

Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition  
General membership meeting  
Libby, MT  
July 17, 2008

Action Items:

6:00 PM Minutes and Treasurer's report

1. Motion to approve minutes, seconded, passed
2. Paul discussed the Treasurers report indicating there is \$1,989 left in the original account of \$15,000. This grant from the National Forest Foundation was used to support the activities of the coalition. The back page of the handout has the detailed financial report. Motion to accept the treasurer's report made, seconded and passed.

Update from Forest Service--- Quinn Carver, USFS **(Complete report is attached)**

- The FS summarized their activities from 2005. One year before the stakeholders organized.
- Grand total indicated 135,913 MBF on 18,093 acres.
- Stakeholder involvement included in this report reflects 18.026 MBF on 2,551 acres.
- Stewardship contracts are hard to track
- The stakeholders are valuable to reduce litigations
- The Meadow project is not included in the report for it hasn't sold yet.(23-2400ac)
- 12,000 acres are normally targeted annually on the Kootenai Forest.

Betty Holder read a paper prepared by Paul Bradford (Forest Supervisor) congratulating the stakeholders on their dedication and service. She presented the 2008 Regional Forester's honor award (Gridlock Breaking) to those who were unable to attend the ceremony.

Some highlights from Paul's paper are as follows:

Since the establishment of the KFSC and the signing of the MOU in September, 2006, members have been engaged in the full spectrum of project planning, design, and decision-making on specific projects of the Kootenai NF. These activities have included regular meetings of all KFSC members, along with a series of on-the-ground meetings on projects by the members of the KFSC specific to each Ranger District, working with staff of the Kootenai National Forest. Through the involvement of the KFSC sub-teams on these projects, the KNF has been able to move from an environment where every proposed project was developed internally, then appealed and possibly litigated, to an environment that is characterized by a partnership with KFSC members. KFSC members are involved early in project conceptualization and design, and through extensive involvement become partners in the final decision by KNF on these projects. This partnership effort, led by members of the KFSC along with KNF personnel, has changed the typical dialog about how to manage the KNF. Instead of perpetuating a culture of position-based discussions and disagreements, the culture has changed to an interest-based discussion, where all members have a stake in improving forest conditions, fuel loads, and contributing to community stability.

Education committee-Ed Levert

- One presentation of fire ecology
- Conference call focused on restoration. Will pursue this issue this fall with a full blown agenda.

Restoration committee- Robyn King

- Looking at issues outside the WUI: wilderness, recreational use, etc.
- Beginning to map common use areas
- Decided to work on the Fortine area
- Betty Holder brought the group up to date on the project.

- There are lots of diverse interests that will all be addressed

#### Rocky Pine

- Record of decision has been made. They are on schedule and will focus on the non-commercial activities.
- There were extra ~~litigation~~ **mitigation** measures in the document
- Approximately 1200 acres and 5 MBF including burning slash piling, thinning, etc. Hope to have it awarded by September. It should be feasible to bid.

#### Sparring Bull

- Everything south of Troy
- 135,000 acres Conducting a basic assessment looking at the bear population
- 35,000 acres considered for timber **This figure may be an error and needs to be checked**
- 300 miles of road, 84 miles open year around. Looking at access. Welcome input from this group.
- First scoping letter has been mailed out.
- Conducting a watershed analysis. Looking at Bull trout
- Scotchman peak in this area but they are not considering it at this time
- Still evaluating the results of recent floods

What position will stakeholder take on the Dalton project? Committee split on the approach representing the coalition. How early should the coalition get involved in projects? There will be a stakeholder team assume responsibility for the project.

Should the three rivers team take on the Sparring Bull project? John Konzen reminded the group that the mission reflects the need for early involvement in all projects. A district committee will discuss this matter in more detail

#### Young Dodge—Noel Williams.

- Lots of interest in this project.
- Ranger McNitt gave an update of the last meeting.
- There was an appeal and the FS is looking at alternatives concerning openings. Dr.Jain made a site visit and indicated there were too many difference from the areas of her research. She did agree with the proposed treatment. Ranger McNitt suggested that if they provided her data, Dr.Jain, from Forestry Research, would conduct some research that may be useful to the Kootenai Forest.
- An appeal resolution was made but it's doubtful it will be considered.
- **Chuck Roady and the Stoltze Forestry staff** spent a full day on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June on site and walked six different units. Chuck Roady narrated a video of the area and he pointed out that there had been a lot of **past harvest** activity **in the area** and is very difficult to find fault with the FS **management prescriptions.**

#### **Some possible recommendations would be:**

- **Reduce** the unit size down and don't slash **all the residual.**
- Needs to be socially acceptable
- Recommend that they go down to 5-6 inches, diameter **on Larch leave trees** **instead of 14 inches.**

- Unit 23 didn't have many larch
- Fuel load is tremendous in most all units.
- Goal is to re-generate the stands with more diversity of species
- There are three appeals and they are trying to address them all at once.
- Mike Peterson mentioned that from his perspective, it was appealed because the proposed action does not mimic nature. There are many other species besides Deer and Elk. There is new science that gets away from large clear cuts. Need to create different size openings for different management alternatives
- Ed Levert said that he thought we were going to get the team back together. What was the purpose for going out there? They can study it all they want but need the stakeholder's involvement. Some stakeholders have been on site, yet many have not.
- Some discussion reflected the need to have Dr. Jain accompany the team for a site tour. Her visit was on a very short notice.
- Mike indicated the appeal should run its course.
- What does the natural landscape look like? (Sizes, species, etc.)
- Do we need to continue with this project? (John) This is a new level of consideration and may take us into other dimensions. (Roger) there are some definite communications break down in the team and stakeholders.
- Betty - whichever way the appeal goes, the stakeholders will continue to work on it.
- When Young Dodge came along, they had different entry levels. (Quinn) Don't let this project derail the process.

Brush Creek—Ed Levert **(The full report is attached)**

The team made a site visit today, with Mike Peterson, which was the second trip to the project. The first visit by the team was June 13.

- They left lots of trees but snag components were outside the area
- The team, less Jeff Juel, agreed to support this project without reservation.
- It has been appealed. Several points have been addressed and a report addressing the appeal has been sent to the regional office. Waiting for the response
- Less than four miles of temporary road in this project. They want to pull three culverts from the decommissioned portion.
- Most roads are on flat ground and will be reclaimed when they no longer have use for them
- Appeal focuses on removal of 17+ inch diameter merchantable timber and temporary roads.
- Appellants don't like road building on salvage sales.
- Concern over taking out large trees. No history of old trees. Saving trees larger than 17" would reduce the sale by half.
- Mike would like to develop policies up front as to size of trees removed and road building in salvage sales so there would be no appeals in the future.
- Some discussion on the size of trees to maintain the tree structure. There is no science on this issue.
- Do we wait until we find what happens to the appeal?

- Mike indicated the lands council does not have a salvage policy. We definitely need a policy.
- John—do we support salvage and in what capacity or level?
- Maybe this should be addressed by the executive committee.
- Perhaps KFSC should create an ad hoc committee.
- They must deal with more than just Burn areas.

Galton—Betty Holder

- Not a lot going on due to personnel turnovers
- Planning for ID team in early August.
- Hopefully they will have a decision this fall
- Proposed action with site visits in August

Meadow

- If the district team wants to monitor, they need to get together.
- Contact Noel.
- Impact of circuit court decision
- Mike indicated there is even more need to collaborate
- The Lands council won in the 9<sup>th</sup> circuit but lost in the majority ruling.
- The more we collaborate, the better off we all are.

Plum Creek land acquisition—Chris Bryant and Patrick Heffernan

Several points made during the presentation are:

- The Nature Conservancy is supposed to reimburse the affected counties with financial assistance to offset the taxes lost through the land sale.
- All lands will have conservation easements.
- Wood fiber will be sold to Plum Creek at market price. After fifteen years, wood products can be sold to the highest bidder. Some wonder about the future of Plum Creek in the timber business.
- The basic intent of the land sale is to keep the parcels as working lands.
- They intend to develop access for all uses
- There was some discussion on creating community forests but this would require considerable planning but would be of interest to the Nature Conservancy.
- Other items included the upfront costs, who pays for fire fighting, and what are the responsibilities of the state and affected counties

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be held on the **18<sup>th</sup> of September, 2008.**

Respectively submitted,

*Jim DeBree*

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Recording secretary



