

**Wolf Advisory Group  
November 10, 2021, Meeting Notes  
Zoom Meeting (Day 2)**

**WAG members:** Samee Charriere, Tom Davis, Diane Gallegos, Todd Holmdahl, Bill Kemp, Nick Martinez, Lynn Okita, Dan Paul, Rick Perleberg, Lisa Stone, and Paula Swedeen

**WDFW staff members:** Candace Bennett, Ben Maletzke, Donny Martorello, Annemarie Prince, Trent Roussin, and Julia Smith

**WDFW Commissioners:** Lorna Smith

**Facilitation team:** Susan Hayman, Elizabeth McManus, and Tristan Marquez

**Welcome and check-in**

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

**Meeting Purpose**

Begin the transition to a new facilitation team; share experiences from the summer season; receive an update from WDFW on ongoing wolf policy priorities, Special Focus Areas implementation, and conflict mitigation actions; begin initial planning for 2022 WAG activities; and revisit ground rules.

Comment

The first order of business is looking at the meeting agenda. Today we will focus on work planning, with public comment at 11:00 a.m. At 11:30, we will do reflections and wrap up, giving WAG members and WDFW staff to share closing thoughts or reflections in the meeting. I will be hopping out at right around public comment time and Elizabeth will step in to facilitate. That is our plan for today. Are there any questions?

**No questions**

Comment

I just wanted to acknowledge the update this morning about the Director's authorization of lethal permits in Columbia County. I just want to make sure everyone is aware. If you have questions about that I am happy to take phone calls after the meeting and can dive in.

Comment

Thanks. If you have not seen that [announcement](#), can you see that on the website?

Comment

Yes, and I will also post the link in the chat.

Comment

Following that, I was authorized by a nonprofit group, Washington Wildlife First, to voice their thoughts on the kill permits issued. They would offer help and that would include providing funding for range riding and paying to rent space in another location. I am just putting that out there on behalf of this group.

Comment

If anyone wants to follow up with you on that, would they contact you? Or do you have another contact?

Comment

I can give them the information.

Comment

Are there any other announcements or comments?

### **No comments**

Comment

This is another Mural activity. I want to be sure again that we understand that different people have different technology setups, so the use of these tools can sometimes be a problem. We don't want to create a situation where people cannot fully participate. We also know that there is a very active and interested audience observing the meeting, so we understand the importance of screensharing the Mural board. Having said that, I will ask were you able to get on the Mural board yesterday or work with us to add inputs?

Comment

I was able to get on yesterday.

Comment

Perfect. We will try different things to find ways to engage and we rely on all of you to say let's try something else. We are open to that.

There should be a Mural frame that says *WAG Work Planning*. If you go underneath, you should see another frame we will be using. When we identify topics for the next meeting, we will go to the lower frame and work on that. Here is where we started with this, and I would love to get your input.

*Chat: I'm on the road this morning and cannot access the board remotely. Sorry.*

Comment

I have prepopulated some topics that came from yesterday's conversation and earlier intake interviews. I will show you a table that you all worked on about post-recovery planning and topics you identified that are of high interest. What you see on the left side of the frame (post-recovery plan, wolf-ungulate interactions, etc.) are things I am tracking

that people have raised. I am not insisting or advocating you talk about those. The only color key I am using is if it is a wolf management topic, I have it in a yellow note. If it is more relationship building for WAG, it is in blue.

If you do want to add something, just click into the frame and a sticky note will appear or you can drag something over. Before you add a bunch of things, look at items previously identified on the left. I would love to hear your thoughts if some of those land for you and if so when those might occur. We have two more months of these meetings in this fiscal year, between now and June, then the other two would occur from July 1 on. Are there any questions before we begin?

### **No questions**

#### Comment

Please jump in verbally if you have thoughts. We talked about CCT refresher/practical exercises – I would be interested to know if folks would like to have an opportunity to think about this training when we get together after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year. I am not sure what that will look like. For some, it might be a formal first training for new members. We could also pick up some topics from CCT and treat it as an overall refresher course. What I heard was it wouldn't be something just for new folks but for the whole WAG to be in community together. Is that something you would want to do sooner than later?

*Chat: I don't feel like it's necessary. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work.*

#### Comment

I think it would be a great idea. My own feeling is that WAG functioned well when we had a basis of understanding those tools. I think sooner rather than later, especially if we get new folks on. It might take a while for new folks to come on, so it might be when there are new members. It is a commitment. It depends on how we do it. I don't know if it is possible for funding or an availability perspective, but my ideal would be to go through a standard 5-day CCT training. It would likely be online, if we could do that in the future when we have new WAG members and we all go through it together. I understand there are obstacles, and it is a time commitment especially for producers, so maybe we could spread it out over time. I think it would be super helpful for all of us to get on the same page to deal with inevitable conflict. And that is not necessarily interpersonal conflict, but we are coming from different places and can find how to use that for positive benefit.

#### Comment

I think it is a good idea, but we should wait until the new people get onboard assuming it will be relatively soon.

#### Comment

I agree. I would appreciate a refresher and one for folks that didn't get much of an orientation. But I also think we should wait until we know what WAG looks like in a few months.

Comment

I just wanted to express support for what was said. Great idea. But I see the logic of waiting until we have full folks and get full cohesion.

Comment

I wanted to echo what everyone else said. I got value out of it but if we are going to get new people we should wait.

Comment

I am seeing heads nodding. Does anyone have a different perspective on that that would want to see something sooner rather than waiting until new members join?

### **No objections**

Comment

How about I put that over here with the idea that it would happen before the end of the fiscal year (June 30)? In hopes that if there are new members, we could schedule that. Is that reasonable as a placeholder?

Comment

Remind me, what is the time commitment for this? Is it days? Hours?

Comment

There is the 5-day one mentioned and I think there are different kinds of trainings.

Comment

Francine does put on a full 5-day standard fundamentals training and that is a big commitment. If she is available to do work with WAG as a refresher then we could probably work to design something that meets the WAG's needs if that is not feasible for everyone.

Comment

I would think that would make sense, if we could do a shortened refresher for those who have been through the full course.

Comment

4 hours? 8 hours? Part of a WAG meeting or separate from?

Comment

I am not the expert, but I would hope we could do it as part of a WAG meeting. I think if we do 5 days that is just not going to work for a lot of people, but I think we can talk to see what is workable to give us the basic tools.

Comment

Got it, thank you.

Comment

I still remember the old facilitator's phrase, "You have got to go slow to go fast." I am still not sure I know what that means but I think that was her way to keep us patient. I don't know if I want to go through that same level of training but maybe making it scalable would be helpful. Because of all these virtual meetings we have not been able to work up relationships. A question for the Department: On the end of the fiscal year, is that feasible for you all in making the appointments and time to do training by the June timeframe?

Comment

I think so. I think it is. By the end of June? Yes.

Comment

I think training can be very useful because I wasn't there for the original. Scheduling wise, we need to meet in person. I don't think we could do something like that over Zoom.

Comment

All those things are noted. That would be a question if she is offering in-person or not. Hopefully by that time it would happen, but I definitely understand. What I noted was the concept of maybe there is a shorter, more "refresher" version for it. Noting if it could be scalable, that you prefer in person if possible, and something before the end of June.

The other note is trying to schedule some of it around a scheduled WAG meeting could be helpful. I think we probably need to take an action to investigate what this would look like. The facilitation team could work to have a conversation, see what that might look like, and bring back options to you. How would that be?

Comment

That sounds great. I just wanted to point out that I see a two-tier thing. I think whatever we do, we should do it together. Finding some happy medium forms the collegiality of the training. If we all can do it together it has to work with everyone's schedules. But whatever we do, I think we should all go through it together.

Comment

Do you think it is possible to have a period where maybe new people might start for half a day, then everyone comes in, or does everyone need to all be there?

Comment

I do think that even people who have had it before could have a refresher. I have been through fundamentals twice and the other training once and I still always learn stuff. I don't think it hurts for people to be exposed to this again, but that is just my opinion.

Comment

I would agree with that. I think it is important for all of us to be together. It is a great way to get to know one another and bond, and I think doing it together is a good thing.

Comment

You mentioned you didn't think it was necessary and would rather go on to other work. If this training were put together, would you be willing to participate in it?

Comment

If it is a consensus, then it is the direction we need to go. I don't think having that done and facilitated through online work will reach the goals it needs to. If we do it, it needs to be in person. Otherwise let's get to work. We have plenty of important work and we are all chomping at the bit to start doing it.

Comment

Thank you. The facilitation team will coordinate. Do any WAG members want to be part of the conversation?

Comment

I am happy to help if there is help needed.

Comment

I am happy to help as well.

Comment

Me too.

Comment

Why don't we, the facilitation team, meet with you three and put options together for you all to contemplate. We will take the notes that you want to be attentive to. As we do this work planning, we will make sure we identify those topics that you all are anxious to and that the Department needs you to get to work on. Be thinking about these two months occurring before the end of June, then these two potential meetings between July 1<sup>st</sup> and the end of the year.

Let's look at topics to the left. If there are other topics on the list that you think you would like to undertake, feel free to move those over into what would be January. This one would be something else (no tentative date). I mentioned I was concerned about a January meeting, but let's put that for now. That would be pre-June 30.

Comment

I wonder if a bunch of these can be rolled up into "wolf-livestock interactions," like the SFA outcomes, lethal removal, addressing barriers of range riding, and lethal removal and effects. I feel like wolf-livestock interactions are maybe the most urgent thing and have the most ramifications. I worry what we are doing is not working well. Do we need a different

organization structure or process? Better ways to look at outcomes and watch the data? I am not suggesting these are wrong, but I wonder if there is more of an uber issue that requires us to break it all down and build back up in a different fashion. I think someone said yesterday, "We should be biased for action." Maybe that is necessary in this case.

Comment

The topics you identified get loaded into that first meeting in January. We can certainly construct that to be around wolf-livestock interaction. For the next part of this, where we talk what information you need, sometimes it is helpful to have the topic split out a bit.

Comment

If we have a different idea about, say, wolf-ungulate interactions, and someone moved it to the third quarter. What if I want to move it back to the first?

Comment

We can just copy and paste it up here or wherever you like.

Comment

That is perfect. Thank you.

Comment

As much as we are trying to be prepared, the facilitation team doesn't always know what was talked about in detail before. People told us in intake interviews to not rehash things or continue conversations that have reached their natural conclusion, so we will lean on you to help us with that.

These are generally 2-day meetings. I think in the virtual space you are doing half-day, half-day, but we made it longer this time. We are happy to be here for two days but something to think about to is how much time you have to discuss these topics.

Comment

I wanted to clarify this "wolf management science" topic. Most had this interview question for WAG of how do you differentiate science from each other? How do you handle science that may contradict each other? How do we determine what is high-quality science? Our Region 3 program manager is an editor for the journal of wildlife management, does a lot of science in wildlife management, and he offered to give a presentation about foundations of science and what we look for when we use it in decision-making. He offered to do that, and I think that would be helpful for WAG. I don't know if that fits better with the CCT timeline so new folks can get it, but I would say to do that as soon as possible. Maybe in January.

Comment

Instead of saying just "science topic," how we might add another word or two to frame that, so it makes more sense to what you are adding to it?

Comment

“How do we evaluate science and use it in our guidance?”

Comment

Thanks for clarifying that.

Comment

I have a couple of things. First, I was the one who put “wolf-ungulate interaction” in the lower box, but I misunderstood the timing of it. I wanted it in the second box, not the third. The only reason I put it there instead of the first quarter is because the first is already crowded. But I do think it is a topic we should talk about. I might broaden it to just “ungulates in general” (their management, how healthy are the populations, and are there things WAG can do together). Also, habitat restoration program; giving advice and guidance from hunters. We have said we want to do it for a long time and have not gotten to it.

Second, I see attention on lethal control topics. We spent a lot of time trying to fully update the 2017 protocol and we never got there. We did an update of the range riding description, we didn’t get a formal inclusion of language on SFAs, but we never fully updated the protocol, and it still took a huge amount of time. I am concerned if we continue to revisit the protocol that it seems to take oxygen out of the room. I am not advocating one way or another, but just remember that when we do that, we tend to not get to anything else.

I appreciate the comments about things not working. Is there advice on restructuring for things in the Department? In general, my sense is that the use of nonlethal controls has been effective compared to other states. We have low rates of lethal removal compared to Rocky Mountain states at the same time in the recovery. My biggest point is that if we keep going back to lethal control issues, we need to be aware that we crowd out space to talk about other topics.

Comment

I appreciate those comments. If the data supports that the stuff we are doing on lethal removal is working, then God bless. It would be interesting to see that comparison. On the wolf-ungulate interactions, I feel like we have been kicking this topic down the field and not diving into it. It is just as important and urgent as the others are. We lack the data and focus on this one, so that is why I would put it in the first month. I know we have this Predator-Prey Project going on, but the previous data I have seen is old. There is a whole community of hunters that don’t feel like they are being served by WAG at this point.

Comment

I want to agree with both of you. For the past years, we have focused on wolf-livestock issues. As we look toward recovery – and we are well on our way – there are other things to consider, like a post-recovery plan, the science of wolf management, and what can and cannot be done as far as population level effects go. I think it would be good to start laying



groundwork for those discussions earlier than later.

That whole topic of wolf-ungulate interaction is huge. Hundreds of biologists dedicate careers to wolf-ungulate interaction. We might not have all data analyzed from the Predator-Prey Project yet, but there are thousands of studies in Idaho, Montana, Minnesota, and everywhere else. We can look to those and start guiding that conversation as the data trickles in from our own state. Washington is not that different from other places as far as how wolves and ungulates interact, and it could be useful for us to look at the other states.

Getting to post-recovery discussion is starting with discussions about wolf science, then wolf-ungulate interactions, and then transition into what our own data says once that becomes available. That is what I would like to see. This conflict thing is going to be present forever as long as there are wolves. It can distract us from talking about other things we should be focusing on as well.

Comment

I really want to thank you. For me personally, as a hunter, we have beat the livestock-wolf conflict to death. I would like to focus on wolf-ungulate issues and get a more detailed idea of what is going on. It would really benefit the group I represent because we feel marginalized. We want to feel a bigger part of this group.

Comment

When I look at wolf-ungulate interaction, the topics of wolf hunting, and these other dense topics, I am struggling with how we put them into the boxes without knowing the timeline from the Department about when they actually need the guidance. How soon do we need to start these discussions? Because they are not going to be a one-day discussion.

Comment

That is a really good point. There are conversations the group can have to set the stage, but when would advice be needed? Those should have a bearing on the scheduling.

Comment

I want to thank you both because I agree totally. We have been kicking this post-recovery plan down the road for the last year or so. I think that we have gone over depredation stuff and need to move on. I think the hunting is way far down the road, but I am fearful with the post-recovery plan we will fall into the trap that Montana and Idaho did where they lost social license and legislation started taking over. I want to start on the post-recovery plan so that we are ready for it to happen. I think that needs to be our #1 priority at this stage and to not keep kicking it down the road.

*Chat: I am concerned we are giving advice on what we want to advise on rather than what the Department or the Director want or need advice on.*

*Chat: But if protocols are not working well enough for all stakeholders, shouldn't we be*

*working to address related issues? Work in the weeds is a hard, but it's necessary.*

*Chat: Agree. We should hear from the Dept on what they want.*

Comment

Thank you, that is great. Please look at those chat comments because we will circle back. There are some things to be talking about on wolf-livestock issues, but I think what I am hearing from people is that these are big topics. People are asking if we can be more surgical or specific about what this group needs to focus on or give guidance on.

Comment

There is a lot on my mind. Almost every comment folks have made I have agreed with. About the protocol, I couldn't agree more. It feels like when people say we need to revisit the protocol or something isn't working, I will remind folks we have incredibly low levels of lethal removal and depredation compared to other places. That doesn't mean zero, but it seems like when they constantly want to revisit protocol there is an expectation that lethal and depredation will never occur. That will never happen. We will always prioritize nonlethal tools; however, those things will not be zero! I constantly hear, "We need to revisit this because so and so is failing." I don't think we are failing. I don't think we are perfect, but I don't think we should revisit it over and over.

About contracting out lethal removal or wolf-ungulate interactions, that ties back to what we served up to you in July with that alternatives matrix and topics we asked you to rank. The reason why is when we say, "work on a post-recovery plan," it is too big a bite. But each of those topics is a big topic in itself, so that is why we asked you to put stars on them. There are a lot of issues about wolves in Washington I think we could address in an updated wolf plan. How do you engage wildlife service again? How do we fix our indirect compensation program? How do we do more for outreach and education? I think they are future planning, but I would encourage you to look at those topics.

Sometimes it feels like a barrier in WAG is you don't have enough information to start with. We might not have research buttoned up in Washington, but wolves are one of the most researched animals on the planet. We, Department staff, can gather information about what other states are doing and compare notes. Right now, we follow our Wolf Plan and our WAC. That is the stuff where the Department needs WAG to weigh in and give guidance. That is what the alternatives matrix was for. That lays out a few different options for those topics. We are not looking for WAG to vote on which ones they want, but we are asking what information do you need on these? I hear those gaps all the time and I think that is post-recovery planning stuff. I don't know if that clarified but I think Department staff could get together and provide information about each individual topic.

Comment

We actually have that matrix you all responded to, and we have the numbers on a slide so we can pop that up. I did bring over the three topics and put them on a sticky note, so it was represented in this exercise right now.

I am going to suggest we take a short break then come back and look at what we think we would like to do in this first month. Work planning is getting used to identifying framework questions for the discussion. We could start building a plan for the Department to get you the information and the questions they want you to all weigh in on. Are there any objections?

### **No objections**

#### Comment

I want to say thanks for being super eloquent on wolf-ungulate interactions. I have made comments on livestock-wolf interactions. I wasn't so much talking about the protocol per se, but the execution like range riding and timeliness. Maybe that is the focus more than the protocol itself. As was said, maybe what can be done is focus on the execution aspect in a timely way. Maybe that can be a subgroup and not necessarily the focus of one of these big meetings.

#### Comment

Somebody noted the option of using a subgroup for instance. Certainly, that can be done. A lot of you mentioned using small groups to work through information and bring back to the larger group to discuss. Let's take a break for 10 minutes, then we will move some of these topics at the bottom of this Mural board and see if we can get a date picked.

### **Break**

*Chat: I recommend the Department convene a sub-group for indirect compensation. That will take a fair bit of focused work. A prior group made some good progress.*

*Chat: I would support that as well. This new group should build on the prior discussion rather than starting new.*

*Chat: I'm supportive of that as well, but it seems like all of that subcommittee work gets lost. I don't have any of that information and don't know who/how it is kept. We need clear leadership on subcommittees if we go that route.*

*Chat: Donny chaired that group. He should have flip chart notes somewhere:)*

*Chat: The execution isn't beyond the scope of an advisory group*

*Chat: Can you say more about what you mean about "execution isn't beyond..."?*

#### Comment

About the next meeting, whenever that is, if these are our topics then what are the questions we want to address? What is the objective for this particular conversation? Now we will get into greater detail and what information we need to help answer those

questions. Before we get into that detail, I will be asking you when we will have this meeting. If you all said January 4 is best, I am sure we can make that work. It is challenging with holidays beforehand. I will be asking about the first part of February, so it will be helpful to hear if early February is too close to calving season.

I dragged down the topics you seemed to lean in on from the top panel. The “wildlife-wolf interaction” topic has a question mark because maybe it would be beneficial to start to lay the groundwork for other topics. You will never dismiss that topic, but is there something in particular around range riders, contractual things, use of third party for lethal removal, etc. It does sound like the “wolf-ungulate interaction” and “how do we evaluate science and use it in our guidance” should go there as well as “relationship map of Washington wolf management.” What would you want to know with the wolf-ungulate interactions?

Comment

I think you might have meant to say, “focused livestock-wolf interaction,” not “wildlife-wolf interaction.”

Comment

Exactly, yes, thank you. If you want to talk about wolf-ungulate interactions, what is it you are wanting to learn about or discuss? Let’s pause and give people a chance to think and add to the board.

Added post-its:

- What are other states finding with wolf-ungulate interaction?
- What other factors influence ungulate populations?
- What is the latest on the Predator-Prey study?
- How are different species of ungulates impacted by wolves (moose vs elk vs mule deer vs sheep etc.)?
- What have we seen with the latest ungulate harvests?
- How can operations/implementation be improved?
- While we know WAG is advisory to the WDFW Director, what authorities do the other bodies have in decision-making?
- Will our difficult conversations matter if these other entities undermine our collaboration?
- What future studies might be planned?
- Under what circumstances might wolf predation be a major concern?
- Advance SFA discussion

Comment

Is that Predator-Prey one part of the wolf-ungulate interaction?

Comment

I thought that was a big part of Predator-Prey where they have two groups of ungulates and look at interaction between collared deer ungulates and how the predators interact with them over a long period of time. It is my understanding that they are rolling out

analysis as we go.

Comment

In some of the conversations with WAG members, the wolf-ungulate topic isn't as top-of-mind, so I want to be sensitive to that. If there are other topics, we certainly welcome you to find value in part of the conversation. But if something else is more compelling to you then it would be wonderful as well. I don't see anyone commenting on how we evaluate science and use it in our guidance. Is there anything to further tease that out? Or is it a good standalone question in itself?

### **No comments**

Comment

What do we think about the "focused wolf-livestock interaction" topic? How can operations be improved? Is there somewhere to focus attention and then the group could decide if there is some utility in small groups doing background work?

Comment

What would "advance SFA discussion" mean?

Comment

I put that. One of the original yellow stickies put on was "evaluate SFA implementation to date," so I think if we are going to spend time on protocol or a bit of the protocol, continuing to engage and learn from the Department: What did they learn and what does that mean for further developing that program? The idea was it would be a pilot and not everyone on WAG was ready to institutionalize SFAs in the protocol. While it is in pilot stage, we should keep talking about how to improve the idea and it seems like that is a containable discussion.

Comment

Does the Department feel they have additional information in meeting potentially in January or February? Are there any thoughts on that or if that would be timely?

Comment

Just to clarify, you are asking specifically about SFA discussion?

Comment

Yes, whether there would be more of what the Department learned.

Comment

We might want to see how rulemaking unfolds. Because what we do in an SFA or in chronic conflict areas might be more in the realm of rulemaking than WAG. That is not to say WAG cannot work on it, but it has changed forms a little bit.

Comment

If that were the case, would it be accurate to say that conversation might be better informed not at the January/February meeting but whenever the late spring meeting is?

Comment

It becomes complex because if you have a proposed rule in front of Commission, it is up for public comment at that time anyway. WAG's discussion might not be the right forum for providing input for what is going on there. It might be better in a Commission hearing.

Comment

Can you give any advice as to keeping it in here and whether it is a good topic to put on the docket?

Comment

Personally, I know it is important to WAG and WAG has good input, but there is a question above that says, "While we know WAG is advisory to the WDFW Director, what authorities do the other bodies have in decision-making?" It is a bit out of WAG's arena at that point. We can have input, but the forum looks different than having a WAG discussion.

Comment

Just to make sure I understand, are you saying if there is a draft rule out for public comment, then whatever WAG wants to comment would be part of the record the Commission might consider?

Comment

WAG could certainly come together and provide a consensus comment to the Commission. If WAG did that, I think that would be incredibly powerful considering WAG is diverse with different perspectives across the state. I think that would be incredible. But rather than a discussion in WAG, it would need to be targeted like coming together and providing a letter to the Commission. It is out of the spot where WAG provides guidance and then it is implemented. It is more so here is what WAG thinks about the proposed rule.

Comment

I think that comment is something that is outside the realm of WAG. Like what was said with SFAs, I think those two comments are outside of WAG control. We have had discussions about range riding and, to be frank, it is still implemented how it is implemented. It has not changed based on what we talk about. I don't think we should talk about implementing execution of exercises.

Comment

I have a question about the SFA pilot project. Is that going to remain in effect until rulemaking may change it and is finalized?

Comment

As we talked about back in July, during our preliminary assessment of rulemaking options, the Department considered a rule based on SFAs, so that is what we are doing. However, in a Commission process, things can change. We will see.

Comment

But we have a pilot project going. Will we continue using those guidelines until such time that rulemaking kicks in?

Comment

Yes, we will. I know we still plan to put together a conflict mitigation plan even if it is not lessons WAG learned from last year.

Comment

I want to provide a slightly different perspective on both things said. The helpful thing of WAG is when we hear about issues – some can be obstacles to implementing things or us hearing yesterday how things played out in attempts to do the SFA – WAG can both bounce ideas off on how to adjust for what was learned and provide additional recommendations.

On the SFA topic, regardless of what the Commission does, I wasn't thinking so much about actual language of the rule. For WAG a discussion I was thinking in problem-solving mode. The original recommendations came from years of experience, observing what happened in the Kettle range, and things that worked and did not work, that formed the basis of SFAs. It is that ongoing dialogue. Even if there is a Commission rule, I wouldn't recommend WAG spend time to reach censuses to the Commission.

I really think where WAG is useful is trying to solve problems. The implementation part may be out of our scope, but in prior experience in WAG, we learned about things that were not working and fixed them. There was a subcommittee that changed WAC language on direct compensation. We heard from livestock producers, the language went right to Commission, and it got passed. We have been part of asking for money for certain things or legislative language on things. When there are barriers for nonlethal controls, for instance, and there is something we can help with then we should do that. Contracts say, "We cannot do that," but you have no idea why. That is something we can help with. I exhort Department staff to let us help with these problems.

Comment

We have 20 minutes left and still need to make decisions on the timing of this meeting. Given the number of stickers, we are probably good on "wolf-ungulate interaction" being a topic. Unless hearing otherwise, I imagine we can develop "how we evaluate science." There are questions for the "relationship map" we can develop and discuss. There are a couple members not here today that would be interested in that conversation. My question for you about the "wolf-livestock interaction" topic is do you want us to frame a conversation around what the Department learns from the pilot program? From now

until when you meet, is there something else learned? Would there be any place WAG could weigh in and advise?

“SFA discussion” and “operations discussion” go hand-in-hand. To the point about whether or not the pilot continues, do you want to plan to have a contained conversation around the SFA and operational things that WAG might be able to weigh in on?

Comment

It sounds like good idea but as long as it is an hour and there is stuff to update. I don't know if they are doing anything from now until January or February. I think people are getting cows off range. It would be good to see outcomes but as long as it is an hour or less. That is what I would say.

Comment

Does that sound alright? Does anyone object?

### **No objections**

Comment

I do recognize we have people who are not able to join this morning. As we work together to frame the agenda topic, we will look for if there is updated information and how we might focus that conversation to be very focused to an hour or less. I am guessing it depends on how long “how we evaluate science” is. I don't know if you are thinking the presenter would that be a half day? A couple hours? What might that look like for time?

Comment

I would think it would be maybe an hour presentation and then time for questions. This is just a thought, but it might be something that is a good precursor for these other things. It is good to start with a foundation of how we evaluate science. It depends on what day WAG selects for the next meeting.

Comment

I imagine we would touch back on that a bit as we dove into research on wolf-ungulate interaction. What can we take from this research and apply here? Having a baseline is helpful to start looking at other research, but each time we look at research we will loop back to that question.

Comment

Maybe we can use that in subsequent conversations down the road, have that check-in on how we evaluate science.

If we were to plan a day-and-a-half, let's talk about dates. I know you had times of year and days of the week that work better so I regret not having that right now. For January 4 and 5, I am wondering if it is possible to move that either to later in the month or possibly to the first week of February.



Comment

Legislative session begins on January 10 so that will be hard for us in Olympia. It is a short session, so there is a lot of fast and furious stuff in the first couple of weeks and maybe February.

Comment

If I remember right, we moved it early because of session. I am not headed to Denver this year, so that first week of January is the best way to have it. The first week of February is fast and furious around here, too, so that will not work for me.

Comment

Legislative session is definitely a thing for many of you and going into February is a struggle for some. I want to make this easy to attend for as many possible. Did you pick January 4 and 5 because they are typically on a Tuesday and Wednesday? I am wondering if we could even push it to January 5 and 6 to give people a little extra wiggle?

Comment

As far as I have been on WAG it hasn't been on certain days of the week. It has been whatever works for people.

Comment

If people feel we need it to be that first week of January, my question is about that wolf-ungulate conversation and that science conversation. Department, when thinking about preparation for that meeting, would January 5 and 6 be doable?

Comment

That sounds fine to me. Also, if we do half days I could do Friday as well. I am not sure if it works for other folks, but that first week is flexible for me.

Comment

How do people feel about that? A Thursday then a Friday morning? Does anyone have a strong reaction opposed to that?

### **No objections**

Comment

If we can do Thursday the 6<sup>th</sup> and a half day on the 7<sup>th</sup>, we can make a solid date and put that on the calendar. I will notify other WAG members not here today and ask if they can make that Thursday and Friday.

Comment

I am talking with staff offline and seeing about wolf-ungulate interaction questions and if we can do that by January 7 or 8. We can definitely have a science presentation, do the relationship map, and we live and breathe the wolf-livestock interaction, so I feel like we

can do that. I am excited by all these questions but need to figure out if Department staff could actually do it then.

Comment

Thank you for that. I am tracking January 6 and 7. Have you ever met in March or done a June meeting? I am just thinking it would give us time, but it is also a big stretch between November and March. But what if we just skipped February and the legislative session?

Comment

February and March are the worst time to ask producers to sit in a room.

Comment

Having heard that, maybe we stick with January and find out what the Department is able to do. If we are not able to get to all questions about wolf-ungulate interaction, we may have a compressed meeting or will not need so much time. Since March is not good, would we just aim for June for the next meeting? It looks like you have met in April, July, and June in the past. Would you want us to aim for an April date or June date?

### **Thumbs up and nodding**

Comment

I am thinking April could be a positive thing and maybe another in June to have a couple things to work with. I am looking for people to either push back or say yes. I will land on January 6, a half day January 7, poll you for April, and poll you for June. I would love and hope that by June we get to meet in person. I don't know, but I would love that.

Before heading into public comment, I want to check in with WAG members and the Department. Is there anything on your mind, any thoughts, or observations?

### **No comments**

### **Public Comment**

- Rachel B:
  - I am pleased with how the new facilitation is going. I hope it will make WAG more functional and encourage participation from all members.
  - I am disappointed in state resources that make sure cattle producers graze on wolf land. Wolves are native and this is mind boggling to me. I don't know of any other business that gets as much support from the Department. It is too much focus in these meetings. Many scientific studies show that wolves are part of a healthy ecosystem and I hope WAG can recognize that.
- Dave Hedrick of Ferry Conservation District:
  - Impacts to landscape is not something that gets brought up in WAG. We have been doing site visits for the last month or so and wanted to keep in

mind this is not Yellowstone Park up here. It coincides with what producers are dealing with as far as not being able to find range riders and being impacted by wolves. The producers up here have been dealing with that for 10 years now and it has taken a toll on the landscape, so what I am seeing is overgrazing of pastures this is due to late turnout to get calves bigger before getting out to Forest Service allotments and moving cattle during year to avoid wolves. This really came to fruition because of our drought conditions this year. We are going to be dealing with consequences of that even if we have normal moisture in the future.

- I understand talking about the protocol, but I will say when people are talking about numbers and comparing to other states, numbers don't tell the story when you are looking at the landscape. Those are thrown out by people that are profoundly disconnected from landscape. Not sustainable for producers and the landscape. The credit card we have been using is maxed out here and dealing with land conversions because people make more by selling lands. The landscape needs to be part of the WAG conversation. Part of it is the silo effect of DFW. You have the conflict people, the policy people, the biologists... All local people work really hard on the ground and hats off to them, but we have to do better. I appreciate that. That is all I have.
- David Linn of Washington Wildlife First:
  - I am dismayed to learn the Director ordered a killing of wolves by issuing kill permits. Private individuals to hunt wolves is alarming. Details on these permits is not released publicly, but the public has right to know what is authorized. Who will kill, what methods are allowed, using dogs, limited to which geographic area, can hunters kill at rendezvous sites, and what ensures wolves are involved in depredations? Predator reports have not been released. I put in a public document request for the recommendation to the Director but it will be weeks/months before getting a response. Did learn about the reasons during WAG, but it's troubling; livestock owners trying to avoid conflict, but the Department has failed them. Bureaucratic red tape in the way of providing range riding. If the Department is unable to provide help to avoid conflict, they should have called to the public to help before problems develop. Washington Wildlife First is prepared to work with producers and provide funding to prevent continued conflict with the Columbia County pack. Funding range riding, providing alternative locations for cattle. We ask producers to turn in kill permits to DFW or WWF. We hope the next time a situation is developing the Department will call on us before the problem happens. You can contact me at [dplinn@wawildlifefirst.org](mailto:dplinn@wawildlifefirst.org) to discuss in more detail.
- Illene Le Vee from Klickitat County:
  - As a rancher and someone who prides themselves on how we police our lands, that includes policing wildlife associated with our lands. If the environment is not conducive to safety of our animals, they are placed in

protective environment. Concern with comment is if there has been an arrangement between producers (don't like that term but) to pasture individual cattle on their land, that is private property, and they have the right to police protection on their animals. If they are grazing on public land allotments, that is a totally different situation. In those situations, I am in support of protection of wildlife in those. I hope WAG gives interest to health of our ungulates across the state. I am seeing more where our ungulate population is severely disadvantaged with their health. I want to know how the Department and associates intend to or can adjust for that circumstance. Thank you and good luck. It was a fascinating meeting.

- Steph Taylor with Northwest Animal Rights Network:
  - Frustration with timing of kill order announcement. Last few were during Commission meeting or WAG meeting which does allow time for the public to ask questions and formulate comments. Many questions we have that remain unanswered and we are frustrated this kill order was even made, especially because we are frustrated the Department resources are going toward protecting cattle and think it would be a detriment to bring in wildlife services and they do not have a great track record for helping recovery effort. If want to go into how climate change is affecting ungulate population and how wolves can help toward chronic wasting disease to so want conversation to move forward. Thank you.
  
- Jana
  - I appreciate the meeting being well facilitated and I learned a lot from producer perspective directly impacted. I agree with the person who said there seems to be an emphasis on producers at the expense of wolves even if wolf population can tolerate some lethal removal. First, I don't see a mention of producers using guard dogs, wondering why that doesn't seem to be prominent while I have seen helpful in other regions.
  - Also, about climate or about ungulate-wolf interaction, it is important to look at effect of drought and forest fires and how having cattle grazing on public lands is affecting ungulate and, in turn, wolves. Cattle being on the landscape affects all of this. Thank you.
  
- Justin Dixon
  - As a producer and a local elected official, I think we need to support our producers in every way possible. They are the people that make these communities survive. These small rural communities could not put kids in schools and the workforce so any support WAG could give to ranchers or producers in the area is extremely well benefited for those small communities. Thank you.
  
- Jim Salkas *via Chat: Does the Group distinguish between and provide different / alternative actions for depredations on private vs. public land?*

**End of Public Comment and Meeting Adjourned**