

>> Greetings everyone, we'll get started in about 8 minutes, thanks for joining us.

>> Good morning, good afternoon everyone. We'll get started in about five minutes.

(please stand by)

>> Thanks for joining everyone, we'll get started in another minute or two.

(please stand by)

(please stand by)

>>

at this time, I would like to welcome Nate Owens he joined the heart of rockies initiative as policy director in 2022, having spent ten years working for the Utah division of wide life services as a program manager he transitioned to the policy world he focuses on legislation and policy from conflict reduction, rural development and private land conservation, Nate you may now begin.

>> Nate. . thanks Jen and thank so much for NRCS with providing the opportunity to present to all of you on the exciting work we're doing.

We have a great panel of speakers lined up for this presentation.

I also want to acknowledge, all those individuals who have contributed to this work in so many valuable ways.

I'll begin with taking a minute or two to introduce the speakers.

>> Nate, sorry there's a large echo -- sorry to interrupt.

There's a big echo.

Try muting your Adobe connect speaker.

All right. Now, see if you can say something something.

>> Is that any better.

>> Much, that's perfect. Thank you so much.

>> Ok. Cool thank you. Ok.

Thanks everyone, again, I'll start off by introducing the amazing speakers we have lined up.

First off we have Astor Boozer, Astor is a regional conservationist in the west region he provides leadership and support to the state conservationist and partners on natural resource issues concerns and the agency's mission.

Through his leadership and NRCS strengthened the partnership collaboration and customer service within the region.

He has worked to improve private and public lands conservation and reduce the burden on landowners gaining access to the USDA technical and financial assistance programs and services.

Astor is native Texan grew up on the farm and ranch operation has worked for USDA NRCS for over 34 years a graduate of Prairie view A and M university, he appreciates the out door loves to hunt and

fish and ride horses next we have Lauri Brown she is a biologist with two decades of experience serving wild life and wild places she started professional career in 2001 as Idaho game in southeast Idaho concentrating on then moved to Helena to reenergy guys the nongame wild life management program for Montana fish wild life and parks.

Lauri's current role is wild life division bureaus coordinator or aka chief cat herder she enjoys closing deals to benefit wild life or habitat, hiking horse riding and sleeping under the stars with her fishing outfitter husband and amazing teenage daughter. Next we have Kyle he is an assist state conservationist for partnerships in Montana, Kyle started his career in southeast Idaho in 2004, has been in Montana since 2007 he lives in Dillon with his wife and two kids.

Gary Burnett is 3 of one managing directors for the heart of rockies initiative, a partnership of 26 lands working in the rockies of New York merge this follows ten years with the Blackfoot challenge collaborative in western Montana he gathered his experience with predator livestock conflict reduction he serves on the local boards of sculpture in the wild and Lincoln, Montana as the Secretary of a local volunteer fire department. In his pair time Gary enjoys getting outside with his family especially his four grandchildren.

>> N we have a Thad, which is the NCRS technical, he serves as state biologist for NRCA in November November and sage coordinator. He currently is a member of the NRCS NHQ outcomes team where his work focuses on wild life and habitat conservation.

Dr. Breck is a wild life biology with the USDA wild life services, national wild life research centers, his work focuses on the science and outreach, minimizing conflict between large carnivores and people ongoing research is focused on Cayotes, wolves, black bears and polar bears associated with the management and conservation of large carnivores.

And finally, Brianna Owens lives in California with her sons Will and Clyde she runs a small beef operation is a steward for the western landowners alliance. With that I think we're ready to get started.

Astor Boozer will kick us off, thanks.

>> Hey, thanks Nate, really appreciate it and, good morning and good afternoon for others. I'm Astor Boozer, definitely, I want to take this opportunity to just, share a few thoughts from you NRCS regional conservation's perspective and, support from our chief Terry Cosley of the agency.

And his with the work he has done, he is actually pushed us more to be open to new ideas and pushing our CIGs moving forward. So, I just want to take a little bit of time, kind of give a little overview and, kind of say why NRCS does some things. You know, NRCS is uniquely positioned to help private landowners across the nation part of that is due to the fact of having field offices and trained staff basically in every county around the nation.

And a suite of conservation practices to address, identify resource concerns.

So you know I think landowners recognize NRCS as a trusted non-regulatory partner, that they can rely on in helping them implement voluntary conservation on their private lands.

You know, they also appreciate farm bill funding opportunities, technical assistance we have, and the privacy we provide, when it comes to protections and the work we do on the operation.

I will say since you know launch of the agency back in 1930s, during the dust Bowl Era, NRCS has used science based conservation to address resource concerns at that local level. Input from the landowners scientists and staff along with direction from our mission, opportunities through the farm bill, has expanded our agency's conservation delivery.

In recent years, NRCS's conservation efforts have expanded to address you know, energy, climate urban agriculture, wild life the human factor along common swath we've been using for these last 80 plus years or so. NRCS we recognize a need to continue to change and evolve to meet national and local conservation priorities. So the conservation innovative grants I'll refer to CIGs were established to accelerate, creative problem solving and innovation. These grant opportunities support the development of new tools, approaches, practices and technology to further natural resource conservation on private lands.

Over the last 30 years, you know, large mammal predator populations of wolves, grisley Bears have expanded due to ESA protections and reintroduction with changes in management by state wild life agencies.

This is a as a result of increased interactions involving either wolves or Bears that negatively impact both agriculture producer and predators. The wolf issue alone is impacting producers in states ranging from the great lakes upper Mid-west down to the south December desert southwest, some states like Montana producers are dealing with Bears and wolves as conservationists I heard from ranchers, partners, on the need for non-Lethal predator deterrent tools, having these tools available will enable the landowners to be part of the solution in avoiding and minimizing conflicts with wolves and Bears etc. so in 2020, heart of the rockies applied for and received funding for NRCS conservation innovative grant entitled landowner, collaborative strategies for non-Lethal predator control. The project team lead by heart of the rockies initiative and western landowner in partnership with the USDA wild life services and university researchers at Montana state and Utah state working with rancher-led groups and ranchers along across several 7 states within the western region, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington. So during today's CIG webinar, you'll hear from partners, researchers, some NRCS staff, what is being done through this project that will enable landowners to be part of the solution in avoiding conflicts with large predators so with that folks, ah I want to pass it onto Lauri our next presenter. Lauri on to you.
(pause)

[pause]

>> LAURI BROWN: Jennifer can you hear me?

>> Yes.

>> LAURI BROWN: There we, go thank you Astor, as -- introduced Lauri Brown, with the Montana fish and wild life parks and I'm representing the program, that we have in place for Grizzl Bear conflict prevention, Astor our producers struggle with Bears and mountain lines and we have a lot of other significant challenges. What I'm here to point out is what we can do as the slide shows what we do regularly mandate us to preserve wild life and prevent ESA listing we're not business of working directly with landowners to conflicts we're to protect wild life and ESA lists the Bears are listed and wolves are no longer. We do this in a variety of way as shown here.

The primary goal is always to prevent conflicts through things like education and training. Cleaning up, potential conflict areas before they start, so that might be, putting up livestock fencing around calving pastures or Apiaries or back yard poultry operations when we have time, and resources we can proactively assist with Carcass removal there's a large program, a couple of different programs for that,

across the state and again that's just to get attractants out of the private land areas where conflicts may occur.

We have a program particularly on the rocky mountain front where we have, some spilled grain issues which can bring in Bears, in certainly northwest Montana, south of Glacier national park there's also a potential concern area up there as we have a train track that sometimes will have a car that tips over and, um, results some some spilled grain, that brings in Bears in a situation that could eventually lead to a conflict.

Then we can always haze habituated Bear with using rubber bullets or choosing with vehicles you'll hear more about the four Cs later on from Gary and Bri I'll say our participation in the four Cs in partnership with this slide is conflict prevention we always prefer to go with conflict prevention before we have to go to any of the next steps.

So the next steps are to respond to conflicts we do this work regularly.

We provide increased technical assistance where we need to. We can continue to provide materials and remove attractants. But something as, um, the term Astor used was uniquely positioned we are uniquely positioned along with the fish and wild life service and the wild life services to be a party to capture and remove conflict animals or lethally remove, repeat offenders. Those last two bullets there in the middle of the slide, are things we're uniquely positioned to do, along with only two other agencies. That is important because for the sponsor I'm sorry the proactive work there are a lot of parties, that are positioned to do that.

There are a large number of nongovernment organizations that have proactive programs that have funding assistance they can, help livestock producer put up, things to keep animals out of the Pasture, provide the technical assistance we do, a lot of parties that can be involved in that proactive conflict prevention work.

For Montana we have 11 management specialists those are folks are on the ground working with landowners removing attractants they would also be the folks are trapping problem animals. We have 3 research staff, so those are folks are counting bears and highlighting maybe conflict areas and/or connectivityish areas between ecosystems we have a really small team of outreach and education folks with one full-time individual tasked with that job she has lots of assistants from other folks and, technical assistance in education and outreach are really parts, important parts of the specialist roles as well.

Everyone has a hand in going to the county fair and handing out information, but again there's a lot of other partners that do that same kind of work.

The things we can't do, which is important to this talk today is we can't prevent every conflict with proactive measures no matter how many nongovernment organizations or how many bear specialists we have. We have expanding Bear populations we sometimes have landowners that have not lived in the presence of this species in the past, so their operation is not designed to be -- it is not designed to proactively discourage or prevent problems with Bears or other carnivores. And we cannot work with unwillingly land owns, if there's a landowner with an issue, we can't work with them proactively or in response necessarily to a conflict unless they want to work with us.

And like, um, like all other um -- like, all other partners and NGO groups or whomever landowners

have their own sort of unique concerns with any sort of individual group or entity. So, with that said we can't force relationships between landowners and nongovernment organizations. So if a landowner doesn't want to work with us, we can't necessarily force them to work with someone like yellow stone coalition or people in carnivores or any other sort of group, and they might find themselves thinking that there's really no one to help in comes a partner that has has not always been in this discussion that is NRCS.

We feel like there's a significant role here that for land owners have a relationship with NRCS specialists comfortable with that entity if that, if that can be the body that offers another tool, then we're certainly supportive of these new grants and ensuring NRCS practices fit the needs of some of these landowners.

With that said I'm going it turn it over to Kyle from Montana NRCS.

>> Kyle: Jen can you hear me? Yes.

>> Can you hear me?

>> Yes.

>> Ok. Perfect. Thank you.

So first I would like to, thank Jen for moderating this and helping organize it, also, a big thanks to heart of the rockies in western landowners for the work they have done. We have learned a lot it's been a great partnership just really a big thanks.

Before I get started as well Tom Watson state conservationist was not able to make it, he sends his apologies I'll do my best to fill in.

So I don't have really any slides other than this one. So I want to work through really the Montana experience first. And to play off what Astor talked about. In Montana we really do belief in that locally-led targeted approach to conservation and to start with that we need to unpack how we do business here. That's through what we call Montana focus conservation. That is where we do targeted delivery of equipment that is lonelily lent, that is addressing the locally identified resource concern. In this case this is an innovative topic where we're working on, it is locally-led, we're lucky in Montana to have landowner-led groups that have been wrestling with this topic for many years. And really the thought leaders I believe in this, in this arena. So we have groups like the Blackfoot challenge who we'll learn more about in the centennial valley association and other groups like that, that are really helping us understand their needs on the ground asking us those hard questions how we can be apart of the process Montana we do business a little different. Hackerrening to the locally-led targeted approach to conservation. A few years ago we really heard from land owners in Blackfoot valley to work with land owns and fencing and drive over mats to reduce conflict with these predators, these are working landscapes ranches, that want to stay on the landscape they want to maintain their business and maintain their operation but they also are dealing with a lot of conflict with wolves and Grizzly Bears.

We started working with the partners there to figure out how NRCS can play a role there and that led to the development of Blackfoot targeted implementation plan. TIP as you'll see up on the screen so that target implementation plan is 3-5 year look how we can work locally in that landscape, very targeted partner and landowners to reduce conflict on the landscape.

So I think I want to unpack a little bit about the partners there. We're working with fish and wild life and parks we just heard from. The Blackfoot challenge as NGO the fish and wild life service partners program to all bring what we can, to the table to address this challenge so what we're looking at with

this targeted implementation plan is an opportunity for land owners to voluntarily apply to eQIP to do a combination of practices both electric fencing and this electric drive over mat we'll see a video of in a minute. So that is really how we got started in this.

This is also transitioned us and built into a little bit bigger project we're looking at how can NRCS support range riding, Carcass management and electric fencing through the farm bill and what we can do with the farm bill funding. And so, we have worked extensively with western land owners alliance heart of the rocky and others to start seeing where we can take part of the solution, we can be a tool in the tool box we're not looking at taking a tool away stepping on fish and wild life parks toes as you heard from Lauri we have unique abilities and tools we can bring to this challenge. I think when we work together we can provide landowners with many options to help them.

So with that I think Jen will transition to the video here.

And to tee it up while you're working on it the Blackfoot challenge has been collaborating with partners and agencies in ranchers for many years, testing developing electrofied drive over mats, so how they view that is using that in combination with five wire electric fences these mats can redisuse the needs for branches to open and close gates coming and going from the ranches these mats are being produced locally, and I was sitting in that shop last week where some of these mats are being made.

Sitting around the table with NGOs, several ranchers, state agencies, Federal agencies, and it is really, really powerful to listen to the need and the solutions that are coming up.

Jen are we ready to go?

>> It is playing it not playing hang on a minute.

>> Yep.

(pause)

(video)

>>

(music)

(beeping)

>>

(farm equipment sounds)

>> My name is Wayne, and ah, I manage this stretch this ranch I've lived here my whole life I've been managing the ranch for 40 years.

>> We have only been using electric mats for about two years, it helps us to keep the Bears out of our carol and our calving lots the mats are good, because you hate opening gates five or ten times a day. So they're in place of the gate, so it helps us with time you don't want to open and close gates all day and all night.

>> My name is Seth Wilson I'm the executive director for the blackfoot challenge we're hoping this is another tool in the tool box that makes it that much easier to use in electrofied fences imagine if you don't have to open and close a gate all day, with this drive over electrofied mat you can keep the gate open your electrofied fence and home side is protected with that hot fence.

>> So, when you want to put a new mat on the ranch we need to find a site that is dealing with the or potential of having Grizzly conflict.

>> Once the mat site is chosen we grade the site, make sure it is flat.

We can install the mats.

Link them together.

Get them fixed down in the soil.

Once that is done we then hot wire the whole system so the electrofied mat is hot as well as that electrofied fence it is part of.

>> Nice and solid.

>> We can really feel confident when a bear is trying to cross this, it will receive that shock and will not come through that entrance area.

>> We're working closely with the natural resources conservation service, US fish and wild life service, Montana fish life and parks at the heart of this our livestock producers who are willing to try something different and we're excited about meeting them halfway, trying some new technologies and putting this all together in a partnership.

>> Electrofied cattle mats really complement the electric fences and the electric fence gates they can be used together very efficiently.

It will be very useful for ranchers you know they can have a better rest night knowing their stalk is good behind the electric fence these pads make life easier they can go to the check the animals they can drive across the electrofied path, carry out the rest of the day's work.

>> My name is James I work for Montana fish parks I'm region 2 bear specialist I work with the community group the Blackfoot challenge the land oners in the valley were one big old teamworking together.

Trying to solve these problems that are arising because of all the Grizzlies in the area these electrofied mats are going to be another tool for the big tool basket. We across different management situations there are many, many times in my past I wish I had something like this electrofied cattle mat I could have swapped out.

>>

>> All right Jen can you hear me?

>> Yes.

>> All right.

So that concludes my presentation I'm going turn it over to Gary Burnett.

>> Can you hear me?

>> I can hear you.

>> All right that's good. Thank you.

Good afternoon now, for everyone.

Thanks to natural resource conservation service and the invite from Kip and the facilitation from Jen for this learning opportunity for predator livestock conflict prevention and conservation planning.

Conservation, conflict on working lands CIG or conservations grant, our team would like to really provide a big thank you to natural resource conservation service and the extensive staffing help we're getting from the resource service, whether it's Thad or the other state conservationist in their district conservations for this grant for landowner led innovation we appreciate the partnership with NRCS to adopt conservation practices this is administered by the heart of rockies initiative as been said we share coordination duties with western landowners alliance.

The research team is made up of USDA APHIS wild life services Utah state university, and Montana state extension and MSU extension and fish, wild life and parks this is a project partner in the services that Lauri talked about as well as the research effort.

The partnership includes over 600 producers as Astor said over 7 states and that -- some of those producers consider the tribes you see on the screen here. I just wanted to note we've had interest with Blackfoot nation.

All right.

I got to get the next slide up ok. Although CIG is combined conflict prevention, it is important to frame conflict prevention as part of a assistance-based framework.

This framework is as we call it, was developed by the conflict reduction consortium, it is a multistate group of partners producers, agencies, coordinated by western landowners alliance. Refer this as the 4Cs, elements of framework include conflict prevention, along with compensation, control, as Lethal and collaboration, RCIG is combined to combine the conservation we know there are outreach interests from users to access the land with implemented practices as distinct from state and Federal agency roles, for conflict prevention or other elements of the framework.

Conflict on working land CIG is a partnership of 600 producer as I said, across 7 states, and with their landowner-led groups, that's pretty prevalent in Montana and partners, natural resource conservation service and the research team, main goal is to reduce the financial and social burden to ranch operations, caused by predator populations, partners came through with the Montana based landowner led, conservation partnership that the heart of the rockies coordinatessance the consortium with the western landowners alliance.

I mentioned this strong interest we heard from other landowners throughout the outreach efforts. We put together a, this letter you see here, that went to the state western state conservationists looking for increased availability of technical assistance, and financial assistance. The point is they would like increased a availability to voluntary conservation mechanisms to support non-lethal predator management importantly this idea that landowner implemented convict prevention supported by the NRCS conservation is program is complementally to other state agencies so at that point, I just want to point out the letter, the pages 15 different states it is important to note this is not just a list of land owners, but there's some significant representation by producer groups like the cattle mens and farm bureaus I think I am turning things over to Thad.

>>

[pause]

>>

>> All right.

I think I'm unmuted am I coming through now.

>> Yes. Thanks.

>> Thank you sorry for the delay, this has been an outstanding project from the start, and everything.

A lot of partners all contributing a lot of different levels a lot of ranchers helping out and everything. And, um, 2022 Montana NRCS submitted a draft interim practice standard to headquarters for review, contained 3 practices in it and everything.

Carcass management fencing and is the second drive over mats and range riding is the third.

We submitted it -- together through Montana and everything, with the understanding that when headquarters reviewed it they would likely divide it into 3 individual practices but we wanted to have a complete package together and everything. So headquarters is currently reviewing it and everything to make sure that, um, we're compliant with farm bill policy and, statute.

Along with, meeting applicable resource concerns. So, two of the practices are going to be rolled into existing practices with what is being looked at right now carcass management and fencing and drive over mats range riding is looked at and reviewed for the interim practice standard. The goal is to have this ready by October 1 of 2024 for the new fiscal year.

So more to come on that in the coming weeks and everything we don't have anything totally finalized on this yet. So stay tuned for that announcement. As far as the resource concern what is being looked at right now to make sure we could plan and use our financial assistance technical assistance is for the resource concern is to the habitat for wild life and invertebrates more to come on that too, when we roll out additional information coming weeks.

One of the big keys to success of this group is that the collaboration and the formation of technical advisory committees for each one the 3 practices and everything, they have helped contribute information and drafting the interim practice standard that Montana submitted along with new components cost list information, collected from the rankers participating in this CIG and everything, along with scenarios and everything that could be used by NRCS to incorporate this into either existing practices or interim practice standard. Outreach collaboration has been outstanding, and fall of 2022, um, they had -- 3 virtual webinars one on each one of these practices and everything, also, in the fall of 2021 had a 3-day workshop, both of the were virtual and everything because of COVID. They're looking to have an in-person workshop coming in the summer of 2023, stay tuned for that.

Outstanding outreach overall, in building network of landowners and everything working together and sharing information, you'll hear more about this a little bit later in the webinar as far as the partners how they're compiling information and conducting research to help with the development of conservation planning tools and, have a fencing survey, Carcass management study and case study, sensitive range riding field data collection and Bri is going to talk about the risk assessment framework and other tech notes being compiled from this CIG project work.

You'll hear next from Stewart Breck with APHIS wild life services present on the research aspects of this project, with that and everything, I will turn it over to Stewart.

>> Good afternoon, my name is Stewart Breck and as Nate mentioned I work for wild life services in the research branch and, um, importantly, for this project I was recruited to perform the research in conjunction with this CIG project. It is part of the background there we have a parallel research project through wild life services is also evaluating range riding and fencing components as well. That is part of the reason I was brought into this. It is a real pleasure to work with everyone in NRCS and all of the hearted of the rockies and western landowners alliance I should also mention I'm leading the team in this effort but the team also involves folks from Colorado State University, Utah state Montana state university and importantly are the two graduate students that we have recruited onto this project Matt at the top left of this slide Matt Hyde is under my advising at Colorado state and then, Ray is at Utah state with Juli young as her primary adviser. I'm going to give a very high level overview I have a couple of minutes to give a sense of what we're doing with the research.

I think it's really important to mention that we know these practices work especially implemented in effect I have ways so the research is really is really in all 3 of these practices geared towards really understanding more details looking at some of the questions in kind of different ways again with the goal of really enhancing not only NRC Ss knowledge but wild life services knowledge to how best implement these. I'll break down each of the 3 practices in terms of what we know and then, current research to give you as to where we're going so with fencing we definitely know different types of fencing are -- are effective for example electrofencing putting electric fencing around small resources like bee hives or chicken coups can be very effective for you know preventing Bear conflict both Grizzly and black bears and electrofencing there's a long list it is effective and effective when put up properly. It is really limited to species like wolves and coyotes and for these small acreage systems where you may be protecting calvs in small Pastures less than 40 acres we're hopeful to learn more about these in our current research.

Permanent fencing is being implemented more and more primary in the Mid-west so Wisconsin, Michigan Minnesota, where you have these chronic small pasture situations that are just really difficult to, um implement something like fladry, where it may only work for a few months so we're starting to learn more about the permanent fencing it is an obvious solution for certain chronic small farm situations there are important barriers for the implementation of these various tools we understand that but our hope is that with the current research that we're able to really understand especially from the livestock producers more of their perspective about when do these when do these fences work? What kind of fencing works in different situations understanding what kind of impacts the time of operation or the topography or the geography have on successful implementation of the fencing projects importantly here for everyone on this, is there's a survey out active right now that Matt Hyde is using as part of his dissertation and if you, if you can take the survey if you're a livestock producer we would love to have you fill that out and take the survey.

Or if you have connections with livestock producers put up Matt's contact information here so please reach out to him or there's a link here that takes directly to the survey Carcass management we also feel, we know it is effective when -- implemented in the right context. A lot what we know about Carcass management is relate to bone piles that -- that producers may use as a way to dispose of dead Carcasses, especially when those bone piles are near calving grounds or, um, near ranching headquarters that is when we know that the -- conflict will increase because of these bone piles. Cleaning up the bone files there's a fair bit of work already done that is really demonstrating the effectiveness, so our research is one to help elaborate that information, regarding clean up of bone piles. But it is also to look at Carcass management in some -- little bit different light and so we're also evaluating can Carcass in this case, can leaving them out or putting additional Carcass out, be effective in preventing conflict? This is a technique that using down in Arizona and New Mexico, very

limited application. But it also to when is it not necessary to clean up Carcasses these are some of the questions we're trying to dig in with the current research.

Range riding is a really important tool this is a really popular technique or management method that is growing in popularity among livestock producers it is one of our few tools we can apply in the big large wide open landscapes there's a -- um, a lot of advantages to it, it provides adaptive human presence meaning, people can adapt to either a livestock or the carnivores we think that's really important.

It is more difficult technique to research requires a lot more effort in terms of because it is such a big landscape because, people are applying this notion of range riding in different ways some of our current research is really focused on trying to elaborate these differences in how people are implementing it. Also, um, when is it effective to focus on predators, versus focus on livestock management then how does the role of range riding fit into that it is also important that, one of the things we're trying to dig into that has not been looked at as much with kind of practice is some of the indirect impacts so indirect impacts not -- direct impact would be predator kills Cow or a sheep. But the indirect impacts maybe the presence of predators or, attack on, an individual livestock has impacts to pregnancy rates, weight gain, hormonal kind of stressors things like that. So we want to understand can range riding impact these indirect impacts as well? Part of the research, there's -- again this is done primarily by Ray Nickerson will be a survey that goes out to producers where we, really try to dig into these complexities and provide more information to NRCS wild life services how to make these practices most effective I think I'll end with this slide which is Is a really important component what we're doing part undership and then, this notion of co-production.

Some of the partnerships have been mentioned about Gary I also want to highlight that a lot of the data we're using is coming from states including Montana, Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, where we're able to look at some more detailed aspects of these practices, so these partnerships are really critical. In addition to that, Bri will talk about this more is, is what we're really trying to do is co-produce all of the information not only with professionals natural resource professionals but especially with livestock producers and as an example of this co-production there's been an article we published last year it is important to look at this list of authors here several of which are livestock producers.

So we're really excited about how this is moving forward in terms of getting this knowledge co-produced by everyone involved.

So stay tuned to this, there's a lot more that will come out overtime.

And, again, very excited to be part of this I'm going turn it over to Bri now.

>> Thanks Stewart, hello everyone.

So I'm going to continue to build on what the other speakers have been sharing where we're at with some of this process and in terms of compiling information and knowledge and where we're headed.

over the next few months in anticipation of, um, fiscal year 2024 availability of these scenarios and practices.

I did want to note for you all, please go ahead and put questions into the Q&A, um, and we will get to those at the end of the session. We're a little behind our intended schedule but several of us, will be able to stay on longer if we do have questions and, need to go longer.

So just, mentioning a little bit more about this co-production process, that Stewart mentioned, um, this goes well beyond the research it is a critical aspect of the research as part of this team effort um, the team, the whole CCOW-CIG team has been very intentional in making sure all of the information the partnership is really coming from the ground up.

Knowing that producers are being impacted by expanding predator populations that they have tremendous knowledge of their operations, how predators are using the landscape.

But really this process is, it is about communication. And it is about compiling knowledge from those landowners and the or partners on the project. How do we compile knowledge across multiple sources to create opportunities as we move forward really thinking about NRCS conservation delivery thinking that you know is our -- our main objective, is to be able to explore this goal of technical and financial assistance, for conflict reduction, through the conflict prevention practices, through farm bill programs and NRCS conservation delivery frameworks.

This was already mentions by Thad just wanted to hit on it as part of the co-production process what we've been developing over the last two years, building off of all of this momentum, Gary mention and other mentions groups across Montana and all the other efforts by Blackfoot challenge this is years of momentum, that has come together into this COW CIG this is some of the things we've accomplished over the last two years, Thad went through some of these, where we are going is, into compiling all this information to be able to put together some tech notes and then, also, moving towards a landowner tool kit and continuing to convene partners and Thad mentioned, 2023 spring/summer gathering in-person for we're hoping for.

I'm I'm going to keep moving through quickly here. So again, just touching back on the four objectives that Gary highlighted and all with the goal of advancing the availability of nonlethal predation management scenarios and practices we feel like this fits in amazingly well with the NRCS conservation delivery framework. It has been mentioned by several of the speakers NRCS is uniquely suited to provide these opportunity to producers to work hand in hand with producers knowing that NRCS is, one of the most trusted conservation partners, for producers, across the west and across the nation.

Um, and so then, if we think about the conservation planning process, and how can we be intentional about supporting providing information to support that process, I just wanted to highlight this piece of like the conservation plan being this is co-developed plan that selects the best combination of conservation practices to meet both natural resource needs and individual land management goals.

So that is what this is all building into is, is -- again this knowledge across multiple sources being able to address resource concerns and everything that we have worked on, across this team and through that co-production process, we also used this framework of -- situation problem solutions. And being able to understand the situation of producers and other partners on the ground, co-define the problem and then think about what are the available solutions out there working across the multiple partners.

I think that situation problem solution lines up really nicely with the conservation planning process, it is an incredibly well designed framework, most of you are on, listening in today now this is something that you're dealing with every day.

Working with producers on the ground, um, through NRCS programs, and -- but also, recognizing that

as Astro mentioned, conflict reduction is new, it is new for producers across the west as predator populations are expanding.

And it is, it is new obviously for NRCS but we have these, these other topics resource concerns that we can build off, we know that the conservation planning process works to make win/win solutions available for both wild life and Ag production.

So this concept of risk assessment framework has been mentioned by a couple of the other presenters and so I'll dive into that a little bit and how we see this as a an opportunity to help and form conservation planning tools across the different states.

This is, this is built out of ecological principles and ago prince production, thinking about ecosystem processes and principles so essentially, these five factors to consider, as we're thinking about, conflict on the landscapes on operations, um, we need to think about, what type of animals are we talking about, both wild life and livestock and prey. The place itself, landscape, of course, time is an important factor.

We know that, both predators and livestock are utilizing the landscape differently throughout the year. Um, disturbance events I'll go into more details on those and then again, how the landscape is laid out land use and jurisdictional boundaries.

So, first going into this species component a little bit more.

Um, we know that type, age class population density of predators and the type and age class of livestock can alter the level of risk, and certainly the abundance and diversity of the prey.

This builds off some of what -- Stewart mentioned about you know, cross the 3 practices what are some of the things we already know from the existing research? And, what are we still trying to figure out? So, again, place is important to consider, topography vegetation community type and cover, this comes into play for range riding especially, um, the visibility that topography and vegetation can influence. Climate certainly we see differences from the northern rockies down to the desert southwest that climate and seasonal variation and climate can have a big influence how predators and livestock are using the landscape, how that relates to risk.

Time, again, this just, this seasonal annual life cycle of wild life and the production cycle of livestock can have a big influence on risk management how we think about it and how we think about putting these tools on the landscape.

Disturbance this is a big one. There's a lot that is actually understand this component. This is you know, any event that can influence the way wild life and/or livestock production is happening on the landscape this could be weather events this could be fire, certainly recreation we know recreation has impacts on native prey. It can also have impacts on carnivores on the landscape, hunting, as a form of recreation, can influence it also hinting of predator species can influence it.

And then, of course, drought which we've been dealing with across western states and thinking about forage productivity of livestock how that can influence our ability to move livestock across the landscape and create additional impacts from predator populations.

>> Then landscape land use this is, um, really just thinking about the geographical component of it, the

size of the operation, the spatial relationship as contiguous not contiguous, and again, thinking about multi-jurisdictional landscapes when we have Federal, state and private land all being utilized by an operation.

Um, so, we have some of these Federal agency partners including BLM and forest service. Certainly management infrastructure is a component of it.

And so, this gets into thinking about how we can map this out. Essentially we can take those five factors we can start to map them.

We can map them on the landscape and again, this is relating back to what Stewart was talking about with where we know some of these practices work and how good effectiveness and where we're still testing some of these practices and, the best approach or application or best strategy these practices we're still exploring we'll continue to explore.

So thinking about stratifying the landscape, through space and time and so it is going to change winter risk is going to be different than summer risk.

Livestock are going to be in a different place in the winter than they are in the summer on a lot of these operations we can think about where do, where is the homestead the headquarters? Maybe that's the place for a fire wife or the drive over mats. We have calving or weaning pastures which might be a good place for the use of fladry or other electrified fencing operations. Carcass management is certainly important in those more intense if I have use areas as we go into some of the associated pastures more productive pastures in the operation. Those practices can apply then as we get into out in the larger landscape, these operations are utilizing range riding can become important. This allows us to think about how predators are using the landscape.

Um, and other wild life are using the landscape. Being really intentional that these practices are not causing problems for wild life movement, but are complementary to wild life movement and livestock production we're looking for those win/win solutions we think that could be accomplished.

I'm not you know, obviously this is it is a different conversation than sage grass livestock interact with these species obviously very different. So, when we talk about win/win solutions I know, we can get some eye rolls from that, but we really do think that although challenging we can get there, if we all work together. If we -- landowners have access to tools and resources and again this collective learning knowledge sharing we've been able to promote through this project.

And with that, um, just to note that this information is being written up, so that it can be utilized by the states to develop tech notes, this risk reduction framework along with information on each of the 3 practices, we are compiling information on principles of conflict reduction. You know we get a lot of questions from partners of thing like well, how many acres can a range rider cover? Or how many acres can I manage through fladry?

It is really unique to each landscape for those who are you know doing planning, um, putting conservation on the ground, with landowners, each operation is unique each landscape is unique. And the capacities of each operation so we're really focusing on the idea of principles as kind of a guiding element for then people to be able to locally, and contextually apply these practices in the right way but we're also compiling case studies with implementation strategies so we hope that through a series of kind of high level down to detailed information we'll be able to put forth information that will be useful for each state and eventually down to each office as these tools become available through other

pathways.

Ok.

So now, I'm going to invite Thad back in to talk about a frequently asked questions document that we have compiled to again support information sharing and communication.

>> Thanks Bri. Am I coming through?

>> Yes.

>> Ok.

Thank you. There's been a series of questions that have come up over the last couple of years and everything and Astro Boozer said let's compile a frequently asked question sheet and everything.

On non-lethal priorities terms the partners have put together a frequently asked question fact sheet and everything it is currently being updated there's some new questions that came in and so, that will be available in probably the next few days once this recording is available we can probably send it out at the same time and everything it just you know, there's some standard yes questions and everything that comes up, getting everyone on the same page having a conversation, as far as know how these practices are employed and what it means in the landscape is important to have that fact sheet out there and everything.

And NRCS plays an important role in part of this and everything. And is, um, you know, potentially going forward along with other partners on the landscape, producers work with us on a number of other resource issues on the land and everything this is one you know NRCS can come to the table and help out moving forward and everything with that and everything, I've already addressed the resource concern earlier in my comments I'll pass it over to Bri and everything.

>> Thank you.

>> We'll take it from there.

>> Thanks Thad we're behind schedule I'll go pretty quick we can get to some Q&A.

We can come back to this if we need to.

This and this, FAQ will be made available when the recording comes out of the webinar.

So you'll have the full list of questions and answers, um, couple of things we have not necessarily addressed completely, how will technical assistance be provided given the current knowledge of the NRCS staff? I think we did just try to hit on that with the information on the risk reduction framework that all of this information is being compiled and then delivered to NRCS.

We would love to continue, we have talked with many of you, at the state office level, um, all the way down to field offices we would love to continue to work with you on a state by state basis, to shall be able to figure out you know what are the avenue and resource capacities from both the partners on the COW-CIG and obviously NRCS to get that technical assistance out to producers needing it.

Then we get this question a lot, is range riding a practice, normal part of typical ranch activity, if so, why would NRCS provide financial assistance on it? When we think about you know, NRCS, CSP the ability of conservation delivery there's a lot of options around management practices are really designed to help the producer implement improve management activities and new technology to

address resource concerns that are identified on operations through the planning process.

And so where we do have areas, operations that are dealing with wolves and Grizzly Bears range riders are often -- they're shifting duties essentially. Either in the application or the intensity of their activities and so we see that riders are placing and checking wild life cameras looking for predator, signs and predator using the landscape, how cattle are being managed on the land and increasing the frequency of checking cattle or moving cattle. There's a lot of different ways that range riding can be deployed.

And again, it is in a site-specific operation specific community specific way, it is designed to the idea is to allow producers to allow operations to implement and refine that management practice overtime as part of a larger management system.

So that's why we feel like, this does fit within the management practices offered by NRCS including you know prescribed grazing, water management, forest improvement, habitat and wild life management we see it fitting nicely with the Suite of management practices.

>> So, with that, um, we are ready I think to move to Q&A I'll turn it back over to Nate.

>> Thanks Bri, thanks to all of our presenters again to everyone, who has contributed to this project.

Um, yeah we'll start the Q&A we're happy to answer any questions that you have.

Again we can also follow-up with answers to any questions that we don't get to during the webinar I see a few questions in the Q&A we can address, please add any other questions that you have, so we can speak to them.

>> First question I see is -- regarding state management plans.

How have these conflict prevention tools been incorporated in the state management plans specifically around wolves and Bears Lauri do you want to take that one.

>> LAURI BROWN: I'm happy to take Nate thanks for the question Jeff, state management plans species specific state management plans don't always have a -- exclusive or inclusive list of all the tools we might use for management of one species or another. certainly the wolf plan, the Grizzly plan we're working to revise right now will have a conflict reduction section and within that, we may detail some of the standard tools, if we try to keep up with all of the new technology we would be very behind most of the time because management plans are intended to last, five or ten years, or sometimes longer, we have to -- include words like you know, we'll look at the best available science, but more importantly, to that you know, it really come down to the, the discussion of the field staff, with the landowner to evaluate all of those factors that Bri described to figure out which is the right tool, for that particular situation.

So, where you might find more details in how the state is, is engaging some of these tools would be, something like a annual Pitman Robertson report or some sort of grant report, where we're saying what we actually used how we paid for it. But in terms of the overall kind of big scale big picture species, management plans we talk about, proactive conflicts work we talk about conflict reduction work we talk about management of conflicts. But not, not detailing each of these specific techniques.

>> Great thanks Lauri and thank you for that question thanks for those posting additional questions.

The next question is, what is the time line for when Montana producers would be able to apply for

funding to implement these practices?

Kyle do you want to take that one?

>> Yeah sure can Nate thanks for the question Trina can you hear me Nate?

>> We can hear you.

>> All right.

Um, so first our goal is to have these practices available for fiscal year 2024, at first that's the goal we have to get to, having them available. In Montana the time to start now. Is to work through the locally led process and the working group to at that timer what a implementation plan, may look like in the area, the landscape in the Rocky mountain front where you live. Even though the practices are not available yet.

I don't think you can start early enough on building those partnerships locally and that momentum so that when they are ready, you can take advantage of it through a targeted implementation if you have any other questions, I can catch up offline or another day I'm happy to do it.

>> Thanks Kyle.

Next question is, regarding local landowner groups how can local landowner led groups access funding within the NRCS contracts in the future for example, one group may want to hold a contract for range riding, rather than individual ranchers.

>> Yeah that's a great question glad to see you on this presentation today. As it stands now community groups like centennial valley association as an example are not eligible for the EQIP funds as it stands. Individual producers in the landscape are, but the group is not, as it stands in the farm bill today.

There are other opportunities for groups like community led groups through RCCP for EQIP it is not an option right now.

>> All right.

Next question is from Morgan, what type of Carcass management practices do you see that the COW-CIG supporting if any, on site, composition, Carcass pick up programs?

>> Nate I can jump in.

>> Thanks Bri.

>> Yeah sure thanks Morgan for the question. Essentially we're looking at all. But, I will just note because the Carcass management piece the consideration is to put this under animal mortality facility, um, there's going to need to be some adjust beings that need to be a new scenario, under that practice, that has been in the past only available for on ranch, on farm Carcass management or dealing with the situation so we are looking at expanding it hoping through the information we're providing to NRCS will be expanded that Carcass pick up and delivery will be a new component and looking at community-based facilities, um, this relates back to question that Kara had and, that Kyle just addressed in terms of community-based organizations.

Being able to be the contracting entity, um, and so we are continuing although, Kyle said there's not a mechanism for that right now. Heart of the Rockies and western landowners alliance and our other partners are having conversations about you know with the new farm bill are there ways that contracting could be done with community-based organizations? Or other community entities to be able to support that scale of Carcass management.

So we're looking at all of those it might take a little bit of time to work up to that scale. But we know it is a need and issue right now that needs to be addressed.

>> Great. Thanks Bri.

Just quickly Bill it looks like your question, is related to that, hopefully we answered that if not, please let us know we can follow-up.

So Celeste I believe we answered your question as well we're looking at FY-24 when that would be available.

Jeff, following up on your follow-up question -- how have these practices been worked into a cost benefit analysis for those agencies?

Lauri?

>> LAURI BROWN: Yes, so I don't have a very clear answer to this question, what I will say is, because of the -- the diversity of agencies involved in managing livestock at least in Montana there's no real direct cost benefit analysis that has been done let me explain kind of why it is complicated. We may be the party, it may be a James Junkle helping with a fencing project, in order to be proactive. Certainly that's a cost, we can look at.

But, if someone does loose, livestock here in Montana they can apply for livestock loss board reimbursement. That's a cost that is, assumed by the state of Montana, separate from fish wild life and parks we also have these other entities if APHIS wild life services that comes in at different points of discussion, may have to do the investigation for a loss or help with proactive, so there has been no cost benefit analysis from the fish wild life and parks I don't know if maybe someone else is tried to do that on a broader scale it will be complicated at best to try to run it based upon the number of players, it is a valuable question in terms of is it more beneficial to go with proactive measures I think certainly some of the producers, Bri might confirm this, that just the sheer piece of mind knowing that you've implemented proactive practices, so you can sleep at night is worth a lot. But hard to value.

>> Thanks Lauri.

Another question just came in from Allison, are there ideas about how NRCS can or will support the long term management cost of range riding Carcass management when contracts are limit today 3-5 years and only 3 years for cost sharing the same practice on the same lands does someone from NRCS want to take that one?

>> Hey I'll chime in this is Kyle.

>> Thank you.

>> I think the what was that?

>> Thanks Kyle.

>> Oh, yeah I think the key here is EQIP is the program we really look at to kick start things.

You know, I'll be honest and have been on previous webinars EQIP is not designed for that long term incentive payment. It is a 3-5 years just look, can we get it kick started get folks up and running that is really how EQIP is built.

>> Thanks Kyle.

Thanks for that and you know, the -- COW CIG team agrees and has had these conversations with Kyle and the others at NRCS and recognizing the um, you know, each conservation program, has a different

purpose and intent and just like you know CIG is looking at innovation, RCCP, is looking at public and private partnerships to get conservation delivery and we have EQIP and CSP, so looking at yeah, getting this kick started through EQIP the practices the now scenarios but then exploring are there avenues through CSP enhancements does EQIP, CIC offer something moving forward to the future also we're you know looking opportunities through like grass land CRP and there are some there are some mechanisms through farm bill and through conservation delivery programs are that really recognize the value, that producers are providing in terms of wild life habitat um, so we want to continue to explore those and just back to the original goal of this project and these partners that is addressing that financial and social burden of this place that we find ourselves in today of expanding predator populations and increasing scope and scale predators on the landscape and finding ways for those species to thrive along ranches across the west. And again we just think that NRCS is such a primary partner, in making that happen.

>> Thanks Kyle and Bri does anyone else have a other questions they would like to pose?
(pause for questions)

If not, we just -- again want to thank all of you for your attention for your great questions.

Again reiterate if you have additional questions after the webinar feel free to reach out, to us we'll be happy to continue the conversation thanks to NRCS for the opportunity, for their continued support of this project I think it has a lot of benefit for a lot of people we're -- very grateful for the support that we've been shown and -- um, we're anxious to look forward.

>> Thank you Nate behalf of the USDA and the natural resource conservation as much as I wanted to say thank you to all of our presenters today for providing an excellent presentation -- on conflict working lands conservation innovation grants and, thank you again to everyone for attending today's webinar, participants don't forget to provide your feedback about the webinar as well. If you selected to earn CEUs please return to your open browser window to continue the process offered by step two and conservationwebinars.net this concludes our webinar presentation thank you again.
(presentation concluded)