

County of Lassen BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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June 24, 2025

The Honorable Wade Crowfoot

Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Director Charlton H. Bonham

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Request for Inclusion of Lassen County in CDFW Summer Strike Team to Combat Wolf-Livestock Depredation

Dear Secretary Crowfoot and Director Bonham,

On behalf of the Lassen County Board of Supervisors, we respectfully and urgently request that Lassen County be included in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) recently announced Summer Strike Team initiative to address increasing livestock depredation caused by grey wolves in Lassen and surrounding counties.

The CDWF announced June 9, 2025, formation of a strike team in partnership with local and federal agencies to provide "round the clock" support for livestock producers experiencing frequent conflict with wolves, among other program benefits, in the Sierra Valley and Siskiyou County. Despite partnering with our neighboring counties, Plumas and Sierra, Lassen County, was not made part of this effort, a gross oversight on behalf of CDFW.

Lassen County is experiencing a growing number of confirmed and suspected wolf depredation incidents, posing an escalating threat to our livestock producers and rural communities. The presence of multiple wolf packs in and around Lassen County, including longstanding and newly established packs, has significantly impacted ranching operations and the broader agricultural economy of our region. This also presents substantial emotional and financial stress to our constituents whose livelihoods are at stake.

Given the immediate and ongoing challenges, we urge the Department to deploy all available resources, including, but not limited to, inclusion in newly formed CDFW Strike Team's focused efforts, to support mitigation strategies, improve response times, and expand technical assistance and compensation programs for affected producers.

The County is open, and has attempted to, collaborate with the Department and the Natural Resources Agency to implement and take the necessary measures to mitigate the damages that

producers are incurring, and will continue incur, with the rapidly increasing wolf population. Including Lassen County in the Strike Team initiative would be a significant and much-needed step toward ensuring proactive and equitable support for Lassen County.

We appreciate your attention to this critical issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information or coordination.

Sincerely,

Tom Neely
Chairman, Lassen County Board of Supervisors



CDFW Launching Pilot Effort to Reduce Gray Wolf Attacks on Livestock

June 9, 2025



Working with local agencies, law enforcement and agricultural partners, the department will implement the effort in Sierra, Plumas and Siskiyou counties

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced today that it is launching a summer strike team in partnership with federal and local agencies to combat livestock depredations by gray wolves in Siskiyou County and the Sierra Valley (spanning both Sierra and Plumas counties). With landowner permission, the task force will provide round-the-clock CDFW staff support seven days a week for livestock producers experiencing frequent conflicts with wolves, among other program benefits.

"Today's announcement showcases the power of collaboration in effectively and safely managing California's growing gray wolf population," said CDFW Director Charlton H. Bonham. "This strike force allows CDFW to work more closely with our key partners and impacted ranchers and provide new tools to protect cattle and other livestock from harm. Together, we are doing everything we can to keep both livestock and wolves safe. Thank you to our partners in this effort for making this strike team possible."

Recent depredation of livestock in the Sierra Valley and Siskiyou County signals the need for additional and increased support for livestock producers during the summer and fall of 2025. Interested producers are encouraged to participate in the program. The summer strike team will take a multifaceted approach to combat livestock depredations, including through:

- **In-person, on-the-ground support from CDFW staff.** Working both day and night seven days a week, CDFW staff will be available to support ranchers facing livestock depredations. The strike team will use a combination of radio telemetry and real-time information from local ranchers to locate wolves (collared and uncollared) to proactively push them away from livestock.
- **Developing conflict risk management plans for participating ranchers.** Livestock producers who volunteer to participate in the program and take any necessary training will have a plan tailored to their unique property and livestock needs to help mitigate future conflict through nonlethal methods. These plans may include a variety of tools, including livestock management, additional barriers, predator aversion devices or injurious harassment.
- **Outreach, education and training.** In partnership with experts in livestock production and management like the University of California Cooperative Extension, training and outreach events will be held in Sierra Valley to help provide producers techniques and strategies ranchers can take to reduce wolf-livestock conflicts through nonlethal practices.

CDFW is also working in conjunction with Sierra and Plumas counties to create a county agricultural protection position that will support depredation investigations and capture and collar methods, as well as develop carcass removal programs to mitigate wolf attraction to ranch properties.

The task force will be led by CDFW's law enforcement and scientific staff and will increase CDFW presence in communities to effectively implement these measures. The program begins today (Monday, June 9) and is anticipated to run through the summer.

"This program is still in its early stages, so there will be a need to learn by doing together. More details will be shared as it progresses. But this is a good start, and I appreciate that," said Plumas County Supervisor Dwight Ceresola.

Sierra Valley, which spans both Plumas and Sierra counties, has had higher-than-normal levels of livestock depredations by gray wolves in the Beyem Seyo pack over the past year. As ranchers move their cattle to the valley floor for summer grazing, additional support from this pilot program will be needed to protect livestock from wolves.

"I am thankful the state and county can do something together. We are hopeful that this additional presence will reduce the immediate losses and provide CDFW with a clear understanding of the day-to-day challenges ranchers have faced for months," said Sierra County Supervisor Paul Roen.

Siskiyou County also has a higher level of livestock depredations compared to other counties, in relation to the Whaleback pack in particular. The county has made significant efforts in slowing depredations and working collaboratively with CDFW staff, including the hiring of a county wolf liaison, but the need for additional support remains. As part of this task force, CDFW will be providing enhanced information on wolf data to Siskiyou County staff, and Siskiyou will assist the department in investigating and collecting additional data.

"This pilot effort in all three counties is made possible through sustained coordination between county supervisors, county sheriffs, local ranchers and state and federal agencies. Importantly, it also reflects the growing calls from local sheriffs calling for CDFW to step up and help," said Director Bonham. "I thank Sheriffs Mike Fisher, Todd Johns and Jeremiah LaRue for their help to get going on our efforts this summer. I also thank all the Northern California sheriffs and county supervisors who have been key voices for their communities."

If you are a livestock producer in Plumas, Sierra or Siskiyou counties and are interested in learning more about the program or how to participate, please contact:

- Morgan Kilgour, Region 2 Manager, CDFW — Morgan.Kilgour@wildlife.ca.gov

- Tracy Schohr, UC Cooperative Extension Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor — tksohr@ucanr.edu/916-716-2643
- Paul Roen, Sierra County Supervisor — supervisor3@sierracounty.ca.gov
- Dwight Ceresola, Plumas County Supervisor — ceresolasuper1@yahoo.com
- Patrick Griffin, Siskiyou County Wolf Liaison — 530-598-6950

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