

The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (hereafter referred to as KVRI) Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project (CFLRP) proposal is focused on the lower Kootenai River watershed of north Idaho. The area encompasses 800,000 acres in Boundary County, including more than 400,000 acres of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

The lower Kootenai River Watershed was chosen for a CFLRP proposal because the restoration needs were substantiated through Tribal, Federal and State assessments. These assessments identified this area as a high priority for restoration and provided the foundation for effective treatments that would enhance ecosystem function and resiliency. Based on this science, the proposal's strategy ensures balance between social and ecological needs such as watershed and ecosystem health, wildfire use and protection, recreation and public access and economic sustainability for local communities.

Together with its partners, the KVRI collaborative group has worked for over fifteen years on landscape strategy development addressing grizzly bear conservation, fisheries recovery, water quality, wetlands and riparian conservation, wildfire protection and forest restoration. This broad view of ecological health made KVRI one of the first collaborative groups in the nation to embrace an "all lands" approach and continue to play a crucial role in efforts towards achieving multiple-use land management goals.

The following treatment objectives were developed for this landscape restoration proposal:

- Reduce the risk of unwanted wildland fire on the landscape.
- Increase the resilience of the landscape to the effects of unwanted wildland fire in the event that such a fire occurs.
- Increase the resilience of the forested landscape to insect and disease epidemics.
- Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.
- Increase the number of watersheds that are in fully functional hydrologic condition.
- Provide high quality outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Reduce the impacts from invasive species.
- Provide the opportunity for the utilization of a variety of wood products, such as lumber, biomass and alternative energy sources.

Rationale for proposed changes

Several contributing factors have been identified which emphasize the importance of modifying the current proposal. Perhaps foremost being that the KVRI project was not selected for inclusion under CFLRP authority until fiscal year 2012. This necessitates truncating original accomplishment figures for all Performance Measures from ten to eight year lifecycle goals. Secondly, market conditions relative to biomass and the utilization of sub-merchantable forest products have not stabilized nor have developed significant capacity to provide an economically viable option for treatments. Helicopter logging opportunities have also been severely limited due to lack of availability of contractors and excessive operational costs associated with this system. Although areas may be analyzed during project planning for helicopter treatment, the sunk costs are currently too high to be financially feasible without negatively impacting other project deliverables.

After additional review of the 2011 Grizzly Bear Access Amendment and the number of road miles required to be decommissioned to meet the standards contained therein, it was discovered that the number submitted in the original proposal was largely overestimated. Upon further evaluation, 25 miles of road decommissioning over the course of the project would more clearly reflect what is needed for grizzly bear standards, as well as any additional aquatic restoration needs. Furthermore, continued input from the collaborative group has resulted in a need to maintain some system road templates in a partial decommissioned or stored condition rather than full obliteration, to provide for future management opportunities and recreational foot traffic use.

During the historic wildfire season of 2015 in Idaho, extensive fire suppression activities and post-fire salvage efforts on the IPNF created significant on-the-ground challenges related to personnel capacity, which further affected KVRI project timelines in 2016. This unexpected workload required most staff to focus on NEPA related to fire salvage and as a result, the NEPA for the Deer Creek project was delayed. This caused an additional ripple effect in associated target accomplishments and the ability to get future work through contracting.

The increased miles of trails maintained and reconstructed as part of CFLRP has resulted in greater volunteer opportunities, thereby increasing program capacity far more than expected. It has also provided many opportunities for local youth to be employed in the summer trails program. These youth and volunteers have and will continue to contribute an immense amount of work in support of improved trails and watersheds while building a foundation as future stewards of our public lands. This increased emphasis on restoration work on local trails has allowed the recreation program to diversify its workforce by partnering with outside non-profit organizations through programs like Bridging Cultures.

As outlined in the accompanying table, the most challenging targets to accomplish to-date are those tied to weather windows, such as prescribed burning and road maintenance. The most inconsistent targets are those tied to timber sales (timber volume harvested and the acres treated through timber sales). This work is tied to timber markets and the potential business models of the purchaser. Some additional observations include:

- Consider a performance measure (PM) for Timber Sale Acres Under Contract (not harvested)
- Consider Road Storage PM, and options for including unclassified 'U' roads stored/decommissioned
- Compare/contrast total NEPA project analysis acres to actual implementation acres.

Revised KVRI Lifetime Goals Table

Performance Measure	Code	<u>Number of units to be treated under original¹ proposal</u>	<u>Number of units to be treated under proposed revision</u>	Percentage of original proposed units to be treated under revised changes (revision units/original proposal units *100)	Additional rationale for the performance measure goal revision in addition to narrative above, if needed
Acres of forest vegetation established	FOR-VEG-EST	4,769	2,190	46%	Integrated target - includes acres of planting & natural regeneration. Acres reduced by 1,110 acres due to helicopter logging that is not currently viable, and an estimated additional 40% (1,469 ac) of natural regen target which will not be accomplished since gPAS credit is given when site prep burning is completed. Current average annual target 275ac/yr based upon capacity.
Acres of forest vegetation improved	FOR-VEG-IMP	19,455	3,700	19%	Integrated target – new target includes only pre-commercial thinning and pruning. Acres reduced by 17,605 since original proposal included helicopter

¹ These numbers have been normalized to reflect the 8 year lifecycle goals of KVRI. All lifetime goals can be found in the Excel Spreadsheet posted on the CFLR SharePoint Site here: <https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-fm-cflrp/Reporting%20Templates%20and%20Guidance/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2Fsites%2Ffs%2Dfm%2Dcflrp%2FReporting%20Templates%20and%20Guidance%2F10%20Year%20Goals&FolderCTID=0x012000363C0E5F6E819E4AB476D1889EEF4F16&View=%7B4B218F89%2D1744%2D46FF%2DB1B2%2DB7D54A81204D%7D>

Performance Measure	Code	<u>Number of units to be treated under original¹ proposal</u>	<u>Number of units to be treated under proposed revision</u>	Percentage of original proposed units to be treated under revised changes (revision units/original proposal units *100)	Additional rationale for the performance measure goal revision in addition to narrative above, if needed
					harvest, improvement harvest and prescribed fire habitat improvement acres which do not count toward this PM in gPAS reporting (new total 1,850 ac). Added another 1,850 ac for pruning which does count under this PM. (no funding reduction)
Manage noxious weeds and invasive plants	INVPLT-NXWD-FED-AC	2,960	N/c		
Highest priority acres treated for invasive terrestrial and aquatic species on NFS lands	INVSPE-TERR-FED-AC	n/a	--		
Acres of water or soil resources protected, maintained or improved to achieve desired watershed conditions.	S&W-RSRC-IMP	1,994	434	22%	Integrated target - includes riparian area improvement (74 acres) and road decom. Treated acres includes 15 ac/mi of road decom. Propose to drop 104 mi of road decom equates to a reduction of 1,560 acres under this PM (no funding reduction).
Acres of lake habitat	HBT-ENH-	n/a	--		

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restored or enhanced	LAK				
Miles of stream habitat restored or enhanced	HBT-ENH-STRM	42	N/c		
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored or enhanced	HBT-ENH-TERR	14,935	N/c		
Acres of rangeland vegetation improved	RG-VEG-IMP	888	N/c		
Miles of high clearance system roads receiving maintenance	RD-HC-MAIN	n/a	208		Not identified in original proposal. Included based upon current and projected targets.
Miles of passenger car system roads receiving maintenance	RD-PC-MAINT	252	240	95%	The original proposal identified only Passenger Car road maintenance. However a majority of project roads are High Clearance so both High Clearance and Passenger Car road maintenance miles were calculated together. This has now been adjusted to identify both PMs separately.
Miles of road decommissioned	RD-DECOM	128*	24	19%	NEPA planning efforts have identified limited opportunities for decommissioning, however more roads are planned for

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					<p>storage with approximately 42 miles expected over the life of the project. However, a Road Storage metric is not currently available to calculate this target.</p> <p>Additionally, non-system/Unclassified roads are frequently identified for decom which do contribute toward Hydro/fish targets, but do not count under this PM. To date approximately 3 miles/year of system road are decommissioned.</p>
Miles of passenger car system roads improved	RD-PC-IMP	22	80	363%	Not identified in the original proposal, which only included a number of culverts target of 22 each. This not reportable in PAS so we have been accomplishing it as Road Improvements.
Miles of high clearance system road improved	RD-HC-IMP	n/a	136		Not identified in original proposal. Included based upon current and projected targets.
Number of stream crossings constructed or	STRM-CROS-MTG-	19	N/c		

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reconstructed to provide for aquatic organism passage	STD				
Miles of system trail maintained to standard	TL-MAINT-STD	474	1,000	210%	Partnership grants through leveraged funding and volunteer groups have allowed additional capacity to be realized under CFLR. This efficiency provides a much larger return in terms of cost/unit than what was originally expected resulting in increased targets.
Miles of system trail improved to standard	TL-IMP-STD	37	270	730%	Same as above
Miles of property line marked/maintained to standard	LND-BL-MRK-MAINT	n/a	--		

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Acres of forestlands treated using timber sales	TMBR-SALES-TRT-AC	21,830	14,360	66%	<p>Integrated target – original proposal identified all commercial harvest acres including helicopter harvest & roadside salvage.</p> <p>Propose dropping all helicopter harvest and reduce by 1,110 acres. Also drop 6,360 acres of roadside salvage, since recoverable volume within proposed treatment areas is limited and/or not economically feasible due to market conditions. Acres are reported in gPAS when harvest is completed on the ground not when contract is sold. Therefore many accomplishments under this PM will be realized, but not until several years after CFLR authority potentially expires. (no funding reduction)</p>
Volume of timber harvested (CCF)	TMBR-VOL-HVST	n/a	150,000		Projected volume based upon current average annual harvest.
Volume of timber sold (CCF)	TMBR-VOL-SLD	190,565	N/c		

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Green tons from small diameter and low value trees removed from NFS lands and made available for bio-energy production	BIO-NRG	74,000	54,000	73%	Proposal anticipated a higher level of merchantable product utilization driven by emerging technologies and market capacity opportunities, which to date have not occurred.
Acres of hazardous fuels treated outside the wildland/urban interface (WUI) to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	FP-FUELS-NON-WUI	631	5,600	887%	Original proposal identified total prescribe burning acres of 6,316 ac, split 10% Non-WUI and 90% WUI burning. To date actual opportunities from completed NEPA have resulted in a 45% Non-WUI and 55% WUI split (this proposed change also reflects 4,000 ac of unplanned natural ignition accomplishment).

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Acres of wildland/urban interface (WUI) high priority hazardous fuels treated to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	FP-FUELS-WUI	20,855	16,400	78%	Integrated target - includes all commercial harvest acres & prescribed burn acres, except Brush Disposal. To date approximately 40% WUI fuels have been treated with BD burning which is not included under this measure. Removed 1,140 acres from this target and added TIMBR-BRSH-DISP as a PM. Also drop 1,110 acres of helicopter harvest that is not currently feasible. (no funding reduction)
Acres of WUI hazardous fuels treated using timber sale Brush Disposal prescribed burning.	TIMBR-BRSH-DISP	n/a	1,140	--	See rational above

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Acres mitigated	FP-FUELS-ALL-MIT-NFS	n/a	7,500		Qualified as the final fuels treatment activity in the unit (not including harvest or other intermediate activities) e.g., pile burning, underburning, site prep burning, etc. (Not included in the original proposal)
Acres of prescribed fire	--	n/a	4,300		Not included in the original proposal.
Number of priority acres treated annually for invasive species on Federal lands	SP-INVSpe-FED-AC	n/a	--		
Number of priority acres treated annually for native pests on Federal lands (native seed establishment)	SP- NATIVE -FED-AC	n/a	--		

*Members of the KVRI collaborative believe this number was an error, and that the original agreed upon calculation was closer to 25 miles of total road decommissioning.

Wildland Fire Use for Resource Benefit

Within KVRI specific opportunities to manage wildfires ‘for resource benefit’ have not yet materialized. Although, 3,976 acres of target for Wildfire – Natural Ignitions was accomplished mostly under the Parker Ridge fire of 2015. None of those acres were on fires managed for resource benefits, rather they all had a suppression strategy.

The 2015 IPNF forest plan includes objectives for managing natural, unplanned ignitions to meet resource objectives on at least 10% of ignitions. Thus, as CFLR continues, we anticipate increased opportunities in order to be consistent with land management goals. In particular, on primitive lands/recommended wilderness or backcountry, the use of fire serves as the primary tool for trending toward desired conditions and serving other important ecosystem functions. Therefore, we specifically anticipate increased opportunities to manage natural, unplanned ignitions in those areas in the future.

KVRI Project Funding Table

Project Name	FY18 CFLR Requested (Original)	FY18 CFLR Requested (Revision)	FY19 CFLR Requested (Original)	FY19 CFLR Requested (Revision)
KVRI	\$1,461,914	No Change	1,505,772	No Change

Ability to use additional funds if available

In the event that additional funding were available in FY2018 and FY2019, one particular project, the Meadow Creek AOP, has been identified as a long term critical need for aquatic habitat improvement, however estimated total project costs approach \$900,000 due to technical complexities of the structure replacement. The particular site is linked to a Union Pacific Railroad line servicing Canada which carries upwards of 10 freight trains per day. However, if the project was implemented it would improve approximately 10 miles of aquatic habitat by removing a currently impassible fish barrier and immediately return critical aquatic ecosystem function and spawning connectivity to an entire HUC 6 watershed. Matching funds, partnerships and grant funding opportunities are available if a large portion was funded under CFLR. However, due to the significant financial contribution requirements of this project commitment of resources has not yet been viable without severely impacting all other project deliverables.