

Meeting Minutes
KVRI Forestry Sub-committee – March 11, 2015 – 9:30 a.m.
Kootenai Tribal Office

In Attendance:

Darlene Young, County Resident
Robert Young, Sportsman Club
Bob Norton, Kootenai Valley Sportsman
Michelle Sweet, County Resident
Philip Sweet, Kootenai Valley Sportsman
Ron Abraham, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Barry Wynsma, County Resident
Jill Cobb, U.S. Forest Service
AJ Helgenberg, U.S. Forest Service
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner
Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League
Kevin Greenleaf, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Bob Blanford, KVRI
Norm Merz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Cleve Shearer, County Resident
Dave Wattenbarger, Boundary Soil Conservation District
Sara Sink, U.S. Forest Service
Billy Barquin, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Karen Roetter, U.S. Senator Mike Crapo
Russ Hegedus, Idaho Forest Group
Duane Saunders, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Kevin Knauth, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)- KVRI Board
Brent Lyndaker, U.S. Forest Service
Tom Elliott, U.S. Forest Service
Matt Varcoe, U.S. Forest Service
Gary Aitken Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Sean Stash, U.S. Forest Service
Sid Smith, U.S. Senator Jim Risch
Jennifer Costich-Thompson, U.S. Forest Service
Beth Bigelow, U.S. Forest Service
Dan Gilfillan, U.S. Forest Service
Patty Perry, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho & KVRI Facilitator
Shandee Alexander, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho & KVRI recording Secretary

Patty welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made.

Kevin Knauth gave a brief overview of the Deer Creek Project. One of the project's goals is to have a timber sale in FY 2016. The objective of the meeting was to talk about roads and the transportation system. Kevin specified that this was not a decision making meeting, but a discussion meeting. The U.S. Forest Service wants input.

The Placer Connection Road (#2540) will be analyzed in the NEPA document. Kevin related the essence of a comment letter he received from Brad Smith on the Deer Creek Project. The IDT team was reminded to follow the process; Analyze, discuss it as a collaborative, reach decisions, move forward.

Patty explained the KVRI collaborative, and why it works to talk and work together. Last year, this district alone, put out half of the allowable sale quantity on the IPNF. The collaborative and staff have accomplished a great deal of road treatment, weed treatment, culvert replacements, habitat improvement and prescribed fire use (the Idaho Buckhorn Burn Project).

Brad spoke about his comment letter. He is committed to the process; to get the best available resource information from specialists, the collaborative then evaluates as a group, and then come to a conclusion.

Presentation: Deer Creek Project – AJ Helgenberg:

The presentation covered project status, transportation systems, and touched briefly on issues. A.J. emphasized that the U.S. Forest Service would still take comments on the Scoping letter.

Responses pertaining to the scoping letter were concerns of the activities' effects on water quality, wildlife habitat, and motorized public access.

Deer Creek Planning Area:

Kevin reminded everyone that the Eastern part of the Deer Creek Project is within a Bear Management Unit (BMU), and the western part is outside of the BMU. So there is more to consider when doing analysis in the Eastern part of the project.

There were many questions and answers for this portion of the presentation.

Transportation system:

Matt Varcoe explained that there are about 365 segments of road. Each segment is categorized under, county (8 Segments), National Forest Service (86 segments or system roads), Private (97 segments) or unclassified (109 segments). There is a large amount of unclassified roads that are being looked at. The team looks at the following: Is there a need for the road? Are there risks on the road? What does long term mean for the road? Matt repeated that this is a process, nothing is set in stone, and comments and input are wanted.

Road Maintenance and Reconstruction:

Approximately 35.5 miles of road would need maintenance. Maintenance includes brushing, blading and shaping the road, cleaning ditches, improving drainage structures, and adding gravel to road surfaces.

Approximately 14.3 miles of road need to be reconstructed for a safe and efficient hauling of timber. Reconstruction includes, brushing, road widening, adding turnouts, improving or adding drainage structures.

There were questions and answers for this portion of the presentation.

Road Management in the BMU:

Brett Lyndaker led us through this portion of the presentation.

The team is looking at reconstructing and utilizing road 2536, above Solomon Lake, and several linked unclassified spurs to treat the lodgepole pine stands. The team is considering the storing of 1.6 miles of the gated road 2225 and 1.2 miles of open road 2224, in order to offset core loss and road density gain. Brett explained core habitat and road density. Core habitat is everything outside of 500m from a motorized route. There are 2 types of road density. Total road density, includes restricted roads; goes along with core, as you improve core, you are improving total road density. Open road density, are roads that are open to the public. Potential flexibility regarding the status (open, restricted) of the 2536 road following the project was discussed.

Philip Sweet attended the meeting, representing the Kootenai Valley Sportsman, and had several questions regarding the storing of roads. Philip stated that the Goat Mountain Road and road 2536 are important roads to the Sportsman. The U.S. Forest Service team will take all questions and issues into consideration, as they analyze the project.

Storing a road is leaving a road at the point where it can't be driven for at least 10 years. The question was asked if a tread allowing foot traffic could be left on stored roads. Jill Cobb, explained her perspective from a hydrologist's point of view. When Jill designs the reshaping of roads, she keeps in mind access for the public. She takes into consideration, what the recreationalists want. Matt pointed out, the roads are stored with the thought of opening it back up after 10 years; the group looks long term at what it would cost to get the road back open.

Boundary County Resident, Darlene Young, brought up the issue regarding no recreational parking, such as for a horse trailer. The team has heard her concern and will review areas for recreational parking.

Unclassified Roads:

Matt directed this portion of the presentation. There are 109 Segments of trails, old skid trails, old roads and roads that are unclassified. The group needs to decide whether to remove the roads from INFRA (computer data base that tracks roads, and the maintenance that is done on them), use and store the roads (add to the system), or to decommission the roads with sale activities.

Remove from INFRA- The road prism can barely be seen, there are no signs of no current uses. It is not a road.

Use and Store- The road is open and drivable and it may be needed for harvest activities. The road will be added to the system, and the long term need will be determined.

Decommission- The road is heavily brushed, it may have been used as a skid trail in the past. The road may need to be used for harvest purposes as a skid trail.

There was time for lively discussion, and input was noted by the U.S. Forest Service team.

Final Updates and Meeting Closeout:

Fisheries Habitat- Sean Stash:

Habitat- is in good shape.

Issues up Meadow Creek- hoping to address
Discussion with the Railroad; might have an interest in partnering with the culvert.
Several collaborative members volunteered to assist in these efforts as needed.

Barry Wynsma wants to discuss the Goshawk and protection measures, at some point.

Kevin reminded everyone, that there is not a lot of flexibility with the BMU. So what the group is presenting is a trade-off. When submitting a scoping letter comment, if you don't like one thing, suggest an alternative. This would be helpful to the group.

AJ read the definition of "Issues" from the Forest Service NEPA Handbook to conclude the presentation:

"Issues serve to highlight effects or unintended consequences that may occur from the proposed action and alternatives, giving opportunities during the analysis to reduce adverse effects and compare trade-offs for the decision maker and public to understand. Issues are best identified during scoping early in the process to help set the scope of the actions, alternatives, and effects to consider; but, due to the iterative nature of the NEPA process, additional issues may come to light at any time."

A meeting to discuss issues and alternatives will be scheduled for next month.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Shandee Alexander
KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant