

# Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition

## Conduct and Protocols

### **Mission Statement:**

The Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition craft solutions for public lands management by representing diverse values and providing a venue for productive, inclusive conversations between the Forest Service and the community.

### **Stakeholders:**

Our Stakeholders Coalition is comprised of the community of forest users and recreationists, loggers, foresters, mill owners, conservationists, business owners, local governments, educators, fire management personnel, and citizens at large.

### **Objectives:**

- Seek opportunities that will foster collaboration and benefit the communities and ecosystems within the Kootenai National Forest.
- Facilitate community education opportunities on a variety of natural resource topics.
- Participate in public processes by supporting and making recommendations on select administrative processes, including travel planning and timber projects.
- Advocate for diverse, forest-wide values including sustainable timber harvests, recreational development, and wilderness protection within the Kootenai National Forest.

### **Our Commitment:**

We do our best creative thinking and problem solving through a collaborative process, to support resource management projects to meet social, economic and environmental objectives.

- Our "collaborative projects" do not prevent any party from taking different or opposing stands on projects that we have not brought within our circle
- This is not an "all or nothing" proposition for any interests; it is an attempt to find common ground
- Collaboration is about working together on the real issues that are preventing progress on projects that will mutually benefit the participants and their interests. Collaboration is about building trust and respect for each other.
- The Coalition will consult and collaborate with corporations, Federal and State agencies, and local government on appropriate issues and seek their assistance when needed
- The Coalition is committed to the following the guidelines, rules of conduct, process and protocols outlined in this document.

**Guidelines for Project Involvement:** Project involvement can begin through either a desire of the board to initiate or be involved in a project, or through an invitation by the KNF for KFSC involvement. Any involvement in a project will require a majority vote of the board. Projects may vary from specific actions such as timber sales or larger issues like KNF travel management policy.

We believe that early and continuous involvement through an authentic exchange of ideas improves the development of projects. It is helpful when early involvement begins at the project concept and design phases.

Projects that focus on treating acres within the Wildland urban Interface (WUI) particularly deserve our attention because:

- The protection of human life and property is a high priority
- Building trust and broad community support in these WUI projects helps us in engaging with other natural resource issues and projects on the forest landscape.

### **Rules of Conduct:**

The Coalition insists that its members adhere to the following rules of conduct when involved in any aspect of Coalition activities or when it might appear that they are involved in Coalition activities.

1. If you can't go along with this commitment to problem solving, then you are not welcome at this table
2. We encourage open and honest discussion of all forest and community development issues
3. We will not resort to disrespectful or confrontational dialogue
4. We will not use the Coalition as a forum to "soapbox" or "rant" about one's interests or position on a topic
5. We will respect and comply with the behavior directions given by the facilitator, including honoring a request for removal from the premises if necessary
6. We will use a good faith effort to resolve differences through a peaceful process.

### **Process of Support for a Project**

The following outlines the steps the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders will complete in considering whether and how to comment on a specific project:

1. A KFSC member or members may report to the KFSC Board of Directors about the opportunity to engage on a specific project.
2. The Board of Directors will approve engagement if the project fits within the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders mission and objectives
3. Once a project is approved for consideration, a Project Team is empowered to engage with the Forest Service and/or other entities. The team may include KFSC members and non-members. Project Team members are expected to participate in the majority of team meetings and field outings, and follow the KFSC Rules of Conduct.
4. During the life of a project the Project Team will report back to the Board of Directors on the project, and the development of team recommendations. Especially if the project is controversial, it is important for the project team to keep the Board informed of options and general recommendations.
5. As soon as an EA or other decision document is released, the project team will work to draft a comment later to present to the KFSC Board of Directors. The Team's comment letter should be presented to the Board no later than two weeks before the deadline for comments on the project
6. The Board of Directors will consider the recommendations from the Project Team and solicit further opinions, as needed
7. The Board of Directors will vote on the draft comment letter, and decide whether to edit the letter as needed and submit it, or whether to avoid making any comment on the project from the KFSC.

- a. The Board of Directors decision is a simple majority of those present.
- b. Any Member or Director opposing the majority decision has the right to submit a written comment on the project on their own behalf, but not as a representative of the KFSC.

### **General Membership Commitment:**

All members have the right to express their level of support for any project or policy. Members will be asked to show their standing on projects during general meetings of the Coalition.

It is understood that the KFSC will make every effort to achieve full consensus, and that a project may be voted on, tabled, and revisited any number of times before the attempt to reach consensus is superseded by a majority vote

All members are required to maintain active membership status. This entails attending 50% of annual general membership meetings. Failure to attend at least 50% of general membership meetings will result in a member losing their right to vote in the election of the Board, being on the Board, and having the right to show level of support at general meetings.

---

Revised 7/10/21