

MINUTES
Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board
November 18, 2020

Celia Gould, Idaho State Department of Agriculture, called the teleconference meeting to order at 1:31 pm. Those in attendance were: Board members Richard Savage, Stephen McGrath, Tony McDermott and Scott Reinecker (substituting for Ed Schriever); Martha Wackenhut, Idaho Fish and Game; Jared Hedelius and Donna Ralston, USDA – Wildlife Services; Dallas Burkhalter, OAG - ISDA; Brian Oakey, Kelly Nielsen, and Janis Perry, ISDA.

Guests attending were: Talasi Brooks, Western Watersheds Project; Brad Carlson, Capital Press; Sean Ellis, Idaho farm Bureau; Derek Goldman, Endangered Species Coalition; Naomi Gordon, Idaho Sheep and Goat Health Board; Sarah Michael; Cameron Mulrony, Idaho Cattle; Suzanne Stone, Defenders of Wildlife; Cameron Mulrony, Idaho Cattle; Pam Williams, concerned citizen; and Chyla Wilson, Idaho Farm Bureau.

Celia Gould asked for approval of the minutes. Tony McDermott moved that the minutes of August 19, 2020 be approved. Scott Reinecker seconded the motion. Scott indicated that Martha Wackenhut had found typos to the minutes. Tony amended the motion to approved the corrected minutes. Motion carried.

Celia Gould asked for public comments.

Talasi Brooks thanked the Board for making the meeting documents available for the public. She asked if Idaho Fish and Game is using Wolf Board funds for lethal actions.

Cameron Mulrony commented that now that wolves are delisted in all 48 states, the need to manage them as the predators that they are is important and we need to do that in Idaho.

Pamela Williams noted that there is ambiguity in the Wildlife Services invoices since there is no detail. She asked how Wildlife Services personnel are trained to recognize confirmed versus probable depredations. She asked if the Board could address the cost to kill each wolf.

Kelly Nielsen reviewed the first quarter FY21 financial statement. The beginning balance in all four funds was \$361,185; revenues collected from livestock and sheep fund were \$30,499; transfer from Fish and Game fund was \$110,000; general fund net of hold back was \$372,400; expenses in Q4 were \$98,432; leaving an ending balance of \$778,778. He reminded the Board that first expenses will be paid from the livestock and sheep fund, next the general fund, and then from the state match.

Next, Kelly Nielsen discussed the Q5 Wildlife Services invoice for \$22,055.57. He explained that this invoice reflects expenses occurred from work done in FY20, but not billed until after June 30, 2020. Scott Reinecker moved to approve payment of this invoice with Tony McDermott seconding the motion. Steve McGrath asked if Kelly recommended payment of the invoice. Kelly responded that the supporting documentation does tie back to the invoice. In response to a question from Richard Savage, Jared Hedelius stated that charges can occur up to June 30, 2020 but not be billed until after the fiscal year ends, so the Q5 bill is actually the final bill for the year. Motion to approve the invoice carried.

Kelly Nielsen discussed the Q1 Wildlife Services invoice for \$134,658.72. He noted that the supporting detail was provided for each transaction, except for \$300 in travel. Steve McGrath asked if Kelly had any concern for the redaction of information in the supporting documentation. Kelly stated that the redacted information was for names and information of personnel. He recommends payment. Steve asked if the arrangement with ISDA is sufficient to cover Kelly's review time. Kelly suggested that he track his time and that the agreement could be revised in the spring. Richard Savage moved to approve the invoice; Scott Reinecker seconded. Motion carried.

Celia Gould stated that the lingering 2015 Wildlife Services invoice has been withdrawn by Wildlife Services.

Lastly, Kelly Nielsen stated that the interagency billing for the LSO audit in the amount of \$1,500 was the first one the Wolf Board has received from LSO, even though they had completed the second audit which occurs every three years. Kelly indicated that this is an annual bill and noted that next year the charge will be \$2,500. Scott Reinecker moved that it be paid; Tony McDermott seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Jared Hedelius reviewed the Wildlife Services Depredation Control Summary for July 1 to September 30. He explained that during the quarter Wildlife Services conducted 104 investigations for 55 producers, finding 66% of them were confirmed wolf depredations; most were on forest service land. Jared explained that if the livestock die of unknown causes, the investigation stops. If killed, they go to the next step of determining what killed the livestock. They removed 13 wolves for the protection of livestock and radio-collared 1 wolf. He indicated that this work involved 17 employees with 12 involved in investigations. Investigations occupied 15% of their wolf depredation time and this number would drop in future quarters since this quarter is their busiest for investigations. Steve McGrath asked if \$12,000 per wolf removed is a reasonable number. Jared responded that yes, with the wolf work they are doing it is since Wildlife Services is looking to reduce conflict and identify wolves that are causing problems, not just looking for wolves to capture. He stated that this is time consuming work. Steve questioned how many wolves they would need to remove to protect livestock. Jared answered that they judge success by the reduction in conflict, not the number of wolves removed. Steve stated that the confirmed depredations was the same this year as last, so wondered if they were effective. Jared speculated that without the program, how high would the livestock losses be. Tony McDermott commented that he felt that 30% of the wolves would need to be removed annually to stay the same and that trappers had removed 270 wolves primarily in North Idaho. Steve requested that Fish and Game get the camera count information to the Board.

Jared Hedelius presented to the Board a plan to provide professional training to his staff on the safe, effective and efficient process of aerial dart and radio collaring of wolves. Celia Gould thanked Jared for bringing this to the Board ahead of time and asked if any Board member felt this would not be appropriate. Kelly Nielsen and Dallas Burkhalter both said this activity would fall in the scope of the Wildlife Services work plan. Jared explained that Wildlife Services would like to continue to radio collar wolves and even do more from the air, since it is cost effective on an opportunistic basis. Steve McGrath indicated he was slightly uneasy and asked about the range of costs. Jared responded that with travel, fuel, helicopter hourly rate and personnel he estimated about \$7,000. Scott Reinecker commented that he felt spending a little money now to save in the future is pretty smart. Richard Savage stated that for that amount of money he supported the training for this dangerous business. Tony McDermott agreed. Celia

noted that Wildlife Services does not need the Board's blessing but certainly appreciates knowing their plan going forward.

Celia Gould asked if there was any other business. Hearing none, she adjourned the meeting at 2:30 pm.

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