

Wildlife Services Directive

2.201

July 15, 2014

WS DECISION MODEL

1. PURPOSE

To provide Wildlife Services (WS) personnel with a systematic approach to decision-making for wildlife damage management activities.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive revises WS Directive 2.201 dated July 21, 2008.

3. AUTHORITY

Authority to promulgate a policy is pursuant to The Act of March 2, 1931, (46 Stat. 1468; 7 USC 426), as amended:

Section 426. Predatory and other wild animals.

“The Secretary of Agriculture may conduct a program of wildlife services with respect to injurious animal species and take any action the Secretary considers necessary in conducting the program. The Secretary shall administer the program in a manner consistent with all of the wildlife services authorities in effect on the day October 28, 2000.”

4. POLICY

a. The WS Decision Model is intended to conceptualize and describe the thought process involved in addressing wildlife damage problems. It is not intended to require documentation or a written record each time it is used.

b. This directive provides WS personnel with a step-by-step approach to help address requests for assistance with wildlife damage. The major aspects presented in the WS Decision Model should be used when responding to requests for assistance.

5. BACKGROUND

a. Wildlife damage management focuses on reducing conflicts between humans and wildlife that occur when wildlife negatively impact agricultural and natural resources, properties, and public health and safety. The WS decision making process is a thought process for evaluating and responding to wildlife damage problems, and is similar in approach to the decision making process used within other professions. WS professionals evaluate the appropriateness of strategies, and methods are evaluated for their availability (i.e., legal and administrative) and suitability based on biological, economic, environmental and social considerations. Following the thought process, the methods deemed practical for the situation are developed into a management strategy. The WS Decision Model is designed to serve as a useful management tool and meaningful communication instrument; however, it necessarily oversimplifies complex thought processes.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

The following discussion is depicted in Attachment 1.

- a. Receive Request For Assistance. Wildlife damage management services are provided only in response to requests for assistance.
- b. Assess Problem. First, a determination should be made as to whether the problem is within the authority of WS. If it is, damage information should be gathered and analyzed to determine factors such as what species was responsible for the damage; the type, extent, and magnitude of damage; the current economic loss and potential losses; the local history of damage; and what management methods, if any, were used to reduce past damage and the results of those actions.
- c. Evaluate Management Methods. Once a problem assessment is completed, an evaluation of management methods must be conducted. Methods should be evaluated in the context of their legal and administrative availability and their acceptability based on biological, environmental, social, and cultural factors.
- d. Formulate Management Strategy. Methods determined to be practical for use are formulated into a management strategy. The concept of IWDM (WS Directive 2.105, The WS Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program) should be applied when formulating each management strategy. This approach encourages the use of several management techniques rather than relying on a single method. Consideration of factors such as available expertise, legal constraints on methods used, costs, and effectiveness is essential in formulating each management strategy.
- e. Provide Assistance. Program service can be provided by two basic means: technical assistance and direct management (WS Directive 2.101, Selecting Wildlife Damage Management Methods).
- f. Monitor and Evaluate Results of Management Actions. When direct management is provided, it is necessary to monitor the results. Monitoring is important for determining whether further assistance is required or whether the problem has been resolved.

Evaluation is used to determine whether additional techniques are necessary.

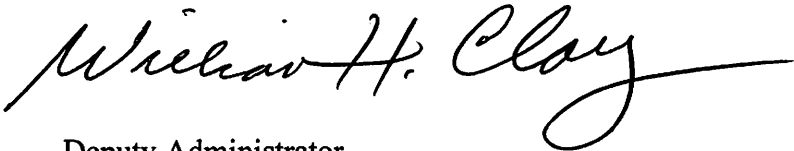
g. End of Project. With technical assistance, the projects normally end after recommendations or advice are provided to the requestor. An operational project normally ends when WS personnel have stopped or reduced the damage to an acceptable level. Problems such as chronic predation on livestock or at aquaculture facilities may require continuing or intermittent attention and may have no well-defined end point.

6. APPLICABILITY

This applies to all WS employees and programs.

7. REFERENCES

- a. WS Directive 2.101, Selecting Wildlife Damage Management Methods (10/29/03); www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/directives/2.101.pdf
- b. WS Directive 2.105, The WS Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program (03/01/04); www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/directives/2.105.pdf

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William H. Clay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Deputy Administrator

