

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS
MINUTES FOR THE WILDLIFE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY APRIL 25, 2016, 8:30 a.m.
AT THE CCA BOARD ROOM, CALGARY, ALBERTA

Present: Colin Campbell - *Chair, Board Rep*
Jeff Havens - *Zone 3*
Walt Suntjens - *Zone 4*
Cecil Andersen - *Zone 6*
Rick McKnight - *Zone 7*
Gordon Graves - *Zone 8*
Maarten Braat - *Zone 9*

Staff: Fred Hays - *Policy Analyst*
Rosanne Allen - *Executive Assistant*

Guests:

Absent: Brad Osadczuk - *Zone 1*
Mark Crowle - *Zone 4*
Norm Hennigar - *Zone 9*
Kevin Stopanski - *CCC representative*

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda **8:30 a.m.**

(a) Adoption of Agenda:

Motion by Graves/Braat:

“That the agenda be approved as presented.”

Carried

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

(a) Minutes of February 29, 2016 meeting:

Motion by McKnight/Graves:

**“That the minutes of the February 29, 2016
Wildlife Committee meeting be approved.”**

Carried

(b) Matters arising from minutes:

Items were addressed from the forum and last meeting that are to be dealt with as a workshop to achieve better focus for the group.

3. Financial Statement

(a) Financial Statement ending March 31, 2016:

As of March 31st the committee spend 102% of the budget to year-end 2015-2016. The current fiscal year budget of \$25,000 has been approved.

Motion by Braat/Suntjens:

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

Carried

4. Action Items

A. Occupiers Liability Act: Review letter:

At the last meeting the members asked that the Occupiers Liability Act be reviewed by legal counsel. Daniel Hawkwood from Beaumont Church LLP reviewed the Act and submitted a report to the committee geared towards farmers and ranchers and how rural landowners can protect themselves from potential lawsuits.

Hawkwood suggests that a landowner have a minimum of \$2 million in third party liability insurance. Some members stated that it should be considerably more.

DIRECTION: Hays to check whether the insurance coverage for farm liability would extend to grazing leases for the full year.

What constitutes a camping spot if someone camps on land that is flat enough to camp on? How do the outfitters handle liability? Suntjens says that anyone hunting with an outfitter has to sign a very extensive waiver before they go hunting. Outfitters have to carry a bond as well as liability insurance. The bond is used to protect the hunter from fraud and the liability protects the outfitter and they need written permission to hunt on private land. We should get a clarification on when the leaseholder cannot use their property. If a landowner cannot use lease land after November 1st why are landowners responsible for liability. Liability is an issue when a landowner cannot use the lease land but if the landowner loses the lease they also lose any improvements.

Campbell suggested two courses of action: i) provide a copy of the Act and legal assessment to AGPAC; and ii) recommend to our membership that they carry \$5 million in liability. Need to have ABP Board position about liability insurance coverage.

Andersen asked to obtain a copy of Alberta Fish & Game Association liability insurance and determine who is covered by it. Is there any producer coverage with this? There is liability insurance coverage when purchasing a hunting licence. Determine who is covered with this.

Motion by Braat/Andersen:

**“That the ABP Board of Directors send a copy
of the Occupiers Liability Act and a copy of the
legal interpretation to the Alberta Minister of
Environment and Parks and to the Alberta
Game Policy Advisory Committee and be
disseminated to Alberta producers via Grass
Routes and be available for anyone who would
request a copy.”**

Carried

Recommendation to have legal presentation dealing with the Occupiers Liability Act at the ABP Semi-Annual meeting. This would be discussed with Rich Smith.

B. Wildlife Forum Summary of Recommendations:

A discussion was held to obtain directions for Wildlife Forum recommendations made.

- Information on liability and education should be a part of the hunting handouts
- Improve documentation of obligations/responsibilities with user groups
 - Provide ABP membership with access documents and guidelines thru website.
 - Give credit to new hunter training course
 - Send letter to Matt Besko, others involved with this
 - Improve Alberta hunter education and communication/ hunting handout material
 - WL Officers and others dealing with livestock predation assessment
 - AFGA education process
 - Alberta snowmobile
 - Alberta ATV clubs
 - Other recreation groups
 - RCMP and Sheriffs info
 - Identify legal obligations of landowners and hunters
 - Promote advanced notice of tag allocation in problem areas
 - Promoted removing deadstock
 - Lobby for deadstock pickup
 - Recirculate ABP deadstock report to producers (zone and fall meetings)
- Improved wildlife management process
 - Need advanced notice of tag allocation in problem areas
 - Producer monitoring of wildlife
 - Increased communication of wildlife population and situation
- Question of potential liability to ABP as a result of providing land access and guidelines documentation:
 - Remove ABP logo from access forms
 - Communication through ABP Grassroutes
 - Increased communication through media/ farm magazines

- Increase lobbying on issue with politicians/bureaucrats (agenda item for Tom)
- Increase level of communication with recreational groups
- Increase lobby of issues and ask the board to bring them to Tom Lynch-Staunton for discussion, dialogue with three of four primary recreational groups to speak

There are over 98,000 licensed hunters in Alberta each year. During 2014/2015 ACA's revenue from hunting levies was \$7.1 million. \$236,000 was spent for wildlife predation and report a poacher programs. (97% vs 3%). The remainder was used for their administration and other ACA projects.

- Increase lobby of issues. Ask the board to bring them to Tom Lynch-Staunton for discussion, dialogue with three or four primary recreational groups to speak at their meetings.
- When dealing with recreation groups ask for a reply to ABP emails or letters. If some action is being considered go back to them for their update.
- Determine who oversees the magazine Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations? Who in the government signs off on it? Encourage more consolidated information.
- Explore insurance for carnivore predation on livestock and disease transfer. This could go to the CCC Safety-net subcommittee for assessment.

C. Wildlife Forum Summary of Recommendations Remainder:

- There is a website that hunters use for cougar counts. The hunter must record his kill within 48 hours. A site like this for elk and deer would help ensure that the quota is met every year. Need to discuss with AGPAC.
- Lack of transparency, differing regulations for various species. To review with Matt Besko.
- Oblige reporting of harvesting within 48 hours. For Matt Besko at Fish and Wildlife.
- Prefer F&W officer as point of contact – use over ASB office
- Assessing livestock losses to predators: (i) Need to advocate for greater number of officers in the field and (ii) thorough training of officers and other support staff for assessing predator losses to livestock.
- Ask for differential evaluation for purebreds
- Encourage use of multiplier computation for wildlife losses; consider going through Safety-net subcommittee

- Review other regions: BC, Sask, Manitoba
- Streamline the program for compensation to remove unnecessary steps. Consider going through AFSC.

Recommendations should be sent to the board.

D. Improvement of Policies and Programs (Action for each: **to do what, how, when**) from 2016-2017 ABP Strategic Objective:

How do we address predation on livestock so that it is more efficient and more effective for our producers?

For the majority of our livestock producers crop, pasture and forage production loss in the field are not a part of their loss calculations. It is harder to assess damage done to standing fields than it is for stored grain.

Carnivore predation is the number one issue brought forward by producers. In some areas carnivore numbers have increased so much that they are pushing ungulates in the province east into the flatlands.

The biggest gain for our producers is for the compensation to become streamlined and reduce response times to an acceptable level. Need to convince producers to report their predation losses to the government.

Producers find the process onerous and the burden of proof is on them to prove it if an animal is killed. Some producers feel their honesty is being questioned.

Need to create a one pager for producers telling them how to report losses, who to report to, how to preserve the evidence, and how long they should wait for compensation.

Motion by Graves/McKnight:

“That the Wildlife Committee create a one-page handout explaining to producers how to deal with deadstock (how to report it, who to report it to, how to preserve the evidence and, wait times for compensation) and make it available on the ABP website and as a handout at fall meetings.”

Carried

We know that we need to address the efficiency of the compensation program but how do we do it?

Write a letter to Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) and base it on the conversation at the forum, we are looking at streamlining or altering the method on the way compensation is paid out and we are looking at opening a dialogue with them on how this could be accomplished. What are the steps taken before a claim is approved and paid off?

DIRECTION for Hays to approach ACA for them to define the reasons for delays in any compensation. Need to have a written response about this from them. This information will be used to help to streamline the process for compensation. Next is to come up with a plausible alternative to the present compensation

process with a process that is more streamlined for producers.

What is an ecosystem service (ES) program? What is the greater good for the most? There are a number of definitions for ES. Nature Conservative agreements become permanent and cannot be subdivided or cultivated. The Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program is a land lease for a specific period of time.

How can producers recoup their losses from animal loss and habitat management? Carbon credit offsets? Carbon sequestration? Rather than selling to a corporate entity take it out of current. Paid for harvesting carbon?

Hays had previously prepared a document discussing various models for Ecological Goods and Service payments; this is available from the ABP website.

Reporting of progress: Action to recommendations will be presented as ABP Resolution progress report.

E. Alberta Game Policy Advisory Committee (AGPAC) Direction:

This is a streamline group developed from AGMAG; its entire reason is to establish how many hunting licences will be allocated and how they will be divided across the province. In some areas they allocate up to 20% of licences to landowners in some areas up to 50% go to WMU's.

Committee members agreed that someone from the Wildlife Committee needs to be at the table. Our main concerns are the lack of wildlife herd management.

5. In Camera

6. Discussion Items

(a) Wolves in the Peace region:

Hennigar has been working on this in his area. There is a resolution that has gone to the board for ABP to work with BCCA and the respective governments to deal with these issues. Kevin Boon, BCCA Executive Director, has been dealing with a government official. BC had a program a couple of years ago that pushed the wolves into Alberta. Apparently, the Alberta government does not have the funds or officers to deal with the situation. A trapper in the Rocky Mountain House area has been having some success limited with trap lines. There is also the option of hunting with helicopters but the cost is about \$10,000.

Need to continue to work with Fish and Wildlife officers to help manage predators. Work with MDs for additional predator population control and bounties.

Under certain circumstances poisoning is an option. There are different ways to deal with wolves across Alberta. Outfitters can charge to hunt wolves; producers cannot.

Hays to check legislation dealing with charging to hunt wolves.

Has there been a change on the availability of strychnine? Hays will review the strychnine availability for wolf control.

(b) Hunting on grazing dispositions and Metis:

Through recent federal government legislation Metis are now considered part of First Nations and have the same subsisting hunting rights as other First Nations on Crown Land. Need to have clarification of the legal position as it relates to Crown Land and disseminate that to our membership.

DIRECTION to Hays to write a letter to Matt Besko, Fish and Wildlife, to have clarification of this.

(c) Wood Buffalo National Park update:

Braat participated in survey flights between Highways 88, 35 and 52 and no bison were discovered in the neutral area. There will be a bison summit in Edmonton on April 27th and 28th, Alberta Fish & Wildlife, Wood Buffalo National Park Wardens, Alberta Agriculture, Gerald Hauer the Chief Provincial Vet and Alberta Native Affairs will be attending it. An organizational meeting will be held in May to discuss this winters programs and financing but no date has been determined. The bison are still considered a endangered species and cannot be hunted in the park. Caribou are grazing alongside the diseased bison and no one has taken any blood tests to determine if they have become infected.

(d) AAFC survey with CCA Domestic Ag Committee – Wildlife compensation program:

CCA was asked to fill out the information for Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC) as an organization that represents the beef industry across Canada. There is a section in the survey on wildlife compensation. ABP provided information from a provincial perspective. Generally most regions had concerns about compensation for wildlife damage.

(e) Board update:

There has not been a meeting since March 17th and the date for the next meeting has not been set.

(f) Cow Calf Council update:

There has not been a meeting since February 2nd.

(g) Environment Committee update:

Nothing to add.

(h) Wildlife Predator and Shot Livestock Compensation Committee:

Have not had a meeting.

(i) Endangered Species Conservation Committee:

There are still waiting for the new government to appoint an MLA to chair the committee.

7. Next Meeting and Upcoming Events

(a) Semi-annual meeting – Delta South, Edmonton, AB, June 13 to 15, 2016

(b) Next meeting – Delta South, Edmonton, AB, morning of June 15, 2016

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by McKnight at 3:00 p.m.