

	<p style="text-align: center;">Livestock Loss Board May 18, 2012 Ravalli County Commission Room Hamilton MT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Meeting Minutes</p>
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Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board Members Present:

Elaine Allestad – Chairperson
Larry Trexler
James Cross
John Herman

Board Members Not Present:

Whitney Wankel
Brad Radtke
Mike Leahy

Staff:

George Edwards – Livestock Loss Mitigation Coordinator

Guests:

Kraig Glazier – USDA, WS
Liz Bradley - FWP
Scott Boulanger
Steve Claudance
Keith Kubista - SFW
Suzy Foss – Ravalli County Commissioner
Marc Cook - Wolves of the Rockies
Carl Baldwin
C Joseph Grover
Clay Dethlefsen - WPCA
Jack Ward DVM
Marie Everett

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 October 14, 2011 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. Harris was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Edwards stated that the last budget report he received from Mr. Harris shows we are at 85% of the budget year. The board is in good shape and has used 76% of the budget. The remaining budget is \$16,896 out of a total budget of \$70,798.

Board members reviewed the budget prepared by Mr. Harris. **Motion:** Larry Trexler made a motion to approve the budget report. John Herman seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None **Vote:** All in favor none opposed. Motion carried.

Reports:

- **George Edwards – LLB Board Administrator**

Mr. Edwards reviewed the board's current loss statistics. Livestock losses are posted on the board's website www.llb.mt.gov and loss numbers are updated as claims come into the board's office. Elaine and George were approached by the NRDC about forming a coalition of Ag and Environmental groups to seek federal funding. George went to the Ag organizations and was able to bring Woolgrowers, Stockgrowers, Cattlemen, Farmers Union, MACO and staff from Congressman Rehberg's office as well as staff from Senators Baucus and Tester into the coalition. NRDC brought in Blackfoot Challenge, Montana Tribes, Native American Fish & Wildlife Society, People & Carnivores and Mountain States Cooperative. George is the main contact for all of the organizations and the coalition has been meeting in person and by conference calls. The coalition has had some success as Senator Baucus placed a provision for federal funding if a livestock producer has had an increased death loss in excess of the ranches normal death loss due to large predators. Senator Tester is going to include a provision for funding of death loss by federally protected species. Mr. Edwards asked the board if they would consider a motion to support this effort by the full board.

Motion: Larry Trexler made a motion in support of the coalition's funding efforts. John Herman seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None **Vote:** All in favor none opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Edwards asked if the board would be in support of adding grizzly bear caused losses under the boards program in the state legislature were to change the current law. **Motion:** Larry Trexler made a motion to support adding grizzly

bear losses to the board pending legislative changes. John Herman seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None **Vote:** All in favor none opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Edwards explained to the board that there will be some federal funding available for loss and prevention via 2008 legislation from Senator Tester. He asked if the board would support buying receivers similar to what USDA WS uses to locate wolves with future federal prevention dollars. His concept is to work with FWP to obtain the collar frequencies and to check out the receivers to livestock owners with wolf problems during a period outside of wolf hunting season. He would collect the receivers once wolf hunting season begins.

- **Kraig Glazier – USDA Wildlife Services**

Mr. Glazier said he had a wolf depredation call on some llamas. He invited George Edwards to go out with him on the call. Upon investigating the llama death, it turned out to be a mountain lion caused loss. Mr. Edwards really appreciated the opportunity.

Currently, they have 15 projects they are working on. Eight of his staff are working on the projects. Specialists territories have been changed slightly due to a lack of federal funds to replace recently retired specialists.

Some of the producers on the Blackfeet reservation were upset by USDA WS determinations. Mr. Glazier follows up on his staff's rulings and verified that bears had caused the losses. On a recent claim near the Kalispell area he went to do a secondary investigation on a cow loss where wolves had been spotted in the calving pasture. The cow was skinned from nose to tail and did not have any trauma or bite marks on it. Because of this a determination that wolves killed the cow could not be made. None of the baby calves in this pasture had been killed. These are tough cases for both the rancher and Kraig's staff.

USDA WS received \$51,000 from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for collaring, control and management of wolves. They share their information with Idaho USDA WS as well as FWP.

- **Liz Bradley – FWP**

Ms. Bradley thanked the board for an invite to speak to them. Here in the Bitterroot the first conflicts began to appear in 1999. The next big blowup occurred in 2006. FWP tries to work closely with the producers and they tried all kinds of thing for prevention. Sometimes works and sometimes it doesn't.

Wolf population growth really occurred in this valley around 2005. The last for or five years it has been fairly steady at about a minimum of 12 packs of wolves or 60 to 80 wolves. Right now she is monitoring 14 packs of wolves. The biggest pack is about eight or nine. The greatest area for conflict is in the south end of

the Bitterroot valley. Last year there were five packs of wolves that got in trouble with livestock. FWP's collaring efforts are primarily from mid April to the beginning of rifle season. They confer with USDA WS on control actions. John Herman asked if they will notify ranchers when a problem pack enters their area. Ms. Bradley said they try to establish communications with the ranchers. They post their flight reports on FWP's website so people can see where wolves are found.

Keith Kubista asked what FWP uses for a protocol in locating packs. Ms. Bradley said it helps when the public notifies them that they have seen a wolf and when death losses are reported to USDA WS. Mr. Kubista asked if FWP would accept help from the public and producers to collar wolves. Ms. Bradley said getting permission on adjoining lands is a problem even for FWP. The best help is to notify FWP when wolves are spotted.

Old Business:

- **License Plate**

The license plate became available in February. During the first two months the plates have brought in \$900.

New Business:

- **Actions from Listening Session**

Similar to prior board listening sessions, there appears to be a strong desire by livestock producers for better wolf management and funding for loss prevention.

- **Federal Funding**

George Edwards went over to speak with Art Noonan, FWP Assistant Director about our board purchasing collar receivers and obtaining collar frequencies for use by ranchers in high conflict areas. The approach was that the board retains ownership of the receivers and would check them out to the ranchers during the time when wolf hunting season is closed. The range riders could then focus their prevention efforts in the areas where the wolves are located. This would allow the prevention dollars to go further. He asked if the board would allow him to purchase some receivers. Board members were provided with the costs based on a current USDA WS invoice. Liz Bradley said they have done this already on a limited basis. She really likes the idea as this will also help with monitoring efforts.

Motion: Jim Cross made a motion to continue to pursue obtaining the collar frequencies and purchase the receivers. Larry Trexler seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ranchers in the audience voiced that this would be a great help to

them and they could focus their prevention efforts where the wolves are located in their pastures. Larry Trexler suggested buying five receivers to start with.
Vote: All in favor none opposed. Motion carried.

The board will be receiving some Federal funding this fall but the dollar amount is not know at this time. Unlike the last time the board received federal funds, this time there will be a requirement to split the funds evenly between compensation and prevention.

- **Fundraising**

Mr. Edwards asked the board in they have any new ideas for fundraising. The board did receive one hide that is being used for educational purposes. Additional hides were not available due to a lack of control actions during hunting season which coincided with the time when hides were in their prime. We will continue to work with the coalition to come up with new funding ideas.

- **Board Meeting Date**

Board members reviewed a calendar and picked a time period of October 15th to the 19th for their next board meeting. It will be held in Polson.

Public Comment

- Public comment occurred throughout the board meeting. A person in the audience expressed appreciation to the board and that he now realizes the board is looking out for everyone's interests. Keith Kubista said he has attended some of the coalition meetings and encouraged the board to try to keep funding for lethal control in any federal funding legislation.

Adjournment 4:00 pm

DATED this 19 day of October, 2012


Whitney Klasna, Vice Chair
Montana Livestock Loss Board