

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting: December 2-3, 2011

Agenda Item 10: Adoption of Wolf Conservation & Management Plan - **Decision**

Prepared By: Rocky Beach, Wildlife Division Manager, Wildlife Program
Harriet Allen, Endangered Species Section Manager, Wildlife Program

Presented By: Nate Pamplin, Assistant Director, Wildlife Program

Background:

Department staff will present the draft Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Plan) for Washington to the Commission for approval. The gray wolf is a state endangered species in Washington, and the Plan is the state recovery plan for the species (per WAC 232-12-297) and also addresses management of the gray wolf while it is state “listed.” It establishes population recovery targets and strategies to achieve those targets and addresses conflicts with livestock; wolf-ungulate interactions; wolf interactions with other species; wolf-human interactions; land management; information and education; research, reporting and evaluation; and costs and priorities for implementation. In four special workshops in fall of 2011, Department staff have briefed the Commission on:

- The public process that took place to develop the draft Plan.
 - The Wolf Working Group process
 - The elements of the Plan.
 - The development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).
 - The changes that occurred based on analysis of the public comments, peer review, Wolf Working Group review, and WDFW review.
 - Possible revisions that may be considered based on Commission input during the last four special workshops on wolves.
-

Policy Issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

The approval of the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (the preferred alternative of the Final EIS).

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

An extensive public process was used to develop the EIS/plan, which was conducted under the SEPA, including:

- Seven public scoping meetings.
 - The formation of a Wolf Working Group to provide recommendations on the plan to the Department. The group consisted of 17 members who were representative of the diverse public values regarding wolf recovery and management in Washington. Ten two-day meetings were held from 2008-11.
 - A peer review of the preliminary draft plan by 43 experts in different fields.
 - A 3-month public review of the draft EIS/plan. Nearly 65,000 people responded during the public review period. The Department analyzed the comments, conducted
-

additional internal and Wolf Working Group reviews, and addressed the comments in the final EIS.

- A blind peer review by 3 anonymous reviewers during the 3-month public review period.
- 12 public meetings held Oct – Nov 2009 (5 on west side, 7 on the east side; 1,157 people attended)

In addition, the Commission conducted 4 public workshops August – November 2011 in preparation to adopt the final plan in December of 2011 (2 on east side, 2 west side; an estimated 500 people attended).

Overall, this process took 4 years and was perhaps one of most extensive public involvement processes that WDFW has undertaken.

Action requested (identify the specific Commission decisions you are seeking):

Adoption of the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.

Draft motion language:

(Under development)

Justification for Commission action:

The recommended Plan was developed under the State Environmental Policy Act and through public, peer and Wolf Working Group input. The Plan balances recovery and management direction for the wolf in Washington. The objectives, strategies, and tasks in the final recommended plan will achieve the dual purposes of the plan: to ensure reestablishment of a self-sustaining population of gray wolves in Washington and to encourage social tolerance for the species by addressing and reducing conflicts.

Communications plan:

The WDFW web page contains extensive information on the development and content of the final EIS/Plan. News releases will be used to notify the public that the Plan is being presented to the Commission for consideration. Further details of the communication strategy is included in the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan itself in Chapter 9-Information and Education, page 134 and Chapter 12- Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tasks, task 9, pages 153-156.
