

Livestock Review Board – Ellensburg

March 23, 2016

Ground Rules for the Board

- Be open-minded with mutual respect between board members
- Take each board member's point of view seriously
- Even if an individual disagrees, all should support the final outcome by maintaining a unified front regarding the final decision
- Active listening between board members, with consideration of the information presented, the individual's experience and perspective, and the context
- Respect the individuality of each claim, and discuss why each member does or does not support a claim
- Make objective decisions about each claim
- Maintain consistency and transparency in the process
- Stay focused to the topic during board meetings and minimize tangent stories, etc.
- Maintain confidentiality of discussions, remembering the sensitive information involved
- Meet deadlines
- Bring snacks

Purpose of the Board

- To build trust in the claimant for the Department's Livestock Review Board process
- Make unified claim recommendations that are issued by Board members with diverse perspectives
- Convey fairness of the Board to the claimant
- Provide education and outreach so that landowners/producers understand the claims process and requirements

Process Steps for the Board

- Board is made up of 5 members
- Maintain confidentiality of the Board meetings
 - Get AGO input
 - Do not use the claimant's name in correspondence
 - Mail claimant materials and speak by phone; do not use email
- Establish a spokesperson for public comment
 - Develop a consistent message for each member to take home from each meeting (i.e., talking points)
 - Have a point or lead contact from the Department
- Have a WDFW staff member involved with the Board process, but understand how that might impact confidentiality.
- Call on other resources when need to make a decision, such as the Wildlife Conflict staff, assessors, budget updates, peer-reviewed articles, etc.
- Establish when different forms of communication (email, mail, phone, meeting, etc.) will be used

- Sensitive information about a claimant should not be shared over email
- Decisions about a claim should be made during an in-person meeting
- A conference call could be used to get more information from an assessor, conflict specialist, etc.
- The Department validates confirmed or probable livestock injuries or kills by wolves
- Interaction with claimants
 - Department has a point of contact with the claimant. The point of contact also interacts with the board
 - Claims should be evaluated based on facts, not producer personalities
 - If the claimant wishes to appeal, it should be to a third party and not the Board
- Decisions by the Board
 - Sufficient consensus by at least 4 of the 5 members (need to discuss process when one of the board members has a potential conflict of interest)
 - If there is disagreement, discuss why
 - Regardless of decision, all Board members support the decision outside of meetings
- Timing of the claims process
 - Consider the time to compile the claim form and data, then the time to review the claim
 - Attempt to achieve a timely claims turn around
 - Make a decision about a claim as quickly as possible, then make the recommendation to WDFW
 - Meeting deadlines will increase the credibility of the Board
 - Board will meet a set number of times per year, on at least a quarterly basis
 - Mail complete claims in one packet one month before the next Board meeting.

Criteria for Claims Assessed by the Board

- WAC criteria
 - At least three years of records prior to the year of the claim. Claims will be assessed for losses in excess of the previous three-year running average
 - Damage must occur on large pastures or range land used for grazing, lambing, or calving where regular monitoring is impractical
 - Department has verified that wolves are in the area
 - Livestock losses can't be reasonably explained by other causes, such as drought, fire, or other predators
 - Compliance with the department's preventative measures checklist, or damage prevention cooperative agreement, or a waiver signed by the director
 - Compensation paid by the department combined with any other compensation may not exceed the total value of the assessed loss
- Acceptable record types
 - Opening statement of losses, then verifiable documentation to support and justify the claim
 - Documentation means all supporting data and may include, though it is not limited to, dairies, sales receipts, records of inventories, data on cattle behavior, etc.
 - The opening statement plus all records/data needs to convince the Board that the loss was caused by wolves
- Review criteria before each meeting

Next Steps

- Change group size from 6 to 5 using the emergency rule

- Provide a contact list of board members and pertinent WDFW contacts to all involved
- Conference call to:
 - AGO
 - Establish meeting dates