

PROJECT SUMMARY

CONSERVATION INNOVATION TO REDUCE PREDATOR CONFLICTS ON WORKING LANDS

An opportunity to

- **Implement and refine predation management techniques by ranchers**
- **Collect data to determine efficacy and cost of three conflict reduction practices - carcass removal, fencing and range riding**
- **Create durable public funding to support Western ranching operations with predators**

The goal of the project is to reduce the financial and social burden to private landowners of expanding predator populations through innovation and evaluation of techniques that reduce predator conflicts on working lands, leading to more resilient ranches, rural communities and maintenance of connected landscapes.

The project team, led by Heart of the Rockies Initiative and Western Landowners Alliance, in partnership with USDA-Wildlife Services and producer groups and ranches in Montana, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Washington, Oregon and California has established these objectives for the project:

1. Evaluate nonlethal predation management techniques for costs and effectiveness by co-producing knowledge with livestock producers.
2. Establish and support collaborative predator conflict reduction programs on working lands through the facilitation of peer-to-peer producer knowledge exchange to scale implementation of effective predation management techniques.
3. Coordinate with NRCS and private landowners to make predation management techniques available as conservation practices.
4. Integrate the collective experience and knowledge gained in a user-friendly, comprehensive guide for effective implementation titled, Support Toolkit for Livestock Producers Implementing Predation Management Techniques.

TECHNIQUES UNDER STUDY

We have identified three predation management techniques as the most in need of evaluation because they hold the most promise to scale predation management across the West. These will be designed to supplement lethal control as part of a holistic approach to sustaining working lands that includes the “4 C’s” - conflict reduction, compensation, control (lethal) and collaboration.

RANGE RIDING

EVALUATE DIFFERENT STRATEGIES, EFFECTIVENESS AND CONSISTENCY ON DIVERSE LANDSCAPES

Currently, the common definition of range riding consists of the application of human presence in a diversity of forms on open range or large pastures. The goals and techniques of range riding are often diverse and context-dependent, and include monitoring livestock health and predator activity, actively hazing predators, detecting livestock depredations, grouping cattle and communicating between livestock producers, range riders, and wildlife managers. Primary gaps in knowledge around the utility of range riding include appropriate application, which may vary by time and space, habitat type, producer interests, age class and species grazed. Assessment of effective techniques in different contexts while accounting for the variability across different landscapes and ranch interests will provide the compelling information needed to enhance the efficacy of the application of these techniques.

CARCASS MANAGEMENT

DEVELOP A SET OF GEOGRAPHICALLY-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CARCASS REMOVAL AND COMPOSTING

Carcass removal can be a significant tool to reduce attractants that may draw carnivores into areas with livestock. There are a number of unknowns and challenges that are specific to geographic areas and jurisdictional entities. We propose to compile and evaluate strategies for carcass management under different ecological conditions and geographies, and develop a list of recommended best practices for communities and local government implementation.

ELECTRIC FENCING

COMPILE DATA AND CONDUCT META-ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVENESS OF TURBO FLADRY, HIGH-TENSILE ELECTRIC FENCE, AND POLYWIRE FENCING AS LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Electric fencing can be an effective predation management technique and offers a wide variety of types for producers to choose among, from permanent electric fences to temporary electrified corrals. The scale, costs, and durations need to be better assessed. Of the fencing tools, electrified fladry, known as turbo fladry, is perhaps the most well-researched and widely used tool for wolf management, while electrified high tensile is often used to deter bear damage.

For more information contact Gary Burnett, executive director, Heart of the Rockies Initiative at gary@heart-of-rockies.org.