

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

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

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

DEPARTMENT STAFF: Lloyd Knight – ISDA
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
Sydney Kennedy – ISDA – via livestream

OTHERS PRESENT: Jared Hedelius – USDA Wildlife Services, Idaho Office
Donna Ralston – USDA Wildlife Services, Idaho Office – via livestream
Dexton Lake – Idaho Farm Bureau
Suzanne Stone – International Wildlife Coexistence Network
Brad Carlson – Capital Press
Jeff Abrams – ICL
Dallas Gudgell – IWCN
Ella Driever – TREE Club
Ilyn Frazier
Lynne Faver
Jill Wright – Willey Ranch
Doug Hansen – USDA Wildlife Services
RJ Holmes – Holmes Ranch
Jack Blattner – Idaho Wool Growers
Sasha Truax – TREE Club
Lane Justus – Western Landowners
Abby Delmar – Idaho Sportsmen
Cody Anderson
Phil Davis – Davis Cattle
Greg LeDonne – WWP
Towako Tamaho – TREE Club
Hayoon Lee – TREE Club
Elena Li – TREE Club
Kirsta Lyon – IUCN

Dondi Black
Bill Truax
April Truax
Caroline Shenkel
Carly Driever
Ben Callenfent – TREE Club
Sneha Sharma – TREE Club
Talasi Brooks – Western Watershed
Jennifer Pierce
Dick Jordan
Crystal Davidson – via livestream
Anja Fredericks – via livestream
Butch Suor – via livestream
Christopher Klingler – via livestream
Bill – via livestream
John – via livestream
Clark Corbin – via livestream
Jonathan Oppenheimer – ICL – via livestream
Garrick Dutcher – via livestream
Ava – via livestream
Pamela Williams – via livestream
Chris K. – via livestream
Karl Prokop – via livestream
Megan Smith – via livestream
Terra Jackson – via livestream
Pat Kelly-Fisher – via livestream
Alexandra Delis-abrams – via livestream
Jim Santa – via livestream
Mackenzie – via livestream
Royce Schwenkfelder – via livestream
Julie Luchetta – BSPR - via livestream
Julian Matthews – Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment – via livestream
Andrea Zaccardi – via livestream
Morgan Folger - via livestream
Gregory Griffin - via livestream

The meeting was called to order by Co-chair Tewalt at 9:07 a.m. MT.

INTRODUCTIONS

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

Acting co-chair Rachael recommended the public comment period be moved to the end of the meeting agenda. Co-chair Tewalt added that doing this would assist for time of the other agenda items. Jerry Cloninger, board member, made a motion to move the public comment period to the end of the agenda. It was seconded by Jon Goode, board member. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ACTION ITEM)

Jon Goode, board member, stated there were three corrections in each minutes to be approved. Jon Goode made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2023, and October 26, 2023, meeting with corrections to be made. Seconded by Jerry Cloninger, board member. 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 for FY2024. The Wolf Depredation Control Board receives funding from several different entities. Kelly stated that once the balance of the state match fund is used, it will go away and not be replenished.

WILDLIFE SERVICES REPORT

Jared Hedelius discussed the 1st Quarter Report for July 1st – September 30th, 2023.

The report included 50 depredation investigations related to wolf complaints, for 33 livestock producers in 12 counties during this reporting period.

Of those 50 investigations, 12 involved confirmed depredations, 1 involved probable depredations, 34 were possible/unknown wolf depredations, and 3 of the complaints were determined to be causes other than wolves.

During the same period in FY23, WS-Idaho conducted 77 wolf depredation investigations. These numbers indicate that during quarter 1 the total number of investigations dropped to 27 less investigations this quarter.

There were no aircraft flights done this quarter.

Acting co-chair Rachael stated that there were a larger proportion of unknown wolf depredations due to maybe response times, time of death, and reporting.

Jared responded that once a request is received from a livestock producer that a carcass has been found, it can be one, two, or five days old. The older it is the harder it is to see evidence of a predator attack. In the summer a carcass decomposes quickly, scavenging also takes place. Jared stated that it is a fine line between possible and unknown, the primary factor is physical evidence. For example, there may be wolf tracks, but did the wolf kill the animal or did it just scavenge off the carcass, if so, this moves into the possible category.

Jon Goode, board member, asked if there was hard evidence for the four wolves stated in the report to which Jared stated yes, that two of these attacks were witnessed and the wolf was removed at that time.

IDAHO FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME REPORT

Katie Oelrich with IDFG spoke about the large carnivores' full wolf implementation right now. There were 184 wolf mortalities, which was lower for the last five years compared to the records since July 1, 2023. She discussed that this is due to the monitoring programs using radio collars and cameras. IDFG has 11-million photos to analyze and calculate in the upcoming month of January. Katie also discussed

the Work Plan, collaring, which is about to happen for the winter capture, until the end of March, then will report the results to the Wolf Board.

Jon Goode, board member brought up the system of using genetics, pups harvested and put into sibling groups. The stats of harvested pups are reviewed to see which are related and which are brand new to an area. These are non-invasive ways to monitor the wolf population and show their locations.

Acting co-chair Rachael responded that IDFG is enhancing the ways to monitor the wolf population and will roll out more in January or March to the Fish and Game Commission. It is a very complex system.

Jerry Cloninger, board member, asked if collars were loaned to Wildlife Services, to which Katie Oelrich, IDFG, replied that they provide 15-20 collars every year.

Tricia Hebdon, IDFG, discussed the F4WM contracts and that there were reimbursements made for harvest costs of 41 wolves during the months of August through October in 2023.

REVIEW OF INVOICES

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. Kelly stated that there was a clerical error, however, in the Wildlife Services invoice. They will credit back the difference after the invoice is paid if the board chooses to pay the full amount at this time.

Jon Goode, board member, made a motion to approve the invoice from Wildlife Services for payment as written and receive a credit at a later date. It was seconded by acting co-chair Rachael. Motion carried.

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

DISCUSSION – PRODUCER PROPOSAL AGREEMENT DOCUMENTS

Co-chair Tewalt gave an update to the Producer proposals, stating that two of the agreements would be going forward and that three of the agreements would not be going forward.

Jon Goode, board member, emphasized that three of the producer proposals would not move forward.

Dallas Burkhalter, with the Office of the Attorney General, stated that the two proposal agreements going forward are 90 percent complete. Signatures for all producers in the agreements will be required.

Public Comment

Co-chair Tewalt stated that everyone will have three minutes to speak, with a 30-second warning. The list is long, we ask everyone to be respectful. She went on to state that the Wolf Board is a financial group and does not grant or supersede authority. Any kind of board funding must go through all legal processes and permits. Idaho Law, the board does not set the law, but implements the law as set.

Suzanne Stone – stated that she appreciates the three producer proposals not being approved. She went on to say that aerial gunning is not acceptable. Suzanne would like confirmation from the board that this type of control would not be approved. She invited the board and agencies to see her methods working for wolf co-existence.

Dallas Gudgell – said that he understands the scope of the board. That the board spends in a manner beneficial for the taxpayers. He believes that due diligence has gone to the wayside, he wants to ensure the taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. Dallas stated that the Nez Perce tribe is concerned about their ceded territory and that they were not consulted, which trickles down to this board. Dallas also stated that he is concerned that tribe members are not in attendance at the meeting today. He would like to see none of the five producer proposals move forward.

Jill Wright – stated that her family runs a cattle ranch year-round. They found one yearling dead in August, and that it was suggested to her to call the state to report. She stated that large producers have been ignored. She went on to say that this year there were no elk to harvest due to predators, the ecosystem has been interrupted by wolves. They called a private trapper and in less than 2 hours he had one wolf, and then a second wolf. Jill asked the board to help manage and rebalance the ecosystem.

R.J. Holmes – stated that his family has leased land in the Payette National Forest in the Indian Mountain allotment at the head of the Little Weiser River. In August they lost three cows. They were not satisfied with Wildlife Services' investigation labeled as unknown. Without confirmation, producers have no way to move forward from loss. R.J. stated that they called and asked about collar locations and did not receive a response.

Ella Driever – continues to share her voice as a member of TREE Club. She wrote an essay about the importance of wolves. She is frustrated with the inability to find common ground between the pros and the cons. Ella stated that hiring a contractor is not the answer, each side is blinded by the other side and can't work together. She believes biodiversity is crucial. People can learn from the wolves in the way they are a team, a pact. She disagrees with spending \$140,000 with no comment from the public.

Marilyn Frazier – stated that she lived in the Sawtooth National Forest for 30 years. Helicopters are not a very humane way to deal with the wolf population. Marilyn agrees with Ella that everyone needs to work together. She mentioned that 50,000 coyotes in Idaho have affected the sheep population.

Phil Davis – stated that he has been to the wolf board meetings and now there are new faces. He said he has lost calves to wolves. He has served on the wolf board. He has been in support of Wildlife Services in the past, but this year is different, it seems that the evidence doesn't matter. He doesn't believe when he is told there has been less depredation this year, there are just less confirmed cases.

Dexton Lake – stated that he is with the Farm Bureau. The board continues to add protections. The goal for the wolf population is 500 wolves, as he understands it. The thought was the wolves would take out the weak wildlife, but it didn't go as planned, wolves are chasing and running down prey, he supports the lethal method for wolves, deaths is not the only damage that wolves do.

Krista Lyons – spoke in opposition to aerial gunning of wolves. She stated that more money needs to be used for non-lethal methods to control wolves. She mentioned that Idaho is supposed to be the least regulated state in the nation. She called for the board to do due diligence when accepting applications from producers. She continued to say that the board should listen to all stakeholders.

Elena Li – stated she is a high school student and a member of the TREE Club. She disagrees with spending \$140,000 for inhumane killing of wolves. She asks for non-lethal methods to control the wolves. Elena urged the board to end the slaughter of the wolf population.

Hayoon Lee – spoke as a high school student at Timberline in Boise, and a member of the TREE Club. Hayoon said that \$140,000 exceeds the value of the livestock killed. Hayoon said that using taxpayer

money is not a collective interest, only an interest of the ranchers. Hayoon urges the board to use non-lethal methods of wolf control methods.

Snena Shaema – stated she is from the University of Texas at Dallas. She stated she is against actions being taken against wolves. She mentioned SB1211, in 2021, when wolf pups were killed in North Idaho. She stated that the decision regarding the producer proposals was made on October 26, 2023, without public comment. She believes that the board should invest their time and effort in non-lethal methods of wolf control.

Sasha Truax – spoke as a TREE Club member and stated that wolves are native to the landscape. Without wolves, she believes the ecosystem suffers. She is against the brutal killing of wolves from helicopters or in un-checked traps. Sasha stated that sportsmen complain about wasting disease, but the wolf population helps. Wolves should be managed but by use of non-lethal methods, this would be more cost effective. She went on to say that wolves live on public land, which ranchers don't own.

Caroline Shankel – spoke as a biology student at CWI. Caroline is against reckless killing of wolves on public land for population control. She stated that unethical hunting puts the ecosystem off balance. It is a challenge, however, she stated that it is our duty to safeguard the wild as a natural state. She is against aerial gunning and cruel methods of wolf killing. Caroline appreciates everyone sharing their concerns.

Jeff Abrams – with the Idaho Conservation League, stated that 25,000 members support their work. He stated that when the board rolled out the pilot program of the producer proposals there was confusion and resentment. He went on to say that Wildlife Services ensure compliance, but that Trevor Walch did not reflect that. He mentioned that co-chair Fredericks in the previous meeting said money should not be spent in areas where there were no wolf problems. Jeff believes that the board should take actions to police itself, having an annual report showing its effectiveness. Other states in the region have come up with plans.

Talasi Brooks – stated that she appreciates the details of the money but feels there is a lack of documenting showing invoice details. She stated that Jared has reviewed his reports since 2019, the basis of the reports, and the actions that were performed. She mentioned that the terms in this room are misleading. She doesn't agree with paying wolf bounties or aerial gunning.

Jennifer Pierce – stated she would like to disagree without being disagreeable. She is sorry to the ranchers. Jennifer said she is a geologist and has spent a lot of time in Yellowstone where there are many wolves. She believes that the board's money is not being well spent, this is not an extermination board. She wonders why the board would fund private parties without adequate oversight. Jennifer agrees with TREE Club members that working together to reduce losses on their lands could be done with a lot less than \$140,000.

Dick Jordan – stated that he originally started the TREE Club. He spoke about looking at the numbers and the need to look at the science. Wildlife Services keep good records. He agreed with what Ella said, the community needs to come together and look at successful non-lethal methods. Public land is involved, everyone has a say.

Co-chair Tewalt asked if anyone else wanted to speak. Seeing none, the public comment period ended. Acting co-chair Rachael thanked everyone for their comments and stated that their comments are appreciated. Richard Savage, board member, thanked everyone for their comments, and stated that it is important to look at the history over the years of protecting livestock and welcomes anyone willing to work together on this matter.

OTHER BUSINESS

Co-chair Tewalt stated that it looked like the budget looks similar to the previous year but has not received the final from the governor's office to date.

Co-chair Tewalt stated that the next meeting date will be set after confirming co-chair Fredericks availability, which would be in February or March of 2024. They will then identify a date and time for the next meeting.

Reimbursements can be settled with Denise.

ADJOURNMENT

10:53 a.m.