

Meeting Notes  
KVRI Forestry Committee  
November 10, 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)  
Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League  
Doug Nishek, USFS  
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group  
Ed Koberstein, USFS  
Bob Blanford, KVRI-Business/Industry  
Jonathan Luhnaw, Idaho Department of Lands  
Kris Hennings, Idaho Panhandle National Forest North Zone, Wildlife Biologist  
Erick Walker, USFS, Sandpoint District Ranger  
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:**

**Westside Project:**

A January meeting will be planned to discuss expectation of KVRI's involvement and Dan expressed his desire to have all agencies involved: KVRI, the County, WUI, and NRCS. Forest Service agreed. Kevin shared that the map they provided Don for the grant application process was sufficient.

**Grouse BMU Project: Kevin Knauth, Kris Hennings, & Erick Walker**

Kevin distributed two handouts to the committee: Grouse BMU Compliance Briefing Paper and Grouse Bear Management Proposed Action.

Kevin reported there is no vegetation objective in the Grouse BMU Project. The simple objective is to bring that BMU into compliance with the Grizzly Bear Access Amendment. The Briefing Paper handout explains what the standards are, where we are now and what the proposed action will bring us to.

The project spans two districts, Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint. Erick Walker, Sandpoint District Ranger, is taking the administrative lead on this project.

**Current Update:**

The scoping notice has gone out. Listed on the table distributed to the committee were the road number details, existing conditions, proposed action and comments of the roads in the Grouse BMU Project (attached).

Overall, the project proposes to store 29 miles of road. Of those 29 miles, 7.9 miles are currently opened to public motor vehicle travel during winter access. (Dec. 1 through March 31), and of those roads that are open and available to the public, the vast majority are not in drivable condition due to the roads brushing in.

One road, #215, that is identified as open during the winter access is drivable. The proposed action on that road is to store 3.75 miles with no public access allowed. The first 1.5 miles of the road will remain open during the winter access time.

The roads in Boundary County are #2625C, 2686A and 2693A. All three roads are identified as not drivable due to being brushed in.

A regular TAPS was done on this project with the purpose of meeting the BMU standards and allowing continued access to private properties.

#### Forest System Road # 280- Proposed Action

Re-route the road starting east of the North Fork Grouse Creek Bridge. Move it out of the flood zone and tie in with the original road near the Wylie Knob trailhead. The new section would be open all year for motorized access. The abandoned section of road would be decommissioned allowing the creek to function properly. The re-route would still provide public access to the Grouse Creek Falls dispersed campsite.

Kevin reported that they have received comment letters and it doesn't seem to be an issue with the re-route.

Roads discussion followed: Which roads were drivable; considered all potential roads that were not accessing private lands; chose those roads with the least impact and still would meet the objective; looked at other road closure scenarios; what roads were counted in the core percentage; concern for the value of developing continuous core roads; the biggest challenge is the intermingled land ownership throughout the project and finding the balance.

As a result of the discussion, the Forest Service will send the committee a map of the roads in Boundary County meeting BMU Core Standards within a couple of weeks.

Dan Dinning stated that the community just needs to know that he has looked at all the possibilities and alternatives on their behalf and gained the knowledge to share with them.

Kris Hennings stated that this BMU is one of a few that have reduced BMU standards because of all the private land access needs.

The Grouse BMU Compliance Briefing Paper (handout attached) displayed the information for Open Motorized Route Density (OMRD), Total Motorized Route Density (TMRD) and Core percentages for each of the following: Grouse BMU standards, Existing Condition 2015 and Proposed Action.

As a result of the proposed action this project will have gained 7% of core standards.

#### Grouse Creek Projected Timeline:

- Start the specialists reports- Jan 2017
- Consultation process/Draft EA- End of Feb 2017
- Decision by- late June 2017
- Implementation- 2018
- Finish- 2019

## **District Opportunity Update:**

The North Zone of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest consists of Bonners Ferry, Sandpoint, and Priest Lake Ranger Districts. In the last 5 years, the CFLRP projects have been essentially in the Bonners Ferry District. During the next 5 years, more projects will be focused on Sandpoint & Priest Lake. Bonners Ferry will continue exploring the use of CE and Good Neighbor Authority Projects in addition to the regular program.

The District will be utilizing the Region funded NEPA strike team based out of Coeur d'Alene. This team will work on the Panhandle and Nez/Clear Forests. The District will be doing the NFMA field /ground survey work and get projects into a NEPA ready state; then the Strike Team will prepare the NEPA document. The local district retains implementation and monitoring of the project to completion.

Discussion continued on the history of the North Zone District projects as well as what opportunities and/or the limitations are on the Sandpoint & Priest Lake Districts, and anticipated timber sale offering dates for future zone projects:

Sandpoint District- Buckskin Stew; FY2020, Buckskin Saddle #2 & #3 FY2021

Priest Lake District- Hannah Flats FY 2018, Lower West Stew; FY2022, and Lower West #2 FY2023

## **Boundary County Opportunities in the next 5 year Action Plan:**

### Camp Dawson project area:

Moved ahead of Trout/Ball because of the BMU in the Selkirk area, and for the treatment of fuels in the area; will be the first candidate on the Forest to use the NEPA strike Team; identified under HFRA to utilize the CE opportunity; conducting field surveys this year to address the vegetation condition, next summer the rest of the surveys should be complete from the wildlife, aquatic and other resources associated with this project; the project overlaps Deer Creek areas that have been missed in the past; project area is approximately 15,000 acres.

### Robinson Lake/Robin Hood Project area:

Centered around Hogue Mountain; addresses urban interface; surrounded by private lands; dry site restoration opportunities; have had requests from the ITD to address the highway safety corridor, open it up and daylight the highway; forest health conditions, overstocking in the dry sights, losing the Douglas-fir and Ponderosa Pine component; project area is approximately 5000 acres; this is another project looked at for consideration under HFRA; meets all the criteria; could accomplish the project quickly; utilize the NEPA strike team; begin this winter and be on the same timeline as Camp Dawson; implement 2019; could treat up to 3000 acres.

### Trout /Ball

FY 2021 decision; recreational and restoration opportunities; it will be an EA or EIS if needed, that would be decided after comment period; includes landscape burning and habitat restoration opportunities; incorporates Westside interface ground near the bottom; white bark pine restoration.

### Caribou Creek/Snow Creek

Not managed since the Sundance Fire of 1967; overstocked mixed conifer stands reaching commercial size; restoration opportunities; old roads systems; this project could possibly be an EA because it has more forest resilience and restoration activities; treatment acres could be 5000 to 7000 acres, limited road access; could involve a community water system; North end of the area is a BMU, intermingled ownership; needs active management in this area; FY 2024

### West of Mc Arthur Lake

Urban Interface area, access is limited; road-less area; part of Sundance fire also; very little commercial opportunities.

### The Face of Clifty area

Adjacent to private lands, back country, within the WUI, access is tough, helicopter harvest method; should consider the investment and cost per unit standpoint and talk more about this area at a later date.

### Eastport Heli

Very rocky area; could evaluate this option at a later date.

Patty requested to have the map and information presented to the KVRI Board in January or February. It would be good for the entire Board to see the treatment areas we have treated, where we are, why we are where we are, and what are the possibilities in next 5 year plan. They don't usually get this in depth perspective of the 5 year plan. Everyone agreed.

Dan Dinning will research the existence and status of any water system in the Caribou Creek area and bring that information to the committee.

Patty also reported that the KVRI board met with Harvard students to discuss collaborative groups on a project they are researching. The students shared with the Board that other groups are frustrated with asking for projects and not receiving them.

Patty said they discussed with the Harvard students how we approach things and how we get things accomplished. What has helped is the longevity of the group in looking at the district together and talking about where we might go instead of waiting for the Forest Service to give us projects. She also shared with the students that we have had a proactive District staff that has stayed focused and continued to look at the areas we could treat and bring them forward to the group. She included information of the CFLR proposal with the students.

The next meeting date will be announced.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Sherrie Cossairt

KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant