

## Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition



### **Quarterly Board Meeting Thursday, December 10, 2020 6:00 – 8:00 P.M. MT Zoom Video Conference**

#### **Participants**

Doug Ferrell	Chad Bensen, Kootenai National Forest Supervisor
Allie Maloney	Juli Thurston
Tim Dougherty	Jerry Wandler
Paul McKenzie	Dawain Burgess
Ed Levert	Bob Castaneda
Mike Petersen	Tom Wood
Shawn Morgan	Jodi Turk, DNRC
Angelo Alderete	Michael Feiger, Cabinet District Ranger,
Mark Peck, Lincoln County Commissioner	Jennifer Nelson, Lincoln Co Forester
Steve Kimball, Montana DNRC	Jeff Lau, Forest Service/ Idaho Department Lands
Tye Sundt, Weyerhaeuser	Ara Andrea, Idaho Department Lands
Tim Love, Montana Forest Collaborative Network	Caroline Mellor, KFSC Coordinator/Facilitator

#### **Meeting Objectives:**

- To learn from and share information with the Kootenai National Forest.
- To provide information to KFSC members on Shared Stewardship.
- To discuss project-level work and upcoming opportunities for KFSC involvement.
- To share KFSC Committee updates and collaborate between committees.

#### **Meeting Summary**

##### **Welcome and Introductions**

Facilitator Caroline Mellor provided a Zoom orientation and reviewed the meeting purpose and agenda. Co-Chairs Doug Ferrell and Tim Dougherty reviewed the positive discussion on recent call with the Collaboration Cadre and introduced new members and Board guests.

## Kootenai National Forest Updates

Chad Benson, Kootenai National Forest, provided the following updates from the KNF. He shared about the opportunities likely coming to fruition over the next few months and year, including related to Shared Stewardship, the Great American Outdoors Act, the Montana Forest Action Plan, and the Joint Chiefs proposal. Benson stated that the Joint Chiefs proposal is now submitted and that he is optimistic for a successful proposal.

Benson also discussed a new RFP (request for proposals) from the Governor's office to work across Montana Forest Action Plan landscapes, with and all lands approach of private, state and federal lands. The goal of the RFP is to move the needle on restoration activities near the WUI (wilderness urban interface).

### Discussion and Question and Answer:

- Benson clarified the Forest Service role related to Shared Stewardship and Joint Chiefs. He explained that Joint Chiefs is a tool for the Forest Service and Department of Agricultural sister agency NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service, which provides technical assistance to farmers and other private landowners and managers) to cohesively partner together. Benson elaborated that Shared Stewardship GNA (Good Neighbor Authority) and Joint Chiefs are all tools and land managers must decide which items are best addressed through each tool.
  - Benson added that Joint Chiefs project must be NEPA ready (i.e. environmental review completed).
  - The Joint Chiefs proposal has involved expert work, including fire risk analysis, current conditions assessments, desired future conditions. This process was a huge exercise conducted in and around Libby, with KFSC represented by Ed Levert.
- Benson shared that if all these projects are funded, there will be concerns to adequately staff the work. Benson has reached out to Counties and the DNRC to explore potential future partnering options. KFSC representatives from the Montana Wilderness Association and Friends of Scotchman Peaks shared potential interest to help sponsor summer needs and staff.

## Shared Stewardship

Jeff Lau, Forest Service/ Idaho Department Lands (IDL) and Ara Andrea, Idaho Department Lands presented on the implementation of Shared Stewardship partnerships in Idaho, as a case study for KFSC and the Kootenai NF. They highlighted:

- Purposes of the partnerships – Comparison to of managed vs unmanaged stands after a fire, and the forest health implications; managed stands fare much better post fire.
- The Idaho Shared Stewardship program has emphasized sharing resources to support necessary staffing. Positions are designated as:
  - Full-Time IDL Idaho Statewide Shared Stewardship Coordinator
  - Two Full-Time USFS “Shared Positions” Working as Shared Stewardship Coordinators in North and South Priority Landscapes
  - Two Full-Time IDL Shared Stewardship/GNA Foresters
- Targeted Shared Stewardship Support
  - State General Fund: \$250,000/year

Information on the KFSC can be found at [Kootenaifuture.org](http://Kootenaifuture.org)

- USFS State & Private Forestry Grant Funds: \$800,000 to date
- Idaho NRCS Funds to Support Shared Stewardship Positions: \$125,000/year
- Collaborative Work
  - Identify cross-boundary solutions with Focal Areas
  - Invest and prioritize resources
  - Develop joint outreach & communication opportunities
- Process
  - *Recognition that no one entity working independently can make the changes needed within the landscape*
  - 1. Communicate
  - 2. Collaborate
  - 3. Define/Identify Common Land Management Objective(s)
  - 4. Share
  - 5. Plan
  - 6. Implement
- Entities included in northern priority area: Idaho Panhandle National Forest, Idaho Department of Lands, interested private landowners, Counties, NRCR areas of interest
- Presenters emphasized the differences of working under Shared Stewardship as:
  - Identifying Cross Boundary Solutions& Investing and Prioritizing Resources within Focal Areas.
    - NRCS's EQIP Program
    - Forestry Assistance –Bonner County OEM Grants
    - Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership Proposal
  - Developing Joint Outreach & Communication Opportunities

Discussion:

- Details on the ways that partners work together – new ways to share existing programs of work
  - Acknowledgement of the need to incorporate other action plans; industry plans are often proprietary, but partners have been willing to share
- The process has created strong communication with industrial and non-industrial private landowners, which has increased trust in the whole process
- IDL has a strong relationship with sub-grantees for figure risk mitigation grants; these grantees are often the office of emergency management for Counties
- Role of Collaboratives
  - Collaborative members have been involved and integral to the process to create prioritization areas
  - Benefit of collaborative knowledge is imperative for designing projects
  - Importance of the ability to reach audiences otherwise might not and build social buy-in
- Cross boundary lessons learned – Idaho and Montana
  - Funding opportunities – IDL has found funding successes to increase the ability to do work and increased credibility by involving more partners up front
  - Overall seen more successful advocacy for work done on the ground
  - Usefulness of combing FS/IDL funds for joint positions

## Committee Updates

Legislative – Committee Chair Allie Maloney presented on the recent past and current work of the Legislative Committee, including conversations with community leaders. The Committee decided to bring the discussion to the wider board and disband the committee until a clear legislative opportunity arises. Maloney highlighted that there is useful related work to move forward with in other capacities outside of a legislative agenda. She also emphasized the need to clarify the Legislative package and the Kootenai Agreement and asked to speak of them as separate entities moving forward, with the Kootenai Agreement as the foundational arch for different organizations to collaboratively work together.

Maloney stated hope that as the group moves to Strategic Planning for the entire board to think about actions to take and stay present in the community on the elements individually and for the Agreement in the future. She highlighted the goal of to continue to build a community understanding of KFSC's diverse values. Board members agreed with Maloney's sentiment and emphasized that Strategic Planning in January will be a great time to continue this conversation on putting goals into actions.

Maloney also emphasized interest for KFSC to coordinate with the offices of the Montana congressional delegates and build a relationship around collaboration; other members supported this idea.

Education – Committee Chair Allie Maloney shared about the successes of the focus groups or Kootenai Community Conversations held this Fall and interest from the community continue conversations next year. She explained that next steps involve a survey designed to build upon the themes heard in the conversations. The combination information will be made available next year in an online, interactive "story map." Maloney also shared that the Committee plans to do educational field trips with different partners next summer.

Funding – Committee Chair Ed Levert and Mike Petersen reported back on discussions with KNF's Chad Benson to create a sustainable funding source through retained receipts to support KFSC's work. Benson stated that he will continue this conversation with further decision-makers.

District Subcommittees – Co-Chair Tim Dougherty, and Board members Mike Petersen and Ed Levert provided updates on several projects that KFSC is considering for comment or currently creating comments. These included:

Graves Creek Salvage (Eureka District) – Petersen shared that the project appeared complicated from the surface but the process from the KNF has allowed for great collaboration. Petersen highlighted the project aspects of roadless areas, old trees, riparian areas. The KFSC brought a group together and worked with ranger Bryan Donnelly in a virtual meeting that included clear maps and descriptions. KFSC will work on final comments before the end of the month. Petersen stated that he felt KNF staff were responsive to their questions and concerns and that the KFSC internal process demonstrated the success of a team with diverse interests creating recommendations that worked for the KNF.

Co-Chair Doug Ferrell clarified that due to the involvement of the KFSC and County Commissions the KNF will be able to use CE authority, allowing the project to address issues in a timely manner.

Ripley – Supervisor Benson updated on unexpected consultation challenges and the importance of taking the time to do the right process and emphasized that he expects to have signed in January.

Information on the KFSC can be found at [Kootenaifuture.org](http://Kootenaifuture.org)

Work is happening with the State on GNA opportunities. Benson shared that there are complications with bears and the KNF has wanted to analyze carefully.

Knotty Pine (Three Rivers District) - Tim Dougherty shared that KFSC submitted comments.

Swamped (Libby District) – Tim Dougherty shared that KFSC submitted comments.

Dougherty shared on positive conversations with district rangers related to both Knotty Pine, Swamped, and continuing to build positive relationships with the KFSC Board. He emphasized appreciation for the optimistic discussion from both district rangers.

Committee Coordination – Coordinator/Facilitator Caroline continued the discussion on committees sharing meeting notes the google drive and sharing out with the larger Board in a monthly newsletter.

### Wrap Up Items

Vote on new members – Three new members were voted in as Board members.

- Cameron Wohlschlegel, Stoltze Lumber
- Tye Sundt, Weyerhaeuser.com
- Juli Thurston, MSU Sanders County Extension

### Next Steps

Action items before next meeting:

Action items	Responsible Party
Respond to schedule poll for January Strategic Planning special meeting	All KFSC members
Coordinator and Co-Chairs to provide date and agenda for Strategic Planning	Coordinator Caroline Mellor and Co-Chairs Doug Ferrell and Tim Dougherty