Fact Sheet

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Plumas-Sierra-Butte Livestock & Natural Resources

August 2026

Increased Wolf Hazing Options for Livestock Producers

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The expansion of Gray Wolves across Northern California has come with many challenges to the ranching community. In 2025, there were 198 confirmed or probable livestock losses caused by wolves, with many additional costs endured by ranchers beyond direct loss. The Gray Wolf is currently listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act, limiting the tools ranchers can use to deter livestock depredation. While producers can conduct non-injurious harassment (hazing) to discourage wolves near livestock[1], injurious harassment has been prohibited. In 2026, CDFW developed a process to authorize injurious harassment of wolves by trained livestock producers, to include the use of specific less-than-lethal projectiles (LTLP) and sustained pursuit to help reduce wolf-livestock conflict.

Legal Mechanism

CDFW & USFWS

CDFW and USFWS developed an agreement outlining the procedures by which CDFW may designate partners (e.g. ranchers, sheriff) in wolf conservation to engage in non-lethal hazing activities to deter wolf–livestock interactions.[2]

Training

CDFW and Partner Organizations

Organizations (e.g., Sierra Valley RCD, Honey Lake RCD, CAFB) can facilitate training regarding the use of LTLP for livestock producers.[3]

USDA Wildlife Services

Wildlife Services will lead training of launchers or marker mechanisms used to deploy LTLP, including their safe use and limitations of tools. Training will also, include a field range scenario.

Permit

CDFW Issues Permit

Trained livestock producers can request 2081(a) authorizations allowing use of LTLP in the form of paint balls or inert powder balls to haze wolves in the vicinity of livestock to deter gray wolves from interacting with livestock.

Reporting

Use of Tools

Permitted Ranchers report all use of LTLP or sustained pursuit through an online tool provided by CDFW within 7 days.

If you are interested in participating in a training, please contact your local Resource Conservation District, Farm Bureau, or UC Cooperative Extension office for additional information.

Less-than-lethal tools, including paint balls and inert powder balls, have been used by law enforcement for years and are also used to help mitigate human-wildlife conflict (e.g. bears in urban areas). While these tools are not intended to cause death or serious injury, they can cause serious bodily damage if not deployed properly. Accuracy and distance capabilities vary with launchers – some may be accurate to approximately +100 feet.

L: Safety glasses, inert powder balls*, training balls, and magazine for launcher. R: Ranch manager participating in projectile launcher field training. (Photo Credit: Schohr, UCANR)*

Special thanks to CDFW for assistance in developing this document.

1. Tools for California Livestock Producers - CDFW December 2024
2. CEQA Notice of Exemption SCH #2026051058. Memorandum of Agreement between US Fish and Wildlife Service and CDFW Regarding Cooperation on Management of Gray Wolf in CA.
3. Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District approved to sign the MOA to coordinate training on August 10, 2026; Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District approved to sign on August 18, 2026; Farm Bureau Federation; and other entities are considering the MOA.