

Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Collaborative  
Board Meeting  
September 21, 2023 | 6-8pm MT  
Flathead Valley Community College – Lincoln County Campus  
225 Commerce Way, Libby, MT 59923

**Participants**

**Board Members**

Aubrey Bertram  
Brooke Bolin  
Dawain Burgess  
Bob Castaneda  
Tim Dougherthy  
Doug Ferrell  
John Gubel  
Phil Hough  
Josh Letcher  
Ed Levert  
Tye Sundt  
Wayne Maahs

**Board Members not Present**

Chuck Esketedt  
Shawn Morgan

Tony Petrusha  
Juli Thurston  
Cameron Wohlschlegel  
Nick Raines

**Guests, Advisors and Collaborative Support**

Steve Kimball, MT DNRC  
Mike Kauff, State Senator  
Tim Love, MT Forest Collaborative Network  
Wayne Kasworm, United States FWS  
Jodi Turk, MT DNR  
Brian Baxtar, Kootenai Record  
Jennifer Nelson, Lincoln County Forester  
Winston Taylor, Rep for Steve Zinke  
Brett Slaughter, Rep Senator Danes

**Meeting Objectives**

- To hold membership elections.
- To receive a regular update from the Kootenai National Forest.
- To hear an informative panel discussion.
- To receive important updates from the Legislative Committee.

**Meeting Summary**

**Welcome and Introduction**

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

There were no new updates from the KNF

## Montana DNRC Presentation

Steve Kimball Presented on: What makes Collaboratives Successful

- **Funding Opportunity**
  - Applying for various grants
  - DNRC can and does provide litigation help.
    - Funding for litigation
    - Support counties and their collaboratives with their litigations
- Synchronize the relationship between collaboratives and agencies
  - Help to get results on the ground.
- What is necessary to make a successful collaborative
  - Organization
  - Have a place for tension between a group and the agencies
  - Have great leadership
  - Have great organization
  - Have great communication
- **You can have influence and impact if you work together!**

## KFSC Membership Election

- There were no board members who needed to be renewed this cycle.
- There were no applications submitted for new board members during this meeting

## Forest Fair Invitation & Updates

The education committee presented on and provided details for the upcoming Forest Fair

- Forest Fair to be held **Friday 22, September from 2-5.**
- 26 booths lined up for the forest fair!

## Panel Discussion and Q&A – Forest Service, and Wayne Kasworm

The goal of the panel discussion is to continue to educate on bear management and how others can help.

- Panel: Wayne Kasworm (biologist), Forest Service  
John, Forest Service, gave an overview of the planned amendment including the history and context for Bear Outside Recovery Zone creation (BORZ).

Wayne discussed the challenges and benefits associated with the BORZs designation on public land and there affects on bear management

- Question and Answers Session
  - What adaptability is built into the plan amendment? Is there a mechanism that can be brought in if changes need to be made into the plan?
    - Move away from BORZ and move to grizzly bear analysis units for better long term planning.
    - There are 5 years between this current plan and the revision for the next plan.

- Other forests are already doing this.
- If/when the decision is made and when can get a written statement from the DNRC or timber companies that for 10 year they are not planning to do anymore work, would this help the cumulative effects?
  - Yes this would help
- How long will this amendment take how can we help ?
  - There should be a signed discission by December. The comment period will end in September
- What is the difference between non BORZ and BORZ?
  - There is no difference to the bear.
  - There is no additional consolation need because of a BORZs area
- Wayne, do you prefer more BORZ acreages?
  - Prefer seeing more protection for bears and see recovery here in the area.
  - We need to see genetic interchange to see a change in population growth
- Road closer methods and illegal use of roads. Any new discussion on road closer?
  - There is currently lots of discussion on the road closers.
  - FWS have been working on how they quantify illegal use of the roads.
- Is there a chance it will pushed to the EA or will it stay to CE?
  - No reason to change from CE to EA it is a reginal forestry call.
- Are there any things that need to be cured to bring back the Ripley project?
  - 3 things need to happen
    - Name change
    - BORZ expansion
    - Cumulative effects study
- What is the best case scenario for Ripley to be resurrected?
  - Hoping to get BO in the next month.
  - Won't take another year of field work
- Where does BORZ pop come from? Are they spill over? How many have we transported?
  - 22 bears since 1990 have been moved
    - We do count from outside BORZ
    - Count cubs and mortality
    - Counts females with young
  - Population come from outside of the zone
- What are the efforts in the last 10 years for bear repopulation?
  - We have not moved many because of
    - Weather
    - Food supply
    - Conflict bear

## **Committee Updates**

### **Legislative Committee Update**

Phil chair of the legislative committee provided lengthy legislative committee update.

- The focus was on the progress of the collaboratives Common Ground Proposal. The updates are as follows:
  - The committee is waiting to hear back from the Forest

- Hopefully with the agreement the Forest service will take under analysis some of the recommendation made.
- Continue to work on it for the 8-12 months,
- Education and Outreach Committee  
An update on the education and outreach committee was provided.
  - Come join KFSC at the Forest Fair!
- Grants and Funding (Bob)  
An update on the grants and funding committee was provided.
  - A financial update was given and an explanation was given on the grants that were awarded from IFC and DNRC.
- A balance sheet will be presented to in DEC
- Received 5k from DNRC to develop education tools that will provide information for development of treating of local, state, private lands
- Recreation (Tony)  
There was no update on the recreation committee/
- District Subcommittees  
Updates on the respective subcommittees were presented
  - Eureka
  - Libby
    - The district is proposing to treat fuels around unit 3.
    - A concern of firefighter safety.
    - Come up with rec to the district that has been approved by the EC. Fuels management project on OU3
  - Cabinet
    - Sold a timber sale
    - Implemented soon.
    - Gathering input on where they should look and what types o treatment the area will need
  - Three Rivers
    - Moving forward with the Trojan Defense decision made first quarter.
    - Controlled burns in a few weeks in the area
    - More to come.

### **Wrap Up and Next Steps**

- Next board meeting Dec 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- Topics for our next meeting.
  - Drafting piece when the amendment comes out in December
  - Legislative update
  - Work plan, March establishes new one.

### **What else?**

Join legislative committee

Ideas for meeting and talks