

COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL

IMAN 

CHILCOTT 

FOSS

STOLTZ 

KANENWISHER 

PLETTENBERG (Clerk & Recorder)

Members Present.....Commissioner Greg Chilcott, Commissioner Suzy Foss, Commissioner Ron Stoltz and Commissioner Matt Kanenwisher

Date.....August 19, 2011

► Minutes: Glenda Wiles

► The Board met at 9:03 a.m. to review and approve of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Grant application for the updated Environmental Assessment in the amount of \$71,250 and local match of \$3,750. Commissioner Stoltz stated the Engineer and the FAA have worked on this application in order to come up with a scope of work for the Environmental Assessment update. Commissioner Chilcott indicated the grant lists the Airport Board Chairman Dave Hedditch as the grant contact, and he asked if that contact should be a Commissioner.

Commissioner Kanenwisher made a motion to add Commissioner Ron Stoltz as the point of contact to this grant and to approve the submittal of this grant application to the FAA. Commissioner Stoltz seconded the motion and all voted “aye” (4-0) Glenda asked a question about the application which resulted in Commissioner Kanenwisher amending his motion to replace Dave Hedditch with Commissioner Ron Stoltz as the contact person. Commissioner Foss seconded the amendment and all voted “aye”. (4-0)

► The Board met at 9:30 a.m. with Tom Lopach who is Chief of Staff for Senator Jon Tester. Various citizens were in the audience.

► The Board met at 10:50 a.m. to discuss and make a possible decision in response to a citizen request for action concerning wolves in the Bitterroot Valley. Numerous citizens were in the audience. Commissioner Kanenwisher handed out a proposed resolution he had prepared noting there has been many discussions about the wolf issue over the years which included last week’s public meeting. He then read the proposed resolution aloud noting it is important to obtain accurate facts about this issue.

Commissioner Chilcott suggested they change obtaining the report results from sixty days to October 19, 2011.

Commissioner Foss stated she appreciates this resolution as it supports obtaining the facts.

Commissioner Stoltz stated this is the next logical step to support the facts in order to take action for the citizens.

Public comment was then taken.

Keith Kubista thanked the Commissioners for recognizing the effects to the human environment by these predators. He feels there is a clear demonstrated need to take action. He is a Director for the Sportsmen for Wildlife and they would support this Resolution as well as assist in the fact gathering. Yesterday he attended a Fish Wildlife and Parks meeting in Helena, and while the wolves are a problem all over the State of Montana, Ravalli County seems to be bearing the brunt of the heavy wolf population.

Kelsey Milner of Hamilton urged the Commissioners to take public comment on wolves rather than an orchestrated event of those the Commissioners assemble. At last week's meeting there was no opportunity for an opposing opinion. While he does not think there might be a problem, he feels the process might be wrong in that the public is kept out of the loop.

Ed Cummings asked what the thought process was for invoking the Federal 10J rule to study the wolves when they have been excluded from the endangered species act. Commissioner Chilcott stated that does not apply right now. Commissioner Kanenwisher stated that particular "Whereas" in the Resolution is simply stating the history of it being invoked last year.

Brian Davis thanked the Commissioners for understanding the needs of the public. This gives the public an opportunity to express their concerns. He listens to both sides and spends a lot of time in the woods. He feels there are a lot more wolves in the woods than is what being reported. The Elk count appears to be accurate by Fish and Game. He encourages something be done quickly because we are either going to have an elk or a wolf population. After the elk are gone, then the deer will be gone and wolves will take people also.

Judy Kline lives in Stevensville and is proud of this resolution. She supports the Commissioners and the Commissioners were elected to do their job. In regard to her integrity being questioned in last Thursday's meeting, she did not lie about the wolf kill that Liz Bradley confirmed.

Skip Kolwalski stated he would like the Resolution to recognize the wolf population management as the responsibility of Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks. He felt sixty days might be a short time to garner the correct information.

Bob Sherman has travelled over 9,000 miles over the past 6 months interviewing experts in field of the wolf population. What is being said by these experts is that there is 1650 wolves, but the count is actually up around 4-5,000 wolves. He stated he is concerned because the wolves do meet the de-listing objectives and a judge from the bench is managing these animals. No scientists agree that wolves will become extinct when the hunting season starts. This issue should be removed from the federal courts and put in the local level. The amount of hunters is down 38% and the State is \$11 million dollars down from the hunting/outfitting industry.

Bill LaCroix of the Bitterroot human Rights Alliance had prepared a handout of their thoughts for this meeting, but that was before seeing the proposed Resolution just being handed out. In regard to the process, he felt the first 'Whereas' is incorrect because the previous meetings as well as this meeting are not being fully noticed. The meetings do not turn out to what they are supposed to be. Not everyone is present and all comments need to be heard. He felt the Commissioners should stick to what you are paid to do, as the Federal Government is addressing the large predator control. He and others feel what they are doing is the 'coordination issue' with American Stewards. He asked why one citizen can get a meeting when another can't and then not even show up to the meeting. Commissioner Foss stated he never asked for a meeting. Bill stated he is being told when and where to talk by the Commissioners and he does not appreciate it. The Commissioners have already paid a lot of money on the coordination scheme. He felt they might be better ahead to put some magnesium chloride down on the roads to make them better.

Mark Cook of Stevensville is the representative of the National Wolf Watchers Coalition. He is hearing a lot of talk on economics in regard to the wolves. He stated maybe people aren't coming here because of the economic times. The elk numbers are where they should be. The wolves are going to be slaughtered, and it will fracture the pack and then there will be an increase in depredation. For the five cows and sheep that have been killed, \$6,500 was paid out for those damages. He felt the Commissioners should be more concerned with the theft of the livestock which totals much more than \$6,500. He stated he would like to be on any committee put into place by the Commissioners. What is happening here is inciting fear in people so the wolves will be killed. Mark stated this is a witch hunt and the wolves are the scape goats.

Jim Pearson stated he asked for last week's meeting but could not be present. He felt the Commissioners are doing their job. He is from West Virginia and believes in history because history predicts the future. Wolves are beautiful animals but they are wolves and they do what they do. The wolves here come from northern Alaska. They are 100+ pounds in this area, traveling in packs. In 1909, 315 people died in France from the wolves because the wolves had no other food source – thus they went for people. According to history we will lose human life if we don't gain control over this issue.

Char Jones of Hamilton agreed with Skip Kowalski, in that the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FW&P) are responsible for this issue and they should be allowed to do their job. If we are having these problems, then they need to be contacted. Research should come from them, and then change will come from that. She does not think the Commissioners should take this on, as there are other things more important. Let the FW&P do their job.

Theresa Manzella stated in November 2007 she had three wolves come into her horse pasture. She lives not far from Highway 93 and runs a horse training facility. While the wolves did not directly attack her young horse, they forced her into a ditch and it ruined her physically. The horses value went down so thus did her profit in her business. The stall tactics by some people are a game and she appreciates the Commissioners taking this on. She likes the 60 day time line.

Len Stout stated bureaucrats are unresponsive and afraid of their own job, that's why nothing gets done. We can't go to Washington D.C. and get them to move, so we need local control.

Paul Shirley had a horse killed and the state gave them some information about how to keep wolves out of the pasture. That was to raise their fence to a 6' electric fence. That type of fence would cost him \$22,000. His family did kill two wolves but there are many left in that area.

Marty Barton agrees with Skip Kolwaski and Char Jones in regard to the FW&P responsibility. She felt it is important to gather people from different sides of the issue, because only then would a process of compromise be reached. As Gene Williams has said, data can be gathered in order to put forth your own presumptions. She also agreed 60 days might be a little short.

Keith added he learned after the meeting in Helena yesterday it is an issue of control versus management. The control element is severely lacking and FW&P is frustrated because of funding shortfalls. This issue is well within the local control. Currently the bar is set too high by the state statute to establish reimbursement. He noted even the Regional Director of FW& P, Mack Long stated the Bitterroot Valley has had a large problem with wolves.

Jim Pearson stated Idaho and Wyoming is declaring war on the wolves. When they are pursued there they will come to Montana as they can move 100+ miles a day. They will see Montana as a safe haven and our problems will escalate quickly. This will end up as a Tsunami. He asked who will come to Montana when the kids are eaten at the bus stops by the wolves.

Bill LaCroix encouraged the Commissioners to talk to Julie King and their counsel in regard to coordination. He was here in Aug 11th and one man stated he shot 60 rounds off at a Trailhead because he thought there were wolves.

Brian believes majority of funding for Fish and game comes from tags, and the tag sales are down. 30% less hunters due to lack of game. Game wardens jobs are in jeopardy due to their funding. He knows a man named Kirk King, who had a large pet Rottweiler who live up 9 Mile. This Rottweiler got bread by the wolves. Three or four of these cross breeds died, but one lived and became an alpha male of the 9 mile wolf pack.

Bob Sherman stated in regard to the 24 wolves in West Fork and removing 18 of them would not work according to the Governor because other wolves will just come in. We need to remove 50% of the wolves just to maintain what we have. To do anything better we need to remove 70%.

Ed Cummings stated you are talking problems; let's talk solutions which should include a list of self help things for people dealing with wolves.

Public comment was now closed.

Commissioner Kanenwisher addressed Char Jones and Skip Kolwaski's comments in regard to MT Fish Wildlife and Parks. He agrees they have a role and task. Nothing in the resolution takes their responsibility away. The data gathering is simply gathering it from those experts. He does not want to supplant what FW&P does, rather to seek their facts. If we have an economic, environmental, and social impacts in our County then the Commissioners have the duty to

address the problem. He respects those who disagree and agrees to keep the process public by asking for all comments.

Commissioner Foss stated back in June they asked for public comment and the Commissioners received a stack of comments. She did not recognize 90% of the people making comments. No one is being left out. She has met with Federal representatives in regard to large predator control and they have all agreed to share facts and information.

Commissioner Stoltz appreciates all of the participation and comments. The citizens did bring this forward and it is up to the Commissioners to gather some facts and information. While this is a polarizing issue, some action needs to be taken, and if that means the Commissioners, then he is for that.

Commissioner Chilcott asked Ed what he meant by self help lists. Ed stated an example would be to collar the wolves as they can set off a signal which tells the stock owner they are near. We need to help ourselves. Commissioner Kanenwisher commented we are living with the effects of the government putting the wolves here.

Commissioner Chilcott stated they will be looking at solid, all inclusive data from numerous sources, which includes the community, and experts. Ed makes a good point for what we want to do with the data and that is to take it and make it into a problem solving list for the citizens. Commissioner Chilcott appreciates Commissioner Kanenwisher's work on this issue.

Commissioner Stoltz made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2718 with the change of October 19, 2011 instead of 60 days. Commissioner Kanenwisher seconded the motion noting any typographical, grammatical errors will be corrected. All voted "aye". (4-0)

SIGN IN SHEET – COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM

****PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME LEGIBLY****

THANK YOU!

DATE: 8-9-19

MEETING: _____

KEITH KUBISTA _____

MARC COOKE NATIONAL WOLFWATCHER COALITION _____

JUDY KLIME _____
