

3/22/2021

To: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Re: 3/23/ 2021 Agenda item 6a Cancellation of the USDA Wildlife Services contract.

I do not support cancellation of the contract with USDA Wildlife Services and the Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) program and am against the establishment of a Non-Lethal Wildlife Damage Management (NWDM) Program.

I am a resident of Covelo and currently own approximately 100 acres on which I raise sheep. In the past I requested the assistance of Wildlife services for assistance in dealing with feral pigs that were breaking through my fences and destroying my pastures. Besides being destructive these pigs were dangerous to me and my dogs as we walked through the property. Our trapper was extremely helpful in helping us make our property pig proof, which it now is. Feral pigs are a significant problem in our area and lethal measures are the only remedy that make sense in controlling their population. It is impossible to relocate these pigs. Our trapper was respectful and considerate. He was not a ruthless killer of wildlife.

I do not support lethal measures when non-lethal measures can work. But removing lethal measures from the available options when dealing with damage by wildlife is short sighted and may prevent the effective and safe resolution of a situation where a lethal option is the most efficacious. Additionally, residents who do not have lethal options via a trained Wildlife professional may resort to initiating their own lethal measures (Poison, shooting) with increased danger to themselves and their neighbors.

In reviewing the letters that have been submitted I see many from non-residents. Additionally, I see many letters from people concerned about elimination of higher predators and disrupting the natural order of wildlife. Many letters espoused the same talking points of a well-organized campaign for eliminating lethal measures. I think these people are well intended and I understand their concerns. However, their letters demonstrate an ignorance of the lived experience of growing livestock. If you want to eat grass fed, humanely grown animals, then you need to support the people who provide that type of livestock. I think they are also unaware and ill-informed of the realities when people and wildlife cohabit in the same area. They are OK with protecting a coyote when it tries to kill a rancher's sheep. They may not be as protective of a mountain lion that is killing all the neighborhood pets. That mountain lion cannot be safely relocated anywhere as it will only return to the easy pickings of neighbor hoods where pets are plentiful. I sadly had this experience when living in Albion. The trapper again was not a ruthless killer of wildlife. The young female mountain lion was only going to continue her actions, putting pets and people at risk.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. This is a complicated issue which a one size fits all solution is not the best choice. I think we can work together to support our local wildlife through providing wildlife corridors and dedicated space where they can live. Simple elimination of lethal measures will not solve, and may exacerbate, the current issues we face when dealing with wildlife/ human interaction.

Sincerely

Marilyn Magoffin
Covelo