

	<p>Livestock Loss Board June 26, 2024 Board Meeting Fairfield MT</p> <p>Meeting Minutes</p>
---	---

Livestock Loss Board Members Present:

Doreen Gillespie – Chairperson
John Sampsel
Joe Kipp
Raina Blackman

Staff: George Edwards – Executive Director

Guests: Butch Gillespie – State Senator, District 9
Clay Vines – State Brand Inspector
Trina Jo Bradley
Tracie Roeder

Call to Order and Administrative Items

Introductions

- Each board member and board staff introduced themselves.

Board Minutes

Ms. Gillespie welcomed everyone to the meeting. She asked if the board members had reviewed the December 2nd meeting minutes and asked for a motion to approve them.

Motion: Joe Kipp made a motion to approve the December minutes. John Sampsel seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Reports: Mr. Edwards began by saying claims have returned to normal levels. We are back to 2022 levels. We still don't know why claims went down in 2023. He said he had received a range rider log from the Centennial Valley Association which looked like what the board wants for grant reporting. He asked them if he

could share this log sheet and they said yes. He asked board members if they want him to send this out with all future grant requests for range riders. The board said it looks like it is well done and to send it out with approved grants.

Mr. Edwards said there is no wildlife services report for this meeting. Mr. Tidwell is on vacation with his family. He had visited with Mr. Tidwell and there was nothing unusual to report. Everything is functioning normally.

New Business

Rollover funds – Mr. Edwards said the state fiscal year ends on June 30th. Any unused money from the claims fund is transferred to the loss prevention account unless the board decides to direct it to another account. He told the board they could leave it all in loss prevention account but typically the board provides forty percent to wildlife services and retains ten percent for board operations as allowed by law.

Motion: Joe Kipp made a motion to provide forty percent to wildlife services and to retain ten percent for board operations. John Sampsel seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mr. Kipp said he would like to recommend wildlife services specialists be trained in DNA collection because there are incidents where specialists cannot confirm a loss in some incidents. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Matching Funds Percentages – Ms. Blackman on the grant screening panel asked about possibly changing the match percentages currently in use. Right now, it is fifty percent for wolf projects and thirty percent for grizzly projects. She would like it changed to a single percentage for all grants. She said it would help the screening panel in evaluating them and would help people applying for grants. Mr. Edwards said the fifty percent figure was originally due to a requirement for grants the board had received from federal funds. Since the board is no longer receiving federal funding, a single percentage would work. Board members liked the idea of a single percentage of thirty percent.

Motion: Joe Kipp made a motion to change the required match to thirty percent for all future grants. John Sampsel seconded the motion. **Discussion:** A member of the public, Trina Bradley said this will make the process much simpler. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Board members discussed limiting grant awards for guard dogs to \$500. Mr. Edwards said they can do this as the board had already changed guard dog claims to \$500 as an agenda item at a prior board meeting.

Board members began discussing what should be allowed for rental rates on equipment. Mr. Edwards told them this topic would need to be placed on a future agenda for discussion and approval. Equipment rates and dog food value will be

placed on the next board meeting agenda. Board members also asked to have the number of livestock lost on the grant form to be placed on the next agenda.

Grant Applications

Apex Angus Ranch - Motion: John Sampsel made a motion to approve this grant for the purpose of discussion. Raina Blackman seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Blackman said the amount approved for this grant is \$10,533. They asked for \$12,500 but their math was not very good. Their cash match and total contributions only allow for the \$10,533. **Vote:** All in favor of approving \$10,533, none opposed. Motion carried.

Big Hole Watershed Committee (Carcass/Composting) - Motion: Joe Kipp made a motion to approve this grant for \$3,500. Raina Blackman seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Board members said their match for this grant exceeds the required amount. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Big Hole Watershed Committee (Range Rider) - Motion: Joe Kipp made a motion to approve this grant for \$17,500. Raina Blackman seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Board members reduced the \$25,000 requested. Mr. Edwards said he received an email just prior to this meeting showing they have a cash match to cover this grant request. Ms. Blackman pointed out they had answered a question on grizzly bears as a yes and a no. She asked Mr. Edwards if there have been any claims for grizzly caused loss in this area. He said grizzlies have been spotted at the edge of this valley but no claims yet. Ms. Blackman said their budget is unclear so the amount approved was reduced to match what the screening panel could justify. There was no description of where their \$31,000 match comes from. A further discussion began on the value of an ATV because the total amount can't be used if the range rider is only using it for three months. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Blackfoot Challenge (Carcass/Composting) - Motion: Raina Blackman made a motion to approve this grant for \$20,000 as long as they provide a report detailing how the cash match is applied. John Sampsel seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Ms. Gillespie said she was opposed to using the word anonymous individuals for donations. We tell everyone where money comes from. Mr. Edwards said this has come up before on prior year's grants. It is to protect the names of individual ranchers participating in a program. Ms. Gillespie said she would prefer that they say individual ranchers. They don't have to say the ranchers' names, but we need to know where the money is coming from. Mr. Edwards said he is very familiar with this project and understood why they used the word anonymous and could have explained why they used this word. They receive donations from the ranchers and don't release this information to anyone, so ranchers feel ok with participating in their program. Ms. Gillespie said the number of ranchers would be helpful. We don't have a darn clue. It could be funding from George Soros for all we know. Mr. Kipp said our own program for compensation is restricted and we cannot release names. Mr. Edwards said he

will let them know to rephrase it in future applications. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Blackfoot Challenge (Range Rider) – Joe Kipp said they are providing a \$8,571 match but they didn't fill out the percentages related to grizzlies and wolves. If you give them full credit it's 70% of their total budget. Mr. Edwards asked if the board wanted him to speak about this area. He said almost all claims from this area are now from grizzly bears. Powell County is one of the areas with large loss numbers. Mr. Kipp said they are asking for \$20,000 and he was ok with that. Mr. Edwards said they employ several range riders and that might be something the board would like to know from applicants. Ms. Blackman said their match is greater than what is required. **Motion:** John Sampsel made a motion to approve this grant for \$20,000. Joe Kipp seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Board members said their match for this grant exceeds the required amount. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried

Blackfoot Challenge (Fencing) – Board members looked at this request and questioned many of the areas they were fencing. Most of them appeared to be in areas not covered by the board. Most of the board members brought up that this request covered too many things not related to this board. Board members stated it has to be strictly for livestock covered by this board. **Motion:** Raina Blackman made a motion to deny this grant request. Joe Kipp seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Raina Blackman said they should reapply during the next round of grants with a proposal that is only related to livestock covered by this board. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried

Laura Blond – **Motion:** Raina Blackman made a motion to deny this grant request. John Sampsel seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Raina Blackman said she was only eligible for \$1,238 dollars. She has already paid for the dog food and submitted a bill from 2023. She did not fill out the cash match so she could reapply and put down \$619 dollars as her cash match. One page of the grant application was left blank and in the cover sheet it states incomplete applications will be denied. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried

Holland Ranch Company – **Motion:** John Sampsel made a motion to approve this grant request. Raina Blackman seconded the motion for the purpose of discussion. **Discussion:** Ms. Blackman said he wants two dogs at \$700 each. Earlier in the day we said we would allow \$500 per dog. Ms. Gillespie said it's easy to reduce their request by \$400. Board members stated confusion on if their match was related to wolves or grizzly bears or both. He filled out the application stating 100% for both. Mr. Kipp said the amount should be \$3,143 for this grant. Mr. Edwards asked Mr. Sampsel if he would accept this as a friendly amendment. Mr. Sampsel moved the grant be approved for \$3,143. Board members noted this ranch has previously applied for guard dogs and wondered when he will be maxed out on dogs. Board members said they would like to see receipts for the dogs he is buying and for the vet bills in his final report a year from now. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried

Parker Jones (Two Applications) – Motion: Raina Blackman made a motion to deny both of his grant requests. John Sampsel seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Blackman said he is asking for a fence that costs nine dollars a foot to put in. If you combine both projects, he is asking for more money than he is eligible to receive. He would only be eligible for \$3,030. Mr. Kipp said working in collaboration with wildlife services, it's only twenty percent of that. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried

Kalsta Ranch (Two Applications) – Motion: Raina Blackman made a motion to deny both of his grant requests. John Sampsel seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Blackman said the application is incomplete. We don't know how many dogs or the cost of scare devices. We don't know details on the fence. He needs to work on an adequate description of the project in his budget. Mr. Edwards said we have had grant requests from Kalsta but he couldn't remember if they passed or not. Ms Gillespie said they answered yes applied in past but nothing beyond that. It doesn't tell us anything. Board members said it is denied because of no details in the description and a need for a breakdown in each section. Board members asked if any claims had been paid to this ranch. Mr. Edwards responded no, this is in a lower predation area. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried

Bill Martinell – Motion: John Sampsel made a motion to approve this grant request for \$1,722. Joe Kipp seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Mr. Edwards said this applicant is in a high predation area and the board pays claims for Mr. Martinell each year. They have guard dogs and have had a grant in the past. Board members expressed appreciation for the completeness of this application. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried

People & Carnivores – Motion: Raina Blackman made a motion to deny this grant request. Joe Kipp seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Board members said there were no ranches signed up on the supplement form. They also wondered what would be in the toolkits. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried

Montana Sheep Company LLC – Motion: Raina Blackman made a motion to approve this grant request for \$3,163. John Sampsel seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Board members said this was another well put together application. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried

Rebish/Konen Livestock – Mr. Edwards said this one is in the highest predation area and the board paid their largest sheep claim to this ranch back in 2009.

Motion: Raina Blackman made a motion to approve this grant request. John Sampsel seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Mr. Kipp said in looking at the calculations for this grant, the board should approve \$11,169. The confusion for the rancher and this board is looking at the different match requirements for wolf and grizzly areas. If they were asked to pay \$1,000 for a dog, this board would pay \$500 bucks a dog. **Vote:** All in favor of \$11,169, none opposed. Motion carried

Ruby Valley Conservation District – Mr. Edwards said there have been a lot of ranches trying to get this project going. **Motion:** Joe Kipp made a motion to approve this grant request although the committee did not and a discussion is needed. John Sampsel seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Ms. Gillespie pointed out they are asking for \$12,000 for the project and \$12,000 for administrative costs. Mr. Edwards said they put the comma in the wrong spot and Mr. Sampsel agreed. Ms. Gillespie's initial reaction was to deny this grant. Mr. Edwards said they can be notified about their mistake and thinks this project should be approved. Last year Mr. McEwen asked for a lot of information on this project which they provided in detail. Ms. Gillespie said we will restrict the administrative costs to \$1,200. Mr. Edwards told the board about his years of work trying to help the ranchers in this area to get this project going. He said this is a rancher driven program and Mr. Giem is well respected. **Vote:** All in favor of \$12,000, none opposed. Motion carried

Ronald Van Dyke – Motion: Joe Kipp made a motion to approve this grant request for \$24,000. Raina Blackman seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Mr. Edwards said this is in an area where grizzly bears are just starting to appear. It's extremely rugged and can only be monitored by horseback. He said he has personally been in the area where they pasture. It's an area where vehicle access is very limited and hard to get to even with a four-wheeler. Mr. Kipp said he spoke with wildlife services, and they told him this ranch has two range riders currently working. He was also told how rough it is to get into the area and horseback is the only way. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Ms. Bradley said she wants to introduce the board to the Montana Conflict Reduction Consortium. It's a collaborative group of landlords, ranchers, federal and state agencies. They meet once a month and it's connected to Western Landowners Alliance. The focus is conflict prevention in Montana. She invited the board to attend meetings. They are almost always on Zoom. The next meeting is on July 9th from 10:30 to noon. The way they wrote the rules is a Montana rancher has to be chair. They are just figuring out where they need to focus and want to help find grant money for ranchers. If anyone is interested, she asked to be contacted.

Motion: John Sampsel made a motion to adjourn. Raina Blackman seconded the motion.

Adjourned

DATED this 26th day of June, 2024



Doreen Gillespie, Chairman
Montana Livestock Loss Board

