

RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Wyoming Board of Agriculture
April 9 - 10, 2007
Department of Agriculture Conference Room

Members Present: Jack Corson, President
Gene Hardy, Vice President
Juan Reyes
Jim Mickelson
David Graham
Joe Thomas
Patrick Zimmerer
Dalin Winters
Emily Horton (came in late)
Frank Galey, Dean, UW College of Agriculture (was gone both afternoons)
John Etchepare, Director, WY Dept. of Agriculture

Members Absent: David Largent
Ryan Lance, Governor Freudenthal's Office

WDA Staff Present: Muff Parker, Recording Secretary
Jason Fearneyhough, Deputy Director

Meeting was called to order by Vice President Corson.

Introductions

Each of the members introduced themselves, allowing the two new members to talk about their background.

Approval of Minutes

The following corrections were made to the minutes: Frank Galey was there January 24 but not on the 25th; and on April 4, the AUM question was asked by Dave, not Jack. **Jim Mickelson made a motion to approve the April 4, January 24 & 25, February 7, February 21, and March 20 minutes with corrections. Seconded by Gene Hardy. All voted in favor. Motion carried.**

Election of President

Jim Mickelson nominated Jack Corson as President. It was seconded by Dave Graham. Jim amended the motion to elect Jack by acclamation with there being no more nominations. Jack seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried. Jim Mickelson noted he would like to see the President hold the office for two years.

Legislation

Board of Ag Bill - Jim Mickelson wanted clarification of the terms of the existing members. John indicated the Attorney General's informal opinion is the existing members will retain a 6-year term effective July 1. John would like to see those terms stagger a little more to reduce allow for a smoother transition of outgoing and incoming members. After discussion it was decided to discuss at another meeting.

Livestock Board Bill – There are some problems with the legislation and there are several people

trying to clear it up, but it will probably take further legislation.

Eminent Domain Bill - Gene feels agriculture will be served fairly well by the outcome.

Prairie Dog Bill – This bill would have changed the status of the prairie dog to a predator. It is going to be an interim topic. Weed and Pest has received additional funding this year which may be able to help local districts in the control of the Prairie Dog.

Grey Wolf – John indicated the Governor is going to hold his hard stance on the management of the wolf. The initial boundary lines have been proposed and the comment period has been extended until May 15. John said he would check on the status of the lawsuit. Discussion of the issue continued.

Knowing that Emily would be leaving the board soon, John suggested writing to Emily and asking her to send in a letter of resignation so her position could be filled.

Liaison Positions

The members review the positions and volunteered to serve. Muff will send letters to the organizations asking them to notify the members of their meetings and follow those meeting with their minutes.

ADMB update

Hank Uhden gave the group some background explaining is was formed in 1999 with a 15-member board. They do issue grants for wildlife enhancement, etc. They are trying to build the science behind predator management. With legislation, they received additional funding of 6 million dollars. 5.7 million dollars is to be granted to the Predatory Animal Districts and the rest to hire a coordinator. There will be two vacancies in August. One is a cattle producer and the other is a sportsman.

Chad Curry is the coordinator and he visited with the board about the funding and handed out an operations manual for the Predatory Animal Districts. They are meeting with the faculty at the University to track this program for reporting to the legislature. They are also working with the district in obtaining liability insurance. They are hoping the ADMB can come up with a policy regarding refunds to the producers. If not, they will have to go through the rule making process. The districts are also struggling with the various fiscal years. Between the district's, federal and state, there is a lot of variance. Most of them are changing to the states' fiscal year which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 each year. There are currently five counties not participating in the predator program because they did not raise their fees. Some of them are watching the program for now and may come on board at a later date.

Bryce is concerned if the department asks for additional funding in the supplemental budget based on the counties currently participating and the other five decide to come on board later – what will that do to the funding for the existing eighteen counties? He is also concerned about liability insurance.

Jack would like for Hank to review some success stories that have come from the additional funding. Hank explained this is the first year of the program and it will take some time to see all of the benefits. He will report back to the board in July.

Review of statues

The members talked about the role the Advisory Committee will take on regarding fulfillment of the statues the Board of Agriculture is responsible for. Jack asked James Goodrich to provide a listing of the duties currently given to the Advisory Committee. James feels the appointees need to be versed in the activities of State Fair and have a willingness to learn, as well as advance State Fair.

Bryce feels those appointees need to advocates of State Fair. He also thinks they need to communicate with the Board of Agriculture. The Board will be having a meeting with James and the Advisory Committee in September to have a better plan. James welcomes the idea of opening lines of communication. Bryce agreed, as a State Fair Advisory Committee Member. Jack asked the members to agree to the meeting with the Committee to improve communications, inform them of their duties and responsibilities and for the Board to set policy and to follow-up with the Committee to carry out the policies. All members concurred.

Gen wanted to know how to improve the rodeo. The contract with Cervi as been extended for this year's State Fair. James said small PRCA production like there are all struggling and he's going to visit with other to find out what they are doing. Perhaps the issue can be discussed as a collective group to come up with solutions.

Budget

Julie explained the budget as she had prepared it. She did say that the 100 series for payroll would be going up by \$25000 as of July 1 because of the increase in salaries from \$10 to \$100 per day. After discussion, it was decided by the members to keep the line items as they are for now.

Living Legacy

Muff talked about the 2007 program and reviewed the assignment list as well as updated the members on the progress. Jim said as chairman, he is asking for sponsors to make a 3-5 year commitment so the Board doesn't have to find sponsors each year. It was decided to have a meeting with F.A.I.R. in September

Farm Bill Discussion

John indicated agriculture is divided on this year's bill between the commodity and specialty crop sides.

Jack asked the members to define what is important to them regarding the farm bill. Juan said carbon sequestration. John said it would be best to get the information, concerns and suggestions to the Congressional Delegation and to work closely with the ag groups. Bryce said disaster/drought relief would be important.

Young Producer Forum

The two youth in attendance indicated they would still like to have a forum. They would like to work with other organization that has youth programs. Dalin and Patrick will get the notes and evaluation from the last forum to the members and report back to the group in July.

Conservation District Requests

Carol Nicholls from Weston County reviewed the boundaries of the Weston County Natural Resource District explaining why they have some areas where the land is not included. She explained the reason for the expansion is to include some landowners requesting to be a part of the district. **Jim Mickelson made a motion to expand the number of acres within the district as presented by Carol. Dave Graham seconded and all voted in favor. Motion carried.**

Hot Springs Conservation District is requesting and extension on both fiscal year grants to October 31, 2007. **Gene Hardy mad a motion to approve the extension requests for both grant to October 31, 2007. Jim Michelson seconded and all voted in favor. Motion carried.**

Lake DeSmet Conservation District submitted a request to extend the Shell Creek Watershed Planning Effort to December 31, 2007. **Jim Mickelson made a motion to allow Lake DeSmet to retain the balance of unused water quality funding, with is being necessary to be spent by**

December 31, 2007. Gene Hardy seconded and all voted in favor. Motion carried.

Washakie County submitted a request to allow for an extension on their final report until May 31, 2007. **Joe Thomas made a motion to grant an extension until May 31, 2007 for their final report on the Big Horn River Watershed Data analysis and Interpretation Project. Dave Graham seconded and all voted in favor. Motion carried.**

Lincoln County submitted a grant request for \$3,449.29 which is the balance left for water quality grants. **Jim Mickelson made a motion to grant the request submitted by Lincoln County to receive funding in the amount of \$3,449.29. Gene Hardy seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Motion carried.**

Review of statutes and State Fair Advisory Committee responsibilities

John and James updated the members on the status of the projects at State Fair Park and handed out a timeline of them, along with the schedule for the equine stalling facility. The members had discussed the advisory committee responsibilities earlier in the day.

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Nominations for Vice President

Juan Reyes nominated Gene Hardy. Joe Thomas seconded and asked nominations be closed. All members voted in favor.

Manager reports

John complimented each of the managers for the hard work they do. Julie, Hank, Leanne, and Dean all spoke briefly about their divisions.

Local Sage Grouse Working Groups

Justin Williams handed out a table of the progress of the eight sage grouse groups' conservation projects. The projects include habitat treatment, restoration, improved range management infrastructure and grazing management plans, applied research, inventories, monitoring and public outreach. The draft plans are available on the Game and Fish website. Each of the groups is comprised of range biologists, sage grouse specialists, and economists dedicated to improve range and develop the habitat for sage grouse. Bryce Reece indicated it has been difficult getting information about the time and place for the meetings. He said having the department of ag attending those meetings has been very much appreciated, given the fact those meetings are not well publicized.

A Sage Grouse Technical Team has been formed which includes several federal, university and other specialized staff and Bob Budd is the facilitator.

Grizzly Bear and Wolf Delisting

Justin Williams discussed the delisting will occur on April 30, 2007 for the Grizzly Bear, but is a continuing process. The state management plan was approved in July, 2005 and is available on the Game and Fish website. Conservation groups are planning on filing an appeal, but it will be a long time for that process. Currently the Game and Fish is spending 2.6 million and will increase by 1.1 million with the delisting. The US fish and Wildlife Service spend approximately \$50,000 a year on bear management. Wyoming is spending more because of the increase in population and the depredation of livestock.

Justin handed out a map created by the Wyoming Game and Fish outlining the various boundaries for the wolf in the state including the one from HB 213. From that bill, the components have to be met by February 29, 2008, US FWS has to adopt the 10J rule changes, all litigation has to run its course,

and the wolf has to be de-listed. The comment deadline on the plan is May 9, 2007, but there is a public hearing on April 19 in Cody. Frank Galey would like to see the board voice the option of the black line on the map be moved to the blue one (map attached).

Update of College of Agriculture

Frank Galey said there are new positions in ag economics, animal science, and water quality. All is well with the college and he is excited about its future. Enrollment is up and they have received some new projects.

Report on the JIO

Lisa Reinhart said the mission of the JIO is: to provide oversight on mitigation proposals, oversight on monitoring, and to provide adaptive management recommendations to the BLM. The office has received a commitment of 24.5 million from EnCana. 16.5 million dollars will be spent on wildlife and the balance will cover the rest of the projects.

Update of the WLCI and CSI

Jason Fearneyhough said the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) is structured similar to the JIO. The department will have someone in the office and are looking for a person with range ecology background. There are five counties within the WLCI. They are looking at government funded projects working in conjunction with local groups, having local input to the group. The WLCI is only going to fund personnel – no projects. And the funding will come from the private sector. The Cooperative Sagebrush Initiative (CSI) is a program similar to the WLCI, but it is the private answer to the government-driven programs. It will be able to compensate landowners for habitat. The Sand County Foundation is involved. Currently there are no models of this type of program so it is going take some time to get it on its feet.

In-stream Flow

Bobbie Frank said all three in-stream flow bills died. HB 84 would have allowed any person to apply for a temporary use permit. SF 51 was the temporary in-stream flow bill which would have changed who would be able to hold temporary permits which currently only the state. HB 307 was never introduced. She said the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts is opposed to these types of bills and asked what the boards' feelings were. Scott Zimmerman said the ag committee didn't feel comfortable working this type of legislation this past session because they weren't knowledgeable enough to know the long-term ramification. He also his organization will host a water conference in Casper June 5 -6 to educate the Wyoming producers.

2007 Legislative Outcomes

Scott Zimmerman discussed the extending sales tax exemption on renewable energy to 2012, eminent domain, and the fuel tax bill that failed. He thanked Jim Magagna for the tremendous job he did this past session on the eminent domain bill.

Bryce Reese said the eminent domain bill was the most contentious bill within agriculture. There was a group that took a bill that wasn't going anywhere and worked tirelessly with ag groups to come up with a bill that hopefully got them 80% of what ag wanted. Everyone knew at the beginning nobody was going to be able to get 100%.

The three brand inspection bills that came out of the session will hopefully save the program. The Livestock Board will be coming to the legislature for 35% of their budget. One of the bills changed the duties of the State Veterinarian and Director. The vet is in charge of the animal health issues and the director is in charge of brands and law enforcement. It also strengthened the reporting requirements to the Governor and allows the board a fund of up to one year's reserve funds. This will allow the board to increase or decrease the fees by 20% per year.

The eminent domain bill started with reclamation. Past easements can be used for discovery if a case goes to court. Under the old statutes, those easements could not be used unless it was proven they were operating in bad faith. The attorney fees will get paid and eminent domain can never be used against the landowner again.

The subdivision regulation bill died, but is a part of the interim studies.

Keith Kennedy talked about the bill that reduced the membership from seven to five and removed the geography boundary requirements. The revenue committee will be looking at all sales tax in interim studies. All exemptions may be on the block.

The state land leasing was an important bill that addresses the issue of folks leasing land and then removing livestock.

They discussed at length water development and the need for further development throughout the state and the need to repair those old projects that are deteriorating.

Board Discussion

Emily Horton announced she will be resigning and thanked everyone for the experience over the past three years and the opportunity to have served.

Jack Corson is writing a letter to the Governor regarding the wolf boundary after Joe Thomas and Jim Michelson have an opportunity to attend the meetings in their areas and report back those findings to the board.

The board decided the July meeting will be in Torrington and Patrick Zimmerer volunteered to help with the tour.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Corson, President

Date

Attachment:
Attendance sheet
Conservation District Requests
Proposed wolf boundary map