

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
December 12, 2017 9:00 a.m.
Combined Board Meeting – Forestry Sub-committee Meeting
Kootenai Tribal Office

Board Members in Attendance:

David Sims, Mayor, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair
Kevin Knauth, (Alt.) US Forest Service (USFS), Bonners Ferry Ranger District
Ron Abraham, (Alt) Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI), KVRI Co-chair
Ed Atkins, Corporate Agriculture/Landowner
Tim Dougherty, (Alt.) Business/Industry, Idaho Forest Group
Dave Wattenbarger, Boundary Soil Conservation District/Ag Landowner
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Jonathan Luhnnow, Idaho Department of Lands
Erik Sjoquist, Idaho Department of Lands
Sid Smith, Senator Jim Risch's office
Karen Roetter, Senator Mike Crapo's office
Judy Morbeck, Congressman Raul Labrador's office
Scott Soult, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)
Katherine Sorensen, US Fish & Wildlife Service
Kevin Greenleaf, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) Environmental Director
Greg Becker, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Boundary/Bonner County
Mike Boeck, Idaho Forest Products Commission, Candidate State Rep. 1A
Erin Mader, Idaho Forest Group (IFG)
Steve Selser, US Forest Service (USFS)
Doug Nishek, US Forest Service (USFS)
Ed Koberstein, US Forest Service (USFS)

Patty welcomed everyone and explained that the two meetings were combined to allow the Forest Service to explain the new components of the Camp Robin project in more detail to the Forestry Committee and there would be no other opportunity to inform the KVRI Board before the scoping information went out on December 19th. The focus of this meeting will be to look more at the Transportation Analysis and Recreation opportunities in this project.

Kevin K. shared that the scoping was initially set to be released the end of January with the thought that they needed a more detailed document. But after discussion with Mary Farnsworth, Forest Supervisor, they decided they would like a second comment period after the EA document was published. With that decision they should save about 2 months in the timeline. Scoping will run through mid-January (approx. January 19th). There will be a public meeting about this project on January 4th at the Boundary County Extension Office from 6-8 p.m. The Forest Service will send out information pertaining to the meeting via newspaper, BF News and he asked the committee to feel free to spread the word of that

public meeting also. Kevin K. stated that the process working with KVRI will not change; this will be an added meeting above and beyond the regular process.

Kevin K. also shared that Mary Farnsworth, IPNF Forest Supervisor, has been offered and accepted a new position as Deputy Regional Forester at the USFS Regional Office in Ogden, Utah. The start date will be Jan. 22. Her interim replacement will be the Deputy Forest Supervisor from the Willamette National Forest. The IPNF Deputy Forest Supervisor position is also vacant and the plan will be to bring in the permanent Forest Supervisor and then advertise and select the Deputy. Shanda Dekome has been serving as Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor and will continue until the position is advertised & filled.

The last thing Kevin K. wanted to share is the Forest has a proposal requesting a recreation fee increase and will be seeking public comment on that proposal. This will include campground fees, lookout rentals, and the Snyder Guard Station rental on the Bonners Ferry District. He will share the brochure and comment forms via email to forward to the KVRI mailing lists. Hard copies of the brochure and comment forms are available at the Forest Service District office.

Patty stated that the Pacific Northwest Trail project which was originally targeted to have an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) NEPA process has been changed to an Environmental Assessment (EA) by the Forest Service in Region 6 who is the lead on that project. There will not be other alternatives that are looked at for the route. It will be the route that was established originally. This change will offer less opportunity to help shape the trail. Any significant re-routes will need separate NEPA and Congressional approval.

Before continuing with the project information, Patty asked for group introductions to make sure everyone had a chance to be familiar with those in attendance. Kevin also introduced Steve Selser as the new NEPA Strike Team Lead.

Camp Robin (formerly Camp Dawson / Robin Hood) Project Presentation- Doug Nishek, USFS

Doug gave a review of the Camp Robin Project to the committee using the PowerPoint presentation (available on the KVRI website at www.kootenai.org) and Google Earth Maps.

Camp Robin 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
Project area is all in WUI and General Forest.

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

Proposed Prescriptions

- Four forms of intermediate harvest or thinning (Pre-commercial & Commercial Thinning, Improvement Cut, and Single Tree Selection)
- Three forms of regeneration harvest (Seedtree, Shelterwood, and Rehabilitation)
- One “hybrid” variable density harvest method (Variable Density Thinning)
- Three overlapping prescribed burn units in Camp Dawson
- One special treatment area in Camp Dawson to reduce shade on Highway 95

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

Anticipated Schedule

- Preliminary Project Development-August-December 2017
- Public Collaboration- May, November 2017
- Scoping & Public Input- Mid December- Mid March 2018
- Effects Analysis- February- June 2018
- Objection Period (abbreviated)- July 16-August 13, 2018
- Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact-September 26, 2018

Discussion topics after the presentation included:

- BORZ (Bears outside of Recovery Zone) area in the project and what effects there will be as the project develops.
- Recreation plans will evolve with help from comment period, the public meeting, and further discussion with the KVRI Forestry Committee.
- Helicopter units will be analyzed for potential long term feasibility.
- Forestry Committee meeting will be held to review comments, and comments will be brought to a KVRI Meeting.
- Public outreach is important issue in this project and the project could include discussion with approximately 350 adjacent landowners.
- Variable Density thinning creates a mosaic of stand densities and tree species across the unit. Mimics Mother Nature mosaic burn patterns with mixed severity fires.
- Standing is established at either comment period, at scoping or Draft EA.
- No new system roads or system road closures anticipated in the project at this time, will see what scoping comments bring up for consideration.
- Anticipated sales: 40mmbf (5000 acres of treatment, first 2 sales in 2019, subsequent sales after that, include 1 stewardship sale, this information not including helicopter units)

Kevin K. explained the Environmental Assessment (EA) document considered for this project. The Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) EA brings a more focused analysis whether it is a reduction of fuels or treatment in heavily impacted insect and disease areas. It allows them to have slightly truncated comment and response periods to help expedite the NEPA process and move it along more quickly. Some say they can save 45-60 days but Kevin K. states it is more like 15-30 days. They don't want to short change the ability to comment or get the necessary information out to the public. What is given up because it is more focused is the work they like to do when they analyze an area such as recreation type work. A more expedited NEPA doesn't want you to chase things like recreation; it wants to remain focused more on the vegetative treatments pieces. So utilizing a standard EA allows us to bring those items back to the table and discuss and analyze and implement those types of things. We are looking at a traditional EA timeline and we are comfortable that we can make that happen.

Patty added that we have gone from a CE to looking at a HFRA EA to a traditional EA in this Camp Robin project. She shared her thoughts with Kevin K. that if we are going to go into an area, we need to utilize whatever NEPA process necessary in order to allow the Forest Service all opportunities for treatment in the project. If we can't accomplish something, because we utilized the wrong process, it is a long time before we have an opportunity to go back to that area. Patty first asked the Forestry Committee if they understand the scope of the project and if they were comfortable with going out for scoping. They agreed and everyone is on board to make recommendations to the KVRI Board that we are concur with what we have right now.

Then she asked the KVRI Board members present (a quorum was present) do we have approval to create a letter to send in support of the scoping for this project in order to establish standing for KVRI on this project. It will say we have discussed with the Forest Service what scoping will look like, and look

forward to further development of the project and our involvement as a collaborative in the project development and we support going forward. Board agreed. Patty will draft a letter for signature.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Sherrie Cossairt

KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant