

**Draft Meeting Record**  
**Kootenai valley Resource Initiative (KVRI) Hybrid Board Meeting**  
**November 18, 2024**  
**Boundary County Annex Building**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Dave Bobbitt, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG)  
Dave Gray, Social/Cultural/Historical  
Ed Atkins, Corp. Agriculture/Landowner  
Erik Olson, Boundary Soil Conservation District (BSCD)  
Kevin Knauth, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)  
Lee Colson, Social/Cultural/Historical  
Remington Daniels, Business/Industry  
Rick Alonzo, City of Bonners Ferry / KVRI Co-Chair  
Tim Bertling, Boundary County / KVRI Co-Chair  
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County / KVRI Co-Chair

**Others in Attendance:**

Ben Robertson, Boundary County  
Caleb Davis, Congressman Russ Fulcher's Office  
Carson Watkins, IDFG  
Cassie Olson, BSCD  
Cathy Gidley, North Idaho Project Manager  
Chris Bachman, Conservation Director of Yaak Valley Forest Council  
Cole Morrison, Idaho Department of Agriculture (ISDA)  
David Dewberry, Citizen  
Jada Fairchild, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) & KVRI Administrative Assistant  
John O'Conner, Citizen  
Lester Pinkerton, Boundary County  
McKay Curriden, ISDA  
Megan Parnell, Idaho Farm Bureau  
Olivia Drake, County Assessor  
Paul Cvitanich, Idaho Department of Agriculture  
Theresa Wheat, KTOI & KVRI Facilitator

- **Welcome and Introductions** were made and the meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

- **Presentations:**

**Cassie Olson**, Boundary County Soil Conservation District, gave an overview of the 2024 Bonners Ferry watercraft inspection station. The watercraft inspection at this new location began on June 25, 2024 and ended on September 30, 2024 with 10 employees. They rented a shed from a local shed center and had no power or water all season. They were able to install a driveway which helped access for vehicles and trailers. The location of the watercraft inspection station was not ideal, and they would look to change locations, if possible, but they still made outstanding progress with what they had to work with.

Out of the total 156,000 boat checks in Idaho, Boundary County had almost 5,000 inspections. They received helpful information from these inspections, including 25% of their inspections that came from Kootenai River launches and almost 300 watercraft inspections each from Canada and Montana. They found six infested watercrafts and preformed five hot washes, none with live mussels. Over 32 samples of plankton were collected from Brush, Dawson, Smith, Robinson and McArthur Lakes as well as the surrounding rivers and creeks.

Throughout the season they had a few news releases and also had a booth at the County's Fair where the community could ask questions and get clarification. Cassie and her team received lots of feedback that they are working on correcting for next water season. The location was not ideal and they missed about half of the watercraft traffic due to poor signage and confusing directions. They unfortunately

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didn't have law enforcement set up and the few officers who gave their time weren't able to help direct everyone to the boat checking station. They do hope to change the location to further north of the current boat checking station for next year. They plan on improving their signage as well as making improvements from feedback they received.

**McKay Curriden and Cole Morrison**, Idaho State Department of Agriculture's Aquatic/Invasive Species group, gave an overview on what is happening statewide with invasive species in Idaho's water. Their program was established in 2008 under the Idaho Invasive Act, which provided a legal authority basis for the inspections. However, a boat or other watercraft can only be decontaminated on a consent basis unless an adult mussel is found. McKay and his team manage and prevent the spread of invasive species within Idaho, which means every invasive species that is listed on the Idaho State invasive species list. Their current biggest concern is handling the infestation of the primary species known as quagga mussels and zebra mussels.

The primary and most public method used to help triangulate these invasive species are watercraft checks. There are currently 22 watercraft checks posted all around Idaho. As of November 4, 2024, they inspected 150,000 watercrafts at the inspection stations through-out the state. Of those watercraft checks, 6,000 came from contaminated water, and they were able to perform 8,000 watercraft decontamination processes throughout Idaho.

Another part of their program is through intensive monitoring throughout the state to detect any invasive species. Once they have been detected, treatment can then begin, as performed in the Snake River. In 2023, when the mussels were initially detected in the Snake River, sampling efforts were put into overdrive. There have been significantly more boats inspected in 2024 then there were in 2023 as well as more sampling efforts. When the mussels were discovered in 2023, a treatment was carried out in the Snake River in an attempt to eradicate all of them. Mussels were again discovered around the same time in August, 2024. Another 200-hour treatment plan was initiated, making this the second attempt to remove to mussels from the Snake River.

In September, 2024, more positive samples were taken from the Snake River, and were confirmed as quagga mussels per DNA testing. Community education was initiated throughout the ISDA staff, Governor's office and local stakeholders. Towards the end of September, the delimit surveys began throughout the Snake River to find and localize the spread of the infestation so they could contain the treatment where it was most needed. The 2024 post treatment monitoring has shown no evidence of viable mussels. The treatment plans have proven to be highly effective and they are noticing less and less evidence of the mussels in the Snake River. This indicates that if treatment is continued, eventually they will be eradicated.

There is an immediate follow-up potash treatment plan to target the potholes in the region that receive intermittent flow and were not able to be properly treated. They will use a potash fertilizer to put into the potholes which will kill any mussels that may be remaining in them. Last year they were unable to deploy eDNA due to not having a contract in place, but this year they we able to collect eDNA off the ground. They plan on collecting 50 – 100 samples of eDNA per region next year. They are in early plans of formulating a contact with the lab to get the work that needs to be done with the samples.

**Kevin Knauth**, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), gave updates on the successful work the Forest Service has done this year. There are a few current projects that are almost complete, Katkee Fuels Project is a project they are currently trying to complete, but will not be finished until 2025. USFS is formulating a biological assessment where they interact with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to discuss the

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species in the Katkee project area. The Assessment will be sent on December 15, 2024 where the consultation process will begin. The draft environmental assessment will be open for public comment in January, 2025, when the public will have a 30-day period to leave any comments and reviews. The decision of the first sale is expected to come out early May, 2025 and the first sale will happen around October, 2025.

The Young Stand Improvement Project is another on-going project that recently had a decision memo signed which allows fuels reduction work and pre-commercial thinning work on all three ranger districts, Priest River, Sandpoint, and Bonners Ferry. The first acres of this project will be treated with the Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscape because this is land that Katkee Fuels Project is in.

The Over Snow Vehicle planning is currently paused, the implementation was planned to be in place for this snowmobile season but the Forest Service must reinstate consultation with USFWS to cover wolverine. Wolverine was listed after the initial decision, so they had to consult again with USFWS. The Notice of Intent (NOI) on Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species has been filed which usually proceeds litigation. The notices that come out 60 days prior to any litigation action are for grizzly bear, lynx and wolverine.

In 2024, 193 miles of road work has been accomplished, with some roads being done multiple times depending on the heavy usage. There was 27 miles of complete reconstruction, 131 miles of grading, and the rest on brushing. To accomplish all of this road work, \$822,000 was spent and of that, \$743,000 came from the Good Neighbor Authority who contract out the work with USFS and have oversight. Also contributing was Timber Sale projects in the amount of \$68,000 and \$12,000 was from USFS contracting. There is a list of all the road work completed in 2024 which can be found at [North Idaho Rx Fire](#).

USFS restored 1.3 miles of Aquatic Organism Passages at Black Creek and Cabin Creek. This was achieved by preventing any blockage from undersized culverts that prevent fish from moving upstream beyond the culvert. This was completed as a stewardship item from the Timbuckstew sale. When a contractor bids on the timber, they are essentially bidding for this service work. Thanks to this stewardship, the Forest Service was able to put \$133,000 worth of work into preventing these fish blockages. They were able to raise the road and crown it at Black Creek to prevent water from running into the stream from the road. A very similar operation took place at Cabin Creek and pictures of the completed work can also be viewed using the link above.

Due to the calm fire season, USFS was able to accomplish a significant amount of prescribed burnings throughout Northern Idaho. They were able to perform landscape burning this year, burning 860 acres in Deer Creek in the spring and 1,440 acres in Boulder Creek throughout the year. They burned 10 units for 138 acres of Slash burning in the spring and only one unit for 42 acres in the fall. As for pile burning, they were able to successfully burn 700 acres of landings and excavator piles in the fall.

There were several timber sales that occurred in 2024, camps known as Robin Hood, Camp Stew, and Hellroaring were all sales that have activity. Camp Stew and Hellroaring are almost completed with logging portions, Robin Hood is still considered currently active. Boulder Creek had four different kind of timber sales this year, all at varying stages of completion. Boulder Creek currently has an abundance of activity. With a portion of Boulder Creek being located in the Katkee Fuels, Boulder Creek also has a very active Bear Management Unit (BMU). All of this activity requires a lot of coordination and communication between USFS, the purchaser, and the loggers. The Westside Restoration Project is being

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logged by Foust this year during the low snow levels. His team went and did a lot of slash piling early this fall and will continue their work this winter. The next sale offering out of the West Side Restoration project will be Caribou Snow and is scheduled for the summer, 2025.

There was a lot of trail work completed this year and USFS accomplished a total of almost 400 miles. The trail crew cleared 353 miles of trail work in the Bonners District, 17 miles of road reconstruction, 7 miles of new construction on the Kootenai Point Trail and 13 miles of new trails created from Cooks Pass to Westside Road.

USFS have created three raft access sites along the Moyie River, located at Copper Creek Campground, Moyie Crossing and Meadow Creek Campground. They created a bigger parking lot at Meadow Creek as well a loop to drop off watercraft. USFS extended the Moyie Crossing parking and created a launch for the rafts. Next year their plan is to build a raft slide to make access much easier. There is new parking at Copper Creek, but parking is still limited because the Forest Service doesn't own much land there, but they were able to expand parking as much as they could. This work was also done through the Good Neighbor Authority so the Idaho Department of Land contracted out all of the work done. They had budgeted for all three works sites to be set at \$150,000 but only used about \$100,000 so they were also able to do some extra work on Brush Lake Road and two other locations.

**Legislative Updates:**

**Kevin Knauth**, USFS, explained that with his retirement, there are several job openings around North Idaho for a permanent position.

**Carson Watkins**, IDFG, informed the group that with hunting season open, they have received 600 CWD samples, most are still pending for results. They have found only two new CWD positives located at Smith Lake and the Copeland area, but samples came from mature bucks. They have found that the current CWD management zone is currently working and correctly sized.

**Upcoming Sub-Committee Meetings**

Grizzly Bear – Spring, 2025

TMDL – October 15, 2025

WAC – TBD

**Next Meeting**, scheduled for January 13, 2025 at 6 p.m. located at the Boundary County Annex Building.

Meeting was called at 7:27 p.m.

Meeting Record by Jada Fairchild