

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Transitioning wolf compensation



Defenders announced on Aug. 20, 2010 that it will be transitioning its landmark wolf compensation program. Defenders will be providing additional support to some western states and tribes to aid in the transition as they take over compensation. The implementation of new federal legislation that provides funds to initiate state-run compensation programs will allow Defenders to focus on promoting coexistence by partnering with ranchers to prevent conflict between livestock and wolves.

Why are you transitioning your compensation program now?

After 23 years of compensating ranchers for livestock lost to wolves, Defenders of Wildlife is bringing its highly successful program to a close. We are thrilled that our dedicated conservation efforts, in combination with federal legislation authored by Senators Jon Tester (D-MT) and John Barrasso (R-WY), have allowed states to follow suit and establish their own compensation programs.

When the compensation program was launched in 1987, we planned to compensate ranchers for verified livestock losses to wolves until state, federal or tribal programs took its place. We've honored that commitment and have continued to pay compensation across the Northern Rockies and Southwest.

However, with the passage of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, which included a provision by Sens. Tester and Barrasso authorizing funds to initiate state-run compensation programs, the time has come to transition livestock compensation programs to the states and focus instead on expanding our programs that help wolves and ranchers coexist.

In the Southwest, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have also formed the Mexican Wolf Interdiction Trust Fund to compensate ranchers for their livestock loss to wolves.

State-run compensation programs to increase tolerance for wolves are appropriate and timely. We contributed \$100,000 to the state of Montana in 2008 and 2009 to help start a state-run compensation program there. We're pleased that more states will now be able to do the same, and we will be providing seed funds to help other such programs

launch as well. In Idaho, compensation payments already made to livestock producers this year will be credited toward fulfilling the state's matching funds requirement. In Arizona and New Mexico, Defenders will make a contribution to the Mexican Wolf Interdiction Trust Fund, which will provide for livestock compensation. In Washington, Defenders will offer a substantial contribution to help the state meet its matching funds requirement. Defenders will continue to offer livestock compensation in Oregon, Colorado, and Utah, and with certain tribes, for one year while those states and tribes adopt measures necessary to establish livestock compensation programs.

What are you doing with the money that went into compensation?

Now that most states are taking on compensation responsibilities, we anticipate focusing on supporting proactive conservation and wolf coexistence partnerships. Defenders will make a one-time contribution to some compensation programs to help them get up and running, and will focus on preventing conflicts between wolves and livestock before any animals are harmed. This includes helping ranchers hire range riders to watch over livestock, installing fences equipped with fladry – brightly colored flags that scare off wolves – and using nonlethal hazing techniques when wolves get too close.

What is the “Wolf Coexistence Partnership” all about?

While compensating ranchers helps build tolerance and social acceptance for having wolves on the landscape, it does nothing to prevent future

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conflicts. The goal of our Wolf Coexistence Partnership is to work with ranchers to minimize losses and conflicts altogether. There are a variety of preventative, nonlethal tools we use to protect livestock and discourage wolves from preying on them:

- Range riders provide a constant human presence near livestock to help keep wolves at bay.
- Guard dogs are good at detecting wolves and can alert a nearby herder or rider.
- Portable fencing or fladry (red flags strung across a rope or electrified wire) can be used to pen livestock in overnight and keep wolves away.
- Nonlethal hazing techniques, such as shining bright lights or firing a starter pistol, can act as a deterrent to wolves.
- Removing livestock carcasses and protecting carcass pits will help prevent wolves from being attracted to the area.
- Moving livestock to alternate grazing pastures away from known wolf dens can keep them out of harm's way.

For more details, we have an entire [guidebook](#) dedicated to nonlethal techniques for reducing conflict between wolves and livestock. You can also read more about our Wolf Coexistence Partnership at www.defenders.org/coexistence.

What are the impacts on livestock producers who lose livestock to wolves?

States will be establishing their own livestock compensation programs, with financial assistance from the federal government and, initially, from Defenders of Wildlife. Nothing should change except for the name on the check. Ranchers who used to receive compensation from Defenders of Wildlife will now receive compensation from a state agency or the Interdiction Fund. Meanwhile, Defenders will continue to be a go-to resource for wolf conservation efforts, and we look forward to sharing our expertise and experience with state

wildlife agencies as they take over compensation. Our regional staff will continue to have a strong presence on the ground, focusing on helping landowners and wolves better coexist through techniques that help to prevent depredations before they happen. With the states taking over compensation, we will have more time and staff resources to work with ranchers to safeguard livestock and save wolves. We are also smoothing the transition by offering a one-year financial commitment to help states and tribes that do not yet have compensation programs in place.

Does this have anything to do with the recent lawsuit decision restoring federal protections for wolves under the Endangered Species Act?

No, it is totally unrelated. This process was set in motion with the passage of the federal legislation sponsored by Senators Tester and Barrasso, which took place long before the ruling came down from the U.S. District Court in Montana. While we are pleased that the court decided to restore protections for wolves, this had nothing to do with our plans to evolve our focus from paying compensation to promoting coexistence. We had always planned to transition out of compensation once states took it over, and we're glad that is now happening. Working with ranchers to protect livestock and save wolves will continue to be a top priority, regardless of the legal status of wolves in the region.

Will you be doing away with compensation completely?

Defenders will officially end its livestock compensation program for wolves on September 30, the end of our fiscal year. But we will continue to honor our commitment to states that are likely to have wolves in the future, and to tribes that do not yet have compensation programs in place. To help smooth the transition, we will make funds available in Oregon, Colorado, and Utah, and on Apache tribal lands in Arizona, for another year and work with these states and tribes to help get their

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programs up and running. Our field staff will also provide input and guidance to help with this process.

Fortunately, many states are already paying compensation or are well on their way. In 2008 and 2009, we provided a total of \$100,000 to the state of Montana to help set up its compensation program. Compensation claims are now handled by the state, so we no longer pay compensation there, although we do have a representative who sits on the board that oversees the program. We continue to invest in coexistence projects in Montana to help keep wolves and livestock apart and safe (including two range rider projects outside Glacier and Yellowstone national parks).

Ranchers in Arizona and New Mexico are now eligible to receive compensation through the Interdiction Fund being administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and advised by regional stakeholders. Defenders will make a substantial contribution to the Interdiction Fund this year to support their compensation and coexistence programs. The Interdiction Fund will allow ranchers to have greater control in determining how funds are spent, and we look forward to partnering with them to protect both livestock and wolves.

In 2010, Defenders has already paid more than \$140,000 to the state of Idaho for compensation and coexistence efforts. This amount exceeds the total matching funds necessary to meet the FY2010 funding requirements under the federal legislation. Defenders will process compensation claims received by September 10. Claims received after September 10 will be forwarded to the state for processing and payment. We will maintain our anticipated commitments for FY2011 for proactive wolf conservation work. Coexistence partnerships have been a major priority in Idaho, and this year marks our third season returning to the Big Wood River Valley to work with sheep producers. We sponsor, train and manage a team of field technicians that protect more than 10,000 sheep as they move across summer grazing allotments in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. In three years, we've lost only a handful of sheep thanks to nonlethal prevention techniques such as putting up fencing, using guard dogs and hazing wolves at night.

Wyoming already has its own compensation program in place, so Defenders will no longer make payments for livestock lost to wolves. However, we will continue to look for additional opportunities to partner with ranchers to promote coexistence.

Oregon now has two confirmed packs of wolves with breeding pairs living in the northeast corner of the state. Ranchers have already experienced depredations, but the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is not allowed to pay compensation under state law. Defenders will continue to pay compensation for one additional year until a state-run compensation program is established. Meanwhile, we continue to partner with the state wildlife agency on projects that promote coexistence with wolves, including helping to remove predator attractants such as livestock carcass pits, and providing funding for a range rider to watch over livestock. We have also committed to working with the Oregon Cattlemen's Association on new state legislation to implement a state-run compensation program.

Colorado and Utah are not known to have breeding wolf packs living within their borders, so they are not currently eligible for funding through the new federal legislation. However, individual wolves have dispersed there and are likely to continue to do so. Defenders will pay compensation for one year until state-run compensation programs are established.

Washington has two confirmed wolf packs living in the north-central and northeastern parts of the state. Defenders will make a contribution to help the state meet its matching requirements in order to receive funds through the new legislation.

What are you doing to help tribes?

Tribal cooperation has been and will continue to be vital to wolf recovery. Tribes are eligible for only a limited amount of funding under the federal legislation, and no formal application process yet exists. On Apache tribal lands in Arizona, where Mexican wolves currently exist, we will continue to pay compensation for one additional year and help them design a tribal-run compensation program.

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Will additional funding be made available in the future?

The federal legislation makes a five-year commitment to paying compensation through state-run programs, but only funding for the first year has been appropriated thus far. Defenders is committed to working to help secure longer-term federal funding for compensation programs.

How will Defenders contributions be counted towards state matching funds?

Funds expended by Defenders in its compensation and proactive programs may help the states and tribes to access the federal funds available under the federal legislation by serving as a third-party match.

Will this decision affect Defenders' grizzly compensation program?

No, we will continue grizzly compensation as usual as well as our proactive and coexistence work to protect livestock from grizzly bears. The federal legislation authorizing funding for state livestock compensation programs only applies to livestock lost to wolves.

What should ranchers do now with their compensation claims?

Defenders will continue to process compensation claims it receives by September 10. Claims received after September 10 will be forwarded to the appropriate state for processing and payment. In Oregon, Colorado, and Utah, where compensation programs are not yet in place and for Arizona's White Mountain and San Carlos Apache tribes, Defenders will continue to pay compensation for one more year. After that, and for all states that will be receiving federal funds, claims should be submitted to the proper state-run compensation program. For more information, please contact the appropriate agency below or your state wildlife agency at <http://www.fws.gov/offices/statelinks.html>.

New Mexico and Arizona	Wally Murphy U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service P.O. Box 1306 Albuquerque, NM 87103-1306 (505) 761-4781 Wally_Murphy@fws.gov
Idaho	Dustin Miller Office of Species Conservation 304 N. 8th Street, Room 149 Boise, ID 83702 (208) 334-2189 x1555 dustin.miller@osc.idaho.gov
Montana	George Edwards Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board PO Box 202005 Helena, MT 59620-2005 (406) 444-5609 gedwards@mt.gov
Wyoming	Wyoming Game and Fish 5400 Bishop Boulevard Cheyenne, WY 82006 (307) 777-4600
Washington	Harriet Allen Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife 600 Capitol Way N. Olympia, WA 98501-1091 (360) 902-2515
Oregon, Utah, Colorado and Apache tribes	<i>Send claims made in FY2010 or FY2011 to:</i> Suzanne Asha Stone (Northern Rockies) Defenders of Wildlife PO Box 773 Boise, ID 83701 sstone@defenders.org Craig Miller (Southwest) Defenders of Wildlife 110 S. Church Ave. Suite 4292 Tucson, AZ 85701 cmiller@defenders.org <i>Claims made after FY2011 should be sent to the appropriate state or tribal agency.</i>

For more information, please contact:

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