

**Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition
Board Meeting
Thursday, March 17, 2022
6-8 pm MT
Virtual Meeting via Zoom**



Participants

Board Members

- Doug Ferrell
- Mark Peck
- Dawain Burgess
- Ed Levert
- Shawn Morgan
- Jerry Wandler
- Bob Castaneda
- Juli Thurston
- Tye Sundt
- Cameron Wohlschlegal
- Phil Hough
- Erin Clark

Guests, Advisors and Collaborative Support

- Hannah Anderson, KFSC Facilitator
- Chad Benson, USFS
- Maureen Bookwalter, USFS
- Robyn King,
- Phil Hough, FSPW
- Stephen Kimball, DNRC
- Tim Love, MFCN
- Jody Turk (GNA Forester with DNRC)
- Ray Stout, Kootenai Valley Record
- Adam Gebauer, The Lands Council
- Gabe Dumm, USFS

Board Members Not Present

- Tim Dougherty
- Mike Peterson
- Angelo Alderete
- Chas Vincent

Meeting Objectives:

- To learn and discuss how the Infrastructure Bill will impact the Kootenai and Flathead Forests.
- To receive a regular update from the Kootenai National Forest.
- To vote on 2022 Board Membership and by-law updates.
- To review project and committee updates, and next steps for the year.

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order. Co-chair Doug Ferrell welcomed members of the Board and guests to the meeting and introduced several attendees. Facilitator Hannah Anderson reviewed the agenda for the evening.

Infrastructure Bill Impacts in the Kootenai and Flathead

Guest speaker Maureen Bookwalter from the USFS District 1 gave an overview of how the new Infrastructure Bill will affect the Kootenai and Flathead National Forests management, including opportunities and strategies the FS has identified for prioritization. Key points included:

- Funding increase is impressive, but will not be able to cover every objective or project at the scale that is currently needed
- The FS is taking time to thoughtfully strategize and organize so they can be as efficient and effective as possible once funding becomes available
- Consideration of supportive services for personnel, including housing
- Specific goals were identified, including:
 - To increase acres treated up to 50 million acres in the next 10 years
 - A focus on all-lands management
 - Fire sheds included as a main part of the FS strategy. Data was shared on nationally ranked fire sheds with the highest risk of community exposure.
- Data was shared on northern region phase II focus landscapes that the FS will use to inform their strategy for allocation of funds from the Bill.
- Ms. Bookwalter stressed the importance of working with stakeholders in collaborative processes to help identify projects and inform FS strategies and expressed gratitude to the KFSC Board.

Discussion:

- Steve: We know capacity is an issue. Wondering if add funding to help with staffing?
 - Mo: Yes! There is a national staffing strategy, to increase outside contracting. We already have 10 new employees in our dept.
 - Chad: Yes, we know the [funding allocation] isn't perfect yet, but we are paying attention to strategy and how to meet these needs. Trying to get capacity in queue even if we don't know where funding will land. Another concern is housing, as we increase capacity, need to think of housing stock availability.

Kootenai National Forest Updates

Chad Benson, Kootenai National Forest, provided the following additional updates from the KNF:

- Regarding the Joint-Chiefs project, the FS is prepared to allocate funds and work with partners once the money is available. The FS feels positive that they'll be able to put action on the ground quickly.
- The FS plans to talk to the County and other agencies to make sure they understand how and where the money can be spent, and which projects are ready to move forward.
- There is no concrete timeframe yet, but the FS feels encouraged that they are being asked [by the state] to work on organization and strategy now.

Discussion:

- Jerry: Regarding the map Mo shared, and fire starts that seem to cause grief with the forest service or landowner: if we know the causes (such as lightning at the top of a mountain) do we know what is the best approach to reduce the risk going forward?

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- o Chad: its complicated, but we are working to provide that buffer for communities near those areas. We plan to try to get communities in good shape first, then move up the hill.
- Robyn: Are we thinking about how to make sure once the projects are announced and out there, that our local workforce is ready? What are we doing to take the opportunity to have Lincoln County people working in the woods? Anything local folks need to be prepared?
 - o Mo: I don't have a response, but those are great questions, and every community needs to be thinking about that.
 - o Chad: The good thing about working with different agencies, means we have more creative ability to meet needs to help them do the work.
 - o Mark: It's also a huge capacity issue. Some of them may need to re-tool, etc. to prepare. We really need to utilize MLA to get folks ready.
- Steve: There are challenges associated with increasing scale, such as capacity, NEPA, etc. I think there may have to be some choices about whether we treat acres in areas of risk, or whether we meet timber targets. Will there continue to be a push on timber targets that may jeopardize treating acres needed? I don't think you can max out both, so may need to make some decisions.
 - o Mo: I appreciate the comment. Sometimes we can do both, and one pays for the other. We are going to be looking at performance measures to see what we are doing across ownership that support our 10-year strategy. I think we'll always look at targets, but they won't matter as much if we look at outcomes. And outcomes vs. outputs are a squishy thing.
 - o Chad: I think the target will always be there. Most of the projects we have lined up are occurring in firesheds.

Board Elections

Co-chair Doug Ferrell called the elections process to order. The facilitator reviewed the KFSC Elections procedure as outlined in the bylaws:

- Every year at the Annual Meeting, the board shall elect two co-chairs, and executive committee members (3 or 5).
- Board member terms last 2 years from date of first election. At the end of term, you must be re-elected or your seat is ended.
- The EC has developed a system for staggering memberships, so that half of the board is up for re-election every other year.

The facilitator explained the voting procedure as follows:

- To ensure only members participated in the election, non-Board members would be moved into a virtual break out room for the duration of the election. Members would remain in the main room of the Zoom meeting, to complete the election process.
- All current Board Members or those up for renewal were requested to vote.
- Majority vote is used to determine the outcome of elections. The voting process is anonymous.
- Member candidates and nominees would be placed in the breakout room, until elections were complete. If successfully elected to a seat, new members would be moved into the main room to vote for the remaining elections.

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Co-chair Tim Dougherty submitted proxy votes to the facilitator prior to the meeting which were included in the calculated votes.

All elections were successful, as follows:

- Renewed Term Members: Dawain Burgess, Tim Dougherty, Ed Levert, Shawn Morgan, Mark Peck, Mike Peterson
- New Nominations: Erin Clark, Chuck Ekstedt, Phil Hough, Josh Letcher
- Executive Committee: Bob Castaneda, Erin Clark, Tim Dougherty, Doug Ferrell, Ed Levert
- Co-Chairs: Tim Dougherty, Doug Ferrell

By-Law Updates

Members of the Board were called to vote upon updates to the Board Bylaws, as presented at the December 2021 Board meeting. Updates targeted language which address the following:

- 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

Voting occurred via live Zoom poll. 12 Members voted in favor, 2 abstained. The bylaws were approved for update. Updated articles include:

- Article III. The Board
- Article IV. The Board: Duties and Responsibilities
- Article V. Officers
- Article VI. Levels of Membership

Committee Updates

KFSC Sub-committees were invited to provide committee updates:

- The Education and Outreach committee will be presenting to the Society of American Forestry in April. The committee asked for volunteers to help with the 2022 Forest Fair. Bob Castaneda, Erin Clark, and Phil Hough volunteered to help.
- The Grants and Funding committee reported that two grants were submitted in recent months, one to Yellowstone to Yukon, and one to Montana Forest Collaborative Network. The Board is awaiting decisions for both. The Grants and Funding Committee recognized Tim Dougherty and the Idaho Forest Group for a generous donation of \$5,000.
 - Bob Castaneda asked the committee to explain the procedure for drafting and approving yearly operating costs. The committee responded that there are goals in place to refine

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this process in the pursuit of financial independence, and explained that the main expenses are related to the Forest Fair event and retention of a contracted facilitator.

- The Edna Fortine committee recently visited with the fuels reduction ranger to hear about the project and discuss their fuels reduction plan. The ranger and their staff have been working with the landowners, who are very supportive of the FS work to reduce fuels. The FS is leaning towards using categorical exclusion, which usually means they may need increased collaborative support. When the FS has more public information, the KFSC can get more involved to see if KFSC can provide specific recommendations. The committee's overall impression was that it seems like a straightforward project.

Housekeeping

Board Member Check-In Summary: The Facilitator thanked the Board for their time and participation in the recent Board Member Check-in interviews. A summary report of that process has been drafted and will be circulated to the Board for their review. Notable themes heard in the Board's feedback include:

- Subcommittees
- Member Goals
- Future Vision, Short- and Long-term
- Executive Committee
- Administrative Efficiency
- Fundraising
- Miscellaneous

2022 Work Plan: Erin Clark reported that there are 4 strategies under development in the draft 2022 Work Plan. There will be an opportunity for the full Board to weigh-in on the work plan at the June quarterly meeting. In the interim, the board was encouraged to please let the EC know if they would like to be more involved in the preparation of the work plan, either as a subcommittee volunteer member, or in a lighter capacity.

Next Steps

Action items before next meeting:

Action item	Responsible Party
Send work plan goals to Board	Executive Committee
Send Board Interviews report to Board	Facilitator

Next Meeting: June 16, 2022, 6-8pm MT