

Meeting Notes
KVRI Forestry Committee
February 16, 2017, 1:00 p.m.
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Attendance:

Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair
Kevin Knauth, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Doug Nishek, USFS
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group
Ed Koberstein, USFS
Jonathan Luhnaw, Idaho Department of Lands
Russ Hegedus, IFG
Norm Merz, KTOI
Beth Bigelow, USFS
Ree Brannon, NRCS
Karen Roetter, Sen. Mike Crapo's Office
Sid Smith, Sen. Jim Risch's Office
Kevin Greenleaf, KTOI
Brandon Glaza, USFS
Brett Lyndaker, USFS
Barry Wynsma, County Resident
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

Opening:

Patty Perry opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Introductions followed.

Boulder Creek Restoration Project (BCRP) - Doug Nishek, USFS

Doug began his presentation with a review of the **Purpose and Need** handout for the Boulder Creek Restoration Project.

Aquatic Resource:

Maintain & improve the aquatic ecosystems (watershed and fisheries) in Boulder Creek & its tributaries.
Reduce the risk of sediment from entering the stream systems.

Vegetation Resource:

Maintain & improve forest landscape resiliency by providing for tree species, stocking levels, and landscape patterns that better resist insects, disease and stand-replacing wildfire.

Fires & Fuels:

Protect the communication site infrastructure and Black Mountain lookout tower from potential wildfire damage by reducing hazardous fuels around the facilities and along access roads.

Return the role of fire back into the ecosystem, by disrupting the continuity of fuels and create a mosaic of stand structures across the landscape.

Recreation:

Maintain & improve recreational sites and experiences in the Boulder Creek area.

Wildlife Habitat:

Improve the diversity of forest and riparian structures, emulate historic disturbance patterns, and contribute to meeting the standards of the Grizzly Bear Access Amendment for the Bear Management Units by increasing core habitat.

Economic Potential:

Maintain & improve the recreational visitor capacity and potential in the Boulder Creek area and utilize any forest products that may be produced as a result of the restoration activities.

These are the objectives that will help move the condition of the Boulder Creek watershed in the direction we hope to be in the next 20 or 30 years.

Boulder Project: Summary of Roads under the Proposed Action

Doug distributed the second handout to the group for review: "Summary of Roads Under the Proposed Action".

The summary covered the following subjects: Road Decommission, Roads added to NF System, Road Storage, and Non-System Roads.

Discussion began with a verification of the Grizzly Bear Access Amendment Deadline as 2019. Considering all projects won't actually be completely implemented at that time, what may happen to those? No one is certain but they don't see it being a cause to shut things down as long as a project is in process to bring us into compliance.

Barry Wynsma inquired on the status of the road repair in Boulder. Kevin Knauth replied that everything he hears says that they are on track for contracting work this summer. The Forest Service identified the area and the Federal Highway Department took it from there. Brandon added that they did repair the washout on the East Fork of Boulder Road (Road 628) last fall. Kevin also stated that repair is a re-route as opposed to re-building the previous road.

Doug presented the map titled "Map 3, Scenario 2", for the group to review. This was the map of the roads they agreed upon about 3 years ago in a meeting at the fairgrounds. Doug used the map to re-orient the group on where the roads are in the project and which roads are to be stored. The roads will be stored after the project is done.

Tim Dougherty asked Doug to remind the group about the difference of decommissioning and storing roads.

Doug explained the transportation analysis process (TAPS) directs the ID team to consider whether or not they need all road segments for the short term and long-term for access and management needs. If they don't think the road is needed, and multiple resources don't think they need it, then it gets put in the decommission category. If there is a chance they will need the road in the future for fire suppression or other management, then it goes into the storage category. If the road rates out as a decommission road, it comes out of the road inventory database, and it is removed from the road system. If it is identified as stored, it remains on the database, and they have options for future later.

It was stated that if they want to access a decommissioned road later it would be analyzed like rebuilding a new road. Also they are obligated to remove drainage structures on decommission roads.

Patty stated for this committee the difference between storage and decommission was to have the ability to keep the roads on the landscape when it was safe to do so and to have the ability to keep it on the Forest Service database so if it is needed in the next ten years we could go back in those areas. But if it was categorized as a decommission road, it's off the system and we lose that ability. It was to preserve management possibilities for the future.

The group continued to go over the table and maps together, discussing the proposed prescription and showing the exact roads on the map in the project.

Patty went over a few specific roads for review and Doug & Kevin answered the questions she and Kevin Greenleaf had about those roads in the project.

Comment Letters received after scoping for Boulder Creek Discussion

Doug presented a brief overview of the Comment Letters received after Scoping for the Boulder Creek Project. He said they received 15 letters and most supported the project.

What we are looking for in the comments are those substantive points that point out an issue(s) with the proposed action. An issue/comment is used to build an alternative way to meet the purpose and need for the project. The comments must address current needs in the project and also help them shape the analysis as they go forward.

Discussion followed as the group reviewed the comments.

Timelines for the Boulder Creek Project:

- Specialists reports -late spring or early summer.
- Draft EA -June
- 30 day comment period -July
- Respond to comments -August
- Final EA and draft decision notice-starts objection period.

Treatment Proposed in Boulder Project

- 40,600 acres in project area, 60% of the project is in two Roadless Areas.
- 13,300 treatment acres (includes 5510 acres logging and 7800 acres prescribed burning only).
- Two sales anticipated.

Deer Creek Project Status

- Decision published next month, starts objection period.
- Optimistic that sales will be a 4th quarter offering.
- Sale #2 will include pre-commercial thinning.

Future Meetings, Topics and Field Trips

- Forestry Committee will meet again in May.
- Field trip in the summer; will check the calendar and pick a date soon.
- March 20th KVRI meeting; bring this discussion of roads and map to the KVRI Board; determine if there is a need for another public roads meeting; Ed K. also stated that they could provide a brief overview of Robison and Camp Dawson projects, the two HFRA projects using the NEPA strike team.
- April or May KVRI meeting: Mary Farnsworth, USFS, would like to be on the agenda to discuss the CFLRP report.

Management Areas- MA5 (Backcountry) and MA6 (General Forest)

Patty stated that one thing we should mention to this group is the MA5 and MA6 discussion that was presented at the KVRI Meeting on Monday.

The Governor opened up the opportunity in Idaho to establish priority areas for treatment for the Farm Bill CE process. Mary Farnsworth, USFS, mentioned, during the 5 year planning process, that she would like to make all MA5 & MA6 areas priority areas.

The Panhandle Forest Collaborative didn't agree. They had a different approach that they proposed back to Mary. The KVRI Board agreed we needed to have a phone call to Mary to get her input on the change before we composed a letter of support. Discussion followed.

That phone conference call is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb 21 at 8:30 at Kootenai Tribal Office.

Old Growth Discussion

An email conversation between Doug and Patty prompted the discussion of the fact that we seem to be moving stands located in general forest to old growth in this project and is that a wise move?

Regarding the Vegetation section in the watershed, the watershed is on the low end of old growth acres, so where it makes sense on the landscape the objective is to thin the dry sites of mature Ponderosa Pine and Douglas-fir in an effort not lose them to wildfire, regardless of whether they are in an Roadless Area or in general forest.

Discussion followed.

Kevin stated that that is not something they will start doing, it's something they will continue to do as they look for those opportunities. Forest planning, when it talks about old growth, says the current condition has a lesser amount of old growth than historically occurred within this landscape. Therefore the general direction is to move our acres toward old growth where it makes sense.

Dan asked that if nothing should change in forest planning management, are we actually promoting something that will be taking acres out of management. And if we meet the old growth standard on the Panhandle, what is the long term logic of this plan. Kevin replied it would be taking acres out of harvest not management.

Doug reminded the group that there are two kinds of old growth, moist site cedar / hemlock types (they generally don't go into those areas) and dry site ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir (those areas need to be managed).

Kevin stated that the objective is not to seek out stands to move to old growth but where it make sense (preferably adjacent to an existing larger patch of old growth), to increase the size of an already mature site.

Both handouts available on line at kootenai.org

The next meeting date will be announced.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Sherrie Cossairt

KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant

