

CITY OF BONNERS FERRY



Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative

WAC Committee Notes – July 10, 2012

Attendance:

Becca Lloyd, Y2Y
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commission
Kennon McClintock, The Nature Conservancy
Kevin Greenleaf, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Don Davis, Idaho Transportation Department
Marcel Huijser, Western Transport Institute
Patty Perry, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho/KVRI Facilitator
Mike Hartz, Idaho Transportation Department
Don Nystrom, Boundary Soil Conservation District
Robyn Miller, The Nature Conservancy
Scott Soultz, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Brett Lyndaker, U.S. F.S. – N. Zone
Tim Patton, Land Design
Dave Gray, KVRI Alternate Board member
Colleen Trese, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game
Ben Studer, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game – Boise, by Tele-conference

Introductions:

Patty Perry welcomed everyone; introductions followed. Ben Studer participated by conference call.

Marcel Huijser --- Western Transport Institute (WTI)/Montana State University (MSU):

Patty introduced Marcel Huijser, WTI/MSU. Becca Lloyd, Y2Y, put together a contract and helped bring WTI onboard with the current project.

Marcel, Research Ecologist with WTI/MSU, has worked in the Road Ecology Program in rural transportation since 1994. He provided a presentation of information and interpretations he put together based on the data records he received for the study area. He reminded the group that the area considered includes Hwy.95, Hwy. 1, and Hwy. 2. He also reviewed the tasks as outlined in the project scope of work. Marcel's presentation is available on the Kootenai Tribe's website, www.kootenai.org. Maps of the crash data were distributed.

Funding for the WTI contract was provided through a grant from American Wildlands/Y2Y. The Nature Conservancy has implementation funds available through a partner grant – these funds must be utilized by October of 2013.

The presentation was followed by group discussion around what possible methods might be considered to improve safety and reduce animal/vehicle collisions. Some methods could improve safety, but would not be considered appropriate to mitigate the effects of the current highway system for wildlife passage (i.e. roadside brushing/clearing-might be less effective than other options -30%, could increase highway barrier effect).

Marcel explained the philosophy he utilized in the presentation would support ecological processes such as animal movement ability, avoid disruption of patterns, and reduce collisions.

As the group discussed options – it became apparent that there is still much we don't know about animal crossings and movement patterns. It was acknowledged that how we complete more of the research picture is a challenge.

Specifically the potential of utilizing detection systems as a component of project implementation may provide useful data, if opening up the forest, similar to the work currently being done in the McArthur Lake area is considered. Improving visibility along the roadway has reduced collisions 20% -30% and as an added benefit reduces frost on the roadway. It is noted this could create a problem with connectivity.

Items to be added for Completion of the Project include:

- Overlay of land ownerships along areas of interest that might be identified for focused mitigation efforts.
- Provide a closer look at the already identified hot spots (2-3)
- A reminder that we need to bring public along by providing information on the project in order to implement actions; project depends highly on public support

Wrap Up & Next Meeting:

The group will meet again when Marcel has completed the project, no date was set.