

Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
June 22, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

Board Members in Attendance:

Dave Anderson, Mayor, City of Bonners Ferry & Co-Chair
Gary Aitken Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) & Co-Chair
Sandy Ashworth, Boundary County Library, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry
Ed Atkins, Corporate Agriculture
Jim Cadnum, Industrial Forest
Brad Corkill, Idaho Fish & Game Commission

Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI
Shandee Alexander, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Ben Conard, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Norm Merz, KTOI
Sid Smith, Sen. Jim Risch
Judy Morbeck, Congressman Raul Labrador
Karen Roetter, Sen. Mike Crapo
Dianna Ellis, Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge
Greg Hoffman, USACE- Libby Dam
Sam Eaton, Governor's Office of Species Conservation
Sue Ireland, KTOI
Art & Setsuko Church, Citizen
Kurt Pavlat, BLM
Stan Galloway, Idaho Dept. of Lands
Bob Olson, Kootenai Valley Reclamation Association
Laura Williams, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services
Chip Corsi, Idaho Fish & Game

Opening:

Dave Anderson opened and welcomed everyone to the monthly meeting; introductions followed. The meeting notes from 5/18 and 6/4 were approved.

Patty announced that there will be 4 cards going around. One for Ben who is moving to a new position, a get well card for Dave Gray who had complications from surgery, Robyn Miller had a new baby girl, and one for Dan and Mary Dinning as Mary's mother passed away.

Committee Updates:

TMDL:

- The monitors are out
- Kevin Greenleaf will check batteries and download data

Forestry:

- Deer Creek analysis is moving forward
- Hellroaring objection period ends June 23rd; received 2 objections. Forest Service will be responding to the objections.

Old/New Business:

Norm Merz:

- Caribou- 1 collared mortality in late May. Caribou was a female with a full term calf. BC investigated, they had to chase Black Bears off the carcass, may have been a mountain lion, still investigating the cause of death. This brings the numbers to 4 collared Caribou and around 14 total.
- Grizzly Bears- 3 known Mortalities in the Cabinet-Yaak. 2 natural causes and 1 under investigation.

Presentations:

Restoring the Kootenai: A Tribal Approach to Restoration of a Large River in Idaho- Sue Ireland:

Sue started with a Project flythrough in order to help visualize projects.

The Kootenai River Sub-basin is about 9 million acres, 2nd largest tributary to Columbia River in terms of runoff volume. It is home to the Ktunaxa Nation; 2 Countries, 2 states, 1 Province. There are transboundary species, hydro power development, and a resource based economy.

Sue gave an overview of the Kootenai Tribe's Aboriginal Territory, the species culturally important to the Tribe and how the Tribe is working collaboratively. There was rich agricultural development through drainage districts and diking which modified the floodplain. In 1974, the Libby Dam became fully operational.

- Benefits: Flood control, power production (N.W. power rates are lower because of the federally developed hydro-systems).
- Limiting factors: Altered flow, temperature and sediment transport. Trapped nutrients (makes the river ultra-oligotrophic), loss of side channels, wetlands, and floodplains & connectivity, bank erosion & land loss.

Because of these limiting factors, the fish and wildlife habitats have been modified.

- Decline of native fish species: Kootenai River White Sturgeon (Endangered), Burbot (petitioned), West Slope Cutthroat (petitioned), Bull Trout (threatened), South Arm Kokanee (functionally extinct), and Columbia River Redband Trout (species of concern).
- Restoration initiatives (collaborative implementation): Conservation aquaculture, KVRI burbot conservation strategy, nutrient restoration & bio-monitoring, Kootenai River habitat restoration, KVRI wetland & riparian conservation strategy, critical uncertainties research, operational loss assessment and wildlife mitigation.
- Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program
 - 10 to 12 year timeframe, 55 mile stretch of Kootenai River
 - Incorporate reach-specific targeted restoration treatments (designed to restore or enhance habitat)

- Individual projects that are implemented each year, add up together to provide critical habitat attributes.
- Master Plan (2009): It's culturally important to the tribe to view the whole system and take actions that will restore the whole entire ecosystem and all the creatures in it; Focus on river processes & ecosystem functions. Synthesis of available data was taken to identify limiting factors: morphology, aquatic habitat, riparian habitat, and identify existing constraints, management & stewardship.
- Major treatments (bring back habitat complexity): Pool forming structures & pool creation or enhancement; in river & bank structures and islands; side channel reconnection & floodplain creation or enhancement; riparian enhancement.
- 2011 to 2016 projects:
 - 2011: Phase 1A & Phase 1B – enhance side channel and create habitat complexity, establish a riparian buffer
 - 2012: North Side Channels- enhance channels and create complexity; 2 years after construction, Kokanee accessed the newly constructed channel for spawning. Upper Meander- enhance pools, contribute to pool ladder, establish a riparian buffer.
 - 2013: Middle Meander- support vegetation, provide habitat complexity and nutrients in the river. Mega pool to contribute to pool ladder.
 - 2014: Substrate Pilot Project- provides rocky substrate to support sturgeon spawning & early life stage survival.
 - 2015-2016: Bonners Ferry Islands- Increase habitat complexity, increase area of vegetated floodplain (building islands), and increase distribution and abundance of deep pools. This project will start in July 2015.
 - 2016: Straight Reach

Sue thanked the collaborative for being a part of the success of restoration efforts.

The group took a break to have some cake. Ben Conard from the USFWS is moving on, he took a position in Montana. Expression of appreciation and thanks were given to Ben for being a friend and for being faithful to the collaborative. Ben also expressed gratitude towards the group.

“The Fish Between the Falls”- Greg Hoffman:

Greg introduced the movie and the group watched it together; it is available on a Public Television Website.

Closing Comments/ Meeting Announcements:

Dianna Ellis- Both proposals (Riverside road improvement, Myrtle Creek bridge replacement) Boundary County sent in to compete under the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), ranked 3rd. The proposals will be moving to the next level. Further analysis will take place in August.

Next meeting July 20th.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.
 Shandee Alexander
 KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant