

Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board

Regular Meeting

June 8, 2015

Boise, Idaho

Board members participating in the meeting were Brian Oakey (for Celia Gould), Ed Schriever (for Virgil Moore) Tony McDermott, Richard Savage, and Carl Rey. Other participants included Chanel Tewalt, Kelly Nielsen, Angela Kaufmann, Brad Compton, Russ Hendricks, Stephen Goodson, Todd Grimm, Donna Ralston, and Barbara Harper (Office of the Attorney General intern).

The meeting was convened at 10:11 a.m. by Chairman Carl Rey. Tony McDermott moved to amend the agenda to include discussion of new project request from Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG). The motion was seconded by Brian Oakey and passed unanimously.

Chairman Rey directed the Board to the first item on the agenda, which was discussion of the Board's presentation to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee during the last legislative session. Chairman Rey expressed concern that the cost per wolf statistic discussed at that time didn't adequately convey to legislators the true cost of livestock and wildlife losses. He would like the Board and staff to develop a more inclusive way of presenting that information. Mr. McDermott agreed and added that the dollar amount didn't account for all damage or for the depredation avoided. Chairman Rey asked that the visual depiction included in the presentation be updated to include not only lethal wolf depredation control but also other control activities.

Mr. Oakey spoke to the group about studies conducted related to livestock depredation. The National Agricultural Statistics Service formerly conducted sheep loss surveys, but funding has since been cut for those studies. Idaho wool grower groups asked if the Board would consider funding the data compilation work. Angela Kaufmann has researched the issue and determined that funding such an effort was not in the statutory purview of the Board. Richard Savage agreed with the assessment, and added that the Board's role is narrow.

Moving to the next item on the agenda, Ms. Kaufmann spoke to the Board about consideration of an amendment to the MOU and Cooperative Service Agreement, which would change the requirements of the documents from quarterly reporting to reporting twice a year. Chairman Rey asked if the change would be amenable to Wildlife Services (WS). Todd Grimm indicated that it would. Mr. Savage moved to change reporting to twice a year. Mr. McDermott seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Kelly Nielsen provided a fiscal update to the Board. The Board had a balance of approximately \$258,000. The next bill from WS was expected sometime in July 2015. Mr. Nielsen also spoke to the slight overlap between the end of the State of Idaho's fiscal year and when the Board received a bill from WS. The Board has a continuing appropriation, so reporting would note when the work was conducted for clarity.

Mr. Grimm shared the most recent WS report with the Board. Chairman Rey asked about the peak time of year for wolf depredation. It is July and August by WS' best estimates. Mr. McDermott noted

some concern from hunting groups in northern Idaho that IDFG had not communicated as much as was possible about the agency's depredation control efforts in that part of the state.

Discussion moved to the Board's next Work Plan with WS. Donna Ralston spoke to the Board about amending the current Work Plan rather than adopting a new one. The amendment could include funding for depredation control work to continue through June of 2016, with a locked-in overhead rate. Brad Compton asked that the draft Work Plan strike a dollar reference to Fish and Game Commission-directed dollars and instead simply reference Commission-directed funds. That would account for any additional matching revenue before the end of the fiscal year. Tony McDermott moved that the Board accept the amended Work Plan draft with changes to the dates for reporting and the stricken language related to an exact FG Commission dollar amount. Mr. Savage seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Oakey asked when the Board wanted staff to start working on the next Work Plan. For WS' process, Ms. Ralston suggested no later than April 2016. Chairman Rey asked the Board if they would like to direct staff to begin the process earlier. Mr. McDermott moved that Board staff begin drafting the next Work Plan in December 2015. Mr. Savage seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda, as per the motion made at the beginning of the meeting, was consideration of the draft proposal distributed by IDFG. The proposal was a request for a cooperative agreement with the Board for depredation control work related to wolf depredation on ungulates. The draft agreement had the same structure as the Board's agreement with WS. It included collaring work, and there was no indirect or overhead fee, which can be waived when State entities work with each other. Mr. Savage asked if funds could be used for collaring. Brad Compton indicated they could when they may facilitate future lethal action. Mr. Compton also noted that the draft agreement had similar requirements for reporting as the WS Cooperative Agreement. Chairman Rey asked why the agreement focused on elf depredation. Mr. Compton replied that was the area where IDFG had seen the most need related to wolf depredation on wildlife. Mr. McDermott asked if there would be sufficient funding to cover the proposal and the Board's contract with WS. Mr. Nielsen said yes and indicated the Board would have approximately \$600,000 for FY2016. Mr. Compton added that the dollar amount in the proposal was based on careful study of past work costs. Mr. McDermott moved that the Board approve the IDFG ungulate agreement. Mr. Savage seconded the motion and it passed with four ayes and one abstained (Mr. Schriever recused himself from the vote).

Mr. Oakey told the group that its budget request was due to the Division of Financial Management by September 1, 2015. He asked that the Board decide on the amount to be requested. Stephen Goodson noted that the Governor's budget would include \$400,000 from the General Fund for the Board. Mr. Nielsen reminded the Board that its enabling statute sunsetted in 2019. He also added that the Board had a cash balance for the current year. Russ Hendricks told the Board that Farm Bureau members would like to see the Board fully funded and would support a budget that reflected that. Mr. Savage wanted to extend his appreciation to the Governor for seeing a need to fully fund the Board. He added that a per wolf number used by some didn't reflect the true costs of dead animals, harassed animals and other consequences of wolf depredation. Mr. Savage wanted to see the Board prepared with full funding.

Mr. McDermott moved that the Board request \$400,000 in General Fund monies in its next budget. Mr. Savage seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Savage moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Mr. McDermott seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Savage moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. McDermott seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

No new business was discussed, and the meeting adjourned at 1:28 p.m.