

MINUTES
Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board
May 20, 2019

Ed Schriever, Idaho Fish and Game; called the meeting to order at 1:30pm. Those in attendance were: Carl Rey, Board member; Martha Wackenhut, Idaho Fish and Game; Toby Boudreau, Idaho Fish and Game; Matt Reiber, Division of Financial Management; Sam Eaton, Governor's office; Todd Grimm, USDA – Wildlife Services; Brian Oakey, ISDA; Kelly Nielsen, ISDA; Dallas Burkhalter, OAG - ISDA; Katy DeVries, OAG – ISDA; and Janis Perry, ISDA. Telephone participants were: Richard Savage, Board member and Tony McDermott, Board member.

Guests attending were Pam Williams, concerned citizen; Heidi Briggs, concerned citizen; Talasi Brooks, Western Watersheds Project; Scott Nicholson, TFI Limited Partnership; Gretchen Hyde, Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission; Steve Stuebner, Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission; Jared Hedelius, USDA – Wildlife Services.

Ed Schriever asked for approval of the minutes. Carl Rey suggested two edits: (1) in paragraph 4, page 1 replace “enforcement” with “control” and paragraph 6, page 2 replace Carl’s name with Richard Savage’s. Brian Oakey suggested the removal of the word “all” in the first sentence on page 2. Carl moved that the minutes of the January 10, 2019 meeting be approved as corrected. Richard Savage seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ed Schriever asked for public comments. Pam Williams asked about her request for a copy of the last meeting’s minutes. Brian Oakey responded that they are available to all members of the public through a Public Records Request. She referred to the Board’s Strategic Plan which indicates the Board is committed to transparency. She challenged the Board for more meaningful benchmarks. She questioned Carl Rey’s reappointment as a general member and asked where the advocacy voice is. She strongly suggested that the Board looks at non-lethal methods of control and at a minimum the Board not oppose someone else taking the lead on changing the statute.

Talasi Brooks echoed what Pam Williams said. She commented that routine meeting minutes should not require a Public Records Request. She suggested that myopathy be considered in control actions and questioned how the Board could focus on killing without understanding how many wolves are in Idaho. She encouraged engaging conservationists.

Scott Nicholson stated that as a livestock producer in Donnelly, last year was the worst for wolf depredation and that he feels that depredating wolves are putting people out of business. He encouraged more use of radio collars because help is needed for the cattle industry.

Brian Oakey explained that four agreements need to be updated now that the sunset has been removed. The first is the overarching Memorandum of Understanding for both cooperators and the Board. Dallas Burkhalter explained that the Background Information was updated. Ed Schriever introduced Martha Wackenhut who is the Assistant Wildlife Bureau Chief for IDFG who will be replacing Toby Boudreau in

the agreement. Carl moved and Tony McDermott seconded that this agreement be approved for signatures. Motion carried.

The second agreement is the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that outlines the administrative support provided by ISDA to the Board. Dallas Burkhalter explained that the updating involved removing references to the sunset provision and increased the compensation to \$2,000 annually. He also commented on Section 3A which added a sentence for providing final approval of invoices by the Board. He foresees a detailed review of invoices that have been paid at each Board meeting taking ISDA out of the approval role. Richard Savage thanked Brian and Dallas for the comments and changes. Ed Schriever asked for clarification on Board approval wondering if this meant being sure that there was sufficient detail to support the invoices. Brian Oakey responded that potentially adjustments to the paid invoices could happen. He did reach out to both Toby Boudreau and Todd Grimm who agreed that this system would be workable. Brian also commented that if it is the will of the Board to send out draft minutes rather than following the ISDA procedure of requiring Public Records Requests, this could be done. Carl Rey responded that he has no problem sending out approved minutes, but not draft one. Tony McDermott echoed Carl. Ed stated that the Board should finalize the minutes and then post or make available. Carl moved that this MOA be approved as presented. Richard Savage seconded. Motion carried.

The third agreement is the Cooperative Services Agreement (CSA) with USDA APHIS-Wildlife Services which provides more detail between the contractor and the Board. It will have a new federal government number. Dallas Burkhalter explained that Article 3b is new language for annual submission of Work and Financial Plans. Section 5e is new language which Todd suggests will separate costs between livestock protection and ungulate protection. Article 5f captures the prior amendment of having two reports. Todd Grimm proposed that the first report covering July 1 through November 30 due no later than December 31 be an interim report and that the second report cover the entire year and due no later than July 31. Dallas indicated that the change could be made and still provides timeliness for a report to the legislature. Carl Rey asked Todd what happens during a federal government shut down. Todd explained that the shut down this past year was the longest in history. However, his agents on the ground were able to keep working, so he doesn't see this as an issue. Carl moved that this CSA be approved subject to the change discussed. Richard Savage seconded it. Motion carried.

The fourth agreement is the Cooperative Services Agreement (CSA) with Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) which provides more detail between this contractor and the Board. Dallas Burkhalter explained that this agreement is all new language since the Board did not have a CSA with IDFG. Section 5e covers the reports requested, so that language will be changed to be the same as with USDA-APHIS. Carl moved that this CSA be approved subject to the change discussed. Richard Savage seconded it. Motion carried.

Since Sam Eaton had another meeting to attend, Ed Schriever asked that Sam's items on the agenda be moved up. Regarding the reappointment of Carl Rey, Sam stated that the governor had received good word about Carl's work on the Board. However, a new process for reappointments is in place requiring Carl to reapply. Sam will have Zach Forester (who is in charge of reappointments) follow up with Carl. Sam indicated that the Board could go ahead with elections and that he thought a decision would be made prior to July 1, 2019.

Regarding the website, Sam Eaton stated that this issue was lost between the two administrations, but that the governor's office was committed to transparency. Sam agreed to work with the governor's communications team of two and the Board chairs to develop a plan for posting agendas and meeting minutes. Ed Schriever thanked Sam for taking the time to explain these two agenda items and to reaffirm the governor's open and transparent policy. Richard Savage agreed that we should move forward. He also asked if the governor had any changes planned for the budget request process. Sam responded that he expects the process to be the same and that the governor's office values the Board's input on the budget.

Kelly Nielsen then reviewed the FY2019 Fiscal Report through May 15, 2019. He commented that adding the fourth subsection had caused the font size to be smaller. The beginning cash balance was \$607,834. Revenue collected so far is \$82,719 plus \$17,805 in interest and \$110,000 from fish and game and \$400,000 from the general fund. Expenses paid so far are \$684,140 leaving a current cash balance of \$534,218. He explained that if collections are less than \$110,000, he will take from the extra account to make up the difference.

Kelly Nielsen indicated that he had included all the invoices, supporting documentation, and payments that have been submitted and paid are included in the meeting documents. This will give a greater level of approval and strengthen the financial controls for the Board in response to concerns in the legislative audit. In response to a question from Ed Schriever, Kelly stated that he did not expect any additional expenses in this fiscal year except for perhaps legal services. In response to Brian Oakey, Kelly reiterated that the state operates on a cash basis, so sometimes expenses are paid in the quarter after they are incurred. Toby Boudreau commented that IDFG would be sending another invoice before the end of the year. Ed thanked Kelly and asked the Board members if they had reviewed the packet of payments. Since this was a new process, Brian suggested that approval be postponed until the next meeting. Ed agreed.

Todd Grimm summarized the Wildlife Service's depredation control report up through April 30, 2019. With 228 investigations, this is the highest ever. He stated that 68% involved confirmed depredations due to wolves. Most were cattle depredations, rather than sheep, which also is a first. Wildlife Services removed 40 wolves all related to cattle. He indicated that a more detailed summary would be provided by the end of July. In response to a questions from Richard Savage, Todd stated that the depredations mostly involved the same areas with nothing significantly new. He indicated that he has been anticipating actions south of the interstate, but so far none there. Cascade and Donnelly are the hottest areas in the state with Leadore and Mackay second and third. Richard Savage asked about what is happening in other states. Todd explained that he has data from Montana and Nevada, but is not sure how relevant that is. In response to a question from Carl Rey, Todd stated that at least a dozen producers in the Cascade area have been impacted, mostly in the summer since livestock is easier for wolves to catch than elk. He also indicated they were probably not the same wolves as in the Washington County area. He explained that with IDFG Wildlife Services has been collecting wolf scat to do DNA testing. Toby Boudreau detailed the DNA collection and cataloging done by IDFG in order to estimate pack size. More of the testing is now being done in the animal wildlife lab in Eagle.

Todd Grimm submitted two work plans on the advice of Brian and Kelly, one just for livestock for \$650,000 and one for ungulates for \$65,000. Based on the first five months, livestock maybe

significantly less than proposed. Carl Rey moved and Brian Oakey seconded that the two plans be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Toby Boudreau summarized the IDFG depredation control actions for FY19. All work was conducted in four game management units. A hired trapper worked for three weeks in the summer to locate unmarked packs, but no new wolf collars were deployed in the Lolo zone. Helicopter based radio-collaring operations resulted in 3 wolves fitted with radio collars and seven wolves were removed. This does not count hunter or trapper harvest according to Toby. He stated that the IDFG work plan proposal for FY20 is for \$110,000. Richard Savage asked if wolves are down this year, can we roll the resources to the hot areas, especially this summer. Todd Grimm responded that Wildlife Services personnel are still working the areas identified as problem ones to collar wolves with the goal to keep depredations down this year. Richard moved and Carl Rey seconded that the IDFG work plan be approved as submitted. Motion carried.

Brian Oakey suggested that the Board proceed with elections. Carl Rey moved that the current officers be reappointed. Richard Savage seconded. Motion carried electing Carl Rey Secretary/Treasurer and Richard Savage as Vice Chair.

Kelly Nielson presented a financial trends graph with figures showing actuals through 2018, 2019 to date but subject to change, and forecasted 2020 based on the trends. He explained that revenues will decrease in 2020 with \$200,000 less from the general fund. The cash balance could be as low as \$130,000 with \$825,000 already committed in contracts. Carl Rey commented that \$400,000 request has worked in the past five years, but his assumptions is that that amount may not be enough going forward. Richard Savage echoed those thoughts. Ed Schriever indicated that the carry-over would be about what was short last year. He felt that \$400,000 would be the amount to request. Brian Oakey commented that the complaints trending down, more than \$400,000 may be hard to defend. Richard Savage moved that the Board request a budget proposal of \$400,000 with Carl Rey seconding the motion. Richard commented that in talking to ranchers and sportsmen, it is tricky to define how much money is enough. Hopefully this will be enough to do everything we can to help. Motion approved.

Brian Oakey presented the updated Strategic Plan which was streamlined based on the DFM training that he and Janis Perry received. Ed Schriever expressed concern that the deadline for the website objective was too aggressive. Brian commented that an action item would be to distribute the cybersecurity plan to all Board members. Carl Rey suggested December 4, 2019 and moved that the Strategic Plan be approved with that change. Richard seconded the motion. Motion carried. Brian explained that the performance report that is due August 30 would need to be approved by the Board so will require a conference call to review.

Gretchen Hyde, Executive Director of the Rangeland Resources Commission, discussed her educational project that is part of the Life on the Range series. This five-part series about wolf history in Idaho includes the following 30-minute segments: 1) Early history of wolves; 2) Wolf reintroduction; 3) Raising livestock; 4) Unforeseen impacts caused by wolves; 5) Wolf management. All are available online <https://idrange.org/range-stories/>.

Ed Schriever adjourned the meeting at 3:50 pm.