

**IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
2270 Old Penitentiary Road  
PO Box 7249  
Boise, ID 83707**

**IDAHO WOLF DEPREDATION CONTROL BOARD  
Minutes of August 31, 2021 Meeting**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Celia Gould, ISDA (Co-chair)  
Ed Schriever, Idaho Fish and Game (Co-chair)  
Richard Savage  
Butch Suor

**DEPARTMENT STAFF:** Dallas Burkhalter, Office of Attorney General – ISDA  
Chanel Tewalt, ISDA  
Kelly Neilson, ISDA  
Dicsie Gullick, ISDA

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jared Hedelius, USDA Wildlife Services  
Martha Wackenhut, Idaho Fish and Game  
Justin Webb, Foundation for Wildlife Management  
Cameron Mulrone, Idaho Cattle Association  
Commissioner Tim Murphy, Region 3  
Emily Merrigan, Idaho Animal Damage Control Board  
Sara Jackson  
Josh Uriarte, Office of Species Conservation  
Brad Carlson, Capital Press Ag Weekly  
Pamela Williams  
Paxti Larrocea-Phillips, Association management Group  
Tamara

The meeting was called to order by Co-chair Schriever at 9:02 AM MDT.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Board members, staff members and others present introduced themselves.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ACTION ITEM)**

Co-chair Gould made a motion to approve the minutes of June 16, 2021. It was seconded by Richard Savage. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Pamela Williams voiced concern by the wolf pups that were killed by Wildlife Services and requested an explanation including how many groups, where they were located, when they were killed, the ages of the wolves killed and rational behind why pups were killed. She also asked if moving forward it was expected they would do the same.

Sara Jackson shared an interest in the same topic.

Phil Davis brought up giving more tools to reduce depredation such as a better helicopter and more resources and asked if there were funding to help get a new helicopter. He asked if Fish and Game no longer collared wolves. He stated there was considerable amount of money available and contracted to Wildlife Services with no ability to contract to collar or research. He would like to see an open discussion about other agencies having the ability to contract.

## **REVIEW INVOICES**

### **MAY/JUNE WILDLIFE SERVICES BILLING (ACTION ITEM)**

Kelly Nielsen presented the flat rate Wildlife Services invoice from May and June in the amount of \$1,446.00. This invoice included fixed wing and helicopter flights. Butch Suor made a motion to pay the invoice. It was seconded by Co-chair Gould. Motion carried.

Kelly Nielsen presented an invoice for June 2021 for personnel and other services in the amount of \$36,114.13 for program support.

Richard Savage made a motion to approve the invoice in the amount of \$36,114.13. It was seconded by Co-chair Gould. Motion carried.

### **REVIEW QUARTER 4 FISCAL YEAR 2021 WILDLIFE SERVICES DEPREDATION CONTROL SUMMARY**

Jared Hedelius presented the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of Fiscal Year 2021 Depredation Control Summary. Between April 1 and June 30 there were 44 investigations with 18 confirmed, 7 probable, 15 possible or unknown and 4 other than wolf depredations. He mentioned that there were more investigations in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of this fiscal year than the previous one.

Co-chair Schriever called for questions. Butch Suor stated that he had a hard time understanding the costs involved and asked if he could get a line item for all of the costs. Jared stated that he could change the format for the Board. Butch stated that he would like a full year report break down of cost for the whole year.

Co-chair Schriever brought up the questions from the public regarding the removal of the wolf pups. Jared stated that in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter there were two different areas where wolf pups were removed. One area had to do with chronic depredation and the other area had to do with chronic and recent depredation. Wildlife Services felt that future losses could be prevented. Both

locations have had zero livestock depredation since the removal of the pups. No adult wolves were removed.

Co-chair Schriever summarized the explanation by stating that the reason it was done was because of concern for the future. It was site specific and not widespread and was responsive management.

## **REVIEW FISCAL YEAR 2021 ANNUAL WILDLIFE SERVICES DEPREDATION CONTROL SUMMARY**

Jared Hedelius presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Annual Depredation Control Summary. Between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 there were 187 investigations with 108 confirmed, 14 probably, 53 possible/unknown and 12 other than wolf depredations. The year before there were 205 investigations with 50% confirmed, so this year there were fewer investigations and more confirmed depredations.

There were 121 control actions started or extended during FY 2021 that resulted in 31 wolves removed and 8 wolves collared. Using aircraft there were 5 wolves removed and 3 wolves collared. There are 17 employees that worked over 10,000 hours, and 14 employees worked on investigations with a total of 853 hours.

Butch Suor stated that it would be an excellent report if it had broken down the amount spent for the entire year.

Jared stated that the helicopter crash impacted the numbers this year. The crash happened in February and most of the removals by aircraft are done in the winter where most of the removals in summer are on the ground.

Butch stated that as a sportsman he felt that Wildlife Services was not putting a dent in the wolf population in Idaho and the sportsmen and tax payers were not getting enough bang for their buck.

Tamara asked if there were any injuries during the helicopter crash. Co-chair Schriever explained that he would not be fielding questions from callers during this portion of the agenda but she could reach out to Jared after the meeting to get her question answered.

## **REVIEW FISH AND GAME ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT**

Martha Wackenhut presented the Fish and Game Annual Activity Report. There is no 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report so the final report is very similar to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report. To recap, Fish and Game removed 22 wolves from public lands and had contracted a fixed wing pilot to spot wolves and a helicopter to remove them. There is a table at the bottom of the report that breaks down how the money was spent. During the February 2021 Board meeting, Fish and Game asked for funds for grant money to reimburse hunters and trappers (\$30,000). IDFG contracted with the Foundation of Wildlife Management. The Foundation asked for an extension to their grant to complete using

the funds, of which \$6,000 were remaining. The deadline to expend the funds is December 31, 2021. The table shows expenses totaling \$97,536.15.

## **REVIEW FISH AND GAME WORK PLAN**

Martha Wackenhut continued with the Fish and Game Work Plan. SB 1211, which was passed by the Legislature, increased the funds provided by Fish and Game for Wolf Control to \$300,000. Based on the Fish and Game Commission guidance and direction to address predation where ungulates have suffered chronic predation and their numbers are low, \$200,000 will be used as a co-op agreement with the Foundation of Wildlife Services for hunters and trappers. \$100,000 will be set aside to protect ungulates. \$80,000 will be used for aircraft contracts to address wolf control. \$10,000 will be for supplies and equipment. \$5,000 for salaries/benefits and \$5,000 for mileage and travel. In short, \$200,000 will be for hunters and trappers and \$100,000 will be for the protection of ungulates.

Butch stated that his only problem was that he did not like sportsman money being spent to protect livestock. Martha explained that some units overlap with ungulates and livestock in areas of chronic depredation.

Co-chair Schriever added that when the commission wrote the direction, it was for availability of the funds, not a mandated use. The money is to be used where there are demonstrated conflicts but no mandates were given of where to use the funds. Some units where we are below ungulate levels overlay with areas of chronic livestock depredation. This is only in 8 of the 43 units. This just shows where funds are available and are not to be used where ungulates are not below certain levels.

Butch reiterated that sportsmen money should be spent on protecting ungulates.

Co-chair Gould made a motion to adopt the work plan. It was seconded by Richard Savage. The vote was Co-chair Gould, aye; Richard Savage, aye; Butch Suor, nay; and Co-chair Schriever, aye. Motion carried 3-1.

## **OTHER BUSINESS – RESPOND TO PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Co-chair Schriever reiterated Mr. Davis' question, stated during public comments, about ways to utilize unspent funds. He explained that in previous years, unused money would roll forward and could be used in the following year. With the current way the the Board's funding works, unused General Fund money does not roll forward. The Board recognizes the value of radio collars and the Board can provide a contingency plan to spend funds. Using private helicopter contractors usually does not work well at the drop of a hat because the helicopters are seldom sitting on the ground. They require some planning, so the sooner we could identify unspent funds, the better chance we have of finding a contractor. There are times of the year where collaring is more efficient than others. He tasked Jared and Martha to work together and look at how we could identify when funds are likely to be unused. He stated that Board could provide a framework to use the funds.

Butch brought up that at the last meeting there was a discussion about outside contractors and the Department of Agriculture was going to put together a template and questionnaire for those interested in contracting with the state.

Chanel stated that we did not have any interest until just after the agenda was sent out. Co-chair Gould added that since we will be needing a lot of advance notice, we will be looking at anyone who shows interest.

Phil Davis asked how many control actions there have been. Co-chair Schriever invited him to have a phone call after the meeting to get his questions answered.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Co-chair Schriever adjourned the meeting at 10:08 AM MDT.