

Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition

Board Meeting

March 17, 2023

5pm -6pm

Flathead Valley Community College, Lincoln County Campus

Optional Zoom Participation Provided



Participants

Board Members

Aubrey Bertram

Bob Castaneda

Chuck Ekstedt

Doug Ferrell

John Gubel

Phil Hough

Josh Letcher

Ed Levert

Shawn Morgan

Mark Peck

Tony Petrusha

Tye Sundt

Juli Thurston

Cameron Wohlschlegel

Tim Dougherty

Jerry Wandler

Guests, Advisors and Collaborative Support

Wayne Maahs, Board Nominee

Rose Olson, Friends of Scotchmans Peak

Sam Matin, Troy District Ranger

Heydi McRoberts, Deputy Forest Ranger

Winston Taylor, Senator Danes Office

Jeff Whitlock, Forester

Jerry Ray, County Road District 1

Steve Kimball, DNRC

Kayla Mosher, KaniksuLand Trust

Chris Bachman, Conservation Director YVFC

Brian Baxter, Reporter of KC Record

Tim Love, Montana Forest Collaboration

Network

Nick Raines, Board Nominee, W.R.Grace Co.

Steve Mostsco, Forest Love

Board Members Not Present

Brooke Bolin

Dawain Burgess

Meeting Objectives:

- To convene KSFC Board Members for the Annual Meeting.
- To vote on new and renewed board membership.
- To hear presentations and have discussions on select topics of relevance.

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions

Facilitator Hannah Anderson called the meeting to order and thanked participants for joining both in person as well as virtually via Zoom. Hannah prompted the Board members to introduce themselves. Non-board members were asked to introduce themselves as well, including the organization, agency, or

interest they represented. Co-chairs Tim and Doug announced that the Board held an executive session prior to the public Board Meeting. Amongst other items, the Board nominated new board members.

The Facilitator reviewed the agenda for the evening, which proceeded as follows.

Kootenai National Forest Updates

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

Discussion:

- 5 new projects being started in the last 6 months, with 2 more projects to start in the next few months. The program region is now the 3rd largest in the country.
- The USFS is moving along with new hires to be able to expand their service even more.
- The Kootenai being recognized as one the top 10 forests to receive funding.
- Updates on infrastructure law: There will be 4 acres of additional treatment along with what has already been established. In total there will be 10 acres of forest treated this year. A majority of the work is being done by local contracting.
- The KNF will begin Winter Travel Planning later this year
- Chad introduced new Troy Ranger Sam Martin and Deputy Forest Supervisor Heidi McRoberts

KFSC Board Ballot Vote

Overview

The board voted on the new nominations of board members, the renewal of membership, and on the name change of the organization from “Kootenai Forest Stakeholders *Coalition*” to “Kootenai Forest Stakeholders *Collaboration*.” The board voted by ballot, counted by the Hannah, the facilitator.

Results of Vote:

New Members

- Wayne Maahs – Unanimous Approval
- Nick Raines – Unanimous Approval

Re-elect board members to another term (board members abstained from voting for themselves):

- Cameron Wohlschlegel – 14 in favor, 1 abstain
- Jerry Wandler – Unanimous
- Juli Thurston – 14 in favor, 1 abstain
- Tye Sundt – 14 in favor, 1 abstain
- Doug Ferrell – 14 in favor, 1 abstain
- Bob Castaneda – 14 in favor, 1 abstain

Executive Committee Elections:

- Aubrey Bertram – 14 in favor, 1 abstain

Information on the KFSC can be found at Kootenaifuture.org

- Ed Levert – 14 in favor, 1 abstain
- Bob Castaneda – 14 in favor, 1 abstain

Board Co-Chairmen:

- Doug Ferrell – 14 in favor, 1 abstain
- Tim Dougherty – 14 in favor, 1 abstain

Name Change from Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition to Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Collaborative:

- 14 in favor, 1 opposed

Guest Speaker, Tony Petrusha (LORA)

Overview: Tony provided a presentation on the outdoor recreation in the Libby area. He covered the topics of how to fund the recreation management of projects, developing trail opportunities, information on the recreation association, and an overview of recreation.

Discussion:

- Helping with raising funds for the fight against of vandalism
- Identify which specific trails allow for different recreation on them
- Facility ownership and what their role is with the area

Common Ground Proposal

- Planning to present the agreement to the public and gain feedback over this coming year. The website has a new page about the Common Ground Agreement.
- The CG agreement grew from the connection between conservationists and the timber industry in the area and represents balance and collaboration between a variety of multiple uses.

Guest Speaker Jenifer Nelson, CWPP-

Overview: Jennifer discussed the origin, drafting process, and purposes of the CWPP, including an upcoming opportunity to comment on it.

Discussion:

- Gather tool from the Montana Wildlife Action Plan
- A public hearing will be held in Eureka at 1pm on Wednesday, March 22.
- This provides an opportunity for the KFSC to provide support or comment and for any board member to be able to do so individually.
- KFSC will circulate a comment letter to our board, expressing support for the CWPP, and ask for a vote to approve or edit.

Information on the KFSC can be found at Kootenaifuture.org

Phil provided a brief report from the Legislative committee.

The committee is working on developing the Common Ground agreement into a legislative proposal. We intend to have a draft proposal for the June KFSC board meeting.

The committee is also working on a number of public presentations and workshops to get further feedback and input before presenting to the Mt Congressional delegation.

Habitat Montana

Overview: Board member Aubrey Bertram presented the recent challenges and opportunities that Habitat Montana is facing to maintain funding from the sale of legal marijuana.

Discussion:

- Habitat MT is another tool that landowners can use to stay on their lands when, without the option of an easement, they might be forced to sell off to developers, wealthy out-of-staters who want a piece of Montana.
- There are three bills that seek to strip recreational marijuana funding from Habitat MT: ○ HB 669, would route recreational marijuana funding away from Habitat MT and into the general fund. Our legislature is already dealing with a nearly \$2 billion surplus: adding more money into the general fund exacerbates this budget surplus
- Defunding Habitat MT could undermine the Weyerhaeuser/Southern Pine Plantations easement, which would secure 100,000 acres of public access and commercial timber harvest on private lands.
- Stripping funding from Habitat MT will make it harder for landowners to preserve and manage private lands as they see fit.
- KFSC has the opportunity to write a letter of support for this funding opportunity for Habitat Montana.

Committee Updates

Subcommittees reported out as follows:

- *Education and Outreach:* There are two upcoming presentations that the committee is working on scheduling a presenter for. The committee is also working on scheduling a field trip in mid-May in Libby.
- *Grants and Funding:* KFSC Treasurer Bob Castaneda reported that the grants and funding committee received a grant from the MFCN.
- *Legislative:* The legislative committee is continuing to do outreach to key stakeholders about the Common Ground agreement.

Next Steps

Information on the KFSC can be found at Kootenaifuture.org

Action items before next meeting:

Action item	Responsible Party
Draft Habitat Montana Letter	Executive Committee
Review the CWPP	Board Members
Ask each committee person to provide updates via email	Committee Chairs

Topics for the next meeting agenda:

Topic	Responsible Party
Legislative Committee Spotlight	
Forest Service Winter Travel Plans	