

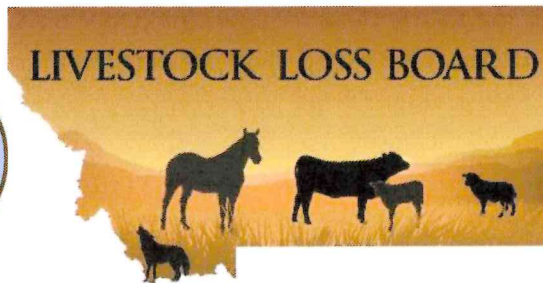
MONTANA LIVESTOCK LOSS BOARD

Meeting Minutes

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

February 24, 2026

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



Board Members Present

John Sampsel, Chair (Stanford)
Raina Blackman (Wolf Creek)

Jordan Mannix (Helmville)
Doreen Gillespie (Ethridge)

(Joe Kipp attended the meeting by ZOOM)

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, EO
Lindsey Simon, Agency Legal Counsel
Rick Corder, Centralized Services
Tom Shultz, Centralized Services
Evan Waters, Centralized Services

Brian Simonson, Deputy EO
Donna Wilham, Adm Asst to EO
Leslie Doely, LLB Program Manager
Dale Haylett, Centralized Services

Public Present

Trina Jo Bradley, Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group
Dalin Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services
Kraig Glazier, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services
Ellie Brighton, MSGA
MT Senator Bruce Gillespie
Sarah Converse
Dillion Brooks
Mandy Holland

Calli Michaels
Kristina Martinell
Teresa Converse Lane
Diane Fitzgerald
Kenny Holland

CALL TO ORDER AND ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(:10) 10:00 AM

(0:24) 10:00 AM - INTRODUCTIONS

(3:19) 10:03 AM - BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

MOTION/VOTE

(3:56) 10:04 AM

Raina Blackman moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Livestock Loss Board November 20, 2025 meeting. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed.

(4:16) 10:04 AM - BUDGET AND CLAIMS STATUS UPDATE

- Brian Simonson reported on the Budget Status of the LLB, reporting that it was quite healthy with an expectation, at the end of the fiscal year, of spending all of the Operational side of the budget on what was remaining on Claims and having a goal of moving expenses around to get General Fund dollars down to zero
- Leslie Doely reported on the graphs and tables she had prepared for the Board, all of which, so far, covered calendar year 2025 paid claims, as there had been no claims or losses that had happened yet in 2026

(11:17) 10:11 AM - USDA Wildlife Services Update (if available)

Dalin Tidwell, State Director for USDA Wildlife Services, shared Investigative Reports (IRs) for Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Mountain Lion and Wolf, from October 1, 2025 to current, saying that with the unique weather, it had been fairly slow.

OLD BUSINESS

(17:03) 10:17 AM

(17:03) 10:17 AM – ADMINISTRATIVE RULE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported by both Lindsey Simon and Mike Honeycutt that a halt was put on individual public participation rules because there was work being done in the Governor's Office on enterprise-wide public participation rules

(18:25) 10:18 AM – ADMINISTRATIVE RULE: TIMELINESS OF CLAIMS SUBMISSIONS

Leslie Doely explained that Brian Simonson, Lindsey Simon and she had worked together to draft language for a new ARM 32.25.101, dealing with the timeliness of claims submissions and appeals to the Livestock Loss Board

MOTION/VOTE

(24:28) 10:24 AM

Raina Blackman moved to approve moving forward with rulemaking for Item #1 of the New Rule 1 (32.25.101) - Loss Mitigation Program Applications and Appeals,

listing a February 1st deadline for reporting depredations that occurred during the previous calendar year, as presented by Leslie Doely. Doreen Gillespie seconded. **Joe Kipp abstained from voting.** The motion passed.

MOTION/VOTE

(34:16) 10:34 AM

Raina Blackman moved to approve moving forward with rulemaking for Item #2 and #3 as written in the New Rule 1 (32.25.101) - Loss Mitigation Program Applications and Appeals, as presented by Leslie Doely. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed.

(36:52) 10:37 AM – EAGLE DEPREDATION UPDATE AND SURVEY RESULTS

Leslie Doely presented the results of an eagle depredation survey that had been requested by the LLB. She reported that she had received 35 responses, with 20 of those reporting that the issues could be either from eagles or ravens

NEW BUSINESS

(51:03) 10:51 AM

(51:03) 10:51 AM – LEGISLATIVE ITEMS

John Sampsel requested that before a break was taken that some of the Legislative Items be addressed

MOTION/VOTE

(51:25) 10:51 AM

Raina Blackman moved to add all species to the Livestock Loss predation claims list that had per capita fee assessed to them. Jordan Mannix seconded. **Raina Blackman withdrew her motion at (1:14:25) 11:34 AM.**

MOTION/VOTE

(1:24:27) 11:24 AM

Jordan Mannix moved that donkeys and alpacas be added to the Livestock Loss Board predation claims list. Joe Kipp seconded. The motion passed.

Mike Honeycutt reminded the LLB that what had been approved was moving forward a “concept” to the Office of Budget and Program Planning that would hopefully, make its way to the Legislature

(1:36:11) 11:36 AM – SET DATE FOR NEXT AWARD CYCLE

The LLB set the date for the next grants award cycle for Tuesday, May 12, 2026

(1:45:08) 11:45 AM LUNCH

(1:45:10) 12:29 PM RECONVENE

NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

(1:45:13) 12:29 PM

(1:45:13) 12:29 PM – GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW AND AWARDS

(1:51:18) 12:34 PM – Pipestone Grazing Association, LLC

MOTION/VOTE

(1:56:08) 12:37 PM

Raina Blackman moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$17,000 to Pipestone Grazing Association, LLC. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed.

(1:58:10) 12:43 PM – Bill Martinell

MOTION/VOTE

(2:01:41) 12:46 PM

Doreen Gillespie moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$1047.87 to Bill Martinell. Jordan Mannix seconded. The motion passed.

(2:04:53) 12:49 PM – Holland Ranch Company

MOTION/VOTE

(2:09:23) 12:54 PM

Jordan Mannix moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$3,117.45 to Holland Ranch Company. Raina Blackman seconded. The motion passed.

(2:11:15) 12:56 PM – Centennial Valley Association

MOTION/VOTE

(2:14:05) 12:58 PM

Raina Blackman moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$20,000 to Centennial Valley Association. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed.

(2:15:29) 1:00 PM – Converse Ranch

MOTION/VOTE

(2:20:46) 1:04 PM

Jordan Mannix moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$1,661.80 to Converse Ranch. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed.

(2:22:18) 1:07 PM – Blackfoot Challenge

MOTION/VOTE

(2:24:18) 1:08 PM

Doreen Gillespie moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$23,600 to Blackfoot Challenge. Raina Blackman seconded. The motion passed.

(2:25:05) 1:10 PM – Sam Ortman

MOTION/VOTE

(2:28:02) 1:12 PM

Raina Blackman moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$9,869.30 to Sam Ortman. Jordan Mannix seconded. **Joe Kipp voted no.** The motion passed.

(2:37:01) 1:21 PM – Rebish/Konen Livestock

MOTION/VOTE

(2:40:10) 1:24 PM

Jordan Mannix moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$29,617 to Rebish/Konen Livestock. Raina Blackman seconded. **Jordan Mannix withdrew his motion at (2:54:07) 1:38 PM.**

MOTION/VOTE

(2:55:00) 1:38 PM

Jordan Mannix moved to award a partial grant amount of \$20,517 to Rebish/Konen Livestock, with a stipulation that we get back to them about the remaining \$13,000. Raina Blackman seconded. The motion passed.

(2:56:24) 1:41 PM – Ruby Valley Conservation District

MOTION/VOTE

(3:01:05) 1:45 PM

Doreen Gillespie moved to award the full requested grant amount of \$24,500 to Ruby Valley Conservation District. Raina Blackman seconded. The motion passed.

(3:04:55) 1:49 AM RECESS

(3:05:00) 2:04 PM RECONVENE

NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

(3:05:04) 2:04 PM

(3:05:08) 2:05 PM – LEGISLATIVE ITEMS (Continued)

(3:05:08) 2:05 PM – Eagles

It was discussed by the LLB whether or not to propose adding eagles to the predatory loss rolls

MOTION/VOTE

(3:06:11) 2:06 PM

Joe Kipp moved that eagles be added to the Legislative list to see if they would be added to the predator loss eligibility rolls. Raina Blackman seconded. **Motion passed as amended (below).**

MOTION/VOTE (Amended)

(3:26:17) 2:27 PM

Joe Kipp moved that protected, predatory and migratory birds be added to the Legislative list of covered predators. Raina Blackman seconded. The amended motion passed.

(3:29:08) 2:28 PM – Wildlife Services Funding

The LLB, DOL staff, industry members and general public discussed requesting more funding from the Legislature for Wildlife Services, in addition to what was already given to them by the LLB

MOTION/VOTE

(3:43:52) 2:41 PM

Joe Kipp moved to ask the Legislature to fund Wildlife Services for another \$100,000, in addition to what the LLB already pays them. Doreen Gillespie seconded. **Raina Blackman, Joe Kipp voted yes. Doreen Gillespie, Jordan Mannix voted no. John Sampsel broke the tie and voted yes.** The motion passed.

(3:57:32) 2:57 PM – Multiplier

There was LLB, DOL staff, industry members and general public discussion on whether or not to request additional annual general fund from the Legislature to support an LLB multiplier on qualified livestock deprecations. No motion was made

(4:06:10) 3:06 PM – Reimburse Vet Bills up to \$500 for Injured Livestock Guard Dogs

There was discussion on a request from Raina Blackman to propose to the Legislature that the LLB cover veterinary bills up to \$500 for injured livestock guardian dogs

MOTION/VOTE


(4:09:49) 3:09 PM

Raina Blackman moved to reimburse up to \$500 for injured guard dogs, utilizing the money in the Loss Account. Doreen Gillespie seconded. The motion passed. **Joe Kipp abstained from the vote.**

(4:25:06) 3:24 PM PUBLIC COMMENT

Senator Gillespie was the only general public that offered comment. There was further discussion by the LLB to refine the scoring for grant applications

(4:36:14) 3:36 PM MEETING ADJOURNED



John Sampsel, Chairman