

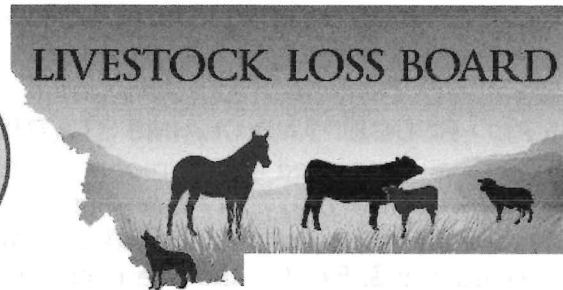
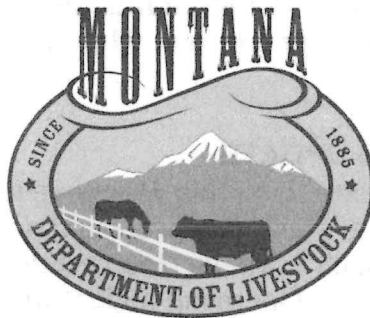
MONTANA LIVESTOCK LOSS BOARD

Meeting Minutes

(This Meeting was Open to the Public & By ZOOM)

May 12, 2026

MT Department of Livestock Board Room #319/Helena, MT



Board Members Present

John Sampsel, Chair (Stanford)
Raina Blackman (Wolf Creek)
Joe Kipp (Browning)

Jordan Mannix (Helmville)
Doreen Gillespie (Ethridge)

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, EO
Dale Haylett, Centralized Services
Carolyn Johnson, Centralized Services
Evan Waters, Centralized Services

Brian Simonson, Deputy EO
Donna Wilham, Adm Asst to EO
Leslie Doely, LLB Program Manager
Lindsey Simon, Agency Legal Counsel

Public Present

Trina Jo Bradley, Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group
Dalín Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services
MT Senator Bruce Gillespie
Craig Iron Pipe, Blackfeet Agriculture Department
Jeremy Gallagher, Blackfeet Agriculture Department
Julie Fambro, Milligan Canyon Ranch
Darcie Warden, Ruby Valley Conservation District
Tyrele Schaff

CALL TO ORDER AND ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(12:20) 1:00 PM

(12:28) 1:00 PM - INTRODUCTIONS

(13:58) 1:01 PM - BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

MOTION/VOTE

(16:41) 1:04 PM

Raina Blackman moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Livestock Loss Board February 24, 2026 meeting. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed.

(17:15) 1:05 PM - BUDGET AND CLAIMS STATUS UPDATE

- Brian Simonson reported that Personal Services so far this year were listed at \$32,674, compared to \$77,917 last year due to Leslie Doely coming on board as just a half-time employee and not doing as much travel as George Edwards did. He reported that \$257,699 had been spent of the Operating budget with \$48,000 left until fiscal year end, which he said was plenty. \$337,649 had been given out in grants so far this fiscal year with \$168,175 of cash still available for grants. He added that budget numbers were positive with just two months left in the fiscal year. 84% of the LLB budget had been expended, with 62% of the Personal Services budget expended, 80% of the payroll completed and the Operational budget was 29% expended.

(26:59) 1:14 PM – Legislative Update

- Brian Simonson said that May 6, 2026 was the deadline for the LLB to submit their three pieces of Legislative requests to OBPP. June 5, 2026 was the deadline to submit the HB2 request to transfer \$100,000 to Wildlife Services that had been voted on previously by the LLB

(28:54) 1:17 PM – Unclaimed Confirmed and Probable Depredations

- Leslie Doely gave the LLB an update on depredation claims numbers as of the end of April, adding that she had just that morning, received two more claims to add to her report, one for 12 sheep in Stillwater County that had been killed in October 2025 and one for two calves that had been killed in Lewis & Clark County in April and May of 2025
- Ms. Doely also reported on the numbers of confirmed or probable depredations she had received from Wildlife Services, but had not yet been sent into the LLB for claims

(38:30) 1:27 PM – USDA Wildlife Services Update (If Available)

Dalin Tidwell, Director for USDA Wildlife Services in Montana, reported by ZOOM, as they were hosting the National Non-Lethal Initiative Workshop Training:

- Mr. Tidwell reported on OARS, their new data management system, and said that they were able to get approval and put out an announcement for a vacant

Budget Analyst position that had been vacant for some time due to the Federal hiring freeze

- IR reports from October 1, 2026 to present: 9 Black Bear IRs for 4 calves, 2 goats, 3 sheep; 25 Grizzly Bear IRs for 16 calves, 10 cattle; Mountain Lion for 1 alpaca, 1 calf, 5 goats, 1 lamb and 5 sheep; Wolf for 9 calves, 3 cattle, 3 guard dogs, 2 lambs and 3 sheep

OLD BUSINESS

(49:10) 1:37 PM

(49:16) 1:37 PM – ADMINISTRATIVE RULE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Lindsey Simon reported that she had not received any update from the Governor's Office on Public Participation Rules

(49:47) 1:37 PM – ADMINISTRATIVE RULE: TIMELINESS OF CLAIM SUBMISSIONS

Lindsey Simon reported that since the LLB had approved moving forward with some rulemaking on the timeliness of claim submissions, the comment period for that had ended with no public comments received on that rule. She expected the rule to be adopted and become effective on May 22, 2026

(52:04) 1:40 PM – REBISH-KONEN GRANT APPLICATION FOLLOW-UP

Leslie Doely presented a letter to the LLB sent by Rebish-Konen Livestock, regarding their previous grant request, that had only been partially funded by the LLB. Their original request was for \$29,617, and the LLB awarded them \$20,517. The letter was requesting that the rest of the original grant be awarded, which included an ATV and storage for that ATV.

MOTION/VOTE

(58:29) 1:46 PM

Joe Kipp moved to award the grant amount of 70% of the ATV to Rebish-Konen Ranch, for a total of \$5,600. Raina Blackman seconded. The motion passed.

(1:00:40) 1:48 PM **RECESS**

(1:06:39) 1:54 PM **RECONVENE**

NEW BUSINESS

(1:06:41) 1:54 PM

(1:06:44) 1:54 PM – GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW AND AWARDS

(1:10:40) 1:58 PM – Baldy Mountain Ranch, Inc.

MOTION/VOTE

(1:15:11) 2:03 PM

Jordan Mannix moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$3,095 to Baldy Mountain Ranch, Inc. Joe Kipp seconded. The motion passed.

(1:15:40) 2:03 PM – Hahn Ranch

MOTION/VOTE

(1:22:20) 2:10 PM

Joe Kipp moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$5,267.50 to Hahn Ranch. Jordan Mannix seconded. The motion passed.

(1:23:08) 2:11 PM – Jess Leach

MOTION/VOTE

(1:23:40) 2:11 PM

Raina Blackman moved to award a portion of the requested grant amount for the thermal scope to Jess Leach. Doreen Gillespie seconded. (All LLB members voted no) The motion failed.

MOTION/VOTE

(1:33:38) 2:21 PM

Joe Kipp moved to approve that Jess Leach be approved for his 70% matching grant ask for dog food for his livestock protection dogs, for a total of \$1,622.71. Jordan Mannix seconded. The motion passed.

MOTION/VOTE

(1:34:33) 2:22 PM

Raina Blackman moved to approach Jess Leach about putting up Joe Kipp's cameras. (No second was made.)

(1:38:06) 22:26 PM – Milligan Canyon Ranch

MOTION/VOTE

(1:39:19) 2:27 PM

Raina Blackman moved to award a portion of the requested grant amount for ear tags and a drone to Milligan Canyon Ranch. Doreen Gillespie seconded. (Raina Blackman withdrew her motion at 2:53 PM - 2:05:53)

MOTION/VOTE

(2:07:29) 2:55 PM

Jordan Mannix moved to award a portion of the requested grant amount for 266 ear tags, the Drone Service and a Range Rider to Milligan Canyon Ranch. Raina Blackman seconded. The motion passed

(2:10:30) 2:58 PM – Ruby Valley Conservation District

MOTION/VOTE

(2:19:52) 3:07 PM

Raina Blackman moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$9,000.00 to Ruby Valley Conservation District. Joe Kipp seconded. The motion passed.

(2:20:34) 3:08 PM – Tyrele Schaff

MOTION/VOTE

(2:38:46) 3:26 PM

Joe Kipp moved to table the request, at this time, of Tyrele Schaff for a grant amount of \$8,942.50, under the advice from a sheep producer that was present at the table. Raina Blackman seconded. A substitute motion was made.

MOTION/VOTE

(2:39:18) 3:26 PM

Joe Kipp moved to not approve the grant request of Tyrele Schaff, in the amount of \$8,942.50, under the advice from a sheep producer that was present at the table. Raina Blackman seconded. The motion passed.

(2:40:17) 3:28 PM – Valley Creek Stock Association

MOTION/VOTE

(2:42:13) 3:30 PM

Raina Blackman moved to award the full requested grant for Range Riders, in the amount of \$15,000.00 to Valley Creek Stock Association. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed.

(2:42:56) 3:32 PM – Robert Yates

MOTION/VOTE

(2:46:08) 3:34 PM

Doreen Gillespie moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$2,408.00 to Robert Yates. Jordan Mannix seconded. The motion passed.

(2:46:42) **3:34 PM – Luke Peebles**

MOTION/VOTE

(2:51:22) **3:39 PM**

Joe Kipp moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$1,537.00 to Luke Peebles. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed.

(2:53:24) **3:40 PM – Board Discussion Regarding Cooperative Agreements with Tribes (Non-Agenda Item)**

Joe Kipp complimented and thanked Senator Gillespie on his work on State legislation that would not require State of Montana Tribal members to have an MOU with the LLB

(2:55:26) **3:43 PM – Grant Scoring Criteria**

With the expectation of receiving even more grant applicants in the future, Leslie Doely shared her ideas on changing grant scoring criteria in the future and was open to hearing ideas from the LLB as well

(3:02:34) **3:49 PM – Set Date for Next Award Cycle**

The LLB decided to set their next grant award cycle for Wednesday, December 9, 2026, with a deadline for grants to be turned into the LLB by November 4, 2026. The LLB also set a meeting date of July 29, 2026 for a short meeting to make a decision on what amount of the leftover claims money should be given to Wildlife Services

(3:09:12) **3:57 PM – Letter of Support Request: Range Rider Training Grant (Western SARE Research and Education)**

Leslie Doely presented a letter to the LLB from Sabrina Bradford, who was working with the Western Sustainability Exchange who were applying for a grant that would help fund training for Range Riders. The grant would come from the Western SARE. The letter was requesting that the LLB submit a letter of support for them to receive that grant

MOTION/VOTE

(3:14:39) **4:02 PM**

Jordan Mannix moved to approve the letter of support to the Western SARE Research and Education regarding the Range Rider Training grant request. Raina Blackman seconded. (Doreen Gillespie abstained from voting). The motion passed.

(3:15:30) **4:03 PM PUBLIC COMMENT**

- The first public comment was received in the form of an email that was read by Brian Simonson, requesting that the LLB compensate for pregnant animals at a higher rate than market value
- Senator Gillespie suggested that maybe some brainstorming sessions be held by the LLB to discuss how some of the grants be justified, because Montana funded most of those grants

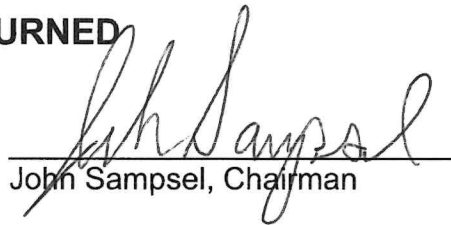
- Trina Bradley thanked Leslie Doely for coming to the Montana Conflict Reduction Consortium meetings. She also encouraged the LLB to talk about a multiplier again
- Craig Iron Pipe shared about the increase in grizzly population in their area, saying that problem bears had been dumped on their reservation, adding that he liked the idea of using drones to monitor them

MOTION/VOTE

(3:30:03) 4:18 PM

Joe Kipp moved to adjourn the meeting. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed.

(3:30:13) 4:18 PM **MEETING ADJOURNED**



John Sampsel, Chairman