

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
2270 Old Penitentiary Road
PO Box 7249
Boise, ID 83707

IDAHO WOLF DEPREDATION CONTROL BOARD
Minutes of May 9, 2024, Meeting
Meeting was live streamed via Teams

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chanel Tewalt, ISDA (Co-chair)
Jim Fredericks, Idaho Fish and Game (Co-chair)
Richard Savage (via livestream)
Jon Goode (via livestream)

DEPARTMENT STAFF: Lloyd Knight – ISDA
Jon Rachael - IDFG
Katie Oelrich, Idaho Fish and Game – IDFG
Tricia Hebdon, Idaho Fish and Game – IDFG
Dallas Burkhalter, Office of Attorney General – ISDA
Marshall Toryanski, Office of Attorney General – ISDA
Kelly Nielsen – ISDA

OTHERS PRESENT: Jared Hedelius – USDA Wildlife Services, Idaho Office (via livestream)
Donna Ralston - USDA Wildlife Services, Idaho Office (via livestream)
Gordon Wilkerson – Washington County Commissioner
Dexton Lake – Farm Bureau
Dallas Gudgell – IWCN
Phil Davis
Scott Nicholson
Suzanne Stone – IWCN
Lane Justus – WLA
Jeff Abrams – ICL
Cameron Mulrony - ICA
Rosanne Noble
Rachel C (via livestream)
Hollie Conde (via livestream)
Joshua Adler (via livestream)
Pamela Williams (via livestream)
Caroline Shankel (via livestream)
Garrick Dutcher (via livestream)
Levi Scott (via livestream)

The meeting was called to order by Co-chair Tewalt at 10:04 a.m. MT.

INTRODUCTIONS

Board members introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ACTION ITEM)

Jon Goode, board member, stated there was one correction in March's minutes to be approved. Jon Goode made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2023, meeting with a correction to be made. Seconded by Richard Savage, board member. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Co-chair Tewalt stated that everyone will have four minutes to speak.

Rosanne Noble – Spoke about mission statements and definitions of words within those statements for the Wolf Depredation Board and Idaho Fish and Game. Rosanne continued, reviewing the killing of 20 wolves on the Nez Perce ceded lands, and how Idaho Fish and Game refused to relocate the wolves to Colorado, upon Colorado's request. Rosanne also reviewed Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and how the 20 wolves that were killed were in an area where at least 10% of the wildlife is infected with CWD. Now that these wolves are gone, CWD is likely to spread. Rosanne reviewed how it is time for Idaho Fish and Game to begin managing wolves by the use of nonlethal methods which have been successful by the Wood River Wolf Project since 2008. Rosanne closed out the statement by speaking how nonlethal measures for wolf population would be a win for Idaho.

Suzanne Stone – spoke how the Wood River Wolf Project is in its 17th year. In an area with 20,000-24,000 sheep, the total loss is less than 5 sheep. Suzanne stated it is more effective than killing wolves while spending less money. Suzanne asked the board to talk to legislation to act on non-lethal means to stop the killing of wolves. Suzanne stated that the board hasn't listened in the past and asked that hopefully this will change with this meeting.

Dallas Gudgel – Spoke about how this statement would be more questions than comments. Dallas spoke about how there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place with the Nez Perce Tribe. The MOU has never been abandoned by either side. Dallas wanted to know who is responsible for this MOU, and who is in charge of this MOU. Dallas stated that the incident of the killing of 20 wolves on Nez Perce land occurred in game unit 10. Dallas then asked if we coordinated with the Nez Perce Tribe for the killing the of the 20 wolves? Dallas closed out the statement saying that in July of 2023, the Nez Perce Tribe wrote the Governor's Office stating that the state of Idaho wasn't abiding by the MOU.

Jeff Abrams – Jeff wanted to bring up a reminder that HB 592 was very helpful. Jeff wanted to thank everyone involved because this is a bill that provides funds to reimburse losses and non-lethal means. Jeff stated that more funding needs to be dedicated to this. Jeff stated that the ratio of 2 to 1 needs to be 1 to 1 with non-lethal means.

Co-chair Tewalt asked if anyone else wanted to speak. Seeing none, the public comment period ended. She thanked the speakers for their comments and stated that their comments are appreciated. Co-chair Fredericks thanked the speakers for their comments also.

REVIEW OF REPORTS

FINANCIAL REPORT

Kelly Nielsen gave an overview of the Tracking of Wolf Control Funds Financial Report, including the total budget, total expenses, total revenue, and the current cash balance for FY2024. The state match hasn't changed. There are still excess funds in the over/short fund which is listed in the Livestock Excess Fund. Kelly also reviewed the current fiscal year to date state General Fund balance and expenses report.

WILDLIFE SERVICES REPORT

Jared Hedelius presented the Quarter Report for January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024.

Co-chair Fredericks stated that the numbers overall are down from last year. He asked if this was due to smaller sample size or just normal fluctuations. Jared responded that it could be either or a combination of the two. It is too difficult to definitively determine what the decrease in numbers is from as there are too many variable factors.

IDAHO FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME REPORT

Katie Oelrich with IDFG gave a verbal overview of wolf captures as of 05/08/2024.

- 11 radio collared wolves including 2 that came into Idaho from Montana
- IDFG couldn't do another push for collars in March due to weather and vendor availability. They are working on a more stable and reliable vendor.
- There has been a total mortality of 389 Wolves. This is about 10% less than last year and about 20% lower than the last 3 years.
- Stated that invoices for the 20 wolves killed are incoming. There is an issue with the statewide billing system but the invoices will be sent out soon.
- Stated that as of March 31, 2024, Areas 1, 2, 6, and 7 have stopped wolf trapping because of the recent court ruling. This accounts for 33% of wolf mortality on an annual basis.

Jon Rachael with IDFG gave a brief overview of the lawsuit that was filed to stop wolf trapping. Jon stated that there is no estimated time of hearing on the appeal that was filed by the Idaho Attorney General's Office. IDFG is anticipating needing to make changes to wolf trapping season from July 1, 2024 through the end of June 2025 to comply with the existing court order.

Jon also stated that in February, the US Fish and Wildlife Service refused to re-list wolves on the protected list. Multiple Non-Government Organizations (NGO's) then filed a lawsuit against the Service. Jon indicated that IDFG would monitor that lawsuit as well.

REVIEW OF INVOICES

APPROVAL OF INVOICES (ACTION ITEMS)

Co-Chair Tewalt asked for an overview of the invoices before the Board. Kelly Nielsen reviewed the charges and supporting documents.

Kelly reviewed the credit amount due to the clerical error from the Wildlife Services Invoice that was presented two meetings ago. Kelly recommended all invoices for payment including the Wildlife Services invoice that reduced the amount due by the amount of the credit from the clerical error.

Jon Goode, board member, made a motion to approve the invoices for payment. Seconded by Richard Savage, board member. Motion carried.

Tricia Hebdon with IDFG reviewed the supporting documentation for incoming invoices that aren't through Luma yet. She stated that the invoices would be coming soon and be ready for review during the next meeting. No action needed yet on these invoices.

DISCUSSION – OTHER INVOICES (PRODUCER AGREEMENT)

Kelly Nielsen reviewed the Valley County Agreement invoices. Kelly wanted to ensure that there wasn't double billing occurring where the Wolf Depredation Board and IDFG were both getting billed separately for the same wolf kills that were listed in the supporting documentation. Kelly stated that there was sufficient supporting documentation showing that the \$18,000 contract was met and recommended payment, as long as there was no double billing occurring. Jon Goode, board member, made a motion to approve the invoices for payment with the stipulation to confirm that there was no double billing occurring. Seconded by Richard Savage, board member. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Co-chair Tewalt and Co-chair Fredericks reviewed the wolf depredation bills that passed Idaho Legislature. Co-chair Tewalt reviewed HB 612 and specified that the phrase "with available funding" is a key component. She asked that everyone keep that in mind with the new proposals that will be reviewed at next month's meeting.

Co-chair Fredericks continued the conversation about HB 592 and how ISDA is going to be responsible for rulemaking. He brought up how we must balance new proposals and reimbursement for losses. He stated that the funding didn't grow, just more latitude to reimburse for more items.

Co-chair Tewalt stated that there is \$125,000 allotted for agreements and \$36,000 has already been used. She also reminded everyone that there are two proposals, one for \$50,000 and one for \$38,000 that will be reviewed at the June meeting.

Both Co-chair Tewalt and Co-chair Fredericks thanked the public for their participation in the meeting.

Co-chair Tewalt reviewed possible dates for the next meeting. June 11, 2024, 1:00pm-4:00pm was suggested. Board members agreed on this date and time. Co-chair Tewalt also suggested that a second meeting in June might be necessary just for paying invoices for the end of the Fiscal year.

ADJOURNMENT

11:32am