

Meeting Notes
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
Forestry Committee
November 9, 2017, 1:30 p.m.
Kootenai Tribal Office

Attendance:

Kevin Knauth, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Doug Nishek, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Kevin Greenleaf, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League (ICL)
Ron Abraham, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)
Evan DeHamer, Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG)
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair
Tim Price, US Forest Service, NEPA Strike Team
Nate Miller, US Forest Service, NEPA Strike Team
A.J. Helgenberg, US Forest Service, NEPA Strike Team
Sue Ireland, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)
Craig Phillips, US Forest Service, NEPA Strike Team Lead
Bob Blanford, KVRI, Business/Industry
Dan Gilfillan, US Forest Service
Linda Bernhardt, US Forest Service, NEPA Strike Team
Beth Bigelow, US Forest Service, Archeology
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

Opening:

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

At Kevin's request, Patty gave the NEPA Strike Team a brief history of the KVRI Forestry Sub-committee. Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI) started in 2001. There are several sub-committees: Forestry, TMDL Committee, Wetland Conservation Committee, Burbot Recovery Strategy Committee, Grizzly Bear Conservation, and Wildlife Auto-Collision (WAC) Committee. There is a nucleus of an 11 member Board that represents the diversity of the group. All of the committees are open to participation to anyone who wants to come and know what's going on. It ebbs and flows with community interest and location of projects in the County.

The role of the Forestry Committee is a sounding group that works directly with the USFS-ID team or Kevin to look across this District under the CFLR area. Where we might want to work, why would we go there and if we go there, what do we want to accomplish. Together we begin with a flyover (via Google Earth) of the project area and a field trip to understand what the Purpose and Need might be. We bring the community perspective and the social license to implement the project. Under CFLR, we've had 6-8 projects that are completed. The first project undertaken on the District was the first that had restoration and a timber sale component that wasn't appealed or litigated in 17 years.

Boulder Creek Project Update-Doug Nishek

November 6th was the last day to comment on the Boulder Creek Project EA. The letters received are as follows.

- Idaho Parks and Rec. - comments were in favor of the Kootenai River Walk, overall supported project, no surprises.
- American Forest Resource Council (AFRC) - supports management, agreed with helicopter concerns, supported importance of contributing to the local economy, stands behind the project.
- Idaho Conservation League (ICL) –Supports the project.
- KTOI-Support letter, Comments on Grizzly Bear and roads, Brett will look at that more closely, concerns were on Idaho Roadless Rule and CFR 70.
- Boundary County- Support letter.
- Kathy Mohar-Troy, MT- Visual concerns of Leonia Knob and Katka Peak.
- Cow Creek Water Association – a few comments on scoping. Supports project.
- Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI) - Supports project.
- Kootenai Environmental Alliance- comments on economics and helicopter.
- Gary Regehr, local logger-Historical/heritage concerns, wealth of information for county history.
- Alliance for the Wild Rockies (AWR) - 144 pages, they want another alternative, fix roads only, no management. There is a lot to look at and respond to.

Patty asked Doug if there was anything new in the last comment letter that we didn't foresee or prepare for and Doug replied that there was not. He also stated that there are no timelines associated with Comments on the Environmental Analysis (EA). They would be working on the responses and hope to be ready for a report to the Forestry Committee in January. Patty asked if the time involved would alter the original schedule for decision or sales and Doug said no.

Deer Creek Project Update- Kevin Knauth

The first sale out of Deer Creek is a Stewardship sale and there are no bid proposals at this time. Discussion followed concerning the opportunities regarding this sale but no further details could be shared.

Dan D. questioned the storage of roads and the implementation of the Stewardship Sale. He shared concerns from the community that the road would be stored and the Stewardship Sale never implemented. Options were discussed. That would be a timing piece the Forest Service could control. Kevin stated that as soon as they had the information of the direction of the Stewardship sale he would share it with the Committee.

There are 2 other sales coming out of the Deer Creek project and they are not dependent on the sale of the Stewardship project.

Camp Dawson/Robin Hood Scoping Update- Craig Phillips

Craig Phillips, Strike team lead, walked the Committee through the details of the Camp Dawson / Robin Hood scoping project summary.

Craig shared that there has been a change in the project since the initial field trip. The project started as 2 separate projects being done under Farm Bill CE's but will now be a combined project done under a HFRA EA. That could change during or after scoping but it's looking like a HFRA EA is the best way to go. The reason for the switch was the recreation opportunities that are being considered wouldn't fit with the Farm Bill CE and the potential treatment areas that brought Camp Dawson above the 3000 acre limit.

Camp Dawson/ Robin Hood Project Summary

Both project areas are in Northeast Boundary County
The Robin Hood project area is approximately 5,750 acres
The Camp Dawson Project area is approximately 36, 500 acres
The combined project area is 42,250 acres

Existing Conditions

- Reduced stand resilience caused by dwarf mistletoe, insects, root disease, & blister rust
- Reduced resilience due to overstocked stands, & unnatural stand composition
- Stand stress & mortality lead to fuels accumulation
- Fuels accumulation increases the potential for extreme fire behavior, undesirable in the WUI

Purpose & Need-preliminary, based on observed existing conditions

- Reduce the risk or extent of, or increase resilience to, insect or disease infestation of the landscape in the project area
- Reduce wildfire risk to the local communities & surrounding federal lands
- Protect critical infrastructure & primary egress routes

Patty asked that the Purpose & Need include community perspective as in the past projects. We want the continuity of representing the communities concerns as well as we go into the project.

Robin Hood- 9 prescriptions, 47 units, 2,977 acres

Camp Dawson- 5 prescriptions, 35 units, 3,993 acres

Resource Considerations- Extraordinary Circumstance & Resource Considerations as well as anticipated design features were discussed in detail for the following resources:

- Silviculture/Vegetation
- Recreation
- Fish
- Hydrology
- Soils
- Wildlife
- Botany
- Scenic Resources
- Heritage Resources
- Fires & Fuels

Proposed Prescriptions include:

- Single tree selection
 - 2 units, 75 acres
- Improvement cut
 - 7 units, 425 acres
- Variable density thin
 - 9 units, 2279 acres
- Shelterwood
 - 9 units, 691 acres
- Seedtree
 - 21 units, 1795 acres
- Rehabilitation
 - 2 units 6 acres
- Prescribed Burn
 - Up to 3 units, up to 506 acres
- Aspen enhancement
 - Areas within units, acreage to be announced
- Special Cut
 - 1 unit, 9 acres, roadside treatment to reduce shading on Hwy 95 to enhance ice & snow melt

Anticipated Schedule

- Preliminary Project Development-August-December 2017
- Public Collaboration- ~December 13, 2017
- Refine Proposed Action for scoping- December 14, 2017 – January 3, 2018
- Scoping & Public Input- January 3-February 9, 2018
- Effects Analysis- February- June 2018
- Draft EA/FONSI-~July 16, 2018
- Objection Period (abbreviated)- July 16-August 13, 2018

- Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact-September 26, 2018

KVRI offered to host public meetings if needed.

The detailed Camp Dawson/Robin Hood Scoping Document is available on the KVRI website at Kootenai.org.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Sherrie Cossairt

KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant