

Draft Meeting Record
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI), Hybrid Board Meeting
September 16, 2024 6:00 p.m.
Boundary County Annex Building

Board Members in Attendance:

Chuck Roady, Landowner/ Industrial
Dave Bobbitt, Idaho Fish and Game Commission
Ed Atkins Jr, Corporate Agriculture/ Landowner
Erik Olson, Soil Conservation/ Ag Landowner
Gary Atkin Jr, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)
Kennon McClintock, Conservationist/ Environmentalist
Kevin Knauth, U.S. Forest Service
Sandy Ashworth, Social/ Cultural/ Historical
Tim Dougherty, Business/ Industry
Wally Cossairt, Boundary County Commissioner

Agency/ Others in Attendance:

Adam Isaac, Boundary County
Austin Terrell, Idaho Office of Species Conservation (OSC)
Barb Moore, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG)
Brandon Diller, (KTOI)
Brittany Morlin, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Caleb Davis, US Rep Fulcher's Office
Carson Watkins, (IDFG)
Dave Gray, Citizen
Eddie Whitcomb, USFWS
Eric Greenwell, Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y)
Jada Fairchild, KTOI & KVRI
Jeremy Sheffield, IDFG
Jim Woodward, Citizen
Kelly Moroney, USFWS
Marc Kilmer, Senator Risch's Office
Michelle Richman, Department of Water Resources (IDWR)
Morgan Pfander, IDFG
Norm Merz, IDFG
Remington Daniels, IDFG
Sean Wilson, (IDFG)
Shelby Therrian, KTOI
Shannon Ehlers, Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge (KNWR)
Theresa Wheat, KTOI & KVRI
Todd Higen, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

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

Gary Aitken, KVRI Co-Chair, **introduced** the new KVRI Alternate Board members recently approved and replaced the two vacancies. Genny Hoyle for Conservationist/Environmentalist and Remington Daniels for Business Industry. Gary thanked the Alternates for agreeing to serve.

Brittany Morlin, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), administers the Partners for Fish & Wildlife (PFW) program in northern Idaho by providing technical and financial assistance to private landowners interested in improving the fish and wildlife habitat. Brittany presented on the Cow Creek Riparian Improvement Project, highlighting the native trees and shrubs that were planted to increase habitat cover, structure, and diversity that future phases can tie into.

Draft Meeting Record
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI), Hybrid Board Meeting
September 16, 2024 6:00 p.m.
Boundary County Annex Building

This initial phase was funded through a WQPA grant provided by the Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission and sponsored by the Boundary Soil Conservation District. Technical assistance and in-kind cost share were provided by the PFW program and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These entities commonly work together with private landowners to fund and get projects like this one up and running. The current overall cost of this project is about \$35,000 with \$8,700 of that coming from partner contributions to fulfill the landowner's 25% cost share.

Austin Terrell, Idaho Office of Species Conservation (OSC), discussed the upcoming Bear Fair on September 28, 2024 at the Boundary County Fairgrounds from 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm. Those attending the Fair may partake of, hamburgers or hotdogs, free of charge. This is on a first-come basis and last year the food supply was exhausted in the first 25 minutes. The Bear Fair includes exchanging any outdated or used cans of bear spray for a new can. There will be information booths about bears, how they live, and how to keep safe in bear country. Anyone who attends the bear spray training will receive a free can of bear spray while supplies last.

There are a variety of events that will take place including bear spray training, an electric fencing workshop, apple press for cider making and more.

Carson Watkins, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG), explained what Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is and how the community can assist with the long-term management. CWD is a protein-based infection that can only affect deer, moose, and elk. It is an always fatal disease that can be spread by direct animal to animal contact and contact with infectious agent in the environment. It is not an acute disease, and it can take up to 24 months before animals display clinical symptoms appear physically, and can last up to decades in some environments.

While CWD cannot affect humans, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend consuming infected meat. IDFG tests for CWD in the lymph nodes of deer. The IDFG had about 185 samples to test for CWD and so far, two positives were detected from the surveillance hunt, both being within a one-mile radius of where the first infected deer was located. All of the data about these samples will be released to the public sometime next week.

The IDFG plans to keep the community engaged as management of the disease progresses. The IDFG had a three-week period where the community was given surveillance tags to help collect samples. Three hundred tags were sold and the IDFG was expecting about a 40% success rate. The surveillance hunt tags were accompanied by landowner kill authorizations to collect samples from private lands. The goal was to collect up to 200 samples from deer within a 120 square mile area.

In August of 2024, there was a positive CWD test in a white-tailed doe in Boundary County. Current priorities are to minimize spread of CWD over the state, and where CWD cases appear to keep the prevalence low. Because it is chronic, CWD can take decades to manifest in a population-level decline in a deer population.

Draft Meeting Record
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI), Hybrid Board Meeting
September 16, 2024 6:00 p.m.
Boundary County Annex Building

Legislative Updates

Carson Watkins, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) stated that they will be releasing about 594 pheasants by the end of December plus about 60 additional pheasants for each youth hunt (October 5, 2024)

Shannon Ehlers, Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge (KNWR) explained the Refuge Reconnection Project is beginning on October 1, 2024 from 5:00 7:00 pm. They are partnered with Bonneville Power to reconnect the Kootenai River to the flood plain at the Wildlife Refuge.

Next Meeting: The next KVRI meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2024

Upcoming Meetings for Sub-Committees:

Grizzly Bear Sub-Committee: Cancelled for October 24, 2024

Forestry Sub-Committee: November 14, 2024

TMDL Sub-Committee: October 23, 2024

Meeting was called at 7:54 pm

Meeting Record prepared by Jada Fairchild