

Meeting Notes  
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative  
June 4, 2015 – 5:30 p.m.  
Special Board/Forestry Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair  
Ron Abraham, Kootenai Tribe Of Idaho (KTOI) & KVRI Co-chair  
Sandy Ashworth, Boundary County Library, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
Kevin Knauth, (Alt.) Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)  
Dave Wattenbarger, Boundary County Soil Conservation District  
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry  
Kennon McClintock, (Alt.) Conservation  
Ed Atkins, Corporate Agriculture  
Jim Cadnum, Industrial Forest

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

**Agency/Others in Attendance:**

Kevin Greenleaf, KTOI  
Cleave Shearer, Citizen  
Norm Merz, KTOI  
AJ Helgenberg, USFS  
Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League  
Eric Anderson, Citizen  
Jay Wages, Landowner (Moyie)  
Doug Evans, Mayor Moyie Springs  
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group  
Sid Smith, Sen. Jim Risch  
Karen Roetter, Sen, Mike Crapo  
Barry Wynsma, County Resident

**Agency/Others call in's**

Chip Corsi, Idaho Fish & Game  
Dave Cobb, USFS

**Opening:**

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

Patty set the context. The collaboration, with recommendations from the Forestry sub-committee, has been working with the Forest Service (FS) on the Deer Creek Project for about a year. KVRI has communicated with the FS about the community's perspective and the needs the collaborative recognizes; the FS has started analysis. In this process, the environmental document that is needed to implement the project will be an Environmental Assessment (EA). In the process of developing an EA, the purpose in need will be determined. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the FS is responsible for releasing project information to the public in a scoping letter; the public will have a chance to comment. The FS has the scoping documents and comments, including comments from KVRI

stating what we think the scope of the project should be. After scoping, the FS will develop a proposed action. The proposed action is based on feedback from scoping with suggestion of what the FS should be looking at as they go forward with developing the project.

Patty was not comfortable, after the Forestry and KVRI meetings last month, that everyone understood that the Placer Creek 2540 road would be a separate alternative. Tonight's goal is for the FS to explain why the ID team feels it is important to analyze the Placer Creek 2540 road decommissioning separately.

Kevin mentioned that Patty explained this well. He also wanted to clarify that in the last meeting: proposed action was #1, No road work or timber harvest in the Bear Management Unit (BMU) was #2 (now A), Regeneration <40 was #3 (now B), and the Placer Creek (2540 road) Decommissioning #4 (now C). The proposed action is developed initially, and somewhat represents the action the FS would like to take. The alternatives are most commonly described as, alternatives to the proposed action. The FS team received the KVRI letter of support for the proposed action and for alternatives A and B.

To clarify, Patty is not sure that the other alternatives are similar to the proposed action. If alternative A, for example, is chosen, this would change the scope of what can be accomplished, reducing timber harvest several hundred acres. There could be significant changes to the project if some of the alternatives come into play.

Kevin explained that the proposed action and alternatives are similar in nature; however, commercial timber harvest acres will vary. All work from the proposed action will occur in the alternatives, except for what the alternatives are suggesting. The alternatives that will be shown result in less work on the ground, except for Alternative C. In the Placer Creek Road Decommissioning, all the same work will occur as in the proposed action, the only difference is the decommissioning of the Placer Creek Road vs leaving the Placer Creek Road where it stands.

### **Presentation: Deer Creek Project- AJ Helgenberg**

June 5<sup>th</sup>, the team will brief the Forest Supervisor on the range of alternatives. An EA for public comment will be produced. April 2016 an EA and Draft Decision for Objection will be released. Final Decision July 2016.

Purpose and need: vegetation management, aquatic restoration, fire and fuels related, economic objectives, and transportation management. AJ used the word "integrated" to describe this project.

Proposed Action: designed with the help of the collaborative to meet the purpose and need. AJ mentioned that if anyone had questions about the proposed action, to meet with him after the meeting.

#### **Public Involvement:**

- Project scoped to at least 200 people in January 2015.
- Press Release and Web posting
- Working with KVRI & Forestry sub-committee
  - Meetings, field trip and open house
- Received comments from a variety of organizations
  - Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
  - Confederated Kootenai Salish Tribe
  - Idaho Conservation League

- Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game
- Interested individuals >25

There are issues associated with this project: effect of the project on public access, aquatic resources, traditional uses (huckleberries, camping...), what the project will look like (result in scenery), roadless areas, wildlife habitat, vegetation...

Alternatives: Public comments are used to develop alternatives. AJ referred to “Alternatives” from the NEPA handbook, “Ensure that the range of alternatives does not prematurely foreclose options that might protect, restore, and enhance the environment... be alert for alternatives suggested by participants in scoping and public involvement activities.”

- Alternative A:
  - “...it is important that options to offset the loss of grizzly bear core habitat and increased road density be utilized and the BMU should remain in compliance with forest plan standards...” –public comment. This created alternative A along with other reasons. Patty explained that Brett (FS wildlife biologist), will develop the documents that the FS will consult the Fish and Wildlife Service on, with this project on the Grizzly bear recovery plan.
  - Road tradeoffs (opening/storing roads) in order to operate in the BMU

The FS is currently in compliance with the BMU, there is another project being done on the Montana side, the team will have to coordinate this project with what Montana is doing in order to stay in compliance during the project.

- Alternative B:
  - The proposed action would create forest openings > 40 acres in size.
  - An alternative will be considered that limits openings to 40 acres, in order to get Regional Forester approval to do so.
  - The National Forest Management act limits openings created by regeneration type cuts to 40 acres or smaller unless the Regional Forester approves.

Openings > 40 acres are in the proposed action to better satisfy the purpose and need.

- Alternative C:
  - “... the Forest Service should develop an action alternative that includes decommissioning the Placer Creek Road...” - Public Comment
  - Potentially approve aquatic habitat and responds to public comment
  - Alternate routes available 2541 and 2522 roads.

Decision (NEPA handbook): the decision notice must include, how the comments were considered, factors other than environmental effects, environmental documents (by title), and how the preceding considerations were weighed and balanced in arriving at the decision. There will be a written document that will explain what the decision was based on.

**Conceptual Comparison of Alternatives:**

Issue Indicator	No Action	Proposed Action	No road work/ timber harvest in BMU	<40 Acres	Placer Decommissioning
Net Change in Legal Motorized Access (Miles)	0	+1.2	+1.4	+1.2	+0.3
Net Change in Social/Cultural Value (Qualitative)	No Change from Existing	Relative to the other action alternatives, all social/cultural value (positive or negative) directly associated with 0.88 mile of Placer Creek Road would be lost if it were decommissioned.			
Timber Harvest Volume (MMBF)	0	10	5	7	10
Net Sediment Delivery (Tons/Year)	No Change from Existing	X	X	X	X
Net Project Revenue (\$'s)	0	300,000	150,000	210,000	250,000

Table: AJ Helgenberg June 4, 2015 presentation

Patty commented that the collaborative wanted to clarify that it understands that there are important aquatic resources in the drainage. The next step the committee agreed to: there needs to be a complete and full analysis in order to look at impacts, and what could be done to mitigate those impacts? What can we do to better protect the stream system, and leave the road on the landscape? The proposed action has enough information to completely allow for looking at that road, mitigating to the fullest extent possible on the landscape, and do whatever restoration we can under the proposed action or whatever restoration needs to take place.

It was asked, currently for the proposed action, if there is mitigating work in mind that has been identified. AJ responded yes, it is not written out yet. Patty commented that, this is why she wanted to clarify, so everyone is on the same page, and that it is in the proposed action. Jill has assured Kevin, that under the proposed action, she has all of the tools she needs to mitigate anything for that road.

Patty's understanding is that there is one perspective covered under the proposed action and the other perspective is the decommissioning. At this point KVRI can agree or table it and say "we don't understand... the message has been to fully analyze and see where we stand from there." The goal of the meeting is to see where the group stands. Patty wanted to clarify that the board is not saying they support one way or another. It's just acknowledging that the FS, in scoping, has received comments.

Dave Wattenbarger asked how long it had been since the road had maintenance done on it. FS was not sure when the last time was. Patty mentioned that it hadn't been anything recent (judging from the last field trip). Dave asked if there was a monetary approximation on decommissioning. Patty answered that this will be part of the analysis.

Dan Dinning asked, if there was not a public comment on the 2540 road decommissioning, would the FS be looking at this. Kevin explained that he could have given this to 3 different teams; they may have decided to not go the same way. It is somewhat subjective based on presence at meetings, what you're hearing in discussions, what you might receive in comments. Patty included that, the fact that it came up in the analysis under the Kriest Project, indicated that there was further study that needed to be done on that segment of road. Dan said, it was not made clear that other mitigating measures other than decommissioning were going to be fully analyzed within the proposed action. It appeared that the FS team was only looking at one thing in the decommissioning alternative, concerned with looking at

only one avenue. Kevin said the FS concern, without this alternative, they would be only looking at one avenue, and that is the one in the proposed action; this drove the team to develop the decommissioning alternative. Without this alternative, the Decision Maker only had 1 choice, she now can choose decommissioning or mitigation, whichever she sees best. That's what the FS team wants to do, provide the Decision Maker with a package that allows her to weigh out her decisions, and make the best informed decisions she can.

Brad Smith asked if all of the action alternatives increase in a net increase of road mileage; CFLRA, does not allow for new roads.

Dan- we are not creating any new permanent roads. We are just cleaning up the system.

Norm Merz commented that it would be really helpful, when explaining the proposed action, that there is a sentence in there that says the Placer Creek Road won't be decommissioned... and under Placer Creek something like stabilization won't occur; put something that is in both descriptions, so it's not lost. Sandy agreed that it needs to be spelled out a little bit more carefully.

Patty wanted the group to clarify the points- in the proposed action, it needs to be made clear that you have this option and in the alternative you have this option.

2 options-

- Table it and let the FS do what you need to do
- Write a memo to the FS stating:
  - o We understand there are 2 ways to consider this road
  - o We understand that under the proposed action, you're going to fully consider any mitigation that could take place. And look towards restoration.
  - o We understand there are comments and concerns regarding decommissioning and understand you will be looking at it as an alternative
  - o But also clearly understand KVRl does not, at this time, endorse any alternative, and understands there is a range that needs to be pursued.
  - o It needs to mention that the Forestry committee and Board would like to be updated as the document is developing, prior to releasing the draft.

It was mentioned that it would be clearer to list the proposed action and alternatives in a consistent form (i.e. stick with abc or 123).

A question came up on if there were other improvements to the Placer Creek Road. Kevin answered, in terms of immediate, anything the Kreist Project identified as having to be done (as far as mitigation) has been done.

The FS wants to know if the collaborative is in support or not, in order for the FS to move forward and analyze the proposed action and the alternatives. Dan said that the board agreed to support 1, 2, and 3; table the #4 alternative, since at the last meeting it was not understood. There are 2 sides that are proposed in the project.

It was mentioned that the right thing to do would be to send a memo that says, we understand that there will be a full analysis of the Placer Creek Road, the proposed action will talk about mitigation measures and everything that can be done to mitigate, under the opposite perspective will be an alternative that will talk about decommissioning that road. Also understand that we are not endorsing

anything except that, they need to be studied. Both sides need to be looked at appropriately. As this group, we would like for the FS to come back and work with the committee/board to keep us updated on the project.

Dan wanted to make sure that everyone knows that the commissioners met on Monday, they voted that yes, they would support analysis under 1,2,3 and 4. It was said to make sure that it was clear that they do not support decommissioning, but support the analysis of everything because it's important.

AJ said the FS will keep in mind the social and cultural values of the road.

The group would like to move ahead with a memo to the FS; Patty will make up a memo.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Shandee Alexander

KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant