

Meeting Notes  
KVRI Forestry Committee  
June 30, 2016 – 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)  
Kevin Greenleaf, KTOI  
Norm Merz, KTOI  
Russ Hegedus, IFG  
Sid Smith, Senator Jim Risch  
Lee Colson, USFS  
Jennifer Anderson, USFS  
Bob Blanford, KVRI-Business/Industry  
Brad Smith, ICL  
Doug Nishek, USFS  
Beth Bigelow, USFS  
Jonathan Luhnnow, IDL  
Brett Lyndaker, USFS  
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI  
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

**Opening:**

Patty Perry opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

**West Side Project Update**

Patty Perry stated that at the last Forestry meeting they talked about holding a meeting with the Westside landowners. As a result, the County hosted a community meeting on June 27 at the Extension Office inviting Westside landowners to hear information presented by the Forest Service, Dept. of Lands, Boundary County Fire Safe Program, and NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service). The group provided information about fire and fire history, grants and technical assistance, and programs used to help landowners create their own land management plans. They were also given the chance to visit one on one with the agencies.

They compiled a list of interested landowners, explained the Forest Service's need for foot access across private lands to access Forest Service properties and the desire to begin a community dialogue about fire management of the Westside area.

Patty asked Kevin K. to keep the committee informed, if and when the Forest Service plans to develop a Westside Project materialize, to discuss with the Committee any possible trade off scenarios that may occur-if another project would be delayed in order to do the Westside Project

**Boulder Creek Update**

Doug Nishek began his presentation reviewing the boundaries of the Boulder Creek Drainage (44,000 acres) and an overview of the vegetation data collected of the area.

- Percentage of LP (Lodge Pole) is well above historic average.
- 10,275 acres of LP (Lodge Pole) stands are considered mod-high hazard for MPB (Mountain Pine Beetle), 5,480 acres are high hazard.
- WP (White Pine) is well below historic average.

- PP (Ponderosa Pine) & WL (Western Larch) are also below historic average.
- No stands where WBP (White Bark Pine) is significant component; about 8 % of forest habitat types would support WBP & 2 % of habitat types are considered “best”.

Jennifer Anderson stated the last significant fire in the area was in 1910.

Doug N. added the constraints to consider in the area are: 2 Road-less areas or back country management areas, lynx analysis unit, old growth, RNA (Research Natural Area) and a Bear Management Unit.

**Purpose & Need (Doug Nishek)** (crafted after the last field trip to Boulder)

- Restoration of white pine on habitat types that historically supported the species.
- Reduction in acres of moderate and high hazard lodge pole pine stands.
- Maintenance and restoration of ponderosa pine and western larch on habitat types that historically supported these species.
- Maintenance and restoration of dry-site old growth.
- Increased patch size of forest openings (seedling/sapling).
- Decreased patch size of immature forests (small and medium).
- Conserve existing White Bark Pine populations and enhance opportunities for restoration where feasible.
- Reduction in the amount and the potential threat of noxious weeds along road sides, trails, recreation areas and near sensitive plant habitat.
- Retention or restoration of ecological conditions and processes that sustain the habitats currently or potentially occupied by sensitive plant species.

**Fire and Fuels (Jennifer Anderson)**

Protect the communication site infrastructure from potential wildfire damage.

- Reduce hazardous fuels around the facilities and along access roads to help protect the site and provide for firefighter safety.
- Return the role of fire back into the ecosystem.
- Disrupt the continuity of fuels and create a mosaic of stand structures across the landscape to increase flexibility in management options for future fires.

**Recreation / Heritage Resources (Beth Bigelow)**

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

- Provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the local mining and ranching history.
- Protect Boulder Meadows area and connecting trail systems from illegal ATV use.

Pat Hart, Bonners Ferry Ranger District's trails and recreation program leader, wants a comprehensive plan for recreation in that area.

Beth Bigelow described the potential opportunity in the Boulder Creek ghost town area for interpretive areas in relation to heritage trails. Possibilities are being discussed. It is a heavily used area, lots of visual interest and historical ties to the County.

Heritage Trail is a proposed walking trail with interpretive panels as an educational experience. The area is flat & open, easy access for the elderly & children with a moderate 1 mile hike. In the planning phase still. The group added camp site development and mountain bike trail access and maintenance in the project area as suggestions to consider.

Patty stated that she hopes, as those ideas develop, Pat will talk with us when she puts together her proposals so they can discuss how the project can help with that. This component has not been in our prior projects and it would be interesting to see how it develops.

### **Wildlife Habitat (Brett Lyndaker)**

The project area contains stands that are relatively similar in size and age, and therefore, not providing a wide range of wildlife habitats. Promote the long-term persistence and stability of wildlife habitat and biodiversity by trending toward an ecosystem composed of vegetation that more closely resembles the historic range of variability.

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

Brett Lyndaker added that there is the need to reduce road densities, which by law they are obligated to do through the forest plan. And they would like to create more habitat diversity in the BMU.

Brad Smith inquired about the Meadows restoration (beavers). Brett said they are looking seriously at this opportunity, although it would not be Forest Service but Fish & Game.

### **Economic Potential (Doug Nishek)**

Provide opportunities to bolster local economy.

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

Doug summarized the Boulder Creek Plan:

- Burn approx. 7500 acres, break continuity. Jennifer A. added that with larger burn areas, creates flexibility, could be ongoing over 10 years or so, will not burn all in one year.
- Add timber units where they can, don't miss opportunity for pre-commercial thinning.

## **TAPS Update (Brett Lyndaker)**

- Increase core habitat 2 % in this BMU.
- Map showed numbered roads considered in TAPS as potential candidates to store or decommission so they can make the core standard.
- Total road density needs to improve but if we get to core, total road will go along with it.
- Looked at 5 scenarios, chose Scenario 2 to meet standard without seriously impacting public use or ability to work there, focused on stacked road systems, need to store 11 ½ mile of road, the best option.
- Discussed River Walk Trail and the possibility of future development.
- Restricted road access – opens after Dec. 1 and closes April 1.
- Boulder Connection Road-if we keep it, need to improve.
- Discussed Idaho Roadless Rule Committee November Meeting (Patty suggested to Doug to address the Boulder Creek project as well as an update of Deer Creek at that time).

Doug also added that new staff member, Ed Koberstein, is looking, in the future, for stewardship opportunities to fix roads, connections routes and haul routes in this project. There is also a gravel pit nearby. Still a lot of homework to do but Doug asked for the group to consider ideas.

## **Boulder Creek Field Trip: July 14**

What we would like to see:

- Boulder Meadows (include burn areas discussion)
- Boulder Creek washout
- Ghost town sites (Heritage)
- Old growth stands

Other Details:

- Time change, 8 am to 2 pm (earlier start in warmer weather).
- Meet at the BF Ranger Station.
- Bring own lunch, hiking shoes, bee sting kit (if needed). Water and cookies provided.
- Start at ghost town with a morning hike, and end at Twenty Mile.
- Send out invite, RSVP by Monday July 11, for vehicle needs.

## **Black Mountain Lookout update:**

Beth Bigelow shared that Verizon is upgrading their communication tower and would like the opportunity to move it to a better line of sight, which is where the historic Black Mountain lookout tower is now. They have offered to move the lookout for us if they can have the lookout tower site.

Negotiations are in progress. The condition of the lookout is very poor, it has been vandalized numerous times, the Forest Service is not able to maintain it and it's about ready to fall over. It may be a good idea to take the opportunity to rescue it.

The thought is to move the cab to a similar vista to use as an interpretive site first, then a recreational rental later when funding opens for more heritage sites. There is community support, both local & national. They also have Lookout organizations interested too.

### **Deer Creek Update**

Kevin Knauth updated the group on the Deer Creek Timeline:

- Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> – signed decision, includes both projects.
- 1<sup>st</sup> sale FY 17 -4<sup>th</sup> quarter, this sale area is in the BMU.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> sale FY 18 -1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

**All presentation maps and documents are available online at [www.kootenai.org](http://www.kootenai.org)**

The next meeting date to be announced.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Sherrie Cossairt

KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant