



Minutes Deschutes County Wolf Depredation and Financial Assistance Committee

Meeting #10: Monday, April 21, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

Deschutes Services Building, Allen Room, 1300 NW Wall Street, Bend

This meeting was conducted in person and by video. It was video recorded and can be accessed on the committee website: [Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance Committee | Deschutes County Oregon.](#)

I. Introductions / Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Commissioner Phil Chang. Present in person: Phil Chang, Deschutes County Commissioner; Jen Patterson, Deschutes County Strategic Initiatives Manager; Nick Lelack, County Administrator; Sarahlee Lawrence; Donna Harris; Johnny Leason; Stephen Pappa; Ethan O'Brien; Aaron Bott, Wolf Biologist, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW); Emily Weidner, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife; David Andrews, non-lethal Wolf Specialist for Central Oregon Wildlife Service; Brian Thomas, USDA, Wildlife Services; Scott Duggan, OSU-Cascades, Livestock Extension Agent; Ryan Kingsbury, McCormack Ranch; Matt Alex, USDA, Assistance District Supervisor; and Ty Nichols, Wildlife Services.

II. Approval of February 11, 2025, Minutes

Sarahlee Lawrence moved to approve the minutes. Johnny Leason seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.

III. Update from Committee Chair, Commissioner Chang

Phil Chang thanked everyone for coming and stressed the work that the committee conducts is the best tool in helping this community to help deescalate tensions around this issue. The County is experiencing increased activity including a poaching of a wolf, a confirmed depredation in the eastern part of the County, depredations in neighboring counties, and other wolf sightings in the area. This committee can set the region on the best path forward in mitigating conflict between wolves and livestock and be a model for how mitigation can be implemented to help manage conflict and depredations while working with our agency partners like ODFW, Wildlife Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and USDA.

IV. Update on Wolf Committee Roles and Decision Making Process

Jen Patterson provided an update from a discussion she had with Oregon Department of Agriculture. The committee has discretion in requesting information and accountability from applicants and recipients of the grant funding. Patterson also made available copies of the ODFW Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management 2024 Annual Report and Western Landowners Alliance Oregon Producers Guide to Predator Attacks on Livestock.

V. Update on Wolf Activity in Deschutes County

Aaron Bott, ODFW, Wolf Biologist, provided an update on the biology of wolves and wolf activity in Deschutes County. The life span of wolves' averages between 2-5 years and they typically weigh between 80-100 pounds. Wolves typically reside in family groups of about 6 members. The birth period is typically in mid-April. Wolves have a tremendous range, the home range can be somewhere between 100-240 square miles. When wolves

reach sexual maturity, they tend to leave their pack and venture off on their own. Wolves naturally began recolonizing in the west in the mid-1980s. In 1995-1996 66 wolves were reintroduced in Yellowstone National Park and in Idaho. Wolves disperse naturally and they recolonized in Oregon and Washington in the late 90's and early 2000's. Wolves are managed in Oregon by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife where wolves are delisted (east of 395). Wolves are federally listed west of 395. The state has a wolf management plan that was developed in 2005 and is updated every 5 years.

Oregon Department of Agriculture administers the compensation program. ODFW investigates depredations and determines the cause of missing or death. ODFW has four determination categories: confirmed, probable, unknown, and not wolf.

ODFW engages in proactive measures including:

- Carcass/Bone Clean-up
- Herders
- Livestock Protection Dogs
- Husbandry adjustments
- Fencing

ODFW posts all information on their website ODFW.com/wolves, they are a fully transparent organization.

Chang asked if ODFW has any specific observations about risk and/or concerns in the three areas of the County that has known wolf activity. Bott stated that the primary food source of wolves is Elk. ODFW monitors where the elk population hang around and dedicates more time into those areas. The lone roaming wolves are harder to monitor versus a family pack and make it tricky to gather more information on their activities. Fencing is a great resource to mitigate conflict between wolves and livestock, it can be a long term solution in a mitigation plan. Sarahlee Lawrence asked Bott if he communicates to smaller producers to let them know about the resources, they could tap into with the County Wolf Committee and grant opportunities. Bott indicated that he informs everyone he interacts with the variety of resources that are available, including the Deschutes County Wolf Committee.

VI. Grant Allocations

Deschutes County Wolf Committee was granted \$50,000 in non-lethal preventative measures from Oregon Department of Agriculture. Patterson shared the applications that were submitted for Preventative Measure grants. The following grant funds were requested: County Wolf Committee - \$30,000, McCormack Ranch - \$81,000, Hatfield Hyde Land Trust - \$16,800, and Desert Creek Land, Cattle, & Timber Co. - \$5,000.

Lawrence asked Bott how effective carcass removals were for as a tool for preventive measures. Bott said it is extremely important as wolves are scavengers. It is hard to gauge at this time how much demand there is for carcass removal as David Andrews started his position, which includes carcass removals, at the end of 2024. Andrews has been active in engaging with producers in the tri-county area and has been actively removing carcasses from producers in the last few months. Lawrence wanted to confirm that a trailer would be put to use and Wildlife Services emphasized that it would be put to frequent use in multi-counties (if there is a trailer sharing option). Andrews also said that grant funds toward dump fees would also be put to use and really appreciated. Ethan O'Brien asked what the dump fees are and Andrews said it was \$16 for up to 400 pounds and goes up from there based on weight. O'Brien stated that it sounds like there is a need to have dump fees funded to have a productive program. Bott said that carcasses should be removed, no matter the cause of the death, in areas that are an attractant to wolves (like calves, wounded animals, bone piles etc.). Johnny Leason asked how many carcasses have been hauled to the dump by Wildlife Services. Andrews said about 4-5 in the past few months. Leason stated that hiring someone would cost about \$250 per removal and hiring it out could be a better cost benefit at this time. Bott said it is hard to estimate how much a removal program could grow but it would be better for preventative measure management for more carcass removals to be occurring.

Leason and O'Brien suggest putting \$2,000 toward a carcass removal program for Wildlife Services and the remaining funds that were not spent on dump fees could be used toward a trailer purchase.

Lawrence said that the County received about 38% of the funds applied for and suggested that each grant applicant receive 38% of what they applied for.

O'Brien mentioned that one applicant requested \$5,000 for fencing and that not everything is equal. Not all funds should be looked at equally and he is not sure the 38% across the board is the best approach in considering grant disbursement.

Bott talked about the different resources requested. ODFW requested Fox Lights as they are very important and he uses them but he can source the Fox Lights from elsewhere. It is more important to get funding to producers who are being impacted and prioritizing funding for a carcass removal program.

Lawrence asked to review the applications for the Hatfield Hyde and Desert Creek requests. Patterson reviewed the applications with the committee.

O'Brien stated that the committee should not pick and choose what the producers should spend grant funding on, producers should have the flexibility to use their grant funds toward the measures that work best for their operations. O'Brien asked Ryan Kingsbury what his mitigation priorities are. Kingsbury said that all his depredations and activity have been at night and being able to see at night would be his best deterrence. Emily Weidner stated that thermal is the "bread and butter" to see at night. Weidner said it is very helpful to be able to manage any activity at night. Weidner has been out in pastures without thermal at night and detecting activity is very challenging.

Kingsbury said having more people (range riding) out with the livestock is also a priority to offset the costs and impact of doing business with wolves in the area.

Lawrence stated the committee should not get too into telling producers what to do with the grant funds.

Chang suggested putting \$5,000 toward committee projects (carcass removal and fox lights) with partner agencies. Lawrence suggested \$5,000 to Desert Creek Land, Cattle, and Timber, \$10,000 to Hatfield Hyde Land Trust and \$30k to McCormack Ranch.

Chang asked Kingsbury if there are other confirmed depredations in the Crook County/Eastern County region. Bott said in 2025 to date there have been 2 confirmed depredations in the area (1 in Deschutes and 1 in Crook – the producers properties encompass both counties). In 2024 there were an additional 3 depredations in the same area. Kingsbury said it's about a 20 square mile area where the 5 depredations occurred. Bott said the McCormack's Land is a larger operation that abuts the mountains and has more activity than the other ranch's in the area.

Lawrence had to leave but expressed a favorable vote for the allocations that Chang suggested. Kingsbury says that it is a more than fair proposal. Kingsbury just met with the Bureau of Land Management agent and he was not thrilled with the preventative measures the McCormack Ranch has been implementing to date. The McCormack Ranch is trying to manage their ranch with nature to the best of their ability.

Stephen Pappa suggested that the \$5,000 of the grant funds allocated to the committee: \$2,000 to Wildlife Services for carcass removal, \$1,000 to ODFW for Fox Lights and \$2,000 will be kept in the County committee funds for determination of spending later in the year.

Patterson recapped the proposal on the table for allocation of the \$50,000 ODA grant award:

- \$5,000 to be distributed to committee priorities

- \$5,000 to Desert Creek Land, Cattle, and Timber
- \$10,000 to Hatfield Hyde Land Trust
- \$30,000 to McCormack Ranch

Ethan O'Brien moved to approve the motion; Donna Harris seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

VII. Public Comments

No public comments.

VIII. Next Steps

Next meeting will take place in September, Patterson will send around a doodle poll to determine the meeting date and time. Next topics will include discussion of timeline for grant applications, producer outreach process, when is the missing and depredation reimbursement timeframe (follow up for Patterson), and application redaction conversation.

IX. Wrap up and Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager,
Deschutes County Administrative Services