

Wolf-livestock conflict in Dirty Shirt pack, 2015

Updated: August 6, 2015

Created: July 16, 2015



Background

The Dirty Shirt pack is located in northeastern Washington, just north of Chewelah. The size of the pack is at least six members. The pack produced pups in 2015, however the number of pups is unknown. The pack had no known history of confirmed wolf depredations on livestock until July 9, 2015. For more details on the Dirty Shirt pack, see the [2015 Wolf Conflict-Deterrence Updates](#).

The livestock producer who experienced wolf depredations in early July 2015 grazes 166 cattle (83 cow-calf pairs) on the North Fork Chewelah Creek and South Fork Chewelah Creek US Forest Service grazing allotments. The terrain is rugged, with steep canyons, partially forested areas, and brushy draws. The cow-calf pairs tend to graze in small groups across the allotment, and are rotated through various pastures throughout the grazing season. WDFW staff communicated with the producer over the past two years, and the producer was aware that the grazing allotment overlapped with the Dirty Shirt pack's territory.

Addressing wolf-livestock conflict

WDFW's [Wolf Conservation and Management Plan](#) describes the strategies and management actions for minimizing wolf depredations on livestock. The Department emphasizes the use of non-lethal, preventive measures as the first line of defense for minimizing conflict. Lethal removal of wolves may be used to stop repeated depredation if it is documented that livestock have been clearly killed by wolves, non-lethal methods have been tried but failed to resolve the conflict, depredations are likely to continue, and there is no evidence of intentional feeding or unnatural attraction of wolves by the livestock owner. The Department, with review by a citizen-stakeholder Wolf Advisory Group, has further defined the conditions for the use of lethal action through the development of a checklist that identifies the non-lethal methods required and a [Protocol for Lethal Control](#) (and [flow-chart](#)) describing the process for considering such an action. A chronology of events and responses by WDFW are shown below.

Dirty Shirt Chronology

Date	Preventive Measures	Depredation Event and Observations	Management action	Comments
June 1, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calving took place at producer's home outside of the Dirty Shirt pack territory. • Producer turned out 83 cow/calf pairs onto summer Forest Service allotment (North Fork of Chewelah Creek) on June 1, 2015. • Calf weights at the time of turn-out were approximately 200-250lbs. Calves born late and under 200lbs are not turned out. • The producer had one hired hand to assist in managing the cattle. • The producer and/or hired hand checked on the cattle two to three times a week. • No cattle were observed sick or injured. • The producer had no bone piles in the area of the wolf pack. • The area has relatively high level of human presence by recreationists and Air Force survival training participants. 	None	None	WDFW Conflict Staff communicated with all the producers in the Dirty Shirt pack area during US Forest Service allotment permittee meetings.
July 10-12, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • WDFW staff and range rider conducted evening/morning patrols: hazed one wolf with spotlight during evening of July 10 • Producer moved cattle to lower elevations away from wolf activity • Producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Cow carcasses secured with fladry until carcasses can be removed. 	<p>Confirmed depredation #1: one dead adult cow (suspected date of depredation July 5, 2015)</p> <p>Confirmed depredation #2: one dead adult cow (suspected date of depredation July 6, 2015)</p>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notified by Air Force staff of one dead cow July 9, 2015, eight miles up North Fork Chewelah Creek. During investigation, a second dead adult cow was discovered and investigated, and determined to be a separate event. • WDFW staff discussed possible non-lethal preventive measures available (7/10/2015): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fladry cannot be used due to open range 2. RAG box not effective as cattle continue to move around on open range 3. Fox lights not used also due the movements of cattle 4. Guard/herding dogs not effective for cattle in rugged, forested terrain

				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Continue to haze wolves if seen near cattle 6. Continue to utilize department staff to increase human presence 7. Share wolf location data with producer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update emailed to WAG/Interested parties and northeastern Washington County Commissioners and Legislators. • Other Forest Service allotment permittees notified about depredation events by Dirty Shirt pack members.
July 13, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • Producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Two range riders worked area on horseback 	None	None	Update sent to WAG and interested parties
July 14, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • Producer, hired hand, and family members looking for stray cattle • Two range riders worked area on horseback • Cow carcass secured with fladry until carcass can be removed. 	Confirmed depredation #3: one dead adult cow (suspected date of depredation approximately July 9-10, 2015)	None	
July 15, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • Producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Two range riders worked area on horseback 	Confirmed depredation #4: one dead calf (suspected date of depredation approximately July 9-10, 2015)	None	Removed the calf carcass from the field.
July 16, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • Producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Two range riders worked area on horseback throughout the morning hours • Two WDFW staff worked throughout the evening 	None	None	Update emailed to WAG and interested parties and northeast Washington legislators and county commissioners

July 17, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW met with a second producer from an adjacent allotment and shared location data with both producers • WDFW shared wolf howling locations with both producers from the night before • First producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Two WDFW staff patrolled the area throughout the evening and early morning • Three fox lights deployed around bedded cattle 	Location data from the collared wolf indicate the pack has moved close to an adjacent Forest Service allotment used by a second livestock producer	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAG conference call to discuss situation and next steps • Update sent to WAG and interested parties • WAG subgroup review hazing strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identified conflict specialist, range riders, producer, and Air Force staff to provide hazing ○ Air Force staff use whistle and flashlights to haze ○ Discussed use of guarding dogs, but not feasible in this case because cattle not familiar with guard dogs
July 18, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations with both producers • First producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • First producer provided outreach to six horseback riders and provided contact information • Two WDFW staff patrolled the area throughout the evening and early morning • WDFW met with Air Force to discuss hazing; students and trainers used whistles and/or flashlights if wolves are seen or heard • WDFW provided outreach to five horseback riders 	None	None	
July 19, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with both producers • First producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Two WDFW staff patrolled the area throughout the evening and early morning 	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pups confirmed in pack based on recent photo from a trail camera
July 20, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf and howling locations with both producers • First producer and hired hand looked for stray cattle 	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range riders will be provided fox lights, whistles, and air horns

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second producer and family checked on cattle and looked for strays on their allotment • Two range riders worked area on horseback 			
July 21, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with both producers • Two range riders worked area on horseback • Two WDFW staff patrolled the area throughout the evening and early morning • Air Force worked during night with a helicopter, which had a large spotlight and loud speakers flying in the core area of the collared wolf locations. Had 86 plus students working evasion on the ground in the same area. Due to the loudness of the speakers, WDFW staff reported it was hard to speak to each other. 	None	None	
July 22, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with both producers • Two range riders worked area on horseback • Two WDFW staff patrolled the area throughout the evening and early morning • Air Force worked during night with a helicopter, which had a large spotlight and loud speakers flying in the core area of the collared wolf locations. Continued to have 86 plus students working evasion on the ground in the same area. Campers reported it was hard to sleep due to loud noise. 	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW met with US Forest Service staff in Colville to coordinate on preventive measures, grazing plan, and communication protocol
July 23, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with both producers • Three range riders worked area on horseback • Two WDFW staff patrolled the area throughout the evening and early morning 	Sick cow found, contacted producer to remove from allotment area	None	
July 24, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with both producers 	None	None	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW contacted two additional producers (producers #3 and #4 in pack area) to share wolf location data and initiated a data sharing agreement • Three range riders worked area on horseback • Two WDFW staff patrolled the area throughout the evening and early morning 			
July 25-27, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers • Three range riders worked area on horseback • Two WDFW staff patrolled the area throughout the evening and early morning 	None	None	
July 28, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers • Three range riders worked area on horseback • Range riders also used vehicles shortly after dark to continue human presence 	Five cows and four calves located at higher elevations	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW staff notified producer of cattle at the higher elevation
July 29, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers • Two range riders worked area on horseback • Range riders also used vehicles shortly after dark to continue human presence 	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producer found a portion of the lower elevation allotment fence had been broken by wood cutters • Range riders assisted with fixing the fence
July 30, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers • Three to four range riders worked area on horseback • Range riders also used vehicles shortly after dark to continue human presence 	None	None	
July 31, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers • Two range riders worked area on horseback • Range riders also used vehicles after dark to continue human presence 	None	None	
August 1-2, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers 	None	None	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One range rider worked area on horseback 			
August 3, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers • Two range riders worked area on horseback • Range riders also used vehicles after dark to continue human presence 	Fresh cattle tracks observed at higher elevations, but no cattle seen	None	
August 4, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers • Three range riders worked area on horseback • Range riders also used vehicles after dark to continue human presence 	None	None	
August 5, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers • Two range riders worked area on horseback 	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW met with Air Force representative regarding what Air Force staff can do if a wolf is encountered • WDFW scheduled presentation at Fairchild Air Force Base to cover these actions
August 6, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW shared daily wolf locations and howling locations with producers • Two range riders worked area on horseback • Range riders also used vehicles after dark to continue human presence 	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW investigated several sites where multiple GPS collar signals were detected within Dirty Shirt pack territory. No cattle depredations detected