



**Livestock Loss Board**  
**September 6, 2013**  
**Stage Stop Inn Conference Room**  
**Choteau MT**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Livestock Loss Board Members Present:**

Elaine Allestad - Chairperson  
Whitney Klasna  
Larry Trexler  
James Cross  
John Herman

**Staff:**

George Edwards – Executive Secretary

**Guests:**

Kraig Glazier – USDA, WS  
Mike Hoggan - USDA, WS  
John Hofer – Miller Colony  
John Hofer Jr – Miller Colony  
Rae Herman – Rancher  
Dylan Klasna – Rancher  
Ben Hofer – Rockport Colony  
Mike Hofer – Rockport Colony  
David Waldner – Pondera Colony  
Bill Waldner – Pondera Colony  
Leonard Kleinsasser – Pondera Colony  
Ike Waldner – Pondera Colony  
Dan Carney – Blackfeet Fish & Wildlife  
William Little Plume – Blackfeet Fish & Wildlife  
Ty Smucker – FWP  
Mike Madel – FWP  
Mia Ageson – Senator Tester's staff  
Roger King – Rancher  
Susan Geise – Lewis & Clark County Commissioner  
Marc Cooke – Wolves of the Rockies  
Erin Edge – Defenders of Wildlife

**Call to Order and Administrative Items:**

Chair Elaine Allestad called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

## **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 May 6, 2013 minutes. **Motion:** Larry Trexler made a motion to approve the minutes. Jim Cross seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Whitney Klasna pointed out a word correction on page five. **Vote:** All in favor none opposed. Motion carried.

## **Budget Status:**

Mr. Edwards stated that the last budget report he received from Mr. Harris shows we are at 18% of the budget year and we have expended 12%. The board's finances are in good shape. The remaining budget is \$71,524 out of a total budget of \$81,227. The total budget has been increased due to a request by Mr. Edwards to allow the board to hold more meetings. Board activities will increase for grant reviews and the added budget will allow board members to attend annual livestock organization meetings when they request the board to do a presentation.

Board members reviewed Board's current budget status. **Motion:** Whitney Klasna made a motion to approve the budget report. John Hermon seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor none opposed. Motion carried.

## **Reports:**

- **George Edwards – LLB Executive Secretary**

Mr. Edwards said a majority of his time since the last board meeting has been spent on obtaining a federal grant. The process was quite involved because when HB322 failed the board did not have state funds for the 50% cost share requirement. Fundraising coalition partners were sought for help. Seth Wilson stepped up to help find the needed cost share. Originally we had FWP participation as part of the match but ended up removing it because their wolf staff are funded by federal funds and matching federal with federal is not allowed. Our original request was for \$251,000 in match with \$181,000 of that for loss prevention activities. We asked for more than US Fish and Wildlife Services was able to grant us and they asked for a resubmission of the original proposal. Mr. Edwards assured USFWS that the board will require applicants to provide documentation for the 50% non-federal cost share. The board received \$100,000 for loss prevention and \$70,000 for compensation payments due to wolves.

Last May loss claims were 42% ahead of 2012 claims for the same period. Current numbers have shown that 2013 is now running equal to 2012 claim numbers.

- **Kraig Glazier – USDA Wildlife Services**

Mr. Glazier said this is an interesting year. It started out slow, then really busy, then slow again. Some areas like Northwest Montana are still really busy. Overall investigations are down by 25%.

Total losses for all classes of livestock are down and the number of wolves removed is also down. Wildlife Services may be getting the wolves causing the losses.

Typically Wildlife Services completes about 200 investigations per year. About 50% are confirmed with the remaining 50% due to other predators. They usually complete about 20 to 50 grizzly loss investigations per year. The numbers of confirmed grizzly investigations are much higher as producers are very aware when a grizzly is in the area. Bears are more consistent than wolves. A small portion of grizzlies cause problems. Overall it has been a slow year for grizzly and black bear investigations.

Larry Trexler asked how their funding is holding up. Mr. Glazier said without the FWP money there would be no flying for wolves other than what the producers pay. Four new counties have passed county petitions which helps.

In Mr. Glazier's area there are 10 specialists. They have had to cut one and two have retired. In the Eastern part of the state they have had one retire and one layoff. Mr. Glazier asked the board to pass on any suggestions for funding. He appreciates any help from the board.

- **Mike Madel – FWP**

Mr. Madel described FWP's carcass redistribution process. It began in 1988 after holding a public comment period. In the 1970's and 80's almost all grizzly bears on the rocky mountain front fed on livestock carrion. Many ranchers maintained bone yards. Boneyards created problems by attracting grizzly bears. The sites were near calving areas and the bears would occasionally kill a calf. The idea was to redistribute livestock carrion instead of using boneyards. Redistribution simulated wildlife die off. Once a year as bears are coming out of hibernation they put carcasses in wildlife management areas. This resulted in reducing conflicts by about 80%. Mr. Madel believes totally removing livestock carcasses would cause an increase in depredation. About 80% to 90% of the carcasses are fed upon by grizzly bears. Each year they redistribute 80 to 200 carcasses. FWP uses the carcasses to help keep a protein source for the bears. Whitney Klasna asked if they use a good portion of their funds for redistribution. Mr.

Madel said the budget is around \$14,000 and they spend about \$3,000 to \$4,000 per year primarily for flatbed trucks usage. John Hofer said if FWP would stop putting the carcasses out, the bears would not come back to create problems. Mr. Madel said they would return to the boneyards. Mr. Hofer disagreed.

Mr. Glazier said wolves are more likely to eat everything compared to what a grizzly bear consumes although there is more surplus killing with sheep by bears.

Tye Smucker, FWP wolf biologist spoke to the board about his area which extends from the Canadian border to Helena. Last year there was a lot of wolf depredation. 50 wolves were removed between the Blackfeet reservation and Helena. Six packs were removed between Birch Creek and Rogers Pass along the front. 50 of the removals were due to 20 depredations. He went on to say wolves are now in the Little Belts and Big Belt mountains. Mr. Smucker worked for the Blackfoot Challenge in the past and said the carcass removal program really helped to lower predation.

Dan Carney, Blackfeet Tribal biologist gave a brief update about depredations on the reservation. He said there are packs in every major drainage down to Birch Creek. This year predation by bears was twice that of a normal year. The predation was mostly cows and calves.

#### **Old Business:**

- **Federal Funding and Loss Prevention Grant**

Mr. Edwards asked for guidance on how to approach the grant process such as project size, guard dogs, etc.... He said the bottom line is that a 50% cost share is required by the federal government. During meetings he has attended the livestock carcass removal program has a lot of support from livestock organizations. Elaine Allestad said to be prepared to speak at the livestock organization meetings about the grant. Mr. Edwards asked if the board would look at high predation areas first. Jim Cross said that would be a good start. Elaine Allestad said the projects should serve a dual purpose. She spoke to the audience to reinforce the match is needed and cannot be from federal funds. Mr. Edwards added that he just learned that Defenders of Wildlife will be giving the board \$25,000 towards grizzly bear loss prevention projects. He said this will be good for the overlapping areas with both wolves and grizzlies. He asked if the board will ask for a 50% cost share for the DoW funds.

**Motion:** Whitney Klasna made a motion to require a 50% cost share for the DoW funds similar to the requirement for federal funds. Larry Trexler seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor none opposed. Motion carried.

Whitney Klasna said the board should provide a list of priorities. The board identified three priorities:

1. High predation areas
2. Serving a dual purpose, wolves and grizzly bears
3. Using two or more forms of loss prevention

George Edwards said he will write up a cover letter for the grants. Whitney Klasna said to add a page with instructions, information and priorities to the grant application. Board members decided to use December 31<sup>st</sup> for the first round of grant submissions with a follow up meeting in January. Elaine Allestad tentatively set the 24<sup>th</sup> of January for the meeting with a location to be determined.

#### **New Business:**

- **Tribal Agreement – Amendment/Renewals**

Mr. Edwards approached the Governor's Indian Affairs office to seek amendments to add grizzly bears and renewals of agreements with CSKT and Blackfeet tribal governments.

**Motion:** Larry Trexler made a motion to add grizzly bears to the agreements and to seek renewals. Whitney Klasna seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None.

**Vote:** All in favor none opposed. Motion carried.

- **Luxford Loss Claim**

Mr. Edwards said Mr. Luxford supplied a hand written note listing what people had paid for his sheep locally and in other states. Mr. Edwards asked Mr. Luxford to supply copies of receipts for the sales. Mr. Luxford said he does not do receipts. He sent another letter stating what he thinks his sheep are worth and that his sheep have Cache Valley disease making the remaining sheep more valuable. Mr. Edwards asked the board to re-read the loss application and the letters. He included information from the University of Utah about the disease. Because determining values is not clear cut, Mr. Edwards asked the board to help determine the value. Larry Trexler said there is a sheep sale in Billings the next day. Mr. Edwards read the law 2-15-3112 to the board and then asked Mike Hoggan if there would be any registered Ewes at the Choteau Sheep Expo. Mr. Hoggan said yes.

**Motion:** Larry Trexler made a motion to take an average price for the same sex, breed and age from the Choteau Sheep Expo and Miles City Ram Sale to determine a final value. Whitney Klasna seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor none opposed. Motion carried.

- **Listen Session Actions**

Whitney Klasna directed Mr. Edwards to begin putting together a survey requested by Dave McEwen during the board's listening session. The survey is to find out what it is actually costing livestock owners dealing with wolves and grizzly bears and their impacts to their operations. Elaine Allestad said to send the form to the board for approval before distributing the form.

- **Board Meeting Date**

The next regular board meeting will be April 11<sup>th</sup> in either Bozeman or Livingston.

**Public Comment**

- Marc Cooke said he appreciates the board's work and getting the prevention money. He encourages composting as he has heard good things about it. A composting project in the Bitterroot would be great as there is a lot of interest.

**Motion:** Whitney Klasna made a motion to adjourn. Larry Trexler seconded the motion. **Adjourned**

DATED this 04 day of December, 2013

Elaine K. Allestad

Elaine Allestad, Chairman  
Montana Livestock Loss Board