

Meeting Notes  
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative  
February 10, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.  
Board Meeting – University of Idaho Extension Office

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Angela Cooper, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Vice-Chair & (Alt.) KVRI Co-chair  
Wally Cossairt, (Alt.) Boundary County Commissioner & KVRI Co-chair  
Dick Staples, Mayor, City of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-chair  
Chip Corsi, Idaho Fish & Game  
Bob Blanford, Business/Industry  
Sandy Ashworth, Social/Cultural/Historical Interests  
Kevin Knauth, (Alt.) Bonners Ferry Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)  
Dave Wattenbarger, Soil Conservation/Landowner  
Don Allenberg, (Alt.) Corporate Agriculture/Landowner  
Kennon McClintock, Conservationist/Environmentalist  
Jim Cadnum, Landowner/Industrial  
Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)  
Karen Schumacher, Recording Secretary KVRI & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

**Agency/Others in Attendance:**

Jonathan Luhnnow, Idaho Dept. of Lands  
Kathleen Trever, Idaho Attorney General's Office  
Norm Merz, Idaho Fish and Game  
Jane Jacoby, Yaak Valley Forest Council  
Marty Martinez, General Public  
Alice Hanley, USFWS – Kootenai Wildlife Refuge  
Shannon Ehlers, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Kurt Pavlat, Bureau of Land Management  
Brandon Glaza, U.S. Forest Service  
Karen Roetter, Senator Mike Crapo's Office  
Marc Kilmer, Representative Russ Fulcher's Office  
Chris Hughes, General Public  
Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Jason Eulberg, General Public

**Opening:** Rhonda Vogl opened the meeting at 7:10p.m. Minutes from January were passed with the agreement to correct the spelling of a word that Bob Blanford mentioned was incorrect. Introductions were made

**Presentations:** *Brandon Glaza* presented on the 100-year climate review using data gathered from the Priest River Experimental Forest. This was one of the first places for predictive fire behavior models. The weather station has been in the same spot since 1916. This information is unique in that the data has been consistently gathered from the same place for 100 years and represents a significant opportunity to trend weather. Brandon's presentation is available on the Kootenai Tribe website, [http://www.kootenai.org/documents/KVRIclimatepresentationofPREFdata102419\\_001.pdf](http://www.kootenai.org/documents/KVRIclimatepresentationofPREFdata102419_001.pdf) .

The information shared included:

1. Daily minimum temperatures have increased 2.8 degrees F over the 100 years
2. No significant change in precipitation in the last 100 years but it is more in the form of rain
  - a. New Precipitation Record established January 2020 with 8.70" which beat the previous record of 8.38" in 1954.
3. March 1<sup>st</sup> is typically the peak of snowpack.
  - a. Snow is collected at the same place, at the same time with a scale that is calibrated to convert to liquid resulting in the water content value
  - b. The trend shows a 1/10" decline per year in water content in snowpack
4. The timing of peak flow has changed
  - a. Was May and is now April

Anyone may contact Brandon for copies of publications referenced at: [brandon.glaza@usda.gov](mailto:brandon.glaza@usda.gov)

The Experimental Forest photographs of interest and historical significance can be viewed at: [www.lib.uidaho.edu/digital/expforest/](http://www.lib.uidaho.edu/digital/expforest/)

**Kathleen Trever** of Idaho's Attorney General's Office, attorney for The Department of Fish and Game, was introduced and presented information on the Grizzly bear status review and the upcoming recovery plan revision.

Kathleen noted that in Idaho the Governor's office of species conservation has the primary leadership role for anything that is listed as an endangered species. Idaho Fish and Game provides the technical information and Kathleen's office provides information on the legal developments.

The current developments she shared are:

- The Greater Yellowstone Grizzly population has been delisted twice but it is back on the Endangered Species list by court order. There is an appeal pending and within the next year there should be a court decision.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife is required to review the status of listed species every 5 years.
- The last comment period for Grizzly was done in 2011, they expect this one to be complete no later than March, 2021.
- Comments related to Grizzly Bear are due to Fish and Wildlife Service by 3/16/2020. The Idaho Office of Species Conservation will submit coordinated comments for the state.

Types of information used for decision making is scientific and commercial data.

The Service is asking for information that affect the status:

- Species biology
- Habitat conditions

- Conservation measures
- Five types of potential threats
  - Present/threatened negative impacts to habitat/range
  - Over-utilization
  - Disease/predation
  - Inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms
  - Other factors
- Other new information

The Grizzly Bear was protected in 1968 by the Federal Endangered Species Preservation Act. It was again listed in 1975 under the Endangered Species act for bears in the lower 48 states.

In northern Idaho Fish and Game will be looking at bears in the 3 identified recovery areas: Selkirk, Cabinet/Yaak and, in Montana, the Northern Continental Divide. This is an opportunity to consider if this is still a sensible way to divide up these areas. In 1975, it was easier to list all Grizzly in the lower 48, but it's fair to say Florida isn't going to be getting Grizzly Bears anytime soon. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission has taken the position that it is time for all Grizzly bears in Idaho to be delisted because of population health and all the measures that are in place. Now we can again look at what management units may be appropriate based on numbers of bears in the true geographical location and suitable bear habitat. It's fair to look at how the bears in North Idaho and Montana relate to bear populations in Canada. States are not even in distribution and it is time for recovery efforts to have measures in places that are relevant.

It's appropriate for the government to consider conservation measures when reviewing the grizzly bear's status, including:

- Measures that support Movement of the Bears
  - Underpasses/overpasses and Conservation Easements
- Public Awareness and Sanitation, and other Measures that avoid/reduce conflicts
- Regulatory Mechanisms in place
  - Such as the Fish and Game Commission classification of grizzly bear as a protected animal
    - Designated as Trophy/Big Game Species
      - This Designation places a higher value and consequence for illegal killing or possession of grizzly bears.

**Committee Updates:**

Forestry Subcommittee: Kevin Knauth provided update on the Westside Restoration Project. Comments on the Scoping Notice are complete as of the end of January. There were no real surprises. They received nine or ten comments from sources that they expected would comment. (Conservation groups, e.g.) The next step is to have a Forestry meeting with KVRI and then go through the comments to firm up proposed actions. They are still expecting this to be final by the first quarter of 2021 (Oct or Nov.).

Grizzly Bear Subcommittee Rhonda Vogl provided information on the next meeting to be held on February 20<sup>th</sup> at 5pm at the Kootenai Tribe Headquarters. The later time was made in an attempt to include those who are unable to attend daytime meetings. The sole purpose of the meeting is to engage the public in the creation of a citizen's-based phone tree. The desired process for when and how interested parties are notified of a bear in their area will be discussed. KVRI has models that will be shared and wants to help but recognizes the importance of allowing the citizens to own and handle the process as they decide is best. It is hoped that the continued movement towards living safely with bears can help in the delisting. It was agreed that the issues our community faces with human/bear conflicts involve both black bear and grizzly.

**Old /New Business:** Rhonda referred to a letter drafted to the Forest Service in support of the Westside Restoration Process which will provide KVRI a standing in the NEPA process. The board has received a copy of this letter via email. Consensus was reached for this letter and Dick Staples signed. Dan Dinning has already signed and the letter will be presented to the tribal council tomorrow to ensure third co-chair signature.

**Correspondence:** Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership workshop registration is still open. The meeting will be at the Coeur D'Alene Resort, April 14 and 15. This year will focus on shared stewardship and the new CFLR funding for the joint collaborative effort with KVRI, Shoshone and Benewah. Bob Steed and Dave Wattenbarger have been asked to speak on the TMDL citizen's water monitoring that they have been involved with for over 10 years.

#### **Updates from Representatives:**

Karen Roetter of Senator Crapo's office had no update.

Marc Kilmer of Congressman Fulcher's office indicated it is his third day on the job and is looking forward to learning more about our efforts and how the Congressman may be of help.

#### **Other Updates:**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Christy Johnson-Hughes. Acting State Supervisor Chris Swanson is going to Trilateral conference (US, Canada and Mexico). Chris Swanson will be doing a presentation on working with Canada to put together recovery action items for Caribou. She hopes to have more information when she does a presentation for KVRI in the near future.

Kootenai Wildlife Refuge Alice Hanley gave input regarding the recent approval to fill the refuge management vacancy. She indicated that things do move slowly but hopes to have someone in by next year.

Idaho Fish and Game Idaho Fish and Game Chip Corsi shared that the Fish and Game Commission extended the Panhandle fall turkey season through January.

In process also is a public comment period for a proposal to expand wolf hunting and trapping state wide.

They are very busy putting GPS collars on elk, deer, moose, lions and will be on wolves and bear. This work is part of a statewide study including key areas Units 1 and 6. The goal is to better understand predator / prey relationships as well as population dynamics for big game species. They will also be conducting goat populations census in Unit 1 later this Spring.

Jim Cadnum asked about the possible updates for McArthur Lake Curve. Angela Cooper said she believed the project is beginning construction in 2021 and finishing in 2022.

Idaho Department of Lands Jonathan Luhnnow provided an update on the logging on Peterson Hill.

**Next Meeting will be March 16th, 2020. Meeting adjourned at 8:30p.m.**

Minutes taken by Karen Schumacher, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho