

My name is Gowan Batist. I'm a Mendocino county sheep rancher, part of the dynamic young generation here educated in Holistic Management and grazing as part of a formal Carbon Farm Plan. I've received awards for my work that bring attention to Mendocino County, and helped launch other successful graziers and shearers. I was recently interviewed by the Ukiah Daily Journal about our non-lethal practices and the track record of those practices, which allow us to graze on the border of State Forest in the presence of a large population of wildlife and frequent interactions with the public in a way that's safe, both for my animals, people, and the wildlife that naturally live here.

Since that article was published on July 12, I have been introduced to the culture of intimidation and harassment that exists in Wildlife Services. Both my seriously ill father and I have received threatening phone calls from a former Mendocino County trapper, current Wildlife Services employee and named individual in the lawsuit that suspended their contract here. The first time he represented himself as an angry wool grower with questions for me- the hostile tone of the message on my cell phone led me to google the number which revealed it listed as belonging to Chris Brennan. The second time he called my father, who picked up, and was told the caller was a blogger with the surname Summer who was seeking a meeting with me and wanted information about my location and contact numbers. When my father refused, Brennan shouted abuse at him and specifically mentioned my dogs in a way I consider an imminent threat. The number used to call my father was the same as before, listed as belonging to Chris Brennan. Why is a government employee trying to gain access to me by deception, albeit ineptly? Are these tactics endorsed by his employer, Wildlife Services, and are they endorsed by Mendocino County BOS? I have never had any interaction with this person before and did not name him personally when interviewed, so I believe I am being singled out due to my picture being featured in the July 12th article and being a female rancher whom he thinks he can intimidate. I demand an explanation from his employer, Wildlife Services. Can we expect this treatment should your contract be renewed?

I find it deeply ironic that the predator I am forced to protect my livelihood, personal safety and the safety of my animals from is Wildlife Services, not wildlife. Before this, the issue of the use of nonlethal means has been one of professional and personal ethics to me- I don't believe private businesses should receive a public subsidy to prop up their poor management. I know first hand that it's possible to run a business grazing here without using their service, and the best and most current science agrees. Now, a personal layer has been added. The enabling culture of this organization and its abusive employees has been revealed to me, as has the fact that I am far from alone in experiencing this kind of harassment. Apparently, this is what you can expect for daring to suggest that native animals be allowed to exist in their native territory, and that there are more effective methods for coexistence than indiscriminate killing. The toxic "good old boy" network that minimizes and protects this kind of behavior is appalling and I'm disappointed in all those in leadership positions in law enforcement and County government who have enabled it for decades. As Dan Gjerde's constituent and neighbor, I want him to adequately explain why he would consider legitimizing someone who is harassing us in this way.

The choice of whether or not the conduct shown by this organization is deserving of County tax dollar support and legitimization is one that is left to the BOS today, and believe me when I say I will judge you personally and professionally by your choice. The choice to live on this land with

respect for the native animals is mine, as is the choice to be intimidated or not. To that I will say- I live with lions. I certainly will not fear any man, on any day of my life, and will not be silenced.

Thank you for your time.