

Meeting Record
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI), Hybrid Board Meeting
July 15, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Boundary County Annex Building

Board Members in Attendance:

Chuck Roady, Landowner/Industrial
Dave Gray, Social/Cultural/Historical
Erik Olson, Soil/Conservation
Gary Aitken Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI), KVRI Co-Chair
Kennon McClintock, Conservation/Environmentalist
Rick Alonzo, City of Bonners Ferry, KVRI Co-Chair
Sandy Ashworth, Social, Cultural, Historical
Tim Dougherty, Business/Industry
Tim Bertling, Boundary County, KVRI Co-Chair
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County

Agency/Others in Attendance:

Ben Robertson, Boundary County
Barb Moore, Idaho Fish & Game (IDFG)
Chris Bachman Conservation Director, Yaak Valley Forest
Carrie Ann Hewitt, Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)
Cassie Olson, Boundary Soil Conservation District (BSCD)
Dave Wattenbarger, Citizen
Dave Wenk, Boundary County
David Bobbitt, Idaho Fish & Game (IDFG)
Greg Hoffman, US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE)
Isabella Valdez, Idaho Department of Lands (IDL)
Jake Garringer, Governor Little's Office
Jonathan Luhnnow, IDL
Jeff Gilberg, Private Citizen
Jyl Wheaton Abraham, KTOI Tribal Member
Kevin Knauth, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Leon Basdekas, USACE
Jyl Wheaton, ITD
Marc Kilmer, Senator Jim Risch's Office
Norm Merz, Idaho Fish & Game (IDFG)
Robert Smathers, Idaho Farm Bureau
Sydney Koberstein, KTOI, KVRI Reporting Secretary
Theresa Wheat, KTOI, KVRI Facilitator
Tom Eckburg, IDL
William Barquin, KTOI

- **Welcome and introductions** were made to begin the meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- **Presentations:**

Jyl Wheaton-Abraham, KTOI Tribal Member, led a slide presentation. She gave an update on the McArthur Lake Archeology Investigation. The project aims to understand the cultural components of the area, particularly around McArthur Lake. Jyl and her team have identified four previously unknown archaeological sites in the area, dating back 75,000 years. The team's research questions include determining the length of human occupation in the area and understanding how much it was used over time. The team is using modern technology to answer these questions and gain a better understanding of the area's history and culture.

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Jyl discussed the archaeological excavations conducted between June and August 2021, which included the collection of soil samples and the analysis of artifacts. She also talked about the 2021 field research, ongoing analysis, and the training of Tribal Members as Cultural Resource Monitors in 2023. The team made several interesting discoveries, including a charcoal stain, a concrete object, and a lake depth of about 12 feet. Further analysis of these findings was planned with Jyl consulting her PhD professor, Dr. Lauren Davis, for expert opinion. The team also found artifacts, but their significance was unclear without context. Additionally, a second archaeological excavation at the site was carried out in collaboration with a professional archaeological company, revealing a concentration of artifacts and two human occupation components dating back 7,000 and 12,000 years. The team also discovered a rare feature providing evidence of ancient Antarctica. Jyl touched on the topic of charcoal and its use, as well as the changes in the environment over time.

Carrie Ann Hewitt, ITD, provided an update on McArthur Lake Project. She highlighted the underpass for animal crossing, straightening out the horizontal curve of the road, and decreasing the vertical curve (or the “sag”) of the roadway. Paving is expected to take place towards the end of the month and the project will be complete this fall.

Dave Wenk, Boundary County, discussed the issue of noxious weeds, which pose a significant threat to agriculture and the economy. He outlined the complexities of the County control and supervision in the context of land management, including the role of County Commissioners. Dave emphasized the need for early detection, rapid response, and control measures and highlighted the dedicated funds for various purposes.

He also discussed the challenges and strategies related to the importance of early detection and rapid response to prevent the spread of invasive species. Dave mentioned the need for education and resources to help landowners manage their properties. He further explained the three categories of land management agreement, control, and containment, each with different requirements.

Tom Eckberg, IDL, led the discussion on Forest Health and Wood Borer Situation in Boundary County. Tom gave a slide presentation covering a variety of topics including educational resources. There was also a discussion about the 2023 annual aerial detection survey, which shows last year’s insect and disease activity on state, private, federal and Tribal lands in Boundary County. (The 2024 aerial detection survey will take place weather and smoke permitting later this summer). Additionally, Tom led a conversation on environmental issues and forestry management including the importance of thinning, the significance of root competition, and the challenges posed by insects and disease. The discussion also touched on how woodpeckers indicate the presence of insects such as wood borers in trees, and the effect of drought on forest service operations.

Cassie Olson, BSCD, discussed the Ash Street Watercraft Inspection Station. She talked about the station opening on June 25, and stated that they have about 50 boats per day being inspected. Cassie reported on the team’s increased productivity and addressed several issues including concerns about a new setup location. She also discussed station attendance policies, plans for releasing more information to the public, and that the Inspection Station has plans of adding a new hot wash component to the station.

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Legislative Updates

Marc Kilmer, Senator Jim Risch's Office, provided an update on the Columbia Preliminary Agreement on the Columbia River Treaty.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2024

Upcoming Meetings for Sub-Committees:

Grizzly Bear Sub-committee: October 24

Forestry Sub-committee: October 10

TMDL Sub-committee: October 23

Meeting was called at 7:50 p.m.

Meeting Record prepared by Sydney Koberstein