



Livestock Loss Board
August 1, 2017
Board Meeting
Helena MT
Meeting Minutes

Livestock Loss Board Members Present:

Elaine Allestad – Chairperson
Larry Trexler
Jim Cross
Doreen Gillespie
Seth Wilson

Staff: George Edwards – Executive Director

Guests: Kraig Glazier – USDA Wildlife Services

Chair Elaine Allestad called the meeting to order.

Introductions:

- Each board member and board staff introduced themselves.

Board Minutes:

Board members reviewed the August 29, 2016 minutes. Ms. Allestad asked if there were any corrections or additions. Jim Cross noted one grammatical error.

Motion: Jim Cross made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Larry Trexler seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Budget Status:

Mr. Edwards provided the board with the budget totals determined by the legislature for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. During the 2017 legislative session all agencies had their budgets reduced. Legislators set the board's budget for 2018 at \$92,307. Recently the governor's office has implemented tier five percent

budget cuts. Mr. Edwards said he will probably have to attend fewer meetings. Mr. Wilson stated it is important for Mr. Edwards to attend meetings. He is the official for the board on the NCDE grizzly bear committee and is the board's voice there.

Department of Livestock's accounting supervisor Evan Waters brought updated budget sheets for the board to review. Mr. Waters stated the budget status report covering budget and expenditures show the board could have spent an additional \$5,000 for the state budget year that ended on June 30th. Thirty percent of the prior year's funding will be rolled over to the current budget to help offset some of the cuts. He is now doing budget projections so as to not run over budget while still providing a general view of the budget. The second page of his handout explains fund numbers. Account 2124 is the board's death loss fund. Account 2125 is the grants fund and still has \$19,000 in state funds restricted to grants. Mr. Edwards added that this is not the amount of roll over funds for the current budget year. Mr. Waters said the third page is the board's license plate fund and contains \$33,000. Mr. Trexler said that is our rainy-day fund. Mr. Cross stated we have not decided a use for that fund. Mr. Waters stated that the rollover funds at the end of the state fiscal year are approximately \$67,000. Per law 81-1-112 there is a clause that allows the board to use ten percent for administrative purposes. Mr. Edwards informed the board they could use ten percent or a lower percentage should they decide to use it. Ms. Allestad asked if the board takes the ten percent but does not use all of it, can it go back where it came from. Mr. Waters said yes, they would code expenses to this fund. Because this is a base year for budgeting, the carry forward does not count towards the base. If the board needs something special they should use the carry forward money.

Motion: Seth Wilson made a motion to take the ten percent for administrative purposes. Doreen Gillespie seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Reports:

George Edwards, Executive Director – Mr. Edwards provided a year to date comparison for 2016 vs 2017 year-to-date. At this time the head counts are identical although less money has been spent due to lower livestock values. Currently wolf caused loss is greater than grizzly bear caused loss. We are still receiving claims form April. The Wildlife Services pages do not have a set cycle and are sent out to the board when they are received. The board's statistics page on the board website is currently out of date due to new web pages created for the Department of Livestock. Ms. Allestad said we will write a letter from her demanding access to update the statistics page.

Motion: Seth Wilson made a motion that the board wants George Edwards to have access to update the board's webpages. Larry Trexler seconded the

motion. **Discussion:** Mr. Edwards asked if the letter could be delayed in case it is not needed. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Edwards said the board now has representation on the NCDE but not in the other grizzly bear zones. The other zones do not have very much activity in them.

Mr. Edwards stated he will be attending meetings with Montana Association of Counties, Farm Bureau, Woolgrowers, Stockgrowers and the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) in the upcoming months. He will attempt to attend as many meetings as possible. He requested a few minutes at the Farm Bureau convention to talk about the new mountain lion addition to the board. He will also speak at Woolgrowers and Stockgrowers. The mountain lion law change is effective October 1st. We received our first swine claim. There are no market reports for Montana. Mr. Edwards used the USDA Westcoast market report to determine values.

USDA Wildlife Services – Kraig Glazier said their investigation numbers are close to last year. In April, they had a retirement in Cascade County. The specialist from Red Lodge was moved into the retired specialist's area. He thanked the board for funding. Mike Hoggan (specialist in the Valier area) has a high workload so he will no longer cover Teton County. The Cascade County specialist now covers Teton County. The specialist covering portions of Meagher, Gallatin and Broadwater Counties will be retiring. These areas will be covered by specialist in adjoining counties. Wildlife Services is still in negotiations with FWP for the \$110,000 they normally provide each year. Currently they are out of money to fly for wolf problems. Funding from the board has helped with investigations. Mountain lion caused losses will be a big deal for their workload. Wildlife Services has been doing loss prevention work in the Northwest part of the state. This is a fladry project where there has been a concentration of wolf caused loss. It was in place for a short time and success is hard to determine.

FWP – Due to timing issues, FWP was unable to have a staff person attend this meeting. They have hired a new bear specialist based in Conrad. His name is Wesley Saramento and he has been on the job for a few weeks. He will be responding to grizzly bears east of highway 287. Mike Madel will respond to calls west of highway 287. In the Valier area, the Pondera County Sheriff's office is responding to calls. USFWS Grizzly Bear Coordinator Hilary Cooley is in the process of developing guidelines for ranchers related to hazing bears away from buildings and livestock.

Old Business:

Montana Wildlife Federation Grant – Board members said to place this application on the September agenda.

New Business:

Senate Bill 41 – This was the board's bill to cleanup grant law. Senator Eric Moore carried the bill. The bill drafter language was not quite ideal but it works. This bill had no opposition during the legislative session.

Senate Bill 73 – This bill restored the board's \$200,000 appropriation for death loss claims. It also fixed problems with state grant funds. Mr. Edwards worked with the bill drafter to create an amendment for the grant funds. He asked the board if they were going to provide half of the funds to Wildlife Services.

Motion: Larry Trexler made a motion to provide half of the roll over grant funding to Wildlife Services for investigations. Jim Cross seconded the motion.

Discussion: Elaine Allestad said the mountain lion caused loss is an unfunded mandate. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

House Bill 286 – Representative Ray Shaw introduced this bill to add mountain lion losses to the board. Additionally, another 23 legislators signed on as co-sponsors. Constituents in Rep. Shaw's district asked for the addition and Montana Farm Bureau added mountain lions to their policy book. Mr. Edwards pointed out a mistake in the legislation on page two of the bill. He had also spoken with Rep. Shaw about the error. Representative Shaw stated during committee hearings that both wolf and grizzly bear loss claims are to be paid first and if any money remained then mountain lion loss claims could be paid. The legislative bill drafter only listed prevention grants in the language. Representative Shaw suggested that the board address this mistake by adopting an administrative rule to match his intent. No additional funding was provided for mountain lion caused loss. Representative Shaw said he would be willing to run a funding bill for the 2019 session. Mr. Edwards suggested the board seek a cleanup bill in the 2019 session to correct the law rather than to rely on only an administrative rule. Ms. Allestad stated the board should do the administrative rule asap. Mr. Wilson is worried that there will not be any rollover funds for state loss prevention grants. Mr. Edwards has sent an email to all Montana Tribes letting them know a tribal agreement is necessary for the board to pay claims on tribally owned land. Only the CSKT and Blackfeet have responded back. If tribal agreements are not in place, Wildlife Services will provide GPS coordinates so that Mr. Edwards can determine if the loss is on fee land or tribal land. Normally coordinates are not provided. FWP is currently working on a new mountain lion plan which should be released by the end of the year.

State and Federal Grant Process – Mr. Edwards told all applicants their proposals are due by August 30th because board availability is difficult after September. Due to mistakes made by the USFWS grant office not notifying the board about the grant until July, they are allowing the federal funds to be used

back to January 1st. Mr. Edwards was told there was staff turnover in their Colorado and Maryland offices that caused the problem. All grant applicants were told not to list any federal sources for the cost match for board grants. This included grazing fees which have been listed in the past and never counted towards a match.

Board Meeting Date – Board members chose September 18th, 19th or 20th as a possible meeting date for the next board meeting on grants.

Public Comment: None

Motion: Larry Trexler made a motion to adjourn. Doreen Gillespie seconded the motion. **Adjourned**

DATED this 28 day of September, 2017

Elaine K. Allestad

Elaine Allestad, Chairman
Montana Livestock Loss Board