

January 31, 2018

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on January 31, 2018, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Cole, Commissioner Bennett, Commissioner Peck, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson.

Commissioner Cole opened the meeting with the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

9:00 AM **Chris Savage/USFWS**: Present were John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker, and Jeff Koskela.

*Lincoln County Commissioner/Kootenai National Forest Update
January 31, 2018 Submitted by Chris Savage*

Salvage

- Total acres currently proposed for salvage is about 10,475 acres.
- Total acres burned from fires was about 85,000 acres.
- Six salvage projects totaled for the KNF:
 - Caribou, EA: 5300 acres
 - West Fork, EA: 3100 acres
 - Cub, EA: 1600 acres.
 - Tamarack, CE. 225 acres. Completed.
 - Gilbralter, CE. 200 acres.
 - Moose Peak, CE. 50 acres.
- Just finished initial scoping on the 3 EA projects. Timeline for all three is to be completed by early July.
- Caribou, West Fork and Cub will be proposed for Emergency Situation Determination for Chief approval. Would remove objection period and save about 90 days on our timeline for decision.
- Sales will be offered and sold this fiscal year.
- Salvage limitations we are working around include
 - Critical habitat for lynx and previously harvested stands.
 - Access.
 - Fire in low merchantable stands.

Kootenai National Forest Timber Program – Forest Priorities

- Currently have approximately 180 mmbf of uncut wood under contract.
- Volume estimated to be sold this year will be approximately 90 mmbf. Primarily will depend on final salvage volume.

Montanore

- Working on SDEIS and draft BA's (biological assessments). Plan to go out w/ DSEIS April/May for public comment.

Rock Creek

- Finalizing work required around objection process.
- Received draft ROD for review. Signing of final ROD April.

Recreation

- Kootenai Falls Swinging Bridge
 - Finalizing NEPA for the bridge. Received concurrence from USFWS last week.
 - Reconstruction of new and removal of old bridge contract out this spring.
 - Materials to be transported by helicopter. Two-year contract time frame, with some public closures to the swinging bridge (not rest of area) during flights/construction.
 - County web site will be official site for closure information. Closures will require 30-day notice by contractor.
 - Understand some concerns from County on closure periods. Will continue to work out differences however, we cannot be too limiting in the contract due to current funding for the bridge.
- Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail
 - National Director, Forest and other landowners working on EA for the Comprehensive Management Plan. Will be primarily general direction, with no site-specific changes. Scoping planned for this spring.
 - Rexford to begin NEPA for trail construction between ABayance Bay and Kooconusa Bridge along Lake Kooconusa shoreline to get PNT off Highway 93. Federal Highway funding for 2020 project.
 - Purchased SST toilet (RAC funds) for Kooconusa Bridge parking area, to be installed this summer.
- YCC (Youth Conservation Core) program Lincoln County, funded through RAC, State WIA, and WO youth engagement funds. Plan for youth enrollees in Lincoln County this summer: 12 Eureka, 12 Libby, and 8 Troy. This is the last year with RAC funding from Lincoln County. The YCC is a very successful program.
- Working to open Timberlane as a campground to expand campsites around Libby. Upgrading electric service this summer. Currently used as a group site only. Goal is to have both the group site as well as a fee campground in 2019.
- Forest received Burned Area Emergency Rehab funding for trail tread, hazard tree removal, and signage for Caribou, Gilbralter, West Fork, Moose fires.
- Campground and cabin rental fee increases.
 - Proposal to be scoped with public this spring. Fees on the forest have not been changed since before 2008.
 - From the fees collected at recreation sites 95% is returned to the Forest. The current receipts do not cover annual maintenance and field staffing needs.

- Implementing fee increases this summer will be dependent on the Administration approval of BLM RAC (REA law requires review by this RAC prior to implementation).
- See attachment for more details.

2018 Proposed Fee Changes

KNF 10/6/2017 Mlaws

DRAFT

Submitted to the commission by Chris Savage

	2016	2018	increase	Notes
Number of Fee campgrounds	18	21	3	Add fee at Kilbrennen, Yaak Falls, Timberlane
Number of Fee Campground with increase in fee			18	all
Number of Fee sites (individual)	407	457	50	Four new CG, reduce Dorr Skeel
Number of fee group sites	6	6		
Number of fee lookout/cabins	13	16	3	Meadow LO already approved; Black butte, Ziegler, Raven
Number of non-fee campgrounds	15	12	-3	
Number of non-fee sites (individual)	107	57	-50	
Number of non-fee lookout/cabins	3			
Number of donation tubes	3	0		Rexford Boat, Stone Hill, Ross Creek
Range of fees campground	\$5-12	\$6-30		
Range of fees lookout/cabins	\$20-55	\$35-60		
Number of Dispersed Sites	580			Outside of campgrounds

Salvage: Commissioner Cole commented that 200 salvage acres on the Gilbralter fire seems small for such a large fire. Commissioner Peck said he has had conversations at the Governor's office expecting strong support for fire salvage efforts. Darren asked how many million board feet would come off of the 5300 acres from the Caribou fire. Chris said approximately 100mmbf. Commissioner Peck commended Chris for a great overall effort regarding fire salvage.

Montanore: Chris said this year's forest service budget is approximately \$245,000 less than what is normally expected for minerals.

Recreation: Commissioner Bennett expressed the importance for public information regarding closure at the swinging bridge site during construction and suggested having a FaceBook page to help get information out to the public. Chris mentioned that during construction, part of the parking area may not be available to the public. Commissioner Cole commented the county wants to be very involved and engaged in conversations regarding recreation issues within the KNF.

Commissioner Bennett recommended an electric system large enough to upgrade the Timberlane Campground Pavilion to whatever the future expansion may be and ensure there is enough power to facilitate future growth. Chris submitted a handout regarding 2018 Proposed Fee Changes to campgrounds throughout Lincoln County. Chris said Dorr Skeels is the highest use campground in this region.

Commissioner Bennett commented that for people who work throughout the week with busy schedules, it is frustrating that campsites are full and suggested implementing a reservation system so people can plan for family camping ahead of time.

10:00 AM **Ernie Anderson/VOIP/Green Button Discussion:** John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker and Jeff Koskela. Ernie discussed the VOIP contract with Frontier; currently waiting for the new proposal. The Voice Over IP System (VOIP) is a phone system that runs over the internet instead of the phone system allowing for people to move their phone with them when changing workstations.

Little Green Button Panic Button System/CRS Proposal: Ernie explained the company is located in Eastern Europe and it is not feasible to move forward with the Little Green Button Panic System. Ernie submitted a new security panic button system by a company called CRS out of Alabama with 24 hour support for commissioner review. Cost is approximately \$1,700.00 annually. The proposal is for Libby courthouse and annex. Ernie said he will need to visit with Commissioner Cole about bringing the system to Eureka. Ernie recommends commissioner approval to move forward. The system comes with a test period and 60-day money back guarantee. Commissioner Peck talked about authorized use of force training for specific employees. Darren said he will research this with MACo and bring back information regarding employee training. Darren said initially, the panic button system will be paid out of the IT budget, but next year the cost will be spread out through all departments. **Motion** by Commissioner Peck to authorize the purchase of the CRS Button Security Program Proposal as submitted. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously.

911 System: Ernie said dispatchers are very pleased with the new system and that it allowed for onsite training. The new system is running smoothly. Darren said the Sheriff's Department gave Ernie a *Letter of Recognition* on a job well done.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues:** Present were Joyce Giles, Myrna Boswell, Bill Lamey, Jerry Snell, Dale Evans, Barbara Turner, John Meister, Gary Armstrong, Michael Haskins, John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker, Jeff Koskela, and Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Robin informed the commission of a Tax Abatement request from the Department of Revenue for Rex Alan and Elizabeth Ann Murray. The parcel was being taxed for the same pole building twice for each of the past three years. Total refund request is for \$219.42. **Motion** by Commissioner Peck to approve Tax Abatement request as presented for \$219.42. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously.

Robin presented the January 24, 2018 minutes to the commission for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve the January 24, 2018 minutes as presented. Second by Commissioner Peck, motion carried.

Darren submitted the annual lease contract for Community Action Partnership of Northwest Montana (CAPNM). **Motion** by Commissioner Peck to approve the lease contract CAPNM as submitted. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously. Lease is for \$250.00 per month for office and parking space at the Eureka Annex. Commissioner Cole asked Darren to check on lease contracts for the WIC office at the Eureka Annex; it may be expired.

Darren submitted Statement of Expenditure Reports for the general funds and sheriff's department. Darren conveyed the county is about 60% through the budget year and departments are doing well staying within budget. Commissioner Peck said the health board is preparing a letter indicating why they are over budget; most of it is legal services. Commissioner Peck commented that he would like to see the expenditure reports monthly and possibly schedule department head meetings when necessary.

10:45 AM **Public Comment:** Present were Joyce Giles, Myrna Boswell, Bill Lamey, Jerry Snell, Dale Evans, Barbara Turner, John Meister, Gary Armstrong, Michael Haskins, John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker, Jeff Koskela, and Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Kootenai Disposal has the county contract with dumpsites and Jerry Snell and Dale Evans asked if there is anything they can do better. Commissioner Cole said the Glen Lake boxes appear full all the time but that may be just a timing issue; overall things are good. Commissioner Bennett said it would be good to communicate during summer festivals such as the 4th of July celebration in Troy. Commissioner Bennett said there may be an extra 2,000+ people and we may need service several times during that weekend. Commissioner Peck said it would be better to place this discussion on the commissioner agenda. Darren said he would put Kootenai Disposal on the commissioner calendar.

Jeff Koskela said the tax hike discussed on the front page of the newspaper brings concerns to the whole community and he encourages the commission to include the citizens in the discussion. Darren clarified that any road levy would be by a vote of the people. Commissioner Peck said this is not something we want to even entertain, but we need to get road information out there and start the discussion.

Gary Armstrong said he is speaking as a Libby City Councilman and citizen and he sees no reason for medical marijuana to have tighter controls than alcohol establishments. Gary stated statistics regarding alcohol and prescription drug deaths; marijuana statistic is zero. Gary said the city ordinance resulted mostly because of rampant fear of medical marijuana and feels decisions were not made from facts and truth.

Barbara Turner commented she felt a story in the Kootenai Valley Record was portrayed as glorified, but then compared it to the minutes and felt they were comparable. Barbara read a portion of previous minutes indicating what the commissioners could do. Commissioner Bennett said that is correct; key word being "could". Commissioner Peck said he specifically asked for clarity on the statutes of what authority the commissioners had, but there has never been any discussion to close anyone down. Barbara said she purchased a building that she wants to conduct business in and that is the concern from a patient standpoint. Barbara explained that she has timelines and needs to be fully compliant by April 30, 2018. Barbara expressed this issue cannot be drawn out so we know if we can invest, and if we cannot do that, we will have to close. Barbara said that if there is a lapse in care, then there will be a serious lapse for patients.

John Meister, owner of Alternative Releaf said he does not understand, with all the empty buildings, why try to do whatever it is you may do; there is money going back into the community and we are state compliant and certified for everything we do.

Joyce said she is new to this conversation and asked the commission to elaborate on its stance. Commissioner Peck said there were people who came to us with concern. Commissioner Bennett said we look at hundreds of different topics, and this issue was put on the agenda to discuss after a discussion at Libby Public Schools. Commissioner Bennett pointed out that he has personally told Barbara via phone conversation that nobody is planning on enforcing closure. Commissioner Peck said it is the commissioners job to research and have some understanding of the new MCA's and to know what the parameters of the county are. It would be irresponsible of us as an elected body to not know and understand what our authority is, but we have never said we need to shut this down.

Commissioner Bennett stated that there has been no discussion about shutting down Alternative Releaf, but it has been discussed that we have certain authorities over medical marijuana dispensaries. Commissioner Bennett said he understands the urgency, but this is one of many other topics we are working on. Commissioner Peck stated that nobody has come to him saying we need to shut this down; all public comment has been for support.

Barbara asked about expanding her business to Eureka. Commissioner Cole said again, it would be about compliancy with state statutes and potentially the Eureka Town Council may need to be contacted.

DC Orr commented that if the commission were not conducting health board meetings secretively, the commission would be more believable.

11:00 PM **Port Authority Update:** Present were Tina Oliphant, Brett McCully, Jeff Koskela, Robert Mast, Gary Armstrong, John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker, Zach McNew and DC Orr.

Tina submitted sign in sheets from glacier bank

Darren asked about sending thank you letters out to departing port authority board members. Darren said we are in the process of bringing on two new board members. Commissioner Peck said we need to set up a time of more than 15 minutes so we can look at outstanding issues. Commissioner Bennett commented that we should schedule a meeting soon for a couple hours and suggested a Tuesday meeting. Tina said she and Brett are creating an outline of topics for immediate discussion. Darren said the ads for new board members have gone out to the public for the next two weeks.

Brett handed out maps showing current port land use and areas showing amenities and the pros and cons of development. Brett also provided a map showing existing lease areas. Darren said it would be beneficial for the Tuesday meeting to have monthly costs; financials. Commissioner Peck said we need to discuss insurance and current liabilities as well as status update on the railroad project and easements. Tina said we can start with an overview and then prioritize. A meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 10AM in the Commissioner's Office.

12:00 PM **Meeting Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mike Cole, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Robin A. Benson, Clerk of the Board