

**MINUTES**  
**Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board**  
**February 17, 2021**

Ed Schriever, Idaho Fish and Game, called the teleconference meeting to order at 1:30 pm. Those in attendance were: Board members Richard Savage, Stephen McGrath, Butch Suor and Chanel Tewalt (substituting for Celia Gould); Martha Wackenhut, Idaho Fish and Game; Jared Hedelius, USDA – Wildlife Services; Dallas Burkhalter, OAG - ISDA; Kelly Nielsen, and Janis Perry, ISDA.

Guests attending were: Adam Bronstein, Western Watersheds Project; Brad Carlson, Capital Press; Phil Davis; Garrick Dutcher, Living with Wolves; Sean Ellis, Idaho Farm Bureau; Derek Goldman, Endangered Species Coalition; Naomi Gordon, Idaho Sheep and Goat Health Board; Lisa Lochner; Sarah Michael; Cameron Mulrony, Idaho Cattle; Pamela Williams, concerned citizen; and Chyla Wilson, Idaho Farm Bureau.

Ed Schriever asked Janis Perry to call the roll. He then requested new Board member, Butch Suor, to give some information about himself. Butch stated that he lives in Stites, Idaho, is a retired livestock producer and avid sportsman who has been involved with this issue since the introduction of wolves into Idaho.

Ed Schriever explained that the agenda be revised to include discussion of an amendment to the Fish and Game FY21 Work and Financial Plan. According to the Open Meeting Law, this requires a motion. Steve McGrath moved that the agenda be revised to include this item; Butch Suor seconded; motion carried. Richard Savage asked if discussion of the helicopter crash could also be added to the agenda. Ed suggested that Jared could add that issue to his presentation.

Ed Schriever asked for approval of the minutes. Chanel Tewalt moved that the minutes of November 18, 2020 be approved. Richard Savage seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ed Schriever asked for public comments.

Phil Davis commented that unfortunately the warning he made two years ago about a fifty-year-old helicopter came true. He states that without it, collaring or control actions cannot be accomplished. He stated that myopathy research has been ignored and the actions of the Board have been disappointing. He would like better communications.

Garrick Dutcher encourages funding for non-lethal programs.

Naomi Gordon thanked the Board for a job well done and fully supports the work of the Board.

Cameron Mulrony appreciates the use of livestock funds for the Board's work. He thanked the Fish and Game for the wolf count.

Justin Webb commented that in light of what has happened he encourages a conversation on how to assist with wolf management.

Pamela Williams reiterated Garrick Dutcher's comments about incorporating non-lethal methods and would like to see best available science used.

Chyla Wilson stated that wolf depredation is important to the members of the Farm Bureau.

Lisa Lochner echoed Pamela Williams comments encouraging non-lethal means and the best available science.

Kelly Nielsen reviewed the first half FY21 financial statement. He reminded the Board that the legislature has set in what order the funds are spent. The beginning balance in all four funds was \$363,185; revenues collected from livestock and sheep fund were \$30,600; transfer from Fish and Game fund was \$110,000; general fund net of hold back was \$372,400; and the Livestock Excess account had \$3,136. Expenses totaled \$256,646, leaving an ending balance of \$630,920. He stated that he had presented the FY22 budget of \$392,000 ongoing funds to JFAC.

Next, Kelly Nielsen discussed the Q2 Wildlife Services flat rate invoice for \$2,450. He explained that this invoice reflects charges for use of the helicopter in November. Steve McGrath moved to approve payment of this invoice with Richard Savage seconding the motion. Motion to approve the invoice carried.

Kelly Nielsen discussed the Q2 Wildlife Services invoice for \$101,916.13. He noted that the supporting detail was adequate for each transaction, except for \$109 in auto. Butch Suor asked about the dog and horse hire. Kelly responded that the federal government allows a specific amount for these acceptable costs. Butch asked if this was charging back for the use of someone's own dog or horse. Kelly said yes. Richard Savage asked about the 1164. Kelly responded that each line item has a number related to the general ledger. Steve McGrath moved to approve the invoice; Richard Savage seconded. Motion carried.

Lastly, Kelly Nielsen stated that the interagency billing for Fish and Game in the amount of \$1,415.28 was for fuel costs for their helicopter and adequate documentation was included. Richard Savage moved that the invoice be paid; Steve McGrath seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Jared Hedelius started his presentation explaining that the aviation program is important to the Wildlife Service's mission, but that it is definitely high risk. He stated that ten to twelve days ago their helicopter was engaged in wolf control outside of Horseshoe Bend. It had mechanical failure and crashed. The two employees involved were life flighted to the hospital, but are recovering well. The helicopter is a total loss. NTSB and FAA are investigating to determine the exact cause of the accident, but that could take several months. In response to a question from Butch Suor, Jared identified the helicopter as a four-door OH6 C model with a very old frame, but with a new engine and transmission. Butch suggested getting a smaller and more maneuverable aircraft. Steve McGrath explained that the Board does not have the authority to buy a helicopter, nor does it have the authority to direct how Fish and Game handles wolves. He asked how this accident may affect the invoices going forward, since without equipment, there may be money left over. Jared responded that the helicopter will have to be replaced and that he had secured another one that might be available by late winter or spring. He continued that there will be about a two-month delay but they still have three fixed wing aircraft, although those are not as maneuverable in mountain terrain. He indicated that he has approached Wildlife Services in other states who may be willing to help. Another option would be to hire contract pilots. Ed Schriever offered condolences to the Wildlife Services family since he is familiar with how anguishing a crash can be. He asked if the

replacement helicopter is new or used and whether they would be borrowing it or a permanent replacement. Jared replied that the helicopter is not brand new. Their training center had purchased a number of helicopters from the military. They will be purchasing it from the training center, so it will be permanent. It is a Jet Ranger 206, so not as agile, but still capable of doing wolf work and will be able to get back into the air more quickly. Ed commented that if the procurement gets held up, he offered the Board's support to assist.

Jared Hedelius reviewed the Wildlife Services Semi-Annual Depredation Control Summary for July 1 to November 30, for five months. He explained that during that time period Wildlife Services conducted 130 investigations for 66 producers, finding 84 of them were confirmed wolf depredations. Jared explained that in 2019 they investigated 171 with 80 confirmed cases. They removed 14 wolves for the protection of livestock and radio-collared 2 wolves. He indicated that this work involved 17 employees with 14 involved in investigations. Investigations occupied 9.7% of their wolf depredation time. Butch Suor asked if any wolves were removed for protection of ungulates. Jared responded that during this period, 100% of wolves removed were for protection of livestock. In response to a question from Ed Schriever, Jared could not explain why there were fewer investigations in 2020 but about the same number of confirmed depredations. Butch commented that harassment and stress can cause cattle to abort. Jared responded that he believes that is real.

Next, Jared Hedelius reviewed the Wildlife Services Q2 Depredation Control Summary for October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. During this period the requests for investigations slowed down to 27 with 13 confirmed. One wolf was removed for the protection of livestock. Steve McGrath asked if Wildlife Services was only responding to livestock complaints, not ungulates. Jared stated yes.

Martha Wackenhut reviewed the Fish and Game Semi-Annual Depredation Control Summary which covered six months. She indicated there was only one expense involving stock piling of fuel in the Lolo zone where they conduct wolf activities. She said this is typical, since most of their work starts after the first of the year. She stated that work has started in the Lolo zone and eight wolves have been removed. They have not been able collar any wolves. Butch Suor asked about the Predation Management Plan for the Lolo and Selway Elk Zones which is ten years old. Martha stated that the predation plans need to be updated.

Ed Schriever presented that Fish and Game Amendment to the FY21 Work/Financial Plan. At the request of the Fish and Game Commission that met last week, the amendment would include providing nonprofit organization grant funding for reimbursement of hunters and trappers for expenses incurred during the process of legal wolf harvest in certain game management units identified by IDFG to support wolf management objectives. To provide these services, IDFG will amend its Cooperative Agreement, dated September 9, 2020 with the Foundation For Wildlife Management (F4WM) to increase, by a total of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000), the amount awarded for F4WM's applications for 2020 Commission Community Challenge Grant requests. In response to a question from Richard Savage, Ed stated that F4WM does a very good and timely job of reported and that would be shared with the Board. Richard commented that he liked the idea. Steve McGrath shared that it was consistent with the Commission direction. In response to a question from Butch Suor, Ed explained that this \$30,000 would be an addition to what the Commission has already authorized for the grant program. Steve McGrath moved and Richard Savage seconded that the amendment be approved. Motion carried.

Ed Scheiver asked if there was any other business. Richard Savage noted that Janis Perry was retiring and thanked her for a job well done. Ed adjourned the meeting at 3:16 pm.

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