

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

**IDAHO WOLF DEPREDATION CONTROL BOARD
Minutes of March 28, 2023, Meeting**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chanel Tewalt, ISDA (Co-chair)
Jim Fredricks, Idaho Fish and Game (Co-chair)
Richard Savage
Jerry Cloninger

DEPARTMENT STAFF: Lloyd Knight, ISDA
Tricia Hebdon, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG)
Katie Oelrich, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG)
Dallas Burkhalter, Office of Attorney General – ISDA
Kelly Nielsen, ISDA

OTHERS PRESENT: Jared Hedelius – USDA Wildlife Services, Idaho Office
Donna Ralston – USDA Wildlife Services, Idaho Office
Jeff Siddoway
J. Dallas Gudgel, International Wildlife Coexistence Network
Cameron Mulrone, Idaho Cattle Association
Brad Carlson, Capital Press

The meeting was called to order by Co-chair Tewalt at 9:00 a.m. MT.

INTRODUCTIONS

Board members, staff members, and others present introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ACTION ITEM)

Jerry Cloninger made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 22, 2022, meeting. Seconded by Richard Savage. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT (3-minutes per person)

Jeff Siddoway spoke and updated the group on issues he is having with wolf depredation in his sheep on allotments along the Idaho/Wyoming state line. The depredations are the result of the same pack on both sides of the state line. The subject came up at the Animal Damage Control board meeting in September, and (then) IDFG Director Schriever said that Idaho state funds possibly could be used to control the same pack on both sides of the border. Siddoway is hoping that the state border won't be an impediment.

REVIEW OF REPORTS

FINANCIAL REPORT

Kelly Nielsen gave an overview of the Financial Report, including the total budget, total expenses to date, total revenue to date, and beginning cash balance for FY2023. The Wolf Depredation Control Board receives funding from several different entities.

Tricia Hebdon asked if the Livestock Fund is continuously appropriated, and Nielsen responded that all dedicated funds are continuously appropriated. The Livestock Fund is not required to be spent, and the General Fund is not rolled over from one fiscal year to another.

WILDLIFE SERVICES REPORT

Jared Hedelius gave an overview of the quarterly and yearly Wildlife Services report. He explained that the 1st quarter is generally the busiest, the 2nd is the slowest. October is when most livestock exit the forests and general hunting season is in full swing. The 3rd quarter begins in January and ramps up into the 4th quarter.

The 2nd quarter – this reporting period – included 32 depredation investigations related to wolf complaints, for 26 livestock producers in 9 counties (Ada, Adams, Custer, Fremont, Gem, Idaho, Lemhi, Valley, and Washington during this reporting period.

Of those 32 investigations, 8 (25%) involved confirmed depredations, 1 (.03%) involved probable depredations, 22 (68%) were possible/unknown wolf depredations, and 0 (0%) of the complaints were determined to be causes other than wolves.

During the same period in FY22, WS-Idaho conducted 33 wolf depredation investigations for Idaho livestock producers, of which 19 (57%) were determined to be confirmed wolf depredations. These numbers indicate there were 10 less confirmed investigations this quarter than last year during the same time frame.

WS-Idaho did not conduct any wolf related flights during this quarter.

Board members discussed several questions related to the report. In response, Hedelius reported that there are new staff in the field, but their determinations are not finalized without review. If other predators such as bears are determined to be responsible for a kill, the Wolf Board is responsible for the investigation if it was originally reported as a possible wolf depredation. Some concern was expressed that there will be more spent on investigations than control actions.

In response to a question, Hedelius explained that comp time may be carried from quarter to quarter, but that overtime is not paid out. The expenses may show in a different quarter than when the time was

originally reported. Hedelius committed to the Board that Wildlife Services will try to show comp time in the quarterly report, although it will take some additional time and effort.

IDAHO FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME REPORT

Katie reported that IDFG actions related to the Lolo Wolf Project had been completed, although invoices have not yet been completed and submitted. On March 16-18, 14 wolves were removed from five packs in Unit 10. Three additional packs were identified but no removal actions were taken.

A Draft Wolf Plan has been presented to the public by the Commission, and over 32,000 comments were received. Comments will be reviewed and then a proposed final plan will be presented to the Commission.

Richard Savage asked about the three new packs, and Katie clarified that these are un-collared, and had not been counted before.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES (ACTION ITEMS)

Co-Chair Tewalt asked for an overview of the invoices before the Board. Kelly Nielsen reviewed the charges and supporting documents. All charges tied out to appropriate documentations.

Co-chair Fredrick made a motion to approve the invoice from Wildlife Services for payment as written. It was seconded by Richard Savage. Motion carried.

Jerry Cloninger made a motion to approve the invoice from the Idaho Department of Fish & Game as written. It was seconded by Richard Savage. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Board members reviewed the status of current contracts, including the contract with Wildlife Services that is good through the Fiscal Year, the Cooperative Agreement between the Board and IDFG, and additional work with the Foundation for Wildlife Management. The contract with the Foundation still needs to be completed.

Under Tab #7, the Board discussed a work plan between the Board and the Idaho Department of Fish & Game. This plan outlines the details around the allocation of \$300,000 to the Board, and is consistent with the agreement between the IWDCB and IDFG.

Jerry Cloninger motion to approve the agreement, Richard Savage second. Motion passed.

Wildlife Services provided a Season Report. The Board has not yet received any bill related to collaring. WS is working with a private contractor. One project distributed 10 collars over 14 days. The budget was \$85,000, including \$21,000 for fixed wing aircraft, and \$60,000 for helicopters, personnel, etc. Wildlife Services personnel did drug distribution for the project.

Katie Oelrich provided a map with current collar locations. The Board requested additional information on quantifying the days available to fly or not due to the weather. It was noted that collars are expected to last approximately five years. Wildlife Services will work with Fish & Game to assess what happens next with collared wolves. It was noted that all the work done is related to lethal control, per Idaho law.

Hedelius opened the discussion related to work on the Idaho/Wyoming border. It is common for Wildlife Services staff to work in the border area and they can cross the state line to do wolf and grizzly work. An agreement is in place with Wyoming to reimburse efforts in Teton County, Wyoming. There are some issues with reaching into some areas due to funding. Wildlife Services does coordinate with the Wyoming Fish & Game Department as they do investigations and authorize actions. Hedelius noted that there is not an agreement for Lincoln County, Wyoming as there is in Teton County.

Wildlife Services will submit an additional bill for the May meeting. There will be additional discussion in May.

The Board identified May 4th at 9:00am as the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

10:40 am