



Minutes Deschutes County Wolf Depredation and Financial Assistance Committee

Meeting #9: Tuesday, February 11, 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 5:43 p.m. by Commissioner Phil Chang. Present on Zoom: Phil Chang, Deschutes County Commissioner; Jen Patterson, Deschutes County Strategic Initiatives Manager; Donna Harris; Johnny Leason; Stephen Pappa; Gordon Jones; Scott Duggan, OSU Extension, Department of Animal & Rangeland Science; Ryan Kingsbury, McCormack Ranch; and David Andrews, non-lethal Wolf Specialist, Wildlife Services

II. Approval of January 21, 2025, Minutes

Donna Harris moved to approve the minutes. Johnny Leason seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.

III. Review Grant Applications

Jen Patterson gave an overview of the program and funding available provided from Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) which included: ODA ended up paying out a total of **\$789,565.28 for 2024** and should have around that same amount for 2025. Since it is the end of the biennium, ODA will be trying to get every penny out to counties and anticipate using a very similar approach.

Additionally, Jen reported that she learned that afternoon that Wildlife Services has been notified that their termed contracts are not being renewed at this time.

Donna Harris would like more information from the ranchers including how much of their property is located in Deschutes County. Gordon Jones voiced concerns that the application are very under informed.

Phil Chang reiterated that the applicants filled out the applications in the entirety and provided all the information the committee has asked for to date.

Ryan Kingsbury shared that his ranch is pretty close to 50/50 split between Crook and Deschutes County. They took into consideration that about ½ their land is in Deschutes County and split their grant requests between the two county committees equally.

Donna asked Ryan Kingsbury how many extra hours of Range Riding they would incorporate if they received a grant request for Range Riding. Ryan responded that they currently have 6 Range Riders and he put in a request to have each Range Rider add one extra hour a day which would cost the ranch a little over \$100,000 a year.

Gordon asked how much Ryan is paying per hour, Ryan indicated they pay \$50/hour. Donna and Gordon think that is high and in the past the committee granted a producer for Range Riding at \$25/hour.

Ryan stated that they came up with the number as a general labor person to help address the wolf activity that has been prominent since November 2024. The wolf activity is a whole new world for their ranch with a lot of activity between November – January and things have mellowed out recently. It is hard to predict what the level of wolf activity will be in the future. Their ranch has close to a 100 different pastures and Range Ride on horseback and ATVs. They are currently playing around using Fox Lights and Fladry. Fladry only makes sense in a couple of scenarios. They have been working with David Andrews and Aaron Bott with placing Fox Lights but it is not advised to keep the Fox Lights in the same place – they lose effectiveness.

Donna asked what Ryan's experience and expectations are using drones. Ryan said he has been using drones for years and that the drone would be used primarily on the Deschutes County side as it is high desert and the best terrain for drones.

Ryan has learned the biggest impact for implementing preventative measures is during weening and calving times and will be using a drone during those times.

Johnny asked what the night vision goggles will be used for. Ryan said he would use them while on an ATV at night to be able to better spot predators including wolves.

Ryan stated that it would cost about \$100,000 to electronically collar his entire herd. He is interested in trying to collar a couple hundred herd to see if it works for their location and their land.

Gordon acknowledged that the costs of Ryan's operations are quite high however he prefers that ranchers try out the less expensive preventative measure as ranchers try to navigate this new world of co-existing with wolves on their land.

Ryan mentioned that they have Fox Lights in use and AM/FM radios and that Wolf 158 walked right through the area and came right up to the radio.

Phil talked about how the previous rancher tried several big scale preventative measures and has not had further depredations which shows to some extent that the methods work.

Johnny asked if it makes sense to ask for grant funds to purchase a trailer considering that the Wildlife Services position may not be funded in the future. Jen said that she briefly talked with Ellie Gage, from Crook County, about this and once the grant funds have been awarded the committee can review what the best options are to fund carcass removal programs.

Ethan asked Ryan if he would be able to attend another meeting once the grant funds have been awarded and Ryan said he would.

Gordon thanked Ryan for attending the meeting but cautioned again that the committee should be judicious about the grant funds they are requesting. Gordon also mentioned that the McCormack Ranch has not had any depredations and therefore their grant request is quite high. Ryan replied that the intent of this process is to prevent any depredations and that implementing preventative measures is trying to get ahead of the process. From their game cameras they caught 6 wolves within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of a herd of their cattle and wolf tracks were at the watering trough. They just happened not to kill at that time but the conflict already exists between wolves and their herd.

Donna stated from her experience as a veterinarian trying everything for preventative measures is not the best approach. She believes Range Riding makes the most sense.

Phil Chang stated there has been a lot of good discussion and talked about the different philosophies of applying for grant applications and the tools available. Phil asked if anyone was ready to make a motion.

Johnny asked what the parameters of the committee are to edit a ranchers/producer's application. Jen said that is a great question that she doesn't entirely know the answer to. She will check whether the committee has the authorization to edit a ranchers application and not request the full amount that is in their application.

Ethan stated that he is leaning toward the point Johnny made, is it even in the purview of the committee to say a rancher should or should not request the funds in their individual applications. Once the grants have been awarded the committee can discuss the best allocations of those funds. At this point it is not the committee's responsibility to determine what a rancher should or should not be asking for.

Stephen Pappa asked if there is interest in having a discussion at a future committee meeting on management process. Phil mentioned that Ryan did talk about the alternative methods they are implementing on the McCormack Ranch. Jen said she can schedule this topic for a future committee meeting.

There have been two options discussed: 1. recommend accepting the three applications as they have been submitted or 2. edit current applications to reduce the grant ask.

Gordon moved to submit grant applications in total for \$100,000. Jen asked for clarification of the motion – is the committee asking specific ranchers to ask for less money in their application.

Ethan asked Ryan if there is anything in his application that he would like to shave off. Ryan said that in fact they believe they could add more fund requests to their application.

Phil called for the vote. Donna and Gordon voted in favor of Gordon's motion. Phil, Johnny, Ethan, and Stephen opposed the motion.

Ethan made a motion to recommend the applications as submitted. Johnny seconded the motion. Phil, Johnny, Ethan, and Stephen voted in favor. Donna and Gordon opposed the motion.

Ethan asked Ryan if he could come into the next meeting prepared to talk about what his priority funding will be since the committee does not expect to receive the full grant requests.

IV. Public Comments

No public comments.

V. Next Steps

Next meeting will take place in April, Jen will send around a doodle poll to determine meeting date and time. Next topics will include review and determination of producer grant applications.

VI. Wrap up and Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:42p.m.

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