

Custer County
Special Meeting Proceedings
Idaho Counties – Endangered Species Discussion
February 20, 2024

The Special Meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM in the Custer County Commissioners Room. Those attending the meeting in person were Commissioner Randy Corgatelli, Commissioner Steve Smith, Chief Deputy Clerk Tamra Giampedraglia, NRAC Chairman Jim Hawkins. Commissioner Jake Zollinger also attended via Zoom. This meeting was hosted by Mary Darling of Darling Geomatics via Zoom. There were eighteen (18) participants, including representatives from Idaho County Commissioners, Washington County Commissioners, Clark County Commissioners, Caribou County Commissioners, Lincoln County Commissioners, Lemhi County Commissioners, Valley County Commissioners, Clearwater County Commissioners and Valley County Parks & Recreation.

Mary Darling shared a screen presentation that she had prepared. She began with an introduction and a summary of her professional experience and affiliations. Mary advised that her belief is that “silence is deadly”, that to make a difference you need to have a voice and make that voice heard. She advised that through her experiences, she knows how to put logistics into language that Federal agencies will understand and may be more inclined to listen to.

Ms. Darling shared her first slide which listed some of the issues that she would be able to assist with addressing:

- 1) Wolves
- 2) Grizzly Bears
- 3) Wolverines
- 4) Sage Grouse
- 5) Decarbonizing the West
 - a) Discussion regarding the fact that the plan has been presented to decarbonize the west by 2030, which would entail moving citizens from rural areas into cities. There are alternatives to decarbonization, those need to be presented to agencies that will listen.
 - b) Agencies have cherry picked data for decades and there is a large margin for errors. There is more data out there that has not been reviewed or used, they have relied on temperature data from NOAA and water data has been “selectively” analyzed.

Mary Darling advised that there is data and studies that have been completed that should be presented to the Federal Agencies. An example is a study done by the U of I in regards to sage grouse. This was a ten (10) year study which states that cattle have no influence on nest success of the grouse. Federal agencies need to review data such as this rather than just guessing and making decisions without any backing. If they are given good data, they may be able to make better decisions.

Custer County Commissioner Steve Smith asked Mary to give a breakdown of her invoicing structure for Counties. Mary advised that she bills out at \$208.00 per hour. She has not billed

for phone calls, coordination or general advise. Mary advised that she is willing to work within any budget. Mary advised that "more voices are stronger" and that the cost is less if more Counties are on board.

Mary Darling advised that it will take a strong front to be able to make a difference. She feels that the Governors' office is in favor of supporting the Counties but that the Federal Agencies have more of an obligation to listen to all views and are swayed by those organizations that bring in litigations.

The floor was open to questions or comments from the audience.

Joann Rutler of Lincoln County asked if issues such as the Lava Ridge Wind project could be addressed along with the other issues. It was advised that all issues that are presented would be addressed, as each county is battling different issues. She asked what Mary Darling's experience was in this area and Mary gave several examples of instances she addresses similar matters.

Skip Brandt of Idaho County asked about the time frame to unify. Commissioner Steve Smith advised that he would send out an email to get numbers of Counties willing to join together and then another meeting can be scheduled to discuss the logistics.

Larry Laxson of Valley County Parks & Recreation advised that he strongly feels that there needs to be a unified opposition to these issues. He feels that Valley County would be willing to join in to give assistance.

Brandt of Idaho County would like to see a meeting scheduled within the next two weeks. Does not want to lose momentum.

Commissioner Randy Corgatelli advised that if even twelve (12) counties joined together, the cost would be approximately \$4000 to each county, a minimal amount to address these issues. He asked if possibly Mary could write up a potential contract that each County, and their Prosecutors, could review and then bring back to the next meeting. Mary agreed that she would begin working on a contract.

With no further business before Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:22 PM.



Attest:



Lura H. Baker, Clerk


Randy Corgatelli, Chairman
Custer County Commissioner