

Meeting Notes
KVRI Forestry Committee
October 5, 2016, 9:00 a.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
Lee Colson, USFS
Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League
Doug Nishek, USFS
Beth Bigelow, USFS
Karen Roetter, Sen. Mike Crapo's office
Ree Brannon, USDA-NRCS
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group
Ed Koberstein, USFS
Brandon Glaza, USFS
John Lefebvre, Westside Project
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

Opening:

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

District Project Updates:

Tower Fire Salvage:

- All four (4) sales have been sold, for a total of almost 25mmbf, IFG purchased one, and Vaagen Bros. purchased three.
- Pending law suit (intent to sue) by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies; currently in the process of preparing declarations for the court.
- Concerns expressed-used EA instead of EIS, contest some resource issues as well.
- Lawsuit is on the salvage sales on the Forest (Tower and Grizzly Sales)
- Harvest is continuing; it was reported that some of the sales have not been started and others are 50% completed at this time.

Deer Creek:

- AJ has taken a new job as a silviculturist on the Idaho NEPA strike team, working on Nez/Clear projects; so he is no longer team lead.
- He was in the process of the draft decision notice and the FONSI for Deer Creek, as well as getting the EA to completion stage.
- Dave Cobb and Shawna Kleinsmith are now working on that document.
- Brett Lyndaker sending 2nd Draft to USFWS, to clarify the timeline for implementation on the first sale, concerned about road densities in the BMU, should be sent in by the end of the week.

- Kevin Knauth anticipates the process to go relatively quickly, need to clear that process before they can move into the EA & Draft decision and open up the objection period, decision expected April, 3rd quarter, FY 17.
- Working with a new contact for the Fish & Wildlife Service-Meagan Kosterman.
- 1st project is a Stewardship Project to facilitate the restoration needs and to coordinate the needs for Access Management from a Grizzly Bear standpoint, to get that ecosystem up to standards sooner.

Boulder Creek: Doug Nishek

- 40,000 acres is in the project area.
- 24,000 acres- in 2 road-less areas (Katka/Boulder- north & Mt. Willard/St. Estelle -south) largest backcountry area, long trail systems; activities will be burning and harvest, borders the Three Rivers District in MT.
- 4,700 acres- even age management.
- 760 acres -uneven age/dry site management.
- A couple units near the communication tower are sanitation salvage/liberation cut prescriptions.
- 500 acres -pre-commercial thinning.
- 5,200 acres -harvest treatments. (skyline 1300, tractor 2300, helicopter 1900)

The Forest Service met Monday with Three Rivers District – they are planning the Starry Goat Project-14,000 acres-burning, 2,000 acres proposed units; same scoping timeline as Boulder (end of the month). This project is adjacent to the Boulder Project.

Dan & Patty reminded Kevin & Doug to get on the Roadless Commission agenda- the next meeting is at the end of November.

Tim Dougherty- Expressed concern for helicopter sales-it is taking a very long time due to lack of infrastructure; not the cost factor, to get those sales accomplished. FS may need to take the road-less base out of the project...if it isn't feasible.

Doug N. : Starry Goat Project-Three Rivers Ranger District (just beyond the ghost town cemetery is wagon road #4402G which falls under the Kootenai National Forest-Three Rivers District jurisdiction), the Forest Service would like them to consider and recognize they have the recreational/heritage opportunities in that area and not block their traffic in that area.

Doug will send us information about these recreational opportunities in the Boulder area that borders the Starry Goat Project so Patty can prepare a letter of support to present to the KVRI board on Oct 17. A letter to the Ranger will address the recreational opportunities shared by the Districts & note that two collaboratives have been working together with the Forest Service. The Group agreed that this would be a good idea and a positive measure for all involved.

Doug: One more connected action-Road #2209 – road connects to the Kootenai River Walk- Boulder project will propose opening the gate, fixing the road to the trailhead, gate will only be closed in spring; does not affect road density. Everyone agreed there is a potential opportunity & it's good to educate and inform the public about these types of positive projects.

Kevin: Deer Creek project also has the opportunity to promote road management and recreational/access improvements, by meeting the access amendments and other outcomes we are able to accomplish in these projects.

Wrap up:

- Start scoping end of October; get comments in.
- Input from the group needed, letter stating they support the project as outlined in the scoping letter, the EA and the Decision like they have done on past projects; Doug will send Patty information needed for letter.
- Forest Service will get the Draft letter to this committee by the 21st, verify on Monday Oct 24 if meeting needed.

Map presented is available online under KVRI Forestry Committee at www.kootenai.org

Camp Dawson: Doug Nishek & Ed Koberstein

- The objective-edge match some projects with older projects; survey the areas we have overlooked or missed in the past 20 years and complete a comprehensive assessment.
- Complete field surveys next summer; hand this project over to the North Idaho NEPA Strike team by October of next year; which is 1st quarter FY 2018.
- HFRA project area-may meet the CE category; Treatment acres- 3000 acres.
- Timeline- proposed action hoping for a decision by 4th quarter FY 2018.
- It will be a CFLR project.

Brush Lake: Kevin Knauth & Ed Koberstein

- Stewardship project- Activities included road work, camp ground improvement, picnic tables, fire rings, & sun shelters.
- YCC kids did the work in the campground area.
- Idaho Forest Group worked with Forest Service.
- Stewardship success stories.

Brad S-How does this work with trails? Stewardship doesn't have recreation money; it could be a matching piece to a grant application.

Ed: Stewardship Authority- for restoration activity (wildlife, vegetation, aquatic); can't fund NEPA-has to go to the contractors; does not have to be in that particular project boundary area; Deer Creek will be the first stewardship project.

Patty-Need CFLR updates at each Forestry Committee meeting and KVRI meetings – next meeting is the KVRI meeting on October 17th.

Brandon-Boulder/Brush Lake future activities- improve the parking lots for Mountain Bike trail head and future ATV trail.

Westside Project- Lee Colson

- Lee spent his summer assessing fuel treatment and fire abatement in the Westside area.
- Committee watched a Google fly by to remind us of the Forest Service vs private land ownership-project area to consider runs from Caribou Creek to Canadian border.

Discussion followed.

In Review:

- Committee needs the Forest Service to identify and prioritize the areas for possible treatment, then we can help, along with Ree Brannon at NRCS and others to contact land owners to see if they would like to treat their properties as well.
- Maybe a good idea to find a property that has already had treatment to show other property owners the example.
- Lee explained that the project area needs to be large enough to be effective to get the project on the list to be done.
- Patty reminded everyone that the Grant/WUI program deadlines are coming soon for Don and John (IFM).
- We will meet again after the Forest Service has their list and priority areas ready.
- Patty will schedule with Lee and others to hold another Westside Group Meeting.

IPNF 5-Year Action Plan-Kevin Knauth & Ed Koberstein

- FY 2021-FY 2026 time period.
- Will address capacity on the North Zone; going forward with Sandpoint & Priest Lake project areas; larger EA's there; not finding large enough areas in Boundary County; must have 1 EA and 1 CE per year.
- Trout/Ball area will land in that time period for EA- FY 2021 Decision.
- Last year for CFLRP 2019.
- The focus on Bonners Ferry District will be CE's; lesser volume opportunities in a CE (3mmbf); restoration opportunities in small areas.

Patty: mentioned that the Committee would like a map of the district depicting where we've been (implemented project activities) and where we can go from here, so the group can understand what the opportunities available are for our District in the future.

Grouse BMU Scoping-Kevin Knauth

- Scoping letter went out Sept. 14; comments due Oct. 17.
- No vegetative component; simple purpose and need; meet access amendments as outlined in the Forest Plan for the BMU.
- Dan questioned the roads portion in Boundary County; there is the public concern about the Forest Service eliminating miles of access and road closures.
- Roads 2693A, 2686A-seasonably/stored; 280C-year round/open.
- TAPS (transportation analysis) is done and available.

A more complete presentation to this group about this project was requested, and a review of the TAPS analysis where it affects this area is requested at the next meeting.

The next meeting date is scheduled for November 10, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 12.05 p.m.
 Sherrie Cossairt
 KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant