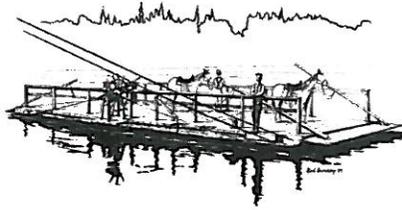




CITY OF BONNERS FERRY



## Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative

May 7, 2010

Leslie Weldon, Supervisor  
Northern Region  
200 E. Broadway  
P. O. Box 7669  
Missoula, MT 59807

RE: KVRI - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Proposal

Dear Supervisor Weldon:

The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative is a long-standing collaborative formed under a Joint Powers Agreement between the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Boundary County, Idaho, and the City of Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

The KVRI has served as a locally based effort to foster community involvement in natural resource issues with the mission of integrating existing local, state, and federal programs to effectively maintain, enhance, and restore the social, cultural, and natural resource bases in our community. The membership represents the diversity of our community and the group has demonstrated what can be accomplished when we work together toward common goals.

We believe the focus and structure of KVRI fits well with the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. Please find our proposal enclosed. We appreciate your review and consideration, and would look forward to further dialogue.

Sincerely,

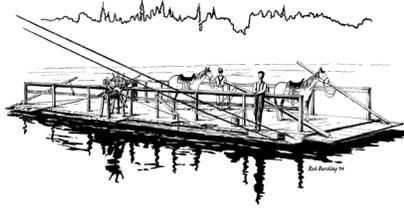
Dave Anderson, Co-chair  
Mayor of Bonners Ferry

Dan Dinning, Co-chair  
Boundary Co. Commissioner

Jennifer Porter, Co-chair  
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho



**CITY OF BONNERS FERRY**



## **Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative**

### **Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Proposal**

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Submitted By

**Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative**

May 14, 2010

The Kootenai River sub-basin encompasses well over 800,000 acres in Boundary County, Idaho (ID). Boundary County, is the northernmost county in Idaho and lies at the top of the “Idaho Panhandle.” The county is bordered by Montana to the east, Washington to the west, British Columbia, Canada to the north and Bonner County, ID to the south. The county includes the communities of Bonners Ferry, Moyie Springs, Naples, Porthill, and Eastport.

Land ownership patterns in Boundary County are 61% federal, 26% private, 13% state, and 0.2% city and county. National Forest System (NFS) lands constitute approximately 410,000 acres, or more than 80% of the federal ownership. The mountainous areas surrounding the communities are primarily NFS lands, with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) scattered throughout. Valleys are primarily private ownership with a mixture of IDL, Forest Capital Limited Partners (private forest management), and Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) lands.

Many of the issues identified through collaboration in the KVRI forestry subcommittee parallel those identified in the Idaho Statewide Assessment of Forestry Resources (SAFR). The SAFR identified eight key issues divided into two categories - those that threaten forests, and those for which forests provide benefit.

***Issues that threaten forests are:***

- Risk to communities and ecosystems from uncharacteristic wildland fire;
- Those that impact forest health, including insects and diseases, noxious terrestrial weeds and climate change;
- Potential loss of canopy to development, urbanization and ORV recreation in undesignated areas

***Issues for which forests and trees provide benefit are:***

- Potential benefit to sustainable forest-based wood products markets;
- Potential benefit to water quality and quantity;
- Potential benefit to air quality;
- Potential benefit to wildlife and bio-diversity, including fish and wildlife, areas of high conservation value and federally listed threatened and endangered species

The collaborative group has identified the following restoration goals.

- Reduce the risk of unwanted wildland fire on the landscape.
- Increase the resilience of the landscape to the effects of unwanted wildland fire in the event that such a fire occurs.
- Increase the resilience of the forested landscape to insect and disease epidemics.
- Provide the opportunity for the utilization of a variety of wood products; including but not limited to, lumber, biomass, and alternative energy sources.
- Increase the number of watersheds that are in fully functional hydrologic condition.
- Provide high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities
- Reduce the impacts from invasive species.

The Upper Columbia River Basin (1997) and the Kootenai River sub-basin assessments (2002) have shown that significant changes in forest composition have occurred over the past century. The most dramatic changes have occurred with respect to long-lived seral species, western white pine, ponderosa pine, and western larch. These species have been replaced across the landscape by more shade-tolerant climax species that are typically less resistant to fire, insects, and disease. Of particular concern are the losses of western white pine and whitebark pine whose populations have been reduced through a

combination of blister rust infection, bark beetles, and fire suppression. Treatment objectives would be designed to restore more resilient vegetation conditions where appropriate, to meet ecological and social goals. This would include restoration and maintenance of wildlife habitats throughout the landscape.

The protection of people, structures and community infra-structure (roads, bridges, and power corridors,) associated with the wildland-urban interface (WUI) would be a primary objective of treatments.

Restoration and maintenance of high value watersheds in a properly functioning condition is another primary objective. The landscape includes several watersheds that serve as public drinking supplies, including Myrtle Creek, which is the municipal watershed for the city of Bonners Ferry.

Ultimately, the group is striving for a forested landscape that provides clean water, community protection from uncharacteristic wildfire, effective use of wood fiber, including biomass, and resilient wildlife and fish habitat and populations.

Historically, fire has played a significant role in Boundary County. Since 1900 several large fires have been documented in Boundary County. In 1910, a fire burned along Katka face and into Montana. In 1926, the Hellroaring fire burned from Round Prairie to the top of Queen Mountain. In 1931, the Deer Creek fire started in Lower Deer Creek and burned north and east into the Yaak River drainage in Canada. In 1967, both the Sundance and Trapper Peak fires burned in the Selkirk Mountains, showering the Kootenai River valley with firebrands and ash. In 2003, the Myrtle Creek fire seriously damaged the water supply of the City of Bonners Ferry. In direct response to this fire the Myrtle Creek HFRA Project was developed collaboratively over a two-and a half year period through the KVRI forestry sub-committee. The project includes 2,100 acres and is being implemented with the goal of maintaining water supplies, maintaining or restoring fish and wildlife resources, as well as accomplishing fuels reduction. Following the development of the Wildland Urban Interface Fire (WUI) Mitigation Plan in 2003, Boundary County established the "Fire Safe" program, which provided expert assistance in protecting structures against the dangers of wildfire by establishing "defensible space," an area around structures treated by reducing fuels to provide a safe area for firefighters, and a "survivable space," an area designed to sufficiently reduce fire intensity to help the building survive. The Boundary County Fire Mitigation Group meets quarterly to coordinate treatment priorities, and opportunities, in the WUI. Members of this group represent Boundary County, the cities of Bonners Ferry and Moyie Springs, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the USFS, Idaho Department of Lands, BLM, the USFWS, and the Idaho Conservation League.

Currently, there are six signed NEPA decisions (Mission Brush EIS, Myrtle Creek HFRA EIS, Northern Prairie EA, Ruby Copper EA, Templeman HFRA EA, and Twin Skin HFRA EA) totaling more than 5,600 acres of scheduled treatments, whose focus is restoration, for the Bonners Ferry, RD. Additionally, the East Fork Meadow Creek project will be signed in June 2010 and the Twentymile Creek project, which is in the early stages of planning and being worked on through the KVRI Forestry sub-committee, is scheduled for a FY2012 decision. The KVRI Collaborative will be using these projects as pilot projects using the criteria established under CFLR to fund implementation and monitoring.

In Boundary County, the Bonners Ferry Ranger District has accomplished an estimated 16,700 acres of restoration treatments over the last decade, or an average of more than 1,600 acres annually. These treatments were designed to improve ecosystem composition and structure and habitats that native wildlife species are adapted to. About 12,000 of western larch and western white pine restoration were completed and more than 4,000 acres of dry forest restoration featuring open-grown stands of large-diameter, and sometimes old growth, ponderosa pine. The District also accomplished more than 1,500 acres of prescribed burning in 2006 designed to restore declining whitebark pine populations, which is recognized as keystone species in the Northern Region. Additionally, another 2,700 acres of scheduled treatments, with similar objectives and completed NEPA, are currently under contract. These objectives

were accomplished through a combination of mechanical thinning, timber harvest, mechanical piling, prescribed burning, and reforestation of native species. The District has used both timber sale and stewardship contracts to accomplish this work. Additionally, the District has decommissioned more than 25 miles of road designed to improve the health of aquatic ecosystems and improve wildlife habitat. It is expected that District will, at a minimum, continue to implement restoration at levels that have occurred over the last decade. Ongoing work coincides well with the sub-basin TMDL process worked on through KVRI.

Since its inception in 2003, Boundary County Fire Safe Projects, including the Myrtle Creek HFRA project that began in 2004, have created defensible space around hundreds of homes and fuel breaks near several communities in Boundary County by reducing hazardous fuels. As an example, in 2009 nearly 500 acres of fuel break work was accomplished in priority treatment areas. The future emphasis for fuel treatment work is to continue the creation of fuel breaks around our communities at risk

Routine effectiveness monitoring of existing projects is ongoing and would be included as standard practice in future projects. Resources that are routinely monitored include air quality, cultural resources, aquatic resources, fuels, noxious weeds, rare plants, soils, road maintenance, vegetation, visuals, and wildlife. In the case of the Myrtle Creek HFRA project, which was developed collaboratively through the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI), multi-party monitoring was established as part of the process to determine short-term and long-term effectiveness of site-specific treatments. Success will be measured in terms of how each project meets the stated objectives.

Current sub-basin vegetation characteristics?

- In moist habitats, there has been a shift from white pine and larch to Douglas-fir, grand fir, and hemlock.
- In warm and dry habitats, there has been a shift from ponderosa pine and larch to Douglas-fir.
- There has been a decrease in the late-successional stage forests (i.e., old growth).
- In general, patch sizes (uninterrupted blocks of forest) and interior habitat have decreased and fragmentation of the landscape has increased.
- There has been an increase in shade-tolerant, drought-intolerant tree species.

The most common forest types on mid-elevation sites in the mountains of the northern Idaho Panhandle are moist forests that are dominated by a mixture of conifer species (western red cedar, western hemlock, western larch, Douglas-fir, grand fir, western white pine, lodgepole pine, etc). Declines in long-lived seral species (western larch and white pine) have occurred throughout the Kootenai River sub-basin. Prior to the introduction of blister rust, when white pine was a dominant species, this was known as the "white pine type." Currently, less than 2% of the sub-basin is composed of stands where white pine is the dominant overstory tree. These forests are very productive and prior to European settlement tended to accumulate large amounts of biomass (the collection of all the living vegetation in a forest) in the relatively long intervals (average 200+ years) between stand replacing fires. Sometimes, low-severity fire occurred two to three times as often as either moderate- or high-severity fire (Smith and Fischer 1997). Because pre-settlement intervals between severe fires were generally long in these forest types, the effects of fire exclusion are subtle. However, exclusion of low- and mixed- severity fires over the past 80 years has reduced ecological diversity and increased homogeneity (stands of similar size, age, species composition, structure, etc.) across the landscape (Smith and Fischer 1997).

Prior to Euro–American settlement, dry ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests of the Inland Northwest were burned by frequent low- or mixed-severity fires. These mostly surface fires maintained low and variable tree densities, light and patchy ground fuels, simplified forest structure, and favored fire-tolerant trees, such as ponderosa pine. The patterns of dry forest structure and composition that resulted from frequent fires reinforced the occurrence of low- or mixed-severity fires, because frequent burning spatially isolated conditions that supported high-severity fires. These spatial patterns reduced the likelihood of severe fire behavior and effects at each episode of fire. Extant dry forests no longer appear or function as they once did. Large landscapes are homogeneous in their composition and structure, and the regional landscape is set up for severe, large fire and insect disturbance events (Hessburg and others 2005). The frequent underburns also maintained a structure with several age classes that were typically dominated by large, old trees (Arno and others 1995). Dry forest composition and structure have departed the most significantly from historic levels. Formerly, recurrent low intensity fires regulated competition for limited site resources (e.g., water and nutrients) by eliminating fire-intolerant trees and decreasing competition. With effective exclusion of underburning fires in this century, dry forests have quickly become overstocked, exceeding their moisture-limited productive potential. Vertical arrangement and horizontal continuity of vegetation has increased from historical stand structures (Peterson and others 2005).

Formerly, frequent underburning fires prevented excess accumulation of carbon and storage of nutrients in woody biomass via consumption and release of nutrients. With exclusion of fire, organic residues have accumulated as have standing live and dead fuels. Wildfire suppression has resulted in an exclusion of underburns for close to a century in most of the dry forest types. As a result, understory surface fuels and vegetation have accumulated allowing stand-replacing fires to become more common (Arno and others 1995). Fire tolerant species have been widely

replaced by fire intolerant species such as grand fir, white fir, and small diameter Douglas-fir (Hessburg and others 2005).

One of the primary objectives of restoration would be to create stand conditions that favor development and retention of larch, ponderosa pine and white pine and reverse the trend toward dominance by Douglas-fir, grand fir, and hemlock, species that are more susceptible to insect and disease problems than ponderosa pine and larch (Harvey 1994) and less fire resistant.

Western larch is severely intolerant of shade and has to be kept in a dominant position; if it becomes overtopped by other trees it will slow in growth and usually die (Schmidt and Shearer 1995). Therefore, without either natural (fire or pathogen-caused) or human thinning, larch would drop out of most stands sometime in the future and not maintain the ecological role it had prior to Euro-American settlement and fire suppression (Zack 1995).

Ponderosa pine, like western larch, is shade-intolerant, relatively fire-resistant (USDA 1990), and grows on the driest of north Idaho forested habitats. Again, in the absence of disturbance agents the more shade-tolerant species, especially Douglas-fir and grand fir, would continue to develop and compete with the ponderosa pine as it does with western larch. Douglas-fir and grand fir also tend to "hog" nutrients like potassium, which plays a critical role in forest health. Ponderosa pine and western larch accumulate fewer nutrients in their foliage leaving more available in the soil (Moore 1994). Given that these dry sites already have a limited supply of moisture and nutrients, stocking excessive numbers of Douglas-fir and grand fir on them would further limit their productivity. Competition for growing space from the more shade-tolerant species is expected to decrease the growth and vigor of the ponderosa pine in these stands. Ponderosa pine, where it exists, would be reduced or potentially be eliminated from these stands.

Characteristics of the restored landscape vegetation would include an increase in the representation of long-lived seral species (e.g., ponderosa pine, white pine, western larch, and whitebark pine), that are relatively more tolerant of drought and fire, and resistant to insect and disease. The forested landscape would also include a diversity of forest structures while the amount of NFS lands managed for old growth in all biophysical settings would increase through time and trend toward historical levels.

Boundary County has the distinction of being home to the largest number of fish and wildlife species that are included on the Threatened and Endangered species list, including the grizzly bear, woodland caribou, Canada lynx, Kootenai River white sturgeon, and bull trout. Additionally, the District is responsible for managing the habitats of several Northern Region Sensitive Species and several Management Indicator Species (MIS), identified in the Forest Plan, and used to monitor effects of planned management activities on populations of wildlife and fish, including those that are socially or economically important. Managing for diversity of forest structure and composition at the landscape scale is key to providing the habitats that wildlife evolved with and are adapted to. The group also feels that opportunities to increase the quantity and quality of big game winter range need to be pursued. A combination of appropriate silvicultural practices, prescribed fire, and maintenance of habitat security through travel management, will be used to maintain and improve wildlife habitat.

To fully restore, establish, or maintain aquatic functions and processes in watersheds that are currently functioning at risk (FAR), or not properly functioning (NPF), we would move those watersheds toward a properly functioning condition (PFC) by removing or mitigating risk factors that are within the reasonable control of National Forest management. This includes Applying improvement measures and controls associated with 303(d)-listed watersheds, streams, and waterbodies that have existing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) and implementation plans. Over the past five years the District has actively decommissioned an estimated 25 miles of roads and this trend is expected to continue in the future as options for travel management continue to evolve.

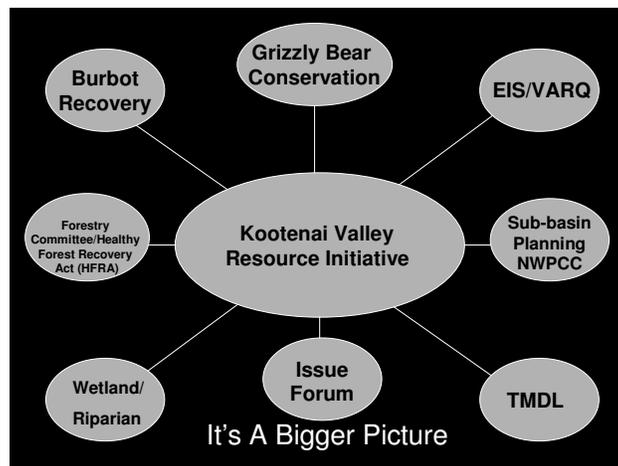
The group will work within the confines of the Bonners Ferry Noxious Weeds EIS to reduce noxious weed and invasive plant density, infestation size, and/or occurrence. Upon discovery of new noxious weeds or invasive plant species, in areas where restoration treatments are applied, the objective will be to contain 100 percent of these occurrences within the discovered site, in particular previously weed-free grasslands, riparian areas, and wetlands.

Lands within the landscape have a long history of motorized and non-motorized recreational use. Recreational use has steadily increased in the last 25 years. The landscape offers opportunities for a wide range of natural and managed settings including, multi-purpose trails, car camping, driving for pleasure, snowmobile use, huckleberry picking hunting, fishing, horseback riding, day hikes, or, primitive and semi-primitive experiences in many of the District's back country settings. Although the highest seasons of use are summer and fall, the naturally diverse landscape setting allows for year-round recreational opportunities. Many sites lie within a half hour drive of Bonners Ferry, Idaho. Recreation sites are easily accessed via Highway 95, which, is touted in many tourism guides as a scenic, recreational travel route. The objective would be to maintain and improve recreational opportunities currently available. Maintaining an ecologically diverse landscape is a critical component of providing these opportunities in the future.

The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI) is formed under a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the City of Bonners Ferry, and Boundary County --- dated October 2001. The KVRI began regular monthly meetings in January of 2002.

The focus of KVRI is to restore and enhance the resources of the Kootenai Valley and foster community involvement and development. The mission of KVRI is to act as a locally based effort to improve coordination, integration, and implementation of existing local, state, and federal programs that can effectively maintain, enhance, and restore the social, cultural, and natural resource bases in the community.

The Initiative membership (11) and partners comprises the Tribe, local government (city and county), private citizens, landowners, federal and state agencies, conservation/environmental advocacy groups, and representatives of business and industry within the community. The Tribe, County, and City representatives serve as co-chairs of the group. The KVRI serves as the primary forum for several issues and utilizes a number of subcommittees (range of 10-30 members) to accomplish the tasks at hand. The group functions as a Board which meets monthly and utilizes consensus as their decision-making process. The subcommittees coordinate multi-party monitoring of a specific issue, as is demonstrated in the Forestry Committee, TMDL Committee, and Burbot Committee.



- The KVRI HFRA /Forestry Committee worked with the FS to plan, design, implement and monitor the Myrtle Creek watershed project. The collaborative process was utilized in every aspect of the project – including development of a monitoring component; jointly discussing outcomes, determining methodologies, deciding what to measure and who would do it, developing a plan, gathering data then following with review and reporting. We recognized some natural resource responses will be immediate and some more long term.
- The KVRI has been recognized by Idaho Department of Environmental Quality as a Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) for the lower Kootenai River TMDL. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plan has been developed and approved by EPA for the lower Kootenai and Moyie Rivers (including listed tributaries). Implementation and joint monitoring activities by several members of the WAG are on-going.

- Myrtle Creek HFRA Project is a collaborative effort developed through a KVRI sub-committee focused on protecting the municipal watershed from further damage by catastrophic wildfire. A 2,100 acre project is being implemented with goals of maintaining water supply, maintaining or restoring fish and wildlife resources, as well as accomplishing fuels reduction.
- Development of a Wetland/Riparian Conservation Strategy – KVRI developed a comprehensive and geographically specific process to identify local watershed objectives, priorities, community issues and historic land use effects on the Lower Kootenai watershed. The strategy was built on baseline data gathered by several member agencies.
- Burbot Conservation Strategy –The Tribe proposed, rather than an ESA listing, that KVRI facilitate an effort with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and committed stakeholders to develop an integrated and innovative approach to recovery of lower Kootenai River Burbot. Working with Congressional staffs, we received a congressional appropriation to fund this project. The Kootenai River drainage serves as a “pilot project” to develop, implement, and evaluate this innovative recovery strategy.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers EIS for Fisheries and Alternative Flood Control Strategies – KVRI worked to coordinate with the federal agencies to ensure flood control, while providing for sufficient flows for the recovery and restoration of fisheries and minimizing impacts to agricultural interests.
- KVRI Grizzly Recovery subcommittee serves as a forum to educate KVRI members and the community on Grizzly Bear Management. The committee takes an active role in that management with federal partners, work to date includes developing brochures for the public, an annual County Fair booth, and other on-going local outreach efforts.
- KVRI facilitates and serves as the local community forum for facilitating information gathering and sharing for:

Kootenai River White Sturgeon Recovery  
BLM Stewardship Project – Two Tail Peaks  
Forest Legacy Projects  
Wildlife Mgmt. Area-IDFG

Idaho Roadless Rule  
Forest Plan Revision  
Smith/Boundary Creek

**Partners Include:** Idaho Office of Species Conservation, IDEQ, Idaho Dept. of Lands, Idaho Fish and Game, Idaho Dept. of Transportation; U.S. EPA, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U of Idaho – Boundary County Extension Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, The Nature Conservancy, Panhandle Lakes RCandD, Vital Ground Foundation, Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation (Local Chapter), Pheasants Forever ( Local Chapter), Kootenai Valley Sportsman

### **Wildfire on the landscape and long-term wildfire management costs**

The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI) Forestry Subcommittee works collaboratively to mitigate a wide range of forest health issues affecting the community; the group is active in identifying opportunities to reduce fire behavior, the risk of uncharacteristic fires, as well as restoring fire regimes through active management on National Forest System (NFS) lands across the landscape. An array of forested ecosystems occur in the proposal area – there are river valleys, lakes, meadows and gently rolling hills, incised creek bottoms and drainages, steep mountain faces, and high-mountain ridges. Extreme elevation changes and aspect variations account for several fire regimes being represented. Each evolved with fire as a disturbing factor in some realm – high elevation white bark pine forests are reliant on high-severity fire for seed dispersal and regeneration and lower elevation ponderosa pine forests evolved with primarily frequent and low intensity fire. Unfortunately, few of these regimes are functioning wholly within their natural range.

One of the goals of CFLRP is to reduce wildfire management costs by reducing the risk of uncharacteristic fire and re-establishing fire regimes. A century of fire suppression has likely had the greatest impact in Fire Regime I. Local evidence suggests these regimes experienced fire every few decades, reducing brush, timber litter and other surface fuels before they accumulated to a hazardous level. This cycle, repeated a few times a century resulted in a primarily open forest structure dominated by early seral species. However, due to changing weather, terrain, and available fuels large fires may have burned with a mix of severities resulting in patchy effects; some areas were left dense with fuels that didn't burn and other areas burned hot, severe and with high mortality (Smith and Fischer 1997)<sup>1</sup>. Removing fire has resulted in the dominance of the dense mature structure and shifts in species to those which are less fire tolerant – both factors contributing to uncharacteristic fire behavior and effects.

In addition to Fire Regime I, there are mixed Fire Regime III landscapes where fires would have occurred at longer intervals with varied fire severities (fires every few decades to hundreds of years) and Fire Regime V landscapes, dominated by high elevation species where stand-replacing severity would have occurred infrequently (200+ years). Though individual fire regimes are departed by varying degrees, when grouped, the larger landscape tends to be at least moderately departed (>33% departed from natural range) and in some cases highly departed (67-100%). The risk of losing key ecosystem components to uncharacteristic fire is moderate to high. Contributing to the departure was the onset of successful fire suppression beginning in the 1930s, thus fire cycles have generally been skipped by at least one interval. Although the time of suppression is within the frequency of the longer interval fire regimes, those areas are likely diverse in origin and years since the last fire occurrence (a series of large fire events occurring over time at varied locations to burn across all these high elevation landscapes). Thus, it is conceivable that within an infrequent fire regime, fire suppression has at a minimum modified the areas that would have burned with low, moderate and high severity and it can be assumed a few fires would have grown had they not been suppressed (Zack and Morgan 1994)<sup>2</sup> (Smith and Fischer 1997). Keeping fires small in these regimes, as fire suppression has done, is uncharacteristic. Each year that no action is taken to restore acres that are at highest risk for unnatural fire, fire regimes become more departed. As so many local species rely on fire at some point in their life cycle, each regime should be managed utilizing fire within the historic range to achieve an overall landscape where fire regimes are restored and forest attributes are intact and functioning.

Out of the National Fire Plan (NFP) came significant strides in federal, state, and tribal agencies working together with communities to accomplish common goals in wildfire hazard reduction and promoting community assistance to reach those goals, specifically in the wildland urban interface (WUI). This

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, Jane; Fischer, William. 1997. Fire ecology of the forest habitat types of northern Idaho. Gen. Tech. Rep. INT-GTR-363. Ogden, UT. USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Research Station. 142 p.

<sup>2</sup> Zack, Arthur; Morgan, Penelope. 1994. Fire history on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest. Draft.

prompted the development of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), titled Boundary County Wildland-Urban Interface Mitigation Plan (2003). KVRI and the District use this plan to identify priority treatment areas and provides the definition of WUI in Boundary County:

“...two (2) miles outside places of human habitation and/or infrastructure to service these points of habitation. Infrastructure includes power and communication lines... and watersheds where citizen groups have organized for joint collection of water for domestic uses. In instances where topography immediately outside the 2-mile zone would allow “anchoring” to good fire control points... the zone will be extended to the anchor point.”

By this definition the interface covers nearly 425,000 acres within the proposal landscape (52%). There are two types of wildland fires; Wildfires – unplanned ignitions and planned ignitions that are declared wildfires (including wildland fire use) and Prescribed fires – or planned ignitions. The Idaho Panhandle NF uses the Appropriate Management Response (AMR) to manage wildfires and this ranges from aggressive suppression to management as a wildland fire use event or a combination of both. Wildland fire use is generally not considered an option for wildfire management in the local WUI due to the high risk to human life. In addition, Federal Fire Policy mandates that initial action on all human caused fires is suppression (which account for approximately 15-20% of all the fire ignitions). Wildland fire use is also limited in some designated caribou habitat, thus even if outside the WUI fires in these areas are usually suppressed.

A common theme has developed from more recent local analysis’ of fire and fuels – natural succession, the lack of fire disturbance, other human influences, insects and disease, and the very productive nature of these forest types have contributed to a high fuel loading across much of proposal landscape. The structure of the mature forests are such that high-intensity fire would be probable under hot and dry conditions – in general surface fuels are heavy, ladder fuels are abundant, and canopies are dense. Estimating fire behavior is not rocket science – all of these factors support the development of large scale fires under conditions of high fire danger. These forests fit appropriately into a Fuel Model 10 (Anderson 1982)<sup>3</sup> – surface flame lengths greater than 4 feet would be expected which is beyond the capabilities of firefighters to attack directly and safely. Where ladder fuels occur within the 4 foot flame length, fire can be carried into the tree crowns. Crown fires move quickly and result in high severity to forest resources (trees, water, soils, wildlife).

High fuel hazard and unwanted fire behavior can be devastating in the urban interface – each year that passes without a fire occurrence in these heavy fuels adds to the hazard. All forests burn so it’s just a matter of time before a wildfire occurs. It comes down to a decision: do we want fires to burn hot, fast and severe or do we want their behavior and effects to be manageable?

Where wildland fire use is not an option, prescribed fire is an available tool for managers to reduce fuels, restore departed fire regimes, and modify unwanted fire behavior. The premise for fuels reduction is to decrease fire behavior so wildfires are more controllable; the easier fires are to control, the less costly they typically are. For example, a fire with low flame lengths and rates of spread can be suppressed utilizing firefighters on the ground rather than retardant planes or helicopters. The 1.5 acre Black Mountain Fire in 2009 burned in heavy down fuels under a dense overstory – flame lengths were too great for ground firefighters to take initial action. The use of SEATS (Single Engine Air Tankers) was necessary to deliver fire retardant to knock down flames so firefighters could enter the fire area. The

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<sup>3</sup> Anderson, Hal E. 1982. Aids to determining fuel models for estimating fire behavior. Gen. Tech. Rep. INT-GTR-122. Ogden, UT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station. 22 p.

SEATS were effective, and though only on scene for approximately 1 hour, they contributed to 64% of the total cost of the 5 day fire (\$36,000). Conversely, the Miller Creek Fire in 2006, which burned an acre in light fuels with low intensity, took 2 ground firefighters with an engine just hours to suppress at the cost of \$681. Both of these fires were in the wildland urban interface burning under similar hot and dry weather conditions. The Miller Creek Fire was on private land within a couple hundred feet from a home. From this example, it is evident that a landscape where fuels are reduced (light sparse surface fuels, minimal ladder fuels, and spaced canopies) will effectively reduce fire behavior and reduce total fire suppression costs.

Where fire suppression does occur, costs can be managed through fuels reduction as above or by the way the fire itself is managed. The Long Canyon fire in 2006 occurred in untreated fuels and was suppressed, utilizing a low-cost monitor and confine strategy as its location posed little threat to people or resources; most of the community being completely unaware that the fire even occurred. It grew to 200 acres before season ending rains put it out. By utilizing a more flexible suppression strategy the cost per acre was \$135. However, the strategies for suppression need to be made based on values – the Myrtle Creek Fire occurred in untreated fuels in the municipal watershed in 2003 and the action of full control suppression was chosen. The financial cost was \$4.9 million or \$1360 per acre. Although much more costly than Long Canyon, it can be assumed based on community values, the majority of people potentially affected by that fire think every dollar was money well spent. Both strategies made sense financially and socially. The management of future wildfires needs to remain flexible to the desires and values of the communities they affect (described more later on).

The flipside is the area outside of the urban interface – the backcountry. Fire was a common summer occurrence in the Selkirk Mountains, which comprise the entire west side of the proposal landscape. Fire history data from 1650-1930 shows that approximately 10,000 acres burned every year (just in the Selkirks, a portion of the proposal landscape). Granted, there have been a few large fires which have occurred across the landscape since then (Sundance and Trapper Peak burned 60,000 acres in 1967); however, recent fire data is completely void of significant acres burned. If we examine fire history data over the past 10 years (2000-2009), only 567 NFS acres burned each year from an average of 26 fires per year. Interestingly, the majority of those acres were the result of just 2 of the 257 fires which occurred during that time. The Myrtle Creek Fire burned 3600 acres and the Northwest Peaks Complex in 2000 burned 1500 acres. Had these 2 fires not occurred, or had they been suppressed small, the average wildfire acres burned per year drops to just 50.

The utilization of fire can be a successful method of reducing fuels and restoring fire regimes. For example, a project to restore white bark pine within this proposal landscape was accomplished in 2006. White bark pine has been fading on the landscape due to white pine blister rust, other pathogens, and the lack of fire effects necessary for regeneration. Project activities included high intensity prescribed fire to create openings for the establishment of seedlings. One-thousand, forty-five acres were ignited utilizing a helicopter. Fire was established on 6 ridges and peaks in the Selkirks and all of the restoration work (project layout, slashing, burning) was accomplished for a mere \$157 per acre.

Once restored, maintenance of fire regimes is necessary to manage long-term costs and to prevent a continual cycle of fuel accumulation. Where fuel hazards are mitigated they will resemble a Fuel Model 8, surface flame lengths will be reduced to 1-2 feet and rates of spread will be low (well within the capabilities of ground suppression forces) – fires will be kept in the surface fuels as the risk of crown fire will be removed. In addition, fuels treatments older than 15-20 years are likely ineffective now for reduced surface fire hazard; forest fuels are continually growing, dying, and accumulating and just one wind event following a treatment can litter the forest floor with heavy dead timber. To address maintenance, members of the committee are looking at opportunities to conduct burning and other intermediate treatments in these past treatment areas.

Back to values. There are studies which provide a cost effective dollar per acre value for treatments to prevent unwanted fire and minimize suppression costs. However, the cost for suppression is generally a conservative estimate and in many cases, it is just the suppression costs that are used for comparison to acceptable treatment costs. In reality, there are many costs associated with wildland fire that should be considered. They include rehab costs, business and property value losses or loss of jobs/tourist dollars, loss of life, roadless and wilderness value losses, public health expenses (compromised water quality or smoke impacts), even loss of wildlife habitat (Snider, Wood and Daugherty, 2003)<sup>4</sup>. It can be difficult to put a dollar amount on the value of fuels reduction projects and wildfire management, especially when discussing the acceptable risk to life, property and non-monetary values. At any rate, the community and collaborative members need to weigh the risks and important values to determine the acceptable financial investment for fuels reduction activities or suppression of wildfires, as both strategies will be necessary for the future of fire management.

### **Recommendations**

- Where fire suppression will continue, focus on fuels reduction to allow for quicker, safer, and more cost effective means of bringing a fire under control. Utilizing prescribed fire in a controlled manner will accomplish fuels reduction while at the same time restoring fire regimes where the use of wildfire is too risky.
- Focus on natural fire and wildfire use outside of the WUI; continually meet as a collaborative group to evaluate opportunities for landscape level burning and restoration work similar to the White Bark Pine Restoration Project.
- Look at past treatment areas for maintenance needs and incorporating fire.
- Revisit WUI boundaries and the acceptable risk levels in relation to wildfire management.

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<sup>4</sup> Snider, G.B; Wood, D.B; Daugherty, P.J. 2003. Analysis of costs and benefits of restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments vs. no treatment. Progress Report #1. Northern Arizona University Forestry.

Currently, the IPNF has a fairly consistent timber sale program of about 50 MMBF annually. Of this, the North Zone offers about 20 MMBF. These sales include multi-forest-products including “traditional-size” sawlogs, small-diameter sawlogs, small-diameter pulplogs, cedar products, posts, poles and energy biomass. These sales have varying objectives including hazardous fuels reduction within WUIs, regular timber management to maintain forest health and restoration, road maintenance and timber stand improvement. Of the 50 MMBF sold each year, approximately 16% of the forest products utilized currently consists of “non-sawlog” material, which includes small sawlogs, pulplogs and biomass (hog fuel).

Our sales typically remove about 60 to 80 green tons per acre of sawlog and non-sawlog-sized trees and logs, with minimum sizes usually set at 4-inch top-diameters, but material as small as 2 ½ inch tops are often removed at the request of timber sale purchasers that use the small material for pulpwood and hog fuel.

These products are currently being utilized at locations such as the Idaho Forest Group stud mill in Moyie Springs (10 miles from Bonners Ferry) and sawmill in Laclede (40 miles from Bonners Ferry); the Stimson small-log mill and cogen facility in Plummer, Idaho (80 miles from Bonners Ferry); the Vaagens’ small-log and pulp-chip mill in Usk, Washington (120 miles from Bonners Ferry); other small specialized log mills in Bonners Ferry; the Clearwater Paper pulpmill in Lewiston, Idaho; the Ponderay Newsprint pulpmill in Usk, Washington; biomass energy facilities at the University of Idaho and at the Avista power generation facility in Kettle Falls, Washington. There are also four pellet mills located in Bonners Ferry, Sandpoint, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho and Eureka, Montana. This list of existing forest products infrastructure located within approximately 200 miles of Bonners Ferry, Idaho is not all-inclusive.

Current demand for biomass for energy within a 200-mile working circle is estimated to be well in excess of 500,000 green tons. The Kettle Falls wood-energy 50MW facility alone has an annual demand of 480,000 green tons, while the University of Idaho uses about 50,000 green tons annually for heating and cooling the campus. Using an estimate of 10 to 20 green tons per acre being available for biomass energy from timber harvest sites (i.e. not including higher-value products), it would take approximately 25,000 to 50,000 acres-worth of mechanical restoration treatments per year to become the sole provider of biomass to existing infrastructure.

Even though the IPNF is currently utilizing trees with top diameters as small as 2 1/2-inch tops, most of our timber sale harvest areas are left with excess logging slash that has to be disposed of either through grapple-piling and burning or broadcast burning. Grapple-piling and burning costs are currently averaging between \$400 to \$600 per acre on the IPNF, and this work is normally paid for by either using Brush Disposal (BD) deposits in timber sale contracts, which are then used to employ service contract piling contactors or; by making it a timber sale purchaser responsibility, and appraising this cost into the cost of completing the timber sale contract, which reduces the stumpage prices paid to the Treasury.

The Bonners Ferry Ranger District and local BLM have recently conducted some official and un-official experiments focused on the quantity of excess logging slash that could sustainably be utilized from harvest areas rather than piling and/or burning.

These experiments have included partnering with the Southern Research Station in 2003 to conduct research on production and recovery rates of biomass using the Slash Bundler technology.

The Bonners Ferry RD also used RAC funding in 2008 to use a service contract to grind up a landing slash pile and haul the hog fuel from National Forest lands. The BLM in 2009 used Stewardship funding to pay for grinding and hauling slash piles from one of their project areas near Bonners Ferry. Between these three “experiments”, we’re fairly certain that our typical hazardous fuels and forest restoration timber sales leave about 10 to 20 green tons per acre of slash that is excess to other resource needs, such

as for coarse woody debris and nutrient cycling, and available for biomass utilization on a sustainable basis.

It is in this area that the IPNF is focusing our efforts to find economical technology and contracting methods to make it feasible for biomass to “pay-it’s way” out of the woods.

## **SHORT-TERM BIOMASS UTILIZATION STRATEGY**

### **1. *TIMBER SALE CONTRACTS***

- a) For upcoming timber sales that haven't been cruised yet, we could start setting minimum utilization of non-saw material down to 1-inch tops on 9 foot piece.
- b) Also for upcoming contracts, we could start requiring landing piles to be removed from national forest lands. Appraise the cost using estimate of \$20 per green ton.
- c) We could also set forest-wide standard to at least use the optional decking timber contract provision, split-pricing method, but go to 1 inch tops.

### **2. *SERVICE CONTRACTS FOR BRUSH DISPOSAL AND ROAD BRUSHING***

- a) If possible with current contracts, we could encourage piling contractors to remove slash rather than pile (salvage rights possible?).
- b) Same concept with roadside brushing contractors.

### **3. *TIMBER SALE NEPA DOCUMENTS***

- a) For all timber sale projects in the early stages of development, ensure that all possibilities for biomass utilization are being included and analyzed for. This includes building in project design analysis for allowing equipment to remove slash rather than pile, equipment to accomplish pre-commercial thinning and biomass removals.
- b) Also for projects in early stages of development, make sure all small diameter timber stands within the project area are being considered for treatment, regardless of quantity of sawtimber and assumed value or economical feasibility for treatment.

### **4. *PRECOMMERCIAL THINNING NEPA DOCUMENTS***

- a) Include analysis for a combination of grapple piling excess slash or biomass removal of slash using small-scale forwarders or other equipment that may be appropriate and available.

### **5. *ESTABLISH ADMINISTRATIVE FREE-USE POLICY FOR LANDING PILES***

- a) Firewood cutters aren't usually interested in using landing pile material for personal use, but we could encourage entrepreneurs to find commercial uses for the material by making landing piles from closed timber sales available for free use. There is a distinct advantage to the government to have somebody dispose of this material rather than having us spend money to burn them, not to mention the smoke issue.

## **LONG-TERM BIOMASS UTILIZATION STRATEGY**

### **1. *FULLY INTEGRATE BIOMASS IN ALL POSSIBLE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITES***

- a) The long-term objective for our timber stand treatments should be to leave only the level of biomass that we want to for resource needs such as CWD and nutrients and utilize all material that needs to be cut and removed.
- b) All future NEPA analysis for vegetation and fuels reduction projects need to include biomass utilization activities.
- c) Identify all overgrown plantations (i.e. approximately 25 to 50 years old) on the North Zone and begin a mechanical biomass thinning program.
- d) Integrate biomass utilization into road brushing contract work, requiring material to be chipped or cut and hauled off.
- e) Resolve the soil productivity issues so we can determine what biomass utilization technologies will best fit our management needs. For example, the slash bundling technology will fit our needs if we have many land or soil types where we want to over-winter slash in amounts of more than about 20 tons per acre of slash ABOVE Graham guidelines. IF, however, soil scientists determine it is acceptable to leave just limbs and tops less than 1-inch diameter and also the 3"+ CWD at levels that meet Graham guidelines during the harvest activity, we wouldn't have much need for the bundling technology but we would need small-scale cut-to-length harvesting systems, so we eliminate the need for a secondary entry into harvest units with equipment.
- f) Biomass industries may become very specialized and entrepreneurs may need small-scale projects to start with, growing in size over time based on market demands and comfort level with investing in this kind of work. Therefore, we should use all available NEPA and forest product contracting tools, including stewardship contracts and service contracts, and make sure we offer a mix of large and small projects based on how renewable energy demands develop.

The Bonners Ferry Ranger District is comprised of forests that are close to 80% publicly managed, primarily by federal agencies. The Forest Service has managed the majority of these lands with an ecosystem restoration approach. The endangered species act directed considerable road restoration for grizzly bear recovery within the northern tier of the district, with little new road construction. The District is heavy to wet forest types and with the preclusion of stand replacement fire and historic small severity fires, the need for mechanical treatments and prescribed fire are necessary to sustain historic conditions. More recently our projects have had a focus of fuel reduction in the wildland urban interface. This District has successfully planned, implemented, and monitored projects to accomplish these goals for decades. This District's record of achievement shows that it is a productive place for continued investment. At this point in time budget limitations have precluded our ability to do more forest restoration projects.

Future investment would further road obliteration, stream restoration, stand treatments for forest health, and prescribed burning. The utilization of helicopter yarding for timber harvest in steep terrain would allow much more acreage to be treated and restored.

The non-federal investments primarily amount to partnership opportunities in conjunction with federal actions. Past and future land exchanges with industrial owners have and will further consolidate ownerships that encourage coordinated but separate land management actions. Recreation groups, wildlife agencies and NGO's, and tribal interests all participate and support federal activities through collaboration and with nominal financial assistance.

Restoration capacity is increased as more projects are funded. Current project funding is shared across a forest of 2.5 million acres and it is not possible to perform all the necessary and projected work on the landscape. The communities private industrial infrastructure remains and continues to adjust to the work we are prescribing on the ground. For example with the current emphasis on biomass utilization we are seeing new equipment designed for gathering and processing small material. There is considerable discussion regarding the construction of cogeneration facilities. Job retention is a unified goal of local governments and these kinds of adjustments have helped in accomplishing this. We've seen existing business adjust for job retention and we've also seen new opportunities with the shifts in work requirements. The communities want to be leaders in the retention of natural resource based employment.

The District has traditionally hired youth crews and recently the north Idaho Resource Advisory Committee has contributed funding for youth opportunities. We hope to continue this valuable program.

<i>(Copy table and provide the planned funding for each additional fiscal year)</i> . Funds to be used on NFS lands for ecological restoration treatments and monitoring that would be available in FY 2011 to match funding from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund	
Fiscal Year 2011 Funding Type	Dollars/Value Planned
FY 2011 Funding for Implementation	\$4,000,000
FY 2011 Funding for Monitoring	\$100,000
1. USFS Appropriated Funds	\$3,000,000
2. USFS Permanent and Trust Funds	\$1,000,000
3. Partnership Funds	\$200,000
4. Partnership In-Kind Services Value	\$100,000
5. Estimated Forest Product Value	\$1,000,000
6. Other (specify)	
FY 2011 Total (total of 1-6 above for matching CFLRP request)	\$5,300,000
FY 2011 CFLRP request (must be equal to or less than above total)	\$4,000,000
Funding off NFS lands associated with proposal in FY 2010 (does not count toward funding match from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund)	
Fiscal Year 2011 Funding Type	Dollars Planned
USDI BLM Funds	0
USDI (other) Funds	0
Other Public Funding	0
Private Funding	0

Revenues generated from the KVRI Collaborative project can support the operations of the Forest Ranger Districts. Appropriations from the National Treasury will be necessary to start the pilot projects and may fully support the operations once the projects are implemented. Funds generated from the pilot project activities will be managed by the Collaborative group and used to meet resource needs and to implement watershed restoration, wildlife habitat enhancement and recreational uses. Funds can be proportioned to local governments roads and/or as a contingency fund for other activities. The Collaborative Group and the Forest Supervisor will determine annually the appropriate levels of funding to implement activities.

It is critical that Congress maintain the revenue generated by the operation of the KVRI Collaborative project as a discrete account during the pilot project period. It will not be possible to meet the functional objective of stabilizing budgets without that provision.

There are considerable non-federal investments anticipated within the landscape, of which KVRI has been, and will continue to be, involved with. These efforts demonstrate KVRI's commitment to developing broad-scale, integrated landscape restoration, through multiparty collaboration.

- Fire Safe Program
- Burbot - \$250,000 congressional appropriation; on-going efforts w/habitat - Tribe/KVRI/USFWS
- Successful Kokanee re-introduction, Tribe/Bonneville Environmental Foundation 10 yr. Model Program/BPA
- Myrtle Creek - RAC funding
- 20 Mile - RAC funding
- Boundary County \$5,000 annually to KVRI
- TMDL-319 to 20 Mile
- TransCanda Grant for KVRI Grizzly Bear Committee \$4,500
- KVRI Griz. Bear Committee - USFWS funding for garbage cans, etc.
- Kootenai Valley Habitat Restoration Project - Tribe/BPA
- Sturgeon Recovery Projects - Tribe/BPA/IDFG/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- NRCS Landowner Projects - Wetlands/Forestry/Ag Plans
- Forest Legacy Projects - Partnerships with Vital Ground/Nature Conservancy/IDL/private forest landowners

There are three maps on the following pages that depict efforts that the Collaborative Group has made in developing their forest landscape strategy.

**Figure 1** – This map shows the boundaries of the landscape, which totals more than 800,000 acres of NFS, State, BLM, and private lands, in conjunction with the WUI boundary. Also, shown are the projects the District currently has under contract, projects that are not currently under contract, but where NEPA is finished, and projects that are currently in the planning phase.

**Figure 2** – This map shows the same information displayed in Figure 1, for NFS lands only, but also adds old growth stands and riparian zones (i.e., INFISH) that are typically excluded from forest restoration; grizzly bear, woodland caribou and Canada lynx habitat that are *not* excluded from restoration opportunities, but where the opportunities may be more limited; and finally, the land use designations depicted in the Idaho Roadless Rule and the IPNF's Draft Forest Plan revision.

**Figure 3** – This map portrays what the Group feels could be considered “Forest Landscape Restoration Zones.” These zones exclude the majority of old growth stands (dry forest old growth would remain in consideration for restoration), INFISH buffers, and Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRRs). The remaining areas are intersected with general forest (GF), grizzly bear management units (BMUs), lynx analysis units (LAUs), and caribou management units (CMUs). The total NFS area is roughly 150,000 acres of the more than 410,000 acres on the District.

FIGURE 1 - KVRI LANDSCAPE

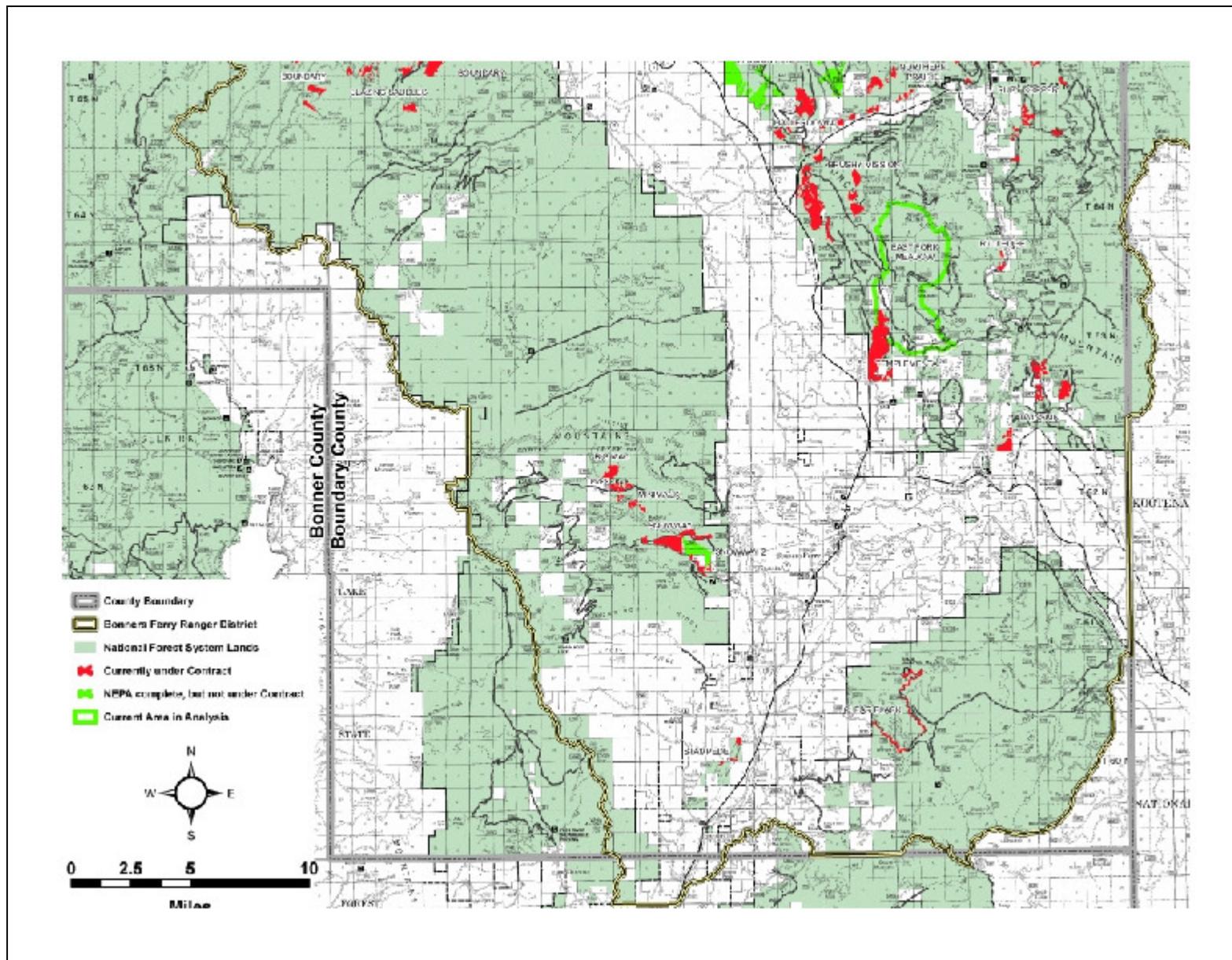


Figure 2- KVRI Landscape Values at Risk

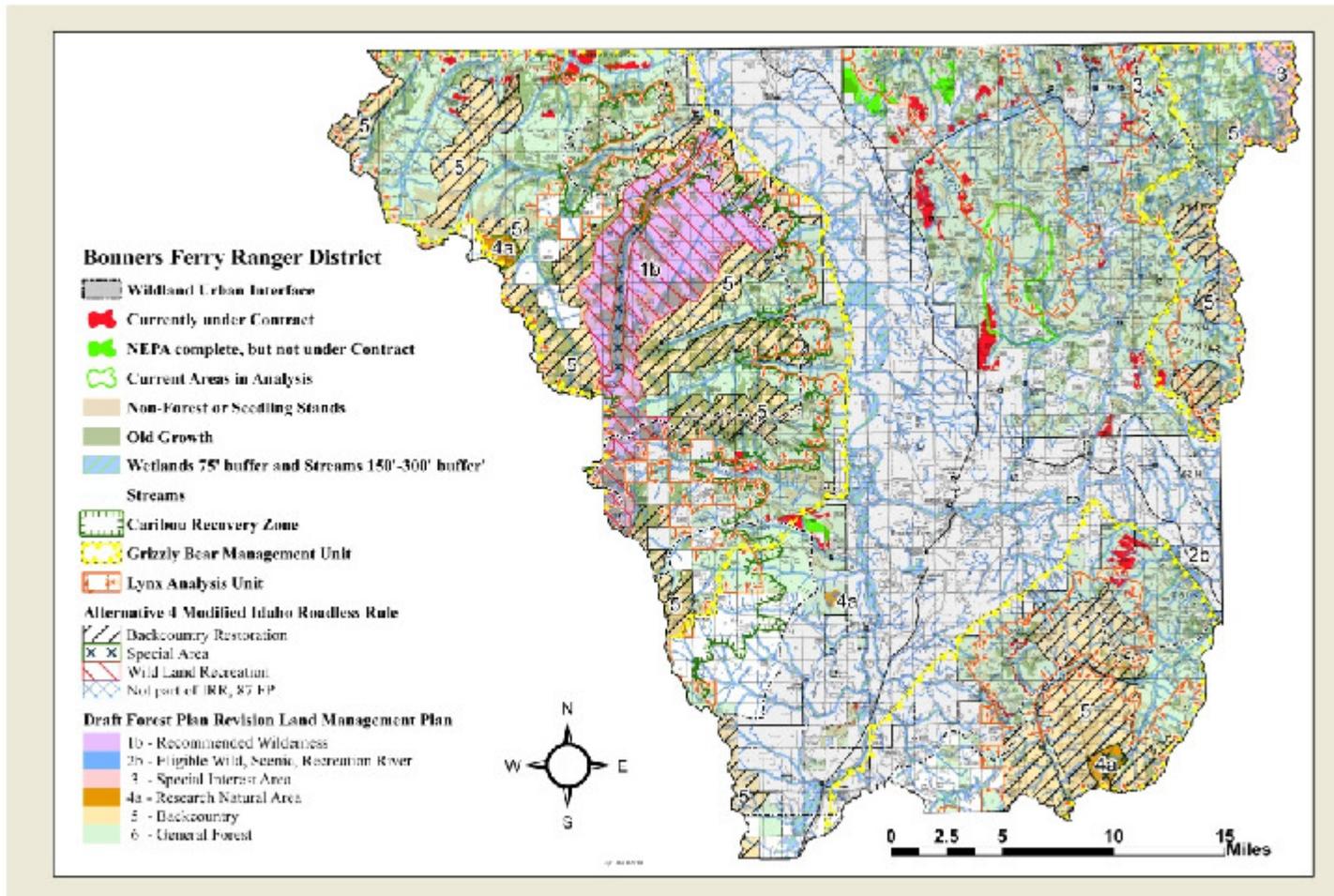
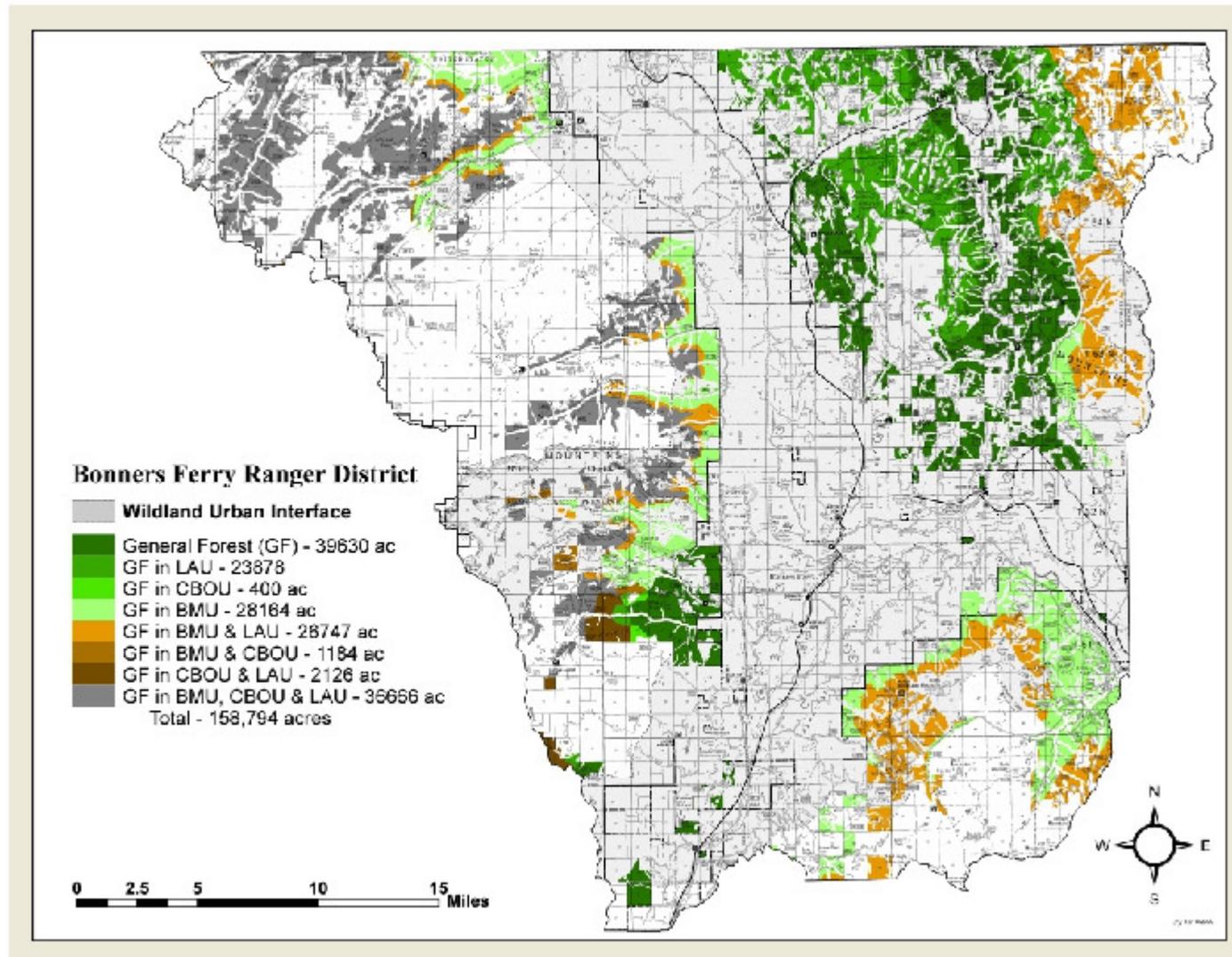


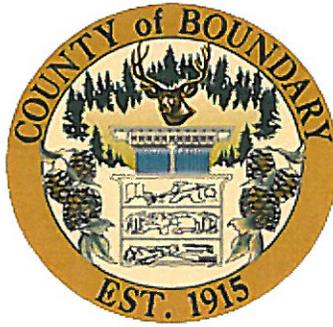
Figure 3 - KVRI Forest Landscape Restoration Zones



The KVRI has been working collaboratively with its partners in developing a landscape strategy for ten years. The primary vehicle for developing this strategy has been the IPNF's Forest Plan Revision process ([http://fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fsm91\\_056305.pdf](http://fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsm91_056305.pdf)). Additionally, KVRI has been active in helping craft the strategies that are the underpinnings of Forest Plan development and the broad-based landscape strategy. These strategies include:

- Identification of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) in coordination with Boundary County Fire Mitigation Group.
- Facilitated the development the Idaho Roadless Rule
- TMDL Plan developed and approved by EPA for the lower Kootenai and Moyie Rivers.
- Development of a Wetland/Riparian Conservation
- Facilitated the development of The Kootenai River Burbot Conservation Strategy.
- Coordinate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other federal agencies, in development of an EIS for Fisheries and Alternative Flood Control Strategies.
- Serves as forum to educate the community on Grizzly Bear Recovery.
-

**Boundary County Commissioners**  
Ronald R. Smith, Chairman  
Dan R. Dinning, Commissioner  
Walt Kirby, Commissioner



Telephone (208) 267-7723  
Fax: (208) 267-7814  
commissioners@boundarycountyid.org

**BOUNDARY COUNTY**  
**P. O. Box 419**  
**Bonnors Ferry, ID 83805**

May 7, 2010

Leslie Weldon, Supervisor  
Northern Region  
200 E. Broadway  
P. O. Box 7669  
Missoula, MT 59807

RE: KVRI - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Proposal

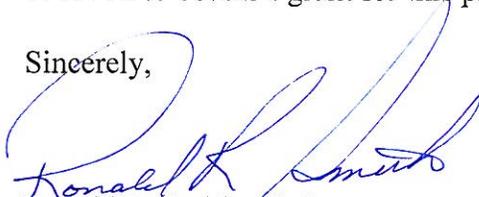
Dear Supervisor Weldon:

The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative is a long-standing collaborative formed under a Joint Powers Agreement between the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Boundary County, Idaho, and the City of Bonnors Ferry, Idaho.

The KVRI has served as a locally based effort to foster community involvement in natural resource issues with the mission of integrating existing local, state, and federal programs to effectively maintain, enhance, and restore the social, cultural, and natural resource bases in our community. The membership represents the diversity of our community and the group has demonstrated what can be accomplished when we work together toward common goals.

Boundary County Commissioners believe the focus and structure of KVRI fits well with the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program and we fully support the efforts of KVRI to obtain a grant for this project.

Sincerely,

  
Ronald R. Smith, Chairman  
Boundary County Commissioners



# Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

P.O. Box 1269  
100 Circle Drive  
Bonners Ferry, ID 83805  
Ph# (208) 267-3519  
Fax (208) 267-2960

May 7, 2010

Leslie Weldon, Supervisor  
Northern Region  
200 E. Broadway  
P. O. Box 7669  
Missoula, MT 59807

RE: KVRI - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Proposal

Dear Supervisor Weldon:

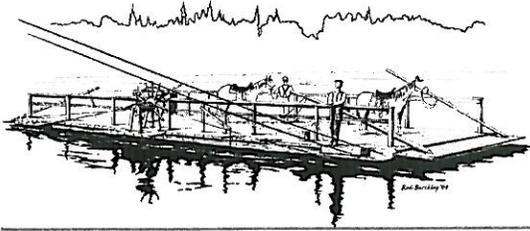
The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho strongly supports the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program proposal.

The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative is a collaborative effort among the Tribe, Boundary County and City of Bonners Ferry to address natural resource concerns within Kootenai aboriginal territory in a manner that promotes Tribal and local values. Water quality, fish and wildlife recovery and restoration, wetland restoration and forestry issues have been at the forefront of this collaboration.

The Kootenai Tribe believes that the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative and its Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program proposal fits well within the Program's scheme. We urge your favorable consideration of the proposal.

Sincerely,

  
Jennifer Porter, Chairperson  
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho



## CITY OF BONNERS FERRY

7232 Main Street  
P.O. Box 149  
Bonners Ferry, Idaho 83805  
Phone: 208-267-3105 Fax: 208-267-4375

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May 6, 2010

Leslie Weldon, Supervisor  
Northern Region  
200 E. Broadway  
P. O. Box 7669  
Missoula, MT 59807

RE: KVRI Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Proposal

Dear Supervisor Weldon,

The City of Bonners Ferry is writing in support of the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative's Forest Landscape Restoration Program Proposal.

The KVRI is collaborative formed under a Joint Powers Agreement between the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the City of Bonners Ferry and Boundary County, Idaho. The mission of the KVRI is to improve coordination of local, state, federal and Tribal programs to restore and enhance the resources of the Kootenai Basin.

The KVRI proposal will have a positive impact on our local National Forest, which is of extreme importance to the City of Bonners Ferry and its citizens. The KVRI proposal effectively meets the goals of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program and the structure and track record of the KVRI makes it uniquely suited to implement the proposal.

The City of Bonners Ferry respectfully encourages funding of this proposal.

Sincerely,

David Anderson  
Mayor

May 7, 2010

Leslie Weldon, Supervisor  
Northern Region 200 E. Broadway  
P. O. Box 7669  
Missoula, MT 59807

**RE: KVRI - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Proposal**

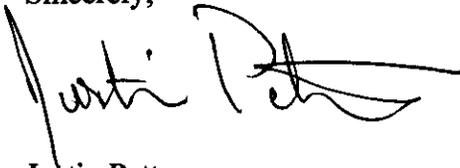
Dear Supervisor Weldon:

The Nature Conservancy strongly supports the intent of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. Its purpose to fund collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes aligns well with the mission of The Nature Conservancy to protect the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth.

The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative is a collaborative effort among the diverse interests of our local community that is convened to address natural resource concerns in a manner that promotes local values. Water quality, fish and wildlife recovery and restoration, wetland restoration and forestry issues have been at the forefront of this collaboration.

The Nature Conservancy has been a participant in the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative for many years, and commends their efforts to seek consensus solutions to natural resource challenges in Boundary County. Although we have not reviewed KVRI's proposal, we believe that the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative fits well within the scheme of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program and encourages your consideration.

Sincerely,



Justin Petty  
Inland Northwest Land Steward