

MINUTES
Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board
June 5, 2018

Ed Schriever, Idaho Fish and Game, called the meeting to order 1:35 p.m. Those in attendance were: Carl Rey, Board member; Ed Schriever, Idaho Fish and Game filling in for Virgil Moore, Board member; Brian Oakey, ISDA filling in for Celia Gould, Board member; Toby Boudreau, Idaho Fish and Game; Katrine Franks, Governor's Office; Amber Christofferson, Division of Financial Management; Todd Grimm, Wildlife Services; Kelly Nielsen, ISDA; Dallas Burkhalter, ISDA; Stevie Harris, ISDA; and Janis Perry, ISDA. Telephone participants were: Richard Savage, Board member; and Tony McDermott, Board member.

Guests attending were Pam Williams, concerned citizen; Jennie Miller, Defenders of Wildlife; Naomi Louchouart, University of Wisconsin – Madison; Suzanne Stone, Defenders of Wildlife; and Kristin Ruether, Western Watersheds Project.

Brian Oakey asked for a modification to the agenda if Katrine Franks did not arrive in time, her presentation be moved to the end of the agenda. No opposition to this change, if needed.

Ed Schriever asked for approval of the minutes. Carl Rey asked if the bill referred to in the minutes had been received. Kelly Nielsen indicated that it had. With that information, Carl moved that the minutes of the January 25, 2018 meeting be approved as submitted. Tony McDermott seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ed Schriever asked for public comments. Pam Williams reiterated her request to have the Wolf Board information on a website. Since there currently is not a website, Pam asked for additional information about each person Board member. Ed Schriever stated that by law the directors of Fish and Game and Department of Agriculture are co-chair of the Board. Carl Rey explained that he was appointed by the governor as a citizen at large. Tony McDermott represents sportsmen and Richard Savage represents livestock interests.

Jennie Miller presented the Board with copies of four studies of scientific research involving predators: "Adaptive use of nonlethal strategies for minimizing wolf-sheep conflict in Idaho" from 2017 Journal of Mammalogy; "Limited evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce livestock predation by large carnivores" from 2017 Scientific Reports; "Managing conflict between large carnivores and livestock" from 2017 Conservation Biology; and "Predator control should not be a shot in the dark" from 2016 Ecological Society of America. She remarked that proactive methods are very effective and that very little scientific evidence supports lethal methods.

Suzanne Stone passed out copies of the 2016 edition of "Livestock and Wolves: A Guide to Nonlethal Tools and Methods to Reduce Conflicts." She commented that with huge advancement in non-lethal methods, other states are miles ahead of Idaho. She hopes that Idaho will catch up. She spoke with legislators who favored removing the word "lethal" be struck from the statute and hoped that the Board will consider that. Ed Schriever reminded her that the Board implements policy, but is not free to change

policy. Carl Rey clarified that a lot of ranchers are using guard dogs and other non-lethal methods. Richard Savage commented that research had been done in DuBois for the past thirty years mainly with coyotes. He feels that preventing conflict in the first place is important.

Kristin Ruether questioned the Board's transparency. She indicated that at the last meeting a question was raised about aerial gunning and shortly later (about two weeks) she was disappointed to learn that aerial action had been taken. She said she understands the concern for safety, but she faults the failure to disclose information. Ed Schriever responded that he had answered that specific question about wolf control on ungulates. He stated that Fish and Game has a plan for areas where ungulates are below objective. However, none of that is secret; it is not possible to tell what day action will take place. Kristin Ruether stated that the questioner asked whether it would happen, not when.

Brian Oakey explained that the Board does not control activities of the contractors or decisions made by the contractors. He said that wildlife managers make those decision. Carl Rey commented that he remembered that Fish and Game was reviewing whether it was happening. Pam Williams remembers hearing "it is under evaluation." She said it seemed disingenuous since it happened two weeks later.

Kelly Nielsen then reviewed the FY2018 Fiscal Report. He reminded the Board that the report includes three sub-sections that are all tracked separately, but related. Two legs of the stool – the sheep and livestock – through the end of May collections are \$101,900. This is potentially on pace to hit \$110,000 for the first time. If that happens, the fourth section would be funded with the excess balance in order to cover future year shortfalls. He also stated for the first time we will spend more than the monies collected.

Next Kelly Nielsen reviewed the LSO Audit which was the first audit of the Wolf Board. He indicated that LSO did not issue any findings but did have several items of note:

1. Many of the bills are not in the name of the Wolf Board, but instead name Idaho Fish and Game;
2. Bills often do not have the correct address;
3. Wildlife Services' invoices do not have enough detail and are not specific for ungulate or livestock;
4. Generally disappointed about the detail on invoices.

This is an audit summary with the official publication still to come. The above are recommendations.

Ed Schriever stated that the Board has the ability to correct these. Todd Grimm stated that Wildlife Services has already corrected the name and address on the bills. He indicated that he has no control regarding the bill from Minneapolis. Kelly Nielsen responded that perhaps Todd could provide documentation from Wildlife Services that no more information is available. Brian Oakey suggested that "something is better than nothing," and perhaps Todd could provide more detail after everyone receives that billing. Todd Grimm stated he had no problem with doing that. Ed Schriever explained that a large part of the bill could be for investigation. Kelly explained that all the costs are related to an accounting code. He stated that he is more than willing to send copies of the bill from Minneapolis that just have a total so that Todd could at a minimum provide summary information such as on his reports, plus provide whether the work involved livestock, ungulates or both. Todd stated that only two bills should be changed to ungulates. Ed Schriever asked if Todd could also break out the cost of investigations. Todd

indicated that that is information Wildlife Services is not capturing now, but they could. Amber Christofferson commented that the more information on that the better. Todd stated that the ungulate part is easy since it involves a different part of the state and they do it rarely. Toby Boudreau stated that Fish and Game can definitely do a better job for detailing their bills using several PCAs. Brian Oakey recommended that Kelly Nielsen get together with Todd and Toby so that more detailed information is provided. Kelly indicated he would like to see what is simple and easy to provide information that is more similar to what is needed. Ed Schriever commented that he agrees with Amber that more information is good and we can do a better job of who spends what and where. Brian Oakey so moved; Carl Rey seconded that the three get together and work out a plan. Motion passed.

Toby Boudreau reported on the Fish and Game activity in the Lolo zone, units 10 and 12. One wolf collar was deployed on a previously uncollared pack; three additional wolves were captured and collared due to aerial action. One collared wolf was harvested by a hunter; and wolves were removed from the Lolo Zone in February, 2018.

Toby Boudreau explained that the goal of the FY 19 proposal is to implement an integrated wildlife management program for the protection of elk from unacceptable levels of gray wolf predation in elk management zones with approved predation management plans and where ungulate populations are below objective. The ground based efforts would include cameras. They are trying to radio collar unmarked packs with some aerial collaring. Most likely there would be some removal next spring. Most of the budget request is for aircraft services. The proposal is in excess of \$110,000 with the balance covering the rest. Tony McDermott moved and Carl Rey seconded that the proposal from Fish and Game be accepted. Motion carried.

Todd Grimm reported that in ten and a half months Wildlife Services conducted 162 investigations with 100 confirmed depredations. May's numbers were 75% higher than last year adding another 16 confirmed depredations. He indicated that if that trend continues, it could be a busy summer. As of today, 59 wolves were removed due to depredation on livestock. They radio collared two wolves and removed 10 wolves in the Lolo Zone. Seventeen wolves were removed via aerial control efforts. He indicated that he anticipates spending the entire \$650,000 of the contract.

The proposal for Wildlife Services for FY19 presented by Todd Grimm anticipates a copy of last year's expenses plus salary raises and fuel cost increases for a total of \$670,000. Ed Schriever clarified that this proposal includes ungulate work that Fish and Game asked Wildlife Services to do. Carl Rey asked about the class for his employees. Todd responded that they are all GS. Carl also asked about Wyoming depredations. Todd stated that since it was easier to reach the Wyoming wolves from Idaho, they handled them but that was not charged to the Wolf Board contract. Carl Rey moved to approve the proposal; Brian Oakey seconded. Motion passed. Carl spotted a typo on the proposal which Todd agreed to fix.

Katrine Franks reported that the governor's office was looking for only mission critical legislation to be proposed. However, she recommends that the Board seek legislative approval to remove the Sunset provision. She indicated that she sees any funding changes as not mission critical. The process begins through DFM on July 13. Ed Schriever recommended that the Board proceed with recommending removal of the Sunset clause. Carl asked if a vote was needed. Ed indicated that since the governor's office had asked, we could proceed. Brian Oakey indicated that the legislation proposed last year was the same. Katrine added minus the dollar amounts and the funding. She also hoped that the reappointments

of Richard and Tony were further along. She said that the letters for the reappointments should be available by the end of the week.

Brian Oakey indicated that each year the Board elects officers. Carl Rey, who is currently Secretary/Treasurer, said he was willing to hold that office again. Ed Schriever moved and Tony McDermott seconded that Carl be Secretary/Treasurer. Motion carried. Tony McDermott stated that he would be happy to continue as Vice President. Carl Rey moved and Ed Schriever seconded that Tony be Vice President. Motion carried.

Dallas Burkhalter reported that the legislature amended the Open Meeting law with HB 611 which begins July 1. The new law provides the following:

1. A meeting notice must be posted online if the Board has an online presence;
2. Each agenda item that requires action must be noted on the agenda;
3. Final action on an item not on the agenda may not be taken unless an emergency is declared.

Dallas further explained that if the Board does not have a website, posting of meeting documents will happen as it has always been done. Kelly Nielsen explained that the governor's office quoted \$130/month to host a Board site. Maintenance of the site would involve hiring an outside source. Brian Oakey asked about the cost of an independent site. Kelly responded that the variable cost would be based on the amount of data and the amount of activity. Ed Schriever asked if the current page on the governor's website is considered a website. Dallas answered that since that one is static, he feels it is not a website. However, if the Boards wants to go active, then they would be required to post. Brian asked for Board clarification from the Board regarding (1) an independent presence; (2) how dynamic the site should be; (3) how it would function and how staffed; (4) what budget limitations and which fund would pay for it. Tony McDermott asked for background on who requested a website. Brian responded that during the past two meetings, Pam Williams had requested the Board consider having a website. Ed Schriever likened a website to a dirty black car saying that websites take work to keep them clean. Tony McDermott moved that the Board not have a website. Carl Rey asked if the Board is allowed to spend money on a website. Ed responded that the Board spends money on administrative services. Carl asked if we could create a vehicle for posting twice a year. Ed asked what the expectations for a website are.

Pam Williams responded that currently the public is not served. She asked for a way to get minutes and make it easier to get information. Suzanne Stone commented that having more notice would be appreciated. Ed Schriever indicated that it takes people and resources to do it. Pam requested a minimum of a place to get minutes, notices, and agendas. Brian Oakey stated that the Board has a responsibility to be transparent, but the decision needs to be measured. She suggested that the website be static, not interactive, and updated three times per year. That would meet the requirements of the open meeting law. Ed Schriever suggested that since wolf management is on the Fish and Game site, the Wolf Board site would be better on the ISDA site. Brian's concern is how the two agencies interact with the Board. He stated that since this is the governor's board, the optics create issues. There is confusion since the Board manages contracts, not wildlife. He recommended that the site be independent of the two agencies. Tony McDermott suggested that a telephone number on the current site might suffice as a simpler way. Richard Savage stated he agreed with Tony but suggested that the Board needed a web presence to have transparency. He leans toward a simple site. Ed stated that since there was no second to Tony's motion, that motion is dead. Brian Oakey moved that Ed be tasked with coordinating with the governor's office

to check on the options and feasibility for a Board website. Tony McDermott seconded the motion. Motion passed. Katrine Franks offered to help.

Brian Oakey discussed the budget recommendation process which must be submitted in the coming weeks. He stated that the Board is familiar with this process and for the previous five years the Board has recommended \$400,000 of state funds. Richard Savage moved and Carl Rey seconded that the Board ask for \$400,000 in the FY20 budget request. Motion carried. Richard expects to have a good discussion on this request before JFAC.

Tony McDermott asked if there is any idea if wolves involve a wider swath with increasing livestock depredation. Toby Boudreau responded that most depredation is in July, August, and first two weeks of September. This past year 404 producers had wolf depredation. However, except for Bear Lake, there does not appear to be new areas. Ed Schriever commented that the number of complaints is up. Richard Savage stated that anecdotally there seems to be an increase in depredation, not only from wolves but coyotes, cougars and even bears.

Suzanne Stone commented that she felt a Wildlife Services' video was inaccurate and that "Wildlife Services is soliciting for depredation." She hopes that Idaho Fish and Game will hold Wildlife Services accountable.

Brian Oakey presented a revised Strategic Plan with changes highlighted. He suggested the highlighted area be deleted. Carl Rey so moved and Richard Savage seconded. Motion carried. Katrine Franks asked if the document could be updated at any time. She suggested a conference call after the website options are researched. Carl then moved and tony seconded adding the word "investigating" to the highlighted areas. Motion carried.

Brian Oakey asked for clarification on the bill paying procedure related to criticism received during the legislature. ISDA is currently paying from the fund where the work is done, livestock or ungulates. Brian asked for direction from the Board regarding this and once bills are ready to be paid, should a Board member sign off on paying the bill. Ed Schriever commented that Fish and Game risks losing Pitman-Robertson funds if fish and game funds are diverted to livestock depredation. Brian proposed that the Board seek out Fish and Game approval prior to each bill being paid. He then suggested that this be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Todd Grimm announced that Wildlife Services is developing an Environmental Assessment with comments to be accepted until June 11. Fish and Game is a partner agency in this process.

Pam Williams thanked the board for considering a website possibility.

Ed Schriever adjourned the meeting at 3:58 pm.