

**ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS
AGENDA FOR THE WILDLIFE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY FEBRUARY 29, 2016, 8:30 a.m.
AT THE ABP BOARD ROOM, CALGARY, ALBERTA**

Present: Colin Campbell - *Chair, Board Rep*
Jeff Havens - *Zone 3*
Mark Crowle - *Zone 4*
Walt Suntjens - *Zone 4*
Rick McKnight - *Zone 7*
Gordon Graves - *Zone 8*
Maatin Braat - *Zone 9*
Norm Hennigar - *Zone 9*
Kevin Stopanski - *CCC representative*

Staff: Fred Hays - *Policy Analyst*
Rosanne Allen - *Executive Assistant*

Guests: Bob Lowe - *ABP Chair (cc)*

Absent: Brad Osadczuk - *Zone 1*
Cecil Andersen - *Zone 6*

available on the ABP web-news 'What's New' on January 8, 2016. The 'one pager' will be promoted again via the weekly newsletter.

3. Financial Statement

(a) Financial Statement ending January 31, 2016:

A statement of expense is provided in the package that shows all of the expenses up to the end of January except for the forum that the committee put on in January and today's meeting. These two expenses will bring us close to the end of our budget.

Motion by Suntjens/Stopanski:

"That the financial statement be accepted for information purposes only."

Carried

4. Decision Items

(a) Review Wildlife Committee Terms of Reference:

Hays provided a copy of the committee's Terms of Reference with possible changes.

Under *Members, Structure, Appointments and Selection*, the committee changed 'The Wildlife Committee could have one member to The Wildlife Committee will have one member plus an alternate'. The members also talked about the representative from the CCC becoming a voting member. Campbell will bring this to the board for approval.

(b) ABP Strategic Objectives 2016/2017:

At the February board meeting the directors discussed the strategic objectives for the next fiscal year. The last objective deals with improved policies and programs for managing impacts of wildlife on cattle producers. The committee needs to complete the development of ABP policy on managing wildlife impacts; establish an effective process in working with government and other organizations to address the impact of wildlife; and provide benefits to producers for wildlife habitat and populations by pursuing ecosystem services. The board will be looking for increased compensation for wildlife predation to crops and animals; a consultative process with the Alberta government to address wildlife impact; and the progress of at least one ES service.

The discussion on compensation needs to be discussed by the board so that the committee has a clear path to follow. Compensation for predation is not enough but should be offset by charging for wildlife access. A formula has been developed to deal with fair and equal costs for crown

The chair called the meeting to order at 8:25 a.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda 8:30 a.m.

(a) Adoption of Agenda:

Additions: 4(q) Big Horn Sheep bio-security; 6(e) Bison update; 6(f) Bears;

Motion by Braat/Graves:

"That the agenda be approved with additions"

Carried

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

(a) Minutes of November 13, 2015 meeting:

Motion by McKnight/Hennigar:

"That the minutes of the November 13, 2015 Wildlife Committee meeting be approved."

Carried

(b) Matters arising from minutes:

At the meeting in Edmonton Fish & Wildlife were talking about a reprint of the Ranchers Guide to Wildlife Damage. What they did reprint was the Wildlife Damage Prevention and Compensation Handbook. A copy of the reprint is provided in the package.

There was a request for the 'one pager' dealing with wildlife compensation. Hays had prepared this and made it

grazing leases. Stopanski attended an AGLA meeting and was told that the government was looking at a \$2.30 AUM price for grazing on the lower zones and a \$1.30 AUM price on the higher zones.

The committee considers ecosystems approach to allow for payment to land access and other payment around hunting so that the landowner receives some compensation. The committee discussed the possibility of producers receiving compensation for enhanced recreation opportunities.

DIRECTION to the members. A. From the Wildlife Forum Summary of Recommendations (page 6): to prioritize their top four or five issues from the list. B. From 2016-2017 ABP Strategic Objectives, Item 6: describe how the committee might achieve the improvement of policies and programs from managing impacts of wildlife on cattle producers using a) two most important impacts from wildlife to the beef sector b) the consultative process that could be used (and with whom); and c) how an ecosystem service (ES) program could be developed. This information to be sent to Hays by March 11, 2016.

(c) ABP Wildlife Policy Position:

The committee discussed the current policy for wildlife that appears under the Environment policy written as 'End Statements' using the Carver model. The policy is broad and the members have the option to alter the policy if there are any changes they feel need to be made. 'Means Statement' or director need to be developed as ways the Committee will fulfill the Policy expectation.

Hays prepared some wildlife position statement notes for the committee that sums up the information the committee has gathered over the last few years including: a) the ABP Plan target for the Wildlife Committee; and b) the Wildlife Forum Summary of Recommendations for Consideration Examples of policy objective statements to achieve policy were provided (Policy Means).

(d) Bison update:

Bob Lowe, ABP Chair, spoke to the committee about the Beef Treaty 2015 that reintroduces buffalo onto the Indian reserves. Reserves in the US and Canada have been stocking their land with buffalo for a number of years and are now asking that the buffalo be quarantined on the reserve. The Blackfoot and Blood tribes are proposing that a herd of bison be located onto their reserves. The World Wildlife Fund is working with them on this issue.

Braat gave the members an update on the management of the bison in the Wood Buffalo National Park.

If Bison fall under the Fish & Wildlife purview they would be considered an endangered species. Because of the disease the numbers expand and contract. Bison cannot be hunted unless they leave the park and move west of Highway 35 and into cattle country.

Braat asked that the budget include \$3500 to continue the bison project. The project used to be under the Animal Health and Welfare Working Group which has been closed. There is some question among the members of the committee about whether this bison project falls under Wildlife or under Cow Calf. Further investigation is needed.

(e) Wildlife Forum review and next steps:

The committee hosted a forum in Edmonton on January 26, 2016 that was attended by a number of Alberta agriculture organizations. A Summary of Recommendations for Consideration was developed from the forum. Campbell asked the members to read the document and make suggestions for moving forward.

To move forward with the suggestions we need to open discussions between ABP, the government and other stakeholders such as the Ag Service Board, Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC), Alberta Conservation Association (ACA), Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) and others. Members discussed a number of options on compensation. Campbell asked the committee to name their two major concerns

McKnight: dealing with hunters; predation on livestock

Graves: depredation of crops; time and money it takes to deal with hunters

Crowle: hunters; over population

Stopanski: crop losses; control access of hunters

Havens: crop loss and over population

Braat – predation

Hennigar: huge problems with elk and biologists determining tags; coyotes

Suntjens: adverse affects from hunters; commodity losses; lack of control or influence to change these.

Dealing with hunters or the hunting community is a major concern and the second is over population in agriculture zones. We need trespass issues dealt with in a reasonable fashion. In a number of areas outside of Canada producers who experience problems with animals will receive a number of animal tags that they can sell to help them mitigate the cost of predation.

Maybe we need a forum for ABP on how to handle the hunter access. We need some form of uniform process around dealing with hunters. We may need to get some legal advice and develop a form for insurance purposes that hunters would need to sign. Campbell felt the mediator did a good job for the forum, he captured all of the information that came out of the forum and the report was well done and concise. Having a mediator helped us to voice our concerns to the other parties and we were able to understand their concerns. Fish & Wildlife have developed a working group for problem wildlife and it is in cabinet

right now. Graves suggested having the board write a letter of support.

There are nine points for consideration that came out of the forum. Landholder tags only last for 20 days of a 180 day hunting season. We have to make sure that anything we push for appeases as many producers as possible.

Campbell feels we need to step forward and start dealing with hunters; sending information to our delegates and out to producers; forms for insurance. A letter was provided by Ian Stuart, Alberta Fish and Game Association Hunting Chair, who is also a landowner to assist with the issue of dealing with hunters and poachers.

(f) A Framework for Mitigating Wolf-Human Conflict over Livestock Predation in Canada:

Marco Musiani, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine U of C, and Leitha Cosentino, Director of Development, spoke to the committee about mitigating wolf-human conflict over livestock predation in Alberta.

Musiani is looking for funding to help investigate wolf movement in Alberta ranch lands by radio collar; predict and map wolf hotspot's; summarize current knowledge on effectiveness of wolf anti-depredation techniques. They are asking for \$30,000, 50% of the required funding.

The committee agreed that \$30,000 was not possible from the Wildlife Committee but would explore this with the Board at their next meeting.

(g) Alberta Trappers' Association Rendezvous and Show Sponsorship:

The committee members agreed that the sponsorship request did not meet ABP sponsorship requirements and instructed Hays to decline the request.

(h) Sponsorships:

Hays included this point so the members could bring forward any sponsorship they felt we should consider. After a deafening silence Campbell moved on to the next issue.

(i) Budget 2016/2017:

The committee discussed the current year's budget and what they will need for the next fiscal year. The ABP budget for 2016/2017 will be less than in previous years and the organization will need to start cutting back in some areas. After some discussion the committee agreed to approach the board for a budget of \$25,000. This does not include the bison tracking project (\$3,500) near Wood Buffalo Park. This would be reviewed before discussing with the board.

(j) Occupiers' Liability Act:

None of the committee members have ever heard of this Act and found reading it confusing and a little concerning

in some areas. Hays suggested asking Adrienne Waller, ABP Legal Counsel, for her input into the Act.

(k) Fall Meeting Resolutions:

1. Motion by McKnight/Braat:

“Be it resolved that the Wildlife Committee conduct a survey of producers in the area to document the level of losses.”
Zone 9

Carried

The producer who made this motion lost a large number of calves to wolves. The pack moves between Alberta and BC and once it crosses the border Alberta Fish & Wildlife cannot do anything about it. The committee suggested that Hennigar call a zone meeting in that area to try and determine predation numbers due to wolves. They also suggested that they use the information gathered in the Miistakis report and have the zone meeting when the ABP Executive has contacted BC.

Motion by Graves/Haven:

“That the Wildlife Committee postpone discussion on the resolution until after the Executive has spoken with the BC Cattlemen's Association.”

Carried

2. Motion by Graves/Hennigar:

“Be it resolved that ABP Executive and Wildlife Committee meet with the appropriate Alberta government Ministries to ensure that sufficient manpower and resources are allocated to eliminate problem wolf packs.”
Zone 9

Defeated

Though the committee understands the problems many producers are facing because of wolf packs they did not believe there was any chance of eliminating them with any reliability.

3. Motion by McKnight/Havens:

“Be it resolved that ABP lobby the Alberta government to allow lease holders to make a deal on their leases with the trapper to trap and snare predators if the trapper is willing to allow them to do so but only if the lease holder has completed a trapping course.”
Zone 5

Defeated

(l) AGM Resolutions:

There are three resolutions that were debated at the AGM that the board has sent to WC to deal with. The first two, to increase funding for wildlife predation and to increase

wildlife officers, is something that the committee is currently working on. The last one deal's with compensation for predation by coyotes. The committee has dealt with this issue a number of times and the government has always said no. This is a touchy issue with producers because the problem is worse in some areas than in others. In areas where predation is not as prevalent the producers want to be allowed to continue to hunt coyotes without government interference.

(m) WC member on Safety-net Subcommittee:

This was discussed in the Terms of Reference. Graves offered to sit on the subcommittee if no one else was interested.

Gordon Graves was acclaimed as the Wildlife Committee representative to the Safety-net Subcommittee

(n) Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC) member and alternate:

The committee is looking at a lot more species; short-tailed grouse are on the list as well as the rough grouse and the Hungarian partridge.

McKnight nominated Graves to represent committee. Crowle nominated Suntjens

Gordon Graves was elected as the Wildlife Committee representative on the ESCC and Walt Suntjens became the alternate.

(o) Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council (AGPAC) member:

Campbell agreed to sit on the committee. The next one is in Spruce Grove and he lives close.

(p) Wildlife Predator and Shot Livestock Compensation Committee member and alternate:

Cecil Andersen was appointed in June of 2015 for a 2 year term and Norm Henniger is the alternate.

(q) Big Horn Sheep bio-security:

The Alberta government are doing their assessment of the big horn sheep. A bio-security committee has been set up with Alberta Lamb. The government is concerned about diseases transferring from sheep to big horn.

A producer had called into the office to make sure ABP was aware of the issue. ABP has not been invited to participate but Hays asked the committee if they would like him to investigate more. The committee agreed that Hays should look into it and get more information.

5. In Camera

6. Discussion Items

(a) Remote Sensing – Erin Bayne:

Erin Bayne from the University of Alberta joined the meeting via conference call. He discussed his project 'Wiretapping the wilderness: Approaches to wildlife monitoring using automated acoustic recorders.' The system has been able to identify 25 bird species through computerization of the acoustic data. Upcoming applications will look at coyote placement, ungulates during the rut season, and comparing camera identification with acoustics. This research ties in with the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI) work.

(b) Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council (AGPAC) report:

The council is presently developing the AGPAC Terms of Reference and have a meeting set for March 1, 2016 in Spruce Grove. McKnight and Campbell attended the last AGMAG meeting where they were informed that it would now be converted to AGPAC. ABP was challenged as to why they were sitting at the table. Campbell will continue to serve as ABP representative on the Council.

(c) Cow Calf Council report:

Cow Calf Council meet on February 8th. The council is again supporting the Cow Calfenomics up to \$3000 for registration fees for young producers and agriculture students 25 years and younger to attend.

(d) Environment Committee report:

Talked about the ESA and creating a 25 year video; continuing with the FAA. The committee will support delegates who attend meetings as long as they submit a report.

(e) Bears:

This issue was not addressed

7. General Reading Material

- (a) 2015 WC Resolutions & Action Items
- (b) Mule Deer and Movement Barriers, Mule Deer Working Group, USA

8. Next Meeting and Upcoming Events

- (a) TBD

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by McKnight at 3:45 p.m.