

MINUTES
Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board
November 29, 2018

Virgil Moore, Idaho Fish and Game, called the meeting to order 10 a.m. Those in attendance were: Carl Rey, Board member; Virgil Moore, Idaho Fish and Game; Celia Gould, Board member; Tony McDermott, Board member; Toby Boudreau, Idaho Fish and Game; Katrine Franks, Governor's Office; Todd Grimm, Wildlife Services; Brian Oakey, ISDA; Kelly Nielsen, ISDA; Dallas Burkhalter, OAG - ISDA; Katy DeVries, DAG – ISDA; and Janis Perry, ISDA. Telephone participant was: Richard Savage, Board member.

Guests attending were Pam Williams, concerned citizen; Kirk Gustad, USDA – Wildlife Services; Greg Jones, USDA – Wildlife Services; Rusty Kramer, Idaho Trappers Association; Tim Conant, Idaho Trappers Association; Delon Lee, Idaho Farm Bureau; Dennis Tanikuni, Idaho Farm Bureau; Brandy Kay, Idaho Wool Growers; Phil Davis, Rancher; Jared Hedelius, USDA – Wildlife Services; Brad Carlson, Capital Press; Cameron Mulroney, Idaho Cattle Association; Scott Nicholson, T.F.I. Limited.

Virgil Moore asked for approval of the minutes. On page two Carl Rey corrected the third bullet to be “Wildlife Services.” Carl moved that the minutes of the June 5, 2018 meeting be approved as corrected. Tony McDermott seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Virgil Moore asked for public comments. Pam Williams asked how a person could make changes to the minutes. Virgil Moore stated that she should contact any of the Board members. Her concern about pronouns was corrected in the minutes. Also she requested more detail to put numbers given into context.

Phil Davis, a rancher, distributed a letter to the board members which is attached. He explained that he felt that the number of depredations was way up this year and that the “problem had outrun the solution.” He suggested that the Board consider this an emergency and do the following:

1. Collar more wolves;
2. Help Wildlife Services lease or buy a better helicopter;
3. Fund university level research on myopathy where an animal exerts itself beyond what it can handle and there currently is no way to test for it.

Richard Savage agreed with what Phil Davis said. He suggested a major overhaul and mentioned that he was available to discuss with other cattle producers. Carl Rey asked how many depredations Phil had this past year. Phil responded “twelve, every one of myopathy.” He indicated that wolf trauma is not always mortal and we should look at the long term effect of myopathy.

Rusty Kramer, Idaho Trappers Association and Foundation for Wildlife Management, showed a map depicting the Game Management Units that are closed to trapping of wolves. He advocated for the opportunity to open more units for trapping. He indicated that the Foundation of Wildlife Management reimburses trappers for wolves but that is impossible if the unit is not open to trapping. He mentioned a wolf depredation in unit 56. Todd Grimm asked if had been reported.

Scott Nicolson, a rancher in the Owyhees and in Valley County, indicated that he had thirteen confirmed depredations this year. He praised Wildlife Services, but asked how to get them additional funds for a new helicopter and for night vision.

Brian Oakey explained that the Board had discussed at the last meeting some discussion from the last legislative session regarding the way the Board's bills are paid. He said some felt that costs should be shared from all three funds. Toby Boudreau commented that Fish and Game can definitely add more detail. He stated that they have only charged expenses to the ungulate account and that will continue. Brian responded that any additional information would be helpful. He asked if when a bill is submitted should it be paid from all funds equally or be paid from one specific fund. Carl Rey stated that it is a more complicated issue since the Fish and Game funds are limited by Pittman Robertson and that the surplus is a problem. Toby replied that since 1937 Pittman Robertson has prohibited license fees paying for anything other than fish and game activities which throws off the three-legged stool approach. Carl wondered if sub-codes could be created for investigations as a line item, because in reality a lot of other activity occurs other than lethal killing of wolves. Richard agreed with the carry over concerns.

Virgil Moore commented that the Fish and Game Commission has to verify that the use of funds is not a diversion. He felt that a new helicopter could be a problem if it were used on coyotes. He said he is not certain if myopathy research would be a diversion since wolves are game animals. Celia Gould stated that myopathy research could be on both livestock and wildlife. Virgil stated that is not afraid to push it, but needs the consent of the Fish and Game Commission.

Brian Oakey stated that he is hearing that it is critical that bills be scrutinized, so when we receive a bill, he suggested giving it to Fish and Game to review.

Carl Rey asked how does Wildlife Services replace a helicopter. Todd Grimm responded that it is complicated. The current helicopter was built in 1966 and has bullet holes. He thought that last year they were getting a replacement. He stated that he may hear Monday on news developing about this. He said that he does have the ability to lease one as Montana does. Toby Boudreau indicated that Fish and Game has contracts with fifteen vendors for helicopter services. In response to Carl Rey's concern about flying if not air worthy, Todd stated that Wildlife Services does not fly if the helicopter is not air worthy. He commented that last year they spent \$100,000 in helicopter maintenance.

Tony McDermott commented that we are all in this together and that there are wolves in every unit. He claimed that Idaho leads the nation in wolf management, but because we don't count wolves anymore, we do not know the number in the state. He stated that the Foundation for Wildlife Management had reimbursed 58 trappers for 451 wolves. He suggested that we reduce the wolf population by trapping.

Carl Rey moved that the Board modify contract billing procedures to include sub-code identifiers under the main program categories of livestock and ungulates so as to track expenditures within each category allocated to investigations. And that a standard protocol be adopted whereby the Idaho Fish and Game review and approve all billing statements prior to their payment. Celia Gould indicated she was comfortable with the language but asked for Kelly's input. Kelly stated that the issue is that Wildlife Services may not be able to provide that level of detail. The information is not built into the accounting system. Brian Oakey commented that the issue is with the detail. There is not linkage to whether expenses are for livestock, ungulates, or shared. Kelly responded that the audit was looking for more

detail. Carl Rey withdrew his motion. Virgil Moore suggested that staff work to propose a draft motion for the next meeting to meet the intent of Carl's motion.

Kelly Nielsen then reviewed the FY2019 Fiscal Report. He reminded the Board that the report includes four sub-sections that are all tracked separately, but related. The beginning cash balance was \$607,834. Revenue collected so far is \$38,574 plus \$7,957 in interest and \$110,000 from fish and game and \$400,000 from the general fund. Expenses paid so far are \$93,718 leaving a current cash balance of \$1,070,647. He also stated for the first time we spent more than the monies collected in FY18. The trend is that expenses are on an uphill curve and its eating into the cash balance.

Toby Boudreau stated that he had a bill for \$57,000 from Fish and Game for work performed from October, 2017 to March, 2018 that did not get paid. He indicated that no reminders had been sent and he just learned of it. Kelly stated he did not think that he had received the bill. Celia Gould stated that "we can't know, if we didn't get it." Toby Boudreau agreed to have the Fish and Game financial person contact Kelly.

Todd Grimm reported that in the first three months of FY19 Wildlife Services conducted 150 investigations with 109 confirmed depredations. He indicated that cattle producers are getting hit now and sheep depredations are down. He stated that \$26,000 had been spent on investigations. Since the report was printed they have seen 24 more confirmed depredations and had killed five wolves and collared two. There are 17 control actions currently open in the state. He said that the wolf collared in unit 39 has moved east to Craters of the Moon. He said that unit 50 in Copper Basin has seen more depredation.

Richard Savage asked what had caused the drop in pressure on sheep. Todd Grimm responded that his hypothesis is that surrounding bands of sheep are guard dogs and herders, so there is constant human protection.

Toby Boudreau reported on the Fish and Game control actions for FY19. He stated that they had radio collared three wolves in the Lolo zone. He indicated that they have plan for collars in units 24 and 50. Virgil added that the Fish and Game Commission is paying closer attention to the increase in wolf activity. They collar for specific management purposes. They are looking to other estimators for better population information.

Brian Oakey reported that the sunset legislation had been approved by the governor's office. He asked that the Board appoint a point of contact for both the legislation and the JFAC presentation. Celia Gould moved that Carl Rey be the point of contact. Tony seconded the motion and motion carried.

Katrine Franks reported that she had reviewed the website option drafts. However, since the Board felt that the governor's office should host the Board's site, she stated it was not doable at this time. In one month Governor Otter's site will be archived and a new person will be facilitating for the new governor. Celia Gould recommended that we have the website on our "to do" list for the next administration. She expressed appreciation for Katrine's work with the Wolf Board. Katrine announced that Tim Murphy has been appointed as new Fish and Game Commissioner for the Southwest Region.

Celia Gould expressed her thanks to Virgil Moore as a great partner. She suggested we look at the first part of January for the next meeting.

Virgil Moore thanked everybody. He stated that the Board is an example of collaborative efforts that come up with solutions. He indicated that Idaho has managed wolves for eight years, three without the federal umbrella. With forty plus years at Fish and Game he commented that the Fish and Game is in a strong position as partner for all types of wildlife depredation.

Phil Davis suggested that the Board ask the legislature for \$800,000. Celia Gould suggested that the sunset clause was more critical than the funding this year. She recommended that all in attendance talk to your legislator.

Richard Savage indicated that he's been asking cattlemen to talk to your neighbors. He expressed gratitude for Virgil's work because he listens.

Virgil Moore adjourned the meeting at 12:02 pm.