



DELIVERING CARNIVORE CONFLICT PREVENTION

A WORKSHOP TO ADVANCE PARTNERSHIPS AND
SOLUTIONS



OCTOBER 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wildlife populations and rural communities in the West are facing unprecedented pressure from the the influx of new residents and the associated development. Agricultural producers form the backbone of many rural communities throughout the West and often operate on thin margins. As the human footprint expands and large carnivores like grizzly bears and wolves return to historic habitat, conflicts between people and wildlife become more likely, placing additional stress on agricultural producers through direct (livestock depredation) and indirect (decreased productivity) losses while hindering the ability of carnivores to successfully move through the landscape. Working lands provide important habitat for species like grizzly bears and link existing recovery areas like the Greater Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystems. Rural communities and carnivore populations depend on the existence of healthy and robust working lands.

Tools and techniques exist that help producers prevent conflicts with carnivores before they happen, increasing acceptance of carnivores across the landscape. For more than two decades, Tribes and locally-led community organizations have developed education and outreach programs to support the use of these tools to successfully prevent carnivore conflicts. While these programs and tools are increasingly being offered, producers often find it financially difficult to adopt and sustain these practices.

In response, new partnerships are forming in Montana as well as other western states to assist agricultural producers in adopting these practices. Existing groups are also positioned and ready to significantly expand the reach of conflict prevention tools to benefit working lands and wildlife. However, the efforts of many local groups and Tribes across the state and West

are being stymied by insufficient resources, inefficiencies in local delivery systems, and inadequate coordination across partners and agencies.

With new federal funding opportunities emerging for cost-sharing for these practices with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and new investments being made in conflict prevention by Wildlife Services, the time is right for a larger conversation about how to deliver needed resources more effectively to Tribes, landowners, and producers for conflict prevention work through increased funding and improved coordination. With pressure on working lands at an all-time high, and species like grizzly bears expanding into new areas, there has also never been a time of greater need and opportunity.

On June 14th and 15th, 2023, a workshop was convened to bring together diverse voices to learn from each other's experiences and challenges living and working in landscapes shared with carnivores, and to explore a shared vision of opportunities and solutions that support working lands and large carnivores.

As a result of this workshop, momentum is building to further align state and Tribal agency capacities with federal technical and financial assistance to support coordinated landowner, agricultural producer, and agency-implemented conflict prevention practices that reduce conflicts between agricultural operations and wildlife for the long term.

The following priority needs and opportunities were highlighted by workshop participants:

- Increased public and private financial resources to increase the capacity of

producers, Tribes, and locally-led partnership to implement conflict prevention solutions.

- Increased technical assistance to agricultural producers, Tribes, and community-based organizations interested in implementing conflict prevention measures.
- Increased coordination across partners and agencies to foster collaboration, information sharing and learning, and the most efficient use of resources.
- Support from state and federal leaders as well as communities for investing in locally and Tribally-led programs.
- Scientific monitoring and research to support the growing use of these tools, increase our understanding of best practices, and demonstrate success.



Photo credit: Centennial Valley Association

COLLABORATING TO ADVANCE CONFLICT PREVENTION: AN ACTION PLAN

During the workshop, participants were invited to share ideas around the most pressing needs and opportunities in Montana and beyond to move this work forward, increase efficiency in program delivery, and ensure that producers, Tribes, and partners have what they need to secure the economic viability of rural communities and the safety of its residents while also successfully sharing a landscape with grizzly bears and other carnivores.

Given the long history of locally and Tribally-led conflict prevention programs in Montana, well-established relationships that engender trust, as well as deep investment by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and federal agencies, participants expressed that Montana is the ideal place to invest in a collaborative effort to scale up investment and demonstrate what can be accomplished when a landscape is adequately resourced to support producers and communities to exist successfully with grizzly bears and other carnivores.

PRIORITY NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES HIGHLIGHTED BY PARTICIPANTS ACROSS THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED:

INCREASED COORDINATION ACROSS PARTNERS AND AGENCIES to foster collaboration, information sharing and learning, and the most efficient use of resources. This is best accomplished by somebody within an agency who is capable of working with a diversity of state, federal, and Tribal agencies.

That said, existing forums for working across watersheds, such as the Locally-Led Conflict Reduction Partnership[1] and the [Conflict Reduction Consortium](#)[2], are filling an important role and should continue.

Potential ways to address these needs include:

- Multi-agency: Hire a position within the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (funded by Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wildlife Services, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) to coordinate on-the-ground delivery of grizzly bear conflict prevention resources across federal agencies and establish a set of shared metrics for monitoring the successful use of grizzly bear conflict prevention tools.
- Multi-agency: Establish one entry point for landowners, producers, and community-based organizations to identify and access responsive conflict prevention funding and technical assistance.
- Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee: Establish a conflict prevention working group within the Committee or the Ecosystem Subcommittee that includes landowner interests. Incorporate Wildlife Services' Nonlethal Initiative staff and Natural Resources Conservation Service staff into the Committee's conflict prevention working group.

INCREASED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES to increase the capacity of producers, Tribes, and locally-led partnership to implement conflict prevention solutions. Ensuring the sustainability of these funding resources is essential to increase participation

[1] The Locally-Led Conflict Reduction Partnership is a Montana partnership of nine landowner-led groups and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes that support one another in carnivore conflict reduction efforts.

[2] The Conflict Reduction Consortium is a diverse group of stakeholders working in wildlife management and livestock production to create and advance consensus recommendations on policies, management practices, and research needs grounded in the experience and expertise of land stewards.

and achieve the long-term goals of working lands and healthy wildlife populations—both of which are critical the long-term goals of working lands and healthy wildlife populations—both of which are critical to rural economies to rural economies

Potential ways to address these needs include:

- State of Montana: Increase funding for conflict prevention grants within the Livestock Loss Board or another state entity.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service: Establish and make available conservation practice standards and new payment scenarios for conflict prevention in FY2024.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service's Montana State Office: Fund 3-5 Targeted Implementation Plans between 2024 and 2026 focused on delivering conflict prevention practices (e.g., electric fencing, carcass pickup, and range riding).
- Congress: When the Farm Bill is reauthorized, provide contract eligibility to community-based organizations and conservation districts to increase practice implementation in certain locales (i.e., those that have active community-based organizations and/or conservation districts).
- Congress: Increase funding to the Wildlife Services' Nonlethal Initiative.
- Congress: Fund the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program at its authorized level to ensure the agency can hire conflict prevention positions to work with producers and state bear managers to advance conflict prevention efforts in states with grizzly bears while also addressing needs in other states.
- Congress: Fully fund the American Conservation Enhancement Act's (ACE Act) "Grant Program for Losses of Livestock Due to Depredation by Federally Protected Species" (7 USC § 8355) that would establish grant funding opportunities to supplement state-run conflict prevention and livestock depredation compensation programs.

INCREASED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE to

agricultural producers, Tribes, and community-based organizations interested in implementing conflict prevention measures. Technical assistance should include fencing technicians working with local landowners to secure attractants, support to deliver carcass removal and composting programs, guard dog experts to inform landowners about options for using dogs to protect livestock and other attractants such as grain storage facilities, and range riders to increase monitoring of livestock on open range.

Potential ways to address these needs include:

- State of Montana: Expand funding for a cooperative agreement with Wildlife Services for nonlethal conflict prevention work.
- Multi-agency: Create shared technical assistance positions across the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Wildlife Services, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service: Create and support a Technical Service Providers program and clarify requirements for delivering conflict prevention resources.
- Wildlife Services: Establish a national training program to teach nonlethal conflict prevention tools to staff who can incorporate the tools into their work to reduce wildlife conflicts.

SUPPORT FROM STATE AND FEDERAL LEADERS AS WELL AS COMMUNITIES for investing in local and Tribally-led programs. To succeed in preventing conflicts, it is critical that there is leadership and support from the top of government all the way down to individual community members and residents.

Potential ways to address these needs include:

- State of Montana: Increase emphasis on and commitment to conflict prevention within Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' grizzly bear management plan.
- State of Montana: Develop a bear education curriculum available to all K-12 schools in the state.
- Montana State University Cooperative Extension: Establish conflict prevention educational programming for 4-H programs in Montana.
- Montana State Legislature: Adequately fund conflict prevention programs to address the needs of Montana producers and rural landowners.
- Congress: Adequately fund the diversity of conflict prevention programs available to address the needs of producers and rural landowners across the country.

SCIENTIFIC MONITORING AND RESEARCH to support the growing use of these tools, increase our understanding of best practices, and demonstrate success. In addition, social science research would increase our understanding of how producers and rural residents view these tools.

Potential ways to address these needs include:

- Montana State University Cooperative Extension: Align extension staff skills and resources to address the needs of Montana's agricultural producers who are interested in preventing conflicts with grizzly bears and other carnivores before they happen.
- Wildlife Services: Formalize a conflict prevention research program at the National Wildlife Research Center, assign a scientist to lead the program, and increase research of conflict prevention practices at the Center.
- Multi-agency: Establish a shared measurement system and set of metrics to monitor conflicts, the use of conflict prevention tools, and producer sentiment towards implemented programs and tools. Annually report applications and the results of conflict prevention efforts across the state to document success and highlight issues that need further attention and support.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

WORKSHOP PURPOSE

To increase the will, funding, and technical assistance available to livestock producers to prevent carnivore-livestock conflicts, facilitate carnivore existence across Montana landscapes and the ability of carnivores to move between ecosystems without conflicts, and increase coordination of all parties engaged in and contributing towards this critical work to support working lands and wildlife.

WORKSHOP GOALS

1. Showcase the broad suite of partners working together to address carnivore conflict challenges through shared learning and implementation.
2. Create, build, and strengthen connections between Tribes, landowners, producers, agencies, and others who contribute to this work.
3. Highlight the roles that landowner/producer-led organizations and Tribes are playing in conflict prevention and the need for increased funding and opportunities for increased coordination to improve delivery of resources to local producers and communities.
4. Demonstrate how state, federal, Tribal, and local programs are currently contributing to conflict prevention activities that simultaneously support working lands and wildlife.
5. Explore a set of investments that, if implemented, will increase the ability for local, state, Tribal, and federal interests to work together to prevent grizzly bear conflicts in Montana.



Photo credit: Heart of the Rockies Initiative

On June 14th and 15th, 2023, more than one hundred individuals representing landowners, agricultural producers, Tribes, state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations from across Montana and the West gathered in Missoula, Montana, to explore solutions that could increase funding, technical assistance, and coordination to prevent conflicts between carnivores and agricultural producers to support the economic viability of working lands that provide important space for wildlife.

The workshop highlighted the role landowner and agricultural producer-led organizations are playing in conflict prevention. It also focused on Tribal and agency conflict prevention work, emphasizing existing and upcoming opportunities for increased involvement and investment. The workshop showcased the broad suite of partners that are working together to address carnivore conflict challenges through shared learning and implementing effective practices.



Photo credit: Centennial Valley Association

Workshop participants underscored how collaboration and partnerships have contributed to achieving more work than any one entity could accomplish alone, addressing some of the capacity and funding limitations that nearly all are facing. Collaboration and trust take time to build, and unlikely relationships and partners have formed around shared interests across Montana and the West.

A mapping exercise offered participants the opportunity to focus on their local geographies and identify current conflict prevention assets, needs, and opportunities. The act of sitting down and developing a common vision spurred new relationships and partnerships that can be expanded and leveraged to meet shared goals.

PRIORITY NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES HIGHLIGHTED BY PARTICIPANTS ACROSS THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED:

- **Increased public and private financial resources** to increase the capacity of producers, Tribes, and locally-led partnership to implement conflict prevention solutions. Ensuring the sustainability of these funding resources is also essential to increase participation and achieve the long-term goals of working lands and healthy wildlife populations—both of which are critical to rural economies.
- **Increased technical assistance** to agricultural producers, Tribes, and community-based organizations interested in implementing conflict prevention measures. Technical assistance should include electric fencing technicians working with local landowners to secure attractants, support to set up and deliver carcass removal and composting programs, guard dog experts to inform landowners about options for using dogs to protect livestock and other attractants such as grain

storage facilities, and range riders to increase monitoring of livestock on open range.

- **Increased coordination across partners and agencies** to foster collaboration, information sharing and learning, and the most efficient use of resources. This is best accomplished by somebody within an agency who is capable of working with a diversity of state, federal, and Tribal agencies. That said, existing forums lead by nonprofits to work across watersheds such as the Locally-Led Conflict Reduction Partnership and the Conflict Reduction Consortium are filling an important role and should continue.
- **Support from state and federal leaders as well as communities** for investing in locally and Tribally-led programs. To succeed in preventing conflicts, it is critical that there is leadership and support from the top of government all the way down to individual community members and residents.



Photo credit: Swan Valley Connections

- **Scientific monitoring and research** to support the growing use of these tools, increase our understanding of best practices, and demonstrate success. In addition, social science research would increase our understanding of how producers and rural residents view these tools.

INTRODUCTION: THE SHARED NEED & OPPORTUNITY

The workshop began with a welcome emphasizing the value of conflict prevention in realizing greater outcomes for wildlife and working lands, while underscoring the need for increased capacity and coordination to effectively deliver conflict prevention at scale across Montana and the West.

Rich Janssen, (Director, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Natural Resources Department), Denny Iverson (Rancher; Blackfoot Challenge and Five Valleys Land Trust Boards), Randy Arnold (Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks), and Gary Burnett (Heart of the Rockies Initiative) provided opening remarks, highlighting the vital need to protect working lands for cultural, economic, and conservation value; support producers and local communities; and steward wildlife as a core part of Montana's heritage and treasured natural resources. Opening speakers addressed the

unique challenges and opportunities of living alongside large carnivores, and the role of conflict prevention and collaboration – integrated with compensation and selective lethal control – in effectively reducing conflicts between carnivores and people across Montana and the West.

All speakers underscored the benefits and growth of “coalitions of the unlike” across Montana and the West that are bridging divides in jurisdiction and perspective, as well as the proliferation of traditional and innovative practices that are effectively reducing conflicts between carnivores and producers across the region and in other states. By working together and being willing to listen and have tough conversations, diverse partners are opening new opportunities to increase the coordination and capacity needed to prevent conflicts among carnivores and people in ways that work for producers and local communities.

The introduction concluded with speakers pointing to the unique value the workshop presented to participants, including:

- The ability to connect across and benefit from diverse perspectives;
- The opportunity to create and strengthen partnerships needed in conflict prevention work;
- Exposure to existing conflict prevention resources and approaches that producers and partnerships can utilize;
- The opportunity to share transferable practices across states and geographies; and
- The need to identify regional-scale opportunities and marshal resources to expand the capacity and coordination needed to scale-up conflict prevention across Montana and the West.



Photo credit: Heart of the Rockies Initiative

MANAGING & RESTRICTING ACCESS TO ATTRACTANTS

The first panel of the workshop focused on creative partnerships that have formed to reduce carnivore access to attractants, including through livestock carcass pickup, electric fencing and mats, and bear-resistant garbage programs. Panelists highlighted innovative approaches that are effectively reducing carnivore access to attractants through partnerships with diverse stakeholders. By coming together across organizations and perspectives, these partnerships are working to increase the capacity and coordination needed to implement solutions at a community-wide scale.

Every partnership featured underscored the importance of taking time to build trust and relationships prior to implementing solutions; starting small and scaling up; utilizing state and federal agency resources and expertise; effective, supported, and ongoing coordination across partners; and ensuring that approaches to reducing access to attractants work for – and with – local landowners, producers, and communities.

EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO REDUCING ACCESS TO ATTRACTANTS SHARED AT THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED:

- [Livestock carcass removal and composting services](#), led by the Big Hole Watershed Committee and scaled up in partnership with the Centennial Valley Association, state and federal agencies, non-profits, and local ranchers.
- [Electric mats](#) that act in place of a gate to enable vehicles to drive over them while providing an electric shock to deter bears; piloted in partnership by the Blackfoot Challenge, ranchers, Natural Resources

Conservation Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

- Community-engaged awareness programs, such as [Bear Smart Missoula](#), which brings together local organizations, agencies, and residents to implement community initiatives that promote responsible attractant management, such as bear-resistant garbage containers in bear-trafficked areas. These programs are particularly effective when supported by local businesses, such as Republic Services and Grizzly Disposal.
- [Wildlife Services' Nonlethal Initiative](#), which emerged from an unlikely partnership between the agency, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Defenders of Wildlife. This effort to provide increased conflict prevention support to producers was initiated in Montana and is now operational in 12 states across the West and the Great Lakes Region thanks to scaled up federal funding. The Initiative enjoys strong support from participating producers as well as NGOs.

ONGOING CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Panelists also underscored ongoing challenges and opportunities for managing and restricting carnivore access to attractants in the region, including:

- Engaging more stakeholders and community members to proliferate effective practices and take a community-wide approach to reducing access to attractants;
- Creating sustainable funding streams and shepherding more resources to support coordination across partners, ongoing implementation of attractant management

practices, and scaling pilot programs up to community-wide efforts; and

- Continuing to build a dynamic suite of attractant management and conflict prevention approaches that are adaptable to the unique needs of each landowner, community, and geography.

OPEN RANGE RISK REDUCTION

Speakers in the second panel session discussed traditional and innovative practices that are being used to prevent conflict on open range, including range riding, guard dogs, enhanced wildlife monitoring, and aerial drones that monitor and deter wildlife and reduce predation on livestock. Across all the practices shared, panelists underscored the importance of working with producers to identify how each practice can best support conflict prevention and herd management, including where they can – and can't – effectively be applied. Working closely with producers to identify areas to improve each practice, addressing research needs that meet the priorities of landowners, and responding to changing conditions were all named as vital to introducing, strengthening, and adapting effective practices over time.

EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO REDUCING RISK ON OPEN RANGE SHARED AT THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED:

- Range riding programs that get skilled conflict specialists out on open range to prevent, mitigate, and respond to conflicts between carnivores and livestock producers. Examples of effective programs include those led by the [Centennial Valley Association](#) and [Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group](#), which have achieved success in preventing conflict and building community support in both landscapes.
- The use of livestock guardian dogs and [innovative collars](#) that protect dogs to support herd management and effectively reduce conflict and depredation.
- Aerial drones that can be used to track and haze wildlife, and as a complementary tool to traditional practices such as range riding and the use of livestock guardian dogs.
- Enhanced wildlife monitoring through cameras, drones, and other technology and methods that enable producers to better track carnivores and protect livestock across the landscape.

ONGOING CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Panelists also underscored ongoing challenges and opportunities when starting and maintaining open range risk reduction practices, including:

- Taking the time needed to slowly build and tend to relationships with neighbors and partners to overcome barriers in trust that can stymie the implementation of practices at a community scale;
- Building enduring partnerships among landowners, producers, nonprofits, researchers, and government agencies that are capable of securing resources that support the coordination and capacity needed to sustain and implement practices over time; and
- Ensuring that landowner privacy and local knowledge is respected and accounted for when developing and implementing risk reducing practices.

EXISTING AND EMERGING CAPACITIES WITH TRIBAL, STATE, & FEDERAL AGENCIES

The third panel of the workshop featured Tribal, state, and federal agency staff who spoke to the existing and emerging capacities they have to lead or support conflict prevention efforts across the region. All speakers highlighted the unique authorities, available resources, and programs of their respective agency or Tribal Nation, as well as the limitations they are faced with that require them to work in partnership with others to manage and secure attractants on the landscape.

Speakers from the Blackfeet Nation and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes highlighted the key role their agencies play in responding to bear conflicts with a suite of approaches, including the installation of electric fences, carcass removal, and when needed, lethal control. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks also emphasized the suite of approaches they utilize as an agency, including attractant management, community partnerships, awareness campaigns, and when needed, lethal control. Agency staff from Natural Resources Conservation Service and Wildlife Services also shared the range of current and emerging resources they offer to support producers. Last, staff from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service spoke about the range of programs and resources they are providing to support producers and communities living with wildlife on the landscape.

All panelists emphasized that while state, federal, and Tribal agencies play a key role in responding to conflicts and providing resources to prevent conflicts, effective conflict prevention is only possible in partnership with producers, landowners, community members, and diverse organizations invested in this work.



Photo credit: Heart of the Rockies Initiative

EXISTING & EMERGING CAPACITIES OF TRIBAL, STATE, & FEDERAL AGENCIES TO FACILITATE & SUPPORT CONFLICT PREVENTION SHARED AT THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED:

- The [Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Fish, Wildlife, Recreation & Conservation Program](#) offers several services to all residents of the Flathead Indian Reservation to prevent or reduce conflicts with wildlife, including consultations to help identify and secure attractants, loaner electric fencing, affordable bear spray, affordable Kodiak bear-resistant trash cans, and numerous educational events and presentations.
- The [Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Department](#) (BFWD) actively responds to nuisance bear calls and livestock depredations and employs a variety of preventative measures, including electric fencing, providing bear-resistant trash cans, propane canons, and even selling bear spray at a discounted price. BFWD work also involves extensive research on bear ecology, while also promoting educational and youth outreach programs, all aimed at

mitigating human-bear conflicts and highlighting the importance of bear safety. Under the leadership of Brandon Kittson, Tony Sinclair Jr., and Landon Magee, BFWD collaboratively employs dedicated seasonal staff during the summer months to effectively manage the extensive workload. BFWD collaborates closely with valued partners like USDA Wildlife Services, National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, as well as all the local community members, whose support plays a crucial role in achieving BFWD goals.

- [Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks](#) (FWP) supports bear management and conflict reduction on private lands with multiple programs. FWP employs nine full-time bear conflict specialists in western and central Montana and about the same number of seasonal bear conflict technicians to help deliver both nonlethal and lethal bear management tools. In addition, local area wildlife biologists and local game wardens also respond to bear conflict reports and assist with nonlethal conflict prevention measures. FWP has seven regional communication and education specialists and one specialized bear communication position that assist with the sharing of information and local bear and wolf conflict education programs. In addition, FWP employs five full-time wolf conflict and monitoring specialists and a wolf/bear program lead at headquarters. Lastly, FWP employs a grizzly bear research lead and a black bear research lead and several full-time staff to monitor the health of both the NCDE grizzly bear population and statewide black bear populations.
- Through the strong and timely efforts of diverse stakeholder/expert engagement, [Colorado Parks and Wildlife](#) (CPW) has established a robust plan to address wolf conflict by allocating resources to compensate/minimize losses associated with wolves. By working collaboratively with state, federal, and NGO partners, CPW is rapidly increasing its capacity to lead the effort of addressing wolf damage through program outreach, minimization material acquisition/distribution, internal training, and sustainable funding mechanisms. These partnerships in turn allow a broader range of needs to be met more quickly, and collectively reduce the burden on all those involved in making an on-the-ground impact.
- The [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Grizzly Bear Recovery Program](#) assists state agencies and Tribes with conflict response. The program provides financial and technical assistance to landowners to prevent or reduce conflicts between humans and bears. The Recovery Program also provides educational messaging through media, brochures/handouts, presentations, and staffing public events to improve awareness of where grizzly bears reside on the landscape and to increase human safety when recreating or living in bear habitat.
- NRCS supports wildlife and working lands through several voluntary programs, including the [Working Lands for Wildlife Program](#), the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP), the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP), and the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP). Ongoing research being conducted as part of a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) is evaluating three conflict prevention practices -- range riding, carcass management, and various electric fencing scenarios. As a result, these practices are likely to be available to producers for conflict prevention efforts through cost-share agreements in federal fiscal year 2024.

- Wildlife Services' (WS) mission is to provide federal leadership and expertise to resolve wildlife conflicts to allow people and wildlife to coexist. WS staff apply the integrated wildlife damage management approach to provide technical assistance and direct management operations in response to requests for assistance. Since 2020, Congress has provided funding for the agency to establish the [Nonlethal Initiative](#) to research and implement nonlethal livestock protection projects utilizing a variety of methods and tools, such as range riding, fladry, livestock protection dogs, and electric fencing. The Initiative received \$4.5M in FY2023 and is currently operating in the following states: AZ, CA, CO, ID, MI, MN, MT, NM, OR, WA, WI, and WY. The Initiative also provides funding to WS' National Wildlife Research Center, which is evaluating the effectiveness of these activities and cooperator attitudes towards nonlethal livestock protection.

ONGOING CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Panelists also underscored ongoing challenges and opportunities for facilitating and supporting conflict prevention, including:

- The opportunity to better connect producers and the public to the resources agencies and Tribes can offer to facilitate and support conflict prevention across the region;
- The need to increase coordination with peer agencies, producers, and partners to enhance the delivery of conflict prevention on the landscape and to sustain this work long-term; and
- The importance of using all four C's – including compensation for losses, conflict prevention, control, and collaboration – to adequately address each conflict and not use a one-size fits all approach to conflict reduction.

APPENDIX A: EMERGING STRATEGIES BY GEOGRAPHY

Nearly half of the workshop was dedicated to a mapping and discussion exercise that brought together Tribal members, landowners, agency staff, and NGO representatives working in the same landscapes to exchange knowledge, build connections, and work together to develop a shared vision for the future. Each group was provided the flexibility needed to work through the exercise at their own pace and in a manner that made the most sense for them and their geography, recognizing that each community and landscape is unique and at a different point in implementing the conflict prevention tools that are most important to them.

The following summaries highlight participant-identified and geographic-specific challenges, existing assets, and ongoing opportunities to enhance the coordination and capacity needed to sustain and scale-up conflict prevention across several landscapes in the region and the broader West.

BLACKFEET NATION & ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT

While bears have had a presence in this region for a long time, conflict prevention efforts and partnerships are still relatively new to this landscape. People have felt forgotten or left on their own with bear conflicts, which has historically made relationship and trust-building with local communities around conflict prevention a challenge. In recent years, community members have increasingly been coming together to address human-carnivore

conflicts, with more communication, enhanced capacity of agencies to support people with conflicts, and a greater recognition of the needs in the region. There is a growing opportunity to expand conflict prevention work in collaboration with local groups and the Blackfeet Nation – if the resources to support local efforts are increased. It's notable that this workshop was the first time these key partners were all in the room together talking about this work, even though there is important overlap and opportunities to better collaborate among those who are all working towards similar goals in this landscape. Because of the history of low engagement, uplifting local leaders and improving trust and communication will be critical to scaling up conflict prevention efforts and facilitating more collaboration and coordination in this region.

Some things are going very well in the area and could be a model for other communities to follow. For example, there has been increasing collaboration, funding, and support for outreach, education, and electric fence building with 4-H youth. This is a great way to demonstrate the value of fencing and to engage with the communities. The relatively new Wildlife Services range rider working on the Blackfeet Reservation is another positive example of conflict prevention efforts happening in this area. This position was initiated by a local leader (the Rocky Mountains Front Ranchlands Group) who helped identify the needs, get buy-in from local producers, partner with the Blackfeet Nation Stockgrowers Association, and connect with agencies to help bring funding and hiring structure to the position. Funding support came from a Livestock Loss Board grant, with

matching funds from NGOs and the Wildlife Services Nonlethal Initiative.

Looking to the future, the group recognized a need for increasing communication, trust and information-sharing between stakeholders to facilitate scaled up conflict prevention. The group prioritized the following actions and needs for this geography:

CAPACITY

- Increase local capacity. There is a need to bring more funding to local groups and leaders to create more community outreach, information sharing, and trust to engage more people (e.g., Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group, Blackfeet Nation Stockgrowers Association, Blackfeet Nation Fish and Wildlife). Local leaders can be a helpful bridge between all stakeholders and advance more peer-to-peer learning.
- Increase capacity and collaboration between agencies, including through more shared positions. In particular, the Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Department has not had as much funding growth as other local partners, and there is a need for more funding and capacity to address bear conflicts on the Reservation.
- Expand conflict prevention infrastructure. Creating a more structured carcass pickup program on the Blackfeet Reservation and a composting site will increase opportunities to prevent conflict in the region.
- Engage youth and families. Continued expansion of 4-H youth outreach, education and fencing projects can engage young people and their families, broadening interest and participation in conflict prevention work in the area.

COORDINATION

- Increase opportunities for connection and partnership. The group identified a need for more regular meetings or calls between everyone that is involved in supporting conflict prevention in this area—key partners include: A Blackfeet Nation council member, a Partners program representative from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), USFWS conflict specialists, Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group, Blackfeet Nation Stockgrowers Association, Wildlife Services, Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) specialists, FWP tribal Liaison, Natural Resources Conservation Service district conservationists, NGOs, and Piikani Lodge Health Institute. In these communication efforts, it's important for state and federal agencies to share clear information with Tribal partners about what resources and capacities are available.
- Share knowledge and engage local communities. The Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group and other partners have already led some conflict prevention workshops in the area. These have gone well and there is an opportunity to hold more educational events to enhance outreach, information sharing, and community engagement.

This group identified the Blackfeet Reservation and Rocky Mountain Front as a region with high opportunity for investment if additional resources become available. This conversation generated momentum and enthusiasm that we hope to keep moving forward.

BLACKFOOT, UPPER CLARK FORK, & BITTERROOT WATERSHEDS

A diverse group of partners participated in the Blackfoot, Upper and Lower Clark Fork, and Bitterroot Watersheds group to discuss conflict prevention on this large and varied landscape. Participants recognized that conflict prevention efforts across this geography are maturing on different timeframes, with efforts in the Blackfoot Valley, where it is estimated that approximately 80 percent of the producers participate in available programs, being furthest along. Across all parts of the region, partners were able to identify existing conflict prevention assets that are functioning as intended, assets to build on or strengthen, and needs and opportunities that have yet to be addressed.

All partners agreed that many who live and work in this geography have demonstrated a “willingness to try.” While they have accomplished a lot, there is still more to do. Relationships and partnerships are central to what has been achieved, as are the many agency staff who are committed to the landscape.

Partners pointed to the Blackfoot Challenge’s model of engaging landowners in each of the valley’s seven communities as one that could transfer to the other valleys. And, while the approaches in the other valleys may look different, partners expressed that having diverse leadership and stakeholders in the room was essential to success.

Participants gravitated towards a vision for the work that includes improving wildlife connectivity, protecting agricultural lands from development, being able to quickly respond to



Photo credit: Blackfoot Challenge

conflict, and building relationships and partnerships to support preventative conflict reduction management.

Looking to the future, the group prioritized the following actions and needs for this geography:

CAPACITY

- Support existing and emerging community-based partnerships. While the Blackfoot Challenge is very established and there is an emerging partnership in the Bitterroot, several other communities would benefit from a working group or community-based organization to advance conflict prevention efforts. Lower Clark Fork, Evaro Hill, Rocker Butte, Clinton/Rock Creek, and Drummond were specifically identified as needing more capacity.
- Provide sustainable and accessible funding for conflict prevention tools and people to implement them. Ideally, each valley has one place/person to turn to as a resource for grizzly bear management, support, and problem solving. Jamie Jonkel serves this role in the Blackfoot.



Photo credit: Natural Resources Defense Council

- Scale-up effective conflict prevention infrastructure. Across all the valleys, there is a need for infrastructure (e.g., electric fencing, drive-over electric mats) to secure more transfer stations, compost sites and other types of domestic and ranch attractants. Participants identified Garrison Junction, Lower Clark Fork, Drummond, and Anaconda in need of composting sites.

COORDINATION

- Continue to nurture community conversations and emerging partnerships in the Bitterroot. Conversations to date have focused on managing attractants in the valley on both private and public lands. Much progress has been made on United States Forest Service-managed lands and there is a need to bring more stakeholders from across the valley into the conversation.
- Expand outreach, community engagement, and access to information. In addition to the infrastructure needed to enhance conflict prevention efforts, communities and partners would benefit from being able to

pull from a centralized set of bear education materials, K-12 curriculum, and a “playbook” designed for communities that want to contain attractants to keep people safe and nurture a “culture of respect” for grizzly bears. Education for new residents was called out as a specific need. Participants also called out the existing bear fairs as valuable assets for outreach and community engagement.

FLATHEAD VALLEY, FLATHEAD RESERVATION, EUREKA, & SWAN VALLEY

Partnerships around conflict prevention work are strong across the Flathead Valley, on the Flathead Reservation, the Eureka area, and the Swan Valley – contributing both coordination and capacity to support landowners and communities across the region. Participants shared many examples of effective coordination between Tribes, federal and state agency staff, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) that are delivering effective conflict prevention. They also highlighted the high level of staff capacity in many parts of this region, including at the USFWS Recovery Program, USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, USDA-Wildlife Services, FWP, and at the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). USFWS biologists are available to help landowners install bear fences in the Mission and Swan valleys, while CSKT has two staff members tasked with responding to grizzly bear conflicts. All staff are well-positioned in locations that span the region, allowing them to quickly respond to conflicts and inquiries from landowners about conflict prevention tools.

While staff capacity is high, there is a growing need for agency and Tribal services – as well as other approaches to conflict prevention – in the face of increased conflict. Like many areas in Montana, this region has seen an increasing number of people moving into the area, resulting in new challenges. Many new arrivals have never lived with large carnivores and have limited exposure to best practices when it comes to securing garbage, limiting attractants, and recreating in bear country.

Effective outreach and education were identified as a top priority for group members. Local organizations like Swan Valley Connections (SVC) offer an effective and potentially transferable model for facilitating community education and outreach around conflict prevention and living with wildlife on the landscape. Bear fairs and participation in public forums have especially proved effective at reaching new audiences. Organizations like Vital Ground Foundation have also developed a unique information guide they provide to landowners for whom they help secure conservation easements and could be replicated for distribution by other land trusts working in the region.

Unsecured garbage is also a significant issue in the region, with high levels of tourism and growing human populations increasing waste and conflict. Replicating the new city ordinance in Whitefish that requires all residential properties to use bear-resistant garbage containers could help other municipalities prevent and reduce conflicts across the region. CSKT also has a bear-resistant garbage program that can be expanded while SVC has a bear-resistant garbage container loaner program that should be sustained and expanded. Priority areas for expansion include Seeley Lake, Columbia Falls, and Big Fork. Participants also praised the efforts of Bear Smart Communities,



Photo credit: USDA Wildlife Services

emphasizing the need to include community leaders (mayors, city council members, etc.) in conflict prevention conversations and efforts.

Participants also emphasized that the future success of conflict prevention efforts in this region will be a result of a shared contact list to facilitate coordination, building upon existing agency and Tribal staff capacity and resources, increased awareness and community outreach, and transferring successful models for partnerships, Bear-Smart Programs, and attractant management to new places across the region.

Looking to the future, the group prioritized the following actions and needs for this geography:

CAPACITY

- Build on effective models of bear-resistant garbage programs in Whitefish, the Swan Valley, and on the Flathead Reservation to expand attractant-management infrastructure to the Seeley Lake Area, Columbia Falls, Big Fork, and other areas with increasing waste and conflict.
- Continue supporting and expanding effective electric fencing programs and partnerships. CSKT, SVC, USDA Wildlife Services, USFWS Partners Program, USFWS Specialists, and area NGOs have resources to either loan or support the installation of electric fencing to prevent bear conflict, depending on the geography. Continuing to support and expand these services – while broadening partnerships to connect these services to landowners in need – can help prevent conflicts between bears and people in the region.
- Build on existing agency and Tribal nation staffing to increase capacity as needed. While agency staff numbers are largely adequate to respond effectively to conflicts, growing human populations in the region and the potential for increases in carnivore-human conflicts may require additional staff capacity to prevent future conflicts. For example, CSKT has identified the need to add two additional bear conflict positions in the coming years to address increased conflicts on the Flathead Reservation.
- Secure reliable, long-term funding for NGO partner staff capacity and services. NGOs are currently supporting landowners through a wide range of conflict prevention approaches, shared above, that require continued funding for sustained service and impact. NGOs can serve a unique and flexible role in both brokering partnerships and transferring resources; ensuring their sustainability is an important part of preventing conflict among carnivores and people in the region.



Photo credit: Heart of the Rockies Initiative

COORDINATION

- Create a shared contact list for people and entities working on conflict prevention in the region. This contact list could help facilitate the sharing of information around bear relocations to nearby producers and landowners, as well as encourage joint workshops and fairs convened by multiple partners in communities throughout the region.
- Enhance community outreach to better utilize existing conflict prevention resources in the region. Wildlife Services Nonlethal Initiative technicians are currently under-utilized and can take on additional responsibilities. Increased outreach to landowners and the public could lead to better utilization of this resource and more bear-human conflicts prevented on the landscape.
- Expand outreach, community engagement, and access to information. Expanding Bear Smart programs to new geographies (such as Columbia Falls), holding more Bear Fairs, and engaging community leaders can help to build awareness around carnivores on the landscape and the importance of conflict prevention in creating safe

communities for people and wildlife.

Community conversations can also lay the groundwork for city ordinances related to bear-resistant garbage containers.

BIG HOLE, CENTENNIAL, MADISON, & RUBY VALLEYS

VISION

Agriculture, Wildlife, and Livable Communities in our area. Nurture a Stewardship Economy.

ONE YEAR OBJECTIVE

- Explore ways to achieve stable, predictable funding for conflict reduction programs. Participants shared examples of how unpredictable annual funding was hampering projects, particularly range rider and carcass management efforts.
- Explore ideas for improved, innovative compensation programs. While existing programs perform fairly well for death loss caused by predators, losses due to stress or illness are still a problem, along with missing livestock that cannot be located or verified.
- Develop a pilot program for using mobile carcass dumpsters for carcass management. Carcass management programs are being held back by the challenges of establishing, developing, and maintaining permanent composting sites in remote areas. Here are probably economies of scale to be realized by composting carcasses at larger, centralized compost sites rather than multiple small sites scattered around the area.



Photo credit: Centennial Valley Association

- Develop and share a map and conflict reduction vision for where grizzlies are likely to show up next in connectivity areas in High Divide. There are numerous different maps showing current grizzly distribution and potential occurrences. Making this information consistent and accessible could help residents and visitors stay informed and take measures to prevent conflicts.
- Explore partnership with University of Montana-Western in Dillon. UM-Western may be a potential partner in developing, sharing, and studying conflict prevention tools and practices in the High Divide. Involving students and faculty in our efforts could prove mutually beneficial. Many students are from the region, and it would be worthwhile to get their perspectives and insights into carnivore conflict reduction.
- Shared and regularly updated contact list for partners and resources in our area.

RED LODGE AREA & THE PARADISE VALLEY

The Paradise Valley and Red Lodge communities are both gateway communities to Yellowstone National Park (YNP). The Paradise Valley is a common access route to the north entrance of the Park, while Red Lodge has a meandering route to the northeast entrance via the Beartooth Highway. Bears and wolves have had a presence in these landscapes, but conflict prevention efforts and partnerships are non-existent or just starting to emerge. There is also a lot of concern around elk herd management. Elk cause conflicts on local ranches, as they are a vector for brucellosis, attract predators when calving in pastures/hay fields, and contribute to economic losses just as large predators do. Participants wanted to make sure elk conflict

was just as pertinent in their area as conflicts with grizzlies. However, some of the strategies employed with both elk and grizzly bears are an effective way to begin mitigating conflict, including:

- Expanding hunting access on private lands to keep elk off pastures, preventing attractants, and controlling numbers; and
- Moving to a fall calving season.

Though conflict prevention regarding grizzly bears has been reactionary, there is interest in the two landscapes to find ways to employ proactive conflict prevention tools. As is common in other regions, a lack of trust between producers and federal/state agencies, and NGOs exists. There is also a challenge in both communities with residential growth and tourist access to YNP and other public lands. Wildlife, including predators, are often safer on private ranchlands with an increase in people.

Looking to the future, the group prioritized the following actions and needs for this geography:

CAPACITY

- Develop partnerships to advance communication, collaboration, and delivery of tools. The group agreed that partnerships are needed to implement conflict prevention tools on their respective landscapes. When forming groups, an entity/person needs to be identified to keep a group together to prevent bias, but core group diversity is a strength. The group also acknowledged that working out how to partner with neighbors is important to scale management activities for a bigger impact. The Red Lodge area identified a new FWP grizzly bear technician in the area that could be a partner. In the Paradise Valley, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) need to be partners at the table and may need to adjust timing of

meetings to ensure their staff can participate.

COORDINATION

- Increase cooperation and communication. Information and resources feel lacking in these areas, yet there is a lot of data in Yellowstone, and it seems that less organizations are providing support in the area, despite a great need. The group identified the need for building a community of landowners and in being an inclusive group versus an exclusive group. This would include inviting federal/state/NGO partners to the table in a way that allows the partners to understand the groups' goals and limitations.
- Create space to do pre-conflict planning to assess tools. Acknowledging and understanding the uniqueness of each community is important to determine what proactive measures can be utilized and who is/could be involved. Enabling landowners to learn how a program can work and be flexible in its delivery is important. Conflict prevention tools and programs should be able to adapt to each unique community. The flexibility is important to ensure programs and tools are accessible to landowners. Control must be a part of the suite of tools.

IDAHO

Participants from across Idaho – including individuals from Idaho Fish and Game, Wildlife Services, Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation, Idaho Conservation League, Western Landowners Alliance, Lava Lake Lamb & Livestock, and Beyeler Ranches – convened to discuss opportunities to prevent conflicts among wildlife and producers across the state.

The discussion highlighted the many things that are going well across the state around conflict prevention. Interagency relationships are very strong in Idaho, offering great opportunities for coordinated agency action and support around conflict prevention. Partnerships and landowners across the state are also exercising the four C's framework for addressing human-wildlife conflicts – compensation, conflict prevention, control (lethal), and collaboration – offering a range of opportunities to reduce conflict across the state. There is also consistent and growing support from the public for the use of nonlethal tools when addressing conflicts among wildlife and people in the state. At the same time, resources available for managing grizzly bear conflicts and the timeliness of responses from Wildlife Services are increasing, bringing greater capacity to the state's efforts to support landowners and producers.

While there were helpful examples from Montana and other states offered at the workshop, the discussion around large carnivore conflict is very different in Idaho compared to most of its surrounding states. Funding throughout the state is still much lower and not guaranteed. Participants envisioned more federal and state resources allocated to continued nonlethal work and more monetary support for producers who are affected by large carnivores. Increases in funding will allow for more resources (equipment, employees, etc.) and on-the-ground implementation. This would potentially also open up more capacity for place-based groups to work in the state and fill in gaps that the agencies can't reach, as there are currently very few that operate in Idaho.

Looking to the future, the group prioritized the following actions and needs for this geography:

CAPACITY

- Establish reliable funding for nonlethal programs across Idaho. This is something that Idaho needs to see these programs expand. The state does not currently allocate money to these programs. Federal funding is limited and not guaranteed. Beyond augmented funding, it is also vital that this funding be consistent.
- Be creative with existing funding resources. There are also opportunities to consider how to be more creative with current large carnivore funding within Idaho (e.g., Idaho Department of Fish & Game black bear and lion conflict funds) to expand the reach and impact of existing resources.
- Funding for compensation of losses also needs to be augmented. Current funding and programs in Idaho only support compensation of market value for confirmed kills. Occasionally, compensation must be prorated for years with higher depredation claims and insufficient funding to complete all of the compensation requests at full value for those who qualify.

COORDINATION

- Create a statewide conflict working-group. Creating a group in Idaho where agencies, NGOs, and landowners could meet to discuss relevant topics could facilitate communication and be a way to engage landowners in policy direction and needs. It could be inspired by Montana's Conflict Reduction Consortium, while being centered around the specific context, themes, and needs relevant to Idaho. There is a need for a collective voice on policy issues that includes support from agency and organization players in the state alongside producers and landowners – a working group could be a forum to uplift this shared voice.

- Create forums for engaging and supporting producers. Many participants would like to see more producer involvement in policy to help push for expanded funding for wildlife-livestock programs. Engaging producers and landowners in policy discussions, especially at the local level, could support progress at future legislative sessions.
- Expand outreach, community engagement, and access to information. There is not a broad public understanding of predator/livestock interactions of predator control as a result. This needs to be improved. While many do have an understanding of what it means to have large carnivores on the landscape, there's a need to shift in ideology from "coexistence" or "conflict prevention" to "conflict management" statewide. Working with agencies and environmental education groups in the state to identify effective approaches for reaching specific audiences around carnivore- livestock interactions could help to expand and improve outreach.

COLORADO, OREGON, WYOMING, & WASHINGTON

The sole multi-state mapping session included participants from Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, California, and Oregon, framed successes around coordination and conflict prevention across these states as a function of the regulatory context, the presence or absence of all four C's (Compensation, Conflict Prevention, Lethal Control, and Collaboration), level of coordination between NGOs and agencies, and trust in the agency delivering and supporting practice implementation. For example, in Colorado, the robust compensation program for addressing both direct and production losses

was cited as building good will and trust amongst Colorado Parks and Wildlife and producers, while an expanding fencing program is meeting agency-delivered conflict prevention needs.

Participants suggested addressing needs around conflict prevention in three spheres: Collaboration, Wildlife Services funding/flexibility, and management plan revision to better enable the delivery of conflict prevention in their states. In Oregon, access to lethal control was cited as an important component for supporting producer-agency trust and working relationships necessary to support collaboration necessary to support successful partnerships for conflict prevention. Further, developing place-based collaborative groups with the ability to coordinate the delivery of tools was identified as a need across geographies.

Last, participants spoke of a need to increase the funding and flexibility for Wildlife Services in delivering conflict prevention through year-round positions, increased budget, and integration of conflict prevention work with other duties of Wildlife Services field agents.

The group also developed a vision of increased ranch resiliency in shared, working-wild landscapes supported by trust and partnership with state and federal agencies. Specifically, the group was interested in expanding or establishing access points to range riding through a certification program, expanded resources through Wildlife Services and Natural Resources Conservation Service, and more venues for collaboration, whether that be processes to revise management plans or develop place-based collaborative groups.

Looking to the future, the group prioritized the following actions and needs for this geography:

CAPACITY

- Continue implementing conflict prevention infrastructure, such as fencing projects, range riding programs, and carcass management. Natural Resources Conservation Service resources, especially through EQIP, could support the implementation of additional infrastructure.
- Explore opportunities to create cooperative positions among USDA Wildlife Services and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Shared positions can increase both capacity and inter-agency coordination when addressing conflicts.

COORDINATION

- Share success stories that can contribute to trust among producers and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Highlighting examples of successful partnerships between producers and Colorado Parks and Wildlife – and what made those partnerships work effectively – can build trust and seed ideas for new partnerships
- Work with partners across Oregon to better integrate the four C's approach into wolf management. Participants highlighted the opportunities to work with USDA Wildlife Services, Western Landowners Alliance, producers, and other partners to enhance wolf management and support conflict reduction that works for landowners across the state.

APPENDIX B: WORKSHOP AGENDA

Delivering Carnivore Conflict Prevention
A Workshop to Advance Partnerships and Solutions

June 14th & 15th
University Center North Ballroom | University of Montana | Missoula, MT

Workshop Agenda

*Optional pre-workshop social hour on June 13th from 6-8pm at Cranky Sam Public House

Day 1 (June 14th): Setting the Stage for Increasing Conflict Prevention, Federal and State Programs, and Specific Tools

8:15 Catered Breakfast available in University Center North Ballroom

9:00 Welcome & Setting the Stage

Rich Janssen – Department Head, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Natural Resources Department

Denny Iverson – Rancher, board member of the Blackfoot Challenge and Five Valleys Land Trust

Randy Arnold – Region 2 Supervisor, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Gary Burnett – Managing Director, Heart of the Rockies Initiative

9:30 Session 1: Managing and Restricting Access to Attractants (sanitation, electric fences and matting, carcass pickup)

Existing partnerships in MT working to limit carnivore access to attractants will be highlighted. Electric fencing, electric mats, sanitation practices, and carcass pickup programs are some of the specific practices that will be discussed. Panel discussion and Q&A to follow.

Moderator: **Linda Owens** – Project Director, Madison Valley Ranchlands Group

Panelists: **Tana Nulph** – Associate Director, Big Hole Watershed Committee

Yvonne Martinell – Rancher and Chairwoman of the Centennial Valley Association

Kyle Tackett – Montana State Conservationist (Acting), Natural Resources Conservation Service

Eric Graham – Wildlife Program Coordinator, Blackfoot Challenge

Chad Bauer – General Manager, Republic Waste Management

Jamie Jonkel – Region 2 Bear Management Specialist, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Erin Edge – Senior Representative, Rockies and Plains Program, Defenders of Wildlife

Zack May – Staff Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Services (MT)

Jennifer Sherry – Wildlife Science and Policy Specialist, Natural Resources Defense Council

Catered Break

11:20 Session 2: Open Range Risk Reduction (range riding, emerging technologies, guard dogs, and sound boxes)

This session will focus on techniques aimed at improved herd management to reduce predation on livestock. Producers using traditional practices like range riding and guard dogs will provide participants with overviews of their programs and experiences, followed by research updates on practice effectiveness. Presentations on the use of new technology and approaches to enhance these traditional practices will also be mentioned. Panel discussion and Q&A to follow.

Moderator: **Molly Parks** – Carnivore Coordinator, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Panelists: **Erika Nunlist** – Wildlife Program Coordinator, Centennial Valley Association
Trina Jo Bradley – Rancher and Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group
Erik Kalsta – Working Wild Challenge Program Coordinator, Western Landowners Alliance
Kurt Holtzen – Field Advisor, Lava Lake Lamb and Livestock
Nate James – District Conservationist for Umatilla County, OR, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Jeff Flores – Oregon State Director, Wildlife Services
Jared Beaver – Assistant Professor and Extension Wildlife Specialist, Montana State University–Bozeman

12:30 Catered Lunch

1:15 Conversation with Invited Guests

Arthur Middleton – Senior Advisor on Wildlife Conservation, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Siva Sundaresan – Deputy Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

2:00 Asset and Opportunity Mapping by Geography

Workshop participants will be invited into groups based on geography and existing partnerships to map existing carnivore conflict prevention assets in their locations. They will also identify aspects of their conflict prevention programs that are working well and highlight opportunities to better leverage existing resources through partnerships, shared assets, and other solutions.

3:25 Catered Break

3:45 Existing and emerging capacities with Tribal, state and federal agencies

Tribal, state, and federal agency staff will present on their work related to carnivore conflict reduction and developments and opportunities within their agencies.

Moderator: **Denny Iverson** – Rancher and Board Member of the Blackfoot Challenge and Five Valleys Land Trust

Panelists: **Tom Watson** – Chief of Staff (Acting) for Regional Conservationists, Natural Resources Conservation Service
John Steuber – Assistant Regional Director, Western Region, Wildlife Services
Adam Baca – Wolf Conflict Coordinator, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Payton Adams – Wildlife Biologist, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Natural Resources Department
Hilary Cooley – Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Randy Arnold – Region 2 Supervisor, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

4:45 Informal Walkaround with Table Hosts (similar to a poster session)

5:15 Adjourn to Social Hour and BBQ on UM Oval

Day 2 (June 15th): Implementing and Coordinating Delivery

7:45 Catered Breakfast available in University Center North Ballroom

8:30 Welcome and share day one shared themes, highlights, and key takeaways

9:00 Emerging Strategies by Geography and Implementing Across the Landscape

Workshop participants will discuss solutions and how additional tools and resources, increased capacity, and increased coordination could benefit conflict prevention efforts both in their geography, as well as across the landscape.

10:15 Catered Break

10:45 Groups Report out on their visions and strategies for the future

11:15 Moving from Vision to Action

11:45 Closing Remarks and Next Steps

12:00 Workshop Adjourned with Option for Catered Lunch and Continued Conversation

APPENDIX C: WORKSHOP SPEAKERS

Payton Adams

Payton is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and a life-long resident of the Flathead Indian Reservation. He graduated from the University of Montana and works as a Wildlife Biologist for the CSKT Wildlife Program. His main focus is grizzly bear research and management, but keeps busy throughout the year conducting various wildlife surveys, presenting to local schools, and working to protect big game herds from disease.

Randy Arnold

Randy grew up in Denver, Colorado. After receiving his BS in wildlife biology, Randy began his career with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) as a game warden trainee in Missoula. Over his tenure at FWP, Randy has been a game warden in Forsyth and Helena, a covert investigator on state-wide and multi-state felony wildlife poaching cases, and a game warden sergeant in Billings. He has been the Region 2 supervisor for the past 10 years. As a regional supervisor for FWP, Randy has been active in policy, management, conflict response and supporting conflict reduction measures for carnivores in western Montana. He represents FWP on the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, serving as Chair of the NCDE in 2019-2021. Randy lives in Missoula with his wife and two daughters and is proud to serve on the board of the Blackfoot Challenge.

Adam Baca

Adam was hired as the first nonlethal-only Wildlife Services specialist in 2018 and tasked with engaging producers on implementing preventative measures to reduce conflict with bears and wolves. Now working at Colorado Parks and Wildlife as the state's first wolf conflict coordinator he continues to work with stakeholders at both the ground and administrative level to increase capacity to reduce conflicts with wolves ahead of reintroduction efforts.

Chad Bauer

Chad is a native Montanan and has spent his entire life enjoying the outdoors—hunting, fishing and camping. In his professional career with waste management, he has been involved in bear and garbage conflicts, working with partners in our state for over 25 years to help find solutions to issues. Chad is also a long-time Montana hunter and bowhunter education instructor.

Jared Beaver

Jared strives to blend wildlife research with applied management by identifying conservation opportunities which have direct relevance for private landowners and wildlife biologists responsible for conserving and managing wildlife. Much of his work has focused on population ecology and habitat management of large mammals, particularly game species. Jared is continually looking for ways to develop partnerships and gain additional insight into broad multifaceted questions pertaining to wildlife management and conservation.

Trina Jo Bradley

Trina is a livestock producer and agricultural advocate who ranches on the Rocky Mountain Front near Valier, Montana. She is the executive director of Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group, chair of the Endangered Species Act Subcommittee for Montana Stockgrowers Association, and chair of the Montana Conflict Reduction Consortium.

Gary Burnett

Gary has been working in conservation for more than 40 years, dedicated to retaining access to natural resources. He has been with Heart of the Rockies Initiative since 2017 where he serves as one of three managing directors. Previous to his time with Heart of the Rockies, Gary served ten years with the Blackfoot Challenge as their executive director. Throughout his career he has worked to build momentum for private land conservation to make a durable impact.

Hilary Cooley

Hilary has served as the grizzly bear recovery coordinator in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since 2017. In her role, Hilary leads the USFWS' Grizzly Bear Recovery Office which implements the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan; coordinates research, management, and recovery efforts; and cooperates closely with Alberta and British Columbia on transboundary grizzly conservation efforts. She is also an affiliated faculty member at the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation at the University of Montana. Hilary received her bachelor's degree from University of Vermont and her MS and PhD in Wildlife Biology from Washington State University.

Erin Edge

Erin has been with Defenders of Wildlife since 2006 where she works on grizzly bear conservation and conflict mitigation. Erin is passionate about working in diverse collaboratives to develop a future where both wildlife and people thrive on the landscape. She works closely with communities, livestock producers, non-profit organizations, and state/federal/Tribal agencies to find sustainable funding for and implement outreach programs, tools, and techniques that minimizes human-bear conflict.

Jeffery Flores

Jeff has been the state director for USDA WS-Oregon for almost two years. He came from the USDA WS Guam and Pacific Theater program where he also served as state director. He started working for USDA WS back in 1999 as a Wildlife Specialist and has a total of 24 years of public service. Jeff enjoys off-shore big game fishing, snorkeling, cooking, and spending time with close friends and family.

Eric Graham

Eric started working for the Blackfoot Challenge in 2013 as a seasonal range rider and in 2015 was hired on full time as the wildlife program coordinator. His work in the Blackfoot watershed primarily focuses on reducing conflicts with grizzly bears, humans, livestock and wolves. When he is not busy with electric fence or turbo fladry projects, the range rider program, carcass management, grizzly bear management/research and Bear Aware presentations he enjoys monitoring lynx and wolverine in the winter.

Jamie Jonkel

Jamie brings over 50 years of experience with wildlife management and conflict reduction to his position with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. He has worked in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Alaska, New Mexico, Canada and Russia with various private and public entities including National Geographic, Hornocker Wildlife Research Institute, Glacier Institute, Interagency Grizzly Bear Study, Glacier National Park Wolf Ecology Project, Idaho Fish and Game, Maine Fish and Wildlife, Border Grizzly Bear Project, and several privately-owned ranches. He has been with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks since 1996. Jamie received his Bachelors in Wildlife Biology and a minor in Journalism from the University of Montana in Missoula.

Kurt Holtzen

Kurt is a native of Idaho. He currently lives in Hailey, Idaho and has been involved with wildlife conflict mitigation for 20+ years. He comes from a fifth-generation agriculture family and helped operate a small family cow calf operation. He lived in West Yellowstone, MT for almost a decade and was involved with grizzly conflict mitigation and some bison. He has worked for the owners of Lava Lake Land and Livestock for the past 8 years developing conflict mitigation standard operating procedures and tools for use with sheep bands.

Denny Iverson

Denny is a rancher in Potomac, MT in the lower end of the Blackfoot watershed. He's a board member for Heart of the Rockies Initiative, Blackfoot Challenge, and Five Valleys Land Trust. He, in partnership with his son-in-law and nephew, runs a cow calf operation mostly on their own land but also on BLM summer range.

Nate James

Nate received his Bachelor of Science Degree, with a double major in Rangeland Resources and Crop & Soil Science, from Oregon State University LaGrande Campus in 2004. He began his NRCS career as a student intern in 2002 and has spent the last 21 years working for NRCS Oregon in Wallowa, Gilliam, and Umatilla Counties. He is currently the District Conservationist in the Pendleton field office.

Nate was raised in a small farm and ranch community, Echo Oregon, in Umatilla County. He and his wife are currently raising two kids there, the 6th generation on the farm. When not working for NRCS or on the farm Nate spends all his free time hunting, fishing, and coaching whatever youth sport is in season.

Erik Kalsta

Erik lives and ranches with his wife Jami on their sheep and cattle ranch along the Big Hole River in southwestern Montana. Now coming into its 5th generation, 125+ years in the same family, it is a monument to stubbornness that some might call sustainability. Erik's love of ranching encompasses far more than cattle or sheep, it extends to all the wildlife that inhabit or migrate through the property and the vegetation that makes those interactions possible. He is passionate about maintaining the open spaces provided by working lands and the habitat they provide.

Rich Janssen

Rich is an enrolled Qlispe (Kalispel') Tribal Member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. He has spent his entire career with the Tribes, the last 13 as the Department Head of Natural Resources, which includes over 258 employees within the Divisions of Environmental Protection, Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation, and Engineering and Water Resources. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of Montana (1993), and a Masters of Business Administration from Gonzaga University (2007). Rich is married with one grown child and a son who recently passed, and his bulldog, "Dennis." He is also a strong advocate for all people with Autism.

Landon Magee

Landon is an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Nation. He is currently a Masters student at the University of Montana where he is studying the use of trail cameras in estimating moose demographics and determining moose abundance and calf recruitment rates on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation and within Glacier National Park. He serves as a wildlife technician for the Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Department's bear program and has been doing that for the last five summers.

Yvonne Martinell

Yvonne, with her husband Allen and family, ranches in southwest Montana by Dell and in the Centennial Valley. The family runs a cow/calf and yearling operation and raises hay for their own use. Currently she is the chairwoman of the Centennial Valley Association and a board member of The Nature Conservancy Montana.

Zack May

Zack is the staff wildlife biologist for USDA-Wildlife Services, Montana. He has worked for the agency for 15 years resolving human-wildlife conflicts. For the last three and half years Zack has served as coordinator of the WS-Montana's nonlethal program.

Arthur Middleton

Arthur serves as a senior advisor on wildlife conservation at USDA. In this role, Middleton advises on how USDA programs can better support conservation of wildlife corridors and habitat. In addition, he is an assistant professor in the University of California Berkeley's Department of Environmental Policy, Science and Management. At Berkeley, his research focuses on how environmental change affects the behavioral, population and community ecology of wildlife, work that is motivated by a global need for science and conservation solutions that promote both ecological integrity and human wellbeing. Middleton holds a bachelor's degree in English and government from Bowdoin College, a master's in environmental management from Yale and a PhD in ecology from the University of Wyoming.

Tana Nulph

Tana is the associate director of the Big Hole Watershed Committee, based in Divide Montana. She was hired by BHWC in 2014 and has managed and improved the Big Hole's conflict reduction programs over the last nine years in addition to her work in drought, communications, administration, and financial oversight. She manages the Big Hole's range rider program and in 2015, implemented the valley's carcass removal and composting program. Tana also facilitated the partnership for carcass removal in Sage Creek with the Centennial Valley Association beginning in 2017. She earned her Master of Natural Resources degree from the University of Idaho in 2014 and her Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from the University of Montana Western in 2010.

Erika Nunlist

Erika is the wildlife coordinator and range rider for the Centennial Valley Association, a rancher-led non-profit in southwest Montana. She is from Montana and has a bachelor's degree in Ecology and a masters degree in Animal and Range Science—both from Montana State University. She is committed to Montana's wild and working landscapes.

Linda Owens

Linda has been the project director of the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group since 2017. She was a founding member of the group which formed in 1996. Linda has spent the majority of her life in Madison County—ranching, farming and sharing her love of rural community values with those who call this place home. She lives on the family ranch northwest of McAllister.

Molly Parks

Molly has worked on large carnivores since 2012. Her work monitoring wolves for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and range riding for the Blackfoot Challenge informed her Master's research project which investigated range rider programs in Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Upon completion of her Master's degree at Utah State University in 2015, she continued her work with wolves and wolf-livestock conflict mitigation for several years before transitioning to coordinate Montana's mountain lion monitoring program. In 2022, she assumed her current role as carnivore coordinator for FWP, where she now oversees the black bear, mountain lion, and wolf monitoring and management programs.

Kyle Tackett

Kyle is the Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships for NRCS in Montana. In this position he interacts with NRCS employees, private landowners, and partners in the conservation community. Kyle has spent the last 15 years of his career building relationships with partners and landowners to address complicated natural resource and wildlife issues in Montana, including Arctic Grayling and Sage Grouse.

Jennifer Sherry

Jenny uses a multifaceted approach to conserve and protect wildlife. From enacting broad-scale policy reforms to working with individuals on the ground, she promotes coexistence between people and wildlife, with a special focus on large carnivores like wolves and bears. Her efforts bring together scientists, state agencies, conservation organizations, and communities to work toward shared goals. Prior to joining Natural Resources Defense Council, Sherry put her skills to use on projects involving climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and wildlife conservation, primarily in mountain environments. She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in environment and natural resources from the Ohio State University, and a PhD in environmental science from Charles Sturt University in Australia.

John Steuber

John attended undergraduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point where he double majored in Biology and Wildlife Management. He attended graduate school at Texas A&M University where he majored in Wildlife Science and studied American alligators. He worked as a wildlife technician for the BLM & the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as well as wildlife biologist for a large ranch complex in Texas before coming to work for USDA Wildlife Services in 1987. For USDA Wildlife Services he has worked in TX, WA, CA, OK, and MT as well as temporary duty assignments in SD, HI, MD, & Washington DC. He is currently one of the two assistant regional directors for USDA Wildlife Services' western region where he oversees the agency's work in 10 states (MT, WY, CO, NM, ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, TX).

Siva Sundaresan

Siva is the deputy director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Prior to joining the Service, Siva served as program officer at the Wilburforce Foundation and as director of conservation at the Greater Yellowstone Coalition where he oversaw their conservation efforts working in partnership with agencies, landowners and other non-profits.

Siva's background is in wildlife biology and behavioral ecology, and he has carried out research on ungulates and carnivores in Kenya and India. He earned his Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology from Princeton University and a Master in Biological Sciences from the Birla Institute of Technology and Science.

Tom Watson

Tom is the NRCS Montana state conservationist and has worked with the agency for 33 years. Watson leads NRCS operations in Montana, including the administration of conservation technical assistance to private landowners, conservation financial assistance programs, conservation easement programs, the Natural Resources Inventory, water supply forecasting, soil survey mapping, and the Plant Materials Center in Bridger. Watson graduated from the University of Wyoming with a range management degree. Throughout his NRCS career, he has worked in Wyoming, Oregon, and Montana, holding various positions at the field, area, and state levels. His family owned a small farm in western Nebraska, and Watson has been connected to agriculture throughout his life. He and his wife Cheryl have been blessed with two sons and three grandchildren.

APPENDIX D: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

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