



**Livestock Loss Board Members Present:**

Elaine Allestad - Chairperson  
Whitney Klasna  
Jim Cross  
Seth Wilson

**Staff:** George Edwards – Executive Secretary

**Guests:** John Steuber – USDA Wildlife Services  
Jessica Flint – Senator Daines Staff

**Call to Order and Administrative Items:**

Chair Elaine Allestad called the meeting to order at 1:00 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 April 11, 2014 minutes. **Motion:** Whitney Klasna made a motion to approve the minutes. Jim Cross seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

**Budget Status:**

Mr. Edwards said the board budget page is from November. Currently we are 32% expended with 37% of the budget year lapsed. According to Department of Livestock accounting staff, the license plate account has \$83,333 in the account. Mr. Edwards does not think this is correct because last year the account only had

about \$4,000. Mr. Edwards will follow up with the states motor vehicle division to find out the correct amount.

### **Reports:**

**George Edwards, Executive Secretary** – Mr. Edwards spoke about his attempts to start loss prevention projects on the Rocky Mountain Front. He has met with county commissioners from Teton, Pondera and Glacier Counties. The commissioners have a desire to begin carcass pickup programs but ongoing funding is an issue. They all share a joint refuse site near Valier and would allow this site for a carcass program.

Currently Madison County is still in the startup phase for their carcass pickup program. Mr. Edwards has been attending multiple meetings to help commissioners get the project going. Locating an acceptable site has been problematic. The original site is close to the Twin Bridges airport and the airport board is concerned about an increase of birds. A new site near Nevada City is being looked at for a permanent site. A sewer lagoon and trash transfer site is already located on the property. Madison County will be seeking an additional grant to help with startup costs.

Mr. Edwards sought a resolution of support for state funding from MACo. He attended their annual meeting in September and a resolution of support was unanimously granted by MACo.

Mr. Edwards participated in the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee meeting in Missoula. Most of the livestock discussion was about chickens. Mr. Edwards clarified that chickens are not covered by the board and explained what livestock is eligible for board programs.

Montana Farm Bureau passed a resolution to add mountain lion and black bear losses to the board. A bill has been introduced in the legislature to add mountain lion caused losses. John Steuber, USDA WS stated there is an MOU in place with Fish, Wildlife and Parks so this will still fit within existing law. Mr. Edwards was contacted by a legislative bill drafter about the added expense. Additional funding for death loss claims will be added to the bill draft.

**John Steuber – USDA Wildlife Services** – Mr. Steuber spoke funding issues within his agency. Funding for predator control is about 45% cooperative funding. This funding is from livestock per-capita fees, FWP, and organizations such as Montana Woolgrowers and Stockgrowers. The Department of Livestock made a major cut in 2003 for the amount of per-capita that is sent to wildlife services. A legislative bill in 2011 increased the amount required by the Department of Livestock for wildlife services but it is still lower than what was received in 2002.



Mr. Steuber explained that they used to receive a federal earmark but it was cut in 2011. This caused a loss of four positions and along with sequestration has put a strain on the predator control budget.

Mr. Steuber spoke about county cattle and sheep petitions. Cattle petitions began in 1995. Funding collected by petitions can only be used in the county where the funds are collected. Currently there are about 25 to 27 counties with petitions. About \$505,000 is collected.

### **Old Business:**

**Budget – EPP Governors Budget:** The board's budget is included with the Department of Livestock's submitted budget. Per the board's request we had asked for \$400,000 for loss prevention and to provide some funding for wildlife services work on behalf of the board. Unfortunately the board's request was not included in the governor's final budget. Mr. Edwards reminded the board that when a funding bill is introduced into the legislature we will be only able to testify as informational witnesses.

**Federal Funding Disposition of Compensation Funds:** Mr. Edwards asked the board what they were going to direct him to do with the federal compensation funds. He stated Wyoming pays a multiplier of 7-1. Elaine Allestad suggested calculating a multiplier close to the \$70,000 and to use the remainder to replace state general fund dollars. Seth Wilson asked how a multiplier came about. Mr. Wilson was advised that a multiplier discussion began over a decade ago with the wolf advisory council. Ms. Allestad said the board could use existing studies and then back off from the study findings. Jim Cross stated he is reluctant to establish a multiplier based on a pot of money. He said the board needs to adopt a formula. Mr. Edwards stated the board never adopted a multiplier because funds did not exist to pay one. He said the federal funds are not enough to even pay a 1-1 multiplier. Ms. Allestad said it should be more but with current funding we can't do it. Mr. Cross stated every area in the state will have a different factor. Whitney Klasna asked if Montana could get a study. Ms. Allestad said it would be nice if MSU would be able to conduct a study. Mr. Edwards said they don't have funding to conduct one.

Ms. Allestad suggested that according to a Wyoming study the multiplier would be X and according to an Idaho study the multiplier would be X but because of limited funds we can pay X. Mr. Wilson said other states studies should not set a policy, will need to refine a policy. Ms. Klasna said this would be a resolution form based upon available funding. Ms. Allestad agreed that we need a scientific study in Montana similar to what has been done in Wyoming and Idaho. Mr. Edwards suggested language: current studies indicate indirect costs are greater than multipliers paid, due to limited funding LLB will provide a one-time only payment. Mr. Cross added the statement should include pending scientific

fieldwork and documentation. Mr. Wilson added, the payment based on available funds.

Mr. Edwards stated January to December 4, 2014 cattle and sheep losses were around \$62,000. The federal grant period of September 2013 to December 4<sup>th</sup> and losses were around \$92,000. Ms. Allestad said a .75 multiplier should work for cattle and sheep losses.

**Motion:** Whitney Klasna made a motion; We are not adopting a ratio at this point. We are however, with limited funding available to help deal with indirect impacts such as weight loss providing a 75% one-time only payment for cattle and sheep losses from September 2013 to December 4, 2014. Jim Cross seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Board members all stated we would like to have a multiplier based on Montana data. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

#### **New Business:**

**Federal Funding:** George Edwards said he knows of no new federal funding available to the board. Jessica Flint from Senator Daines office said as changes will occur in Washington D.C. processes will be changing because of recent elections. At this time everyone needs to wait and see what those changes will be.

**Grant Process Refinement** – George Edwards asked board members for guidance so he can respond to questions from the public. State law mentions some items the board may consider for loss prevention but during the January 2014 board meeting board members were uncomfortable with a few of the items. Based on the January meeting Mr. Edwards gave a list of priorities for the board to consider. Whitney Klasna said the top six items on the list are all good priorities. They are high predation areas, dual purpose (grizzly bears and wolves), multiple prevention methods, number of head covered by the project, area covered, existing projects, and the number of producers covered. Elaine Allestad suggested the board focus on high predation areas, dual purpose areas and sustained projects. Seth Wilson encouraged everyone to consider chronic depredations, number of producers covered and high risk geographic areas.

**Grant Applications** – Board members postponed Miller Colony's grant application for loss prevention due to grizzly bears until the board meets to consider all grant applications.

**Carcass Pickup & Composting** – Seth Wilson offered an invitation to tribal and FWP personnel to visit the Blackfoot Challenge site and to talk about composting.



**Legislation/Legislature** – MACo contacted the board office to say that Representative Jeff Welborn is willing to carry a funding bill similar to Representative Cuffes bill from the 2013 legislative session. George Edwards said he has been informed that Representative Cuffe is willing to run the bill again. Representative Cuffe is somewhat uncomfortable with the \$400,000 request because of the board's attachment to the Department of Livestock. Mr. Edwards asked the board if there was a target number to tell Representative Cuffe. Seth Wilson said the board should stay with the \$400,000 number if possible. Elaine Allestad said our board can't be used to balance us against Department of Livestock.

**Board Meeting Date** – Board members chose February 11, 2015 for the next board meeting pending receipt of federal grant funds.

**Public Comment:** Nobody from the public comment offered comments.

**Motion:** Whitney Klasna made a motion to adjourn. Seth Wilson seconded the motion. **Adjourned**

DATED this 11 day of March, 2015

Elaine K. Allestad

Elaine Allestad, Chairman  
Montana Livestock Loss Board