

National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee Meeting

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Tacoma Downtown
2101 South C Street
Tacoma, WA 98402

Wednesday, August 03, 2016

Committee Members in Attendance:

Dr. Scott C. Bender; The Navajo Nation, Arizona
Ms. Karen Elaine "Maggie" Brasted; The Humane Society of the United States
Ms. Irma Cauley; National Association of Counties – Brazos County
Mr. Joel S. Dennis; Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers' Association
Mr. Howard B. Dew; Forestry – Timber Industry
Mr. Reginal Herman; Agribusiness, National Sunflowers Association
Mr. Burdell E. Johnson; Farmer/Rancher
Dr. James LaCour; Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Ms. Andrea Joan Reed Lococo; Animal Welfare Institute
Mr. Brent Adam Miller; Congressional Sportsmen Foundation
Mr. Allen Kent Olsen; American Sheep Industry
Mr. Ronald J. Regan; Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Dr. Stephen M. Schmitt; Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Mr. Scott W. Steckel; Varmint Guard, National Pest Management Association
Mr. Kenneth R. Wilson; Colorado State University
Mr. James Anderson; Arkansas, National Aquaculture Association

Committee Members not in Attendance:

Ms. Dena Lee Fritz; Farmer/Rancher
Mr. Daniel P. Sullivan; Air Force Safety Center
Mr. Joseph D. Lanham; National Wildlife Control Operators Association
Mr. Mark Zaunbrecher; Rice Growers

Deputy Administrator's Welcome and Opening Remarks – Bill Clay

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM by Wildlife Services (WS) Deputy Administrator Bill Clay. The WS Management Team and staff were present. Thanks were given to those who helped put the meeting together, including Jimmy Taylor, with the National Wildlife Research Center, who planned and coordinated a field trip to the Hancock forest area on Tuesday, August 2. During the field trip, silviculture practices were discussed as well as wildlife damage issues and the impact they have on product production, economics, and future forest management strategies. James Anderson is a new committee member, replacing Charles

Williamson. This is the last term for six committee members: Scott Steckel, Scott Bender, Maggie Brasted, Andrea Reed, Howard Dew, and Stephen Schmitt. Solicitation for replacement committee positions will go through the Federal Register.

Associate Deputy Administrator – Martin Mendoza

WS Associate Deputy Administrator Martin Mendoza summarized and provided an update of recommendations from the 2015 meeting, and gave an overview of the process for addressing recommendations. The Under-Secretary's office (Ed Avalos) was made aware of 2015 recommendations and responses. Following are the 2015 recommendations, responses, and associated discussion:

- Recommendation 1 – *NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that Wildlife Services continue to offer operational support and assistance to State and Federal Fish and Wildlife management agencies, upon request, and in keeping with proven management techniques, to achieve state-specific Fish and Wildlife management objectives.*
 - Decision to continue and grow the partnership with other agencies.
 - Q: Does “state-specific” need to be specifically mentioned in this recommendation?
 - A: No
- Recommendation 2 – *NWSAC recommends the Secretary of Agriculture continue to support Wildlife Services in partnering with the 50 states, U.S. territories, U.S. Department of Interior, other Federal agencies, Tribes, and Non-Governmental Organizations in the national healthy wildlife concept addressed in the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative.*
 - Decision to develop interagency disease management strategy.
- Recommendation 3 – *NWSAC recommends that the Secretary of Agriculture improve the latitude for communication by Wildlife Services to share information about their operations using existing and new communication avenues and provide additional funding for more communication personnel.*
 - Partnership with TWS newsletter, e-blast. Information goes out to WS Stakeholder list, Twitter. Communications Specialist (Carol Bannerman) now devoted to outreach activities.
- Recommendation 4 - *NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that Wildlife Services increase the helicopter fleet or increase access to helicopter time via contract for increased aerial gunning and other activities in the eastern region, without reduction of the western region fleet, in order to help meet state fish and wildlife objectives.*

- WS getting 2 helicopters to be stationed in MS and AL.
- 2 new fixed-wing aircraft to be stationed in NM and one of the northern states.
- Surplus helicopter from Customs and Border Protection. Louisiana needs aircraft capability sometime after the fall of this year.
- TX has a previous surplus helicopter from Customs and Border Protection.
- Q: Does WS need fiscal assistance for this?
 - A: Yes, additional funding would be helpful.
- Recommendation 5 - *NWSAC recommends the Secretary of Agriculture engage in high level discussions with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Defense (DOD) to explore avenues to identify new funding resources for airport wildlife mitigation and methods development for urban, rural and military airports and to determine and implement a national quality assurance program to evaluate processes to maintain the integrity of the airport wildlife hazards program at civil and military airports.*
 - Q: How can the NWSAC help with this high priority?
 - A: Continue to take the recommendations to and visit with Under-Secretary Avalos or his replacement.
- Recommendation 6 - *NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that Wildlife Services continue the process of development and licensure of feral hog toxicants, in particular, sodium nitrite, and expedite the process where possible. Additionally, we recommend the continuation of other approved toxicant use where currently utilized, in particular, lethal control of black birds by intoxication efforts to stop seed and crop depredation where necessary.*
 - Larry Clark, Director of the National Wildlife Research Center, gave an update on the status of Sodium Nitrate application and efficacy field trials.
- Recommendation 7 - *NWSAC recommends the Secretary of Agriculture continue a policy of aggressive research with a focus upon achieving a 21st century approach to solving difficulties with wildlife depredation and property damage and a continued focus on identifying, understanding, and representing the attitudes and beliefs of the various stakeholders. Focus areas may include...*
 - There isn't any funding to go with Department's concurrence.
- Recommendation 8 - *NWSAC recommends the Secretary of Agriculture study the impact of the proposed changes to GSA leasing and funding distribution and consider the following: 1) transfer all APHIS property holdings to GSA; 2) ask Congress to transfer APHIS appropriated funding for APHIS leased space to GSA for deposit into the Central Rent Account; 3) retain funding for GSA space leasing in the Central Rent Account; and 4)*

ask Congress to continue GSA funding, procurement and management because this change would negatively impact Wildlife Services and potentially increase costs to cooperators.

- USDA and APHIS implemented a tiered system in the way funds are distributed.
 - WS' increase was paid off the top with Overhead monies.
 - There is no new money to pay for this or pass to the states.
 - States' federal appropriations are decreased the accordingly.

- *Recommendation 9 - NWSAC recommends the Secretary of Agriculture continue to support and enhance the WS National Rabies Management Program, including maintaining the FY15 \$2.6 million increase for the support of Rabies control activities, emergency contingency outbreak responses, and applied research. Expedite WS-NWRC investigation, research and field trials of new oral rabies vaccines (ORV) and assist making these ORV options available in a timely manner. Support updating and revising the North American Rabies Management Plan, the U.S. National Plan for Wildlife Rabies Management (2008-12) and develop a Rabies program communication plan that will enhance Rabies management in North America, moving towards the goal of control and elimination of terrestrial rabies.*
 - Maintain that level of funding
 - Developing different vaccines

- *Recommendation 10 - NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that Wildlife Services continue to use its full authority to manage wildlife predating or impacting other wildlife species. Wildlife protection includes threatened and endangered species, species of concern and game and nongame wildlife and fisheries. Wildlife management activities should continue to be managed cooperatively with wildlife management authorities' including federal agencies, States and Tribes where appropriate and that WS protection and mitigation activities not be fragmented to multiple agencies.*
 - Reaffirmed WS role to work cooperatively with agencies to resolve WDM.

- *Recommendation 11 - NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that at the request of the state agency of jurisdiction, provide continued and enhanced where necessary, control of predators negatively impacting livestock, using the most effective techniques available.*
 - Concurrence of WS' role
 - Q: does a recommendation like this help WS?
 - Yes, there are continual challenges toward WS particularly in the area of predator control. Support from the NWSAC helps reaffirm to the public and other groups of WS' role. Important to be there because of the amount of Natural Resource management

requested by the states. There's pressure to discontinue that type of work.

- Q: Can we tier these recommendations to highlight the critical issues rather than the ongoing type of work WS does?
 - Predator damage management, while ongoing, is still critical to highlight.
 - Q: Will there be a summary of FY17 budget and vacancy outlook?
 - Comment: Imperative to have WS assist and continue to assist.
 - Comment: Some of the recommendations seem to address obvious ongoing mission oriented activities. Questioned whether these need to remain as future recommendations.
- Recommendation 12 - *NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that Wildlife Services solicit USDA/APHIS Veterinary Services for additional operational funding to support any wildlife and zoonotic disease surveillance or control efforts. A direct allocation should be provided to ensure adequate and stable funding for WS activities pertinent to wildlife and zoonotic disease outbreak.*
 - The only permanent funding in FY17 would be \$1 million in emergency preparedness funds.
 - Driven by emergency response, farm or wildlife, through CCC funding.
 - Interagency funding creates a slowdown of the process.
 - Recommendation 13 - *NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that Wildlife Services enhance technical assistance emphasizing prevention of damage through a variety of outreach and educational tools especially including planned workshops for producers, governmental agencies, and other interested parties.*
 - In FY16, there were 12 workshops held.
 - Goal is to get partners to the workshops for joint presentations, and to get the producers involved.
 - States are directed to conduct at least one each year, beginning with livestock protection.
 - Direction to conduct WDM workshops has been incorporated into State Directors' Performance Plans.
 - Enhancing communication between all involved, opportunities to bring in state agencies, NWRC. Highlight the science, economics, tools, experience, and emotions. How to implement strategies, and show that we're an advocate of non-lethal methods.

- Recommendation 14 - *NWSAC recommends the Secretary of Agriculture allow Wildlife Services to use all current lethal and non-lethal legal methods to control damage and to put no further restrictions on the use of aircraft.*
 - WS concurs.

- Recommendation 15 - *NWSAC recommends the Secretary of Agriculture support Wildlife Services in petitioning the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) to encourage the expansion of best management practices (BMP) for trapping in the United States beyond common furbearers to include other species commonly trapped to reduce human-wildlife conflict, such as black bear, cougar, grizzly bear and mountain beaver.*
 - WS will continue partnering in the development of BMPs.

- Recommendation 16 - *NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that Wildlife Services continue and increase the use of all currently available technologies (e.g. tranquilizer tabs, electronic trap monitors, the use of drones, etc.) where possible, to improve the welfare of trapped animals in lethal or non-lethal control operations and to lower labor costs of the program.*
 - Continue to develop the use of UAVs for surveys, habitat evaluation.
 - Trap monitors in use.
 - ORV development.
 - Q: Any specifics on UAVs?
 - Sensor technology for crop damage. Better identify risk areas. What benefit would we be having?
 - Platform. Worked with FAA on blanket COA.
 - Surveys, damage evaluations.
 - Q (Andrea Reed): Trap inventory – are they in line with BMPs?
 - A: Traps are older models; field folks keep them going until they are disposed of. Those that don't meet standards are phased out of the Program, and are replaced with appropriate traps.
 - **Action Item: WS will try to have an updated trap inventory for the next committee meeting.**
 - Q: UAVs and infrared being used in hog work. Does WS have restrictions precluding this?
 - Guided by FAA guidelines.

- Recommendation 17 - *NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that support for feral swine work to be continued and when possible, increase efforts to further reduce problems associated with feral swine.*
 - Redirect funding for FY17
 - Q: Status of feral swine demonstration program?

- A: Fifth year in demo, 12 of 17 counties eradicated. Hoping to move to detection state within 3 years. Just received approval to work in wilderness areas. Annex issues where landowners sell hunts.
 - Q: Do the helicopters mentioned here include those mentioned in the discussion relating to Recommendation 4?
 - A: These are the same helicopters.
- Recommendation 18 - *NWSAC Committee recommends the Secretary of Agriculture to secure additional funding for Wildlife Services to research flooding, siltation, and water quality issues caused by beavers in forest ecosystems, especially salmonid habitat in the Pacific Northwest.*
 - Continue to provide funding as budgets allowed.
 - Comment: Need more research on beavers on salmonid streams. Seeing that river beavers are different than other populations.
 - A: Research Needs Assessment was just sent out, and will see where this issue falls. Top 4 or 5 needs are typically addressed.

Highlight of WS Oregon Program, OR State Director

Dave Williams, WS-Oregon State Director, provided an overview of the Oregon Program. This is an extremely diverse Program with agriculture and livestock as vital producers to OR's economy. Coyotes are number one damage issue. Cougar damage is a blossoming issue, and is due in some part to the loss of some damage management tools. Willamette Valley is home to seven goose sub-species, and resident geese number from 60k to 300k. Cackling geese are burden on Oregon farmers, but a subsistence need for Alaskans. Oregon is home to runs of endangered salmonids, which interface with a Caspian tern colony at the mouth of the Columbia River. Double-crested cormorants are also predated on salmon smolt. Mixed funding sources are used to place WS personnel in counties to provide WDM services. Counties that have kept funding WS for decades are a testament to the relationship with WS, and the high level of service delivery.

Scott Steckel, Committee Chair

Ground rules of the committee proceedings were covered. Committee members introduced themselves and highlighted their main concerns, constituents, and their involvement with WS.

Committee Discussions

Committee members began discussions with a review of a letter from Defenders of Wildlife (DOW) addressed to NWSAC. DOW isn't represented in the committee, but any current member can present a recommendation based on any of the issues contained within the DOW letter. Issues include:

- Direct NRCS to add non-lethal predator deterrence to EQIP funding,
- Direct WS to promote non-lethal solutions to wildlife conflict, and provide financial and tech assist to producers who want to use non-lethal tools, report to public on impact of non-lethal tools,
- Request additional funds for non-lethal tools,
- Cease use of M44, sodium cyanide cartridges, and Rozol,
- Request new funding for non-lethal outreach programs,
- Enforce WS Directives 1.301 and 2.101 giving preference to nonlethal methods. Create mechanism for transparency when using WS Decision Model.

Discussion on NRCS and EQIP process. Mission is wind/soil erosion, water quality. Motion by Jim LaCour for committee to write a response to DOW, seconded by Irma Cauley.

New Business and recommendations

Committee members provided general recommendations, either desired re-submissions from 2015, modifications, or new issues for 2016.

Burdell Johnson:

- Re-submit recommendation #11, add nonlethal and lethal language.

Brent Miller:

- Re-submit recommendation #11, add game and non-game.
- Use hunters for population control, particularly with ungulate overabundance.
 - Discussion on what situations to use sportsmen, perception of professionalism, management actions vs. sport hunting.

Andrea Reed:

- There isn't any public representation at these meetings. Recommend more advanced notice in Federal Register. Public should be able to not only attend, but comment, participate in Q&A, interact with committee members.
 - **Action Item: Bill Clay will bring forward concern about timeliness of implementing Notices in the Federal Register.**
- GAO report of unauthorized grazing. Recommendation that WS should not provide lethal control to landowners who are willfully violating the law.
 - Discussion on whether or not this is within the scope of WS. Concerns were raised that this would put WS in a regulatory light. More information is needed before this should become a recommendation.

Howard Dew:

- Bob Gillman telemetry device to note capture of bear in a snare.
- Re-submit recommendation #16
- Re-submit recommendation #18

Jim Lacour

- Recommendation for WS to maintain DRC-1339 EPA registration.
 - Larry Clark covered status of DRC-1339.
 - Data call
 - Availability
- Re-submit recommendation #17
- Vehicle leasing/telecom costs
 - Discussion on whether or not it is worth the committee's time to move these forward as Recommendations. Vehicle leasing likely won't change. Telecom charges are being sorted out, and cleaned up.

Stephen Schmitt:

- Re-submit recommendation #2
- Re-submit recommendation #12

Scott Steckel:

- Monitoring devices cut due to telecom costs
- WS research and vet the efficiency of monitoring devices, and then maybe states will change their laws.

Ronald Regan:

- Re-submit recommendation #1
- Re-submit recommendation #15, affirm the importance of BMPs, their value to the future.
- Cormorant Depredation Order lawsuit. FWS NEPA inadequacy.

Return from lunch, continued discussion:

- Discussion turned to Mission Critical elements

Maggie Brasted:

- Animal welfare assessment tool for WS so control methods can be evaluated. Work this into the decision making process.
- Increase outreach opportunities to promote non-lethal methods, technical assistance.

Joel Dennis:

- Rabies ORV drop zone in TX. Emphasis to maintain this rabies-free zone.

- Re-submit recommendation #14

Ken Wilson:

- Statement about funding to maintain staff, and account for increase in cost of living.

Reginal Herman:

- Avian control repellents that would be longer lasting than hazing.
- Re-submit recommendation #6
- Use of drones for hazing

James Anderson:

- Re-submit recommendation #11, add aquaculture facilities.

Irma Cauley:

- Re-submit recommendations #2, #11, #12, #13
- Q: How can constituents read, learn, and hear of WS' successes? What are they getting for their money? Need to do a better job of telling about WS' accomplishments.
 - A: Management Team spoke to outlets where WS distributes reports and stories, such as You Tube, Twitter, web-sites.

Scott Bender:

- Re-submit recommendation #9
- Vaccines manufacturers declining, consolidating. Recommendation for PSD to produce vaccines that NWRC or someone else develops, until it can be transferred to industry.

The committee Vice-Chair asked each member to provide their top two issues for discussion as a precursor to developing recommendations for the Secretary of Agriculture's consideration.

Chairman Steckel charged the committee membership with converting their respective agenda items into recommendation statements before the meeting resumes in the morning. The committee will discuss each recommendation and then vote on which to forward to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Meeting adjourned for the day at 4:45 PM.

Thursday, August 04, 2016

The meeting was re-convened at 8:08 AM.

Committee Discussions and Preliminary Recommendations – Scott Steckel, Chair

Committee discussed the status of the draft response to DOW, and "Basic Tenets" draft language. The committee discussed and revised the draft recommendations, and edited for final versions.

Basic Tenets and Recommendations (Ken Wilson):

Committee discussed ongoing and basic tenets that are better captured in this section as opposed to stand-alone recommendations.

Burdell Johnson/Brent Miller:

Continue to provide assistance with predator damage management, added game and non-game, and aquaculture language. Discussion on the relevance to including lethal and non-lethal language. Discussion on including humaneness.

Brent Miller:

New recommendation for using hunters as a management tool for ungulate overabundance. Discussion on relevance to WS working with the state game agencies. This will be assimilated into the Basic Tenets.

Andrea Reed:

Publishing of meeting notice, public involvement and oral input. Discussion on live-streaming or videotaping and whether or not that would diminish the effectiveness of the committee. Concerns over videotaping and live-streaming NWSAC proceedings were voiced; there are concerns with the public taking committee members' comments out of context. Some members would not want to be on the committee if proceedings were videotaped or streamed on the internet. Transparency and perception of secrecy is the underlying issue being addressed in this recommendation. Having Stakeholders meeting timed to precede NWSAC meetings is a possibility for enhancing public involvement. The portion of this recommendation dealing with public involvement will be withdrawn from the recommendation, but the Federal Register Notice timing will remain.

Howard Dew:

WS continue to using available technologies, including cell phone/satellite phone trap monitors and other communication platforms where feasible to improve animal welfare and operational efficiency.

Administrative Issues – Kevin Williams

Kevin Williams, Program Specialist, addressed changing air fare reservations with BCD, and travel reimbursement forms and requirements. Committee members will provide travel receipts to Kevin, and Kevin will forward travel voucher back to committee members.

Committee discussions, continued

Jim LaCour:

Continued licensing of toxicants for feral hogs (sodium nitrite), and DRC-1339 for bird depredation.

Ronald Regan:

Expanding trapping BMPs to include large predators, and incorporate research done with livestock guarding dogs.

Maggie Brasted:

Enhance Tech Assist, outreach and educational workshops. Communicate activities to stakeholders and constituents.

Maggie Brasted:

WS to develop an animal welfare/humaneness assessment tool for evaluation of control methods, and incorporation into decision making process.

Joel Dennis:

To maintain a rabies free zone, continue WS funding for rabies ORV drop zone in TX.

Scott Bender:

Pocatello Supply Depot to produce wildlife vaccines, developed by NWRC and other research agencies, that aren't yet commercially viable.

James Anderson:

Resources for WS to continue double-crested cormorant surveys for environmental documentation.

Multiple:

Increase WS' helicopter fleet and flight time in Eastern Region without taxing the western states.

Voting on Recommendations

Recommendations were finalized by the Committee for consideration by the Secretary. The Committee vote is shown as Y (yes), N (no), or A (abstain). Background information was provided by the Committee member submitting the recommendation. The acting chair (Scott Steckel or Scott Bender) during the call for vote will abstain except in case of a tie.

Reginal Herman departed from the committee proceedings at 12:15 PM, not proxied.

Howard Dew departed from the committee proceedings at 12:48 PM, proxied by vice chair Scott Bender.

2016 NWSAC Recommendations

The Committee designated as the National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC) wishes to express our support and thanks to the staff and program administrators of USDA-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service-Wildlife Services. As stated in our charter, this Committee is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on policies and programmatic issues necessary to manage damage caused by wildlife to protect America’s agricultural, industrial and natural resources and to safeguard public health and safety.

Wildlife Services (WS) has achieved a longstanding record of success in providing critically needed resources to state and federal natural resource agencies, ranchers, foresters, private industry, state departments of health and agriculture, schools, universities, counties, local governments, Tribal nations, and a variety of conservation stakeholders. Currently, Wildlife Services is held in high regard as the most effective and efficient program in the federal government in the area of wildlife damage management.

Current estimates show wildlife damages throughout the nation to be in excess of \$12.8 billion dollars annually impacting natural resources, agriculture, private property, and public infrastructure. Feral Swine alone causes \$1.5 billion a year in damages including over \$800 million directly tied to agricultural losses.

This Committee reaffirms our commitment to support Wildlife Services in implementing their Strategic Plan (2013-2017) and provides the following recommendations for your consideration:

Approved: Y (15) N (0) A (0)

Basic Tenets & Recommendations

NWSAC recognizes the following basic tenets that guide the operations of the WS.

“The mission of WS is to provide Federal leadership and expertise to resolve wildlife conflicts to allow people and wildlife to coexist. WS conducts program delivery, research, and other activities through its Regional and State Offices, the National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC)

and its Field Stations, as well as through its National Programs.”

(<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage>, accessed 4 Aug 2016)

In resolving wildlife conflicts, WS uses non-lethal and lethal methods. Depending on the objective, methods used by WS are targeted at removing individual animals and/or at reducing populations of species creating the conflict. In implementing these methods, NWSAC recommends that WS use the most efficient, effective, and humane methodology available.

Approved: Y (15) N (0) A (0)

The following NWSAC recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture are basic, ongoing recommendations for Wildlife Services Operations:

A. Offer operational support and assistance to State and Federal Fish and Wildlife management agencies, upon request. Such recommendations should take into account proven management techniques to achieve state-specific Fish and Wildlife management objectives.

Approved: Y (13) N (0) A (2)

B. Through partnering with state fish and wildlife agencies, recognize the critical role that regulated hunting plays in managing wildlife populations, thereby minimizing the need for Wildlife Services’ intervention.

Approved: Y (13) N (2) A (0)

C. In the upcoming annual budget, request cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to ensure that ongoing operations can be implemented without being affected by budget reallocations to address new initiatives.

Approved: Y (15) N (0) A (0)

D. Support Wildlife Services in partnering with the states, U.S. territories, U.S. Department of Interior, other federal agencies, Tribes, and non-governmental organizations in the national healthy wildlife concept addressed in the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative.

Approved: Y (15) N (0) A (0)

E. Continue to support and enhance the WS National Rabies Management Program, including maintaining the funding for the support of rabies control activities, emergency contingency outbreak responses, and applied research. Expedite WS-NWRC investigation, research and field trials of new oral rabies vaccines (ORV) and assist making these ORV options

available in a timely manner. Support the North American Rabies Management Plan and the U.S. National Plan for Wildlife Rabies Management. Develop a rabies program communication plan that will enhance rabies management in North America, moving towards the goal of control and elimination of terrestrial rabies.

Approved: Y (12) N (2) A (1)

F. At the request of the state agency of jurisdiction or cooperator, Wildlife Services will provide where necessary, control of predators negatively impacting forestry, livestock, game and non-game species and aquaculture facilities using the most effective techniques available including lethal and non-lethal methods.

Approved: Y (13) N (0) A (2)

G. Secure adequate and stable funding for WS activities pertinent to wildlife and zoonotic disease surveillance and management.

Approved: Y (14) N (0) A (1)

H. Use all current lethal and non-lethal legal methods to control wildlife damage and to put no further restrictions on the use of aircraft.

Approved: Y (13) N (2) A (0)

I. Support for feral swine control programs to be continued and when possible, increase efforts to further reduce problems associated with feral swine.

Approved: Y (13) N (2) A (0)

J. Continue to enhance technical assistance emphasizing prevention of damage through a variety of outreach and educational tools including planned workshops for producers, governmental agencies, and other interested parties.

Approved: Y (14) N (0) A (1)

Adjourn for lunch at 1:00 PM.

Committee members returned from lunch and commenced voting on 2016 main recommendations at 2:20 PM.

Main Recommendations

The following ongoing and new recommendations are provided in addition to the above Basic Recommendations:

Recommendation #1:

Continue and increase the use of all currently available technologies (e.g. tranquilizer tabs, electronic trap monitors including satellite communication technology, the use of drones), where possible, to improve the welfare of trapped animals in lethal or non-lethal control operations and to lower labor costs of the program.

Approved: Y (14) N (0) A (1)

Background:

Technology is changing rapidly and with the advent of new devices and new communications methods should be tested and validated for operational use. This level of validation provides state lawmakers the comfort to include technology into their current laws involving nuisance wildlife for the public and private sectors. Examples of this are satellite communications for bear devices since standard cellular devices don't function well and cellular trap monitors with low or no monthly data fees.

Recommendation # 2: Continue the process of development and licensure of feral hog toxicants, in particular, sodium nitrite, and expedite the process where possible. Additionally, we recommend the continuation of other approved toxicant use where currently utilized, in particular DRC 1339, used for lethal control of black birds by intoxication to stop seed and crop depredation where necessary.

Approved: Y (12) N (2) A (1)

Recommendation #3: Work with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) to encourage the development of science-based best management practices (BMP's) to address large predator conflicts (e.g., black bears, cougars, and grizzly bears) based on emerging guard dog research and management trials.

Approved: Y (14) N (0) A (1)

Recommendation #4: Communicate program activities proactively to constituents and stakeholders especially including non-traditional audiences in communities where Wildlife Services is providing services.

Approved: Y (14) N (0) A (1)

Background: Information about WS programs and activities should be as widely available and assessable as possible to all interested parties but especially to the taxpayers who provide financial support of the program in communities where WS is providing services. This would assist local elected officials and managers by providing their constituents needed information about the program and inform public decisions about WS cooperative relationships. WS should incorporate traditional and new methods and avenues (i.e., social media, innovative technology) of communication to reach non-traditional constituents.

Recommendation #5:

The NWSAC recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture the continued participation by the USDA in helping in the funding of the Rabies Bait Drop zone along the Texas-Mexico border at least at the current level in order to help prevent the re- introduction of coyote and grey fox rabies into the United States.

Approved: Y (9) N (3) A (3)

Background: The elimination of canine and Texas grey fox rabies from the United States are the only success in the battle against terrestrial rabies up to this point. Therefore, it is logical to maintain the protective corridor between the United States and Mexico without weakening the fight against terrestrial rabies.

Recommendation # 6: The NWSAC recommends the Secretary of Agriculture explore the development of USDA Wildlife Services Pocatello Supply Depot and other appropriate facilities as a resource for the production of vaccines, developed by NWRC, USGS and research partners, (such as GonaCon™, Oral Rabies vaccines, Oral Plague vaccines), that are valuable for disease and population management of feral and wildlife populations, that don't currently or will have no commercially viable economic production.

Approved: Y (13) N (0) A (2)

Background: There currently are very few options for the extraneous commercial production of vaccines and there has been a high degree of vaccine company consolidation in the past 5 years. This has the effect of limiting competition, increasing costs and requires any vaccine to be financially profitable for a company to produce it for sale. This has for the most part ended availability of "orphan vaccines" that have limited economic return. As an example, currently in development is the Oral Plague Vaccine (OPV) by the US Geologic Service (USGS) for about 12 years. It appears to address many of the present limitations seen with other treatment modalities, yet has limited economic return and has little current interest by commercial companies because of its limited application. While the USGS is currently producing the current Oral Plague vaccine for field trials, there is limited ability or space to scale up production to meet the growing demand for expanded field trials and eventual use. This is where the USDA Pocatello Supply Depot could bridge the gap with their facilities and within the scope of their

mission, to scale up production of vaccines that are developed in the lab, to a point where they could become commercially viable thus also helping to make promising vaccines available in greater amounts, steady the supply and prevent shortages when commercial companies see limited use of “wildlife” vaccines as profitable.

Recommendation # 7: The NWSAC recommends that the Secretary of Agriculture provide the adequate resources for Wildlife Services in partnership with other wildlife agencies to conduct Double Crested Cormorant population surveys to aid in the environmental decision-making process needed to evaluate statewide depredation permits and depredation orders.

Approved: Y (12) N (2) A (1)

Recommendation # 8:

Increase the helicopter fleet or increase access to helicopter time via contract for increased aerial gunning and other activities in the eastern region, without reduction of the western region fleet, in order to help meet state fish and wildlife objectives.

Approved: Y (12) N (2) A (1)

Additional NWSAC votes of the Committee:

Vote called for the Chair and Vice Chair to again meet and present the committee’s 2016 recommendations to the Under-Secretary’s office (Ed Avalos)

Approved: Y (15) N (0) A (0)

Vote called for adjournment of the 2016 NWSAC meeting:

Approved: Y (15) N (0) A (0)

The following table documents individual Committee member votes in regard to each recommendation.

NAME	RECOMMENDATION																			
	Preamble A	Preamble B	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Andrea Reed	Y	Y	A	N	Y	Y	N	A	A	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
Burdell E. Johnson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Joel S. Dennis	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y
K.E. "Maggie" Brasted	Y	Y	A	N	Y	Y	N	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	A	Y	N	N
Reginal Herman																				
Ronald J. Regan	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scott C. Bender	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	A	A	A	Y	Y	A	A
Scott W. Steckel	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y
Stephen Morgan Schmitt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Kenneth R. Wilson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Howard B. Dew	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Allen Kent Olsen	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Brent Adam Miller	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	A	Y	Y
Irma Cauley	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
James LaCour	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
James Anderson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Joseph D. Lanham																				
Daniel P. Sullivan																				
Dena Lee Fritz																				
Mark Zaunbrecher																				

Meeting adjourned at 4:48 PM.