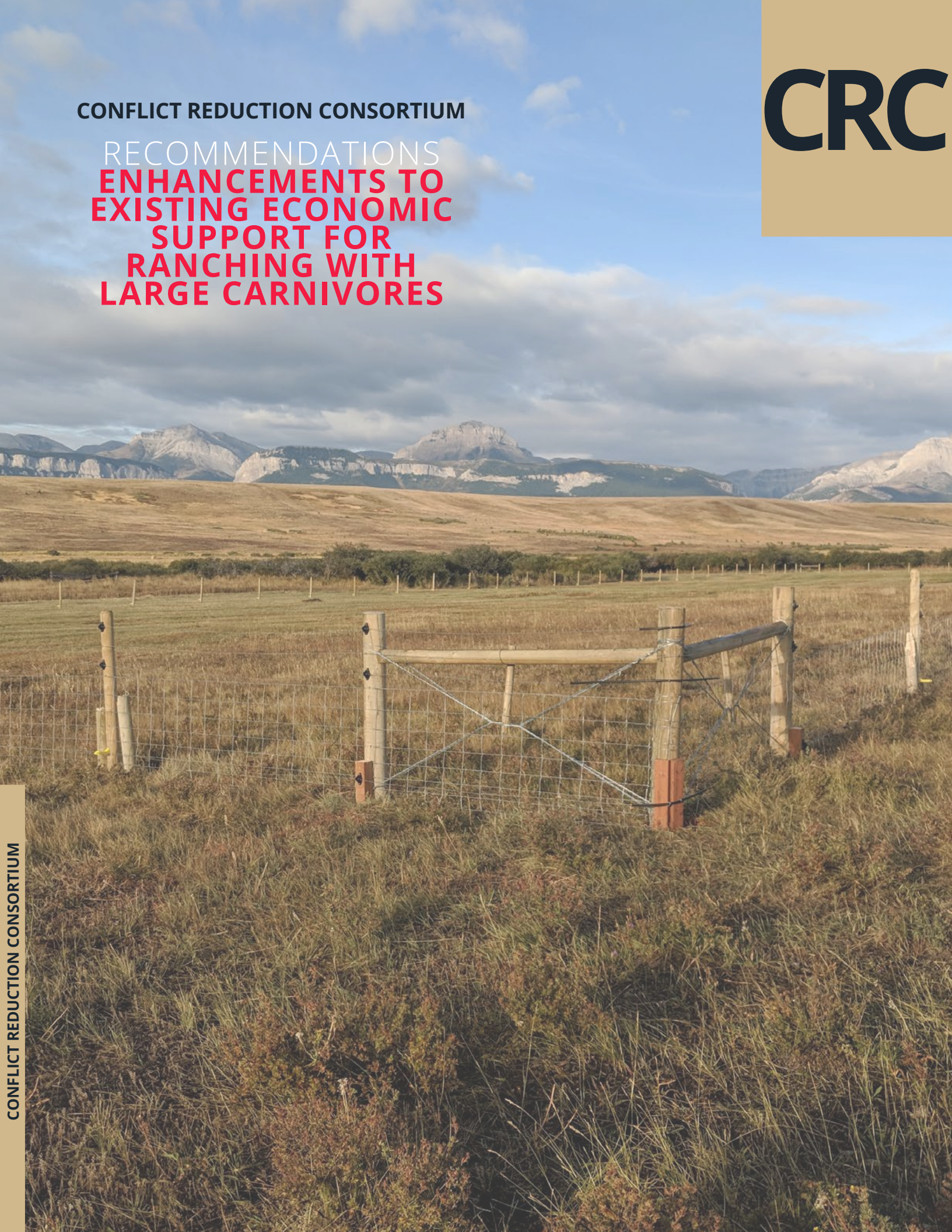


CONFLICT REDUCTION CONSORTIUM

RECOMMENDATIONS
**ENHANCEMENTS TO
EXISTING ECONOMIC
SUPPORT FOR
RANCHING WITH
LARGE CARNIVORES**

CRC

CONFLICT REDUCTION CONSORTIUM



INTRODUCTION & PRINCIPLE STATEMENT

Enhancements to existing economic support for ranching with large carnivores

Economic support for agricultural lands that provide important wildlife habitat can prevent habitat loss and loss of connectivity through land conversion. The most biodiverse lands are typically private lands, which are also the most at risk. The recommendations in this document provide opportunities for the public to invest in sustainable stewardship across all ownerships.

PRINCIPLE STATEMENT

Livestock producers have a connection to the livestock, land, and wildlife they steward. They do not want livestock harmed or killed, regardless of whether there is compensation, though they recognize that in some cases it may occur. Appropriate and durable depredation compensation¹ strategies should be available as well as financial and technical support for employing non-lethal conflict reduction strategies where and when possible. In promoting conflict reduction measures and depredation compensation, achieving resource goals and providing accountability must be paramount. However, methods of providing accountability must still ensure support to address resource concerns.

In an effort to both conserve wildlife and protect livestock, producers that operate in areas subject to depredation implement non-lethal conflict reduction techniques where and when possible. Even with implementation of non-lethal conflict reduction techniques, depredation will continue to occur. This is especially true as large carnivores recover and repopulate their historic range and as ungulate migrations are conserved.

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¹

Depredation compensation is financial assistance provided to agricultural producers who incur losses to agricultural production, for example livestock, due to depredating wildlife species such as wolves

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Wildlife is a public resource. The American public, as a whole, values the presence of diverse wildlife across the West, including large carnivores. We recommend funding sources for depredation compensation reflect the fact that these species are a public resource.

- Current state funding for wildlife conservation and depredation compensation is not sufficient and does not reflect the extent and geographic scope of public support for conservation. Additional federal, state and private funding sources are needed to supplement existing state efforts to support compensation for depredations and distribute the costs of providing habitat for wildlife.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Support for agricultural producers on working wild landscapes must be multi-faceted. Sustained, durable support to agricultural producers is needed to address the ongoing economic costs associated with wildlife on working lands.

- A multi-faceted program should include existing compensation programs, assistance with implementation of traditional and newly developed conflict reduction measures, and support for the cost of providing wildlife habitat.
- Develop long-term funding for payment for presence or habitat lease programs.
- Support farm bill revisions to include funds for use in a habitat lease program and conflict reduction measures.
- Support increased funding and resources for the Mexican Gray Wolf-Livestock Coexistence Council - a multi-faceted program supported by producers and conservationists - and similar programs as they are developed.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Develop and pilot a habitat lease concept that recognizes sustained stewardship of wildlife habitat by agricultural producers.

- Consider the following factors in development of a habitat lease program:
 - variable gradients for payments based on productivity of land and the wildlife sustained by habitat
 - state, federal and private funding sources are necessary
 - additional outcomes are not required

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Explore the use of depredation compensation programs that use context appropriate multipliers,² recognizing that multipliers will vary based on the depredating species and landscape specific features (e.g. pasture size and cover).

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

Support improved funding and cost-share programs for implementation of traditional and newly developed conflict reduction measures where and when possible.

- Support resources for conflict reduction measures (electric fencing, herding, etc.) not just on private land but also on public grazing allotments, including funding through farm bill programs such as EQIP, CRP and CSP.
- Support research and collective knowledge sharing (training) on best practices for conflict reduction measures. Involve land stewards in this research, innovation, and knowledge sharing.
- Agency personnel need to have training in livestock management techniques, operations, and depredation mitigation, especially when conflict reduction measures are a condition of a federal grazing permit.
- Recognizing the effective implementation of conflict reduction measures may not always be possible in all situations, we recommend an adaptive management approach that integrates multiple solutions for reducing conflict based on the best available research and the particular circumstances of individual operations should inform decisions.
- Build flexibility into grazing management plans on private, state and federally administered lands, to reduce potential for conflict between wildlife and livestock.

RECOMMENDATION SIX

Support monitoring and research to evaluate social conflict, human/wildlife conflict, sustainable carnivore and ungulate populations, and sustainable economies where compensation is available.

- Measure and assess the impact of existing and future compensation and conflict reduction programs toward reaching overall goals.
- Recommend testing in pilot projects.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

Recognizing that successful conservation of large carnivores is resulting in expanding large carnivore populations and increasing depredations, we recommend increased funding and training for investigators to ensure timely and accurate investigations of possible depredations.

²

For example, Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Regulations Chapter 28 states that in geographic areas determined by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to have terrain, topography and vegetative characteristics that influence the ability of the producer to find missing calves and sheep that are believed to have been damaged as a result of depredation by grizzly bears, compensation is determined by the number of calves and sheep confirmed killed by grizzly bears multiplied by 3.5 times the value of the livestock, not to exceed total animals missing.

CRC MEMBERS IN SUPPORT

Centennial Valley Association
Madison Valley Ranchlands Group
Northeast Washington Wolf-Cattle Collaborative
Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association
Western Landowners Alliance

Jared Beaver
Sabrina Bradford
Bradley Ranch - Valier, Montana
Gary Burnett, Heart of the Rockies Initiative
Rick Danvir, Basin Wildlife Consulting
Hannah Jaicks, Future West
Kyran Kunkel, Conservation Science Collaborative
Cole Mannix, Mannix LLC
Rae Nickerson
Sam Ryerson, Grass Nomads LLC
Avery Shawler

A photograph of a herd of cattle grazing in a field of green shrubs and trees. The cattle are of various colors, including black, brown, and white. The background is a dense forest of green trees.

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