



WDate: April 15, 2015

To: Predator Management Districts partnering with Wildlife Services

Subject: Wolf Damage Management

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the status of wolf damage management in Wyoming. As you will recall, after two years of effective state management, the status of wolves was returned to the endangered species list and US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) management in September of 2014 by the court in Washington D.C. USFWS has contacted USDA APHIS Wildlife Services Wyoming (WS) and requested WS to serve as their agent for the purposes of identifying wolf damage and providing control actions as determined necessary by USFWS. However USFWS has not had any funds to pay for these services. During the winter months WS was able to provide these services by using county PMD funding for personnel and aircraft. Initially we were operating with the understanding that the ADMB Predator Zone wolf funding would still be available and applicable to helping to pay these costs. There were also, as you are aware, efforts in Congress to return wolves to state management. At this time wolves are still listed and under USFWS management. Recently it was determined at the state level that use of ADMB funds would not be permitted and that county PMD funds may not be available due to the wolf no longer being under state management. With the grazing season beginning, we can anticipate that wolf attacks on livestock will likely increase to at least the usual levels experienced over the last several years. Due to reductions in federal funding the Wyoming WS program has experienced in recent years (\$2,243,577 in 2007 reduced down to \$1,524,128 in 2015), I am projecting the Wyoming WS will not have adequate funding to provide services at the levels delivered in the past. Federal agencies are not allowed to spend into a deficit position.

Most of you will recall that over the last several years, in response to these reductions in federal funding, WS has reduced the federal funded portion of the cooperative cost share that was helping to support WS field personnel in the counties. WS also reduced the number of district supervisors from 4 to 3 and reduced one position in the state office clerical staff from 4 to 3. We also kept the budget analyst position vacant for over a year. These actions were taken to stay within the budget and also to minimize the impacts on field programs and delivery of services.

To get a projection of the cost of wolf damage management, I have gone back to the last years when WS was doing all of the wolf damage management, 2009-2011. More recent years include Wyoming Game and Fish damage management personnel and WS personnel combined, plus the wolf population was reduced somewhat by regulated sport hunting and wolves taken by hunters in the predator zone. According to the USFWS annual reports for those years, which are online at <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolf/>, the amount expended by the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services for wolf damage management was \$299,765 in 2009, \$235,358 in 2010 and \$129,981 in 2011. The average of these 3 years is about \$222,000.

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I am working with Mike Jimenez, USFWS to develop an agreement for the requested services. So far our efforts have indicated an agreement for about \$20,000 is likely, which will help, but as you can see from the paragraph above that amount is less than 10% of the probable projected need.

I wanted to provide this information so that as these issues develop, you are kept informed. Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter please feel free to contact either myself or Craig Acres at 307 261-5336.

Rod Krischke  
State Director Wyoming  
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services