

Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition
Board Meeting
December 9, 2021
6-8 pm MT
ZOOM



Participants

Board Members

Doug Ferrell, Co-Chair
Tim Dougherty, Co-Chair
Tye Sundt, Weyerhaeuser
Angelo Alderete, Project Ascent
Dawain Burgess, Community Member
Juli Thurston, MSU Sanders County Extension
Bob Castaneda, Retired KNF Supervisor
Cameron Wohlschlegel, Stoltze Land and Lumber
Ed Levert – former Lincoln County Forester
Mike Petersen, Community Member
Mark Peck, Lincoln Co Port Authority
Jerry Wandler, Motorized recreation

Board Members Not Present

Chas Vincent, Environomics
Aaron Peterson, Yaak Valley Forest Council
Shawn Morgan, Thompson River Lumber

Guests, Advisors and Collaborative Support

Hannah Anderson, Facilitator, The Langdon Group
Phil Hough, Friends of Scotchman's Peaks
Steve Kimball, Montana DNRC
Tim Love, Montana Forest Collaborative Network
Cody Daiutolo, Thompson River Lumber
Sara Ghafouri, American Forest Resource Council
Jeff Babik, Yaak Valley Forest Council
Seth Carbonari, Eureka District Ranger USFS
Jennifer Nelson, Lincoln County Forester
Colleen Hinds, Community Member
Robyn King, former ED Yaak Valley Forest Council
Seth Carbonari, US Forest Service
Erin Clark, Wild Montana

Meeting Objectives:

- Hear Forest Service Updates and gain an understanding of the Kootenai NF 5-year plan.
- Hear updates on the Ripley project litigation and KFSC participation.
- Learn about considerations for changing forest management goals in the WUI and elsewhere in light of emerging research on wildfire science.
- Review proposed bylaw updates.
- Review Board member nominations and election procedures.
- Hear from KFSC subcommittees on project updates.

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order. Facilitator Hannah Anderson and co-chair Doug Ferrell welcomed members of the Board and guests to the meeting. Erin Clark from Wild Montana introduced herself and her role as a temporary stand-in coordinator for the KFSC board in replacement of former member Allie

Maloney. Co-chairs Doug and Tim greeted and introduced attendees of significance. Facilitator Hannah Anderson reviewed the agenda for the evening.

Kootenai National Forest Updates

Seth Carbonari, Kootenai National Forest Service, provided the following updates from the KNF:

- Active projects include: Ripley, McKay Engle, Black Ram, Knotty Pine, Swamped, Edna Fortine
- KNF had a recent strategic planning meeting – it ended up being more touching base, and confirmation that what was going on was accurate. Hesitant to make any big changes knowing that some big legislation was coming down the pipeline. KNF feels good about the next 3 years.
- Opportunities for Public Involvement in Get America Outdoors Act (GAOA) Projects:
 - Pending federal direction, at the start of 2022 KNF expects to start working on identifying 2024 projects through collaborative process and public input. The KFSC stakeholders should bring project ideas to Seth.
- The upcoming infrastructure bill will have some impacts on KNF work. KNF is preparing for potential changes in program work and funding, while trying to stay flexible.
- The new infrastructure bill provides a huge opportunity for additional funding to arrive soon. As of now it appears the funding qualification will have a focus on fuels and community protection.
 - Last year WA office set up a whole team just to have a focus on how to take funding from the bill and turn it into meaningful activities on the ground.
 - Funding will be dispersed over a 10-year trajectory – not all at once.
 - KNF hopes to know more at the start of 2022 but feels optimistic that the joint chief project will get a go ahead to move forward.

Discussion:

- The board requested that KNF share the presentation materials.
- Board question: How did the forest do last year in meeting targets, and how are you positioned this year for meeting targets?
 - Seth: We're being told to "keep doing what you are doing" considering the extra challenges that come with recent fires and COVID. The targets have been a little lenient, but Kootenai has been really good at meeting targets.
- Board question: Are there grants available to help the properties around the projects?
 - Seth: NRCS is working with grants and landowners in that area right now.
- Tim Love: The Montana Collaborative Network is planning another joint workshop and has decided the theme would focus on the infrastructure bill to be ahead of the curve. MFCN will provide information to the collaboratives in the area the keep them up to date and share how to be involved in the issue.
- Phil H: The bill also gave funding to restoration of watersheds and money for CLFRP. Any more details on those?
 - Seth: Not yet, but we will keep you posted.
- Board Question: Will the funding from the bill be totally in addition to the regularly appropriated funding you get?
 - Seth: Yes, that is our understanding. It will be in addition, and for very specific projects.
- Board Question: If its additional, that would suggest that there is an expectation that more interests get treated (in addition to 5yr data you just showed us), so is FS going to make a plan to add projects to the list?
 - Seth: Yes – that's why we didn't want to make too many changes until we saw what the bill would be. We expect they'll want us to get more done, and we want to get more

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done. We'll be creative on how we do that and utilize some tools we haven't used in the past and look to partners for some help.

- Board Question: The Libby Joint Chiefs is ready to go. Are there any others in Kootenai?
 - Seth: That is one of the things KNF is discussing. My guess is they will start with Joint Chiefs first since it is ready to go. The program of work I showed is mostly timber harvest. A lot of the funding that goes through is for fuels work – which is expensive. And we have a lot more fuels work backlogged, so I expect that's what the funding will target.

Lincoln County WUI 5-Year Strategic Road Map

Steve Kimball with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) presented an overview of the 5-year strategic roadmap that DNRC is working on with KNF, Lincoln County and the NRCS. Key points of the presentation included:

- A goal to increase pace in addition to scale (acreage rather than volume), noting that pace may be more challenging but is equally important.
- A goal to increase entrepreneurial nature of project selection and strategies.
- The Lincoln County Partners are developing an interactive map which shows projects in Lincoln County WUI. Steve shared an example interactive map from Payette County to demonstrate what Lincoln County's map may look like.
- A process document which outlines the Lincoln County WUI Shared Stewardship Initiative Flowchart.
- A goal to create a procedural toolbox to aid project effectiveness and efficiency. For each project, staff can tailor the strategy by selecting and applying those tools and methods which are most effective and appropriate. A desired outcome of the toolbox is to aid long-term commitment and follow through during the lifespan of projects, to counteract staff transitions and succession. This will demonstrate predictability to the State, County and officials when determining funding commitments.

Discussion:

- Board Comment: In addition to tools, another helpful strategy is to get an audience with Federal judge and present them with the project plan. This helps increase federal understanding of how joint planning is necessary and beneficial to community.
- Board Comment: KFSC is keen to pay attention to this and explore how we can be involved and support.
- Board Comment: When you start to change management plans, litigation issues may arise. It might behoove KNF to talk to DNRC about modification of forest plan to address some of those potential issues.
- Board Question: Regarding project selection, how are we going to determine which are chosen? Based on density? Intrinsic value? Habitat?
 - Steve: Selection is based on risk. Managers assess which areas need to be treated to mitigate risk in CWDP and the roadmap processes.
 - Board Comment: Yes, all of the above. We look at each section and prioritize where this goes, based on all of those things, plus residential density – it's based on the level of threat to infrastructure, homes, watershed, etc.

Ripley Project Update

Ed Levert, KFSC Board Member, gave an update on the stakeholder's participation in the recent Ripley litigation. Updates included:

- The judge has accepted the stakeholders' plea for being a dependent.
- Next steps: the Forest Service must provide administration records by December 16th, after which the parties will complete a summary briefing. After April 7th the court will hopefully have an oral judgment, and a final judgment is expected for later in 2022.
- Sara Ghafouri with the AFRC provided additional information:
 - The judge granted joint intervention.
 - Court review of the litigation will occur from January 1st – March 31st. The hearing will be scheduled after that. We can't really predict when the judge will act, it could be a month to 6 months.
 - Fortunately, we avoided preliminary injunction by agreeing to certain work being done – although that's not to say it may not come back up later on.
 - The case is focused on a merit-based approach – which is to our favor.
 - AFRC put out a press release when intervention was granted which circulated in local papers.
- Steve Kimball with the DNRC added that the DNRC is filing amicus separately, with the intention to have a greater impact by telling their story separately.

Proposed Bylaw Updates

Co-chair Doug Ferrell and facilitator Hannah Anderson presented proposed revisions to the KFSC bylaws. The bylaws were originally based off standard bylaws. Some of the language was meant to avoid anticipated problems and scenarios that the Board has not ended up experiencing. As a result, some of the direction given in the bylaws is administratively burdensome.

The KFSC facilitator will provide a report of the proposed revisions to the Board members, as well as a survey to assess support for the changes. An official vote to approve the revisions will occur at the annual meeting in March 2022.

Proposed updates include:

- Increase board to 21 members maximum
- Revise EC to be 2 co-chairs plus 1 or 3 additional officers
- Replace secretary and treasurer with Coordinator
- Updates to Coordinator position: Non-Voting, non-member, contracted by EC as third-party
- Remove executive director title
- Remove 10- and 15-day nomination notices

Board Member Nomination and Elections Procedure for 2022 Annual Meeting

Facilitator Hannah Anderson reviewed the procedures for new board member nominations and elections to occur at the 2022 annual meeting in March 2022. The meeting will be virtual, via Zoom, and

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voting will occur via a live poll. Elections will occur in the following order 1) members of the Executive Committee, 2) current members who wish to renew their status, 3) new nominations for membership.

Committee Updates

The Education and Outreach committee is working on a PowerPoint presentation to be given for a variety of audiences and occasions which gives an overview of the KFSC, collaborative goals, current projects, and opportunities for public involvement. The Education and Outreach committee is seeking a member to collect and manage KFSC media (pictures) for marketing, the board website, and social media accounts. Contact Hannah at [insert email address] if you'd like to fill this role.

Housekeeping

Website Updates: The KFSC website is being audited for updates, including form and function of the site. The Board was welcomed to review the website and submit any needed or suggested updates to Erin Clark at eclark@wildmontana.org. The website will be updated to include a roster of the current Board. Members were asked to submit a photo and short (2-3 sentence) bio statement to facilitator Hannah Anderson to be published to the website.

Board Member Check-Ins: Facilitator Hannah Anderson will be conducting a round of Board members check-ins, to assess member satisfaction and interest in KFSC actions. Hannah will contact each member to arrange a phone or video call. The check-in calls are intended to be conversation and relaxed. Co-chair Doug Benson encouraged the Board to take this opportunity to be open and share honest reflections and interests in how the Board can reach its full potential.

Next Steps

Action items before next meeting:

Action item	Responsible Party
Provide Bio Statement and Photo to Facilitator	All Board Members
Submit Board Member Nominations to Facilitator	All Board Members
Conduct Board Member Check-Ins	Facilitator Hannah Anderson

Topics for the next meeting agenda:

Action item	Responsible Party
Board Elections	Executive Committee
Infrastructure Bill Updates	TBD
Vote on Proposed Bylaw Revisions	Executive Committee

Next Meeting: March 17, 2022, 6-8pm MT

Respectfully submitted: January 26, 2022

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