

# MARIPOSA COUNTY

Agricultural Commissioner · (209)966-2075



## **RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2015-247**

MEETING: June 2, 2015

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Cathi Boze, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

RE: Letter of Support to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors for the Wildlife Services Program

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### **RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:**

Approve a Letter of Support to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors for the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) Program, and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Letter. The Wildlife Services program in Mendocino County was recently challenged and it is appropriate to offer support to other rural counties on the same programs that are in operation in Mariposa County and that provide valuable services to the citizens of Mariposa County.

The USDA APHIS Wildlife Services program was included for the first time in the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer's budget in FY 1988/1989 and continues to date for FY 2015/2016. The Wildlife Services program is a shared cost program with the federal government for the services of a fulltime Wildlife Services Specialist operating within the County.

Wildlife Services' overall goal is to maintain a biologically-sound Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) program to assist property owners, businesses, private citizens, and governmental agencies in resolving wildlife damage problems and conduct control activities in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

The Wildlife Services program: services both urban and agricultural problems and provides technical assistance as needed; protects livestock, crops, property, and natural resources including threatened and endangered species; removes animals which pose a threat to public health and safety (e.g. rabies in skunks; beaver dams on creeks; and mountain lions, bears, and coyotes in close proximity to residences); and conducts disease sampling of animals for plague, pseudo rabies, brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis, and other zoonotic diseases.

### **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:**

The Board has approved letters of support in the past on issues and programs that will benefit the citizens of Mariposa County.

**ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:**

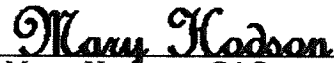
Do not authorize the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to sign the letter. Individual Board members may write their own letters of support which may not carry the weight of a letter endorsed by the entire Board.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Mariposa County WS support letter for Mendocino County program (DOCX)**

**CAO RECOMMENDATION**

Requested Action Recommended



Mary Hodson, CAO

5/26/2015

**RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER:** Kevin Cann, District IV Supervisor

**SECONDER:** Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor

**AYES:** Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Carrier

# Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

District 1 ... ROSEMARIE SMALLCOMBE  
District 2 ..... MERLIN JONES  
District 3 ..... MARSHALL LONG  
District 4 ..... KEVIN CANN  
District 5 ..... JOHN CARRIER

June 2, 2015



MARY HODSON  
County Administrative Officer

RENE LAROCHE  
Clerk of the Board

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[www.mariposacounty.org/board](http://www.mariposacounty.org/board)

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors  
c/o - Clerk of the Board, Mendocino County  
501 Low Gap Road  
Ukiah, California 95482

RE: Letter of Support - Wildlife Services Program

The Honorable Mendocino County Board of Supervisors,

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors supports the Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) program that the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) agency implements in California. This program brings vital services to many different constituencies, both rural and residential, within Mariposa County to alleviate human/wildlife conflicts in a professional manner using non-lethal methods (Technical Assistance) whenever possible. The program supplies needed protection to the livestock industry, public and private resource lands, and human health and safety.

WS is able to provide trained individuals with the appropriate equipment that other agencies do not have access to. It is important to our citizen's well-being to have the ability to remove single individual animals within a local population that have become habituated to depredating on livestock, may be causing serious damage to resources, or may pose a human health or safety risk. Without the WS-IWDM program, the resolution of wildlife conflicts would be left to untrained individuals or residents, with possible negative consequences. These could include higher numbers of wildlife species killed; possibly the wrong wildlife species being killed through misidentification; and more non-target animals killed as a result of using non species-specific or illegal methods.

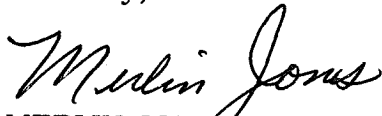
Human health and safety requests deal with wildlife interactions that are causing, or have the real potential to cause, harm to the citizens of Mariposa County, including threatening or aggressive animals as well as animals that can potentially carry diseases transmissible to man (rabies, plague, bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis, etc.). Property and natural resource protection is afforded the citizens of Mariposa County by the removal of wildlife causing damage and losses in our rural residential areas: be it structural damage or losses in gardens, vineyards, and orchards, 4-H, or hobby-scale animal operations. Reducing the damage and losses caused by predatory wildlife to the livestock and crops of the ranchers and agricultural producers in Mariposa County is another fundamental aspect of the current program.

It is reassuring to note that the IWDM program operates under compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and has received positive consultations with both the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service relating to environmental impacts and Threatened and Endangered species impacts.

The presentation to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors on May 5, 2015, by Project Coyote focused on non-lethal alternatives to the Wildlife Services program, but it was clear from the public comment received that most producers are already using non-lethal methods with varying degrees of success. The WS-IWDM program provides an additional control option when owner-initiated non-lethal methods prove inadequate. As mentioned above, Wildlife Services responds with its non-lethal technical assistance options as the initial approach to resolving wildlife conflicts.

We are pleased that you were able to reach a settlement agreement recently with the various organizations that challenged the Wildlife Services program in your county and we encourage you to continue to provide this critical service for the residents of Mendocino County as you move forward.

Sincerely,



MERLIN JONES  
Chairperson

cc: Chuck Morse, Mendocino County Agricultural Commissioner

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors  
c/o – Clerk of the Board, Mendocino County  
501 Low Gap Road  
Ukiah, California 95482

Letter of Support – Wildlife Services Program

To the Honorable Mendocino County Board of Supervisors,

Ms. Carre Brown, District 1, Chair  
Mr. John McCowan, District 2  
Mr. Tom Woodhouse, District 3  
Mr. Dan Gjerde, District 4  
Mr. Dan Hamburg, District 5

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors would like to take this opportunity to convey their support for the Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) program that the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) agency implements in California. This program brings vital services to many different constituencies, both rural and residential, within Mariposa County to alleviate human/wildlife conflicts in a professional manner using non-lethal methods (Technical Assistance) whenever possible. The program supplies needed protection to the livestock industry, to both public and private resource lands, and for human health and safety. Wildlife Services is able to provide trained individuals with the appropriate equipment that other agencies do not have access to. It is important to our citizen's well-being to have the ability to remove single individual animals within a local population that have become habituated to depredating on livestock, may be causing serious damage to resources, or may pose a human health or safety risk. Without the WS-IWDM program, the resolution of wildlife conflicts would be left to lesser trained, or untrained individuals or residents, with possible negative consequences. These could include higher numbers of wildlife species killed (the mandate to only take single culprit animals within a local population would be lost); possibly the wrong wildlife species being killed through misidentification; and more non-target animals killed as a result of using non species-specific or illegal methods.

At the request of resource or property owners that have suffered loss or damage and after confirmation of the loss being attributable to wildlife, the Wildlife Services Specialist responds in an attempt to resolve the situation. The IWDM program provided by Wildlife Services includes: technical assistance via demonstration and instruction on species identification, wildlife exclusion, and/or control techniques; prioritizing and addressing any request that involves human health or safety concerns arising from wild animal interactions; predator removal when livestock, crop, or natural resource damage is verified; nuisance wildlife removal when property damage is identified (including damage to non-agricultural private property); and disease surveillance and response.

Working in conjunction with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Wildlife Services program helps manage select wildlife species and provides important disease surveillance information as well. Technical assistance is the initial approach used in responding

to requests for assistance and seeks a non-lethal solution to the damage being caused wherever possible. Resource owners are given advice and information on ways to reduce predation on livestock, damage to property, or avoid attracting nuisance wildlife onto their property. Quite often, technical assistance is successful in resolving the conflict and no further action is needed.

Human Health and Safety requests deal with wildlife interactions that possibly are causing, or have the real potential to cause, harm to the citizens of Mariposa County. These include threatening or aggressive animals and animals that have, or potentially can, carry diseases transmissible to man (rabies, plague, bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis, etc.). Property and Natural Resource protection is afforded the citizens of Mariposa County by the removal of wildlife causing damage and losses in our rural residential areas: be it structural damage or losses in gardens, vineyards, and orchards, 4-H, or hobby-scale animal operations. Resource managers, both public and private, have the option to call on Wildlife Services to address wildlife-caused damage and losses to public and private lands. Reducing the damage and losses caused by predatory wildlife to the livestock and crops of the agricultural producers and ranchers in Mariposa County is another fundamental aspect of the current program. Once the losses are confirmed and if technical assistance proves ineffective, the wildlife species responsible for the loss is identified and single individual animals within a local population are targeted. In most instances, non-target animals that may be caught are released. It is reassuring to note that the IWDM program operates under compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and has received positive consultations with both the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service relating to environmental impacts and Threatened and Endangered species impacts.

While the presentation to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors on May 5, 2015, by Project Coyote focused on non-lethal alternatives to the Wildlife Services program, it was clear from the public comment received that most producers there are already using various non-lethal methods with varying degrees of success. The WS-IWDM program provides an additional control option when owner-initiated non-lethal methods prove inadequate. As mentioned above, Wildlife Services responds with its non-lethal technical assistance options as the initial approach to resolving wildlife conflicts.

We are pleased that you were able to reach a settlement agreement recently with the various organizations that challenged the Wildlife Services program in your county and we encourage you to continue to provide this critical service for the residents of Mendocino County as you move forward.

On behalf of the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors,

Merlin Jones  
Chairperson

cc: Chuck Morse, Mendocino County Agricultural Commissioner