

	<p style="text-align: center;">Livestock Loss Board April 11, 2014 Board Meeting Bozeman MT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Meeting Minutes</p>
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Livestock Loss Board Members Present:

Elaine Allestad - Chairperson
Whitney Klasna
Jim Cross
Larry Trexler
Seth Wilson

Staff: George Edwards – Executive Secretary

Guests: Maggie Nutter
Kevin Frey - FWP
Abby Nelson – FWP
Cory Richards – National Geographic
Eric Sommer – USDA NASS
Zack Strong – NRDC
Jerimiah Smith – FWP
Bruce Nelson – FSA
Shelley Rolando - FSA

Call to Order and Administrative Items:

Chair Elaine Allestad called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.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 January 24, 2014 minutes. **Motion:** Larry Trexler 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 is at 70% expended with 68% of the budget year lapsed. The reason the board is 2% over budget is move to a new office space. The Department of Livestock accounting staff only allotted \$82 for rent and with the new office space this category is now 1438% over budget. Mr. Edwards will work with DoL accounting staff to bring future budgets more in line with actual expenditures.

Reports:

George Edwards, Executive Secretary – Since the last board meeting in January he restated the board's position on FWP's changes to wolf administrative rules. He pointed out that FWP's addition of their staff to conduct livestock loss investigations is in conflict with 2-15-3112 (5) MCA. He also pointed out that their additions of definition of confirmed losses does not belong in their rules as it is again in conflict with existing statutes 2-15-3112 (6) MCA.

Mr. Edwards provided an update of board activities to the Board of Livestock and told their board that LLB will be requesting funding through the governor's budget to be included with the Department of Livestock's agency request.

Mr. Edwards began talks with Lewis & Clark County Commissioners to see if a carcass removal/carcass composting site could be placed at the dump in Augusta. He met with the Augusta dump board and they were concerned about costs, smells, and attracting grizzly bears to the dump site. Originally the meeting was supposed to include ranchers but Commissioner Geise decided to seek the Augusta dump board's opinions first. At this time it appears that no matching funds would be available for the site. Commissioner Geise asked Mr. Edwards to arrange a tour of the Blackfoot Challenge site near Ovando for the dump board members. Mr. Edwards told them he would discuss this meeting with LLB board members for guidance.

Kevin Frey – FWP – Mr. Frey spoke about an MOU with USDA Wildlife Services. He said if a problem bear needs to be captured Wildlife Services captures the bear and then transfers it to FWP for further action. Grizzly numbers have grown by 36% in his area. Bears are moving further out of traditional areas. Conflicts have occurred near Red Lodge due to a bear that used to be in Wyoming. Grizzlies are expanding in their range around Madison County. Young male bears from Yellowstone Park have a tendency to get bumped out and begin to explore new areas outside of the park.

Maggie Nutter asked Mr. Frey if he had seen crop damage in his area. He responded no as this area does not have crops like there is on the Rocky Mountain Front. Seth Wilson added that grizzly bears have caused crop damage in the Blackfoot Challenge area.

Whitney Klasna asked Abby Nelson if she is seeing any difference in wolf activity. Ms. Nelson said in 2013 they have seen wolves in two new areas, the Crazy and Bridger mountains. She said that pack sizes appears to be dropping. Zack Strong asked Ms. Nelson about wolf population modeling used by FWP. She said they are still refining the process. Ms. Nutter asked where FWP counts wolves. Ms. Nelson said they count wolves where there are known packs and from reports by the public.

Farm Service Agency – Bruce Nelson, State Director spoke about the new Farm Bill's LIP program. Under LIP livestock owners no longer have a crop insurance requirement in order to participate. This program would partially cover losses from wolves and grizzly bears. LIP is now a permanent FSA program rather than having to be reauthorized under the Farm Bill every five years. Federal rules required livestock owners to seek payment from state programs first and if the state pays the claim they would not be eligible to receive a payment from the LIP program. The only losses that Montana livestock owners may be eligible for would be losses from grizzly bears that occurred between October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2013. If the livestock owner has documented evidence of loss during this time period and were not compensated for the loss or only partially compensated they should contact their local FSA office. Sign up for FSA programs begins April 15th.

Old Business:

Issued Grants:

George Edwards said he had received a W9 form for one of the two remaining grants. He is still waiting for a W9 from the Lazy Daisy Ranch and is seeking board guidance on how to proceed. Board members asked Mr. Edwards to call and continue to work with Lazy Daisy Ranch to finalize the grant.

Loss Prevention Grant – Grizzly Bears:

Board members encouraged Mr. Edwards to continue the conversation with Lewis & Clark County if future funding becomes available. Mr. Edwards said he will contact Madison County to see if they may want to start a second site on the East side of the Tobacco Root Mountains near Ennis or Cameron. The board has already provided grant money for wolf loss prevention to Madison County. A project is going to be started near Twin Bridges. Larry Trexler said to use the money wherever a project can be started. Seth Wilson asked about time constraints. Mr. Edwards spoke with Defenders of Wildlife who had provided the funds and they agreed not to put time constraints on the funds.

Federal Funding:

Mia Aageson with Senator Tester's office said the senator is attempting to put additional funding in the federal budget. She said it will be a couple of months before they will know if they were successful.

Mr. Edwards asked the board how they wanted to use the current \$70,000 awarded by the federal government. Some of the funding could be used to pay veterinary bills as there is more flexibility than current state funding. Board members directed Mr. Edwards to find out exactly what is allowed and then to establish a future teleconference board meeting to decide how the funds will be used.

New Business:

Grant Process Refinement – Board members liked the list of discussion items in their board books. They all want to see the results of the recently issued grants in order to more accurately decide guidelines for future grants. This agenda item will be placed on the board's December agenda for further discussion.

Budget/EPP Governors Budget Process – The governor's budget office requested all agencies to submit their general requests the week of this board meeting. Mr. Edwards submitted the board's request for \$400,000 per year similar to the Woolgrowers bill from the 2013 session. He said he will work with George Harris on the budget for smaller items to maintain board operations. If the governor's office does not accept the board's request, Woolgrowers has already planned to introduce their legislation again for the 2015 session.

Funding Opportunities – Seth Wilson said he is currently working on possible NRCS funding for the Blackfoot Challenge. There may be some possibilities for funding of projects for the board within the NRCS programs. Larry Trexler said it would be good to look at any funding opportunities. Elaine Allestad said range riders have been funded in the past via NRCS. Mr. Wilson will be in contact with Mr. Edwards as information becomes available.

Listening Session Actions – No actions were identified during the listening session.

Board Meeting Date – Due to many potential conflicts of timing the board decided to hold their next full meeting in December. They chose either December 4th or 5th in Billings to coincide with the Montana Woolgrowers annual convention.

Public Comment:

Public comment was made throughout the meeting and is included in these minutes.

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

DATED this 41 day of December, 2014

Elaine K. Allestad

Elaine Allestad, Chairman
Montana Livestock Loss Board