

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS
MINUTES FOR THE WILDLIFE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY JUNE 8, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
AT THE SOUTH DELTA HOTEL, EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Present: Colin Campbell - *Chair Board Rep*
John Buckley - *Zone 3*
Walt Suntjens - *Zone 4*
Cecil Anderson - *Zone 6*
Rick McKnight - *Zone 7*
Gordon Graves - *Zone 8*
Norm Hennigar - *Zone 9*

Motion by Buckley/Anderson:

“That the financial statement be accepted for information purposes only.”

Carried

Staff: Fred Hays - *Policy Analyst*

Guests: Rick Freisen - *Board*

Absent: Brad Osadczuk - *Zone 1*

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

(a) Adoption of Agenda:

Additions: 4(l) Northern Bison at Wood Buffalo National Park project; 6(d) Current Weather conditions;

Motion by Suntjens/Hennigar:

“That the agenda be approved with additions.”

Carried

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

(a) Minutes of February 26, 2015 meeting:

These were minutes from the Cow Calf Council:

Motion by Graves/Suntjens:

“That the Minutes from February 26, 2015 Wildlife Working Group meeting be approved.”

Carried

(b) Minutes of May 1, 2015 conference call:

These were minutes from the Wildlife Working Group; a quorum was not present:

Motion by McKnight/Graves:

“That the Minutes of the May 1, 2015 Wildlife Working Group conference call be approved.”

Carried

3. Financial Statement

(a) Financial Statement ending May 31, 2015:

Financial Statement was available for the newly formed Wildlife Committee.

4. Decision Items

(a) Review and Adoption of Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference draft had been reviewed previously by the Board. Some discussion occurred dealing with possible overlap objectives with the Cow Calf Council mandate. There were also issues with the draft's membership that had limitations on a maximum for each zone of one member including the chair. It was suggested members should be those interested in wildlife issues, but not to have the Committee over populated. Recommendations for membership were to be sent to the Executive Director.

Motion by McKnight/Graves:

“That the draft Terms of Reference, other than membership, be approved”

Carried

DIRECTION: to provide the Executive Director with membership change recommendations.

(b) ABP Wildlife Policy:

The current policy in the Alberta Beef Producers Policy Manual was reviewed. Item 1.3 did not have restriction on Wildlife.

(c) Wildlife Committee Objective Strategic Priorities:

The Objectives were reviewed and compared with the ABP Plan. The ABP Strategic Objectives (2015/2016) indicated No. 4: Protecting the interests of producers by providing direction to the GOA on property rights, water rights and wildlife impact. The Objectives template was reviewed and modified.

DIRECTION: The WC Objectives would include using the Miistikis report to help develop a policy position on dealing with wildlife impacts; developing rapport with GOA officials, and others in the wildlife sector; and developing a wildlife communication plan for delegates.

DIRECTION: for the WC to draft comments about the WC objectives and priorities by July 1, 2015. These would be sent to Hays for compilation.

(d) AGM Resolution:

This came from the Board. The WC was to continue to drill down from the Miistikis study to include community working group meetings.

(e) Committee Assignments:

i. Alberta Game Management Advisory Group (AGMAG):

Discussed continued membership on this government of Alberta committee. This advisory group deals with wildlife regulation counsel and direction.

Motion by Graves/Buckley:

“That Richard McKnight serve as the Wildlife Committee representative to Alberta Game Management Advisory Group with Colin Campbell as alternate.”

Carried

ii. Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC):

This Committee had previously been filled from representatives from the Cow Calf Council. With the formation of the Wildlife Committee it was being transferred.

Motion by McKnight/Buckley:

“That Gordon Graves serve as the Wildlife Committee representative to Endangered Species Conservation Committee.”

Motion by Graves/Anderson:

“That Walter Suntjens serve as the Wildlife Committee’s alternative representative to the Endangered Species Conservation Committee.”

Carried

iii. Predator Compensation/Shot Livestock Group:

This Committee from ESRD had previously been filled from representatives from the Cow Calf Council. With the formation of the Wildlife Committee it was being transferred.

Motion by Hennigar/Graves:

“That Cecil Anderson serve as the Wildlife Committee representative to the Predator Compensation/Shot Livestock Group.”

Carried

iv. Cow Calf Council Safety-net Subcommittee:

From the Wildlife Committee and Cow Calf Council Terms of Reference there was an allowance to have one member from the Wildlife Committee on the CCC Safety-net Subcommittee. The Wildlife Committee felt it was important to have good communications dealing

with insurance and conservation wildlife issues. Therefore it was decided to appoint two members to the Safety-net Subcommittee on the condition that two members would be approved by the Cow Calf Council. If only one member was approved by the CCC then the second representation recommendation would serve as alternate to the Subcommittee.

Motion by Hennigar/Suntjens:

“That Gordon Graves be appointed as the first member to the Cow Calf Council Safety-net Subcommittee, and Richard McKnight as the second member.”

Carried

(f) AGMAG meetings and notifications:

A meeting had been planned for June 2015. It was subsequently changed, projected for sometime after the summer. This would be announced.

One difficulty with the December meeting is that it comes at the same time as the ABP Annual Meeting. There was a recommendation to try to have this changed.

DIRECTION: to provide background information to the ABP Executive Director to have a letter sent to the AGMAG management for consideration of this change.

DIRECTION: to have another member at each AGMAG meeting as an observer. This could be the alternate or another member.

(g) Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) Membership, damage claims and payment process:

The ACA had discussed the possibility of having ABP join their board of directors. They were to have a meeting on June 9; this would be discussed there.

Motion by Suntjens/Graves:

“That any correspondence dealing with the Alberta Conservation Association board membership requests be sent to the Executive Director and the ABP Board.”

Carried

There have been difficulties getting The ACA were also wanting to have their wildlife damages payments administrated through AFSC to improve payment efficiency and reduce damage payment time.

DIRECTION: to lend support to ACA for having any administration for wildlife damage compensation being paid through the AFSC process.

Further to this there have been producer problems receiving any confirmed damage payments initially approved by Fish and Wildlife or the RCMP to be paid by ACA. There are some examples of producers having to wait for up to five months for these payments.

DIRECTION: That a review be prepared by Hays to assess the expectation and accountability for wildlife damage payments through the Fish and Wildlife/ACA process.

(h) Miistakis Report review and follow-up:

The Miistakis Report and Summary had been presented. There was some expectation that the media would be picking this up. Further action was to occur after the Miistakis Institute presentation to the delegates on the following Tuesday. Need to review compensation, lobby for paid access, promote private hunting seasons, and assess wildlife impact or enforcement, to lobby for compensation for habitat, to be available to present decision of action.

DIRECTION: to have the Wildlife Committee become familiar with the Miistakis Report and to listen to the Miistakis ideas about next step at the Wednesday meeting. A subsequent WC meeting to be determined to be able to proceed with a strategy.

(i) Elk Problem- Suffield:

The continuing problem with elk at Suffield Military Base in SE Alberta was discussed. The present numbers are from 5,500 to 8,000 head and presently not contained. There is a grazing association on the base that uses 40% of grass for cattle. There is hunting on the base managed by the military commander. The main problem is having the elk move off the base consuming producer feed close to the area. The government control is at a federal and provincial level. The hunting statistics were reported to Brad Osadczuk. There was discussion about how to control the elk herd on the base that was not apparently successful. There was an apparent need for compensation for feed losses. Suggested that the problem was local and any solution should be handled at that level. This was not accepted by some members of the Committee. There was no resolution.

(j) Geese Problem- Sheerness:

The continuing problem of geese on the Sheerness Power plant by Hanna was discussed. Geese stay in the region year round because of the open water and availability of feed, primarily from producers in the region. The power plant has assisted with noise cannons on farmer property that moves them from the fields for short periods, and is not totally acceptable. There was an apparent need for compensation for feed losses. One member was negotiating with Ducks Unlimited to help with the problem. Suggested that the problem was local and any solution should be handled at that level. This was not accepted by some members of the Committee. There was no resolution. It was suggested to find resolution at the ABP fall meetings.

(k) Swath and Bales Grazing Compensation:

This information had been requested at the last Cow Calf Council Meeting. With the separation of Compensation

issues going to the Wildlife Committee and Insurance issues going to the Cow Calf Council further initial review would be done by the Wildlife Committee.

(l) Northern Bison at Wood Buffalo National Park Project

The Health and Welfare Committee had been looking after this file. This involves administration of a Growing Forward 1 grant to assist ESRD for disease testing, population monitoring and other activities. It was decided to have Karin Schmid continue managing the file until further notice.

5. In Camera

6. Discussion Items

(a) The Real Wolf:

The Real Wolf: The Science, Politics, and Economics of Co-Existing with Wolves by Ted B. Lyons. Book available about the politics and situation of wolves in NW US written by a Texas senator. Discusses dealings with US Fish and Wildlife and others. Available from <http://www.Amazon.ca>

(b) Grizzly Bear Film:

Grizzly Bear film “Sharing the Range: Waterton Biosphere. A short film about the issues around grizzly bears in SW Alberta had been prepared in April 2015. It is available on the internet <http://www.sharingtherange.com/>.

(c) Current Weather Conditions:

It is dry in many areas of Alberta: affecting pasture and forage availability. Need to have AFSC release forage acres that are insured for livestock feed.

7. General Reading Material

(a) 2015 WC Resolution and Action Items:

(b) Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference:

8. Next Meeting and Upcoming Events

The next meeting to assess the direction for Wildlife would be planned for late July/early August. To develop a strategy and plan to present to GOA and for the zone meetings in the fall.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by McKnight at 10:40 p.m.