

Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Collaborative
Board Meeting
Dec 14, 2023
6:00 - 8:00PM
Meeting Conducted Via Zoom



Participants

Board Members

Aubrey Bertram
Brooke Bolin
Bob Castaneda
Tim Dougherthy
Doug Ferrell
John Gubel
Phil Hough
Josh Letcher
Ed Lvert
Tony Petrusha
Juli Thurston
Cameron Wohlschlegel
Nick Raines
Wayne Maahs
Brent Teske

Board Members Not Present

Chuck Ekstedt
Tye Sundt
Dawain Burgess
Shawn Morgan
Jerry Wandler

Guests, Advisors and Collaborative Support

Hannah Anderson, Facilitator
Audrey Gowans, Facilitation Support
Heidi McRoberts, Deputy Forest Supervisor
Chris Bachman, Conservation director / YVFC
Tim Love, Montana Forest Collaboration
Network
Steve Howke, Congressmen Zinke
Bill Cripe, RAC Committee, Yaak resident
Brett Slaughter, U.S. Senate - Daines
Mark Peck, Lincoln County Port Authority

Meeting Objectives

- Hold a special election to elect a new member to the board as well as elect a Secretary to the Executive Committee.
- Hear Updates from the Kootenai National Forest Supervisor.
- Listen to statewide effort on fire crisis.
- Discuss the 2024 Work Plan through a facilitated workshop.
- Hear updates from KFSC Committees.

Meeting Summary

Welcome & Introductions

Facilitator Hannah Anderson called the meeting to order and thanked the participants for joining 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.

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

Special Elections

Special elections for a board position and the EC Secretary position were held during the KFSC board meeting. All applicants were voted in unanimously

- New Board Members
 - Zach Angstead (Unanimous vote in favor)
 - Brent Teske (Unanimous vote in favor)
- Executive Committee—Secretary
 - Brooke Bolin (Unanimous vote in favor)

Wildfire Crisis Report

Doug Ferrell was provided with updates on the statewide efforts on the fire crisis, from Steve Kimball of DNRC, to share with the board.

- Montana counties take the lead in updating County Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)
- Counties with CWPP can apply for grants that apply to priority areas
- Our Lincoln County has been a leader in pursuing projects and getting funding
- GNA program, administered by the state is growing to provide additional capacity for wildfire risk and forest health goals
- BLM and NRCS are increasing capacity to get more done on the ground in 2024

Report is Attached

Proposals – (Tim Love) interlude in agenda

Guest speaker Tim Love gave a brief overview from the Montana Forest Collaboration Network. Tim will be retiring later this year and many expressed appreciation for his leadership.

- Request for proposals for MFCN administered grants went out for the 7th of December
 - Proposals are due January 22nd
- Info from the Annual workshop has been posted on website – if you did not come you can see the proceedings as annual report

KFSC Workshop for 2024 Work Plan

Bob Castaneda presented the 2024 Work Plan to the board and opened the floor to discussion. He provided a brief explanation as to why the work plan is updated every year, and how the KFSC benefits from having one.

- All votes were unanimous in favor of adopting the plan
- The 2023 work plan was shared with the group via screen share by the facilitator.
- The work plan is a template used to direct our work and to apply for grants
 - KFSC is able to keep track of goals and which tasks were completed
- Highlight the strategies and what the KFSC wants to accomplish in 2024
 - KFSC 4 basic strategies – biggest project we do is the Forest Fair (bulk of strategy 3)
 - 1. Support agencies, comment on management actions and proposals

- 2. Cover the funding and be engaged with the boards needs
 - 3. Kootenai Forest Fair
 - 4. Conservation Goals – work with Forest Service, common ground proposal, efforts from the legislative committee
- To receive grant funding, we need to summarize the outcomes - “did the rubber hit the ground?”
- Discussion from the board on the 2024 Work Plan
 - “Coalition” to “Collaborative” change in our name can be taken off 1C to-do task because it has been accomplished
 - Treasurer Bob Casteneda was able to come up with some grant money and is in communication with Lincoln Fire Safe Council to get a fire adaptive workshop in Libby, to hammer home the things we need to do as a community (preparedness)
 - Is the Collaborative all in favor of +181,000 acres of Wilderness?
 - The acre’s number is going to change – we are in the process of seeking feedback including the forest service agency
 - The proposal is a working progress, premature to discuss any changes or numbers
 - The number will change but the components of legislative proposal will change too.
 - Entire legislative package – one part is legislative acres and is under review
 - Elements will change and number of acres is likely to change
 - Steve’s chat comment – “This is Steve with Zinke's office and if there are any grant applications that would benefit from a letter of grant support, please reach out to our office 406-422-8576”

Expectations as board members

KFSC Co-Chair, Doug Ferrell went over the board member expectations and how each member of the board can get involved more within the KFSC.

- Everyone can find a use for their skills. We encourage board members to participate actively in our group and consider joining a committee
- If there is a committee you would like to join please contact the chairperson
- Expectation for board member attendance according to our Bylaws
 - If you are going to be absent notify secretary (Brooke) or member of executive committee to be accepted as an excused absence
 - Attend at least 2 out of the 4 board meetings
- Kootenai website has been updated –
 - All board members please look at it and let Hannah or Executive Committee know of any edits or suggestions
 - Photos and bio of board members on webpage – if you are missing a photo or bio send it to Tracy or Brooke to get it updated
 - Minutes of meetings and bi-laws are not on the website -

- They are normally regularly updated and currently on Tracy's radar
- Website completely crashed and they are going through the process of rebuilding

Committee Updates

Each committee provided a brief report on their efforts over the last 3 months.

Recreation subcommittee agenda – Tony Petruscia

- Snowshoe trails project
 - – 15 miles of trail ready to be worked on but waiting on lease agreement
 - Final plat agreement and link into Norgard trail – that will connect with DNRC and will add 4 miles of trail for recreational bicycling
 - Swim pond plan moving forward, it will be a nice swimming Pond when things warm up
- Ripley trail project going forward gets us on sweet mountain bench
- How are we going to pay for Libby Recreation projects? A plan coming together through a foundation or sign-up and create endowment to take money from real estate sales and put into endowment and create an annuity out in the future.

Education and Outreach Subcommittee (Brooke) -

- The date for the upcoming Forest Fair is September 21st
- If you want to join the committee for just the Forest Fair or the Outreach Committee overall - let Brooke know
- Contact local groups to get more perspectives from all over – different point-of-view
- Remember to occasionally be placing news stories and press releases into regional press

Legislative Update

- Legislative Committee is in the process of reviewing the Common Ground Agreement
- Forest service has been asked to review the Agreement and make suggestions –
- Gratitude towards Zach for joining committee
- There is a standing committee meeting the 2nd Tuesday of every month

Budget

- Our total proposed budget would be \$20,000 - same amount as in work plan
- Financial report and proposed budget for 2024 Voting: **unanimous approval of both**

Update on OU3 Project

- The project covers the area around the asbestos mine
- The firefighters have been concerned if there is a fire up there it could lead to asbestos contamination nearby
- District is proposing to treat the area around the mine site

- Do not have a firm proposal but working on that
 - District needs to develop exact acres and treatments and we will work with district to send letter to board on what we would like the forest service or district to do.
 - Coming up early in January

Update for Cabinet Ranger District

- Cabinet district has an active project in the works - Tusker project
 - Similar to Saw Creek and dealing with forest health and fire reduction issues
- Ranger Michael Fieger is keenly interested in involving the public
 - Recruited neighbors to get involved
 - Project includes vegetation and fuel management – 2,700 acres
- Commercial and noncommercial harvest
- Implementation planned for 2024- scoping is open now and project docs are ready for comments in spring
- Goals include reduce stand density and increase species diversity
- Draft comment letter written, within a week comment letter can be revised by board members

Additional Comments

- Trojan Defense project is proceeding as an authorized emergency action
- “As a Yaak resident Knotty Pine and Black Ram are very important to us. Please comment. We are under the highest fire risk in Lincoln County” - (Bill Cripe)
 - We submitted comments in favor of Knotty Pine. We have not submitted comments on Black Ram (not an endorsement or non-endorsement).
- Ripley on legal front – forest service is still moving forward and gathering information that Judge Christensen has asked for.

Meeting Wrap Up

Next Steps -

- Spring meeting is our first annual quarterly meeting
 - Board members elected in March of 2022 will be up for reelection in March of 2024
- Always asking the board – let us know topics for consideration in board meetings

Zoom Meeting

Sign in View

A screenshot of a Zoom meeting interface. The main area is a 4x4 grid of video thumbnails. The top row contains: Phil Hough, Audrey Gowans (highlighted with a green border), Doug Ferrell, and Ed Levert. The second row contains: tdougherty, Hannah, Facilitator, John Gubel, and Wayne Maahs. The third row contains: Bob Castaneda, bteske, Brooke Bolin, and Josh Letcher. The bottom row contains: Bill Cripe, Juli Thurston, Cameron Wohlschlegel, and SHowke. Below the grid is a control bar with icons for Mute, Start Video, Security, Participants (16), Chat, Share Screen, Summary, AI Companion, Record, Polls, Reactions, Apps, Whiteboards, Notes, More, and a red Leave button. At the bottom is a Windows taskbar with a search bar, system tray, and clock showing 8:13 PM on 12/14/2023.

Audrey Gowans

Phil Hough

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Doug Ferrell

Ed Levert

tdougherty

Hannah, Facilitator

John Gubel

Wayne Maahs

Bob Castaneda

bteske

Brooke Bolin

Josh Letcher

Bill Cripe

Juli Thurston

Cameron Wohls...

SHowke

Mute Start Video Security Participants 16 Chat Share Screen Summary AI Companion Record Record Polls Reactions Apps Whiteboards Notes More Leave

Type here to search

8:13 PM 12/14/2023

Zoom Meeting

Sign in

A second screenshot of the same Zoom meeting interface, showing the same 4x4 grid of participants and control bar as the first image. The layout and content are identical, including the names of the participants and the Windows taskbar at the bottom.

Audrey Gowans

Phil Hough

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tdougherty

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