

Wolf Advisory Group

January 8, 2020

Meeting Notes

Comfort Inn Conference Center Tumwater
1620 74th Avenue Southwest
Tumwater, WA 98501

WAG members: Diane Gallegos, Dave Duncan, Paula Swedeen, Tim Coleman, Tom Davis, Nick Martinez, Bill Kemp, Jess Kayser, Andy Hover, Don Dashiell, Dan Paul

WDFW staff members: Donny Martorello, Julia Smith, Dan Brinson, Candace Bennett, Kyla West, Steve Pozzanghera, Maci Yungdahl, Trent Roussin

Facilitator: Rob Geddis

Governor's Office: JT Austin

US Forest Service: Robert Garcia

Welcome and check in

Rob welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda for the day.

Do members have any update requests?

Updates/Changes:

New WAG appointments

Status on how winter capture numbers are going

Update on the staffing in the NE Washington

Update on where we are at in litigation

Report on collars

Any proposed legislation

Litigation Update:

Date in May for the APA portions of the case. Thurston county has not been set. A few weeks ago, the attorneys have started the motion to dismiss the King county case. In the hearing, the judge did not issue a decision, but will have one later this week.

Update on winter capture efforts/collars:

This year we are doing a spotter plane to do the counts for the year. Once we have identified where a collar is, then we will dive in to try to deploy more collars.

Ten total packs with collars currently and trying to supplement with more collars. The packs without collars, we are trying to locate a point from the ground to send a spotter plane in to deploy a collar. If it is a pack with the predator-prey study, then we will put out a collar designed more for the conflict side. If it isn't a study area or conflict area, then the wolf will get a different type of collar.

So far with the collaring efforts, the beginning of the week was hard because of weather. Plane was grounded and not enough snowpack.

WAG Recruitment:

Potential candidates in the audience today. Total of 14 in the group and there are four open seats. We are finishing up with interviews and are looking at about ten folks currently. We will be reaching out to Francine for some input as well. Because of the post recovery coming up, we are taking that into consideration.

Staff Changes/Increase in NE Washington:

Brought on a seasonal conflict specialist, permanent conflict specialist and one more staff member.

Ferry Stevens and Pend Oreille county conflict specialist was hired, but not specifically for wolf related items. A lot of turkey conflict in Pend Oreille county.

Governor's Office Update:

I have been the senior policy administrator for the Governor. I have been to a couple of these meetings and a couple of Francine's trainings. I am a big believer in working with everyone involved in this issue. It is a statewide issue and we should all be involved as much as we can. I have gone out to Eastern Washington about every summer and have had the opportunity to go out there in the last part of December 2019. From this experience, I wanted to share. I had the pleasure in meeting with several producers and range riders in NE Washington. From this, the administration needs to have more interactions like this and be more outside of the Olympia area as opposed to us getting briefed and then briefing the Governor. He is concerned and he is on record in support of lethal removal. We are looking for some balance and recognition that there is a concentration of wolves in one area and the dispersal hasn't happened like we had once thought it would. My goal of going out was primarily relationship building and to hopefully get the governor out there to have coffee with the ranchers firsthand. I learned that there is a small group of gentlemen that are recognizing the pressures in the area and there needs to be more tools for them to implement. From their perspective, they have been working very hard and I would like for them to come and speak to the WAG members as well as meet with the administration to share their story. I would like to have more collaboration and more voices heard. There are some folks that need to have more opportunities to voice their story. This is not a Republican or Democratic issue. This is an all hands-on deck response and a healthy willingness to respect the ways of life that we don't live ourselves.

Comment

I wanted to call out and acknowledge that at this point it is so easy to go to war. This meeting and the letter from the Governor put a face to this issue. I am hearing from multiple WAG members. We gave ourselves a deadline of January to have this completed so that we were not encroaching upon the grazing season. I think it is safe to say that we can take a little more time to finish this. It feels like things are starting to happen, things are starting to line up.

JT

The Governor's letter in September wanted to drive some action and provide some support to an area that needs it. It also drove home the point of urgency as well. This all makes us want to take action and respond accordingly. The meeting that I had, I believe will lead to more meetings and more conversations. I would like for us to allow for more opportunities for a voice. We want to make sure that we get this right and at the right time. I am advocating for more opportunities for voice to be heard from those that are experiencing the issues firsthand. I am not taking a position on anything that they are working on, I am just excited that they are working on something. One big thing that I heard is just more collaboration. I am hoping to get a meeting for them with the Governor as well. Advocating for a thorough fair process that leads to a citizenry outcome.

I think it is important that the Governor's office stays engaged with this issue. All of us have to keep evolving our thinking and try to put ourselves in each other's shoes more often.

Comment

I appreciate what you have said and what you do. Thank you for meeting with those folks in the NE. Their work is important. The Governor's letter in September was offensive to us. Our take is that the Governor supports the wolf plan, except in the NE. Having you come today is very helpful for me to be able to communicate this message back to my group.

Answer

The Governor gets to take positions and react and respond. I would say that that letter contained a couple of different points. One that supports a continued collaborative process. One called out as a notification to the public that there is an issue in a certain part of our state. One called out that there is a real citizen support for continued support for continued work on wolf recovery. One called out that we have multiple partners and roles in this, and it shouldn't all be on the Department.

Comment

Thank you. I was happy to hear that you had that meeting with those folks. My concern is that the grazing season starts soon. For this to be effective we need to limit the interaction between cattle and wolves. Now it feels that we should take our time, but I don't think that is what should happen.

Answer

I don't think we should pump the brakes, and I don't want to take any sides.

Comment

I want to thank you and the Governor for sticking your neck out. I thought the letter was softly worded in attempt to appease multiple sides. A lot of people care about this issue. I encourage you to reach out to other parties in the area rather than just producers/ranchers.

Answer

We always have open doors for anyone to pop in and have a meeting. I will stretch myself as thin as I can, but I can only drive so much.

Comment

Where we left off, we were looking at it as a guidance perspective. At a local scale, there is a plan for the non-lethal tools. There have been several local check-ins across the board and the question now is how do we bring all of this together.

Comment

There are a lot of things coming together from the field all the way up the chain. There is definitely a heavy pressure to do the right thing, but not knowing what is best. I think things are moving in the right direction, but we need to make sure to not push this into the something that it shouldn't be.

Comment

I find all of this hopeful, positive, and interesting. Just feeling all the pressure on us. It would be good for us to talk about what the timing looks like for this based on what we just heard from the Governor. Do we live with the current protocol along with the local based solutions or do we continue to develop more into the protocol? I think there is room for good dialogue. I love that the conversations are happening, but we need to be cognizant of our roles here at the WAG and the time limitation we have.

Comment

We aren't pumping the brakes. We are still on the gas, but it doesn't need to be done tomorrow. We want to stay connected to the Governor. Between now and the 2020 grazing season we would like to stay in contact.

Legislation Update:

We have not seen anything yet.

Question

Are there conversations happening with the Forest Service?

Answer

Yes, we are meeting tomorrow.

Winter Count Update:

We don't officially start counting until the first of January. Right now, they are flying the helicopter as we speak.

Question

How much effort are you guys able to spend on looking for new packs?

Answer

Each year we have more effort into the Cascades with more biologists' help. At the moment, we haven't found anything new. We are currently trying to sort out things in the North Cascades.

Comment

There is a reluctance that you hear in our voice during this time of year because it is like balancing your checkbook. You have to go back several times to make sure everything is correct. There is a fairness that is really important to us and we want the news to come out to everyone at once.

Question

Is there a non-department person that audits the counts?

Answer

It is always our staff that verify our counts except for the reservation packs. It is almost like we are auditing the information that comes in from the public most of the time.

Discuss proposed changes to the protocol

Rob gave a brief overview of where we left off last meeting.

Comment

I would like to talk about timing and what our deadline is for this. Maybe there are some things that need to happen right away and prioritize.

Comment

My concern is that our next meeting is in May. The session will be finished in March and I thinking we should have a meeting in March would be good. If the final protocol is finished in March, then can you get the word out?

Comment

It depends on what you're looking at. Most folks are already out in the first part of April.

Comment

When I think about timing, there is a difference in protocol and an implementation plan with nonlethals. If we are going to be moving forward with this, then we need to visit with the communities and try to make sure that we are proactive with all of this.

Comment

I think there is at least a couple pieces we have been contemplating. If we could have them done before grazing season, then that would be great. There may be some of the items that may not need to be finished for the start of the grazing season. There was a request from the group in the NE to have us not finish this during this meeting so they can have a voice in this before we are finished. I think that this is important because we need to make sure that we hear those voices. If they are asking to be heard, I think it is only right that we try to accommodate that. Trying to put it off a little bit to make sure we include this smaller group of folks that are dealing firsthand with all these issues. I think we can make a lot of progress, but I don't think we should wrap it up with a bow just yet so we can hear what the local NE group has to say.

Comment

You just expressed my very thoughts! You put me in a difficult place. I've been saying for some time that the small voices from the NE haven't been heard. It seems like it would be disrespectful to not include those voices. Remembering that we need to go slow in order to go fast. For the folks that I represent, they would clamor for the opportunity to be heard. Without that input, they would be very frustrated.

Comment

Obviously, there are some discussions happening. Are there things that we can get done, not get done, or things that we can just finish? So, are we revamping the whole thing, just looking at the red line things, or just pausing on this? I am curious where pumping the brakes looks like.

Answer/Comment

I don't think pumping the brakes means slowing down anything on this. I think it is just making sure that we aren't completely finished without having more input.

I have been torn a little bit. The local level needs to happen, but it also needs to include the Department staff. Even if we get done, I don't want us to wrap this up until the dialogue is finished.

Comment

I feel like I have a good idea of where everyone sits, but I would like to have some context on all of these pieces. I think we are going to have a lot of great input from the local level.

Comment

If this local group wants to have input, then I think we should have a meeting before the next scheduled meeting to have their input before we tie a bow on it.

Question

Is this group based on the range riding or chronic conflicts zones?

Answer

Both.

Question

Did we ever have the lessons learned presentation?

Answer

No.

Question

Are you the facilitator in these meetings?

Answer

No.

Comment

I think they need to have some guidance on what bullet points would be best to bring to this meeting and group.

Comment

They have reached out and we have had several conversations. I think they will have a lot of great things to bring to the meeting.

Comment

I would like in some forum to hear what that local NE group has to say before our next WAG meeting so we know what they are bringing to the table. If they are meeting with the Governor, then maybe they could meet with some of the WAG members. Maybe they can also share a document of their points so we can start thinking about how to wrap this up with a bow including their points.

Comment

I also like the idea of getting a glimpse of their perspective. I don't want to have anything written down. I would like to hear it from them in their own words.

Comment

The harder you push; the more doors will close. I understand the reason behind wanting those points, but I don't have the authority to push in that way.

Comment

I understand. I just want to make sure that everyone feels sufficiently exposed to the ideas from the local group.

Comment

Given your discussion, from the standpoint of not wanting a document yet. I am wondering if you would want to entertain the idea of a conference call so be able to hear what they are working on.

Comment

I like that idea. Can we look into a combination of the two? In person and for those who cannot make it, they can conference in.

Comment

The Department will go back to the local group and we will report back on if we can pull something like that together.

Consensus

We all need another meeting before the end of March meeting. The local input piece needs to come before that meeting.

Break

Discuss proposed changes to the protocol

Question

I am curious if there are any members that want to add to the protocol questions on the flipchart notes?

Question

Review protocol goal? Is it to change wolf behavior?

Comment

This protocol really says that we have wolves and cattle on the landscape and that is the problem. We have spelled it out. We are never going to finish this until we look at what is causing this to make the solutions. I want to look at something that will not blame the wolves for a lot of these issues. We need to listen to the folks that are being affected. We are a long way from finishing this protocol. The language throughout this whole protocol needs to be changed. I just want to try to point out what the problems are.

Comment

I think you are sharing an interpretation of the protocol. Members of the public have come to me on multiple accounts. Folks have a hard understanding between lethal removal and wolf behavior.

Comment

This protocol is the wolf-livestock protocol. It doesn't encompass every component. It encompasses wolves and livestock.

Comment

The goal is to reduce (not eliminate) the loss of livestock/injury to livestock and the current killing of wolves.

Comment

Impacts. When you said that, it triggered that there are more. Changing it to damages to livestock by wolves and reducing the current killing of wolves.

Comment

This is reducing the interaction/contact between wolves and livestock.

Comment

It may be important to distinguish what the ultimate goal of this protocol is. Both in reducing interaction, but also this may apply to line 480, the purpose of lethal removal is to reduce the amount of depredations in the short term. Are we talking about the whole protocol or just this specific section?

Comment

We have seen that contact between livestock and wolves isn't the issue. It is when that contact becomes an issue. You can have contact and overlap of wolves and livestock without having conflict or issues.

Comment

I would recommend voicing that the contact between wolves and livestock to not be portrayed as a bad thing. Sometimes it is good for the wolves to learn how to act around livestock.

Comment

I want to figure out how to have a good conversation about including all components. Not just wolves/livestock. When whatever is tried does work, and the standards are met, then the solution is to only kill wolves. It seems that the blame goes to the ranchers, Department, and then back on the wolves. I want to structure the protocol in a way where blame isn't placed on any party.

Comment

Tolerance for wolves on the landscape for some folks have gone downhill. Where I live, there aren't any depredations. There is hunting happening where I am at. I don't want to admit it, but there is. We have more than recovered wolf in the NE Washington. I think we need to recognize that. I think we need to discuss the killing of wolves when we reach a recovered population. Not killing wolves shouldn't be where we are going. I think in the north east we have more wolves than that area can handle. Acceptance of wolves in the rural country is going downhill. Just this protocol in itself has created a lot of the problems and it points the finger where it shouldn't be pointed.

Comment

The policy guidance of this current protocol is all inclusive. Going back to where the conversation started, our current protocol doesn't articulate that this is not a blame thing. If there is conflict, it doesn't mean that non-lethal is lacking or any portion is not working correctly. There needs to be some language stating this.

Comment

I am frustrated with what is going on right now. I heard, what are the counts? On one hand we are looking at the numbers of wolves to determine the recovery. What about deer? The Department doesn't tell us the counts for deer. They base it on a black hole theory. When it comes to wolves, it is very different and more about detailed counts. When there is conflict with deer, the Department goes in to manage the deer population. When there is conflict with wolves, the Department doesn't go in to manage wolf population.

Comment

Things bubbling up in the north east is a beautiful thing to hear. How can we let that process continue and let those failures not be looked at as failures, so the blaming does not occur?

Comment

The idea of saturation in a broad scale is not applicable. In the area where wolves have been controlled, there is not any wolf sign. There are several other species. My own personal experience is that I don't see any wolves where I am at and I see a lot of deer. The folks that I speak to are not complaining about lack of ungulate populations. Even the tribal has said that there are lacking numbers, but that is due to the timber harvest numbers. There are sources and/or sinks for these wolves. They are not migrating, and we need to find out why. Also, there are a lot of public ranchers

that are not having problems. Wolves have been removed and have been killed. I really think that we ought to think that development, human pressure, windstorm, etc. have a lot of effect on ungulates.

Comment

We can put any language in the protocol to not have any blame or point a finger. But it is human nature and we can't control that because everyone has their own opinion.

Comment

I am glad we are having this conversation because it raises a lot of difficult issues. There are just honest, different impressions on what is affecting these issues/problems. Last year, the depredations in Idaho was very high, yet they can hunt wolves. I don't think that controlling population of wolves will have an effect on reducing depredations. What did have an effect was targeted lethal control. I am hearing that we all have different perspectives and I am wondering how we can sift through that. It's not a basis to get angry, we all bring different knowledge to the table. I don't want us to talk past each other or argue. I think we need to acknowledge and move forward with a decision and potentially come to common ground. I don't want us to end up arguing with each other because we all look at the problem in a different way.

Comment

This is a hard conversation. It's a conundrum. There are no answers to this, I feel like. Our current protocol doesn't speak to any of this, so that makes this hard. People are thinking of it; protocol is largely silent on it. Protocol is guidance and it is implementing the current plan. Do we put some narrative in there that whenever the commission makes the decision to categorize them as recovered, we have some language regarding that?

Comment

I live right on the Idaho border. If I really wanted to hunt wolves, then I can go to Idaho and hunt for ten or so wolves. Yet, this hunting is not helping with the depredation issues in the state. We really don't know how many wolves in NE Washington are needed to have a recovered population. We need to have that conversation to come up with a number to have in place. The wolf plan now is about ten years old now. It was based on old information and I think we need to look at changing the wolf plan, translocation, or even delisting in the north east part of the state. How many wolves do we need in NE Washington in order for us to start managing wolves?

Comment

We are still working on post-recovery planning. You're talking about, "what does the future look like?" The current plan is based on breeding pairs, not individual wolves. I don't think things in the north east will change. Wolf packs are a certain size ranging from 2-10 wolves and will split and then disperse. Every territory will continue to have wolves. The status quo in NE Washington is the level of number of wolves that would be the standard for the state. Biologically, that won't change. Conflict in that area; we still have to address it regardless of post-recovery or delisting. We need to have the conflict discussion—regardless of the wolf's listing status, the level of conflict we see now in NE WA is likely what we will see into the future.

Question

How would people feel about moving forward to the range riding discussion from the subcommittee to prepare for tomorrow?

Comment

Two elements. Goal Statement and the Status of NE Washington. Do we want to address that? If we are thinking about this and it is a conundrum, then it is a huge conundrum outside of this room. Do we continue this conversation or put it away?

Comment

This is obviously a hard issue for us all. It didn't help with the Governor politicizing the issue. As we move forward with this conversation, is there a peek of population that we will manage to and then as a group can standardize the methods. I think the Governor's letter was harmful to our group. I appreciate this conversation and to recognize the different lenses that each of us look through.

Comment

This whole conversation started with the feeling of disagreement that the goal of this protocol is to change pack behavior. We don't like the goal, yet we don't know what would be better. Getting rid of the changing pack behavior is a good idea.

Comment

To me, what I heard from the Governor's letter is not so much the annual lethal control of wolves. More specifically we need to be looking at those chronic areas of depredation to try to stop the pattern that is happening.

Comment

On the issues of do we need population control, I don't think we need to do that now because I don't think we will come to a conclusion. The statement of, "wolves is impeding on ungulate numbers" is something that we need show proof of. There will be continued statements to be made for us to try to get a handle on this ungulate population question. We need to address the fact that we need to answer some of these questions about ungulate populations to determine what we can do about the issues. Also, what does it actually take to keep cattle and sheep safe from wolves? Can we have a systematic effort to evaluate this? If we hunt or not, we will always have a certain number of wolves in a population. No matter what, we still need to determine how we can protect the cattle and sheep.

Comment

There is an empirical question. Are the wolves the main factor of declining populations of ungulates? I don't think so. There are several nuances in managing ungulates on the Department level. It doesn't seem like there is a nuance for managing wolves. Protecting cattle is a separate piece. In Idaho and Montana people can hunt, and they still have depredations. However, the people still feel that they have a way to take the issue into their own hands by hunting. The Department flies planes to take out wolves, but hunters would gladly hunt them. We need to somehow state that wolves are not the main factor in declining ungulate population.

Comment

How much do we really want to bite off? I feel that the task that we have at hand is a big enough task. The public wants to know why the public agency is spending tax dollars to kill animals that are trying to recover. I appreciate the fact that we need to focus on how we deal with the issues when there are wolves. We try to help advise how wolves and livestock can live on the landscape. We need to simplify and organize what we are focusing on.

Comment

At the end of the day we are still going to have the interaction on the landscape, and we need to figure out how we are going to manage the conflict regardless. Right now, we live in a certain

sandbox of our plan. Some of the ideas that are getting brought up are outside of the sandbox that we are working in on the plan.

Comment

With JT from the Governor's office showing up today and potentially showing up tomorrow, I think we need to get to the section nine piece as well.

Comment

The chronic conflict zones, don't they affect the north east group. I thought we were going to wait for the local group's input before we focused on that part.

Comment

Where we left the discussion, I am not sure that the two are in conflict. My understanding from the local group is more on a specific instance. I think we could look at this section on more of a process/policy level and that may not intervene with the input from the local group. Doing this may help satisfy the public and the Governor because we are coming up with the standard process. Prepare ourselves, and then hearing the input from the group. I wouldn't mind describing what happened with range riding piece within the subcommittee. I think we are running into trouble with the fact that we have really identified what the role of having this language in the protocol really is.

Comment

We've proven time and time again that we have been able to change our way of thinking. I don't think we should not try to reach an agreement and move forward. I have driven a long way to be here and I want to make it count and move forward.

Comment

If we need to get to the changes in the protocol, then we need to get to it because we may not even get what we need from the local group.

Comment

In the last meeting it was important to get a producer involved. If you want to discuss section nine, then we can but I won't agree to anything.

Comment

They (local group) are really talking about enhancing the tool, and we are talking more on the policy level.

Update from Subcommittee:

WAG member gave an update on how the subcommittee worked through the language part of range riding and human presence and the events that lead up to today's meeting.

Comment

Maybe we are not all on the same page with what we are trying to accomplish with the range riding/human presence piece in the protocol.

Another WAG member gave an update on what happened and the events that happened through the subcommittee. Raised some concerns with some of the events that took place within the subcommittee.

Comment

Cattle ranching and range riding is more of an art than a science. Maybe we could make the livestock part of the protocol become a goal to try to achieve. We know that those goals may not be able to be achieved 100% but we aren't asking for perfection, we are only asking for your best. If there are issues that happen on the ground, then they point the finger to the producers/range riders. I would like to know what the folks from the north east have to say before we finalize this piece.

Another WAG member gave their update on what happened and the events of the subcommittee.

Comment

From the language in the protocol on range riding, we needed to determine a difference between range riding, the DPCA-L and human presence.

Comment

I wouldn't mind tomorrow putting up the language that we came to in agreement as a subcommittee. What are our goals? I think we need to identify those goals as well as define each component to the language.

Comment

You're not going to get me to agree if you use the language of "this is required by the Department." We need to have the caveat that some of this may not be achievable depending on the certain environments and cattle. Some things can work in some environments and not in others, so it shouldn't be a requirement.

Comment

Is this a state contracted range rider or a producer hired range rider? That's the definition that we need.

Comment

Just want to remind the group and the public is that what we are trying to do here is create a shared document. There was an inconsistency between what the Department used to check the box of range riding and what was actually happening on the ground for range riding.

Comment

Whether it is a contracted range rider or through a producer, at the end of the day we have to look at if the expectation has been met. We need to determine what the expectation is. It can't be interpreted as rule because there are several variations on the landscape. There needs to be some guidance to follow by everyone.

Comment

It seems that we are trying to accomplish different things here with the definition of range riding. I think the Department needs to have the "requirement" piece included for our employees. This doesn't mean that if the requirements of a contracted range rider don't work, at least we can say that that was what was required for them to do. The Department can't get away from the requirement piece.

Comment

What's the difference between pornography and range riding? Well I can't give you a definition, but I know it when I see it.

When range riding was presented at a cattlemen's meeting, no one knew what it was by term. The understanding back then was that the range rider was someone from the agency to monitor wolf activity. That definition does not seem to be portrayed here. I think the definition/duties that are portrayed here are really talking about what the producer's crew does. Need to not call "producers" range riding.

Comment

I appreciate the point that the Department will still need "requirements." When the Department does their check to determine if things happened, then there needs to be definitions/descriptions of what a range rider generally does/should do to meet the standard. There is a person in this room that has been range riding for years and knows what goes on in the landscape, and I think we need to include them in the conversation tomorrow.

Comment

I have been trying to seek a definition of what range riding is for several years now. I am hoping that it is something we can define. I am concerned about the livestock producers out there. We don't need to include the state contracted range rider in the discussion because the Department can do that. But if the Department tries to tell a producer how to manage his cattle, that won't fly.

Comment

It's a WDFW employee and you have different requirements for them. You can't compare them to a producer hired range rider. I don't expect the WDFW employee to be managing grazing because that is the producer's responsibility. When one is called, both should be called.

Comment

The name of this is confusing. For a short time, we used the term human presence because range riding was confusing. Then we started using them interchangeably. Maybe using a different term for WDFW contracted range rider than for the private producer hired range rider.

Question

Is it okay to differentiate between human presence and range riding?

Comments from group agreeing that it is a yes.

Comment

Conflict zones. In conflict zones we have state range riders. Need to discuss that tomorrow.

Public Comment

Comment

First, I would like to thank the lady that takes the notes. I have presented to the commission talking about wolf recovery because it is important to me (he proceeded to read off what he presented at a commission meeting). It seems like we talk a lot about the general terms at these meetings and we don't talk about the real issues that are happening. I think that people like me reaching out to the Governor. I do not agree with the repeated killing of the wolves. I think that we should have an all hands-on deck approach to the first incident of conflict rather than when the point has been met of lethal removal. Sometimes they should look to

moving the cattle away from the area. The producers should work with the forest service to accomplish this. I don't think that there should be any killing of the breeding pair or the pups. Including 10 months ago conflict should not be counted towards something happening that day. I have been disappointed on a few things. I was disappointed with the act of killing four wolves on August 16th just before the court hearing. Also, that there was another wolf in the same area. In December, there was a breeding female killed. I don't agree with the rules on how lethal removal is determined. Public member reads a dialogue from a previous director. I think we need to take bigger measures to protect our wildlife.

Comment

I agree with the first public comment. We are going through all the iterations of the protocol. There are several ranches in the state that are not having issues. But one producer seems to have all the issues and is causing the killing of several wolves. Now, they are taking steps to make sure wolves are killed. No one in this group is talking about the fact that several ranchers in the state are not having issues. Most of the wolves that have been killed have been caused by one producer. The public can come to these WAG meetings and why hasn't that one producer shown up to these meetings. Now the Governor has to bring them in. One producer is causing this killing and getting away with it.

Comment

I agree with the previous comment. It is always one rancher that is causing the money to be spent on killing wolves and it is never talked about in this meeting. People want to see wolves in the kettle range and the wolves keep coming back, but they keep getting killed and it is tragic.

Check out

Everyone checked out around the room.

Meeting adjourned for the day

January 9, 2020
Meeting Notes

Comfort Inn Conference Center Tumwater
1620 74th Avenue Southwest
Tumwater, WA 98501

WAG members: Diane Gallegos, Dave Duncan, Paula Swedeen, Tim Coleman, Tom Davis, Nick Martinez, Bill Kemp, Jess Kayser, Andy Hover, Don Dashiell, Dan Paul

WDFW staff members: Donny Martorello, Julia Smith, Dan Brinson, Candace Bennett, Kyla West, Steve Pozzanghera, Maci Yungdahl, Trent Roussin

Facilitator: Rob Geddis

US Forest Service: Robert Garcia

Welcome and check in

Rob welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda for the day.

Update on data sharing and where we are at with that.

Discuss proposed changes to the protocol

Comment

On front page, the first line should be changed so that it doesn't focus solely on livestock producers and it includes everyone.

Comment

There is a gentleman in the back that has been range riding and there is also a Forest Service member here that could talk about what they recommend for moving cattle on the landscape. Maybe we could have a brief presentation from them on these topics. I feel that range riding is a major component here and it would be nice to have that.

Comment

There are a couple people that may have been insulted by bringing in those folks because I feel that some of us here can speak to that.

Comment

We ended the last meeting in section nine and then we drafted new language. We need to make sure we try to get to that so the Department will be able to have something to work on after this meeting.

Question

Are we going to touch on the number of depredations before action? Aside from the north east local group having a concept to present, I don't want to hold off until we hear from them. I would like to address the numbers of depredations over a certain time period.

Is the group okay with the new wording of the main goal? "Reducing damages by wolves to livestock"

Comment

We spent a lot of time, originally, talking about the main goal and I feel that we have just come back around to it.

Comment

I would agree. If that is where everyone is at, then I am fine with keeping it as the new suggestion.

Comment

The 2016 protocol was based around stopping depredations and we learned that that will never happen. Then, we focused on changing wolf behavior.

Comment

Ultimately, the goal was to change the behavior of the wolf pack, not any specific individual wolf.

Comment

Maybe re-tweak the reoccurring depredations to match the ultimate goal.

Comment

It isn't really changing behavior; it is really more changing the social structure of the pack that will make the difference.

Comment

It is helpful to try to change what the pack is doing. The goal is to keep the depredations below a level that requires lethal removal. In the process of doing that, it is to disrupt the wolf pack behavior. Even with packs that have started depredating, there are other tools that can be used to change pack behavior without lethal removal. The landscape can change the available tools to be able to use. There are cases where the use of non-lethals can work without having to go to lethal removal.

Comment

By large, changing pack behavior in the kettle range has changed time and time again. The preferred prey base is ungulates and not cattle, it is just that the cattle are in the place where the wolves are. We need to try to get the food source (cattle) away from their main prey base (ungulates). If you kill the alpha male wolf, then you take out the main hunter of the group that is needed to feed the pack. Electric fence has never been seemingly used and several others that should be used to keep the cows away from where the wolves are. Why can't we use more tools to keep control of the cattle. There are too many variables that can cause this whole thing to fail.

Comment

When you were sharing the failure word, my reaction to that is it takes me back to the sense of in the entire toolbox of non-lethal/lethal, when one or some of those tools do not work. When we are addressing the conflict, we need to address that these tools are short term, not long term. If there is range riding on the landscape that meets the standard and there is still conflict, it doesn't mean that it has failed.

Comment

The protocol you want to lean on as being proactive. We constantly hear that killing wolves doesn't result in long term resolution. Sometimes your best band aid in situations is short term tools.

Comment

In going back to the goal, disrupting pack behavior is just one way/tool to use to achieve the overall goal. So, I think we need to broaden our goal.

Comment

I see problems in the proposed goal because I don't think the protocol addresses reoccurring conflict.

Comment

Isn't that the goal of this is to maintain the social tolerance of wolves and livestock on the landscape. You have folks that value cattle on the landscape verses folks that value wolves on the landscape. We need to build a protocol that can address these two views.

Comment

If we can get behind a goal that we can all agree to, then we can structure the protocol behind that. Tolerance is a hard thing to measure because it varies over time. Social tolerance could be influenced whether conflict is there or not. I think that tolerance is giving voice to those in need. You want to contribute your ideas and that is part of bringing in the social tolerance.

Comment

The person that is here to talk about range riding needs to get on the road, so I think we should include them right now.

Comment

What I hear is coexistence and how do you do that? Is it reducing the number of kills or number of wolf kills? What does coexistence look like?

Comment

Maybe it isn't one or the other, maybe it is truly coexistence and I think that that should be part of the messaging.

Comment

You say it is hard to define. Cattle ranching existed a certain way before wolves and we have to adapt. Wolves existed a certain way before humans and they have to adapt. We all need to adapt.

Transitioning to Range Riding Topic:

Invited a range rider up to the group. He was the first contracted range rider for WDFW in Washington state. He feels that he has the most experience in Washington as range riding.

Question

What is your definition of range riding?

Answer

Range riders are an on the ground resource that can help drive the process of wolf-livestock interaction. I do have an issue with the weekly portion of the range riding part of the protocol. Sometimes you can't be out in an area weekly.

It took me three years in order to get permission from producers to work with their cattle.

Question

So, you have the animal husbandry, crops factitive, and forestry all stating the best way to graze. Then you have the wolf component. With those four components, do you know what the operating standards are when you are out there?

Answer

Yes, I work with the range specialist and the producer to build a plan.

Question

The way you have worked hard to gain trust to be able to work with the cows is great. I think what we are trying to do is to set the standard protocol and you may go above and beyond that. I think we need to distinguish between what the common factors are across all range riding that we can all agree to. A common denominator/requirement is to have really good close communication between the producer and range rider in order to respond to situations.

Answer

I do hear that it is hard to put a requirement on range riding, but I feel that it is needed. The requirements that I built have helped me gain trust with the producers. With all do respect, vehicles can be used but that doesn't do anything. You can't actually see cattle or wolves, and you may only see tracks or scat. We need to have a baseline and build a definition to go off of. I was here last year talking about the definition of range riding and here we are again. Boots on the ground are very important.

Question

I am wondering what you think about the term's human presence verse range riding. Also, what would you think about a certification program that involves you and others to be able to establish a baseline?

Answer

I am trying to build a baseline, but you have to have all groups in agreement to it. I think that you need to establish a baseline. I call us coexistence specialists because it is hard to define. I feel that human presence is me being out there with my horse.

Question

If you got a call from someone with chronic issues with wolves that had a harsh landscape, what would your requirements be in that situation? With the use of non-lethals beforehand.

Answer

I require myself to be out on the landscape. With the requirements from the Department, I can really only be out there for three hours. I establish a base camp and work out from there. I try to be out there overnight with the cattle and help to reduce interaction. I will offer to throw out salt blocks or amending fence, yet that isn't range riding because I haven't assessed the cattle and wolf movements.

Question

If one day you are in one place, then a different place for another day, do the requirements or effective things you do change when you go from place to place?

Answer

No, they do not change wherever I go because there is a set of tactics that I need to apply wherever I go.

Question

If someone is out there applying non lethals that don't include range riding, to try to bring in a range rider to fix those issues may not be as affective as having them there prior.

Answer

I would say yes. I have seen where some of the non-lethals have not worked because they are not applied correctly.

Comment

I feel that we are getting a bit off track. When we started range riding back in the day, it was to provide an extra lift in the non-lethal toolbox when the non-lethals from the producer didn't work. I think that we are focusing on one tool and ultimately range riding is based on husbandry

Question

How long have you been doing this? How many cattle have you worked with during that time? How many cattle lost under your watch?

Answer

8 years, thousands of cows, and one cow that was lost. When we showed up that day, there were already a lot of cattle depredations that had happened, and we knew going in that there could be more.

Question

Can you describe when you get a client, how long are you there? And how is the relationship with the client?

Answer

When I move into a location, I try to establish a base camp and clear trails to make a system. I try to randomize the schedule and it can range from 8-17 hours a day. I start with riding on a horse and try to find the cattle to evaluate how they are doing. At night I try to ride quads. I try to associate myself with the cattle and try to keep myself there to eliminate issues.

It is hard to cover a lot of areas because we haven't been able to have constant, accurate coverage.

The contract period is one stent, but then my stent in the field is another. My crew is my horse and dogs because I don't have the funding in order to be able to establish a better crew.

Question

Not having human presence for a certain period of time, what does that do for the situation?

Answer

When I go back to an area, I have to find the cattle and establish a new system. In the Togo pack area, there was a 14 day period where there was no coverage and that is why they got in that situation.

Comment

I want to get back to the point that there are a lot of things that are animal husbandry that a rancher can do before using the range riding tool. Now that the state has had a range rider program, there are a certain number of skills that need to happen across the board. One thing is having the knowledge of the landscape your working with, cattle behavior, and to be able to read wolf sign

(collar data or not) to have a sense of what the sign in the field is in order to react correctly. I don't want to lose the fact that there is something unique with the range riding position, but yet we still want to keep in mind there are other animal husbandry tools that producers can do. I want there to be a cooperative discussion so that producers don't feel like they are being told what to do, but still we can have some standards set as a society that we can follow. There needs to be dialogue back and forth on what producers are comfortable with doing.

Comment

When we look at general animal husbandry practices, I think it is a good thing for us to look at. I am wondering how we can grow something like what the range rider has brought up because there is a huge time and money effort that has to go into it.

Comment

A lot of people are willing to do the range riding activity, but the money hasn't been allocated to the range riders. During the grazing season, the producers have to produce their own hay and they don't have a lot of time to provide efforts into range riding. If the range riding was done properly in the Profanity area with all the money spent, then maybe there wouldn't have been the issues that had happened.

Comment

I think this is a good conversation. It is very expensive, and I don't think people realize truly what the expense is. I think that there is some ground to talk about the animal husbandry practices.

Comment

When you said there are a lot of people out there that want to do the work, I would like to touch base with you on that. My question is how you keep track of your time/activities.

Comment

I use GPS track logs with pictures to accurately show what I am doing. I have recently been checking in with a GoPro about every two hours. And I also do a daily paper log and personal journal.

Comment

What are we really trying to do in the section of range riding in the protocol? Is this piece being applied properly and how do we go about checking the boxes? What you do with the wolves and knowing about how they are moving is a little bit more than the animal husbandry from the producer. In chronic conflict areas, we need to have certain things that the producer/range rider needs to be doing. We need to make sure that we can all follow the protocol document.

Comment

I think we started on it yesterday. If it is a contracted range rider then I think there are separate requirements than what the producer is to be held to.

Question

We should define it in the capacity of a contracted range rider vs. producer. Do you think that there is a problem with the things in this section being called range riding?

Comment

Whether it is producers, employees, state, etc., there are range riders out there applying this tool on the landscape. The foundation is the animal husbandry practices and then they can be built up with

the use of range riding. The knowledge and variables of the cattle and wolf movements creates a scenario where the tools need to be applied to each individual area.

Comment

What is it that we are trying to do here? One of the needs is when the Department makes the decision to go to lethal, we need to know that when the box was checked for range riding the level of range riding was applied correctly. One of our jobs here is to make sure that there is a standard to fall back on and guide us. A lot of the learning behind effective range riding comes from the producers and range riders on the ground and them not wanting livestock lost. I am wondering if we can have a dual part function of language in the protocol. The first is to have a set of standards of what range riding has been done, then have a lessons learned section that speaks to the set of approaches that have/haven't worked (have more of a suggestion section of things that have actually worked really well). Can we make sure that people are aware of the things that are most effective when using this tool of range riding?

Comment

I get nervous dividing it. In this protocol, regardless of if it is a producer, range rider, etc., if they are doing the things in the protocol, then that should be good enough. We want to have a standard to follow across the board. Looking long term, the goal should be to help the producers who don't have the time, or training, and try to help them build on the foundation of husbandry that they have already established. Later, we can talk about if the person is a range rider or not.

Comment

I have a different perspective. There isn't a lot of time from the producers to give to range riding or additional husbandry activities. The landscape in a lot of areas of the country is much easier to work with than a lot of the terrain in this state, so it is hard to compare to other states.

Comment

When the Department gets sued because a producer's cows got chewed on and had to go to lethal removal, there needs to be a standard that those are held accountable for what has taken place. I think there is a minimum standard of requirements that have to be done. In other states, there is the option of killing wolves. Here, we can't shoot wolves. In this state, we are trying to mitigate that lethal removal aspect.

Question

How many coexistence specialists would it take to cover current wolf territory?

Answer

Probably at least 30 in just NE Washington

Question

What is the cost?

Answer

Currently, there is not funding. But probably about a million dollars. Once we actually establish the requirements and get on the ground, the cost could potentially go down. If the range riding is done right, the wolves can become conditioned as long as we can be out there. Yes, it is more expensive to have no definition, then go out and do range riding incorrectly, and then end up lethally removing rather than having a good system set in place.

Comment

I just want to say that you may not be the only person out there that knows how to do range riding effectively. There are several folks out there that are qualified to do the work. I find some value in finding the common denominator.

Comment

I have been very successful in range riding. In my opinion there are some range riders out there that are doing things that are not effective at all. One person in an allotment does not do any good and there are some accounts where one person is covering several allotments.

Comment

This is the accountability of producers, range riders, etc. with the use of tax dollars. For the funding part, I think we really need to focus on the chronic conflict zones first. We need to hammer home where the reoccurring areas are in the state.

Comment

A few obvious things. The wolf plan says we are going to develop the protocol, this is the guidance document. The Department is responsible for providing the guidance from this document as well as incorporating lethal removal as a tool. A producer needs to implement a minimum of two non-lethals and then work with a conflict specialist. I believe that the Department is strictly implementing this protocol and there is an argument around what the best suited tool to use both internally and externally. We can go through a laundry list of non-lethals that have been used. We are wrestling with this as a required process to use because we as the Department have to present/suggest to the Director that the tools are truly happening and if we need to be able to say that, then there needs to be requirements. As a person in the chain, what we think of this document, what the public thinks of this document, and what a producer thinks of this document are very different.

Break

Discuss proposed changes to the protocol

Comment

I have been wanting to lay eyes on how far the subcommittee has gotten. We have had a lot of general discussion which is great, but I think we need to go into detail and get through some of the things that we have come up with. If we send the committee away right now, I don't think it will be clear enough for us to move forward.

Forest Service Update:

I am the region six range manager. I was a field going range con for about 17 years. I have heard cowboys and cow hands, but I have also heard rider and herder. The riders and herders are hired by the permittees. The range is broken up into allotments and each permittee is assigned to an allotment. We make a plan and implement the plan. We have a certain amount of forage that the cows are allowed to consume within each allotment. Some allotments are managed for bank alteration in the creeks. Taking all of this into account, we have down time between each grazing permit. During that downtime, we sit down with each permittee and try to come up with a grazing plan for the next year. Every so often, we do the long-term monitoring and short-term monitoring every year. We do this to maintain or move towards the conditions in each management plan. In working with range riders, we teach them on how we do our use monitoring so they can keep track

of where each permittee is at in relationship to their criteria in the permit. When we worked in the wood river wolf project, we used the term human presence. Steep country, but rolling hills compared to Colville country. All sheep country. This consisted of going out to each trailhead and posting the dates at which the sheep were allowed to be in that area. We hired several staff to hike the back country to look for sign or hear wolves. If they see/heard sign, then we sent interns out to stay with the cattle.

Question

The interns weren't necessarily moving the sheep, they were just there to be a deterrent to the wolves. Is that correct?

Answer

Yes. Part of this is to help keep a good relationship with the permittee. There is a slough of conditions in each agreement and we need to be able to check each box. Part of this human presence is one of them.

The range rider side of this is that in the annual operating instructions, if the permittee wants to stray from the plan then they need to give us 24-hour notice. If the cows are in one allotment where wolves are and they move to the next allotment early, then they are out of compliance and we need to be in communication. Need to understand the situation to help provide tools to be successful.

Comment

As you have been here and heard the concept of range riding, are there parts of the range riding activities that you feel are a disconnect with the operating instructions of the forest allotment agreements or do you feel that they mesh well?

Answer

In range 101, widespread distribution is part of it. There is a conflict of being in compliance, as well as eliminating issues.

Question

Help us understand the part of the AOI (Annual Operating Instructions) about the salting sights.

Answer

I have seen it vary from 50ft to 100yds. There are specific instances in each permit. We don't want the salt to be put near water sources, so there is always a buffer put in place. I have seen where the salt was placed 100feet instead of 100yards away. If we called them to move it and it doesn't get moved after a while, then that becomes a problem.

Question

We talk about resource use. I understand that wolves are not a federally protected species in the eastern part of the state, so that can change the forest service perspective. I am curious with how wolves are considered a resource.

Answer

They are protected. In a recent report, it was found that there was no threat to liability in that instance. Wolves are different than other protected species such as fish or even resources. There are threats to other resources that create vulnerability and we need to mitigate for that. Wolves create a different type of mitigation. There is variation between different forest allotments in relation to on and off dates. There is a section of noncompliance in our handbook and that chapter is what we go by. If there is a noncompliance, then we need to describe the noncompliance and

determine a remedy for it. This will result in suspension or cancellation procedures for the permit. This could mean a 25% less amount of grazing either suspended for a time period or cancelled for good.

Question

If you consider range riding and grazing. When you move pastures too early, then your sitting on the last pasture too long which could result in a shorter season or even noncompliance.

Answer

If the cows are moved early off the pasture because of wolves and the producer wants to move them back to that pasture when it is safe, then we are not against that. The handbook is due to come out here in a few months. In the revised handbook, there is revised direction for certain circumstances.

Comment

You have to be careful moving cattle around and bypassing certain pastures because you may not be able to go back to that pasture because there may not be the quality of forage, and you have a shorter season, poor forage, or noncompliance.

Comment

We can modify permits to fit the unusual circumstances. You won't have to ask for an extension if you just talk to us and have communication with the forest service.

Question

In your experience in the eastern part of the state, how many acres per animal does it take to graze the area in NE Washington?

Answer

In a grassland habitat, there is enough growth within 1 acre to sustain a cow for one month. Whereas, it may take 500 acres in a forested habitat.

Question

I want to thank you for bringing this information and education here. You also need to incorporate the food source for both the wild animals as well as cattle. Do you have scientists that think about the wild animals?

Answer

We do have scientists to look at that. Our utilization needs on an allotment are built by both cattle grazing and wild animal grazing.

Question

Who spawns that noncompliance when it occurs? Is there a noncompliance for not using a certain pasture?

Answer

No, there is not a noncompliance for nonuse in a circumstance with wolf conflict. We will always stay in communication with each permittee, range specialist, and biologist to discuss noncompliance issues.

Question

These allotments are large and varying. If you had to move the cows, then could you move the cows to a different part of the pasture?

Answer

Sometimes you can move cows outside of the pasture, to a different part of the pasture, or even bunching the cows.

Comment

Some terms may be confusing to the public. Eastern WA protected area is east of 97, not the divider of the cascades. Need to keep that in mind.

Rob put the range riding subcommittee notes/changes on the big screen and everyone read them individually.

Comment

Public funds are being used to do something. They want to know the level of certainty of some of these things. I think some of the items here could be changed to "shall do" rather than how it is done. Range riders "shall do" anything in relation to wolf items. Range riders "may be" able to do things in relation to husbandry items.

Comment

Maybe we could split the items up into two groups, I agree.

Comment

More clearly jumps out that this is more for allotment type settings, so not just livestock anywhere. Similar to dividing them up into groups, stating "here are the enhanced husbandry practices, and then here are the ones beyond that group that can be done" then later in the description state that sometimes it could be a producer, range rider, state employee, etc., that could accomplish the items previously stated.

Comment.

I agree. I would love more detail in the beginning talking about the types of landscapes we are talking about. Also, stating where the areas on chronic conflict are or could become would be helpful as well.

Comment

This has to be more than just a windshield applied sort of human presence. How do you define this in such a way that it can happen on the ground? How do you quantify these items? Looking for terminology that says it isn't just following wolf collar data, it is paying attention to the animals you are trying to protect.

Comment

I agree that that is something that should be in there, but we haven't gotten to that in the group here yet.

Comment

The RCW says "may," and I would hesitate for this document to say, "shall." Your missing a bullet point that says to keep calving areas away from wolves. That needs to be included.

Comment

It looks like the items have been cut and pasted, so one was missing.

Comment

Lambing, calving, and injured areas should have its own bullet.

Comment

This section is about human presence and we used a different term here.

Comment

There needs to be a checklist that is marked off, but that is in a different document or section.

Comment

I wanted to clarify terminology to help clarify what the definition of human presence meant. Because people have been raising the point of not knowing what human presence really is. This section refers to the act of human presence, but I have removed the term of human presence to help eliminate the confusion.

Question

I am all for getting rid of the term human presence. If you have a small pasture that is next to or surrounded by humans or barns, then would you expect, in addition to all those things, this human presence focused section to happen or would the human presence in this small pasture be enough?

Answer

We would want to make sure that if producers request to have more human presence at night, then we need to have that. Yes, the pasture may be close to barns or human presence, but it may not be enough.

Comment

I think that in the situation described, there would be enough human presence but if we were in a lawsuit, it may not be considered enough.

Comment

WAG member talks about the events of what happened in the subcommittee and the different language that was included. Calls out specific sentences that he doesn't agree with. The lack of quantifiable measures is a big concern and the feeling that the more definition that is included, then it becomes less defensible in court.

Comment

We are striving for what is the best thing you can do that is super proactive to conflict. That should be our baseline. Then there is the "if there is something brewing" then there is that immediate dialogue that needs to happen to determine the best tool to use in that situation.

Comment

We didn't settle on if this was just a definition to help people understand or if it was set as a standard. What would be a basic expectation and what are some of the activities that can happen. The concern about language earlier; this is early, raw material and I don't think this was intended to be in the requirement piece. I think it may have been just the definition piece. Some of these items are definitely a personal choice to be had on the producer side. Sometimes, there are areas where the initial non-lethals don't happen, but range riding happens, and it has been very successful. I

think that some of the herding/bunching levels of non-lethals can be just a suggestion, not a requirement.

Comment

There is a lot of standardization that has to happen across all documents here. Each document says something a little different and they all need to be saying the same thing.

Comment

On the duties of range riding: Is there anything in there about identifying where the cattle are on the landscape and locating the stragglers that are out there? I think that is important.

Comment

One item is monitoring the health and actions of livestock and I think that locating could fall under that, but should/could also be its own item.

Question

When does the state determine that they need to use a state contracted person to ride the range? Who makes that determination?

Answer

It usually depends on what the producer wants. If they want more help, then they can get more help no matter where that comes from. If there is an area where we have some concerns, then sometimes we can recommend. Mostly driven by the producer and sometimes from the Department.

Comment

Trying to make sure that there is no gap in coverage of range riding is one of the things that the Department tries to do. But in doing that, it stretches the quality of range riding thin.

Comment

The reason why I ask is that there is this concern about expending public resources on this. What I hear is that the producer is asking for this and the Department is saying, "yes, we could provide something," but there are other things.

Comment

If there is a WDFW contracted range rider, then there are requirements on that end. Each hired entity has their own requirements.

If we put resources in one area, there will be other areas with conflict during that time. We understand that range riding needs to be proactive for it to be effective.

The requirements have changed over time and it is variable.

Comment

WAG member talks about another document that was put out from a WDFW member that categorizes DPCA-L, range riders, and others. Active monitoring while keeping eyes on the cattle are important.

Comment

This document was built for means of discussion, not really a set suggestion.

Comment

My understanding of that document is that it is broken down into categories depending on the different range riding groups. Would you rather have that, or would you rather have a baseline of requirements across the board?

Comment
I think both.

Comment
It's confusing include in the protocol to distinguish between all the different groups because that is really the Department's decision.

Comment
I understand the bare minimum. What irks me about this is that there are some things that just simply won't work on my operation, so the baseline really needs to be looked at. I would rather do something that works rather than just checking a box.

Lunch

Gauge the potential for reaching "sufficient consensus" and identify next steps

Section on Page 18 of the Protocol

Comment
First paragraph in line 590, a suggestion on wording was provided.

Comment
I would suggest getting rid of the whole section. It seems like it is micromanaging a portion of the guidance document that we can get consensus on as a whole. I think if the management in the whole plan is working, then we won't have chronic conflict zones.

Comment
It seems like, for the definition of a chronic conflict zone, we are throwing everything into the definition or ingredients on what makes this zone. We should just simplify what it is when we have a high conflict area and then there are steps that come after that determination.

Comment
When you look at a chronic conflict zone, it isn't just about cows getting killed. It is also about wolves getting killed.

Comment
What would instigate an action in an area that we are defining here? There are other actions that could happen because of the area.

Comment
For this to make sense, having a requirement of a WDFW contracted range rider in chronic conflict zones is needed.

Comment
Is that both on public and private land?

Comment

That would be ideal, but if we are bound to public land, then I understand that.

Comment

I do think that if you have to remove wolves for a third year in a row, then that may mean that something isn't working.

Comment

At what point do we consider this? After total pack removal?

Comment

I think after any removal because every removal is critical and important. Despite the fact that it may not be full pack removal, the plan hasn't work. This protocol is designed to not have full pack removals.

Comment

After two years in a row, then that means it's a chronic conflict zone.

Comment

In my experience, the value of range riding is that the range rider knows the area. In an area like Grouse Flats, there is not range riding because it doesn't work in that area. If you put a contracted range rider in this type of area, it may make it worse.

Comment

This needs to be a proactive measure. Point is to not make the producer pay extra for something like this.

Comment

We keep hearing pack removal. Where have we had pack removal? I believe it has never happened.

Comment

The court is hung up on this removal question in OPT.

Comment

The blues is going to be one of these chronic areas.

Comment

I think the OPT pack was pretty well cleaned out. The Wedge probably had a few leftovers. Is anyone going to second my motion of removing this whole section? If not, I think that it should be removal after the first depredation instead of going back through the protocol to rinse and repeat.

Comment

We had a letter from the Governor that says we have to look/work under that direction. This section is meant to address that direction.

Comment

The reason we can't okay this today is because we have to wait to see what the locals in the north east region have to say. I don't know why we are discussing this.

Comment

Some of the things that the Department thought about in thi, wouldn't change the thoughts from the local north east group.

Comment

I think we should just stay put and by the next meeting we can finalize it after we have heard from them.

Comment

I go back into the last few years when we have had repeated conflict. In that time period, the livestock community, producers, and the environmental community has a raised stress level. When we do see conflict like that, we need to put some thought into that. We do have some time to think about the nuts and bolts. I don't want to step away from it, but what are the big things we are missing in this?

Comment

Yes, there is something potentially happening from the group in the north east, but I do think that there are a lot of other things going on where this group can look into this section. I don't want to put a lot of pressure on the local group in the north east to come up with a solution for this section.

Comment

Does the Forest Service have a GIS layer for all of the range allotments? (Answer is yes) Has that every been overlaid with the pack map? (Answer is yes) Chronic conflict zones. Anytime a wolf gets shot two years in a row, then that becomes this kind of area. That's not conflict in my mind. We had an animal that killed a cow in my county. I don't get where you got to get to three depredations in 30 days or 4 depredations in ten months until lethal removal. I don't want public funds used on something that I don't think it should be used for.

Comment

In the experiences that we have had in the state; when you have gone through two seasons with depredations, the producer is pretty upset. Anytime there is any lethal removal, on my side I hear so much strife. On the producer side, it causes strife when there are several depredations and no lethal removal. If lethal removal happens for a third time in the same area, then that is horrible. This isn't to blame or point fingers, this is for us to get together to learn from each other. We need to take it to the next level.

I think we need to have this section because our community would be very angry leaving this conversation without having this section move forward.

Comment

I agree. Other things to think about: how long do these zones remain in this state? Does it clear after one season with no conflict? Need to have an end point.

Comment

The Governor's letter is in the same topic of this. For the Governor to politicize this issue, it really offended us. I think having this section will really help us with addressing that. Does calling something a chronic zone provide staff with a tool to address these areas and is it the right tool?

Line 610: What does that sentence mean?

Line 613: This is still an issue and would be helpful to know that it is meaningful and is a helpful tool that can be used.

Comment

Is it really chronic? I want to add that it may be chronic for them whether or not there is lethal removal. For the producers, there are other factors such as lost cows and reducing calving rates. You left at what happens if that custom-tailored tool isn't implemented or doesn't happen. In lines 607-612, does the Department answer to that? We brainstormed as a group and checked in with the Director to hear reactions and that is the reaction that we got.

Comment

It's not just about the money that we lose on the producer side. Yes, there are always costs with ranching and breaking even is a close number. The chronic zone on the ranch is very expensive. These calves are not just for money, they are also like pets.

Comment

I think the chronic zone section should stay in here. I think the definition is in past tense and that makes sense. I like this section except the one big red paragraph. There are several areas that we don't look at and we should dig deeper into it.

Comment

I must be really dense because in this section, what are we trying to achieve with this section? Are we trying to force the producer to do alternative things? When this happens, we give the Department a green light to spend more money there? What is the reasoning behind this section?

Comment

We need to look for the cause so we can treat it. Not just treat the symptom.

Comment

On page 19, line 610: Doesn't make sense and I don't like it.

Comment

We plan to change it; this was just a nugget to throw in the bucket for conversation.

Comment

Back to line 590: my insertion there. I think it is duplicative and we can remove my suggestion. I actually really like this section and would like to tie a bow on it today. I think section nine is essential because it responds to public concerns. This is a trigger point to bring in additional resources.

Comment

The public aside, I would want us to be looking at this just because of the cows, wolves, and sheep. If this is just words on a page to keep the public happy, then that doesn't do it for me. My question to Department staff is how does this make your job different? How does this bring in more resources?

Comment

I was originally asked to draft this section. I know that the conflict specialists work very hard and I know there is already effort to try to help eliminate this from happening again the next year. This section signals that in the off season, this should trigger a bigger analysis or the question of do we need more resources to really take care of the issue. That way the people are alerted early, and you can look at the two years' worth of information to determine the lessons learned and how to move forward. Almost like a workshop to discuss the different things to throw at this issue and to help determine the different resources that are available. That was the intent.

Comment

It's not just a signal. I think it goes hand in hand with what we are working on with range riding. We have learned that in some areas there were not good range riding happening on the landscape, yet the box was checked. In these types of zones, we need to have clear standards to cover the Department's back and have eyes and ears in the public.

Comment

Everything you said was really easy to capture in one paragraph. Define chronic conflict zone. "In any chronic conflict zone the Department shall at the end of the grazing season, do a thorough analysis of the conflicts and in conference with the forest service, producers, and range riders to develop a more comprehensive plan in the area."

Comment

I think the language already says that. After talking to a range rider, he would like to go up there to start scoping where the animals are to help prevent conflict before the cattle even get on the range.

Comment

The value of range riding is emphasized throughout the document. Range riding doesn't work unless the producer wants it and has a relationship with it. What if the producer doesn't want to use a range rider, or doesn't want to sit down to create a plan? What if they don't want to do it? That's where the agency needs your guidance when we are faced with that.

Comment

We are making the definition of chronic that we killed wolves two years in a row. Yet you still have a producer experiencing chronic conflict.

Comment

Part of the language doesn't really change things. For us, our resources are limited, and we need to know how to prioritize our resources. A big benefit is, in a public way, a conversation is started before the grazing season starts. Having a plan and being able to share that with the public, so they have an opportunity to see that we are truly trying here, and it increases transparency.

Comment

If a rancher chooses not to be part of the conversation, then that is their choice.

Comment

If a rancher is not meeting the expectations that are set prior to the grazing season, then the Department may consider lethal removal upon a higher level with more considerations. If there is another producer that is following the expectations, then the Department may consider lethal removal upon a higher priority.

Comment

Is that currently happening?

Comment

I think so. It depends on the circumstance that is going on.

Comment

We talked about the producer not meeting expectations. What about the Department not meeting the producer's expectations? What happens then?

Comment

I appreciate that point and I think we should think about it. The language you put in there in red is understandable because that is what is in the Department's control. The Department's only choice here is lethal or non-lethal. Is lethal control the only choice in these situations? The larger system reaction that has been happening is really big and will that tip us into a place where we spin out of control? I don't know that we can put language in here that says what we are facing here isn't a good choice regardless. Are there other resources that could be brought in? I want everyone to think about more things than just lethal removal option. We put this in here because of the larger social reactions.

Comment

I think there are a couple aspects of this governance. People outside of this circle/community don't feel like they have influence, or a voice and things are happening without their say. You may think that being a producer you have all this weight on you, but you have a voice. In this section, it is in a very small way trying to respond from the public.

Comment

Reserve allotment idea. Highlight a piece of the landscape where there is repeated conflict. Then try to determine what we can do in the near term and long term. We really want to have a large conversation across the board where we can identify where these areas are. I don't want to get caught up in the sense of failure. This is just an idea right now and there may be others.

Comment made on having the range rider's lessons learned workshop.

Comment

What do we do if we can't get someone to the table to work with us?

Public Comment

Comment

From the goal discussion there was the talk about changing pack behavior. The conversation is really about changing the social structure, not the behavior. Having the range rider and US Forest Service here was incredibly helpful. I feel that I learned a lot and there were a lot of questions asked. I think it would be helpful for the WAG to identify where there are education holes and invite more folks in.

Comment

I want to put out there that I was one of the folks that sent a message to the Governor. I have been on this train for a while trying to get my voice heard. To see that protocol, I think it is important. I think the public is smarter than you think. I want to know that everyone is doing their due diligence with using all the tools in the toolbox. Thank you, guys, for all being here.

Comment

I think it is kind of a shame with everyone here and all the language with the range riding and chronic conflict zones that stems from one producer and I feel that that is the problem here that needs to be addressed.

Comment

There was something said about two in a row. It seems that there is a lot of conflict in one area. I think that some land is unsuitable for domestic animals, but great for wolves.

Check out

Everyone checked out around the room.

Meeting adjourned