



**Livestock Loss Board Members Present:**

Elaine Allestad - Chairperson  
Larry Trexler  
Jim Cross  
Seth Wilson

**Staff:** George Edwards – Executive Secretary

**Guests:** Kraig Glazier – USDA Wildlife Services  
John Vore – FWP  
Bob Inman – FWP  
Ron Nye – Madison County Commissioner / Rancher  
Chris Inman – Wildlife Conservation Society  
Peggy Trexler  
Matty Lewis  
John Scully – Board of Livestock  
Steve Primm – People & Carnivores

**Call to Order and Administrative Items:**

Larry Trexler made a motion to start the meeting one hour early per the notation on the agenda “Agenda times may vary as much as one hour – earlier or later”. Seth Wilson seconded the motion. Chair Elaine Allestad called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. **Discussion:** None **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Chair Elaine Allestad called the meeting to order.

**Introductions:**

- Each board member and board staff introduced themselves.
- Chair Elaine Allestad asked the audience members to introduce themselves and encouraged public comment.

## **Board Minutes:**

Board members reviewed the March 11, 2015 minutes. **Motion:** Jim Cross made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Seth Wilson seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Mr. Cross pointed out a duplicated word on page 3 of the minutes. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

## **Budget Status:**

The board's current budget is at 97% as of June 29<sup>th</sup>. With just one day to go the board should stay within their budget. George Harris, Centralized Services Administrator for the Department of Livestock has stated to the Board of Livestock that LLB has been above and below budget even though the board had not bought anything or had travel expenses. Because of this Elaine Allestad sent a letter to the Board of Livestock requesting Mr. Edwards sign for all expenses for the board. Within the first week he found \$200 charged to LLB in error. Mr. Edwards now has the ability to monitor the budget on the state accounting system and will be supplying the board printouts directly from the state system.

## **Reports:**

**George Edwards, Executive Secretary** – Mr. Edwards said he has been working with the Board of Livestock to improve relationships related to budgets and administrative attachment.

He attended a conference in the Tom Miner Basin promoted by Seth Wilson and Hillary Anderson. The conference covered prevention topics that appeared to be better suited to small operations as they were labor intensive.

Last year the board had paid approximately \$39,000 in claims from January 1<sup>st</sup> to July 10<sup>th</sup>. This year the board has paid \$33,000 for the same time period. Mr. Edwards said he is aware of 45K to 65K of claims that have not been turned in yet for this year. He stated the public could not rely on the board's current statistics until all the claims are in for the year. He spoke about the claims process and animal valuation for the public in attendance.

**Kraig Glazier – USDA Wildlife Services** – Mr. Glazier spoke about a recent bunch of ewes killed by grizzly bears. He asked if the newborn lambs would be covered by the board because they may not live because the ewes were killed. Ms. Allestad said this would be almost like a multiplier. At this time the board would have to consider it as a non-confirmed death so they would not be covered. Mr. Trexler said he thought that anything directly hurt or injured was covered. Mr. Edwards said only if the animal died as a result of the injury. Mr. Glazier said the board has paid for a calf that was stepped on during an attack they had confirmed. Mr. Edwards stated that only claims listed on the USDA WS



investigation as confirmed or probable are paid. Mr. Glazier said he will talk internally with Wildlife Services on their processes.

Mr. Glazier reviewed current losses presented to the board. He said there are two horses, 36 cattle, one llama, 11 ewes and 17 lambs for a total of \$63,000. Wolf work appears to be less than last year but grizzly work has increased. One producer near Red Lodge lost 21 head of cattle on one producer. This producer pastures cattle in Wyoming and Montana. The producer told Wildlife Services that without LLB he would have trouble with his operation and really appreciates the board.

Maggie Nutter, President of the Marias River Livestock association has asked Wildlife Services to conduct a non-lethal workshop this fall. The board has been represented at all of the prior workshops.

**John Vore & Bob Inman – FWP** – Mr. Vore said moving faster towards delisting in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Delisting in the NCDE (Rocky Mountain Front) is further down the road. Ms. Allestad asked if the Montana grizzly management plan has been modified. Mr. Cross asked if adverse public reaction is factored in. Mr. Vore said all they can do is supply the best biologic information and the original plan has been modified.

Mr. Vore stated that as of May 2016 the state will be out from under US Fish & Wildlife Services for federal oversight on wolves. He anticipates this will help FWP but the board shouldn't notice any changes.

Mr. Cross asked what was FWP's intent for the newly created carnivore and furbearer coordinator. Mr. Inman said the position covers 15 species. They will begin with a bobcat management plan; fishers are on the list as well. They will be working on furbearer management plans. Mr. Vore said Mr. Inman is now the point man for delisting. No changes are planned for current grizzly and wolf plans.

#### **Old Business:**

**Issued Grants Status Update:** Mr. Edwards stated he has not issued a second payment yet. Reports were included in the board's books for review and discussion. Letters were sent to all of the applicants to let them know that no federal funds could be used towards the match requirement.

Board members discussed all of the issued grants. Most of them had met the original match criteria while some were extremely close. BHWC has had some permitting difficulties for their compost site but once this is resolved they will have an in-kind match. The funds expended for their range rider provides a match for the first payment. Madison County's carcass site is currently on hold pending a new location for their site. Keystone has met their match. Mark Robinson has



matched all but \$40 of his entire grant. Granite County just recently turned in their W-9 and a payment was sent. Centennial Valley Association has met their match. Tom Miner Basin has met their match. Blackfoot Challenge has already met close to the entire match. Mr. Wilson said the total amount could be released for the Blackfoot Challenge if they have met the full match in September.

**Motion:** Larry Trexler made a motion to approve all of the second payments except for Madison County. Seth Wilson seconded the motion. **Discussion:** No further discussion was held. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried.

**Grant Process Refinement – Grant Form Revisions:** Mr. Edwards said he attended many legislative hearings concerning board funding. A number of legislators were reluctant to support funding for board non-lethal activities. Legislators expressed their reluctance was due to fears that funding would go to NGO operations rather than on the ground projects. Nothing in the current board grant process addresses what can be used for administrative costs vs. on the ground projects. Mr. Edwards asked the board to discuss the issue. Ms. Allestad said perception with legislators is what we need to deal with. She said we could ask up front what wage they are going to pay as an example. We could ask upfront what funding is for on the ground projects and what is going to administering their grant as this appears to be a problem with legislators. Mr. Wilson said it would be fair to have 10% for administration with 90% for on the ground projects. Ms. Allestad said the board will refine the process via telephone board meetings for the grant application.

Mr. Edwards asked the board what they felt was a reasonable rate for in-kind wages or a range of what is acceptable. Mr. Wilson said the U.S. Bureau of Labor has a wage of \$31.87 for a rancher. Ms. Allestad said we need to require applicants to disclose the wage scale they are using in their application. Mr. Trexler said it should include information like the wage, value for horse trailer time and estimated feed as an example for a range rider. Mr. Edwards asked if a list should be included on the application listing estimates for each area. Mr. Trexler said estimates will help the board. Mr. Wilson said we should specify what is being supplied as in-kind or cash. Ms. Allestad said we need to know what the total is which would include in-kind and cash for the match.

Ms. Allestad said we need to make a point that the project is something beyond normal ranch operations and not something like fence upkeep. She suggested the board look at the bullet points in the board book. Mr. Edwards asked if the form should still ask for a Township, Section and Range (TSR) or just a general area description. Ms. Allestad said we could ask for a map of the project area if available, if not still ask for the TSR. Mr. Wilson suggested making typing into the forms available into each section. Ms. Allestad said we could pay someone to make this possible if the board's IT support is not available for this task. Mr. Trexler would like a list of rancher's names that are part of the project or at a minimum the number of ranchers participating.



**Motion:** Seth Wilson made a motion to have George Edwards produce a draft template for a new form by September 1<sup>st</sup> for board review. Jim Cross seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried.

### **New Business:**

**2015 Legislative Session** - Mr. Edwards provided an overview of legislation with potential impacts to the board. A bill was heard in committees to add eagle and raven caused livestock losses to the board. The legislator introducing this bill contacted Mr. Edwards to ask if there would be problems. Mr. Edwards explained board processes for loss verifications and that eagle and raven caused losses are not typically investigated by USDA Wildlife Services. The bill was withdrawn. Mr. Glazier stated that Wildlife Services does offer technical assistance to producers when requested.

A bill was introduced to add mountain lion caused livestock losses. This bill passed out of committees during the beginning of the legislature but failed to meet deadlines for full passage. A few legislators spoke about what they perceive as mission creep by adding new predators to the board. Mr. Edwards asked board members for their position on future bills to add mountain lions and/or black bear caused losses. Ms. Allestad stated the original purpose of the board was working with intensely managed species. She questioned how FWP management would occur if other species are added. People have expressed they are worried that FWP would lessen their response if the board pays claims due to those species. Mr. Vore said he doesn't see a big increase in mountain lion take occurring but they would never be in a place to do nothing. Mr. Trexler said there would have to be additional funding if species are added. Ms. Allestad said the board was established for protected species. Mr. Cross said that grizzly bears fall into that category. Mr. Trexler said wolves were reintroduced and grizzlies were not, a rancher has no control over protected species. Mr. Wilson said Wildlife Services is already investigating mountain lion and black bear losses so it could be good for landowner relations. Ms. Allestad expressed the same concern as some legislators of how long before other things are added. No board action was taken at this time.

**2017 Legislation and Budget Request** - Mr. Edwards stated the 2015 legislature changed the board's restricted account for loss payments. In the past \$200 K was deposited into the board's payment account and unspent funds rolled over to the next year in case of catastrophic losses. The law now restricts the fund to \$300K and created a new fund where the excess funds will be deposited. Board members now have the option to use half of the excess fund for Wildlife Services and half for non-lethal activities. In the past the board has never been able to pay for the investigations conducted by Wildlife Services. Mr.

Edwards asked the board to begin thinking about future funding requests and the amount the board will need.

Further discussion by board members was to seek a modification to 2-15-3111(4)(C), MCA. Board members will seek to remove "including but not limited to fencing, fladry, night penning, increased human presence in the form of livestock herders and riders, guard animals, providing hay and dog food, rental of private land or alternative pasture allotments, delayed turnouts". Board discussion revolved around having more precise verifiable reasoning in their determinations on what constitutes a direct loss prevention activity.

**Motion:** Seth Wilson made a motion to seek legislation for modifications to 2-15-3111(4)(C). Jim Cross seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Elaine Allestad said the wording would be just proactive measures and other successful prevention methods as they become available. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried.

Board members asked to place the mountain lion and budget questions on the next board agenda to further discuss a board position.

**Board Meeting Date** – Board members will conduct a telephone meeting limited to grant processes with a date to be determined sometime in September or October. A regular full board meeting will be held on December 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> pending availability of board members. A tentative spring meeting may be held on April 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>. Suggested location was Red Lodge or Columbus.

**Public Comment:** Comments were heard throughout the meeting. No additional comments were offered at the close of this meeting.

**Motion:** Jim Cross made a motion to adjourn. Seth Wilson seconded the motion.  
**Adjourned**

DATED this 29 day of April, 2015

Elaine K. Allestad  
Elaine Allestad, Chairman  
Montana Livestock Loss Board