



Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation  
Board  
October 18, 2010  
State Capitol, Room 152  
Helena MT

## Meeting Minutes

### Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board Members Present:

Elaine Allestad – Chairperson  
Larry Trexler  
Whitney Wankel  
Brad Radtke  
Michael Leahy  
James Cross  
John Herman

### Staff:

George Edwards – Livestock Loss Mitigation Coordinator  
George Harris – DOL – Centralized Services Administrator

### Guests:

Kraig Glazier – USDA, WS  
Carolyn Sime – FWP  
Aeric Reilly - MFU  
Jack Ward, DVM  
Clay Dethlefsen –Western Predator Control Association  
Todd Earp  
Terry Murphy  
Hope Stockwell

### Call to Order and Administrative Items:

Chairperson Elaine Allestad called the meeting to order.

### Introductions:

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

### Board Minutes:

Board members reviewed the June 4, 2010 minutes. **Motion:** Whitney Wankel made a motion to approve the minutes. Larry Trexler seconded the motion.

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

## **Budget Status:**

- **George Harris – DOL Centralized Services Administrator**

Mr. Harris stated the board came through the past budget year fine. \$72,603 has been budgeted for the 2011 budget year. He said he appreciated contributions to the license plate and logo funds. Enough money is being saved in operations so he has authorized expending the needed funds from the board's budget to complete the license plate and logo tasks. \$140,000 was received in federal funding. This was coded to 2010 fiscal year payments. About \$106,000 is remaining in general fund spending authority for livestock loss claims. The budget office is still working on the 2012-2013 budgets but Harris is optimistic that a \$150,000 budget request will remain in the new budget.

Elaine Allestad asked for information on the board's \$300,000 budget request. Mr. Harris said the Department of Livestock submitted a \$150,000 request to match what was done in the last legislature.

Larry Trexler asked if the \$140,000 federal funding was a one time deal. Mr. Harris said that depends on federal congressional action. The \$150,000 is a state general fund request that is not tied to the federal funding. The state funding could be used to match federal funding requirements. Mike Leahy asked if the board is then getting \$300,000. Mr. Harris said no, the \$150,000 is a biennial appropriation.

## **Reports:**

- **George Edwards – LLRMB Livestock Loss Mitigation Coordinator**

Mr. Edwards advised the board that he had prepared an annual report for the legislative committees. He gave an oral report to the Economic Affairs Interim committee and provided written copies of the report for the Environmental Quality Council committee. A one page handout will be prepared for the upcoming legislative session to condense basic information for legislators.

Handouts were provided to the board covering a time period of January – October 14, 2009 and the same time frame January – October 14, 2010 so that the board could accurately compare claim statistics. The comparison shows a 62% increase in cattle claims for 2010.

Kraig Glazier said there seems to be a spike in losses during late summer and early fall. This is also a time when the pups are getting bigger. Currently there is a spike of losses in Madison County. Brad Radtke pointed out this is also when livestock owners are gathering their stock and discovering they are missing livestock.

George Edwards asked Mr. Glazier if indications that USDA WS may have to shut down control operations for three to four months next year are a possibility. Mr. Glazier responded that WS did have to suspend aerial operations in September due to funding. They were already reducing flying hours in 2010 and that included coyote work in Eastern Montana. In the coming year they may have to back down to one helicopter for work statewide. This does have the potential to increase loss claims.

Montana Woolgrowers Association invited Elaine Allestad and George Edwards to a meeting they arranged with Senator Baucus. Senator Baucus suggested seeking funding via the state legislature as federal funding would be very difficult. Elaine told him many of our constituents believe the federal government should be providing funding. Other meetings that Edwards attended were Montana Cattlemens Association, FWP work sessions, USDA WS annual meeting and legislative committee meetings.

#### **Old Business:**

- **Prevention Committee / Grant Form**

George Edwards developed a draft prevention grant form based on the board's prevention committee meeting in June. Mr. Edwards said an agreement regarding a donation from Defenders of Wildlife contained a clause that \$4750 would be made available for prevention work once federal funding became available. He prepared a draft grant form to start the grant process. Requests for a grant have been received by the board office, primarily for range riders. Board members suggested placing a clarification statement in an introduction letter about the matching funds and the match can come from any source. An in-kind match may be used but the livestock owner will need to place a value on the in-kind match. Labor such as a riders time can be used as a match. The board's prevention committee would review all grant applications approximately sixty days prior to full board meetings. The committee's top three recommendations would be presented to the full board to select grant awards. Mike Leahy said Defenders of Wildlife may add \$250 to the grant fund making it a total of \$5,000.

Board members suggested that advertisements for this grant to list it as a pilot project because of the limited funds. Larry Trexler said the management of wolves needs to be factored in. Prevention efforts may not work if there are too many wolves in an area. Money should not be spent on prevention unless there is also a control effort in place.

Carolyn Sime said FWP has used federal dollars to purchase fladry for prevention. She also stated FWP's role is to provide expertise but she did not see any funding coming from FWP.

Public Comment: Clay Dethlefsen, President of the WPCA stated the control piece is critical. A resource that could be acted on right away is to allow ranchers to determine what prevention methods would work on their ranch. Elaine Allestad responded that is exactly what the prevention committee had determined and the committee acknowledges that ranchers will be able to decide what prevention effort may work on their ranch.

**Motion:** Brad Radtke made a motion approve the draft form and procedures so long as the board has the ability to amend each. Whitney Wankel seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Jim Cross asked if there is any room on the form for a narrative on prior losses. George Edwards said that is why Wildlife Services and FWP would be consulted via a points system to rank grant applications. Elaine Allestad said the applicant would need to show prior losses or wolf activity in the area. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried.

- **Logo Contest / License Plate**

George Edwards stated he would like to get the board's logo contest started with a press release and requested guidance on the contest from the board. Board members will review entries and select a winner. Edwards will work with Ag groups that typically sponsor a legislative luncheon during the legislative session and announce the winner during the luncheon.

The prize for winning the contest is \$500. Prize money was donated by Montana Cattlemen's Association and by the board waiving their per-diem from a prior board meeting. The contest is to be open to anyone submitting their entry. A press release should include asking for a slogan that would fit on a license plate and advise that the logo may be used on a license plate. If there are a lot of submissions, the fundraising committee will select the top three entries. The full board will be emailed the top entries and will select a winner. The contest is to run until December 20<sup>th</sup>. (Note: Montana Farmers Union added \$250 towards the logo contest shortly after the board meeting, bringing the total contest amount to \$750)

- **Facebook (Livestock Loss Reduction Mitigation Program)**

Board members requested the Board's Facebook page be placed on this agenda for discussion. Current postings of livestock losses and the county where the loss occurs remains the same. No pictures will be posted. Any information listing the work of the board may be included as

well as any legislative bills impacting the board. USDA Wildlife Services contact information will be periodically placed on the website so ranchers will know who to contact in the event of a livestock loss.

Board members also would like to post draft minutes of board meetings due to the length of time between meetings. A link to the draft minutes can be posted on Facebook when they are available.

### **New Business:**

- **Legislation**

Board members were handed copies of current proposed federal legislation. Three bills have been introduced in the senate and two bills in the house.

George Edwards explained Montana's legislative website and how it can be used to make a "watch list" of bills during the session. Elaine Allestad requested Mr. Edwards email bill information as they are introduced. An example is LC64 "Prohibit harassment of sportsmen who purchase hunting licenses". Board members asked that wolf related bill numbers and titles be placed on the Board's Facebook page. Elaine Allestad advised the board that they will need to take a position on some of the legislation. George Edwards advised that the board will need to hold a conference call meeting prior to testifying on the board's position. Montana Woolgrowers Association and Montana Farmers Union have both offered to seek sponsors if the board has any legislative proposals.

Elaine Allestad said the board will need to watch budget bills in case the board does not receive funding. She said several legislators have expressed they could work on a bill amendment for funding. George Edwards added his concern about funding for USDA WS as they had to cease control operations in September. USDA WS does all the investigations for this board and they have indicated that budget shortfalls could cause them to shut down for possibly three months in 2011.

George Edwards said an example of seeking legislation could be similar to the request the board made to the legislative Environmental Quality Council to receive half of the revenues generated by the 2009 wolf hunting licenses. Another example is the request the board made in May to FWP requesting wolf hides taken under control actions.

**Motion:** Brad Radtke made a motion to sponsor a bill via Montana Woolgrowers to enable LLRMB to receive wolf hides taken via depredation kills be sold for board fundraising. Whitney Wankel seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Mike Leahy was opposed to the motion as it

may be more trouble than it is worth. It is something his organization would not support. Larry Trexler said those dollars would benefit the program and be passed back to the agricultural community. Jim Cross asked what happens to the hides now. Carolyn Sime said some carcasses are not retrieved and availability will be low. Jim Cross asked Ms. Sime if there is a market for wolf hides. Ms. Sime said yes at fur shows. Kraig Glazier said Wildlife Services used to collect all carcasses that are turned over to FWP for samples. He said there is a narrow window when the hides are of good quality however, if the board was to get legislative authority, they could retrieve a few hides. Brad Radtke asked Mr. Glazier his estimate on how many hides the board could get. Mr. Glazier said 20 to 50 more or less. It could increase Wildlife Services workload but he did not want that to be a determining factor. Whitney Wankel wants a couple of pelts for auctions to help the board. **Vote:** Elaine Allestad, Jim Cross, Larry Trexler, Brad Radtke, Whitney Wankel and John Herman in favor, Mike Leahy opposed. Motion carried.

Elaine Allestad asked all board members to send any suggested legislative proposals to George Edwards by November 18<sup>th</sup> so the board would have time to hold a meeting to vote on it.

Board members discussed if releasing of names of individuals who have submitted loss claims has occurred and if so has it been a problem for those producers. George Edwards said he is unaware of any problems but he has been contacted by the press to release names on large losses.

**Motion:** Mike Leahy made a motion to have George Edwards ask producers and other agencies if they have encountered problems and to report back to the board at the next meeting. Jim Cross seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Mike Leahy gave an overview of the fundraising committee. Ideas included the wolf hides, logo/license plates and seeking ag groups to include the board during their legislative luncheon. Additionally, the committee will be attempting to arrange a meeting with Glacier and Yellowstone park officials to see if a voluntary contribution could be made at the gates or a concessionaire fee. The committee would like to have a letter drafted or sign onto a letter to congress to support federal funding.

**Motion:** Whitney Wankel made a motion to either draft a resolution or support a resolution for seeking continued federal and state funding. John Herman seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Brad Radtke asked if the board should approach organizations such as Woolgrowers. Whitney Wankel said that would be the board's best interest. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Hope Stockwell, staff person for EQC and bill drafter for the House Fish and Game Committee spoke to the board about resolutions. She said they are similar to a bill draft in that the board would need to seek a sponsor. The bill drafter would work with the legislator or designee to draft resolution language stating support from the legislature and congress. Mike Leahy asked if the board would just supply a general statement. Ms. Stockwell said specific language is better, especially when the request comes from a group such as this board. George Edwards asked if the board wanted him to draft a basic resolution. Senator Terry Murphy has indicated that he would be willing to sponsor this resolution. Board members asked to see the resolution prior to sending it to a legislator.

- **Mini Horse Claims**

George Edwards acknowledged the boards prior authorization for him to pay claims based upon prior sales. Because these miniature horses were registered and it was an unusual claim, he brought it before the board. Mr. Edwards had contacted the registered horse breeder listed on the registration certificates. The breeder said the value placed by the current owner on the animals may be a bit low. Mr. Edwards had also researched miniature horse values in Montana and found a broad range of prices.

**Motion:** Larry Trexler made a motion to pay the \$5,250 requested by the owner for the four miniature horses. John Herman seconded the motion.  
**Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

- **Administrative Rules:**

George Edwards provided an outline from the Secretary of State's office on administrative rules. He suggested the committee could work on rules for claims and grants. Because there could be possible legislation impacting this board, the committee will meet in late February or early March.

- **Board and Committee Meeting Dates:**

Board members selected April 14, 2011 for a listening session and April 15, 2011 for the next scheduled board meeting. The April meetings will be held in Dillon, Montana.

Members of the administrative rules committee chose February 23, 2011 for a meeting date. The meeting will be held in Missoula at a location and time yet to be determined.

Members of the fundraising committee chose to have a short teleconference meeting on November 1, 2010 to discuss any updates.

- **Board Member Terms:**

Board members Elaine Allestad, Larry Trexler and John Herman's terms will be expiring on January 1, 2011. All three board members will be seeking re-appointment.

**Public Comment**

- Clay Dethlefsen, Western Predator Control addressed the board by stating general support and stressed communication is vital.

**Adjournment 3:28 pm**

**Motion:** Larry Trexler made a motion to adjourn. Whitney Wankel seconded the motion. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

DATED this 15 day of April, 2011

Elaine K. Allestad

Elaine K. Allestad, Chair

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Board