agencies, partners, resource specialists, an advisory council, communities and the public. Thirteen seats will be open for non-government participants – the planning commitment is scheduled to begin April of 2015 with the advisory council meeting approximately every six months for five or six meetings. The public has the opportunity to be involved at all stages. The USFS Regional Forester makes the final decision and signs the congressional management plan (expected completion date: May 2017). Working landscapes will be included in the plans and provides for historical background to be shared. To be involved - work with the local District Ranger and staff, or contact Matt for information involving the advisory council.

The Pacific Northwest Trail begins near the Continental Divide in Glacier National Park and travels more than 1,200 miles through Montana, Idaho, and Washington before reaching its western terminus at the Pacific Ocean near Cape Alava.

The PowerPoint trail presentation will be made available on the Kootenai Tribe website www.kootenai.org at KVRI – Documents. Matt McGrath may be reached at USDA – Forest Service, 2930 Wetmore Ave., Suite 3A, Everett, WA 98201. Phone: 425-783-6199; Cell: 425-583-9304 or mtmcgrath@fs.fed.us. Learn more about the Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail at www.fs.usda.gov/pnt.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Joel Fenolio, Upper Columbia Senior Water Manager, Seattle District

Joel presented his fourth annual Kootenai Basin Operations discussion with a map of the above average mountain snowpack as of April 1, 2014, and a graph showing current April–August inflow for Libby Dam at 117% of average. As of April 21st, the current elevation was 2,397.6 feet with a target elevation of 2,377.2 feet at the end of the month and the dam is operating at full powerhouse capacity (releasing 25 kcfs).

The sturgeon pulse will not have a spill this year, but will require peak releases for 14 days. Summer operations will be similar to last year with higher releases for September.

Koocanusa Reservoir operations were charted along with the maximum April-August Bonners Ferry Stage probability chart which may be viewed on the USACE PowerPoint presentation on the Kootenai Tribe website www.kootenai.org at KVRI – Documents. To summarize, the flood risk is elevated based off current snowpack and predictions with June precipitation as the wildcard. The flow update is available at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers web page:

<http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/LocksandDams/LibbyDam.aspx>. Watch the newspaper for notice of the next annual USACE Libby Dam public meeting to be held May 29, 2014, in Bonners Ferry.

Forest Legacy Program Proposal - Kennon McClintock, TNC

Kennon presented information on The Nature Conservancy's Selkirk Hall – Kootenai Bench Forest Legacy Project for 2014. Kennon gave an overview of the voluntary private landowner conservation program which is funded by the USFS and in partnership with the State of Idaho administered by the Idaho Department of Lands. The program is designed to maintain working resource lands (locally – generally working farms and forests) with conservation easements. The goal of the program may be viewed in the PowerPoint presentation found on the Kootenai Tribe website www.kootenai.org at KVRI – Documents. The proposal has two private industrial owners, five private landowners, and approximately 5,600 acres.

The Nature Conservancy brought the proposal to KVRI requesting a letter of support for the project. After questions and some discussion, the Board agreed to provide a letter of support. KVRI board member, Brad Corkill, requested the meeting notes reflect he was not comfortable with supporting the project, but would not “throw a monkey wrench” in the process. Board member Sandy Ashworth asked if Brad could please provide a written explanation of his concerns so the Board could better understand them. He agreed to do so & allowed the Board to move forward. (Attachments).

Committee Updates:

Forestry Committee Update – Patty Perry

The forestry committee held a public meeting on April 7th, and talked about the Boulder Creek Project and different options for roads pertaining to Grizzly Bear Management and the Access Amendment. Discussion included recognizing areas within the project area that the community views as important for access, and roads improvement requests were brought up to the FS. Roads that could be considered for storage after the project is completed and that would meet the Access Amendment requirements were discussed.

Wildlife-Auto Collision (WAC) Committee – Patty Perry

The contract with Sloan Security expires at the end of April, and an extension to the contract date is being considered. The wildlife detection system that was located along Highway 95 near Moose Valley Farms is now up by Camp Nine. A full report on how the system is working will be made available to the sub-committee.

New Business:

Chip Corsi, Panhandle Regional Supervisor – IDFG, advised that Wayne Wakkinen has accepted the Regional Wildlife Manager position in Coeur d’Alene. IDFG is uncertain about the personnel vacancy that currently exists in this area.

Chip discussed British Columbia, Canada, leaning toward control action on a wolf pack potentially affecting the Woodland Caribou population. IDFG would authorize B.C. crossing into Idaho on that detail.

Next year the spring bear season has been extended beyond May 31 to June 20, 2015.

Correspondence: Patty Perry

A draft decision notice and finding of no significant impact has been issued for the Twentymile Creek Project, and legal notice was published in the Coeur d’Alene Press on April 18, 2014. Objections must be submitted within 45 calendar days following the publication of the notice in the Coeur d’Alene Press.

System Operational Request: MT-2014-1 was submitted by Brian Marotz, Jim Litchfield, and Sue Ireland concerning the summer and fall plan for Libby operations to maintain stable or gradually declining flows for the period July through September.

Closing Comments/Meeting Announcements:

The next meeting of the KVRI Board will be held May 19, 2014. The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Janet Satchwell
KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant