

National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee Meeting

USDA Center at Riverside
Oklahoma City Memorial Conference Center
4700 River Road
Riverdale, MD 20737

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

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
Ms. Dena Lee Fritz; Farmer/Rancher
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. Daniel P. Sullivan; Air Force Safety Center
Mr. Kenneth R. Wilson; Colorado State University

Committee Members not in Attendance:

Mr. Joseph D. Lanham; National Wildlife Control Operators Association
Mr. Mark Zaunbrecher; Rice Growers
Mr. Charles Williamson – resigned

Welcome and Introductions – Bill Clay

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m. by Wildlife Services (WS) Deputy Administrator Bill Clay. The WS Management Team and staff personnel were introduced. Under Secretary of Marketing and Regulatory Programs Edward Avalos and APHIS Administrator Kevin Shea were welcomed. It was noted that three Committee members were unable to attend, but that a quorum was present. The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC) members introduced themselves and their representation.

Opening Remarks – Under Secretary Edward Avalos

Under Secretary Avalos complemented WS on the professionalism they bring to the work they do to resolve wildlife damage conflicts. He highlighted the management efforts in bird strike avoidance at airports, feral swine eradication efforts, rabies management, and

livestock protection dogs. He acknowledged the difficulty in finding non-lethal and lethal means to address conflicts at the wildlife/human/livestock interface while still upholding society's values and beliefs. He closed by thanking the committee for serving in such an important role.

Administrator's Remarks – Administrator Kevin Shea

Although we began our agency in the 19th century, we need to be a 21st century agency. Administrator Shea talked briefly about the history of the Federal government's role to manage wildlife conflicts. He charged the committee to advise WS in its efforts in continuing to utilize 21st century technology and damage management methodology. He touched on avian influenza, bird strikes at airports, and feral swine, the skills and education of employees, and technological solutions present in the WS program now is the highest it's ever been. Administrator Shea thanked the committee for their service and serving as advisors in helping WS continually move towards the goal of being a 21st century agency. Administrator Shea acknowledged the critical role of the NWSAC and the importance of the committee's recommendations to APHIS/WS and their stakeholders; and he is looking forward to hearing their recommendations.

Certificates of Appointment – Under Secretary Avalos and Administrator Shea

Under Secretary Avalos and APHIS Administrator Shea presented the NWSAC members with their certificates of appointment.

Deputy Administrator's Remarks – Bill Clay

Bill Clay provided an overview of the WS organizational structure, history, funding, and national program priorities. WS partnerships and cooperation with other agencies and organizations were highlighted. WS National Wildlife Research Center was highlighted as the only research center addressing human wildlife conflicts. Important WS initiatives were discussed including development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Pest Management Association, the expansion of invasive species and wildlife disease work, emergency management response, and international capacity building.

Regional Updates

Western Regional Director Jason Suckow provided an overall summary of current WS activities in the West, the vision and direction of the Western Region, and emphasized the importance of collaboration with the States and constituent groups. Eastern Regional Director Charles Brown presented an overview of funding sources, important Eastern Region activities, and emergency response activities. National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) Director Larry Clark gave a summary of NWRC role, organizational structure, and research priorities. Questions from the Committee members were addressed.

Rabies Program Update – Rich Chipman

Rich Chipman, WS National Rabies Coordinator, spoke on the success and challenges in wildlife rabies management in the United States. A brief history of WS involvement in wildlife rabies control and accomplishments was presented, goals and components of

Rabies program, funding structure, along with an overview of the North American Rabies Plan. Questions from the Committee members were addressed.

Feral Swine Program Update – Dale Nolte

Dale Nolte, WS National Feral Swine Coordinator, spoke about the history, current issues and challenges facing feral swine efforts. He highlighted operational methods, research efforts, outreach, and economic analyses occurring within the program. He also spoke about program funding, status of NEPA analysis and documentation, and provided an overview of the National Feral Swine Plan and priorities.

Airport Wildlife Hazards Program Update – Mike Begier

Mike Begier, WS National Airport Coordinator, spoke about the history, current issues and controversy surrounding bird and wildlife strikes at airport facilities. He spoke about the MOUs in place with other agencies, collaboration with FAA, database management, and research occurring to aid in methods development in managing wildlife hazards at airfields, and funding structure. He highlighted WS receipt of the Presidential Award for Federal Stewardship for the Conservation of Migratory Birds for raptor relocation activities. Questions from the Committee members were addressed.

2009 NWSAC Recommendations – Martin Mendoza

The previous NWSAC meeting was held in June 2009 in Sandusky, Ohio. Associate Deputy Administrator Martin Mendoza presented the 15 recommendations from the last meeting along with the corresponding Agency decisions. The WS Management Team addressed questions and concerns about the results of the 2009 meeting.

Review of Charter and Rules of Order – Bill Clay

Bill Clay discussed the committee's structure, terms of appointment, meetings, and USDA Departmental Regulation 1043-27 dated April 23, 2014, which reestablishes the NWSAC and serves as its charter. Bill asked the committee to adopt Robert's Rules of Order or similar rules for conducting business. The committee was cautioned about making too many recommendations citing a maximum of 15-20 recommendations as a feasible target. The committee was advised that once a Chair and Vice Chair are elected, the Chair will assume control of the meeting and decide what agenda items to address. WS personnel will not be involved in the meeting from that point on, but will observe and be available to provide guidance and technical information, answer questions and provide administrative assistance.

The next order of business was to elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman to serve the next 2 years. Scott Steckel volunteered to be Chairman and Scott Bender volunteered to be Vice Chairman. Motion made by Irma Cauley and seconded by Dena Fritz to move forward with the election of the nominees. The vote was unanimous in favor of electing Scott Steckel as Chairman and Scott Bender as Vice Chairman. With the election of the committee leadership, WS turned the meeting over to Chairman Steckel, and he offered suggestions on how the committee will operate.

Discussion of Agenda Topics – Scott Steckel, Chair

A motion was made by Irma Cauley and seconded by Dena Fritz not to allow proxy votes. The motion failed, and proxy votes will be allowed.

The Chair discussed options and logistics for the location of the next meeting. Deputy Administrator Clay and Larry Clark provided information on site logistics to accommodate a meeting. Committee members will vote for their top three locations. A final site determination will be communicated to the community at a later time.

The committee Chair asked each member to provide their top three issues for discussion as a precursor to developing recommendations for the Secretary of Agriculture's consideration. Twenty (20) issues were presented and briefly discussed by the committee:

1. Loss of support in funding for WS
2. Support for fish and wildlife health initiative; addresses #3 in 2009 NWSAC recommendations list.
3. Increase communication with the public, through posting notices in the Federal Register with longer time frames for public responses.
4. Increase aerial gunning in southeastern states
5. Increase helicopter activities
6. Increase outreach activities
7. Need for press releases, more public notices, and more opportunities for engagement with the public.
8. More proactive approach in communicating with the public.
9. Regarding Goal #2 in WS Strategic plan, expand to broader issues such as forestry, fisheries, water quality, and endangered species.
10. Need for the Secretary to engage DOD and FAA on new resources for airport work and methods development.
11. Develop and evaluate quality assurance of WS airport program.
12. Potential for NWSAC to provide feedback on OIG review.
13. EPA requirements and approval process needed for registration of toxicants.
14. General funding for WS activities.
15. Central rent account
16. Send a statement of value to Secretary commending the services WS provides in preventing the spread of rabies.
17. Letter of support for WS strategic priorities.
18. Support more research funding in non-lethal methods development.
19. Provision for supporting aerial operations and equipment delivery related to bad weather, in order to continue operational work. Possibly through fleet expansion or contractor.
20. Agency adoption of accounting standards more clearly understood by public.

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 5:00 PM.

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

The meeting was re-convened at 8:00 AM. Bill Clay opened the meeting, announcing that Deputy UnderSecretary of Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services (MRPBS), Gary Woodward, would be in attendance for the morning.

Administrative Issues – Kevin Williams

Kevin Williams, Program Specialist, addressed travel reimbursement forms and requirements that were provided in the Committee member folders, and shipment of materials for committee members needing that service.

Remarks – Deputy Under Secretary Woodward

Deputy UnderSecretary acknowledged the committee's role supporting WS. He was interested in hearing what the program was doing well or not so well, and what we can do better. The Deputy UnderSecretary indicated he is interested in hearing about the sociological aspects of the WS does, what is right and wrong with press releases, how do we message the story of WS, and how do we tell the story of WS. He thanked the members for taking time to be a part of the advisory committee.

Committee Discussions and Preliminary Recommendations – Scott Steckel, Chair

The committee had initial discussions of possible locations for the next NWSAC meeting. A proposal from Howard Dew was presented to hold the meeting in Oregon. Discussions and final vote for location will be held on Thursday.

The committee discussed, combined, and withdrew some of the initial recommendations. Subgroups were formed to draft language for the final recommendations. This work was performed throughout the day, with committee members charged with reading all drafted recommendations at night to prepare themselves for final revisions, discussions, and voting slated for the following morning.

The day's session was adjourned at 5:10 PM.

Thursday, March 19, 2015

Meeting reconvened at 8:00 AM. The Chair read to the committee a statement received from Charlotte Faulkner Conley with Defenders of Wildlife, and Dave Sollman with the Fur Industry of North America for committee consideration.

Presentation given by WS Communication Specialist, Carol Bannerman, on press release protocols, WS website overview, and information location. Staff Biologist, Janean Romines, gave an overview of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) process.

Committee decision for the 2016 NWSAC meeting location: Oregon (first choice), Phoenix, AZ (second choice), and NWRC, Ft. Collins CO (third choice).

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.

Opening Statement – The Committee designated as the National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee wishes to express our support and thanks to the staff and program administrators of USDA/APHIS/WS 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 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 to name a few. Currently, Wildlife Services is held in high regard as the most effective and efficient program in the federal government in the areas of wildlife damage management and public health and safety.

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 continuing the support of Wildlife Services in implementing their Strategic Plan (2013-2017), and provides the following additional recommendations for your consideration:

Recommendation 1: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: State fish and wildlife agencies, the primary managers of our nation’s game and non-game species, are uniquely poised to collaborate with Wildlife Services to address the social, cultural, biologic, and resulting economic components of fish and

wildlife management in their jurisdictions. For the enhanced application of effective and efficient management techniques, we encourage Wildlife Services to build and maintain strong and collaborative relationships with state fish and wildlife agencies and to actively seek their expert guidance when evaluating management options.

Recommendation 2: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: In view of the increasing need for fish and wildlife managers to effectively address zoonotic and public health issues, a National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative (NFWHI) was developed under the leadership of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and in cooperation with governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. The NFWHI is nested within AFWA's infrastructure and process and is under the formal direction of the AFWA.

Human activities, such as ecosystems alterations and the movement of pathogens, hosts or vectors, often enhance the emergence and resurgence of diseases at the interface of wildlife, domestic animal and humans. The intentional or accidental introduction of these diseases can significantly affect fish, wildlife, domestic animals or human populations and necessitate a coordinated, multi-agency response.

The mission of the NFWHI is to conserve, restore, and enhance healthy fish and wildlife resources of the United States by recognizing and respecting the missions, jurisdictions and abilities of fish and wildlife managers to address health issues.

The importance of maintaining healthy populations has long been recognized by fish and wildlife managers, and several disease issues are of growing concern to fish and wildlife, domestic animal, and public health professionals and the publics they serve. Significant diseases, such as plague, hemorrhagic disease, pasteurellosis, chronic wasting disease, botulism, viral hemorrhagic septicemia, West Nile virus, whirling disease, and others have been found in wild and farmed fish or wildlife populations in North America and can have a significant biological and economic effect on state and federal public trust resources. Reservoirs of economically important diseases including bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis have inadvertently become established in native wildlife and threaten livestock industries in some areas. Foreign animal diseases eradicated from the continent decades ago, such as foot and mouth disease and classical swine fever, and those historically not reported in North American wildlife, such as highly pathogenic avian influenza, are a constant concern. Human activities (alteration of ecosystems, movement of pathogens, hosts or vectors, etc.), as well as improved recognition through advances in diagnostics and epidemiology, continually provide occasions for the discovery, emergence and resurgence of diseases at the interface of wildlife, domestic animals, and humans. The intentional or accidental introduction of new disease agents

could have a significant impact on fish, wildlife, domestic animals or human populations and would necessitate a coordinated multi-agency response.

To accomplish these goals, the AFWA proposes the implementation of the NFWHI by a multi-disciplinary consortium of state, tribal, territorial, federal, university, corporate, and nonprofit organizations under the leadership of the AFWA. Although national in scope, NFWHI will not mandate programs at the state, federal, tribal, or local level. The NFWHI is dedicated to advancing the science, awareness, and fostering cooperation related to all aspects of fish and wildlife health. It is a policy framework by which all interested parties may seek both to minimize the negative impacts of disease agents in fish and wildlife, and to proactively promote healthy fish and wildlife populations. The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) supports the development and implementation of the NFWHI, under AFWA leadership, and passed a resolution to that effect in 2005.

Recommendation 3: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: Currently, communication avenues are limiting the ability to share the WS’s message with the general public. The number of ways of communicating to the general public is rapidly changing and in order to remain effective and relevant it is important that Wildlife Services be allowed to more effectively transmit their message. Accordingly, that also requires more staffing. Providing greater information to the public and offering more opportunities for public involvement can build trust and create bridges between the program, stakeholders, and the public. Some examples of means to achieve this recommendation may include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- The use of the latest technologies and social media to tell the stories of the WS program.
- APHIS internships for students to assist with Wildlife Services communication.
- The use of WS internal communication specialists.

Recommendation 4: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: Aerial gunning has been proven to be the most efficacious and economical means to control feral hogs and other nuisance animals in many habitats. Timeframe for optimal aerial gunning conditions are often finite. Due to limited availability based on

need, weather, and mechanical issues, often helicopters are unavailable during optimal times thus reducing the effectiveness of state and federal wildlife operations.

Recommendation 5: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee recommends the Secretary of Agriculture to 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.

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

Background: NWSAC commends and recognizes the role of WS currently plays in mitigating wildlife hazards on civil and military airports. Current funding structure is inadequate to provide services to all airfields in need of wildlife damage control. Additional funding is required from federal stakeholders to provide services at GA airfields in support of USAF assets and rural communities nationwide. USAF aircraft are based and trained at many of these airfields to maintain mission readiness and combat capability. The current and potential increase in WS presence at all types of airfields requires oversight from a national system to maintain continuity of service and to ensure current best management practices are followed.

Recommendation 6: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: The expansion of feral hog range and population continues to increase nationwide despite current control efforts. Development and implementation of humane, efficacious toxicants would result in an additional tool which could be used in the control of feral hogs.

Current lethal black bird intoxication efforts, particularly those associated with rice farming in Louisiana are very effective cooperative endeavors already accepted in the communities where executed which decrease depredation on rice, seed, and crops. Similar strategies may be used in other states with commodity crop damage due to black birds.

Recommendation 7: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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:

- Minimize economic loss and decrease compensation-based programs which maintains positive producer to consumer outcomes
- Development and increased use of nonlethal methods, where appropriate
- Development of lethal and humane methods using toxicants and restraining methods.

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

Background: WS has had an effective program of research, which should continue to incorporate the newest methodologies for decreasing human-wildlife conflict. As the U.S. population continues to grow, there is a need to be aware of newer shareholders in research, operations, and communication. The focus areas identify types of research that can benefit the public by:

- Prevention will directly reduce wildlife mortality and ensure the beneficial economic cycle that ensures the movement of products and services from producer to consumer. Examples include preventing coyote predation of sheep or prevention of woodpecker damage.
- Development of nonlethal methods is straightforward
- New more humane lethal methods will certainly continue to be needed and key areas will be on better toxicants and methods such as kill traps to remove specific wildlife causing conflict and decrease capture/harm to non-target animals.
- Black bird depredation on seeds is a major issue and research on these species needs to continue as a high priority.

Recommendation 8: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: Space, including offices, shops, warehouses, and ware yards, used by APHIS programs are important for mission accomplishments. Within APHIS, there are several mechanisms to obtain space, such as direct ownership by APHIS, lease by the General Services Administration (GSA), APHIS lease, and free space provided by cooperators. Changes are being proposed for space management involving GSA space.

GSA leases are normally negotiated by GSA and paid for by appropriated GSA funding from a central rent account. It has been proposed that the \$42.6 million now in this

account-and, which is and has been used primarily for lease space for Wildlife Services (WS), be used to lease space for APHIS, which has rents that approximate \$44.3 million. Other APHIS program offices, including those leased with APHIS appropriations and mandated user fees, also need additional funding and are looking to redirect some of this already-dedicated funding (\$42.6 million) to other program functions. Some of this funding has paid for office space within WS since the early 1980's. It has also been proposed that WS will have to find funding within existing appropriations or pass new costs on to cooperators. In the final analysis, WS will lose much of its GSA funding, creating financial hardships within WS and conflicts with cooperators. This action will cause significant shortfalls in space leasing funding. This will impact program delivery since it may result in the following: 1) forced office closures; 2) reduced federal presence; 3) increased vulnerability of equipment to loss and weather by reducing secure indoor storage; 4) add additional burden to dwindling budgets; 5) increased costs caused by moves and breaking of existing GSA long-term leases; 6) reduced morale of employees; and, 7) eroded cooperator relationships.

Therefore, it is important that GSA funding changes be managed so that WS offices funded by GSA appropriations continue to receive proportionate shares of that funding, so that continuity of operations is not compromised.

Recommendation 9: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture that Wildlife Services adopt a uniform and more detailed accounting of its research and operations at the national, state, and local program levels, the purpose of which is to increase overall accountability of the expenditure of taxpayer dollars to support program operations.

Not Approved: Y (4) N (9) A (2)

Background: According to the 2013-2017 Wildlife Services Strategic Plan, some Wildlife Services program activities and processes have not been standardized across the national program, resulting in notable variation in services among states and between regions. Budget constraints and increasing agency interest among agency leadership to formalize and standardize processes across the program are requiring Wildlife Services to develop a national Business Model to address issues and guide future program development. Wildlife Services is tasked with more clearly defining, prioritizing, and communicating resource management assignments. An integral component of institutional business models is standardized financial management that includes a means to conduct itemized accounting of financial expenditures to determine whether or not they correspond to the expectations of stakeholders based on an organization's mission and priorities. Wildlife Services has been routinely criticized for its failure to provide an adequate itemized accounting of its expenditures, (e.g. the costs of lethal vs. non-lethal management actions). Having proper program-wide accounting could help address such criticisms.

Recommendation 10: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: Rabies has been a critical mission of the Wildlife Services, utilizing the unique expertise and research in wildlife management and damage mitigation of the WS and the NWRC. With the continued outbreaks, evolution of unique strains of Rabies in the western US, the existence of eastern seacoast raccoon and Midwest skunk rabies continuing to threaten the dense human population areas of the US, this expertise and funding response will be even more in demand in controlling and eradicating this zoonotic disease.

There continues to be only one supplier and one approved ORV to the WS Rabies Management program for wildlife Rabies control. The current vaccine is less than optimal for many of the Rabies reservoir species, and ineffective in several wildlife species that WS must vaccinate to eradicate terrestrial Rabies.

Need for additional Oral Rabies vaccines, continues to be critical to the success of the WS Rabies Management program. Additionally, the lack of ORV providers (competitors) to the sole provider of the current ORV to the WS Rabies management program continues to stymie overall ORV development, improvements and cost containment. Should there be a manufacturing problem, such as has occurred with human Rabies vaccine production, having only one supplier would stop wildlife Rabies control activities, placing people, animals and wildlife at greater risk of Rabies infection.

The North American Rabies Management Plan and U.S. National Plan for wildlife Rabies Management originally developed and carried forward by the WS Rabies section in 2008, and both being currently being updated for 2015, has provided a blue print for eradicating terrestrial Rabies in North America, and should be applauded for getting the US, Canada, Mexico and the Navajo Nation to formally agree and continue their cooperation efforts to eradicate this common problem. WS should continue to be the lead agency for the eradication of wildlife Rabies and needs to develop a communication plan to disseminate Rabies activities and achievements to the public.

Recommendation 11: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

Approved: Y (10) N (2) A (3)

Background: Wildlife Services has been authorized since 1931 to manage problem wildlife species. The Services' unique expertise and long history of being a leader in wildlife management provides a valuable tool within the overall management and protection of these critical economic and cultural resources, with Wildlife Services leading the world in research and mitigation of wildlife damage and zoonotic disease management. Because of Wildlife Services expertise, wildlife management agencies including states, Tribes, and other federal agencies call upon the program to enter into cooperative programs where these cooperators rely on Wildlife Services expertise to help manage wildlife and protect threatened and endangered species. This is especially important in areas where the cooperator does not have the ability or skills to manage wildlife to protect other wildlife species. There is no other wildlife agency with the considerable amount of expertise and research in the area of minimizing wildlife conflict and damage for species of concern. In the current age of minimal resources, spreading these resources between competing agencies would reduce the ability to effectively manage species of concern, game and nongame wildlife, fisheries and the recovery of threatened and endangered species.

Recommendation 12: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

Approved: Y (11) N (2) A (2)

Background: Current estimates of livestock depredation exceed \$137 million per year in the United States.

Recommendation 13: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been detected in both domestic poultry and wild birds. HPAI has potential ramifications for international trade and human health. Increased demand for surveillance and control efforts by WS are possible. As these activities have not been budgeted for, a subsequent lack of funding may reduce the ability of WS to deliver other programs to cooperators. Initial

congressional funding was intended to be split between WS and VS, but VS maintains all control of additional line item funding. Additional stable line item funding would allow the development and implementation of an effective disease monitoring and control program as described in the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative.

Recommendation 14: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: Preventing damage from wildlife before it happens is more economical, efficient, and humane than lethally removing the wildlife which have caused damage after the fact. This benefits producers and property owners who would have otherwise experienced damage as well as wildlife who are not subjected to lethal control. Providing information and educational opportunities to producers, state resource managers, property owners, and other interested members of the public enhances their ability to implement the most appropriate and effective damage prevention methods specific to their needs and in a timely manner before damage occurs. Wildlife Services is uniquely able to provide the most current science-based technical information necessary to successfully implement wildlife damage prevention due to the research of their National Wildlife Research Center and their operational experience. Therefore, it would be beneficial for Wildlife Services to share that expertise as broadly as possible to place the tools to prevent wildlife damage in the hands of those most at risk of experiencing damage by increasing the technical assistance they provide.

Recommendation 15: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: Wildlife damage results in more than \$12.8 billion annual loss to natural resources, public infrastructures and private property. Loss of the ability to use certain wildlife control techniques will reduce the success and increase costs of Wildlife Services operations. Wildlife Services should be allowed to use proven techniques based on sound science to drive management decisions.

Recommendation 16: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: Recognizing there are differences between furbearer trapping and damage control activities, we suggest the development of best management practices (BMP) for damage control activities as the international community did for furbearer BMP's. Quality assurance training in the application of BMP's for those individuals performing damage activities would add a level of confidence to the public, improve animal welfare, and help to retain these critical tools.

Recommendation 17: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee 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.

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

Background: The 2013-2017 WS Strategic Plan calls for the use of the most humane, selective and effective control techniques possible. The use of modern technologies helps to improve the welfare of target and non-target animals, could reduce the extent and seriousness of injuries of trapped animals, and may facilitate the release of non-target animals. In addition, systems to notify operators of actual trap discharge will result in more effective and efficient use of resources and help to prevent a loss of time investment.

Recommendation 18: The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee recommends to the Secretary of Agriculture the support for feral swine work to be continued and when possible, increase efforts to further reduce problems associated with feral swine.

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

Background: Feral swine cause damage to agriculture, natural resources, property, and threaten human health and safety. Feral swine cause \$1.5 billion a year in damages including over \$800 million directly tied to agricultural losses. The population and range of feral swine are rapidly expanding. Current efforts to reduce damages caused by feral swine are appreciated.

Recommendation 19: The National Wildlife Services Advisory 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.

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

Background: As stated in their Strategic Plan (2013-2017), Wildlife Services (WS) protects national forest and private working lands by detecting and combating invasive species on a daily basis. Together with other agencies, producers, and industry, WS conducts programs to prevent, control, and eliminate threats including reducing damage to timber resources caused by deer and black bears; and removing beaver dams that block waterways and flood standing timber. This effort is nested within APHIS Objective 3.2: Reduce damage to valuable natural, agricultural, and other resources caused by wildlife; and USDA Priority Goal 2: National forest and private working lands enhance our water resources and are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change.

The reestablishment of the American beaver throughout its historical range is an ecological success story, yet beavers are managed as an ecosystem engineer, valuable fur-bearing species, and a pest. The beaver is one species that is managed by Wildlife Services on private and public lands in almost every state, where beavers provide ecosystem services and disservices through dam building. Managing for beavers is sought by many as a means to adapt to climate change, provide critical habitat for threatened and endangered salmonids, restore degraded streams, and improve wetland function; however, scientific data is lacking. This sometimes results in increased human-wildlife conflict. More research is needed to develop landscape-scale management plans that maximize the positive and minimize the negative effects of beavers on ecosystem function. Wildlife Services has the knowledge to do this. By giving funding priority to tactics that support beaver management and research, Wildlife Services can assume the lead in setting national standards that enhance the nation’s water resources while minimizing conflict.

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

NAME	RECOMMENDATION																		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Andrea Lococo Reed	A	Y	Y	N	Y	N	A	Y	Y	Y	A	N	A	Y	N	Y	Y	A	Y
Burdell E. Johnson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Joel S. Dennis	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Joseph D. Lanham																			
K.E. "Maggie" Brasted	A	Y	Y	N	Y	N	A	Y	Y	Y	A	N	A	Y	N	Y	Y	A	Y
Reginal Herman	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ronald J. Regan																			
Scott C. Bender	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scott W. Steckel																			
Stephen Morgan Schmitt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	A	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	A
Kenneth R. Wilson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y
Daniel P. Sullivan	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Howard B. Dew	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Allen Kent Olsen	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

PROXY

CHAIR

Brent Adam Miller	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y
Dena Lee Fritz	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Irma Cauley	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
James LaCour	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mark Zaunbrecher																			

Meeting adjourned at 3:00PM