

Wolf Advisory Group Meeting Notes

May 10, 2016

Ellensburg

WAG Members: Bob Aegerter, Dan Paul, Dave Duncan, Diane Gallegos, Jack Field, Janey Howe, Lisa Stone, Molly Linville, Nick Martinez, Paula Swedeen, Shawn Cantrell, Tom Davis

WDFW Staff Members: Donny Martorello, Anis Aoude, Candace Bennett, Ellen Heilhecker, Jason Earl, Jay Shepherd, John Cotton, Kevin Robinette, Matthew Peterson, Scott Becker, Scott McCorquodale, Stephanie Simek, Steve Wetzell, Tara Meyer, Eric Gardner, Matthew Trendera

Third Party Neutral: Francine Madden

Welcome/Overview: The third party neutral welcomed everyone to the WAG meeting. She spoke of how far the WAG members have come over the past year and how much progress they have made already. This meeting is an important moment for the WAG. She said she is confident in their capacity to work together and produce a protocol by the end of the two day meeting.

She also said that WAG will have the ability to revisit the protocol to assess what worked and adapt it as the realities change. The importance of WAG is that it is not just the small amount of people here. It is imbedded in the larger system. That is a good thing, and stronger, more resilient policy will come from that.

Making a policy that impacts a small minority of wolves will work to build a tolerance for the larger population of wolves that do not cause problems.

Each element of the protocol will be discussed, and the third party neutral encouraged the WAG members to find a tentative agreement on each of the elements before moving on to the overall package. She said there is no agreement on any of the elements unless there is agreement on the overall package. A final protocol will not be achieved unless a sufficient consensus is reached.

Quick Check-in: Donny gave a quick update on his check in with the Director. WDFW will bring elements they are uncomfortable with forward. He said if there is cohesion on the resource aspect of the protocol, WDFW will be there with the WAG.

Elements of Protocol Rapid Sessions: The third party neutral reviewed the principles from the March meeting. WAG asked WDFW to take the information from March and flesh the aspects out more. WDFW worked from within and with other entities to bring forward 12 elements for the WAG today.

The first element was wolf depredation investigations. In areas where wolves are listed federally, WDFW typically takes the lead. If the investigator is inexperienced on the ground, the decision can be vetted through USFWS review. Coordination is performed throughout the process. The folks who do the actual investigation make the call on confirming the depredation. Ultimately, USFWS and WDFW need to have agreement on whether or not it's a wolf depredation. Wildlife Services participates in the investigation as well. Local law enforcement is also included (part of the routine).

Molly expressed concern that in the event of a disagreement between agencies, the process could be slowed down.

Diane clarified that local law enforcement is there to assist, rather than take a lead role. This helps build trust as well.

The next element was defining livestock. There was a discussion in March about dogs and whether they count or not. In the current wolf plan, the understanding is that guard dogs counted towards compensation, but not toward the depredation count.

The group had a discussion about what merits counting a guard/herd dog. Some thought an attack on a dog should count every time. Others did not want a territorial dispute to count toward the depredation total, as that would not coincide with a pattern or habitual behavior. Others said no matter what the animal, attacks that indicate a pattern should count. The pattern was the most important thing to some.

One comment said that if you don't really know what the dog was doing, where it was, or the dog wasn't associated with an operation where three other depredations occurred, that shouldn't count as a depredation.

One comment said that you also have to consider that WDFW will be out there implementing nonlethal methods as soon as the first attack occurs, no matter the target animal. This isn't just the livestock producer saying every dog, every time. WDFW would be out to assess the situation in each case.

Comment: The problem with putting limits on counting dogs is that it's unclear how you can write that down.

Comment: The intent of the guardian dog is not to fight wolves. The intent is to work with the humans on the ground.

Comment: You don't really want them tied to a human, you want them tied to a herd. The best dogs are out with the herd.

Comment: The issue can get so gray that we will never make a decision. The pattern plays a major role, as that is what we can agree about. We have to put trust in the Department to make the call on cases like this. I think we have to leave this situation to the biologists and conflict specialists in the field.

Comment: Trust will go both ways. The Department trusts the producers as well.

Comment: I would be comfortable with the Department making the decision on whether a dog counts in a given situation.

Third party neutral: WAG needs a process in place that says something to that extent, if that is what you want to go with. That needs to be written into the protocol.

Comment: Saying just trust the Department doesn't give them enough guidance on those situations.

WDFW: We look at the evidence that is there. We aren't going to make stuff up. If we don't know, we will say unknown. That's one reason we communicate so much. If there is any doubt, we don't jump ahead to confirmed wolf.

WDFW: In our definition of caught in the act, that doesn't just mean blood drawn. It means stalking, participating, etc. It also covers domestic animals.

Comment: Just because you see wolves around livestock does not mean wolves are going to attack livestock. In Idaho and Montana, it used to be you could not shoot a wolf unless you caught the wolf in the act (killing, biting, etc.). The protocol was adjusted to include wolves who were caught chasing animals. It allows people the ability to protect their property, and it was not abused. We wanted to avoid revenge killing. That was our approach in those states to give some room to those producers. The process has evolved through time. To prohibit people from protecting their private property was angering producers. We evolved it to say we weren't including dogs in the depredation count, but gave permission for private landowners to shoot wolves caught in the act. It's trying to address how you allow people to protect their property. And this includes all dogs, not just guard/herd dogs. This means pets.

Comment: Is something like that, where dogs are not counted towards agency action, but wolves attacking dogs goes to private control, something we would like to implement? How does that sound to people? Do we already have that?

Adding common domestic animals, regardless of breed, that are not considered livestock was discussed. It was agreed that to be as clear as possible was very important. You have to keep perspectives wide open about wolves and conflict. It's not just livestock. Planning for conflicts with wolves and protecting pet owners, wolves, and all other elements involved needs to

happen early to ensure the success of wolf recovery in Washington. People may not tolerate any wolves on the landscape if there are no means of protecting the interests of those people.

Compensation versus removal comes into play. Are pets going to invoke lethal removal? It's our agency that addresses that. We are going to have staff members out working, trying to minimize conflict and solve the issue on the ground.

Comment: We have a lot on our plate right now dealing with the lethal removal of wolves in regards to livestock. The agency is already dealing with domestic animals in several cases. It may be better to focus on the bigger details right now.

Comment: I encourage you not to lose sight of the domestic animal area of this issue. It's a new realm with wolves, and I hope you all have those discussions. Differences of opinions will come into play. Also, how do you put a compensation value on a domestic pet?

Comment: Just wanted to echo that we have already dealt with this in several cases. Outreach needs to be done on the domestic pet side of the issue.

WAG members said they need to support the Department with outreach actions.

The next element for consideration was the confirmed wolf depredation event. WAG discussed what a single event means for each species. In March, WDFW proposed larger animals are one depredation, one event. Events including smaller animals, such as sheep, often include multiple animals. Smaller animals would count as one event per night. If it's one in one night, it's one event, and if it's ten in one night, it's one event. Cow/calf pairs have historically counted as one event, even though there are two depredations.

The science behind this proposal comes from understanding wolf biology as a whole. For example, if WDFW finds two cows in one night, it's far more likely those animals were killed on different nights. The investigation has to determine if those happened on the same night and were found separately, or if they were separate events.

If there are a lot of smaller livestock killed in one night (100 or more), it may call for an emergency clause.

If four dead cows are found on the same day, that may count as four events and may lead to lethal removal depending on the situation and what the other elements of the plan say.

Comment: When you go by number of depredations, you limit the process. Two sheep over two days is far different than 20 sheep in one night. Rigid numbers may make people feel comfortable, but eliminates the reality of what wolves are doing.

Comment: When we're talking about the four number, and what events mean, that is just one part of the overall protocol. As the remainder of the protocol is discussed, measures will be on the ground and a sequence of ramp up will be discussed.

Comment: What if the first was an event regardless of numbers? This lets nonlethal measures be put in place after that, and once nonlethal measures are in place, the specific count starts up.

Question: How would conflict specialists deal with a situation where it was obvious that two depredations were separate events?

Comment: How we would like it addressed in the field is that each large animal is counted as a depredation.

Comment: There are a lot of times when we don't know depredations are occurring until multiple depredations have happened on the landscape.

Comment: Going off a previous comment, those producers who are already implementing preventative measures would have that first event count for more (1.5) than a producer not implementing beforehand.

Comment: There was a study done that asked how many depredations were not found for every one that was found. It was discovered that many were not found.

Comment: If WDFW cannot tell for sure if multiple carcasses happened on the same night, those carcasses count as separate events. This counts for all species, large or small animals.

Question: What if one happens at 4:00 a.m. and the next happens at 8:00 p.m.? Are those the same because they happened on the same day? Or are those different events?

Answer: That is all based on the investigation.

Comment: In my mind, if I go out and find four dead cows, that's four events and those wolves have prey-switched. Is that going to count as one event if the producer has not implemented nonlethal methods?

Comment: In Dirty Shirt, there were four cows, then nonlethal measures were implemented and depredations stopped. Has that not accomplished the goal? One of the coming elements will address what level of deterrent methods are implemented and when.

Comment: What happened for Dirty Shirt may not be realistic in other areas. There were 80+ people up in that area. It looks like, from the outside, there were four events and then it stopped. I don't feel comfortable saying it worked that way.

Question: My question was about prey-switching in that area. Those measures in Dirty Shirt interrupted the behavior, and, from my understanding, that stopped the prey-switching.

Comment: There is a large randomness to depredations. The cause and effect is very difficult to establish. This falls back on the rigid numbers. Rigid numbers get you away from the cause and effect. Wolf behavior may not be as predictable as you think.

Comment: It is absolutely true that there will be exceptions to every decision, and it's absolutely true that we don't know everything. Can we avoid these exceptions to every idea so we can put together a protocol that we can put out and give to producers for the coming year? We can then revisit it and see what worked and what did not.

Third party neutral: I would like to point out that when the principles were discussed, it was important to everyone that at least one thing is quantifiable. That helps with the building of trust in the group. Recognizing that it limits you to some extent, but that piece was there.

Comment: We're all going to take that risk today if we want to get through this. The important thing is that we do this journey together, and we keep molding this as we move into the future. We have to remain a team, and that is the most important thing.

One large livestock = one event, multiple small = one event (unless WDFW investigations speaks to contrary evidence based). Cow/calf = one or two. Pre-deterrence = one, after that count.

The next element discussed was the threshold and criteria for considering lethal removal of wolves. The proposal was that a four count would be the threshold for qualifying depredations. Once you get to four, you assess the other elements around the situation and go from there. It shouldn't be so rigid, however, as to compel the Department to act no matter what. Right now, the language in the wolf plan says the Department *may consider*. An emergency clause can be considered in some cases as well, if we're thinking about room for judgement each way. At four, one of those four could be a dog (guard/herd/domestic).

Question: Is it three and then the next one means lethal removal or do you wait for four and then decide?

Comment: I would say it would be best to prepare after three because those resources need to be called in and prepared.

Comment: To me, the "may" language is a big issue. When you build up to that decision point and you get there and it's a "may" rather than a "shall." Is four a trigger for action? We need some level of assurance in our community that action is going to take place, but I also want to recognize the concern of going and shooting too fast.

Comment: That's where the "depredations are expected to continue" comes into play. There could be any number of factors involved. In Oregon, with the Mt. Emily pack, even though the threshold was met for lethal removal, they took no action.

Comment: Yes, we felt there were several things that still could be done, and we felt very strongly about that. The other factor that came up was that the sheep were due to go back to Idaho in about a week. There is importance in my mind to an agency having discretion in cases such as this.

Comment: My problem there is that conversation needs to happen between two and three on the depredation count. Waiver at two instead of at four. Don't get to four and then decide to implement more nonlethal measures. That leads to the "one more thing" idea that we already decided was not good.

Comment: The fifth has to be the wolf. It's a slap in the face to the Department and will greatly hinder the relationships built between staff and producers on the ground. What Oregon did with Mt. Emily is not acceptable in my mind. The "may" language is not acceptable in this case either.

Comment: How fast can we move to implement nonlethal measures?

Comment: The deterrents are started on the very first day. Those are reactive deterrents. There may be proactive deterrents already out there on some areas.

Comment: There is an expectation that when you get to that level, the Department is ready to go. Unless WDFW sees something else that will stop this now, then WDFW moves forward with this tool. However, the "may" language is important for that reason. I think we can accept this four number and build on it as we move forward.

Third party neutral: We also have to realize that the past is not a forecast for the future.

Comment: Could it be three or four? If producers are implementing nonlethal measures, and doing everything they can, are three depredations enough in that case?

Comment: I would personally be open to that if they went through everything to get to that point. That is something I would be receptive to in that case, though I can't speak for all in the room.

Recognizing that if a producer has all of these high quality deterrents, the wolf behavior is a pattern, and three would be reasonable in that case.

The next phase was talking about incentives. The third party neutral asked people who didn't like the 1.5 idea to please speak up.

Comment: I think it could be viewed as an incentive as a sort of prize to kill a wolf. Producers are in business and they make decisions on a daily basis for what their operation can do. It seemed like a bad idea to make it a reward to kill a wolf.

Comment: I've struggled with this for the last few weeks. I don't think the incentive is there, and I don't think people will do it because of the incentive. I would like to settle on a number and make it fair for all. For some producers, who go above and beyond, maybe that number is a little lower. However, for those in northeast Washington, something simple and straightforward is the best. Some producers may want to do things, but are unable to do so. Also, wolves don't just target one producer, and multiple producers may be affected.

Comment: The goal is not to kill wolves. The goal is to prevent depredations. We need incentives to help minimize depredations. That can be whatever you want.

Comment: 1.5 isn't solving anything. That still makes it three total, and that's too much in my opinion.

Comment: Something I heard several times regarding the topic said that the state brought the wolves and so the state should have to deal with them.

Comment: One idea behind the 1.5 idea was that a running total would be kept on the same pack/wolf. It was just a way to keep track.

Comment: This is not about killing wolves, or retribution, or prizes. I think we are going to struggle until all of us go back to our groups and tell both sides of this story. As the representatives on this WAG, we need to promote coexistence. What I've heard from people is that the environmental community needs to give a little more.

Comment: It would be great if WDFW and the public would recognize that producers have a lot of things already on the landscape that are there to prevent losses.

Comment: One discussion we had in March was to keep it simple. Simplifying the process would benefit all involved as far as understanding. I also want to say that WDFW definitely recognizes those producers who have preventative measures on the landscape.

Comment: A lot of us on the WAG spent a lot of time talking about the 1.5 idea and how it is not a prize to kill wolves. We take that responsibility very seriously. People in the community heard it, and said it was just hard to not see it that way.

Also, I am optimistic that we can land on something that works for everybody. A lot of people in our community like certain models. Oregon's plan says to do sanitation plus one other proactive method in areas where you know there are wolves. For the other proactive the

Department will work with the producer to discover what works best. If there's that and then depredations happen, they are counted and the number is four for lethal removal. It gives the Department flexibility and also a set of guidelines to follow.

Comment: Is it a barrier to employ preventatives if you sign a cost share with WDFW and are paid up front? Is there a community model that can be developed? Is there a way to get funding into communities that need it?

Comment: I think that's more in the future, but I think that would be great to move forward with. This year, I don't think it's conceivable, but in the future it could be very effective.

Comment: The effort required to get ranchers to cooperative may outweigh the end benefit.

Comment: Time and money are your barriers for a model like that. Regionally, it all depends on the amount of effort. There is a high level of interest in several areas, like the Blue Mountains, and as you look around you can see opportunities. The money we just received from the legislature, \$300,000, is there now and I am confident it will all be used by the end of the year. So, if you build it, have the tools available and people will pick them up. We've come a long way in the last few years, and we'll have to get more money next year. The obligation by the state is going to hopefully stay long into the future. This isn't a short term solution. We have to think 50-100 years into the future. That has to be an understanding that everybody knows, regardless of where you are on the issue.

Comment: The education needs to go to city communities and other areas. My incentive is to stop depredations, not kill wolves. City values versus rural values need to be discussed. There are several financial issues. We have to have an incentive to get people on board.

Comment: Why not phrase it as less killed livestock instead of more killed wolves? There are a lot of ways to help people think of it a different way.

Comment: I've heard the Department worried about how long the legislature is willing to fund the DPCAs. We'll lobby for that as long as we can. I think if we can get to a point where there is a standard set of expectations around the "four" number. What does it look like on the ground to have sanitation plus one more? I think it's a good idea to have a plan that says if you do everything you possibly can, three could be on the table.

Comment: A lot of us at WDFW struggled with this idea of incentives. We thought about it like if you are a producer implementing these nonlethal measures and wolves are still depredating, these are wolves that really want to depredate. That made a few of us more comfortable with the idea.

Comment: Oregon has a rate of depredation that pair with a conflict deterrence plan. Everything a producer does is voluntary when it comes to wolves. However, if they choose to

do nothing, lethal removal is not on the table. The only other thing to mention is that qualification is an issue that comes up as well.

Question: What fits under sanitation?

Comment: Identified attractants are what we look for with sanitation. Picking up bone and carcass piles is widespread as of now in Oregon.

Comment: I wanted to point out that eliminating the offenders has never limited recovery in other states.

Comment: In my part of the state, I can't kill wolves no matter what, as they are federally protected. We implement those nonlethal methods because we want to stop depredations.

Comment: But are you the norm?

Comment: We need to get that as the norm. Just a few years ago, WDFW couldn't give out money, and now producers are working with them. It will take a while, but getting there is possible.

There was energy and receptivity to the model of getting financials on the ground for preventatives pre-grazing. High quality, proactive deterrents are needed. It's not waiting until depredations happen.

Comment: If all you can do is sanitation due to costs and other limitations in areas with no known wolf pack, one wolf depredation should count as one. If something happens, we have a plan for proactive update and we step up and do everything we can do. However, if we get to three at that point, we definitely have a chronic pack.

Comment: If WDFW says there is a pack in that area now, maybe step up those proactive deterrents, on top of those sanitation methods, in an effort to step up prevention. There will have to be some kind of agreement in the field with the specialist in the field. If something can be done (and funding allows) then definitely implement those on top of the sanitation.

Comment: My concern with that is that we're still in recovery and three is too low of a number. That doesn't give enough time to see if the wolves will react to the nonlethal methods. You need to give wolves time to change their behavior.

Comment: There should be a lower number for somebody who steps up and struggles after that first depredation. These folks do not want to raise calves and feed them to the wolves. They will do anything to protect those livestock. If those preventative measures do not work, we have to go the other way. Producers cannot constantly give.

Comment: Could this go the other way as well? If a producer refuses to even do sanitation, does the number moves up to five?

The proposed plan was producers who do sanitation and one other proactive deterrent in wolf country would get the four number (this happens immediately). Those methods are always expected to be in place. Producers who do literally everything they possibly can in those areas would get the three number. The above description for producers not currently in wolf country applies as well.

Question: Does the number go with the pack or with the producer?

There was a general consensus that the number must fall with the pack.

If a producer ramps up after one depredation, then has two more (three total), and then the pack depredates on a neighboring producer's land and that producer doesn't want any assistance from WDFW, does that count as four?

A lot of folks thought that it must count as four and action must then be taken. However, some disagreed.

Question: Why even have a protocol if lethal removal is out there for all producers, even if they don't participate in sanitation or other methods?

Answer: It comes down to wolf management, rather than producer management.

Comment: I want clarity from the conservation community that the number moves with the pack.

The number moves with the pack, not the producer. There is no zero, but if a producer is not meeting the minimum, the number moves to five.

What is the pack's number if it depredates on a producer doing everything, a producer doing the minimum, and a producer doing below the minimum? In this case, the Department would look and determine if depredations are expected to continue.

There are others around those three putting deterrents on the ground as well. It's not just the three producers affected by the pack. Everyone increases the nonlethal measures at that point.

Donny recommended that we step back and get to the core value of four, with something that might look like three and something that might look like five. The principle would be to stop a pattern.

The next element of discussion was an emergency clause, which would authorize the use of lethal removal in an extreme circumstance. The third party neutral directed everyone to think about what that might look like for Washington.

The next element of discussion was the time period for qualifying depredations, which would set a gap in time between depredations in which the total count would reset to zero. The current rationale encompasses the grazing season, and generally goes from April to April. Then it was discussed to include a calendar year. It was then discussed within the Department and it was decided that a set time period didn't really work on a biological level, and so they were unhappy with it. The floor was then open for discussion.

Question: Did the six month running timeline work for Oregon overall?

Answer: I'm a big supporter of some sort of timeframe. The six months came from a settlement. With wolves, everything is different every year (packs). Most of the time, the six month period fit more livestock grazing seasons.

If you go six months without any depredations, by default the number resets to zero.

Donny relayed that the Director recommended a cumulative approach.

Comment: The tricky thing there is you can go six months without exposure to cattle, but habits of the pack don't change. The six months doesn't work in that case.

If chronic depredations over a number of years, WAG may want to set a criteria (x number of depredations over x number of years).

There is a value in recognizing patterns that need to be stopped. If there is a lower number of depredations, but the pattern is consistent from year to year, the expectation would be that WAG needs to address that in their protocol.

Comment: It has to be cumulative. If you have a pack with three depredations for a few years in a row, you have to stand up and say that's a chronic pack.

Comment: I think we can't set an expectation level of no losses. That's why we have the compensation program. If a pack is killing a couple livestock every year, that may be not so bad. The number of livestock killed overnight affects that line of thinking.

Comment: It's more the social tolerance of wolves on the landscape in this case. A small number of packs create the problem. From a public perspective, if we allow that to happen year after year after year, that won't help wolves in the long run.

Comment: Will we just keep replacing that pack with another one that depredates?

Comment: We wouldn't be removing the whole pack. And, if we do nothing, that hurts the public perception of wolves overall.

Comment: Location of the pack could have an influence as well.

Comment: Not all packs that overlap with cattle are going to eat cattle. We are only dealing with those few that do. You leave the pack intact and see what happens after one or two are removed. Only about 16-20% depredate. I also think the history should matter in the timeframe.

Comment: We have been tolerating having cougars take a couple calves a year. That was sort of the price of doing business at the time for us. There is some level of "that is business" in these situations. Demanding no losses is not realistic.

Comment: One difference in perception is that cougars are a hunted big game species, while wolves are not.

Comment: We have to decide what we mean by chronic as well. Two years is much different from four or five years. We need to decide how many years is chronic.

Comment: If you had three depredations two or three years in a row, is that what we are looking at in this situation? Is there a gap in there? Is there a point where you reset to zero?

Deterrents on the landscape, depredations are occurring, and it's during the grazing season, is that what qualifies?

Comment: I think it's chronic if you fall one under the limit for three years in a row and it's the same time period each year. This is especially true for the producer who is doing everything he can do on the landscape when it comes to preventive methods.

Three depredations in two years, or two depredations in three years.

Comment: It may not have happened yet, but my thoughts are WDFW should have some freedom of discretion in this area to determine chronic patterns. However, we definitely need to recognize chronic packs.

Comment: I think the chronic issue is critical to long term management. I want to give the Department discretion, but also a defensive position so we aren't setting them up for abuse in that situation.

Comment: I'm not totally convinced that we know what a chronic pack looks like. I'd like to hear something from the science that backs this up.

Comment: I'm not sure I have a science reason. There are several things that can reset a pack (pups, dispersal, etc.), and if those things are not happening and the level of depredation is consistent for three years in a row, that is definitely going to catch WDFW's attention?

Question: How rare is this?

Comment: There won't be any science here. It will be a public policy debate. There's nothing really that makes it a science question. At what point do you lose public tolerance? This group will have to make that decision.

Question: Have the northern Rockies experienced something like this, where a pack has depredations for x number of years?

Answer: It all has to do with location. Wolves are opportunistic, and will take advantage of what is available around them.

Question: What does a chronic designation on a pack mean?

Comment: It's just a term that is used to recognize that the pack has a history outside of the current year.

Comment: We may not see that chronic depredation, and that is something to consider as well. We have tolerance for putting human presence on the landscape, and that does two things. It locates these chronic depredations, and it also can help prevent more depredations from occurring.

Comment: As an agency, if we see more depredations from certain packs, I assume we will see an uptake in deterrence measures in those areas.

Comment: If we keep it simple and just focus on our main threshold of four, if we see a pack depredating over multiple years, we let the Department determine if that pack is chronic. This would mean a calendar year timeframe for qualifying depredations.

Comment: If we had three depredations last year, for example, and then we have one the next year, the Department should be able to look at that pack with some flexibility and determine if that pack is chronic. The Department has some discretion in those situations.

Comment: Does a time gap get you to the same place without thinking about chronic packs? Could we go for nine months and not have a chronic definition?

Question: If we get four depredations in one year, and action is taken, and the next year the remaining pack members depredate again, what's the number for a further action?

Comment: I just wanted to say I hope the Department uses that discretion wisely in a chronic case.

Comment: There may be different expectations on the Department's role depending on the situation.

The third party neutral commended everyone on the work they did today.

Public Comment

The first public comment said she had no real comments, just questions. She is curious about livestock operators in Klickitat County. What is the difference between livestock operators in Klickitat and the operators in areas where we have wolves? Is the model different? The Department is investing a lot of resources in areas with no wolves.

She also wanted to say that we need those resources dedicated to staff members. Conflict specialists are on the front lines, and they should have access to the resources they need. If they don't, we should work on that. They will then be better suited to find the solutions for particular areas.

Another public member answered the ranchers in Klickitat County have a long history of working with WDFW and there are several incentives. It's also getting buy-in ahead of the curve, which is important because that is good wolf country. WDFW is investing the resources now in order to have better experiences in the future when wolves are on the landscape. The sooner you get on the ground and have the impact, the better off you will be in the long run.

The first commenter responded that the wolf plan offers compensation for losses. She wanted to know if the Department is getting that compensation out. Those people should be getting compensated as soon as possible.

Donny said there is criticism that the compensation isn't happening fast enough. WDFW is hearing that across the board, and they are working on it. Stephanie said the process will be streamlined moving forward.

Jay addressed the Klickitat County aspect of the question. He said there seems to be a different feel there due to people being eager to learn. WDFW was behind the curve in other areas of the state. The positive direction is there, but in other areas of the state it may be slower.

The second public commenter brought up social tolerance and the challenges faced there. It's not a matter of science. There isn't a single paper published that says agencies killing wolves helps social tolerance. There are a lot of papers that say the opposite is true. She also said that Russ Morgan is a valuable resource to use, and she urged WAG to take advantage of that resource.

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May 11, 2016

Ellensburg

WAG Members: Bob Aegerter, Dan Paul, Dave Duncan, Diane Gallegos, Janey Howe, Lisa Stone, Molly Linville, Nick Martinez, Paula Swedeen, Shawn Cantrell, Tim Coleman, Tom Davis, Tom Erskine

WDFW Staff Members: Donny Martorello, Anis Aoude, Candace Bennett, Ellen Heilhecker, Jason Earl, Jay Shepherd, John Cotton, Kevin Robinette, Matthew Peterson, Scott Becker, Scott McCorquodale, Stephanie Simek, Steve Pozzanghera, Steve Wetzel, Tara Meyer, Matthew Trendera

Third Party Neutral: Francine Madden

Check In: The third party neutral welcomed everyone to the second day of the meeting and checked in with everyone to see how they felt so far. The general feeling was one of anticipation to get going and finish up today.

Donny gave an update on a call to Director Unsworth. The Director reiterated that keeping it absolutely as simple as possible is very important. Also, staying within the umbrella of the plan is necessary as well. If WDFW is outside of that comfort zone, they will communicate that to the group today.

The dog issue is a big one for WDFW. Whether the depredation is a part of a pattern, or an injury rather than a kill, working dogs are in the plan. The Director asked that the dog discussion be reworked to fit within the scope of the plan.

The third party neutral said the idea is if the Department and stakeholders are working together to create the lethal removal protocol (science aspects, social aspects, etc.), it's a change from previous structures. The Department does need to have a policy that is able to be implemented though, and that piece needs to be honored as well. The point is that everyone is creating the plan together. She encouraged everyone to speak up if something is not feasible or realistic.

Considering Further Elements: The conversation picked up where it left off the day before, with the number of depredations and the chronic packs being discussed.

Comment: I just wanted everyone to understand that we start ramp up at one depredation.

Comment: I understood it not so much as adding more things on, but being adaptive in each situation.

Comment: Yeah, and I want to really drive home that we do that right at one depredation. That is also happening before one depredation in many cases.

Comment: We ramp up if someone hears a wolf howl, in many cases. These producers don't want to lose anything.

Comment: I can't understand how two equals chronic, even if there were three the year before. I just can't get there.

Comment: Based on that, I think it's important to have a bit more clarity about what a chronic situation looks like in year two. If the ramp up occurs, and that second depredation the second year fits the pattern, then the Department can look into what that means. However, if that second one in the second year looks different (different area, different producer, etc.), the Department should be able to have some discretion *and* guidance. Does a second depredation mean lethal removal right away? Is it likely to continue?

Comment: If we have a depredation on Producer A, the staff is not only working with that producer. We're working with every producer in that area.

Comment: Everything on the landscape looks different the next year. Everything varies (pack dynamics, etc.), but it's the pattern you have to look for to make a decision on if it's warranted or not.

Comment: We need to hear the Department definition before we move forward on this.

Comment: It seems simple to me. If we hit three in a year, the Department is going to be on alert and monitoring that pack the next year. If something emerges the next year, we'll determine if it looks chronic.

Comment: We may have a situation where we want to focus on the year we are in, and get on alert. We want to look at if it could be a pattern that started the previous year, or if it might be a pattern the next year.

Comment: For so many reasons, I think we need to be cautious before going to lethal, and it should be a last resort because of all those reasons.

Comment: Does having flexibility and discretion sufficiently protect the Department in these decisions?

Comment: We would need the flexibility, but also would need the plan to call out those instances (chronic packs, producers who are doing everything they can, emergency clauses, etc.).

Comment: Having an emergency clause in place for extreme circumstances may make this conversation easier to get through as well.

Comment: The important part of this is the part that says “depredations are expected to continue.” If you don’t think they are going to continue, why do it?

Comment: From year to year, situations can change. Weather can push cattle to different areas, depending on conditions. When lethal removal is implemented, it can sound like it’s easy. It is very difficult. Just because the move is made for lethal removal doesn’t mean it’s actually going to happen.

Comment: The sanitation plus one sounds like the baseline and expectation. If producers are doing that, four will be the number.

Comment: What happens if the Department is helping with the sanitation and the money runs out? In some areas, that can be a big challenge.

Comment: In my experience, sanitation is not the big issue. In a lot of cases, there is no ability for ramp up, due to other jobs, time constraints, etc. I don’t think we should worry about tying this tool to ramp ups. We should worry about getting in out there for when we need it.

The conversation turned to ramp up and what that means.

Comment: I have a problem with hearing that if there are no resources for ramp up, lethal removal will be used. Lethal removal uses a lot of resources.

Comment: It’s not the money, it’s the effort in those cases. If something then happens somewhere else, we’re short-staffed there and may not be able to give the support we want to give.

Comment: I think if we are going to use money, we want to use it in the proactive, nonlethal methods. However, when depredations do happen, we want to stop it. The reality is we can’t get everyone the help they need. Ramp up needs to become an elevated conversation with the producers. That’s my sense of what reality looks like moving forward. Investing creativity and money in proactive is the way to go to limit depredations as much as possible.

Comment: The demand for help from producers far outweighs the supply. How do we get that on the ground for everyone? We have to look at that entire situation. In many cases, producers literally cannot do anything more, and they need help.

Comment: I hear more and more people are doing at least the sanitation and one other thing. If we agree to four (with sanitation and one other thing) for this grazing season, and see how that

works, all the while working on this parallel track for funding and structures for these communities, we can then move forward with more when we revisit it.

Comment: I would like to see this group look into that aspect of support and what that looks like into the future. This is an opportunity to look at that future planning.

Comment: Where there is a need, volunteers will step up. There are thousands of volunteers out there who are passionate. Whether they need to be trained by the Department or something else, that can be looked at later on. People who are passionate about wolves should be chomping at the bit to get out there and volunteer and help out.

Comment: I don't want to be responsible for taking a bunch of untrained volunteers out into the woods for wolf hazing. That's a responsibility I don't want to have to worry about.

Comment: Ramp up is a normal part of WDFW's response, and we are working to get it in place as soon as we hear anything.

Comment: Sanitation as a given will be harder to do as you look into it further. A dead cow can be very difficult to get out of the area, especially if it's not all in one piece.

Comment: The proactive stuff in regards to ramp up is what my staff does on a daily basis. We are reaching out to different groups to help us out as well. There is a lot of land out there to cover.

Comment: The problem with the ramp up element in the plan is when any number of events result in disproportionate agency response between producers. My concern is that we can't specifically describe what a WDFW ramp up response will be given the number of decisions on the ground. The Department's ability to provide a consistent or basic ramp up needs to be discussed. We need a blanket plan that says what we can provide in all situations, then if depredations kick in, we are pulling from all available resources, but we don't know what that might look like depending on the situation. I think it would be good to have an understanding of what the Department can provide on a basic level of conflict response. Something that says, "Here is our starting point."

Comment: If the Department has discretion, an internal discussion could be had with staff members that determines what the ramp up might look like across the state on a basic level.

The next element discussed was lethal removal actions. The idea is an incremental approach, and the hope is to stop depredations by removing as few wolves as possible.

Comment: I recommend that the language add "methods as timely and humane as possible" to ensure we reflect the principles from the March meeting.

Comment: I think we are in a good spot as a staff when it comes to communication.

Comment: I'm a little concerned about the language of 1-2 weeks. I'm not sure how realistic that is in every case. I'm thinking 30 days may be better.

Comment: The ultimate goal is to minimize future conflict, so if there is nothing happening after a week of serious action, it may be necessary to roll back a little. The more time passes after a depredation, the more it becomes a retribution situation.

Comment: One piece I don't see in here is the ability for the Department to say actions are finished, whether wolves were removed or not. There needs to be that discretion/communication.

Comment: That does need to be there. There may be situations where we remove one animal and pause. There may be situations where depredations stop and we didn't remove an animal. We are after stopping depredations, and if they don't continue, then we don't want to label that pack.

Comment: I think that's a tough situation for WDFW. The helicopter itself may be enough to bump wolves away. However, if you communicate to the public that wolves will be removed, and then none are removed, it could negatively affect that public perception. Even if the problem is solved in that case.

Comment: I would like to hear something like "lethal removal action will occur" and then get the report on that later on. Once the Department commits to do something, they should do it and communicate it after the fact.

Comment: This does touch the communication idea. The detail would be to say we are implementing lethal removal, and then provide updates as time goes by. A full report will then be put together after it is over.

Comment: It's important to have the ramp up after three to prepare for that four count.

Comment: That's not a conclusion that we will go to lethal. We aren't ramping up because we expect that green light. It's just so action is timely should lethal removal be green lit from the Director. We want to be prepared just in case it does get to that point.

Comment: I think clear communication on when the action is finished is important as well.

Comment: Yes. We want to get to a place where, when we get a green light, we have the information for how long, what it looks like, etc. It has been a learning phase in the past. We want to get away from that and have what the plan looks like for the next two weeks.

Comment: Why not get the red light/green light after three in that case? Then after a fourth, you can go or not depending on that decision.

Comment: With each depredation, our concern and awareness is elevating. We don't try to tell the future, but we do want to prepare for different paths. That green light comes afterwards, but we have already talked about what that might look like.

Comment: Would it be helpful to have that cutoff period? Oregon has a period of 45 days, unless there is another incident. There is another aspect that says if there is another depredation within two months of the end of the action, lethal removal can be authorized again.

Comment: We are looking for the ability to say that in each different case. We'll have that for each case before a green light is given.

Taking out the 1-2 weeks was discussed. It was recommended it be removed, with the understanding that action would still be quickly implemented.

Comment: I'm uncomfortable with taking 1-2 weeks out.

Comment: We would like the discretion to say we completed the action, no matter how much time has passed. All numbers create expectations. We want to be able to determine this on a case by case basis.

Comment: What if we don't include those numbers, but agree to a weekly update on each situation, communicating status regularly.

Comment: No number also communicates something. Is there then expectation that it keeps going until a wolf is removed?

Comment: In Oregon, I am very grateful for the 45 day number. When we had no number, the pressure was actually greater on us. The end number helped us a lot. You want to weigh out the pressure from either side.

Comment: What if we have language in there that says lethal removal will be reevaluated after 1-2 weeks. That gives the Department a chance to have that discretion and reevaluate what is going on in that situation.

Comment: As long as there is an update that comes from that, I would be fine with it.

Comment: I like that idea, but it could cause more problems than it solves.

Comment: That helps us though, as in each case we are learning more about the situation as we go. Timing plays a factor here as well. Identifying the time period can help determine the method used as well.

Comment: If we are providing weekly updates, do we need to do these reevaluations? We would already be doing that in the weekly updates.

Comment: Once the Department has completed what they wanted to do, whatever that may be (decided on internally), they should then be done at that point.

Comment: If the community knows that the Department is doing their best to implement lethal removal, could we go a season without using a hard number and then reevaluate how that went for the state after the fact? Could we test out this theory and reevaluate it?

Comment: It's also important to not fall into a trap of just extending the days out over and over again as the operations go on.

It was decided that no official numbers would be given and then the WAG would assess how that went at a future date. WDFW will still provide weekly updates, and may provide updates more frequently in some cases. These updates would include whether or not action would stop or continue.

Comment: It's important to know that there is a serious safety issue with some of this communication aspect as well.

Comment: Is there any discussion about the age of the pups when moving forward with lethal removal?

Comment: You consider the aged animals first in that case. The thinking is to maintain the breeding pair and the pups.

Comment: I'm thinking about timing. If the pups are not old enough to survive on their own and that lethal removal order is given, is that considered?

Comment: That is a situation where every pack member steps up to ensure those pups survive. While there is potential that something could happen, but the higher probability is that lethal removal would be initiated later in the summer. That will have to be judged on the timing as well.

Break

Comment: It was said that lethal removal would never involve pups unless it was full pack removal, and I wanted to let you all know that isn't always the case.

Comment: There may be cases where pups are targeted. This usually involves smaller packs. The main goal is to maintain that breeding pair. Pups may be the only ones that could be targeted. It is very rare, but there is potential that it could happen.

The next element was communication and what that looks like.

Comment: One thing to address is that when the Department communicates with the public in regards to lethal removal, they communicate fully. That includes depredations that led to it, compensation details, etc.

Comment: We can amend it to say if it's eligible for compensation or not.

Comment: When would you go to lethal removal and not have any qualify for compensation?

Comment: It's part of that whole picture and wanting to include everything. Or, it could be a scenario where it's livestock that aren't covered, or multiple producers that don't meet the \$500 threshold.

Comment: If you have your first depredation, you don't necessarily kick in the lethal removal protocol. What's a non-qualifying depredation look like?

Comment: That can be more a statement about history of depredations, etc. that have led up to implementing lethal removal. It's being honest about everything that led to that decision for lethal removal. Having that full package of information will be important.

Comment: I have a huge issue with how we communicate from HQ to the public. If we are specific, that puts the conflict specialists' jobs at risk. Some people will show up in the field. They will follow us. It's also an issue for the producer. It's a big safety issue.

Comment: So if we keep it to the pack or to the county, that might help.

Comment: Informing producers of packs in the area then falls to the conflict specialists. Producers communicate with each other as well.

Comment: Would saying a general area of the county (southwest Okanogan, for example) be all right in that situation?

Comment: Does the WAG get more detailed information?

Comment: I get a little nervous if the Department has different levels of the public, and some know more than others.

Comment: I think there's an opportunity for that update afterwards. When things are going on, however, there has to be an understanding of safety. That update will be given, and it's on the chronologies that we put together.

Comment: I do think there is a balance point here that WDFW will have to discuss internally. Communication needs with government entities are also going to be handled differently. I have no issue communicating with WAG members, but if it's sent out as a mass email, we don't know what we're inviting.

Comment: It's important to recognize that it's unacceptable for anyone to feel in danger while on the job. Producers should not be getting death threats. We need to ensure people who engage with the government are not threatened.

Comment: I think this also raises the issue of education needs. This is one of those long term projects for us. Recognizing those specific education needs is important.

Comment: I hear all the concerns, but I also would be a lot more comfortable if the Department got the word out before the media. I want to hear from the Department before I hear from a media outlet.

Why does anybody need to know anything beyond the location area or pack level?

Comment: I would agree with that. I don't know why anyone needs specifics other than the Department.

Comment: Information is already being provided on a regular basis. We tell about depredations when they occur. This would a situation where we have four events, and the chronology is on the web. All of those pieces are out there.

The public is getting the history, chronology, and scope. We don't want to give too many specifics for staff and public safety.

Comment: Just wanted to say that I'm comfortable with knowing everything just at the county level, and from the regular WAG updates.

Comment: We strive really hard to get our word out first, at the WDFW level.

Comment: There will still likely be reports. My fear if we go this route is that the narrative will be shaped by the media and not the Department.

Comment: We won't be able to prevent the media from printing whatever they want. However, I want to say I'm glad this conversation is happening now and not after a tragedy.

The third party neutral said that WAG members have the power to shape that conversation. Dan has been doing a phenomenal job on social media sites, encouraging people to find the facts and use the correct information to form decisions.

Considering the Whole: After considering all the elements, WAG members looked at how to put it all together. The third party neutral gave an overview of everything that had been discussed and decided so far. There were a couple areas that required further discussion before a protocol could be finalized.

The chronic topic was further discussed. If a pack had three depredations in one year, WDFW will look at the history of that pack over the last year, as well as consider what the future might bring for that pack.

Comment: Will a producer need to have those proactive measures in place after that first year?

Comment: Not all producers in the area will, but some definitely will.

Comment: Will the clock reset for Dirty Shirt this year?

Comment: I can't get there, I don't think. If we have four one year, and then two happen the next year, I feel like that's a pattern and may need to be addressed.

Comment: Where I have trouble is counting that history where no preventatives were used.

Comment: Especially with that history, to me there is now an expectation that those producers are doing the required nonlethal tools. Somewhere in this mix, it has to be shown that methods were used and failed. If producers are not meeting that bar, then WDFW will have trouble moving forward. However, if they are implementing the nonlethals, then that's something we may need to be addressed.

Comment: One thing I constantly struggle with is regardless of producer effort, after a consecutive year you have to accept that these animals are targeting livestock. It's almost like you would be punishing other producers if the pack is not dealt with.

Comment: I agree. If we don't do it across allotment boundaries, we lose credibility with the public in that area.

Comment: Can we have an expectation that the producers hire a range rider or the Department has a range rider contracted there this season, as there seems to be evidence that range riders helped last year in Dirty Shirt? If the pattern of depredations continues, it's clear to say that's chronic and there were known effective measures on the ground at that point.

The plus one for sanitation plus one in an open range should be human presence.

Comment: With this history of Dirty Shirt, the conflict specialists are out there driving the ramp up in those areas.

Comment: We have this concrete example though, of what a chronic case might look like. It seems like a fair question to ask if you would have a range rider out there before going to lethal removal this year.

Comment: There will be a range rider out there this year, but we won't be able to cover everything. There will be one range rider over four grazing allotments. They won't be able to afford this. We just don't have an endless supply of range riders.

Comment: I'm still having a hard time saying two equals chronic. To say two could get you to lethal removal after months of no depredations seems too fast. Why expend those resources without giving it a little more time?

Comment: Case by case, situations can change. All of the factors (fires, populations, nonlethals, etc.). All of this will be taken into account before lethal removal. I ask that we get off of the numbers for a while and understand that every factor will be examined.

Comment: I like simple is better, and any year when you reach three, you are looking at the years around you and assessing the situation. That makes sense.

Comment: The two number could fall under that simple explanation, so it's important to get clarity there.

Comment: My understanding was since we had four last year, after two this year we ramp up and prepare for the possibility of the third one.

Question: Say a pack gets into a lethal removal situation. Where does that put it next year? Does that change that number?

The discussion continued over what chronic actually means, and whether chronic is the appropriate word for the situation. It was encouraged that after a decision was made regarding this situation, it be applied directly to Dirty Shirt for a plan this year.

Comment: I can't handle people nitpicking and telling biologists how to do their jobs. They are the ones hired to do the job, not me. All of our communities have extremely different and volatile views on wolves and a number of other animals. People want to meddle, and are putting so many qualifiers on there, that it could get so jumbled that nothing gets done. I am very against putting all these different qualifiers on there.

Comment: If you kill wolves, a state listed species, after two depredations, you are going to get push back from a number of communities.

Comment: It should be range rider plus one, rather than sanitation plus one. If there's one thing you need out there, it's human presence. Also, while two could definitely be random, it could be a sign of a pattern. Also, if you had four the year before, two should be the limit. There is more going on than we know about it.

Comment: If the two isn't realistic, the emergency clause needs to be there just in case.

Comment: I thought we had decided that with the sanitation plus one, the Department helps figure out what that plus one is. It's not just any plus one.

Comment: If we have the number at four, and include a break (nine months?) that then resets it to zero, would that be okay with everyone? Does that get us down this path?

Comment: Would it be possible to have a roving range rider program? If a pack is deemed chronic, a preseason requirement would then be to have a range rider.

Comment: As more packs get into the state, you are going to run into a problem.

Comment: That is also more of a reactive approach rather than a proactive approach.

Comment: We have to remember that we can't predict everything. We put our resources where we thought there would be an issue, and we were blindsided by Dirty Shirt. That is probably going to happen again eventually.

The timeline was discussed once again. Eighteen months, twelve months, and 9 months were suggested. Another suggestion said that it might be better to ditch the timeline altogether and trust the Department to make the right decision. Building the trust in the Department over one year may be the best method. Then WAG can revisit that the next year.

A rolling twelve month period could also work.

A proposal was made to adopt one plan that says if depredations occurred one year, efforts are ramped up the next year. If another depredation occurs, the Department looks at every factor involved and determines if it's a pattern that needs to be disrupted. If it is determined that lethal removal is necessary, the Department moves forward. The number that triggers that could be any number (2-4) depending on the variables included.

A few different proposals were suggested as well. An approach that included six in two years (3+3 or 4+2) could instigate the lethal removal of a "chronic" pack. Another suggested having a reset period of 14 months (if no depredations happen for 14 months, the count goes back to

zero). Four in 14 months would trigger the consideration for lethal removal. The added two months takes care of the lapse in the grazing season.

The issue with that is you can have three in one grazing season, and have one 13 months later that is not related at all to those. It's far too easy to get the fourth with a really long time gap.

If it's happening again 13 months later, is that part of a pattern? We would again have to lean on the discretion of WDFW to determine that.

Another suggestion said if you get to three in one year, that will carry over as one to the next year. Three more that next year gets you to four.

What about having two at the end of the grazing season one year? Would those two then not count?

Could any depredation carry over as one for the next year?

The third party neutral reminded everyone that they needed a plan that would be put in place for one year and it needs to be simple to communicate.

The suggestion was made to have six in two years, as it seems to fit most of the other concerns in it. Those six would be related to the pack. At least one would have to be a mortality, and pattern would have to be suspected.

Six in two years could also be applied to Dirty Shirt.

The public will push back if lethal removal is instigated after two in one year.

Dirty Shirt is one situation. Every other pack is going to need four this year. Also, you have to remember that a pattern needs to be determined, and the depredations need to be expected to continue. There are other qualifiers besides the six.

So, four for 2016 is the threshold, and six for 2015 and 2016. Calendar years are the timeline.

One comment suggested getting a robust outreach effort out for the Dirty Shirt situation. Get the message out first and have people react to that, rather than have it addressed later. Holding to the six number would be critical to avoid push back in the Dirty Shirt area.

This means six in any two consecutive years. This can be reassessed at a future WAG date.

Finalizing Protocol and Going Forward: In finalizing the protocol, the next topic for clarification was dogs.

Comment: I can be comfortable with a dog mortality counting once, but not injuries.

The steps of a suggestion said: The dog is actively guarding/herding that producers herd, there is evidence that the dog was doing that, and injury and mortality count.

Comment: If a dog gets an ear bit, and comes back, I can't be comfortable counting that. I can get on board if it's an injury that takes that dog out of the field.

Comment: It's more about consistency with the plan. Why is the chewed ear on the cow different from the chewed ear on the dog?

Comment: From what I understand, that injury to the cow is different because of it being taken to market. The guard dog can still do its job and serve its purpose.

Comment: The plan does not address qualifying depredation for lethal removal, so there is some discretion there. The fact is wolves are in recovery, and you should err on the side of the wolf. I think the discretion is there for the group to consider how and if dogs should count towards lethal removal.

Comment: It's important to note that there are cases where the dog is attacked, even with a minor injury, and can't go back to how it was before. The plan says *any* attack.

If a debilitating injury occurs, could that count? This would include any injury that prevents the dog from going back to work.

Comment: The tough part about debilitating is you can't always tell right away.

Comment: Some of the discomfort in the past was centered around whether or not the dog was really actively guarding/herding livestock. We also have to recognize that when a wolf does have a tangle with a dog, that is almost always going to be severe.

Comment: I thought what we came to yesterday, in regards to whether or not the dog was actively guarding/herding, is that the conflict specialist on the ground determines that on a case by case basis.

Comment: Could a vet be involved the conflict specialist and the producer to help determine what happened? That might be where I can compromise. The vet can help determine the debilitating injury. If the injury is serious enough to go to the vet, that qualifies the attack. The vet would not go to the field. The wolf attack would be determined by conflict specialists on the ground.

Comment: My personal experience is that vets do not want to get dragged into this. This seems to put a lot on the vets, who might not want to be involved.

Comment: What if it's if the dog is out of service for that year?

Comment: What if the vet gives a report, and the conflict specialist makes the call?

Comment: Why would we make that decision for the producer? That's the producer's dog, and the producer should make that call. I think we need to trust the producer in that situation.

Comment: I won't support telling an operator whether or not a dog can go back to work. We are on scene to determine what happened to that animal, and that is all.

The other aspects of counting a dog include:

- The dog is actively guarding/herding livestock
- Investigation confirms that the dog was actually guarding/herding the appropriate herd
- A dog injury counts if it is a part (1 of 4) of a sequence/pattern of depredations on that livestock
- Dog death counts always, as long as the other three aspects are met.

The group all agreed on those aspects. In the situation that the dog was successful in guarding the livestock and no other livestock was harmed, yet the dog was injured, it wouldn't count towards lethal removal. It would count for compensation. If the dog is killed while actively guarding/herding, it would count no matter what. An injury counts if there was another depredation on the livestock the dog is guarding.

The final aspect was an emergency clause.

Extraordinary losses in a short period of time by the same pack should qualify for an emergency clause. The group agreed on this as a definition of an extraordinary circumstance.

The last thing to address was the range of 3-5. It was brought up that it would be difficult to have different thresholds across producers.

Comment: There was some sense that the Department would have discretion to establish whether or not there's a pattern.

Comment: Yes on the intent, but we have to hold to the plan. The plan says nonlethals have been tried and failed. If a producer is not at all cooperating, we cannot justify go to four. Four should be the threshold, except in very special circumstances.

Comment: It's very disconcerting to me that in order to get the special circumstances, a producer would have to go through the WAG process. I would hope WAG would trust the conflict specialists on the ground to determine what that looks like for each different producers.

If we create this plan, opening it up to others in a reasonable way should be an option. This is just a request.

Comment: I disagree with the variable threshold for different people. If you treat people differently, there is a possibility of setting neighbor against neighbor. The incentive is avoiding losses, and we don't need to name a different one.

Comment: I'm kind of in the same spot. I think we should have our line as four, and move on from there.

Comment: I feel strongly the other way. Remember that this is the first time we've had cohesion with stakeholders in the state. At this stage, I encourage us to get behind what we've built and reevaluate it once we get through it. I think we do have some other producers we know who are doing all of those things, and they are at that threshold. Our conflict staff can determine who is at that bar of being proactive. We can add those producers to that list. Does that work?

Comment: That would include everyone who has signed a DPCA in my mind.

Comment: I agree with previous comments of having four across the board. The producers I've talked to are not liking the incentives aspect. The incentive, in my mind, is the Department working with you.

Comment: Let's reiterate that this is a trial run. The message is on four, and it can have variability.

Comment: DPCA-Ls already set people apart, and we don't need to further that at all. They are good with four. It's persistent and we can count on it.

Comment: Things will need to happen in the next year to figure out where adjustments need to be made.

A simple four, and then work on this issue throughout the year. Timely reimbursements will go a long way to make that more appealing. The Department has discretion on a case by case basis, and there is no asterisk next to four.

The third party neutral went around the room to determine if everyone was on board with the protocol.

One comment was that the value of the conflict specialists was incredible for the meetings and made it so agreement can be reached.

A typed-up copy will be out to WAG members next week, and each will respond to ensure everything was captured correctly.

The third party neutral commended everyone on the fantastic work they've done over the previous two days. There was a round of applause.

Public Comment

The first public comment said she hasn't been to a WAG meeting in a while, and she was impressed by the civil and respectful atmosphere of the group. One of the things that didn't get discussed was under the communication topic, where the whole public knows where packs are located. People can see where packs are, what they are doing, and the timelines on the web. The plan didn't define what a qualifying depredation is. The discussion regarding thresholds should have been based on science, and they were not today. There was no science included. You worked hard to get away from retribution, but the two year timeframe can certainly appear that way. I heard a lot that private property has to be protected, and I agree, but public lands belong to everyone, and there was no discussion on different thresholds for public versus private lands. That's a big issue for a lot of people. I've been at a lot of meetings overall, and you've spent two days discussing life and death decisions over a listed species. I wish you would have had a lot more time to discuss this topic. Life and death decisions should be given a lot more time than two days. Thank you for your efforts today.

The second public comment touched on a few things, recognizing that a lot of it was for future thought. This needs to be codified in the WAC as a rule. For a long time there has been distrust, and this process has helped, but new faces will come in. For the sake of everyone, having this captured in a rule will help in the future. One thing I think is really important is that there should be some sort of protocol or policy for each form of lethal removal method used (certain traps not allowed, etc.). Another thing for WDFW to think about is a safe harbor agreement with USFWS in areas where there are other listed species. There can be a risk to non-targeted animals. Lastly, in regards to transparency, and recognizing safety issues, I think there should be at least a basic public notice that lethal removal is taking place. It should be a basic public service. Some sort of form could be developed that summarizes findings and helps show people how a wolf depredation was confirmed. I encourage you all to think about that. Also, before going to lethal, a form that shows compliance with the protocol could be there spelled out in writing. I also note that an illegal grazing case could result in a depredation that did not count towards lethal. The public commenter said that the environmental representatives on WAG are doing a great job of getting the message out and they truly do have the WAG's best interest in mind.

The third public comment echoed previous comments that have been made. She does commend everybody on the work, and said she is sad that there is such a constrained amount of time on such a huge issue. Some themes she'll be thinking about, and hopes WDFW will be thinking about, is that she heard a lot about trust. Realistically, no one trusts the Department, and that is something to keep in mind. More people want a voice in wildlife management. Lack of trust comes from not being included in the process. Everybody wants a voice in making decisions

regarding public resources. There seemed to be some conflicting messages amongst the Department, especially when it comes to constraints on the available resources. I don't like hearing that the Department can't afford range riders. We have to have that resource available. There always has to be a mix of nonlethal methods. You are not constrained to apply one technique. I also hope we're not talking about minimal deterrents. It should be after you've exhausted all available deterrents. Words are so important. We have to be able to judge nonlethals, because you are making decisions on killing wolves. Let's also work on the idea that demand outstrips supply. We have to be careful about the message we send to the public.

The fourth public comment congratulated everyone on the good work and thanked them for taking the time out of their schedules to come here. He said now we have to sell it to the public. He said he would like to see 4 in 12 months, and 6 in 24 months, rather than how it's worded now. He said he saw no decisions made over the last two days that would hinder progress, and that they've come a long way over the last two days. He also said the incentive should stay, and getting the incentive there encourages producers to get all possible deterrents in place ahead of time, which in turn protects more wolves and more producers. To minimize depredations is the ultimate goal. There has been a lot of give and take on both sides, and he was happy to see all were acceptable on the give and take. He was also very impressed by the conflict specialists who work on the ground. As they succeed, the wolves will succeed as well. What you have truly done is build trust in each other, and you can make changes as you learn better now.

A fifth comment said a few years ago, after a year of sitting in a room with folks, something this morning that was said resonated with me. That was that everything discussed here is explainable. When we in Oregon came up with an agreement, our Commission adopted the rule. The new rule included explanations, and public meetings were held to explain the new agreements, and it became very clear that there was no way to easily explain how we got there. You have all been talking about this stuff a lot, and you know it. In the case of the public, they have not been there. This has to be understandable and explainable. The public does not have the benefit of the back and forth. This process was fantastic, but the diverse perspectives on wolves can make this very complicated. It's really important to keep it simple. Being consistent and implementing this plan consistently is key to success.

Donny spoke up and thanked the third party neutral and everyone involved. He said he values the relationships he has with everyone, and said they are more important than anything else in this whole process.