**MINUTES**

**Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board**

**August 21, 2019**

Celia Gould, ISDA; called the meeting to order at 1:30pm. Those in attendance were: Richard Savage, Board member; Ed Schriever, Idaho Fish and Game; Toby Boudreau, Idaho Fish and Game; Todd Grimm, USDA – Wildlife Services; Brian Oakey, ISDA; Kelly Nielsen, ISDA; Dallas Burkhalter, OAG - ISDA; and Janis Perry, ISDA.

Guests attending were: Pam Williams, concerned citizen; Darlene Carver, Idaho Wolves.org; Alyson Martin, wolf advocate; Heidi Briggs, wolf advocate; Talasi Brooks, Western Watersheds Project; Kirk Chandler, Washington County Commissioner; Cameron Mulroney, Idaho Cattle Association; Cody Chandler, rancher; Braden Jensen, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation; Sean Ellis, Idaho Farm Bureau; Suzanne Stone, Lava Lake Science Institute; and Brad Carlson, Capital Press.

Following introductions, Celia Gould asked for approval of the minutes. Ed Schriever moved that the minutes of the May 20, 2019 meeting be approved as submitted. Richard Savage seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Celia Gould asked for public comments. Darlene Carver commented that as a wolf advocate she wanted to see what was going on and to see that wolves are adequately treated.

Cody Chandler, who ranches in Washington County, shared his experience the previous Monday night when he and his family were near Cuddy Mountain. Around 2 am wolves went wild and were chasing his cows. The next morning the wolves howled from 9 to 10 am and had chased the meadow of cows into the trees. He claimed that the wolves are effecting his family’s way of life and hurting them really bad. He claimed that public lands are no longer safe.

Kirk Chandler, Washington County Commissioner, stated that packs of wolves are effecting the economy of the county. The wolves are also causing other wildlife to move closer to town which is effecting the health and safety of the citizens.

Suzanne Stone commented that she had introduced her family to the thrill of wolves howling on a camping trip. She remarked that she does not feel that we don’t have to have cows on all our lands. She encourages the use of non-lethal methods for reducing conflict between wolves and livestock. She stated that all citizens matter.

Braden Jensen, Idaho Farm Bureau, noted that wildlife corridors had been discussed at a Fish and Game meeting he attended this week. He stated that the Farm Bureau has members in all 44 counties and they are seeing additional depredation where wildlife have not traditionally been.

Cameron Mulroney, Idaho Cattle Association, indicated his organization supports the management of wolves.

Talasi Brooks, Western Watershed, commented that documentation from Wildlife Services is lacking on the use of non-lethal means before wolves are removed.

Celia Gould asked about the approval of invoice paid in FY19. Ed Schriever moved and Richard Savage seconded that the invoices be approved. Motion carried.

Todd Grimm summarized the Wildlife Service’s depredation control report for FY19. Indicating it had been a busy year, with 264 investigations, involving 136 producers. He stated that 66% involved confirmed depredations due to wolves. Most were cattle depredations, rather than sheep, which also is a first. Wildlife Services removed 66 wolves all related to cattle and mostly on private land. He stated that a large chunk of the removals done at the end of May in an area of historic losses may have resulted in a better summer. August is typically the busiest month and with 42 days so far in FY20 they have done 28 investigations, which is way down from last year.

Responding to questions from Richard Savage, Todd Grimm stated that their helicopter flew this morning and right now their equipment is in pretty good shape. He also noted that there is still has been no wolf activity south of the interstate, but there has been more activity in Washington County. He indicated that there is nothing much happening north of Riggins nor in Ada County this year.

Brian Oakey presented the updated Performance Report which conforms to the format from the governor’s office and takes information from the reports from Wildlife Services and Fish and Game. Richard Savage commented that since the Board has narrow side boards on what it can do, perhaps those statute limitations could be added to the overview. He moved that the report be approved with that addition to the overview. Ed Schriever seconded the motion which carried.

In other business, Kelly Nielsen reviewed the end of the year financials. He commented that May and June livestock collections boosted the revenue, so that the livestock account exceeded the $110,000 threshold. This meant that the excess was placed in the livestock excess fund which will collect interest.

Richard Savage stated that having only $200,000 from the general fund next year could be a problem for the Board. Ed Schriever responded that he felt we would get through the fiscal year and reminded the group that the budget request for FY21 approved by the Board at the May meeting was for $400,000. He continued that the Fish and Game control actions are under the purview of the Fish and Game Commission. Since delisting, radio collaring has proved to be insufficient to accurately estimate the number of wolves in the state. So, Fish and Game per the wolf management plan will be transitioning to something more cost effective. Fish and Game has placed 800 or so cameras and along with other metrics this will allow them to estimate wolf count yearly. He stated that currently the wolf population in the state is robust allowing for wolf trapping.

Richard Savage asked about Carl Rey’s term on the Board that has expired. Celia Gould indicated that was in the hands of the governor’s office.

Celia Gould adjourned the meeting at 2:10 pm.