



# LASSEN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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**John McGarva**  
Sheriff - Coroner

To: Lassen County Board of Supervisors

From: John McGarva, Sheriff-Coroner

RE: Lassen County Wolf Management Plan

Agenda Date: May 12, 2026

**Subject:** The Sheriff's Office has prepared a management plan for the Gray Wolf in Lassen County for review and approval by the Lassen County Board of Supervisors.

**Discussion:** The discussion regarding the gray wolf in Lassen County has been a concern since 2016. The County has been involved with discussions with California Department of Fish and Wildlife since that time. Public hearings were held regarding the concerns of Lassen County residents, especially from the agricultural community on multiple occasions. Director Chuck Bonham appeared virtually and residents were able to address concerns and issues they have experienced.

On October 16, 2018, the Board of Supervisors passed Resolution #18-070 requesting assistance from the CDFW to expedite implementation strategies and reduce the adverse effects of the gray wolf in California (see attached). The resolution outlined the impacts and concerns about the conservation plan issued in 2016 and the concerns about the decisions made at that time regarding keeping the gray wolf listed on the California Endangered Species Act. The Resolution was passed unanimously.

On April 21, 2020, the Board of Supervisors sent a letter to several officials for the CDFW and the California Fish and Wildlife Commission stating the concerns about the gray wolf and its presence in the Lassen County (see attached). The Board raised concerns about the classification of the gray wolf as an endangered species is being conducted without a scientific basis for the determination.

The concerns have only escalated over the next few years. The presence of wolves in Lassen County have reached a point that it has become a viable threat to the safety of the citizens of Lassen County. The Dixie Valley Ranch has experienced close encounters with wolves in their area. They have come within fifteen yards of one residence, attempted to gain access to food containers and other activity described as atypical for wolf behavior. The areas included a sandbox used by young children as a play area and the area of a fort the children had built. They have begun eating items that would be considered outside of normal behavior including human trash and waste. This shows these wolves are becoming conditioned to a human scent being a reward. Residents of nearby ranches are seeing wolves becoming more aggressive. Residents have videos showing wolves attempting to charge them in an aggressive manner. While I understand this may be a protective action by the wolf, this behavior is causing a growing concern that the wolves will escalate their behavior and possibly start attacking the residents of the local ranches.

The residents have used the suggested mitigation or hazing techniques in multiple efforts to alleviate the suffering and depredations caused by the introduction of the gray wolf. The residents have used fladry, electrified their fences and the use of noise making devices designed to deter or scare the wolves away from the area. While they work for a short period of time (approximately one week), the wolves become desensitized to the devices and they no longer work. The



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wolves continue to return to the area causing the death of livestock and the threat to those who live in the area. The wolves are no longer concerned about the presence of humans in the area.

On March 22, 2025, I attended the Fall River-Big Valley Cattlemen's Dinner and Business Meeting. United States Congressman Doug LaMalfa, California Assemblywoman Heather Hadwick, Supervisor Albaugh, Modoc County Sheriff Tex Dowdy and Sierra County Sheriff Mike Fisher. We discussed how delisting the wolf is pending at the federal level and what we are doing at the state and local level concerning the wolf.

On March 24, 2025, I sent a letter to Director Bonham expressing my concerns about the increasing threat to public safety being posed by the gray wolf in Lassen County (see attached). I requested a meeting with Director Bonham to address these concerns. While I have not heard from Director Bonham, I have met with other CDFW officials and spoken with Mike Senn of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Senn informed me that the state had taken the lead in the management of the gray wolf. I mentioned to Senn that the state places this in the charge of the Federal Government as their position. Senn asked to be a part of any formal meetings moving forward. I have not been contacted to schedule a meeting with Director Bonham. Since the letter issued to Director Bonham, additional wolf kills have been reported in the Willow Creek Valley area. There have been two calves killed owned by an area rancher. This brings the total to eight depredations in the past month.

On May 20, 2025, the Board of Supervisors passed resolution #25-012 recognizing the need for immediate intervention by CDFW or other appropriate agencies to assist with the management of the gray wolf, create a more robust compensation program for depredations and grant authority to local law enforcement to protect livestock through more aggressive mitigation techniques.

On June 25, 2025, I sent a letter to Assemblymember Heather Hadwick and Senator Megan Dahle detailing the history and actions taken by Lassen County regarding the gray wolf. This included all actions taken dating back to the meeting held at the Dixie Valley Ranch up to the meetings with CDFW Director Bonham and Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot.

In 2016, the California Fish and Game Commission developed and implemented the conservation plan for the gray wolf. This laid the plan out in three phases. We are still in Phase I. Based on meetings held previously, CDFW does not have an accurate count on breeding pairs to be considered for movement from Phase I to Phase II of their conservation plan. This has left any possibility of moving the plan forward at a standstill. For any progress to be made, CDFW needs to be at the table. The proposed outcome would be to come to an agreement that is beneficial to all who are affected by the introduction of gray wolves into Lassen County.

Resolutions have been passed in Modoc and Sierra Counties declaring a state of local emergency regarding the presence of the gray wolf (see attached). Additional wolf sightings and depredations have continued through 2025 in Lassen County, Plumas County and Sierra County. The depredations in Lassen County alone were over 45 for the year, 42 were confirmed to be by the gray wolf. With the events that occurred in the Sierra Valley in 2025, discussions on techniques have continued between Sheriffs and CDFW. With appointment of Director Meghan Hertel, we have begun discussing an MOU regarding less-lethal hazing by law enforcement.



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Many of the strategies mentioned were critical in each step leading to the conclusion of events in the Sierra Valley in 2025. This has been seen as best practices as outlined to meet the standards necessary to take all necessary action in the prevention of such an incident occurring elsewhere in the state.

Earlier this year, it was decided that Lassen County needed a wolf management plan that met the needs of our area and its residents. It was decided the plan would be drafted with the consultation of stakeholders, subject matter experts and law enforcement for a plan that met the needs of Lassen County. Representatives from law enforcement, county administration, Cattlemen's Association and Farm Bureau were provided opportunities for input into the plan that is presented. The Lassen County Wolf Management Plan and all materials were reviewed and approved by County Counsel. Included in the plan are the following documents:

Lassen County Wolf Management Plan: This plan is a comprehensive review of the history of the gray wolf in Lassen County. Included in the plan are mitigation strategies and investigation protocols to assist with the management of wolves in Lassen County.

Predator Deterrence Ranch Plan: To be completed by the producers for their property. This plan is part of the process used to decide on the appropriate mitigation plan for their location. This is used to determine the escalation in strategies up to and including lethal take if necessary.

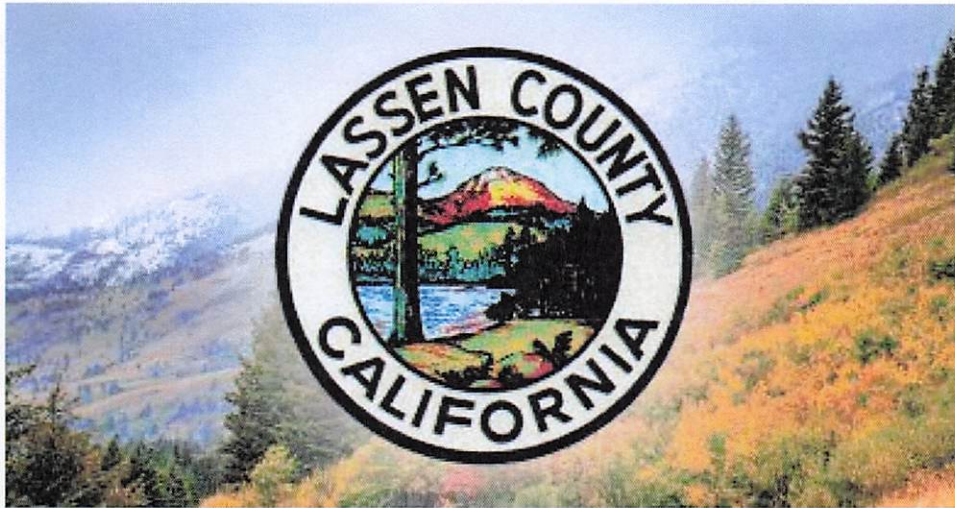
Carcass Disposal Plan: Guidelines for the removal of carcasses by producers as part of overall mitigation strategies. Carcass removal has been noted on several occasions by CDFW and USFWS as an essential mitigation strategy in the management of the gray wolf.

Depredation Report: This form was developed for producers to report their depredations to the Sheriff's Office. This will be maintained as an official record with our office to assist in the justification in escalating the management strategies used.

The use of this plan will increase the efficiency and movement of resources to help those deeply affected by the gray wolf. The forms listed have proven to meet the requirements of each step in the process. The Sheriff's Office is working with CDFW and USFWS to use less than lethal projectiles into the hands of those who would have the most effective use. We will soon have a data sharing plan that will be more effective for use by producers and law enforcement to provide for the safety of the public. Additional measures will be continuously evaluated to increase the effectiveness in management of the gray wolf in Lassen County.

Fiscal Impact: No fiscal impact to the General Fund projected.

Recommendation: 1) Adopt the Lassen County Wolf Plan and Supporting Documents for use by residents of Lassen County; and/or 2) Provide Direction to Staff.



# LASSEN COUNTY WOLF MANAGEMENT PLAN

A strategic guide for the management of the gray wolf for use by  
residents and county officials.

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## County Description:

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Lassen County is located in Northeastern California bordered by Modoc County to the north, Plumas and Sierra Counties to the south, Shasta County to the west and Washoe County, Nevada, to the east. It encompasses parts of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Lassen County contains a large area of publicly administered land by both the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. As of 2024, the approximate population is 28,340 people spread over approximately 4,720 square miles. The county seat is the City of Susanville located near the southern border of the county. Lassen County's economy is characterized by a mix of public and private sectors, with a significant focus on agricultural and livestock production, ranking 36<sup>th</sup> amongst California Counties.<sup>1</sup> This includes cattle and sheep production.

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## History of Wolves in Lassen County:

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The California Gray Wolf was present in California in the 1800's until the last one was killed in 1924 in Lassen County. This wolf exhibited a threat to the livestock producers of the area and was eradicated to protect the land and livestock. While historical data for the county is uncertain in 1924, the population at the time was far less than the population exists today. The California Gray Wolf is considered to be an extinct species by biologists.<sup>2</sup>

The Gray Wolf is listed as an endangered species both the Federal Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The introduction of the Canadian Gray Wolf began in Lassen County with the migration of the wolf designated as OR-7 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 2011. The California Fish and Game Commission designated the Gray Wolf as a "non-game" animal at that time. The California Fish and Game Commission added the Gray Wolf to CESA on January 28, 2019. This was upheld through court challenges in California.

Since 2016, discussions have taken place between Lassen County and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). This included public hearings expressing the concerns of residents, especially the agricultural community, about the introduction of an apex predator like the gray wolf in Lassen County. These meetings were used to help generate the *Conservation Plan for Gray Wolves in California (2016)* by CDFW commonly referred to as the Wolf Plan. This plan has been used as the guideline for interactions with the Gray Wolf by all in California.

On October 16, 2018, the Lassen County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed Resolution #18-070 requesting assistance from CDFW to expedite implementation strategies and reduce the adverse effects of the Gray Wolf in California (see Appendix A). The resolution outlined the impacts and concerns about

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<sup>1</sup> [Lassen County Demographic and Economic Profile and Long-Run Forecast](#)

<sup>2</sup> Conservation Plan for Gray Wolves in California, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (December 2016)

## Lassen County Wolf Management Plan

the Wolf Plan and the concerns about the decisions made at that time regarding keeping the Gray Wolf listed on the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).

On April 21, 2020, the Board of Supervisors sent a letter to CDFW and the California Fish and Wildlife Commission stating the concerns about the Gray Wolf and its presence in Lassen County (see Appendix A). The Board of Supervisors expressed its concerns about the Gray Wolf being classified as an endangered species without a scientific basis for its determination.

Concerns continued to escalate amongst the agricultural community in Lassen County as the years passed. The Gray Wolf continued to prey on the producer's livestock. CDFW continued to remain in Phase I of the Wolf Plan until 10 breeding pairs were identified in California. Based on varying counts of the wolf population, CDFW held firm on remaining in Phase I despite evidence of increasing numbers of wolves and more conflicts with the livestock producers. CDFW continued to recommend the use of hazing and deterrence techniques as outlined in the Wolf Plan.

In February 2025, reports were sent to the Lassen County Sheriff's Office regarding the public safety threat by the Gray Wolf to the Dixie Valley Ranch. Wolves were now documented within fifteen yards of a residence, in a child's play area, and near dog kennels. The wolves were attempting to gain access to food containers, and eating trash and human waste from a nearby dumpsite. The residents felt threatened by the presence of the wolves.

In March 2025, a meeting was held with community stakeholders, CDFW, and Lassen County Sheriff John McGarva regarding the public safety threat the wolves have become to livestock producers. The meeting discussed mitigation measures enacted and their perceived effectiveness. Representatives from CDFW toured the property and provided additional mitigation recommendations.

On March 24, 2025, Sheriff McGarva sent a letter to CDFW Director Carleton Bonham regarding the threat the Gray Wolf poses to the residents of Lassen County. This included both livestock and public safety concerns outlined by the meetings held in Lassen County. A meeting was requested to discuss assistance and collaborative effort to address the continuing conflict with the Gray Wolf in Lassen County.

On April 2, 2025, CDFW issued a media release stating that based on the population count concerning the Gray Wolf in Lassen County, they are now moving to Phase II of their Wolf Plan. This was based on the confirmation of two breeding pairs for two consecutive years.

On April 3, 2025, the Lassen County Cattlemen sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors asking for assistance and a local emergency be declared in Lassen County due to the presence and impact of the Gray Wolf.

On May 5, 2025, a letter was sent to the Dixie Valley Ranch stating they had not properly mitigated attractants and gave recommendations for ignoring wolves when seen, installation of fladry and scare boxes, and disposal of human waste and animal carcasses.

The Gray Wolf depredations continued and additional packs have been declared with a direct impact to Lassen County. These packs are the Harvey, Lassen, Ash Pan, Tunnison, Diamond, and Grizzly. Reported depredations in Lassen County were 45 (42 confirmed) for the 2025 year. The beginning of 2026 documented the first horse killed by a wolf in Lassen County. A letter from Sheriff McGarva to Secretary

Crowfoot was sent asking for assistance in the management and constant depredations of the Harvey Pack. The depredations continue to highlight the threat to the public health and safety, as they occur increasingly closer to residential areas. This escalation is causing increased livestock losses and extremely stressful conditions that impact the safety and well-being of residents in Lassen County due to the presence of the Gray Wolf.

The increased vigilance and resulting stress have been a constant for the last few years, with a noted increase in the last twelve months. Those immediately affected had reduced sleep due to sharing range riding responsibilities with neighboring ranchers.

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### *Purpose of the Lassen County Wolf Plan:*

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The Lassen County Wolf Plan is a collaborative effort to address the growing presence and threat to public safety that has arisen as a growing wolf population is in conflict with the human population already present on the land. Personnel from several county offices assisted in the generation of this plan. As outlined in the Lassen County Hazard Mitigation Plan section 5.4.1.2, wolves and other predators are listed as a serious harm to livestock. This plan was approved by the Lassen County Board of Supervisors for implementation for use by the residents and officials of Lassen County.

Lassen County Officials raised concerns about the presence of apex predators such as the Gray Wolf as well as mountain lions and bears. The population of the Gray Wolf is increasing while prey species are reducing in population. The population of ungulates, such as deer and elk, have reduced annually over the past several years as documented by counts performed by the State of California. The Gray Wolf has become habituated to livestock in Lassen County. 70-90% of wolf scat tested has shown cattle as a primary food source. The habitat of an apex predator such as the Gray Wolf must contain a viable food source other than livestock. California statistics show reduced numbers in ungulates resulting in a food source that cannot sustain the needs of apex predators such as the Gray Wolf.

Communication with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has shown to lack transparency. Information provided is purposefully vague and ambiguous. The data is often old or lacks any current probative value. When asked for current information, Lassen County is stonewalled stating it is “for the protection of an endangered species.” Officials stressed to CDFW that the information is not being used to target the Gray Wolf, but rather provide affected producers guidance regarding concentration of prevention and mitigation efforts. Sheriffs from around the North State have requested the information but are met with similarly ambiguous responses. Direct communication has only improved after increased pressure from the media and legislators requesting transparency and information to address wolf conflicts. However, responses have still been vague and ambiguous providing little useful information to assist in the mitigation of depredations by the Gray Wolf.

Public safety has become the driving force behind the wolf plan in Lassen County. The wolf packs are directly impacting our homes and citizens with increased presence near residential areas. The wolves have attacked animals within yards of occupied residences. Their presence has increased concerns and effects on those who live near the established packs and has placed residents in a constant state of heightened awareness, proven to affect their mental and physical well-being. The increased population

of the county and increasing population of wolves has resulted in more human-wildlife conflicts which will inevitably result in a violent interaction between people and wolves.

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## *Lassen County Wolf Plan Goals:*

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The introduction of the Canadian Gray Wolf into Lassen County is not classified as a resurgence of an extinct species, but the introduction of an invasive species into the current environment. The presence of the wolf has become a significant disruption to the public health and safety for the citizens of Lassen County and this Wolf Plan will be implemented in three phases starting with Phase I. The goals of the Wolf Plan are the following:

- Minimize the conflict between the citizens of Lassen County and the Canadian Gray Wolf
- Preserve public safety and mitigate the loss of property
- Establish guidelines for the citizens of Lassen County for the management of Gray Wolves in Lassen County
- Minimize wolf-livestock depredation
- Communicate with the public regarding presence of Gray Wolf and its possible effects on the residents of Lassen County
- Establish mitigation strategies and provisions for public safety and protection of property affected by the Gray Wolf.
- Effectively reduce wolf conflicts with balanced and complimentary lethal and non-lethal tools. Management tools must be adaptable to fit specific situations and needs.

Wolves in Lassen County exist in very diverse geographic locations. It is critically important that Lassen County's diverse topography and observed wolf behavior is considered when making management decisions and policies.

The plan is meant to be used as a guideline and not to be used as a one-size--fits-all approach to the County. Each individual producer, citizen, or resident may fit into a different area of the plan as it pertains to their individual situation and needs.

Nothing in this plan is intended to eliminate the right for anyone to protect themselves or their property from the imminent and/or active attack by a Gray Wolf. The law allows for the protection of yourself or others from the imminent threat of attack, even from endangered species.

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## *Mitigation and Prevention Techniques Defined:*

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*Depredation:* Killing of livestock, poultry or pets by a problem predator or causing of property damage by the predator.

*Fladry:* A method of nonlethal deterrent that entails hanging numerous strips of flagging along a fence or other device, and is intended to keep wolves out of an area.

*Guardian Animal:* An animal (usually a dog) used for providing protection for livestock and ranches.

*Incidental Take Permit:* This permit allows a permittee to take a CESA-listed species if such taking is incidental to, and not the purpose of, carrying out an otherwise lawful activity.<sup>3</sup>

*Injurious Harassment:* Aversive conditioning that causes any object to physically contact a wolf, including firearms discharging nonlethal ammunition (e.g., rubber bullets or bean bags) or using motorized equipment (e.g., all-terrain vehicle, drone, motorcycle or four-wheel drive vehicle) to follow or pursue a wolf.

*Lethal Control:* Will be implemented when a wolf demonstrates aggressive action that has resulted in physical contact with a human; or a wolf exhibits an immediate threat to public health and safety based on the totality of the circumstances

*Radio Activated Guard or Scare Box:* A device designed to frighten wolves usually placed near livestock pastures and are activated either by presence detected by a collared wolf or in timed intervals to deter wolves from approaching.

*Ranch Management Plan:* Plan implemented by producers to reduce the attractants and deter a predator from approaching their property and continue the depredation of livestock.

*Range Riding:* The practice of monitoring livestock including activities such as monitoring carnivore activity and deploying measures to reduce conflicts with wolves and other carnivores. Often done with the use of non-lethal methods such as noise-making and human presence.

*Take:* As defined by CDFW regulations includes hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, capture, or kill.<sup>4</sup>

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## *Ranch Management Plans:*

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Ranch Management Plans are essential to effective implementation of the Lassen County Wolf Plan. These plans are made by individual producers to help mitigate and prevent wolf depredations on their livestock. Each plan is tailored to the individual producer for effective management of their lands. This could include easements or permits they hold on public lands for livestock use. Resources are available through the California Cattlemen's Association to assist with the development of Ranch Management Plans.

The plans describe all mitigation techniques used to assist in predator deterrence. These techniques need to be consistent with all relevant laws and regulations regarding the management of an endangered species. Ranchers are encouraged to document and address notable issues that prevent

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<sup>3</sup> California Code of Regulations Title 14, Sections 783.2-783.8

<sup>4</sup> California Fish and Game Code Section 86

the implementation of depredations procedures based on conditions or circumstances. These could include carcass removal, use of guard animals, electric fencing, etc. Based on the information provided, Lassen County Officials can work with ranchers to address outstanding mitigation concerns and provide resources to assist when necessary. This plan can be used as a reference point to authorize the actions to be taken if (or when) a depredation occurs.

CDFW's Wolf Tracker website can assist with planning and deterrence of wolves in the area of ranches. The polygon on the map shows recent date where a collared wolf is ranging so they can place appropriate deterrents making their area less attractive to apex predators like the Gray Wolf.

A template for the Ranch Management Plan is provided in Appendix A.

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### *Investigation Procedures:*

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The introduction of the Canadian Gray Wolf into Lassen County is not classified as a resurgence of an extinct species, but the introduction of an invasive species into the current environment. The presence of the wolf has become a significant disruption to the public health and safety for the citizens of Lassen County and this Wolf Plan will be implemented.

The incident will be investigated and make the following determination:

- *Confirmed:* Confirmed depredation by a Gray Wolf
- *Undetermined:* Evidence is inconclusive to confirm or deny the Gray Wolf was responsible for the depredation
- *Negative:* Gray Wolf was not responsible for the depredation

Once the outcome of the investigation is determined, officials will complete an incident report containing the following information:

- Date, time, and location of the incident
- Photographs of the scene will be taken to document the depredation scene and public safety concerns that are present.
- Estimated distance and direction from main residence to the scene of the depredation
- DNA samples taken of the wounds caused during the depredation and submitted to the Lassen County Sheriff's Office for storage until testing can be completed.
  - While working with CDFW is ongoing, the samples may be submitted at the discretion of the Sheriff to a suitable lab for testing as necessary. The sample can be used to confirm or deny the depredation was caused by a Gray Wolf.
  - Samples are typically obtained by the Federal Trapper, but can be taken by trained personnel
- Depredation reports by the trapper are requested by the Lassen County Sheriff's Office regarding circumstances and outcome of the depredation to assist in determination of the incident and disposition.
- Notation of all mitigation methods taken by the owner of the property and noted effectiveness

- Locations of collared wolves in the area (if known)
- Number of total confirmed depredations for the landowner as of the date of the report

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*Authorized actions to be taken based on number of depredations in a calendar year:*

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The listed actions are recommendations based on information provided by the noted resources. Nothing in this document is intended to prevent someone from the immediate defense of life. Unlike the provision for the public safety take of the mountain lion<sup>5</sup>, no provision exists in the California Fish and Game Code for the public safety take of a Gray Wolf. It should be noted that current case law does not support the taking of an endangered species for the protection of livestock only.<sup>6</sup>

Zero to Five Depredations:

All non-lethal provisions to deter the Gray Wolf are authorized under the permit. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Off-highway vehicles to deter approaching animals
- Drones
- Less than Lethal weapons
- Other methods of deterrents and mitigation (ex. Fladry, scare boxes)

More than Five Depredations:

If provisions are met including training, mitigations strategies and deterrents, then the use of lethal take can be authorized. This would include the use of a depredation permit issued by either CDFW or USFWS. Coordination with USFWS will be done through either the Agricultural Commissioner or the County Sheriff. Under the Federal Endangered Species Act removal is allowed where an animal has shown to be a demonstrable, but nonimmediate, threat to human safety providing the removal is done in a humane manner.<sup>7</sup> Any and all taking of wolves will be coordinated with the USFWS and CDFW based on established practices for removal.

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<sup>5</sup> California Fish and Game Code Section 4801

<sup>6</sup> United States v. Charette (9th Cir. 2018) 893 F.3d 1169; 16 USC §1540(a)(3) & (b)(3).

<sup>7</sup> Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations Section 17.21(c)(3)(iv)

# **Predator Deterrence Ranch Management Plan**

## **Lassen County**

### **Section 1: Immediate Actions**

The first priority for ranches facing potential or ongoing wolf depredation is to become familiar with relevant laws and resources. Ranchers should review the legal framework under both the Federal Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act to ensure all deterrence actions remain within the boundaries of the law. Staff working on the ranch should also be briefed on these legal restrictions, especially concerning non-lethal hazing techniques and what constitutes lawful self-defense.

Ranchers should register for the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) daily text alerts, which share GPS collar data and wolf activity clusters.

Ranchers are also urged to regularly check CDFW's Wolf Tracker automated mapping system for updated GPS data to help anticipate wolf movements and protect their livestock.

All potential wolf attractants on the ranch, such as bone piles, old carcass pits, and carcasses should be identified and addressed. A clear and consistent carcass removal plan must be established, preferably in coordination with county officials, the Sheriff's Office or CDFW. This includes daily scanning of pastures for downed livestock and the safe removal and disposal of carcasses to prevent attracting predators.

Finally, ranchers should notify their neighbors and form communication networks to share real-time information about wolf sightings, losses, and effective deterrent practices.

### **Section 2: Predator Deterrents**

After the initial assessment, ranchers should begin installing predator deterrents around livestock areas. Fladry, nylon or plastic flags strung on fencing should be deployed around calving pastures or night enclosures. For greater effectiveness, turbo-fladry (electrified fladry) can be used. These should be rotated at minimum every 30 to 45 days to maintain their effectiveness and prevent predator habituation. Carcass burial sites and old buried bone piles should have fladry surrounding the sight.

Additional deterrents should include the installation of lights and sound devices. Motion-triggered strobes, Foxlights, and sirens can disrupt wolf activity and should be strategically placed near high-risk areas. Placement should be varied to reduce the chance of wolves becoming desensitized.

Livestock guardian animals, such as trained livestock guardian dogs (LGDs) and guard donkeys, should be incorporated into herd protection plans when practical. LGDs are effective at deterring predators through their territorial behavior and constant presence with the herd,

# **Predator Deterrence Ranch Management Plan**

## **Lassen County**

while donkeys offer an additional layer of defense by using their natural aggression toward canines to drive off potential threats.

### **Section 3: Daily and Weekly Protocols**

Once deterrent systems are in place, ranchers should establish a consistent monitoring and maintenance schedule. Daily visual patrols should be conducted, either on foot, horseback, or by vehicle, and patrol routes should vary to create an unpredictable human presence.

Deterrent tools such as lights, sirens, and fladry should be moved or adjusted on a regular basis to avoid predators from becoming familiar with their patterns. Any sightings of predators, tracks, scat, or predation evidence should be logged in a physical or digital record book. This documentation may be necessary for compensation claims or for guiding CDFW's response strategies.

Fencing and deterrents must be regularly checked and maintained. Batteries should be recharged or replaced, fladry inspected, and damage repaired. Livestock should be checked daily for injuries or signs of predator interaction, and any carcasses must be removed immediately.

### **Section 4: Response Planning**

Each ranch should designate a primary response coordinator who can act as the point of contact during a depredation event or predator sighting. Legal hazing training provided by CDFW or the Sheriff's Office should be documented and retained in the ranch plan.

Ranchers should keep an evidence collection kit readily available. This should include a camera or smartphone, markers or flagging, and forms to document depredation sites quickly and thoroughly.

If a livestock loss occurs, ranchers should gather all required documentation and submit it to CDFW's compensation program as soon as possible. Accurate and timely documentation will increase the likelihood of successful reimbursement.

### **Ranch Plan Implementation Outline**

- Contact CDFW, enroll in the strike team program, and register for daily text messages with current GPS collar information.
- Cleanup of carcasses and attractants, assess pasture layout, and communicate with neighboring ranches.

## **Predator Deterrence Ranch Management Plan Lassen County**

- **Install deterrents, including fladry, lights, and livestock guardian dogs or donkeys when practical.**
- **Train ranch staff in identifying predator sign and in using legal hazing methods effectively.**
- **Coordinate with other ranchers to review predator activity and discuss shared deterrence strategies.**
- **Maintain deterrents, rotate systems regularly, continue documentation, and communicate with CDFW and the Sheriff's Office as needed.**



# Predator Deterrence Ranch Plan Lassen County



Date of Plan: \_\_\_\_\_.

This ranch plan form is to be completed by individual ranches and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to document proactive steps being taken to protect livestock and legally haze gray wolves under federal and state law. Please include any costs that you have incurred to implement mitigation measures.

RANCH NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

LANDOWNER: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph#: \_\_\_\_\_

RANCH MANAGER: \_\_\_\_\_ PH#: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 1: Immediate Actions

1. Have you reviewed the legal requirements under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and California ESA?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Have all ranch staff been briefed on legal hazing techniques and self-defense laws?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you enrolled in the CDFW Sierra Valley Strike Team Pilot Program?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Predator Deterrence Ranch Plan Lassen County



4. Are you receiving daily wolf GPS collar location updates via text from CCA or through the CDFW mapping system?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Have all attractants (bone piles and carcasses) been assessed and a carcass removal plan established?

YES  NO

Carcass Removal Plan Attached:  YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you notified and coordinated with adjacent ranches regarding wolf activity and deterrent plans?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Deterrent Installation

1. Have you installed fladry or turbo-fladry around high-risk areas such as calving pastures or bone pile sites?

YES  NO

Map Attached

Photos Attached

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Predator Deterrence Ranch Plan Lassen County



2. Are deterrent lights and noise devices in place (e.g., Fox lights, motion sensors, sirens)?

YES  NO

Map Attached

Photos Attached

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are livestock guardian dogs or donkeys being used to protect livestock? (If yes, indicate the number, breed, and training)

YES  NO

DESCRIBE: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are livestock penned at night or during calving in secured corrals with electric fencing?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Section 3: Daily Protocols

1. Are daily patrols being conducted to check on livestock and monitor for predator activity?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Predator Deterrence Ranch Plan Lassen County



2. Are deterrents (lights, sirens, fladry) being rotated or relocated on a regular basis to avoid predator habituation?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are sightings, tracks, scat, and other evidence of predators being documented in a field log?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are fences, batteries, and deterrent systems inspected and maintained on a scheduled basis?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are pastures being checked daily for carcasses or injured livestock?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Section 4: Response Planning

1. Who is the designated ranch point of contact in the event of predator activity or livestock loss?

Name and contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary person contact: \_\_\_\_\_



# Predator Deterrence Ranch Plan Lassen County



2. Have you completed or scheduled training in the legal hazing methods of predators with CDFW or the Sheriff's Office?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is an evidence collection kit available on site (camera, markers, documentation forms)?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you have a process in place to submit loss documentation to CDFW's compensation program?

YES  NO

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Section 5: Training

- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Less Lethal Firearm Hazing
- Best practices when using fladry, lights, and/or sound deterrents.
- livestock guardian dogs or donkeys use in ranching
- Use of drones to search large pastureland to identify depredations or injured livestock
- Other:
- Other:
- Other:

# **Predator Depredation Carcass Disposal Plan**

## **Lassen County**

*For Non-Diseased Livestock Carcasses Suspected or Confirmed - Predator Kills*

### **1. Purpose and Scope**

This plan outlines standardized procedures for the safe, legal, and environmentally responsible removal or burial of livestock carcasses killed by predators (wolves, bears, mountain lions, etc.) in Lassen County. It is intended for use by landowners, ranch hands, local law enforcement, and collaborating wildlife agencies to:

- Mitigate disease, odor, and scavenger risks
- Prevent additional predation
- Ensure compliance with state and local laws

### **2. Legal Compliance**

- California Food & Ag Code §19348(c): Allows on-site burial of livestock carcasses within 3 miles of death if animal was not diseased.
- Local County Ordinances (Lassen §8.08.090): Carcasses must be disposed of promptly and sanitarily.

### **3. Documentation Process**

1. Secure the site. Keep scavengers, domestic dogs, and bystanders away
2. Photograph carcass before moving or disturbing it (multiple angles)
3. Complete the Livestock Depredation Report

### **4. Removal Protocol**

#### **Equipment Needed**

- Front loader, ATV or Side by Side with trailer
- Tarp or plastic sheeting
- Lime (calcium oxide or hydrated lime)
- Backhoe or excavator (for burial)

#### **Transport Guidelines**

- Wrap carcass in plastic to prevent leakage
- Avoid dragging carcass across open pasture when possible

# Predator Depredation Carcass Disposal Plan

## Lassen County

- Transport carcass to burial site immediately after investigation is complete

### 5. Disposal Protocol

1. Owners Property
2. Authorized Alternative Burial Site
3. Reno Rendering Facility, Reno Nevada (Approximately \$250.00)

### Burial Requirements

- Pit depth: 4 to 6 feet (enough to ensure 3 ft of soil cover above carcass)
- Pit width: Wide enough for full livestock body without crowding
- One large carcass per pit is recommended
- Lime application:
  - Optional but recommended for odor and pathogen control
- Backfill: Compact soil firmly to prevent scavenger access

### Additional Burial Pit Requirements:

- 100 ft from water sources (wells and ditches)
- 25 ft from embankments or property lines
- Outside floodplains and drainage paths

### Recordkeeping:

- Complete and retain the Livestock Depredation Report

### 6. Burial Site

- Inspect burial area for signs of disturbance (e.g., digging by scavengers)
- Apply additional soil or lime if needed

### 7. Off Site Carcass Removal

If landowner does not have suitable burial location:

- Contact Lassen County Sheriff's Office (Lassen County Ranchers)

# **Predator Depredation Carcass Disposal Plan Lassen County**

- Reno Rendering
  - Ranchers are authorized to use Reno Rendering as an alternative carcass disposal site.

## **8. Additional Considerations**

### **Winter Conditions**

- Frozen ground may prevent immediate burial; temporarily store carcass in tarp or shed and freeze naturally until ground softens
- Utilize Reno Rendering during winter months when ground is frozen

## **9. Outreach and Training**

### **Ongoing Training for Local ranchers:**

- Identification of predator depredation vs. natural mortality
- Safe carcass handling
- Documentation for compensation programs
- Best practice for carcass disposal

## **10. Program Maintenance**

### **Annual review of:**

- Legal changes
- Approved disposal sites
- Equipment and supply needs

# Livestock Depredation Report – Rancher Documentation Form Lassen County

## 1. Rancher Information:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- Ranch/Brand Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- Location of Incident (GPS): \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Livestock Information

- Species:  Cattle  Sheep  Goat  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Breed/Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sex:  M  F
- Tag/Brand ID (if any): \_\_\_\_\_
- # Animals Affected: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date/Time Found: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Suspected Predator (Check all that apply)

- Wolf  Mountain Lion  Bear  Coyote  Dog  Unknown  Natural Death

## 4. Actions Taken

- DNA Swabs Collected:  Yes  No / By who:  CDFW  USDA  Sheriff  Rancher
- Photos Taken:  Yes  No
- Carcass Covered/Preserved:  Yes  No
- Disposal Plan:  Burial on Site  Left in Place
- Transported (Location): \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Agency Notification

- Reported to:  Sheriff  CDFW  USDA Wildlife Services
- Date/Time Reported: \_\_\_\_\_ / Person Contacted: \_\_\_\_\_
- Wolf Depredation: Confirmed  Yes  No / Probable  Yes  No / By Who:  CDFW  USDA

## COMMENTS:

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**Livestock Depredation Report – Rancher Documentation Form  
Lassen County**

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**RETAIN THIS FORM FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS**  
EMAIL TO: [sheriff@co.lassen.ca.us](mailto:sheriff@co.lassen.ca.us)