

**MONTANA WOOLGROWER ASSOCIATION POLICY
Resolutions for 2017**

ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL/PREDATOR COMMITTEE

Grizzly Delisting (2016)

MWGA encourages our congressional delegation to introduce legislation and appropriations to delist the Grizzly bear for the entire state of Montana.

Wolf and Grizzly Management (2016)

Whereas livestock losses caused by wolves and grizzlies in Montana continue to increase at an unacceptable level.

Whereas emphasis and funding for wolf and grizzly management needs to prioritize protection of livestock and especially in the case of grizzly management to maintain public safety.

Whereas MWGA agrees that USDA Wildlife Services be the primary agent in wolf and grizzly damage control.

Therefore be it resolved, MWGA insists FWP reimburse Wildlife Services for all of the work WS performs on wolves and grizzly bear damage management.

Further be it resolved, MWGA work towards securing adequate funding for WS for wolf and grizzly depredation as well as funding for depredation control of other predatory animal species.

Predator Control Methods (2016)

The MWGA strongly encourages continued use of all current and new developments in viable predator control methods.

Beneficial Alliances (2016)

The MWGA recognizes the need for beneficial alliances with agricultural, sportsmen, and non-agricultural entities that will assist in maintaining, understanding, and enhancement of predator control and wildlife populations.

Permanent Wildlife ID of Transplanted or Relocated Wildlife (2015)

Whereas Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) moves wildlife individuals within the state;

Be it resolved that MWGA seeks legislation directing FWP personnel work with Wildlife Services (WS) in developing a permanent wildlife ID program in which all ID information on any transplanted or relocated wildlife individual is to be kept and made available to FWP and WS on a 24 hour basis. Any bear or wolf that is handled shall be identified with an easily visible tag in each ear and a permanent ID.

Per Capita Funding (2015)

Whereas the Board of Livestock cut predator control funding by 52% in 2003 even though total per capita collections were down only 8% the same year,

Whereas the BOL kept predator control funding at or below the 52% reduction for 5 consecutive years starting in 2003 even though total per capita collections returned to a level even higher than 2003 levels in 2004,

Whereas predator control is vital to livestock producers in the state of Montana,

Whereas livestock losses to predators are higher in Montana than they have been for over a decade,

Whereas, USDA WS per capita account has completely depleted carry-over funds.

Whereas, prior to 2003 over 13% of total per capita went to predator control,
Therefore, be it directed that the MWGA request that the BOL restore predator control funding to the 2002 level of 13% of total per capita and to seek to reauthorize the statutory predator control appropriations.

Livestock Protection Dogs (2015)

Whereas Livestock Protection Dogs (LPD) are commonly used for nonlethal predator control and,

Whereas LPD's are instinctively independent when performing their protective duties, with little human intervention;

Therefore be it resolved that MWGA support legislation that would enhance producer's protection from liability and treat LPD's like livestock under State statute.

FWP Liability for Bears (2015)

Whereas the FWP determines the final disposition of grizzly bears captured for livestock conflicts and human safety issues and black bears captured for human safety concerns

Be it resolved, the MWGA seeks legislation directing FWP personnel to either authorize USDA Wildlife Services to euthanize the problem animals or lethally remove the problem animals themselves or accept liability for any relocated animals and to permanently identify relocated bears.

Montana LLB Restitution (2015)

Whereas the Montana Livestock Loss Board (Montana LLB) is responsible for reimbursing livestock producers for livestock depredations caused by wolves and grizzly bears.

Whereas the Montana LLB has limited funds from the federal government, state appropriations, and private donations,

Whereas there has never been sufficient funds to indemnify livestock producers for livestock killed by wolves, and no funding for injured or missing livestock,

Further be it resolved, MWGA supports restitution for grizzly bear damage.

Therefore be it resolved the MWGA insists governmental appropriations fully fund the Montana LLB, namely federal appropriations, so all direct and indirect damages incurred by wolves and grizzly bear be reimbursed as determined by the multiplier.

Feral Hogs (2013)

MWGA supports any and all efforts to keep feral hogs from entering and becoming established in Montana.

Diversion of Wildlife Service's Funding (2013)

The MWGA opposes any diversion of existing Wildlife Service's funding for non-lethal control or for research programs. It also opposes the use of existing Wildlife Service funds for control or research of non-traditional species, e.g. tree frogs and brown snakes.

Furthermore the MWGA proposes that additional money and funding sources be found to provide funds for both lethal and non-lethal research and uses of predator control.

Collaring of Wolves for Monitoring (2013)

The Montana Wool Growers Association request that the agencies responsible for wolf management must continue the collaring of wolf packs mandated by Montana Code "*MCA 87-5-132 Use of radio tracking collars for monitoring wolf packs.*" Funding should not come from traditional predator control used for the protection of private property and livestock.

Public Notification of Infected Wildlife (2013)

The MWGA requests that all state agencies notify the public of any animals/ wildlife identified that may pose a health risk to humans and/or livestock.

Prohibition of Ownership of Wolf Hybrids (2013)

The MWGA supports legislation that would prohibit the owning, breeding, or possessing of wolf hybrids or wolf like dogs as defined by Fish, Wildlife and Parks or any state agency. All previously existing animals would have to be spayed or neutered.

Endangered Species Act (2012)

Be it resolved that until such time as adequate protection be provided for our private property that the MWGA calls for a moratorium on the further listing of species for protection under the E.S.A.

Delist Grizzly (2012)

The MWGA is opposed to the reintroduction of grizzly bears to the Bitterroot-Selway Wilderness Area or to any areas in Montana. The MWGA also opposes the establishment of corridors between populations and supports the delisting of grizzly bears from the Endangered Species list.

Montana Wildlife Services (2012)

The MWGA would like to recognize the personnel of Montana Wildlife Services for doing a commendable job with limited resources.

Illegal Predator Control (2012)

The MWGA does not condone irresponsible or illegal predator control activities on public or private property.

Fish, Wildlife Funding (2012)

MWGA recognizes the importance of predator control on game populations and encourages the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, and legislature, to continue, and increase, funding for predator control. Furthermore, MWGA believes this funding should be used in areas where there is a benefit to protect livestock from predators and that WS should have some discretion where that work is done.

Wildlife Services Funding for Wolf Control (2012)

The MWGA opposes any effort to shift existing predator control funds to wolf management, or control.

EPA Petition for M-44 and 1080 LPC Suspension (2012)

The MWGA opposes the suspension and cancellation of the pesticide labels for M-44 Sodium Cyanide Capsules and Sodium Fluoroacetate Livestock Protection Collars.

State Wolf Management (2012)

The MWGA supports a state wolf management plan that allows for more liberal and aggressive wolf damage control actions, including lethal, as the wolf population and/or range expand in Montana. Furthermore, coyote control methods should not be impacted by these expanding wolf populations.

Trapping Ban (2012)

Whereas Trapping is an important wildlife damage management tool for ranchers, farmers, home owners, and USDA Wildlife Services; and

Whereas This critical management tool helps control problematic predator and pest populations that kill livestock, attack pets, spread diseases among humans and wildlife, damage property, and negatively impact wildlife population; and

Whereas Trapping is an important part of the livelihood for many Montana families; and

Whereas trapping has been a part of our heritage and culture since before Montana became a state and we need to defend our way of life from extremists who are unwilling to acknowledge the damage problematic wildlife can cause;

Therefore be it resolved, the Montana Wool Growers Association supports the continued trapping on public land in Montana.

Wildlife Services Funding (2012)

Whereas the MWGA supports continued funding for Wildlife Services under USDA and increased funding is needed to reduce livestock losses.

Whereas Montana law provides that the Montana LLB is to work with Wildlife Services on mitigating and preventing damage done by wolves and grizzly bear,

Therefore be it resolved that MWGA supports legislative efforts to obtain adequate state funding through the Montana LLB that would allow both the Montana LLB and Wildlife Services to effectively carry out their missions.

FARM FLOCK

Scrapie Tags (2016)

The MWGA encourages APHIS to purchase the voluntary and the mandatory ear tags for the Scrapie Program.

National Scrapie Eradication Program (2016)

The MWGA encourages the continuing education of the National Scrapie Eradication Program to producers as well as organizations and agencies involved in the sheep and goat industries, including, but not limited to auction yards, and county extension agents.

Mentor Program (2016)

MWGA supports the ASI Mentor and Young Entrepreneur Program which is part of the Let's Grow Initiative and directs the board to seek grants to assist new sheep producers.

MSU Shearing School (2016)

MWGA supports the MSU Shearing School. MWGA is encouraged to maintain a list of shearing school graduates interested in shearing for hire.

NSIP (2015)

The MWGA supports the National Sheep Improvement Program and encourages its members to make use of it through an aggressive education program developed by Montana State University for Extension Services and Producers.

Niche Marketing (2015)

The MWGA supports and encourages niche marketing for both wool and lamb. We support our members who find alternative markets for their products.

Noxious Weed Control Funding Sources (2015)

The MWGA supports and encourages producers in seeking sources of funding through grants, private funding and other sources to assist in noxious weed control.

Continuing Education (2015)

The MWGA encourages continuing education opportunities for beginning sheep producers through the resources at MSU, ASI, and the Young Entrepreneur Program.

Small Flock Outreach (2015)

Whereas, small flock producers comprise 50% of sheep producers in Montana and many of these small flock are in confinement or on irrigated pastures,

Whereas, internal parasites are increasing in frequency,

Be it resolved, that the MSU Extension Program is strongly encouraged to place increased emphasis on farm flock health and management programs.

MSU Extension (2014)

The Montana Woolgrowers would like to express their gratitude to Montana State University Animal and Range Sciences Department and Extension for hiring a Sheep Specialist and are looking forward to this continual working relationship.

Ewe Sale at Montana Ram Sale (2013)

MWGA supports a ewe sale in conjunction with the state ram sale.

MWGA Web Page (2013)

The MWGA encourages continuation of the MWGA web page and inclusion of educational opportunities and links with Montana State University, ASI, etc. and encouraging more current updates.

Grant Applications (2013)

The MWGA should seek grants expanding opportunities for applied research involving the Sheep Industry.

Farm Flock Research (2013)

Recognizing the fact that farm flocks contribute to the economic, educational, and cultural aspects of the sheep industry in the state of Montana; Therefore the MWGA supports the need for research useful to farm flock producers.

Youth Programs (2012)

The MWGA encourages its membership participation in youth programs and involvement in the sheep industry.

Natural Lamb (2012)

The MWGA encourages the Montana State University to explore opportunities for better production and marketing, and to establish criteria for natural lamb and or wool products, and a database of producers meeting these criteria.

PRODUCTION, MARKETING, ANIMAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

Trade Barriers (2016)

The MWGA supports elimination of non-scientific based health trade barriers.

U.S. Government Wool Usage (2016)

The MWGA encourages the United States government to increase their use of domestic wool through the support of the Berry Amendment.

Imports (2016)

The MWGA encourages trade policy that benefits American sheep industry's products over imported product.

MSU Wool Lab (2016)

MWGA requests that MSU maintain a functional wool lab facility located within the MSU campus and MSU continue to seek funding for the wool lab manager position as part of its base budget. The facility should maintain operations that continue to utilize appropriations including federal initiatives, experiment station funds and grower funds, to ensure quality research that applies directly to MWGA and Montana producers.

Lamb Processing Facilities (2016)

WHEREAS, the sheep industry produces a product as opposed to a commodity and recognizing there could be a potential bottleneck within the existing supply chain,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED MWGA supports efforts to expand the number of lamb and mutton processing facilities in the United States to ensure future industry stability.

Montana State University Sheep Program Infrastructure (2016)

WHEREAS, MWGA recognizes the importance of the combined efforts of sheep programs at Montana State University, specifically the Sheep Specialist, Wool Lab, and County Extension Network.

WHEREAS, these programs and the people responsible have a very positive impact on the sheep and wool producers within Montana, as well as throughout the United States.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED MWGA directs its executive secretary to coordinate efforts in cooperation with Montana State University to enhance the future services provided by the Sheep Specialist, Wool Lab, and MSU Extension Network.

Value Added Programs (2015)

The MWGA supports value added programs. These efforts have a great potential for positive influence to all segments of the industry.

Increase in LDP rate (2015)

The MWGA supports an increase in the LDP base rate on wool and that adjustments be made in the program to encourage more wool to fall into the graded category rather than the ungraded category.

Range Days Committee (2015)

The MWGA shall create a "Range Days" committee to include at least one MWGA board member as well as area producers to insure representation of the Association in program planning and helping to provide one noon meal during the event.

Industry Expansion (2015)

The MWGA supports the American Sheep Industry's Lets Grow Program.

Buyers/Firms Dues Collection (2014)

The MWGA would like to express their sincere appreciation to all the Wool Pools and wool buyers/firms for their efforts in collecting MWGA dues.

Livestock Management Practices (2014)

Federal regulatory agencies have recently questioned routine and historic domestic range management practices.

Be it resolved that MWGA supports efforts to continue operations and encourage regulatory agencies to recognize routine and historic livestock management practices.

Wool Certification Program (2014)

The MWGA supports producer involvement within the ASI sponsored Wool Certification program.

MSU Sheep Research Site Identification (2014)

The MWGA supports the need for pertinent research for Montana sheep producers by Montana State University to preserve the profitability of the industry.

Whereas the strength of the sheep research program is dependent on the Wool Lab, Red Bluff research facility, and Fort Ellis research facility. The MWGA requests that the Dean/V.P. of the College of Agriculture at Montana State University formally designate the mission and existence of the research facilities to be:

- Fort Ellis – Sheep Research Station
- Red Bluff – Multi-species Rangeland Grazing Research Station
- Montana Wool Lab – Wool Research, Education and Grower Services

MSU Wool Lab use within regional states (2014)

Whereas MWGA recognizes the importance of the MSU wool lab to neighboring states and the region,

Whereas some neighboring states have recognized the importance of a viable MSU Wool Lab and passed resolutions of support for the continuation of and expansion of the MSU Wool Lab,

Therefore, MWGA supports the expansion of the MSU Wool Lab's technology and expertise for service within the region as long as this increased effort does not affect the services being provided to Montana producers.

US Sheep Experiment Station (2014)

MWGA supports the continuation of the Dubois, Idaho US Sheep Experiment Station. Coordinated lab efforts with Montana's research infrastructure and specific goals beneficial to the western sheep industry are very important to the future success of the sheep industry.

Electronic Grading (2014)

MWGA supports the integration of electronic grading technology being added to the existing lamb harvesting operations. Used appropriately, electronic grading should provide efficiencies through cut-ability within the lamb plants and feedback to the lamb producers with regards to the most profitable lambs for the industry and its consumers. It is very important the proper feedback is communicated back to producers in order for proper genetic selection to be accomplished.

Sheep Extension Specialist (2013)

WHEREAS, MWGA recognizes the importance of the MSU Extension Network,

WHEREAS, the MSU Extension Network is an integral part in the distribution of important agricultural research and production tools,

WHEREAS, the position of Sheep Extension Specialist is mandated by Montana statute,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED MWGA strongly requests that the Sheep Extension Specialist position be filled and remain on-site on the Montana State University campus.

Industry Roadmap (2013)

MWGA supports the goals of the Industry Roadmap initiative:

To identify and analyze the major challenges facing the American lamb industry, to propose the most effective solutions to those challenges, and to develop a strategy for the industry that will strengthen its short-term and long-term competitive advantage and return the industry to consistent profitability.

USDA Purchase of American Lamb (2013)

The MWGA supports USDA use of American lamb for USDA programs

Private Property Rights (2013)

The MWGA supports legislation protecting private property rights vital to the ranching industry. We oppose legislation that will take private property rights.

The H2A Program (2013)

The MWGA supports the existing H2A program, which is our main source of migrant workers to ensure labor laws are not adversely changed or deleted.

Elk and Bison Brucellosis Management (2013)

The MWGA supports relevant agencies, working in coordination with Montana producer organizations, in the development of a proper brucellosis management plan for both elk and bison within the state of Montana.

Independent Contractor Exemption for Shearers (2013)

The MWGA encourages sheep shearers to acquire their Independent Contractor's Exemption and will provide support to facilitate it.

MWGA also supports legislation exempting sheep shearers and wool handlers from needing an exemption certificate.

MSU (2012)

The MWGA commends the MSU Wool Lab and the work of the MSU sheep specialist, sheep faculty and researchers. The MWGA encourages continued oversight of the sheep teaching, research, and wool programs at MSU by the MWGA-MSU Advisory Committee.

Country of Origin Labeling (2012)

The MWGA supports country of origin labeling.

Legislative Report Card (2012)

The MWGA supports continuing the practice of publishing a "Legislative Report Card" by the MWGA and other agriculture interests to provide valuable information to producers.

Livestock/Agriculture Merger (2012)

The consolidation of the Montana Department of Agriculture and the Montana Department of Livestock is not in the benefit of the sheep industry.

Therefore, the MWGA is totally against any consideration of this consolidation.

Noxious Weeds (2012)

MWGA encourages state & federal land management agencies to take steps to stop the spread of noxious weeds, and especially the use of sheep and goats as a control measure.

MWGA further encourages recognition & education of the public about sheep and goats as a method of noxious weed control & pledges their continued support of Montana State University in their efforts to control noxious weeds.

Brucellosis Management (2012)

MWGA continues to support the Inter-Agency Bison Management Plan (IABMP) as a method of managing brucellosis. MWGA supports producer managed efforts to prevent brucellosis. MWGA also supports efforts for protecting Montana's brucellosis "class-free" status.

Livestock Theft (2012)

Livestock theft historically has been and continues to be a threat to the industry. Producers have the right to protect their property and to be protected by laws handed down by the state legislature. People involved in such crimes should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Therefore, the MWGA supports legislation to make livestock theft or brand altering a mandatory prison term if convicted.

Horse Slaughter Ban (2012)

The horse market as an industry is vitally important to the United States agriculture industry. Therefore, the MWGA opposes legislation banning the transportation for slaughter or direct slaughter of horses.

Animal ID (2012)

MWGA supports the continued development of more efficient and economical methods of source identification. Research should be focused towards lowering the financial impact upon producers, while increasing the market value of our products through consumer confidence.

Quality Product Control (2012)

MWGA supports efforts for the improvement and enforcement of quality control measures in marketing lamb, mutton, and goat products.

Export (2012)

MWGA supports foreign export markets for lamb, mutton, goat, and wool products to provide added value to the US sheep and goat industry.

MSU Vet Science Curriculum (2012)

Whereas MWGA recognizes the strong agriculture reputation of Montana State University and encourages the tradition of delivering quality education.

Be it resolved, MWGA supports the expansion of the curriculum of Veterinary Science at MSU.

LAND USE

Sage Grouse Protection (2016)

The MWGA opposes any action on Sage Grouse protection that would negatively affect management of private and public lands for livestock grazing.

Livestock Driveways (2016)

Whereas the MWGA recognizes the importance of traditional and historic livestock driveways, be it resolved that the MWGA supports the continued unrestricted use of these driveways

Public Land Access Damage (2016)

Whereas public access for hunting and recreational purposes is causing damage to, including but not limited to roads, fire, erosion, and the spread of noxious weeds,

Whereas these activities cause unnecessary hardship and frustration to the land lease holders

Be it resolved that MWGA work together with Fish Wildlife and Parks, public land agencies, and land owners to address issues of damages caused to Private land from Public land access encroachment

Bison Translocation (2016)

The MWGA opposes the translocation of bison for the establishment and the introduction of free roaming bison in Montana.

State Land Fee Increase (2016)

The MWGA opposes rate increases on State Land, which are not based on current or future market value and cause undue hardship on leasees.

Multiple Use (2015)

Whereas the MWGA has long supported the multiple use concept, including grazing practices presently used on public land, the MWGA endorses the community coalitions advocating continued multiple use of public lands and make available allotments not under permit.

Impaired Streams (2015)

Whereas the Water Quality Bureau has listed various streams in Montana as “impaired streams” and

Whereas at this time very little data has been collected to prove their impaired status,

Whereas this will have dramatic impact on private property rights and economic factors,

Therefore be it resolved that the MWGA opposes the Water Quality Bureau's general listing of stream as impaired without sufficient data.

Antiquities Act (2015)

The MWGA opposes the abuse of the Antiquities Act of 1906 to designate monuments in Montana.

Property Rights (2015)

The MWGA supports the protection of all private property rights.

PR (2015)

Whereas certain adversarial groups have attacked our sheep industry with intention to harm and defame and

Whereas public education and awareness of our industry has been negatively portrayed by false accusations and sensationalism,

Be it directed that ASI proactively and aggressively pursue actions to curb those negative attacks through targeted public relations campaigns and legal avenues.

Translocation of Bighorn Sheep (2014)

WHEREAS, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) has adopted a Bighorn Sheep conservation strategy for the State of Montana;

WHEREAS, The strategy calls for transplanting Bighorn Sheep to new areas of Montana and augmenting existing Bighorn Sheep populations;

WHEREAS, The strategy envisions reintroducing bighorn Sheep in areas where domestic sheep are to be found and adjacent to private and leased lands;

WHEREAS, The MWGA is recognized by the FWP in the conservation strategy as a critical partner in the management of Bighorn Sheep;

WHEREAS, The MWGA supports efforts to ensure the health and viability of the Montana Bighorn Sheep population;

WHEREAS; MWGA's support is conditioned on the conservation strategy's recognition of private property rights, protection of existing grazing leases and MOUs, and cooperation with producers;

WHEREAS, MWGA is concerned that FWP may make Bighorn Sheep management decisions using unproven assumptions that domestic sheep transmit disease to Bighorn Sheep.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that MWGA requests that FWP:

- Adhere to FWP's 1995 Bighorn Sheep transplant policy for newly established herds;
- Follow all environmental laws and regulations prior to transplanting Bighorn Sheep or transplanting existing herds;
- Comply with Montana's Importation, Introduction and Transportation of Wildlife statutes (MCA 87-5-701-711), which recognize that transplanting and reintroduction of wildlife is prohibited unless there is **no** threat of harm to agriculture and the transplantation has significant public benefits.
- Avoid interfering with existing grazing rights;
- Honor all existing MOUs;
- Assume the liability and risk for transplant failures and Bighorn Sheep die offs; and
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with landowners to identify areas not appropriate for Bighorn Sheep transplanting and augmentation.
- Base its Bighorn Sheep transplanting and existing population augmentation efforts on sound, proven disease science, and proper scientific investigation and environmental analysis.

US Sheep Experiment Station (2014)

The Montana Woolgrowers Association supports the US sheep experiment station and its use of ARS lands in its entirety. Montana Woolgrowers Association also supports the allocation of ARS funds to accomplish the function of a pertinent and applicable sheep research facility at Dubois. MWGA encourages research in areas of wildlife-livestock interaction.

Sage Grouse (2014)

Whereas the state of Montana has implemented a sage grouse management plan through executive order.

Whereas the conservation districts have implemented a successful program through S.G.I. (sage grouse initiative) and have people working in core sage grouse areas.

Whereas the majority of core sage grouse habitat is private land.

Therefore be it resolved The Montana Woolgrowers support the Montana state sage grouse plan so long as funding and FTE are under the direct supervision of locally lead groups such as the conservation districts and the Montana Association of Conservation Districts. Any sage grouse management efforts must be undertaken in collaboration with and the consent of private landowners.

EPA Waters of the US (2014)

The Montana Woolgrowers Association supports the historic definition of the word navigable as used in the US Constitution and therefore opposes any regulatory effort to extend federal government's jurisdiction over waters of the US, such as those efforts of the US EPA to regulate ditches, prairie potholes, non-perennial streams, and creeks.

FWP Land Purchase (2013)

Whereas Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) has been purchasing private land parcels throughout the state,

Whereas (FWP) has no fiscal plan for future management/upkeep ie...fencing of these purchased lands,

Whereas (FWP) is in direct competition with private citizens purchasing agriculture use lands, thus taking them out of production agriculture,

Whereas (FWP) has failed to adequately fund wolf management activities,

Therefore be it resolved MWGA is against all current and future land purchases by (FWP),

Be it further resolved MWGA request (FWP) shift dollars used to purchase land into predator control which benefits all species of wildlife as well as livestock production.

Travel Management Plan (2013)

The MWGA supports a travel management plan for public lands, which include BLM, Forest Service, and state lands, provided the holder of grazing permits are guaranteed exemption for management purposes.

NEPA and MEPA Compliance (2013)

The MWGA will work with public land management agencies on behalf of member permittees to ensure that those permittees are not adversely affected due to compliance with the NEPA and or MEPA process.

Government Grazing Permit Buy Out (2013)

The Montana Wool Growers Association is opposed to any legislation that would buy out grazing permits.

American Heritage River Initiative (2012)

MWGA opposes the American Heritage River Initiative.

BLM Notification (2012)

MWGA strongly recommends that, in accordance with their existing policy, BLM notify permittees prior to accessing allotments for any activity.

Pasturing Agreements (2012)

Whereas the Bureau of Land Management and the livestock industry recognize pasturing agreements as a necessary and legitimate range management tool provided for use within federal grazing regulations and,

Now therefore be it resolved than any violation or abuse of these grazing regulations are in no way condoned by the MWGA and should not be permitted by the Bureau of Land Management.

Drought, Insects and Temporary Circumstances Policy (2012)

The MWGA urges the Public land managers not to react too hastily to range conditions brought by drought, fire, insects or other temporary circumstances, by adopting untried policies, which may be counterproductive in the long run. Instead, the MWGA suggest consultation and cooperation with range users and utilization of existing management techniques, which have proven their worth.

Furthermore, existing policies should not be abandoned hastily for a promised quick fix.

Species Introduction and Relocation (2012)

Whereas, BLM, Forest Service and State Lands are mandated for multiple use purposes, e.g. grazing, wildlife, oil and gas, timber and recreation, and

Whereas, federal and state agencies are attempting to relocate, introduce or re-introduce species on public lands and in streams that may have a negative impact on these multiple uses, and

Whereas, this relocation, introduction or re-introduction will have an impact on future funding of the MFWP and DNRC due to the loss of revenues generated from the multiple uses of these lands,

Now therefore be it resolved, MWGA urges the agencies to perform a scientifically sound economic and social impact statement before any species relocation, introduction or re-introduction occurs.

Public Access Control (2012)

Public access for recreational purposes is causing damage from fire, erosion, and the spread of noxious weeds, and is causing unnecessary hardship and frustration to the land leased holders. The poorly marked public land boundaries leads to damage on private land and causes unnecessary hardship and frustration to lease holders.

Therefore the MWGA requests that the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, DNRC, BLM and County Law Enforcement come together with land owners and lease holders to find common ground on permanent boundary markers and the enforcement thereof.

Limestone Hills Training Area. (2012)

Whereas the National Guard wishes to withdraw approximately 25 sections of BLM Land from the public domain that are adjacent to an existing training area presently used by the National Guard. These lands are utilized by both sheep and cattle grazing leases that are administered by the BLM. MWGA supports the preferred alternative of the Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) which will allow continued grazing administered by the Department of Defense.

Resolution to “Amend Montana Department of Revenue Agricultural Grazing Lands Productive Value for Property Tax purposes” (2012)

Whereas: Montana Code Annotated Section 15-7-103 states that “Land classified as agricultural land or forest land must be classified according to soil type and productive capacity. In that classification work, use must be made of soil surveys and maps and all other pertinent available information.”

Whereas: MCA 15-7-201 states “The Legislative intent on valuing agricultural land is that the value determined reasonably approximates that which the average Montana farmer or rancher could have attained.”

Whereas: The Montana Department of Revenue has failed in it’s obligation under Montana Law to fairly classify grazing land. In many situations DOR has identified productive capacity of grazing lands to be three or more times higher than Natural Resource Conservation Service range technicians have established for the ranchers grazing system using the same “Soil Survey and other pertinent available information that the DOR is required by law to use. (See Rebish & Helle, Helle Livestock, Ruby Dell Ranch, Sauerbier Ranches, Inc vs. The Department of Revenue of the State of Montana).

Whereas: The Montana Department of Revenue, in its’ attempt to find a “one size fits all” approach to valuation of agricultural land in a State as large and diverse as Montana, has failed to provide the County DOR Offices with the flexibility necessary to arrive at land productivity values characteristic with area conditions.

Be it therefore resolved that: The Montana Woolgrowers Association work with other appropriate Montana agricultural producer associations to work with the Montana Department of Revenue to modify it’s internal procedural process to allow County DOR Offices the flexibility to work with local Natural Resource Conservation Service Offices and local landowners to arrive at a valuation system to determine land values for taxation purposes which uses “Soil Surveys ... and other pertinent available information ... to value agricultural land ... *which* ... the average Montana farmer or rancher could have attained”.

Be it further resolved that: If a reasonable resolution to this situation cannot be attained working within DOR’s internal procedural processes, Montana Woolgrowers Association and others will seek action through the Montana Legislature to amend the law governing DOR’s agricultural land valuation procedures.

Be it further resolved that: That the Montana Woolgrowers opposes any change in shortening land reappraisal schedules. Furthermore, MWGA seeks remedies for discrepancies in reappraisals through the ag land valuation committee.

GENERAL

Promotion Directive (2015)

Whereas promotion of lamb and wool is a priority of MWGA and,

Whereas the Country Store and the Promotion Outreach Committee do many promotion activities,

Be it resolved that this group be made an official committee to include a MWGA Board Member appointed by the President.

Authorization of Board Actions

Whereas, the bylaws of the association authorize the MWGA Board of Directors to establish interim policy during the course of the year, and whereas, the MWGA Board of Directors have so acted during the course of the year;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the interim policies established by the MWGA Board of Directors during the course of the year, and the management and control by the Board of Directors be hereby approved and is ratified by a majority of the membership of the association according to the bylaws of the association at the 2016 annual meeting held December 3rd 2016 at Billings, Montana.

