

Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
July 18, 2016 – 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

Board Members in Attendance:

Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair
Gary Aitken Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho & KVRI Co-chair
Adam Arthur, (Alt.) City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests
Kevin Knauth, (Alt.) Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Don Allenberg, Corporate Agriculture/Landowner
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry
Jim Cadnum- Landowner (Industrial)
Brad Corkill, Idaho Fish & Game Commissioner
Patty Perry, KVRI Facilitator & KTOI
Sherrie Cossairt, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Sue Ireland, KTOI, F&W Director
Chip Corsi, Idaho Department of Fish & Game
Justin Figgins, BCSCB
Ree Brannon, USDA-NRCS
Karen Cathey, USFWS
Dianna Ellis, Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge
Mitch Silvers, Senator Mike Crapo
Karen Roetter, Senator Mike Crapo
Judy Morbeck, Congressman Raul Labrador
Dave Gray, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests (alt.)
Kurt Pavlat, Bureau of Land Management
Russ Hegedus, Idaho Forest Group

Opening:

Co-Chair, Gary Aitken Jr., opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting; introductions followed. Last month's meeting draft notes were approved by consensus.

Presentations

Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program (KRHRP) Sue Ireland, KTOI

Sue Ireland began her presentation with a background of the Kootenai River Habitat Restoration project and followed with an update on this year's projects scheduled to begin this August.

The river restoration work is an important component helping restore conditions for aquatic species, vegetation, and natural processes. The Tribe has taken a lead on that in order to bring people together to work in collaboration to address those needs.

The following slide describes the KRHRP Master Plan.

- KRHRP Master Plan
1. Overarching framework for large-scale restoration
 2. Focus on dynamic river processes & ecosystem functions instead of prescriptive approach to single life stage of one species restoration actions
 3. Synthesis of available data & analysis
 4. Goals to address limiting factors related to:
 - Morphology
 - Riparian Vegetation
 - Aquatic Habitat
 - River Management & stewardship
 5. Toolbox of restoration treatments to address limiting factors

Using maps & pictures, Sue described the projects on the river that began in 2011. Last year's project was the first one visible to the community near the Kootenai River Bridge on Hwy 95.

They've had a lot of work going on in the past, lessons have been learned from the things they have implemented, and they can now monitor how these projects are performing.

Sue continued as she described the major types of treatments implemented.

- Major Types of Treatments Implemented 2011-2016**
1. Pool forming structures & pool creation or enhancement to encourage Kootenai sturgeon to migrate to upstream habitat & to provide holding habitat for sturgeon, burbot & other native fish
 2. In river & bank structures to create more diverse & complex habitats for sturgeon & other native fish
 3. Side channel reconnection & floodplain creation or enhancement to enhance the food web & provide habitat for juvenile Kootenai sturgeon & other native fish
 4. Riparian enhancement (& riparian buffer fencing) to enhance the food web & provide cover for native fish

The Bonners Ferry Islands project (2015-2016), started last year, includes:

- Bank grading & revegetation
- Island construction
- Pool creation
- Large wood bank structure
- The work was done from the North side of the river.

The Board viewed pictures showing excavation of the pools, island construction, temporary access roads, and island enhancements. Sue explained the large wood materials used for the projects and how they were configured to be used for structures to benefit hiding cover, fish habitat in the river, and to stabilize the river banks.

She showed the design drawing plans and the plantings scheme. Specific plant species used for different elevations on the islands and the river bank are planted to be supported by the types of flow regimes that are now part of the river. She informed us that the brown brush on the island and on the river bank is a new technique they are using to provide cover to protect the new planting in the center of those brushy groupings.

The Bonners Ferry Island & Straight Reach projects for 2016:

- This summer's activities will include: excavation of one deep pool where an existing small island is currently located, grading of the south riverbank, construction of new floodplain areas using materials excavated from the pool, and riparian planting. Two large spurs made of timber piles; riprap and larger wood will also be built from the south riverbank extending into the river.
- The second project, the Straight Reach project, is located just downstream from Highway 95 Bridge. Actions will include construction of two small rock spurs that extend from the riverbank into the river to help redirect flows. One spur will be built on the north bank and one on the south bank. In addition, using a barge, rocky materials will be placed over the current sand and clay riverbed to provide surfaces for sturgeon eggs to attach and spaces between the rocks where larval sturgeon can hide after they hatch.

(Sue's KRHRP presentation, maps & pictures are available online at www.kootenai.org)

Sue also reported on the success of the Kootenai Tribe's Public Sturgeon Release on May 20th 2016. The Tribal Council extended an invitation to the community to come release sturgeon at the Search & Rescue boat ramp. They received very positive feedback and good community turnout. As part of their cultural education, the Tribe always does a tribal youth release with sturgeon and burbot.

Gary Aitken Jr added that the Public Sturgeon Release is a good outreach program to the community.

Sandy Ashworth reported that the Boundary County Library belongs to the world's largest library cooperative; they share holdings with 74,000 libraries & 140 countries. They received a request from the National Library of the Czech Republic for a book about burbot. Realizing the opportunity to share information about the Hatchery, the Tribe, the community and the work we do here, Sandy contacted the Tribe for information to send along with the package.

This is only the second international request they have filled. They can only assume it is being used for research.

Sandy also shared that they have hired a young woman who was a youth intern with the library and now has her degree in wildlife biology. She will be doing science presentations on wildlife for the library and plans to put together presentations on sturgeon/burbot to show on a regular basis to the public. She will

be contacting Sue and Gary Jr. for more information to be used in her presentations to the youth and families of the community.

Documentary update:

Sue also added that the local documentary team (Kyle & Rob Productions) is just about finished with the video project the tribe hired them to do on the Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program. They will present information about the project and how they learned about it and what it takes to do it. According to Gary Aitken Jr., there should be a preview soon. They do have a 3 min. video trailer already on the internet.

Committee Updates:

Forestry Committee-Potential Westside Project

Patty updated everyone on the potential for a Westside project that connected private landowners and the Forest Service. The County hosted a meeting with representatives from the County Fire Safe program, Forest Service fuel specialists, NRCS, and Idaho Dept. of lands to discuss agency roles in land management and fire reductions practices and resources available.

She reminded everyone that the process will not happen overnight, but that beginning the discussion was the focus of the meeting. The Forest Service now has the landowner information to contact them for access in the future to begin analysis on Forest Service lands in the area.

Ree Brannon- Joint Chief's Project Introduction

Ree Brannon shared with the Board an introduction to the Joint Chief's Project. This is an Initiative started in 2014 in response to recognizing the need to get proactive about management of forest lands, and public and private lands as well.

The Chief of NRCS and the Chief of the Forest Service initiated this partnership to help target funding across the nation to address issues like the Westside slope, where there is the interface of Forest Service lands, public land and private land ownership. The objective of this partnership is to try to get a combination of these funds and practices out on the landscape to reduce the risk of wildfire and to deal with issues of forest health as well.

Ree and Jennifer Anderson from the Forest Service have been looking into this funding opportunity. It's very new and a little vague, but there might be a possibility for a 2017 proposal. Although there is no call for proposals as of yet, submission could be as early as Oct 30, 2016.

According to Ree, outreach by the county to the private landowners has already begun in Boundary County. It would help target and designate funds to this forest, to this project. It can be staggered; it's a maximum 3 year proposal. It could be that NRCS would work with private lands in that first year and then supply the Forest Service that information to use in the second and third year for treatment possibilities. Funding is available to other Federal Lands as well.

Patty added that if they move ahead with the proposal and if there is an opportunity for the collaborative to be of any help, we will.

Forestry Sub-Committee Update

Patty reported that the Forestry Sub-committee met on June 30, and was brought up to date on the Boulder Creek Project. The Forest Service hosted a field trip to the Boulder Creek Project area on July 14, for approximately 25 committee and community members to the Ghost town, the bridge, road washout, meadows and over Twenty mile.

They reviewed the TAPS analysis, (the Forest Service has until 2019 to meet Grizzly Bear access amendment), road closures to be considered and how can we meet Access Amendment guidelines while still retaining community access in the area. They also presented ideas for potential recreation in the area with trail improvement and meadow restoration.

There is no meeting date set as of now, but Kevin added that they will be scoping for Boulder this fall and will need to have a meeting before that.

TMDL Committee Update

Patty also reported that the TMDL Committee met on June 24 and included an update on where the temperature monitors are for this season. Bob Steed, IDEQ, was present, and the BURP (Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program) crew will be in the area this year and they will coordinate with us when they are here so we can let folks know their activities.

Comments/Meeting Announcements/Correspondence

News Release: Handout

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Selects Greg Hughes as New State Supervisor for Idaho Ecological Services Field Office dated July 15, 2016

Twenty Mile Field Tour

Senator Jim Risch's staff will be holding their annual retreat next week in BF. They have asked KVRI and the Forest Service to put together a field tour on July 28, of one of our CFLR projects, to help the staff understand what it takes to put together a project like that. There will be about 25 staff members and 4 spouses.

Since the Twenty-Mile Project was the first CFLR (Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration) project for KVRI, it was chosen for the tour. It included a 21mmbf timber sale and it was the first project that hadn't been litigated in 17 years in this district. The area shows units that were treated, units that are going to be treated, a burn area, an opportunity to talk about the importance of the Black Mountain communication towers, it addresses the Grizzly Bear Access amendment, and TMDL issues, including sediment reduction. Consequently it has a little bit of everything in this project for them to see.

OLD BUSINESS

Fair Booth

The fair booth planning is underway. We have ordered new sheets for backdrops for the booth and the banner updates are ordered. The theme this year is "Seasons of Scarecrows and Sunflowers". Set-up will be August 15, 5 pm, dinner to follow with Indian Tacos and Huckleberry Cobbler. A notice will be sent to remind everyone.

Mitch Silvers, Senator Mike Crapo

Mitch Silvers stated he has worked for the senator for almost 14 years. KVRI was the very first collaborative project he was ever involved in. He added that KVRI is such a great example of a community with such diverse interests coming together for the betterment of all that he shares KVRI's success with everyone he talks to.

The next meeting will be held at the Fairgrounds on August 15, 2016 at 5 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.
Sherrie Cossairt
KTOI/KVRI Admin. Assistant