

Idaho Wolf Depredation Board

Regular Meeting

February 2, 2015

Boise, Idaho

Board members participating in the meeting were Virgil Moore, Celia Gould, Carl Rey, Tony McDermott, and Richard Savage. Other participants included Brian Oakey, Chanel Tewalt, Kelly Nielsen, Angela Kaufmann, Brad Compton and Todd Grimm.

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 12:14 p.m.

Brian Oakey gave a brief overview of what would be covered in the meeting including practice of the budget presentation before the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC), a fiscal report and then a review of the day's packet of documents.

Carl Rey gave the draft budget presentation to the group, which ran approximately 11 minutes. The Board did not ask for any changes to the presentation.

Brad Compton spoke briefly about the IDFG item on the agenda. IDFG is considering a proposal with Wildlife Services and the Board for aerial and ground depredation control work, but no proposal was ready to present. Todd Grimm added that the work was being planned at the very local level with regional IDFG managers. Chairman Moore noted that IDFG is continuing its work to document breeding pair across the state.

Chairman Moore also spoke about the general misinformation shared about the Board, especially outside the state. Chairman Moore wants increased effort is disseminating information. IDFG is working with partners to underscore the need for wildlife data. Mr. Oakey added the Board's JFAC presentation notes sought to clearly delineate the mission of the Board and to try to outline a very specific mission.

Richard Savage joined the meeting at 12:30.

Tony McDermott referenced the email to the Board asking about a bifurcated work plan for wildlife and livestock depredation control and asked if any other Board members had concerns about splitting the plan. Mr. Compton shared some of the same concerns. Chairman Moore explained that the bifurcation was an attempt to move forward with depredation control work. He again emphasized the importance of education to the public. Mr. Rey shared Mr. McDermott's concerns but saw the bifurcation as the lesser of two evils. Mr. Savage was concerned with splitting the plan.

Chairman Moore commented that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies was an important partner in explaining the importance of the work done by WS, which is important and helps wildlife in all states.

Brian Oakey asked the Board to consider re-examining the issue in the near future. Chairman Moore echoed that it would take a policy decision by the Board. Mr. Savage asked what options were available for contractors. Mr. Compton explained that IDFG could consider private contractors which would be effective but likely very expensive. Mr. Rey asked about the cost. Mr. Compton answered that private contractors could typically cost \$1000 per hour. Mr. Grimm noted that WS would never expect to cost more than \$600 per hour. Mr. Oakey explained that Idaho Code provides that the Board may contract with federal, state or state-recognized governmental entities, so options for contractors would be somewhat limited.

Mr. Rey asked what the end date was for the current Work Plan. Chairman Moore answered June 30, 2015, and that he would like to see a twelve-month contract signed for July 1, 2015. Mr. Compton asked Mr. Grimm if he knew of what a timeline would look like for a renewed agreement. Mr. Grimm was uncertain about a definite timeline and noted the interjection of USDA Secretary's Office in the signing of the last Work Plan.

Celia Gould added that the reason for providing a bifurcated Work Plan for the Board's consideration was to provide options in the face of the budget presentation to JFAC. Chairman Moore was in favor of the Board settling on another agreement as soon as feasible. He suggested revisiting the issue after the Legislature finished budget setting. Mr. Grimm indicated that timeline would be enough time for him to outline a proposal as well.

Mr. Oakey asked if any changes needed to be considered for the next Work Plan. Mr. Savage asked if the Board could be more proactive in addressing depredation control issues before they become larger problems. Chairman Moore replied the IDFG's efforts would be consistent with established management plans. Mr. Compton added that IDFG is largely proactive with season setting. Chairman Moore continued that IDFG and WS are learning depredation hot spots earlier. Mr. Savage had the sense that wolf depredation activity would pick up considerably in the future. Mr. Grimm mentioned the work WS does in conjunction with Montana for areas affected along the shared border with Idaho.

Chairman Moore noted that Idaho would always have wolves, which underscores the need for the resources of the Board.

Mr. Rey asked Mr. Grimm to review the map slide in the JFAC presentation, which was prepared with information from WS' report to the Board. Mr. Grimm explained that in some units, depredation control work occurred but didn't result in lethal action. Mr. Savage asked IDFG to speak to the value in collaring wolves, which Chairman Moore explained was very important.

Angela Kaufmann instructed that, per the Board's statute in Idaho Code, livestock depredation control must be tied to lethal control, but the IDFG match dollars did not have the same requirements.

Chairman Moore spoke to the need for additional policy development to memorialize the Board's direction on issues like unified agreements. Mr. Rey also expressed a desire for written policies that could be shared or discussed as needed.

Mr. McDermott asked if the Senate Resources and Environment Committee had asked for a presentation from the Board, which it had not to date. He also commended WS for its work and effort to head-off misinformation. Mr. Savage continued that part of his thought with additional radio collaring would be to provide even more wildlife data.

Mr. Rey referred back to the map slide in the JFAC presentation. He asked Mr. Grimm what a full year of data would look like opposed to the current map showing collection of 6 months' worth data since the Board's inception. Mr. Grimm answered that the map distribution would be pretty similar but that the concentration in each unit may differ.

Chanel Tewalt gave a brief update to Board members about the schedule the following day for the JFAC hearing at the Capitol.

Mr. Rey asked about a date for the next meeting. Chairman Moore suggested that April would be a good time since the legislative session would like be over. Mr. McDermott also agreed on the timing.

There was no further business, and the meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.