

**Animal Damage Management Board Meeting  
Tuesday May 12, 2020 & Wednesday May 13, 2020  
Zoom Teleconference**

Meeting called to order at 9:00 am by Doug Miyamoto.

**Board Members Present:**

Doug Miyamoto (Co-Chair)	Shaun Sims	Kevin Kisicki
Brian Nesvik (Co-Chair)	Tyler Abbott	Sandy Underhill
Mike Foster	Ron Cunningham	Garret Falkenburg
Bob Harlan	Jeff Boner	Robin Naeve (for Brad Jost)
Bob Phillips	Gay Lynn Byrd	

**WDA Support Staff Present:** Jerry Johnson, Kent Drake, Ryleigh Vaughn, JD Sater, Stacia Berry

**Public Attendees:** Mark Davis, Kristin Combs, Lisa Robertson, Brady Smith, Amy Hendrickson, Diana Holcomb, Valerie Bjorhus, Kelon Smith, Rene LaBare

Shaun Sims moves to approve current agenda, GayLynn seconds. Motion carries.

Doug Miyamoto entertains a motion to approve January 8, 2020 minutes. Jeff Boner moves; Shaun Sims seconds. Motion carries.

**Current Funding Statuses—Jerry Johnson**

*Wolf Funding Status:* There is currently \$100,000 of additional funds in the allocation amount for wolf work. Emergency rules are being drafted for this program, but will wait until the next legislative session is finished to finalize. Jerry suggested it would be good idea to take an additional \$100,000 from the budget allocation to make sure there is sufficient funding.

*ADMB General Funding Status:* There is currently \$6.061 million budgeted for the biennium – \$3.03 million per year. Due to likely upcoming budget cuts in response to COVID-19 shortages, Jerry recommends that 10% of funds be set aside, leaving \$2.727 million to allocate to each district this year.

*Rabies Funding Status:* After \$20k is deducted for the state vet lab contract and \$10k is deducted for emergencies, the biennial budget is \$90,000—\$45,000 per year. Campbell, Sheridan, and Johnson Counties are applying for use of these funds.

Doug Miyamoto once again noted the impending budget cuts he has been asked to prepare for and advised for 10% of funds held-back, in agreement with Jerry's earlier suggestion. He also stated that, by current order of the governor, any funding amounts over \$100,000 will require special approval. Shaun Sims questioned if these funds were held back, would these funds be reverted if not used, or could the board use them in subsequent years. It was determined by Doug and Jerry that the source of the funds will determine reversion status; however, any funds not utilized in the first year of the biennial fiscal budget may be reused in the second year. Doug or Jerry will clarify with Julie.

Shaun Sims motions to set aside \$100,000 for wolf work. Kevin Kisicki seconds. Motion carries.

**Presentations:**

*Goshen County: Stan Smith and Jim Angle*

*Requested: \$53,735*

Last year there was 480,000 acres worked on 61 different properties. There was \$4,999 of reported (unconfirmed) losses last season. There has also been a resurgence of rabies and distemper in the county. Coyote numbers have been trending slightly downward due to concentrated efforts during the calving and denning seasons. This county's large amount of reserve funds would help them stay afloat if budget cuts were mandatory. Underutilization of aerial programs has led to a slight increase in their reserves.

*Carbon County: Josh Peterson, Luke Spanbauer, Charlene Abbott, and Dan Braig* *Requested: \$203,000*

This county has a large black bear population and an "exploding" mountain lion population. There have been several incidences of mountain lions threatening personal safety and quick response time has minimized any black bear losses. There have been several wolf pack sightings—it is assumed that it is only a matter of time until they will appear on ranch lands. Coyote damage has increased by approximately 65%; however, the wildlife populations are flourishing with a very high doe-fawn survival rate. Raven, magpie, and crow populations have all been managed effectively by baiting and poisoning. No current rabies issues. Budget increases are due to adding a part-time/apprentice trapper to replace their valuable retiree. Other budget increases would allow for exploring new aerial areas with newfound helicopter access.

*Weston County: Carson Keeline, Kassie Swartz, Brad Troftgruben, and Allen Slagle* *Requested: \$203,000*

Their primary focus is on coyote predation due to higher reported losses last year. Coyote litter counts are high this year. This, in conjunction with an increase in sheep populations, will lead to trappers being spread much thinner. There was a verified wolf sighting in Newcastle last year with more reported. There were no other noticeable increases in other predator counts. The primary increase in their funding request was to hire an additional trapper for the denning season. Otherwise, they would like to continue their current program as producers are happy with the work. They have demonstrated exceptional reserve-fund management in past years.

*Albany County: Joel Modey*

*Requested: \$154,500*

They are looking to continue their current program. Coyote numbers are remaining steady with a slight increase in losses compared to previous years, possibly caused by the increase in reporting from cooperators. They would like to budget for 20 additional hours of helicopter time. Albany County runs a fairly frugal program and is looking to continue maximizing efficiency while meeting demands.

*Campbell County: Kevin Geis, Calvin Taylor, and Kenda Ford*

*Requested: \$204,505/ \$50,000 rabies*

There has been a slight increase in predator populations but they are remaining steady for the most part. The lower prey base this year led to increased predation on livestock. They are able to realize a low cost per coyote as a landowner/aerial operator offers discounted prices. Their program is working well but the public demand is increasing. Increase in budgeted requests are due to adjustments in flying and trappers' expenses—it has been 8 years since there were any adjustments made.

*Uinta County: Steve Sims and Wade Larson*

*Requested: \$220,190*

They have stopped using government aerial contracts and have started working strictly with a private contractor—so far it has been cheaper than any other chopper applicators. They are also utilizing a trapper/denning specialist through this company. Thus far, they have been effective. There are no other large changes besides broadening their treatment focus to the entire county instead of lambing ranges only. Their large reserve balances are from historical assessment funds that were placed in CD's.

*Big Horn County: Mike Burrell, Randall Jones, and Kay Neeves*

*Requested: \$183,853*

They currently employ 1.5 trappers, but their budget request would allot for an increase to 2 full time trappers. They will need approximately \$146,000 minimum to keep program going. Cash reserves will be approximately \$200,000 at the end of the fiscal year. Coyote numbers are stable, possibly due to the preventive work being done.

*Park County: Mike Burrell, Monte Nicholson, Rori Renner, Shane Smith, Jacob Jarrett, Reagan Smith*

*Requested: \$179,000*

They are anticipating more wolf activity this year. Their budget request is similar to previous years', but they have increased their admin costs and would like to build a non-lethal trailer system. This trailer would have lights/noises on a timer that could control coyotes. They are passionate that this trailer would be effective. Sheep deaths were slightly higher last year from coyotes—there has also been some predation from ravens.

*Crook County: Andrew Litzel and Nick Smith*

*Requested: \$175,000*

Their budget has increased from last year as the Wildlife Service pilot they were utilizing has retired and will be hired as a contract pilot. They have also increased their budget to allow for 3 ground trappers (one more than last year) and would like to increase their chopper hours. The coyote population is growing and leading to more losses, but they are controlling as well as possible. Black bear numbers have increased every year. There have also been issues with wolves and smaller predators. These increased predation numbers have come from areas with large amounts of tree cover that prevents effective aerial application. 14 confirmed sheep losses from bears with other property losses, 11 sheep losses from lions, and an additional calf loss.

*Sheridan County: John Auzqui, Kellan Little, Justin Lewis, and Bob Strausser*

*Requested: \$150,210/ \$20,000 rabies*

Not a lot of changes in this program. As of January 1, they are attempting to mark predator GPS waypoints with On-X maps. This will help identify flow and trends for better resource utilization in the future. They received commissioner's tag funds last year that allowed them to take 257 coyotes along the Montana border. This has largely increased their winter survival rates. Because this has been very beneficial to their program, they would like to continue this aerial treatment and have thus requested a subsequent increase in their funding. There have also been issues with eagles in this area. Two new men have been hired to help mitigate rabies—42 tested with 3 positive cases.

*Fremont County: Beth Evans, Gloria Philp, and Tracy Frye*

*Requested: \$233,625*

Fremont County has one of the largest land masses in the state with the most diverse types of predators. Last year they purchased two pickups for trappers, which significantly reduced their reserve funds. Without significant funding they would have to do some major cuts to their program. In previous years there were significant wolf problems—they have been able to manage effectively. Mostly coyote predation currently. They have asked for more helicopter hours that would be a great advantage to their program and add safety benefits. Their raven and crow work stays relatively steady.

**Public Comment:**

Kristin Combs commented on the negative view of predators—she questioned if the board would be willing to learn about non-lethal predator control methods and how that information might be disseminated. The board concluded that more information is always welcome and Mike Foster stated that there will be an expert dedicated solely to non-lethal methods.

Meeting will reconvene at 8:00 on Wednesday—dismissed at 4:00 pm.

**Wednesday May, 13, 2020:** Meeting called to order at 8:00 am by Doug Miyamoto

**Presentations Continued:**

*Natrona County: Mary Owens*

*Requested: \$200,000*

Last year provided prime conditions for coyotes and thus they utilized a large portion of their fly hours. This resulted in over 1550 coyotes killed, which is increased from previous years by about 200. Deer numbers have also increased which illustrates the effectiveness of their efforts. The increase in their budget request is to fund more flying hours. They had raven issues last year, although work is spotty.

*Converse County: Tim Pexton and Casey Tillard*

*Requested: \$252,064*

The operation of this program is dependent on receiving state funds. Funds will be used for 2.5 trappers and a private pilot, which has been effective in keeping coyote numbers controlled. The increase in budget request includes funding for an additional trapper to cover the South part of the county as well as they do the North and/or to cover denning season where the most losses were realized. There has been a slight upward trend in number of losses. Last year, they started a small Raven program but it is undetermined as to whether or not it will be continued.

*Johnson County: John Camino, TJ Tavegie, and Dave Hall*

*Requested: \$150,000/\$20,000 rabies*

They employ 2 trappers that split the county as well as 2 seasonal skunk trappers for rabies control. The bulk of their revenue is from ADMB grants. Johnson County, the City of Buffalo, and the Town of Kaycee all contribute matching funds. Their budget increases consists mostly of contract changes. Over 95% of budgeted expenses are for "boots on the ground". They have taken roughly 1,000 coyotes which is on track to be the highest number in 10 years. There has been a large influx of bears and lions as well as wolf sightings. Coyote and raven losses have both increased. Livestock losses amounted to over \$100,000. Rabies incidents are trending down, with 1 positive rabies test last year.

*Hot Springs County: Mike Burrell and Brett Belden*

*Requested: \$199,000*

Changes to their budget for this year show a cut in aerial and operating hours, which they planned to use to replace their side-by-side. A minimum of \$185,000 is needed to run the program with no changes. This county is geographically small but has a very complex predator system. Predations have included coyote, fox, raven and eagle. Coyote predation has been low due to work by the county predator management board. There were 3 wolves removed since April of this year. Annual kills show 0-5 from wolves, 5-15 from coyotes, and a large number of losses (no exact estimate) from grizzly bears.

*Niobrara County: Barb Kilmer and Kitson Boldon*

*Requested: \$150,000*

This county takes roughly 1300 coyotes annually, with an average cost of \$182 each. Their 2 trappers cover their own expenses. There seems to be an endless supply of predator seed stock coming from South Dakota and Nebraska. They choose not to utilize helicopters because of the high associated costs. This program is efficient and is known for their low-cost operation. Funds in their reserve were obtained before this state program was established. Ravens, crows, and eagles are not a large problem because sheep numbers have decreased. Mountain lions have been a large problem.

*Washakie County: Mike Burrell, Rolly Redland, and Mark Dooley*

*Requested: \$215,000*

1.5 trappers have been managing numbers in this county well. Coyote numbers are stable with a slight increase from previous years. Overall predation rates were average this year—8 verified cases. Mountain lion and black bear predations have increased in the summer. Last year, they decreased their budgeted aerial hours but would like to increase again as their aerial program has proven very effective. If they are to face budget cuts, they would like the priority to remain on increasing aerial hours. \$143,000 would be needed to cover aerial hours increase.

*Sweetwater: Jim Burnett, Dick Thoman, and Gary Zakotnik*

*Requested: \$145,000*

Sweetwater PMD has reworked their program and they are now using a private contractor for predator work; the budget surplus shown was due to underutilization of fly hours by WS over the last two years. They are largely dependent on state funding and have been working very hard to get caught up on predator requests. There have been wolf activity reports although none were confirmed. They would like to start earlier next year to focus on killing female coyotes that are still pregnant. Ravens are dealt with by producers alone as WS is the only entity allowed to do the work. Other birds have not been an issue.

*Lincoln County: Steve Moyle and Jon Child*

*Requested: \$200,000*

They took 342 coyotes this year, 190 of which were taken by air. Employees were reduced from 3 down to 1 which has spread them pretty thin. Their wolf situation is ongoing and is time consuming/expensive to control. Verified losses this year from wolves: 24 lambs and 2 ewes. Verified losses from coyotes: 4 calves and 95 lambs to coyotes. There have been additional eagle and raven losses. Their raven problem is ongoing, especially on calving and lambing grounds. 127 ravens removed last year helped considerably with predation. The supply of predators is seemingly endless and their current budget request would cause them to dip into their reserve funds by approximately \$7,000.

**Public Comment:**

Amy Hendrickson questioned the review needed for amounts over \$100,000 and what that might mean. Doug and Brian explained that under this review, the approved amounts may be changed. Amy noted that this brings a large amount of uncertainty for these predator management boards.

Gary Zakotnik raised concerned because Sweetwater was one of the only counties that had a decrease in funding because they had a cash carryover, but noticed today that other counties have larger reserves. Shaun Sims commented that cash carryover is a simple screenshot and is not an accurate depiction of trends, and that many other items go into consideration when deciding on allocations.

**Allocation Discussion:**

Bob Harlan moved that 10% be reduced from the total allocation amounts in light of likely budget cuts. Shaun Sims seconds. Motion carries.

After the 10% reduction, \$2,727,000 is available to allocate this fiscal year, with an additional \$45,000 in rabies funds.

Bob Harlan moves to allocate funds according to 2019 amounts and adjust additional funds individually thereafter. Gay Lynn Byrd seconds. The motion carries with 6 votes in favor and 5 against.

Brian Nesvik motions that they allocate additional funds to Big Horn County to raise approved amount to \$146,000. Bob Harlan seconds. Motion carries.

Bob Harlan suggested his adjusted amounts for each county which included increases to Carbon County (by \$12,000 to \$150,000 total), Hot Springs County (by \$10,000 to \$190,000 total), and Washakie County (by \$27,000 to \$157,000 total). Ron Cunningham would like to move the leftover funds to Fremont County which would raise their final amount to \$190,000. Shaun motioned that he would like to see Sweetwater get more funding due to lack of predator fees, however final amounts were never agreed upon and the motion was withdrawn. Reference final allocation spreadsheet for exact amounts.

Bob Harlan made a motion to approve final amounts as presented. Gay Lynn seconds. Motion carries.

**Rabies Allocation Discussion:**

Rabies requests exceeded funding totals by approximately 50%. Doug Miyamoto questioned the need in each county. Jerry Johnson stated that all counties have significant need. Shaun Sims made a motion to fund Campbell and Johnson counties for \$17,500 each and Sheridan county for \$10,000. Brian Nesvik seconds. Motion carries.

**Other Business:**

Next meeting will be on June 11<sup>th</sup> via Zoom, specific times to be determined.

Doug Miyamoto entertained a motion to adjourn. Garret Falkenburg moved. Shaun Sims seconds. Motion carries—meeting adjourned at 12:33 pm.