

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

**IDAHO WOLF DEPREDATION CONTROL BOARD
Minutes of September 14, 2023, Meeting
Meeting was live streamed via Teams**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chanel Tewalt, ISDA (Co-chair)
Jim Fredericks, Idaho Fish and Game (Co-chair)
Richard Savage (via livestream)
Jerry Cloninger (via livestream)
Jon Goode

DEPARTMENT STAFF: Lloyd Knight, ISDA (via livestream)
Jon Rachael, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG)
Katie Oelrich, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG)
Tricia Hebdon, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG)
Dallas Burkhalter, Office of Attorney General – ISDA
Marshall Toryanski, Office of Attorney General – ISDA
Kelly Nielsen, ISDA
Denise Lauerman, ISDA

OTHERS PRESENT: Jared Hedelius – USDA Wildlife Services, Idaho Office
Donna Ralston – USDA Wildlife Services, Idaho Office
Dick Jordan – CCF
Seth Randal – Film maker
J. Dallas Gudgel – IWCN
Or Bruchim – TREE
J. Dutcher - livestream
Joshua Uriarte – livestream
Butch Suor – livestream
Brad Carlson, Capital Press
BL – livestream
Bailey Woolf, Idaho Sportsman (via livestream)
Patxi Larrocea-Phillips, ICA/IWGA (via livestream)
Benjamin Johnson, USDA/NASS – livestream
Garrick Dutcher – livestream
Justin Webb (F4WM) – via livestream
Pamela Williams – via livestream
Levi Scott – via livestream
Greg LeDonne – via livestream
Eric Clewis – livestream
James Dawson – livestream
Megan Smith – livestream
Dallas Gudgell

The meeting was called to order by Co-chair Tewalt at 2:10 p.m. MT.

INTRODUCTIONS

Board members, staff members, and others present introduced themselves. Co-chair Tewalt congratulated Jon Goode, board member, on his re-appointment to the board for 2 additional years.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ACTION ITEM)

Jon Goode, board member, suggested including livestream and co-chair adjacent to the appropriate names in the minutes to be approved. Jon Goode made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2023, meeting with corrections to be made. Seconded by Co-chair Jim Fredericks. Motion carried.

REVIEW OF REPORTS

FINANCIAL REPORT

Kelly Nielsen gave an overview of the Financial Report, including the total budget, total expenses, total revenue, and the current cash balance ending for FY2023 and the current balances starting FY2024. The Wolf Depredation Control Board receives funding from several different entities. Kelly stated that a new accounting system is now in use, and they must learn how to transfer money after the bills have been paid. Co-chair Tewalt and Co-chair Fredericks agreed that this is the biggest change in the history of Idaho, and everyone is working through it.

WILDLIFE SERVICES REPORT

Jared Hedelius discussed the 4th Quarter Report for April – June 30th, 2023.

The report included 23 depredation investigations related to wolf complaints, for 15 livestock producers in 8 counties during this reporting period.

Of those 23 investigations, 8 involved confirmed depredations, 0 involved probable depredations, 12 were possible/unknown wolf depredations, and 3 of the complaints were determined to be causes other than wolves.

During the same period in FY22, WS-Idaho conducted 33 wolf depredation investigations (15 confirmed), and in FY21, WS-Idaho conducted 44 investigations (18 confirmed). These numbers indicate that during quarter 4 the total number of investigations dropped by almost 50 percent and confirmed investigations in quarter 4 have also dropped by almost 50 percent in the last two years.

Jared also discussed the yearend report for July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.

The yearend report information included 142 depredation investigations related to wolf complaints, for 75 livestock producers in 16 counties during this yearend reporting period.

Of those 142 investigations, 46 involved confirmed depredations, 8 involved probable depredations, 41 were possible depredations, 38 involved unknown causes of death, and 9 of the complaints were determined to be causes other than wolves.

During the same period in FY22, WS-Idaho conducted 157 wolf depredation investigations (85 confirmed), and in FY21, WS-Idaho conducted 187 wolf depredation investigations (108 confirmed) for livestock producers. These numbers indicate there were 47 less investigations, and 62 less confirmed investigations in FY23 than during the same period in FY21.

Jared stated that the number of hours worked since July 1, 2022, have been decreasing statewide, in years past there have been many more hours worked.

IDAHO FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME REPORT

Co-Chair Jim Fredericks reported that there was \$100,000 funding left from the previous year, and IDFG asked the commission to use this funding going into FY24 to which the commission answered yes.

Co-Chair Jim discussed reimbursement of the first wolf harvested, that F4WM does not pay for the first wolf, if someone in the past had harvested a wolf and can prove it, then they were paid for the first wolf. The reimbursement was \$2,000 in area #1 and \$1,500 in area #2.

Katie Oelrich gave an overview of wolf population monitoring, which includes 750 trail cameras. The IDFG then analyzes the photos and creates estimates to give a better picture of wolf population and trends. She also discussed collaring efforts, which co-exists with wolf removal. Katie stated that IDFG has 50 new wolf collars to put out this coming winter. Jon Goode asked what the life of a collar is, and Katie responded 5-years, 2-years depending on varying conditions.

Katie Oelrich discussed tracking the Harvest Season in real time. She stated satellite fees between \$1,200 - \$2,200. There has been a rate of 50 percent less wolves over last season from July 1st – September 30th. Co-chair Jim stated that there are less wolves.

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.

Jon Goode, board member, made a motion to approve both invoices from Wildlife Services for payment as written. It was seconded by Richard Savage, board member. Motion carried.

Jerry Cloninger, board member, made a motion to approve the invoices from F4WM for payment as written. The IDFG incurs these expenses then comes to the Wolf Board for reimbursement. It was seconded by Jon Goode, board member. Motion carried.

Kelly Nielsen gave an overview of an invoice for the agency to operate as a board for the state treasurer, the state controller, and the office of the attorney general, that is required to be paid. The cost of \$1,436.79 is not optional.

DISCUSSION – PRODUCER PROJECT REVIEW (ACTION ITEMS)

Co-Chair Tewalt opened the discussion regarding producer project review of three proposals that were received just prior to this meeting date. The proposals were received from three areas in Idaho: Lemhi County, Valley County, and collectively Fremont, Jefferson, and Bonneville County. The proposals were from multiple producers totaling above the total cost amount previously discussed at the last board meeting.

Co-Chair Fredericks stated that these are action items, however, these proposals were only received in the last couple of days. Co-Chair Tewalt responded that these proposals are for consideration and can be approved, denied, or amended. If the board moves forward with these proposals, they will work with the attorney general to include key performance measures within the contracts.

Jon Goode, board member, stated that, as was stated at the previous meeting, \$50,000 is a good place to start. This is a new initiative and would like a key performance indicator for the activity taking place.

He stated that thoughts for a target would be good, then review the contract at 6-months, or whatever timeframe is decided upon with the intention to finish. Jon would like to see some performance measures. Jerry Cloninger, board member, stated that maybe giving one-half of the total amount would be a good starting point. Co-Chair Tewalt stated that the concept falls between Wildlife Services and F4WM, need a more targeted structure. Co-Chair Fredericks asked what the merit for success is. The challenge is dollars per wolf and/or how to get enough detail in the proposals, as not all areas are located in the chronic wolf depredation areas. Jon Goode stated they shouldn't get stuck on a certain dollar amount per wolf. Co-Chair Tewalt responded that this is a new concept, the board needs to see the data that comes back, she is not sure they have enough data to make a decision today.

Co-Chair Fredericks responded that the board should have a discussion of the best means to remove wolves and distinguish if a wolf gets caught between controls. The board doesn't want to pay money for wolves that are not causing problems. Jon Goode agreed.

Richard Savage, board member, stated that he was thinking about when the Wolf Board was initially started, and the legislature thought the dollar amount for funding sounded high. Richard added that this work is expensive. Everyone's intent is the same, to ensure the wolves don't hang out in their neighborhood. He stated that he agrees with Co-Chair Tewalt, that they may find some wolves of value and some of no value, as well as finding out what works and what doesn't work. Richard is in favor of funding these projects as high as the board can go to see what the producers can do but need performance measures.

Jerry Cloninger, board member, added that there needs to be some sort of performance measures and the board needs time to digest the information. Co-Chair Fredericks responded that this is a great idea, but the board needs a basis to fund. He added that maybe the board should talk with the applicants to get clarification of what and where they are proposing. He stated that the current proposals are written broadly just like the board had asked for.

Jon Goode, board member, stated that \$50,000 was approved at the last meeting and that maybe an evaluation period of 5-6 months would work. Then at the end of that evaluation period the board could evaluate the criteria to see if the proposals were a good use of funds. Co-Chair Tewalt responded that the ISDA has grants available for funding. If reduced, the applicants can tell the board what they can do. If there are more applicants, then there would be a higher the dollar amount. Jon stated the board would have to decide on side boards; where, what units, land ownership, activities, contractors, or do the work themselves, etc.

Co-Chair Fredericks added that two of the proposals asked for funds to be released today and the other proposal asked for funds to be released later in the year. Co-Chair Tewalt responded that the funds to be released as quickly as possible.

Jerry Cloninger, board member, stated that there may be more applicants submitted in addition to the proposals already received. Co-Chair Tewalt responded that they were unsure of that. To which Co-Chair Fredericks responded that there was no deadline set, so more applicants may submit proposals. Co-Chair stated the board could receive none or they could receive ten.

Co-Chair Fredericks stated that the proposals should not compete with Wildlife Services. He further stated that the board should look at how this tool relates to Wildlife Services. To which Jared Hedelius, with Wildlife Services responded that there are 12 different management units in two proposals. He wonders if Wildlife Services is required to stay out of those areas. Co-Chair Tewalt stated there may be other producers in the same area. Jared responded that he could see calls for assistance in areas that

Wildlife Services would need to stay out of. Jared went on to discuss both private land and public land, and that the Wildlife Services Directive should be read and included in the next meeting. He stated that Wildlife Services can avoid areas, but other producers may be on that allotment or on neighboring allotment and they may have to stay out of those areas.

Co-Chair Tewalt stated that there would be no decision made today. Co-Chair Fredericks agreed and stated that he and Co-Chair Tewalt would discuss the proposals with the applicants to get more details. Jared Hedelius stated that he would bring the directive to the next meeting, as he cannot speak to others, only to the Wildlife Services Directive. Co-Chair Fredericks mentioned maybe one was in the air and the other was on the ground. Jared responded that all tools would be a conflict of interest for sure. Jared stated that there is an MOU in place for work on the ground, he wasn't sure how it would work with contractors. Richard, board member, mentions the MOU, that the board needs to think about this and look into it, see what the people need to be able to do the work. Co-Chair Tewalt stated that the board needs to understand the land type and what can take place. To which Co-Chair Fredericks responded that this is beyond the scope of this work.

Jon Goode, board member, stated there is a lot to think about. Co-Chairs Tewalt and Fredericks stated they should look at dates for the next board meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Board identified September 27th at 10:00 a.m. for the next meeting.

Reimbursements can be settled with Denise.

ADJOURNMENT

3:54 p.m.