

NATIONAL WILDLIFE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
National Wildlife Research Center
Fort Collins, CO
June 14-15, 2000

Wednesday, June 14, 2000

Committee Members in Attendance:

James Butler, Texas A&M University (Chairman)
Clait Braun, Grouse, Inc. (Vice Chairman)
Joseph Harper, West Virginia Livestock Producer
Russell Ives, Rose Exterminator Company
Mark Zaunbrecher, Louisiana Rice Growers Association
Scott Nelson, North Dakota Sunflower Grower
Camilla Fox, Animal Protection Institute
Deloyd Satterthwait, Ellison Ranching Company
Paul Eschenfelder, Airline Pilots Association
John Baucus, Seiben Ranch Company
Austin Jones, Bear Creek Fisheries
Donald Lein, Cornell University
Gayne Fearnough, Texas Department of Health
Jerome Carl, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
Diane Gansauer, Colorado Wildlife Federation

Committee Members Not in Attendance

Enrique Guerra, Livestock Producer
Rosemary Hearn, Academia
Caroline Kennedy, Defenders of Wildlife
Terry Mansfield, Wildlife Management
Gloria Notah, Wildlife Management

Welcome and Introductions

The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC) met at the Wildlife Services (WS) National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) in Fort Collins, CO. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m., on Wednesday, June 14, 2000.

Acting Deputy Administrator Martin Mendoza welcomed the group, acknowledged its importance in helping the WS program bring issues to the forefront, and thanked them for suggesting the opportunity to have this meeting at the NWRC here in Fort Collins, which Martin described as a "shining jewel in the eyes of Wildlife Services." He then congratulated Dr. Richard "Dick" Curnow, NWRC Director, who recently received the USDA Secretary's 2000 Honor Award for Customer Service and his leadership in focusing on research on wildlife

management solutions and supporting WS' ongoing initiatives.

Martin noted that the agenda was centered around strategic issues relevant to WS and research, and that he was looking forward to the Advisory Committee's discussions on these issues. Martin further noted that Bill Clay was unable to attend the meeting due to unfinished business. Mike Worthen, the Western Regional Director, also was unable to attend; however, in his place Craig Coolahan, WS/CO State Director, provided a brief overview of the issues pertinent to the Western Region. APHIS and WS personnel in attendance to assist the committee included: Dick Curnow; Gary Larson; Cindy Smith; Eva Ring; Jan Grimes; Alton Dunaway; Rick Bruggers; Mark Tobin; Kathy Fagerstone; Russ Mason; Al Dale; Ann Mannos; Rod Krischke; Craig Coolahan; and Diana Dwyer.

Dr. Craig Reed, APHIS Administrator, gave a welcoming message to the committee. Dr. Reed expressed his appreciation to the Advisory Committee for its attendance at this meeting, and stressed the importance of the Committee's contributions, especially when conflicting points of view are involved. Dr. Reed explained the current status of the vacant WS Deputy Administrator position, indicating that he had made and forwarded a selection, and explained that it would be another 4-8 weeks before an announcement would be made as to the person selected. He talked about the need to change the way we do business throughout APHIS and briefly addressed some of the issues he sees as being important to the program. Dr. Reed indicated that a lot of work needs to be done in helping airport designers and managers deal with the huge populations of wildlife on and around airports that daily threaten the lives of those who use air transportation; aquaculture is becoming a strong segment of the economy, and APHIS needs to find better ways of dealing with cormorants and other birds that devastate catfish production in the South--there is even some talk of including aquaculture in the definition of livestock; he is very proud of the work that is being done to control the outbreak of raccoon rabies in the East (VT, NY, and Ohio) as well as the major progress being made in Texas on canine rabies. Dr. Reed then thanked Dick Curnow for hosting the Secretary's Advisory Committee at NWRC, thanked the committee for standing up for what it believes in, and indicated that he is looking forward to reviewing the results of this meeting. Dr. Reed concluded his presentation by acknowledging that with the election year at hand, there will be many changes in USDA, but that he intends to stay on as the APHIS Administrator.

Following Dr. Reed's remarks, Mr. Butler explained that after the welcoming remarks and the regional and research updates, 2 hours in the agenda would be APHIS devoted to: 1) a summary of the NWSAC interviews that were conducted by Policy and Program Development (PPD) personnel and, 2) an interactive workshop to provide input into WS' Strategic Planning process.

This review was in response to item #13 on the NWSAC Summary/Decision Document dated August 24-25, 1999, accepted by the Secretary of Agriculture.

WS Regional Updates:

Gary Larson, WS Eastern Regional Director, presented an overview of the Eastern Region's goals and objectives encompassing the mission to provide Federal leadership and broaden serviceability to include all citizens in the Eastern Region. These goals include activities in the areas of disease (rabies management, bovine tuberculosis, pseudorabies, and swine brucellosis),

invasive species (pigeons, starlings, and nutria), airport assistance (hazard assessments), aquaculture in FL, AL, MS, and GA (protecting the catfish industry), threatened and endangered species (shore birds and sea turtles), livestock protection (timber wolf/coyote predation), and beaver and Canada goose management. He stated that relationships with WS research field stations (Sandusky, Gainesville, and Starkville field stations) in the Eastern Region are enthusiastic and productive. He further stated that progress is being made toward the goal of providing service to all citizens. In some cases, because of budget constraints, some work, in particular with airports, has had to be delayed or turned down.

Jim Butler asked Craig Coolahan, Colorado State Director, in the absence of Mike Worthen, Western Regional Director, to provide a brief overview of issues in the Western Region. Craig discussed some of the issues surrounding the WS aerial program (improving maintenance and safety), trapping, and NEPA documentation. Martin added that in the FY 2001 budget, an initiative has been proposed to convert WS helicopters from the piston-driven to a safer turbine engine. Craig also noted that listing of the lynx in Colorado as an endangered species has resulted in WS restricting activities until an interim policy is implemented by the Department of Interior. The released lynx have been radio collared, and indications are that they are moving out of Colorado into areas, including NE, NM, and UT--maps are being prepared, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, showing the location of the lynx on Federal land. The sage grouse is scheduled to be listed as an endangered species in the near future.

Dick Curnow, Director of NWRC, gave a brief overview of the Center's research in Fort Collins and at each of its 8 field stations around the United States. NWRC Research Program Managers (RPM) then made presentations outlining recent accomplishments in the areas of bird, mammal, and product development research.

The Bird Research Program, as explained by Mark Tobin, RPM, has (1) provided data to support the registration of Methyl Anthranilate (for repelling birds), Mesurol (to protect endangered bird eggs from predation by ravens), Flight Control (for repelling geese), Alpha Chloralose (for capturing coots, waterfowl, and pigeons), Glyphosate (for managing blackbird roosting habitats around sunflower fields), and (2) maintained a Bird Strike Database now used by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

The Mammal Research Program, as presented by Russ Mason, Field Station Leader from Logan, UT, has focused on the area of livestock predation, with specific research on behavior and selective responses in coyote populations to attractants, oral contraceptives, animal-activated frightening devices, electronic training collars and surveillance technology, and the use of high-speed videography to monitor and improve capture devices. Additionally, Russ explained that research is progressing in the use of textural repellents and pond levelers for beaver management, repellents, and supplemental feeding program to reduce bear damage to timber, holistic approaches to rodent control, (including thiram/capsicum formulation to permit direct reforestation seeding), and potential toxicants for invasive frogs in Hawaii.

Kathy Fagerstone, RPM of the Product Development Program, pointed out research accomplishments in wildlife infertility, including PZP and GnRH (possible infertility agents for deer and rodents), Nicarbazin (a possible infertility agent for geese), and brown tree snake

control (fumigants, repellents, attractants, and toxicants). She indicated that IPM methods have been developed to reduce expansion of prairie dog colonies, reduce damage by deer, pocket gophers, and bear, and that much progress has been made in the areas of analytical chemistry in developing a tranquilizer trap device for use in specified trapping areas, and analysis of components of commercial attractants to develop more effective coyote lures. Kathy concluded that a great deal of expectation exists in new areas of methods development for wildlife damage management for the future of WS.

Several committee members were interested in how these products and information about them and NWRC research gets disseminated to the public. Dick Curnow indicated that as with most research organizations, manuscripts comprise a majority of information transfer, but that these reach only a fraction of WS constituents. In realizing this, NWRC has developed a number of information outreach processes including a website containing on-line Fact Sheets, NWRC publications (past 3 years are online), APHIS product labels (to be on-line within days), and links to many technical and extension components related to current research activities that can be obtained by anyone who has Internet access capabilities. He also stated that NWRC scientists participate in WS State and regional meetings, which in 1999 was a very effective means of information transfer to over 500 WS employees. Committee members were referred to a recent article from the Wildlife Society bulletin entitled "Information transfer for wildlife management," 1999, by J. Johnston, et.al. (provided in packet), which was a WS survey conducted to determine the effectiveness of information transfer in the WS program.

Dick Curnow concluded the research overview presentation with a look toward the next 2 years and described the NWRC Master Plan (which includes the soon to be built support wing on the Animal Research Building and the outdoor pens). These additions which will enable NWRC to expand its research into even more diverse and far-reaching areas. Dick reviewed the past year of NWRC funding and expressed concern over congressional appropriations, not only the shortfall in keeping up with the Consumer Price Index, but in the past 2 years, NWRC's required redirection of funding to address specific congressional directives which ultimately have reduced the Center's base allocation.

Summary of Advisory Committee Talking Points

At the onset, Jim Butler introduced Cindy Smith (WS), who gave an overview of the purpose for WS' review of its current Strategic Plan. After this introduction, members of APHIS' Planning, Evaluation, and Monitoring staff (Jan Grimes and Eva Ring) were introduced and they described the objectives for this portion of the meeting. They included:

1. To share with the NWSAC a summary of the results of all the individual interviews conducted with each Committee member by Jan Grimes and Eva Ring. These interviews were conducted at the request of the WS Management Team to obtain their input for strategic planning purposes.
2. Based on the results, to allow members to select those strategic areas they felt warranted further discussion among the members, and to allow the Committee to discuss these topics in open session and have further input recorded and

considered as input to WS' strategic planning.

Each NWSAC member received a summary report. Jan Grimes and Eva Ring presented a list of seven thematic topics that could be used for further discussion based on the summary report. The committee prioritized these seven areas and selected the top three to discuss over the next several hours. Jan and Eva led a lengthy discussion around these three strategic topics. They were:

The Mission of WS,
Setting Priorities for WS, and
Measuring Impacts of WS Programs

The other four topics included Limited Resources, Informing the Public, Research, and Policy Precedents for Covering Costs.

Topic 1: The Mission of WS:

The conversation roamed through a variety of topics around the mission. There was consensus among the group that the mission and vision did need to be re-examined and refined in some manner. However, opinions about that refinement were varied.

One comment was that the two statements are more reactive than proactive, and they focus too heavily on problems rather than preventing problems or finding solutions to problems.

Another comment was that the language implies that wildlife cause the problems, and not that humans are part of the equation--that it is the interaction between wildlife and humans that creates conflict.

This led to the group talking about the role of WS in handling wildlife/human conflicts. While some felt that the program should focus more on educating customers around preventing wildlife/human conflict through more technical assistance work, others in the group felt strongly that the program needs to go back to its "roots" and reflect upon why the program was developed in the first place. There was a strong opinion among some members that protecting the agricultural community is fundamentally where the program needs to remain focused.

This led to a discussion about the enabling legislation--should it be changed to reflect new types of work, especially new work developed through congressional mandates? Who are the influential customers for the program? Who are the traditional customers? Are they the same? Should the program spend some time redefining who its customers are, and then develop a mission and vision statement to reflect their needs and desires? Should the program link itself to a conservationist perspective where agriculture and the conservation public (seen as more mainstream America) can come together for common interests in managing wildlife? Is more partnering needed with these various groups?

Although the opinions varied around many of these matters, the second point of consensus was clear: Currently, the WS program is trying to be everything to everyone, and it has stretched

itself too thin to be effective in most cases. The program is trying to do too much with too little.

Topic 2: Priorities of WS:

The priorities discussion also roamed among a variety of topics as well, and, as expected, much of the conversation was spent back at the mission and the vision of the program. The two topics are so linked that it is nearly impossible to talk about priorities without talking about the vision and mission. Priorities that were mentioned for the program include:

- Human health and safety;
- Technical assistance from research;
- Farmers' economic well-being, i.e., protecting their livelihood;
- Developing better measurement tools (economic data for example);
- More research--more effective, publicly acceptable methods for handling conflicts;
- Multiple land-use management practices;

Committee members discussed the WS program diversity. Several members of the committee expressed frustration, given that American farmers are the most efficient in the world and have afforded the American public the great luxury of not spending much of their income on food. In their opinion, this is why folks are able to spend their time and income on recreation and other things. There was also an interesting discussion about the lack of a national farm policy in this country. Large corporate farming seems to be the future of agriculture, even though the Department spends a lot of time "talking" about saving the family farm, and "talking" about how important it is to get young Americans into farming. But the demographics are not showing young farmers getting into Agriculture, unless they are joining a corporate-style farm.

There was also a discussion about wildlife population control. Several members of the committee believed that a priority for the program should be in getting certain wildlife populations back in balance, and looking at the long-term effect of these populations on various ecosystems (the tundra and snow geese, for example). Some committee members felt it was time the program "injected some common sense" into wildlife population management. Others did not agree, and still others stated that the program needs to consider the conservationists' view, which is more about balancing multiple uses of the land, looking at the carrying capacity of an ecosystem, and not taking an animal's life unnecessarily or in a disrespectful manner.

Within this discussion about the conservationist, it was stated that most of the general public is not trying to make life difficult for farmers; but they have developed some of their opinions about not killing animals out of ignorance. They are not educated about how a balance needs to be developed and how ecosystems are negatively impacted by overpopulation. This is why education of the urban public is necessary for the survival of agriculture and for the survival of Wildlife Services' ability to protect agriculture.

Topic 3: Measurement:

Initially when asking this question during the individual telephone interviews, many of the

respondents described different types of quantitative or economic measures that would be useful. However, during this discussion, many of the Committee members acknowledged that part of the problem here is that economic data, while very important, is often not enough to measure.

There are sociological and psychological dimensions--attitudinal data--that need to be measured in order to have effective public education campaigns, and to develop understanding and consensus about appropriate wildlife management practices. So far, there have been no comprehensive studies to look at these types of issues--no benchmarks established, etc.

In terms of the economic data, however, pieces of the puzzle are often missing. Some specific things that were mentioned included:

- Economic value of wildlife to non-consumptive wildlife users;
- Economic value of keeping small farmers on the land for tourists--Switzerland and VT were mentioned (in the ski areas, tourists like to see small neatly kept farms);
- Preventative aspects of minimizing damage--future economic losses that are avoided by taking action now;
- Credible, consistent values for various agricultural resources (there is often a lot of variability in the values assigned to some resources);
- Economic value of environmental problems caused by overabundant wildlife

Another important measure mentioned included Bird Strike Data from all appropriate airports. It was noted that this data is not willingly supplied by airports, but is absolutely vital to do good risk analysis and develop risk mitigation plans. Legislative action (change) may be required in order to get this type of data.

At the end of this discussion, Dick Curnow invited all members of the committee to join the NWRC at its August 1-3, 2000, Symposium entitled "Human Conflicts with Wildlife: Economic Considerations." Many of the issues raised during this discussion will be addressed at this symposium.

Update on Last Committee Recommendations

Martin Mendoza updated the committee on the progress WS has been making toward last year's recommendations.

Motion to leave for the day. The Committee will reconvene at 7:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thursday, June 15, 2000

Discussion of Topics

Jim Butler opened discussions on some of the current issues facing WS, including the agenda items received from NWSAC members, and commented that not all agenda items will be discussed. Diane Gansauer recommended that because this Committee has met once before, and

considering the sensitivity of issues and differences of opinions, we should not rehash/review past recommendations, but move on with discussions on current issues. Jim Butler assured the Committee that discussion topics would be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

Aerial Program: Diane Gansauer presented a challenge to WS concerning the issue of aerial gunning, stating that WS is on the brink of losing another tool in several of the Western states--this may be the next ballot initiative in Colorado--and felt it was important for the committee to address this issue. She suggested that perhaps some human dimensions research could be done to measure public attitudes on this and other WS issues. Camilla Fox presented a crash report received through FOIA which indicated there had been seven fatalities in the WS program in the past few years. Jim Butler stated that any decisions the Committee makes need to be made on facts--not emotion. He further stated that if we're going to ask the Department to look at this, it needs to be all-encompassing, not strictly related to gunning. This tool is needed for WS operations.

Martin Mendoza explained that the WS program is committed to increased safety in the aerial program and that WS has had \$1.2 million/year for the last 2 years to implement safety recommendations from the 1998 Aerial Operations Safety Review Report. A request for FY 2002 funding (\$2.9 million) for implementing all of the recommendations of the aerial safety review team is included in the program initiatives for FY 2002 now. There was some discussion on the reasonableness of shutting down the whole program after one accident. A variety of issues exist--use of contractor aircraft, training for pilots, changing from piston-driven to turbine aircraft, and the fact that not all operations are for livestock protection. This is definitely a human health and safety issue and employee safety concerns are a high priority in the program and in the Department. The agency has a self-imposed deadline of December 2002 to complete the conversion from piston-driven to turbine engine aircraft and training of WS employees.

Airport Safety: Paul Eschenfelder showed a video produced by the Airline Pilots Association to inform the public of the types of wildlife hazards that exist in this Nation's airports. He would like to see WS create a permanent position to oversee a national wildlife strike database, conduct surveys of all Part 139 airports (those that provide scheduled air carrier service), develop management plans for airports, and educate the public. Camilla Fox was concerned that the airport safety issue be not so much a matter of public awareness (it could incite fear), since the public would not be able to do anything about it except not fly. John Baucus questioned the reaction of airport managers--maybe they don't want any suggestions. Clait Braun stated his support behind recommending this idea be pursued and funding be requested. Martin indicated that WS did make a request based on recommendation #1 in the minutes of the last meeting, but it did not make it to the Secretary's budget. Gayne Fearneyhough summarized by saying "regardless of tasks A, B, and C, you can't do anything without funding."

Congressional Testimony: The committee discussed some of the questions surrounding the development of an internal protocol to follow when called on to make public statements or provide congressional testimony as NWSAC members on behalf of the Advisory Committee. Martin Mendoza clarified the WS position in this regard, stating that WS employees have a Legislative and Public Affairs Office, and are required to utilize this office; but to his knowledge, there are no protocols in place in the Federal Advisory Committee Act or in the

USDA Charter governing advisory committees that address this issue. To change this in the Charter would be a very long process. As private citizens, however, each committee member is entitled to his/her right to contact Congress, independent of WS, on their behalf, on issues of importance to them.

What this discussion directly referred to, as explained by Jim Butler, was an incident that occurred last year, when he met with Mr. Dunn, Bobby Acord, and Martin Mendoza and offered to submit testimony on behalf of the NWSAC. This created some level of anxiety among some committee members because the committee did not review the final draft of the testimony. Mr. Butler stated he should have had the committee members review the testimonies as a courtesy to them even if he had advised them earlier of his intent to do so, and no committee member had expressed any concerns. Camilla Fox requested that it be a matter of record that Jim Butler's testimony was not reflective of the opinions of all committee members, and in fact, went above and beyond what was discussed by the committee. She would like to be assured that this would not happen again and believes this should be addressed in the bylaws. Paul Eschenfelder suggested that the Chair heed the wishes of the members and that the next NWSAC Chairman be made aware of these issues. Jim Butler asked that this discussion be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

Trap Checks: Camilla Fox would like to see a 24-hour trap check policy instituted by WS. She agrees that WS is trying to use more humane, less injurious methods of trapping. Her goal is to improve humaneness for the animals and the image of WS and hopefully avoid State ballot initiatives that would result in trap bans. John Baucus agreed that if this tact would create a more positive image for WS, he would be all for it, prophetically speaking, this would make the WS program more inefficient because it would take away from the ability to serve other people--this is a manpower issue. Clait Braun added that WS would be getting into a States' rights issue because the current WS procedure is to defer to each State's requirement for trap checks, or in the absence of such a requirement, check as often as needed. Joe Harper pointed out that manpower that would be required to implement a 24-hour-trap check policy, especially for large ranches. Diane Gansauer stated that if a dangerous tool is on the landscape, it needs to be checked. The use of electronic monitoring devices, currently being tested and evaluated at NWRC, was suggested as a possible means of checking traps. Russell Ives raised the question as to whether electronic monitoring would serve as a trap check--no doubt each State would be different. Russ Mason pointed out that each monitoring device now costs about \$100 and is limited in its transmission capabilities. Future experimental research on this device will hopefully lead to a smaller, directional, more cost-effective product for WS operational use. Martin Mendoza indicated that if the committee were to recommend a 24-hour-trap check for WS work, he would like to see a recommendation for full funding with new money.

Wolf Predation: WS has received funding for managing wolf predation in the West, specifically the reintroduced gray wolf in the northern Rockies and the Mexican wolf in New Mexico. As Joe Harper explained, the eastern timber wolf, an indigenous species in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, has been a Federally protected species. It has grown to a population of over 3,000 and has been expanding its range and attacking livestock on farms and ranches in the area. Where does the responsibility fall for wolf management? Martin Mendoza explained that until it is de-listed, the responsibility lies with the Department of Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, unless there are livestock issues; then WS operations becomes involved. Martin further noted that there are not enough resources within WS to deal with expanding wildlife populations; we must rely on MOU's with the States, and work with them to come up with wildlife management plans. The eastern timber wolf is not the only species experiencing expanding populations.

Rabies: Don Lien explained the increased threat of rabies throughout the eastern U.S. Rabies is becoming an ever-increasing health threat and has been spread by raccoons in the East and coyotes and gray foxes in Texas. Don indicated that the State rabies control and prevention programs are not consistent from State to State. He would like to see WS take a leadership role in establishing a national program for overall rabies prevention and management as well as to complete the Ohio Barrier, a rabies-free strip of land from North to South that has been begun by researchers through State-Federal cooperative effort. An oral rabies vaccine has been used by WS in large-scale experimental programs in areas of Texas, but the threat is such that it warrants a much larger, coordinated prevention program.

The Chairman requested the wording of all draft recommendations be duly recorded into these minutes.

(insert draft recommendations)

Final Recommendations:

The following are recommendations agreed to by the committee.

Jim Butler commented on the process the committee would be following to come to agreement on final draft recommendations and asked for input from the members. Clait Braun moved that rather than having a counted vote, a consensus be recorded, for this portion of the meeting. It was resolved that a consensus would be recorded as being approved by a majority of the committee. In the event that any committee member would like to call for a tabulation vote, a secret ballot would be used.

1. The Committee reaffirms its interest in and support for continued Wildlife Services action on recommendations 1-16 and 20, as noted in the minutes of the Committee's August 24-25, 1999, meeting.
2. The Committee recommends that Wildlife Services complete revision of its Strategic Plan and goals and invite the National Advisory Committee to continue to participate in the process.
3. The Committee supports the new funding initiative for the Eastern Region's 2002 budget year, and recommends that Wildlife Services assign the highest priority for this new funding to accomplishing initial wildlife hazard evaluation and follow up monitoring at all Part 139 airports.
4. The Committee recommends that the Advisory Committee meetings be

held in alternate years at field facilities, e.g., NWRC Sandusky, Ohio.

5. The committee recommends that the Secretary seek additional funding to support the transfer of new methods and technologies to WS field staff and the public. This transfer should include training in newly approved means of avoiding wildlife conflicts.

6. The committee recommends that the Secretary seek new appropriated funding to Wildlife Services for personnel and budgetary resources necessary to support state approved oral rabies vaccination programs. Wildlife Services should provide the leadership needed to develop a coordinated National Rabies Control Program to prevent the continued spread of raccoon rabies in the northeastern and southeastern U.S. and canine rabies in Texas. Through coordination of State programs, strategic regional barriers should be expanded and merged with the ultimate goal of developing a National Rabies Control Program designed to eliminated the threat posed by rabies in these wildlife species.

7. The committee recommends that APHIS allocate greater and/or dedicated training resources for development of Wildlife Services personnel on coalition building and communication consistent with the Mission and Vision as stated in the Strategic Plan of Wildlife Services.

8. The NWSAC recommends that the Secretary of Agriculture pursue additional funding to evaluate implementation of the use of electronic trap monitoring devices, in the field.

9. Eastern Timber Wolves have reached a population of nearly 3,000 and are expanding their range as are other wolf populations. The committee recommends that the Secretary seek adequate additional funding to manage wolf predation on domestic animals. (balloted)

10. The committee supports ongoing human dimensions research pertaining to Wildlife Service's programs, including, but not limited to, programs that have generated controversy. The results should be included in the agency's strategic planning process. (balloted)

11. The committee recommends that the Secretary support increases in the research budget to allow for utilization of the National Wildlife Research Center.

Each of the above recommendations was approved by a majority of the Committee (does not necessarily mean the vote was unanimous). The following was a balloted tie vote and recorded as not approved by the Committee:

The Committee recommends that Wildlife Services conduct an analysis of aerial operations, by program, incorporating human safety data, cost to taxpayers, and benefits to public. This

recommendation did not pass.

Closing Remarks:

Jim Butler closed the NWSAC meeting by thanking everyone for working so hard. He noted that the committee strives to have as much diversity as possible, but the common goal is to act as advisors to the WS Program. He further explained that this was the last meeting of this particular committee, but that all members are eligible to be re-nominated except Russ Ives. With the change in Administration, there may be a lapse of time before another committee will be able to meet. Although the draft recommendations were provided to the members at the end of the meeting, Mr. Butler requested that they not be shared until they are sent forward to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Martin Mendoza also thanked the committee for taking the opportunity to come to Fort Collins and working so hard on WS' behalf. He looks forward to sending these new recommendations on to the Secretary's office, but explained that they may not be acted on until the Secretary arrives. Martin noted that the committee membership is up for renewal in November, and that nomination forms were provided in the meeting packets. Mr. Mendoza stated that he looks forward to working with many of the members of this committee again in the future.