

MINUTES  
**SENATE RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 08, 2017

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Bair, Vice Chairman Vick, Senators Brackett, Heider, Bayer, Johnson, Stennett, and Jordan

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Siddoway

**NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Brackett** moved to approve the Minutes of January 30, 2017. **Senator Stennett** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PRESENTATION:** **Chairman Bair** welcomed David Langhorst, Director, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR). **Chairman Bair** noted that Director Langhorst was a former Senator and member of this Committee, then asked Director Langhorst to address the Committee and to also introduce IDPR's staff and Board members.

**Director Langhorst** said it was a privilege to appear before the Committee. He introduced the following people: Anna Canning, Betty Jo Miller, Keith Hobbs, Tammy Kolsky, David White, Gordon Hansen, and Mike Boren.

**Director Langhorst** said that IDPR was challenged to become more entrepreneurial and more self-sufficient. **Director Langhorst** said IDPR met that challenge by increasing revenues through the "Passport Program" and finding ways for new users to come to the parks. Standup paddle boards and sand boards are just two examples of being creative to entice new users.

**Director Langhorst** stated that not all parks are engineered to produce a lot of revenue. For example, Cataldo Mission and Harriman State Park are assets that are important to Idahoans, but simply cannot charge enough to pay for maintenance; however, other parks do produce a profit. Idaho has 30 parks which provide recreation for Idahoans all across the State.

**Director Langhorst** said IDPR does have a down side. It has a maintenance backlog and also, the overall salaries of IDPR's employees are lower than State averages.

**Senator Heider** inquired about the use of volunteers. **Director Langhorst** stated that IDPR does use volunteers. Last year, IDPR clocked its one millionth volunteer hour. This was recorded time and there are many unrecorded hours by volunteers. Parks that are near populated areas are able to obtain volunteers on a regular basis. Some parks have volunteer camp hosts and those parks provide a space for a trailer or fifth wheel in exchange for work by the host.

**Director Langhorst** said that IDPR has a volunteer coordinator and the number of volunteers is increasing as well as the number of volunteer hours.

**Senator Stennett** asked about the damage to the barn roof caused by the snow at the Reinheimer Ranch at Sun Valley and if such damage is included in the budget of IDPR. **Director Langhorst** said that to his knowledge, the ranch is not part of IDPR's property, but if it were, insurance would take care of the damages.

**Chairman Bair** thanked **Director Langhorst** for his remarks.

**GUBERNATORIAL  
APPOINTEE  
HEARING:**

Michael Boren is from Boise and was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Board to serve a term commencing July 7, 2016 and expiring July 1, 2018. **Mr. Boren** stated that he has been the Chairman of the Board and Chief Operating Officer for Clearwater Analytics since December 2004. Clearwater Analytics is a software company with 450 employees. **Mr. Boren** holds a professional license as an investment advisor.

Organizations that Mr. Boren is a member of are as follows:

- Experimental Aircraft Association
- Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
- National Rifle Association
- Boy Scouts of America

Mr. Boren served as president of Flying Resort Ranches, Inc., which is headquartered in Salmon, Idaho, from April 2001 through April 2008. As president, one of the duties was to manage the recreational operations in the River of No Return Wilderness area. Preserving and maintaining access to trails and parks was a primary reason why Mr. Boren considered applying for the position to become a board member. In Idaho, there is a great amount of wilderness, and **Mr. Boren** said that he is a firm believer in allowing as much access as possible, while preserving the resource and to not cause problems for other users. **Mr. Boren** stated that from his observation, 95 percent of the trails that are to be maintained by the federal government are not being maintained. The other five percent, half is being maintained by private individuals and the other half by the federal government. **Mr. Boren** said that he has personally spent thousands of dollars each year in the backcountry maintaining trails.

Past boards that Mr. Boren has served are:

- Ore-Ida Boy Scout Council Board
- Flying Resort Ranches, Inc., Board
- Clearwater Advisors Board
- Clearwater Analytics Board
- Sawtooth Investment Management Board

Mr. Boren received a BA in Economics from Brigham Young University in 1988. Mr. Boren was an assistant Lacrosse coach at Boise High School from February 2009 through May 2012. Some of Mr. Boren's interests include horse packing, hiking, mountain biking, aviation, boating, hunting, and fishing.

**GUBERNATORIAL  
APPOINTEE  
HEARING:**

Gordon Hansen was born in Burley and has been a lifelong resident of Idaho. **Mr. Hansen** said he is an outdoor enthusiast, participating in many sports. They include: waterskiing, snow skiing, snow boarding, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, hiking, surfing, and mountain biking. Mr. Hansen is a past Sun Valley ski instructor. Another hobby is photography.

**Mr. Hansen** also likes to travel and has visited many foreign countries in Europe, Asia, and South America and also speaks Italian.

Community service has been an important part of Mr. Hansen's life. It includes:

- elected to four four-year terms on the Burley City Council;
- played a key role in the conception and in the development of the Burley Greenbelt;
- instigated the acquisition and construction of the newest waterfront park and boat ramp in Burley;
- past member of the State Waterways Advisory Committee;
- current Republican Precinct Committeeman;
- Boy Scouts;
- Young Men's Advisor - Church; and
- LDS Mission - Italy.

Mr. Hansen is a graduate of Burley High School, 1984, and was student body president. He graduated from Brigham Young University-Mariott School of Management, 1991, with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. Since that time, Mr. Hansen started a ski and bike shop and it has grown into two full-service boat dealerships and sporting goods stores in Burley and Nampa. The businesses employ 26 people and has annual sales of approximately \$10 million.

**Mr. Hansen** said his first experience with IDPR was when he served on the State Waterways Advisory Board. **Mr. Hansen** stated that developed an admiration for IDPR and a desire to contribute to the program. One of Mr. Hansen's goals is to find ways to streamline the decision making process and also to empower the staff to accomplish the tasks before them.

**Chairman Bair** thanked Mr. Boren and Mr. Hansen for their time before the committee.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Brackett** said that in order to expedite the business of the Committee, he asked for unanimous consent to send **RS 25200C1**, **RS 25196**, and **RS 25197** to print. There were no objections. **Chairman Bair** said it has been so ordered.

**PRESENTATION:**

**Chairman Bair** welcomed David Groeschl, Deputy Director and State Forester, Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), who will present a program on the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA).

**Mr. Groeschl** said his presentation would provide: a background on how we got here; what is GNA; what's been done so far; next steps; and challenges and opportunities.

**Mr. Groeschl** said the GNA started with the passing of the 2014 Farm Bill, which included provisions in the bill and one was an amendment to the Healthy Forest Restoration Act that allowed Governors of each state to determine the national forest system lands that are at high risk of insect and disease mortality within their state. When the amendment was passed, the Governors had 60 days to make the initial designation. Idaho's governor asked IDL to do the assessment, pull that information together, then reach out to the forest supervisors and to the various collaborators within the State.

**Mr. Groeschl** said there are 21 million acres of national forest land that is in Idaho. Of the 21 million acres, approximately 12.6 million acres was identified as being at some level of suitable management. Out of the 12.6 million acres, 8.8 million acres was identified as being at high risk for insect and disease mortality. Fifty proposed treatment areas were identified and totaled 1.8 million acres. Treatment areas ranged in size from a few thousand acres to 300,000 acres. One million acres was added recently and now the total of high risk areas is nearly 3 million acres.

One of the tools authorized in the farm bill was GNA. It allows states to enter into cooperative agreements with federal agencies to achieve restoration and resilient landscape objectives across all ownership boundaries. **Mr. Groeschl** said the reason for doing this is to increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration on federal lands through active management. Some of the benefits of doing this is that it improves forest health and reduces fuels and threats to communities and watersheds from catastrophic wildfires. It also creates more jobs. For every additional million board feet that is generated through these restoration activities, they provide \$3.85 million in goods and services and provide \$667,000 in wages. It also supports 12 forest industry jobs and 8 support level jobs within the sector.

**Mr. Groeschl** provided information on what has been done so far with the GNA. The Healthy Forest Restoration Activity (HFRA) designation was accepted in May 2014 and the passage of SCR 126 was in March 2015. This directed the department to look at the opportunity of using GNA to accomplish more work on federal lands and to report on the accomplishments of each year. It also asked what federal lands would make sense to do GNA projects on.

**Mr. Groeschl** said the first GNA timber sale (Wapiti) was held on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. The sale consisted of 4.4 million board feet and is expected to generate \$1.4 million in gross receipts and about \$1.2 million in net receipts. That money will go into the supplemental project agreement fund for the Nez Perce- Clearwater Forest and will be used to do additional restoration work. The goal is to build the fund over time to grow the program and get more work done on the ground. That sale was bought by McFarland Cascade, with three active bidders on that sale.

Other GNA work currently underway is on the Payette National Forest. **Mr. Groeschl** said the Payette National Forest has provided federal money to IDL to fund field work associated with the Lost Creek Boulder Creek and Brundage Vegetation Management Projects. Approximately 150 acres on Lost Creek Boulder Creek were jointly marked by the Forest Service and IDL staff. In addition, IDL staff collected stand exam data for the 180 acre Brundage Vegetation Management Project and identified 14 treatment units totaling about 800,000 board feet. This project preparation work paves the way to formally begin the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental planning process.

**Mr. Groeschl** said there is a 5,000 acre project in the Panhandle National Forest where they will be collecting data this Spring using contractors and also working with the Forest Service as they move through the NEPA process. After the NEPA process is completed, actual field work will be started in the Fall.

**Mr. Groeschl** stated that other national forests have approached him to consider additional Supplemental Project Agreements (SPAs). One is on the Boise National Forest. The Boise National Forest has been busy preparing salvage sales on the Pioneer Fire area that occurred this past summer and they are looking for assistance in other work because their staffing is limited at the present time. Both the Payette and Boise National Forests are providing federal dollars to cover the expenses of GNA to do the work.

The next topic **Mr. Groeschl** addressed was challenges and opportunities. **Mr. Groeschl** said that challenges are on both the state side and the federal side and congratulated the staff for the work they do and also Ms. Marten's leadership. Working together and staying focused on the end result is GNA's goal. **Mr. Groeschl** said secondly, GNA is developing agreed upon key performance metrics that reflect the additional acres being treated, fiber being produced, jobs created, and improvements being made to forest and watershed health.

The third item **Mr. Groeschl** talked about was the growth of the program. Growth is wanted in a smart and intelligent way and to make the program self-sustaining over time, regardless who is at the helm.

**Mr. Groeschl** said that Director Schultz gave GNA a challenge and Director Schultz's goal in ten years is that GNA will be adding 100 million board feet to the market by accomplishing more restoration on federal lands in Idaho. **Mr. Groeschl** said that is the Director's "moon shot."

**Senator Heider** asked if Idaho has a reciprocal agreement with the federal government to harvest timber in a timely manner that has been burned. **Mr. Groeschl** said it is a challenge with federal lands due to the NEPA process, which typically takes six to twelve months. Legislation would be needed at the national level that would provide a more expedited relief for NEPA.

**Vice Chairman Vick** asked if there was relief for GNA under NEPA. **Mr. Groeschl** replied that there is not necessarily relief from NEPA, but under the Healthy Reforestation Act there are categorically exclusions that allows up to 3,000 acres in areas that meet certain criteria.

**Chairman Bair** thanked **Mr. Groeschl** for providing the Committee with up-to-date information, then welcomed Leanne Marten, Regional Forester for the Northern Region of the U.S. Forest Service from Missoula, Montana. The Northern Region encompasses North Idaho, Montana, and parts of North and South Dakota. **Ms. Marten** said she is also representing Nora Rasare who serves the Intermountain Region. The Intermountain Region covers Southern Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, and parts of Nevada.

**Ms. Marten** said the partnership with the State has been phenomenal and she credited **Mr. Groeschl** for the working partnership. Since 2014, there are eight projects across Idaho that have either been completed or are underway and involves about 25,000 acres. There are an additional 27 projects that will be done by 2020.

**Ms. Marten** stated that the Northern Region has many challenges to implement the work that needs to be done on the ground on the national forests in Idaho. **Ms. Marten** said they have been using the GNA and the Farm Bill Authority to put into effect the work that needs to be done. Many of the issues don't stop at the boundaries of federal, state, private, tribal, and county land.

Work is in progress across Southern Idaho in the Payette, Salmon, and Challis National Forests. In Northern Idaho, the Clearwater National Forest is working on forest planning revisions and the Idaho Panhandle finished revising their forest plan the past year. The Idaho Panhandle also has a five-year action plan, which was well received by the public.

**Ms. Marten** said one of the things with national forests is that citizens have a right to object to projects and the right to sue. There is active litigation in different parts of the Idaho Panhandle region. **Ms. Marten** stated that litigation is something they continue to work through.

**Senator Heider** asked who brings litigation to stop the salvage on federal land when it could be productive timber. **Ms. Marten** said lawsuits have been brought by individuals, non-profit groups, and tribal nations. Often times, the things that are brought into litigation are disagreements on analysis or the impact of salvage on wildlife habitat. Sediment in streams affecting fish is also an issue. Some folks simply do not agree with logging.

**Chairman Bair** inquired if there is a mechanism in the GNA that could help facilitate the NEPA work on a forest burn to salvage the timber before it deteriorates. **Ms. Marten** said GNA is one tool that could be used, but they would still have to go through the NEPA process.

**Senator Heider** asked if a fire burns on both state and federal land, are the same challenges from the same people filed on both parcels. **Ms. Marten** said that usually the federal side receives the challenge as the State has different mandates and laws. **Mr. Groeschl** said that state land does not see the same challenges as the federal lands do because of the difference in the mission and law. Also, the State does not have the same ability of litigants. The State bases their salvage on the best available science and there is no State NEPA process.

**Chairman Bair** thanked both Ms. Marten and Mr. Groeschl for their presentation.

**ADJOURNED:**

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Bair** adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

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Senator Bair  
Chair

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Juanita Budell  
Secretary