

Wolf Advisory Group
CWU SURC room 140
24 July 2014
Minutes
[DRAFT]

In Attendance – Dave Duncan, Linda Saunders, Bob Aegerter, Paula Swedeen, Don Dashell, Dan Paul, Tom Davis

Staff: Dave Ware, Donny Martorello, Stephanie Simek, Joey McCanna, John Cotton, Jay Shepherd, Steve Wetzell, Kris Thorson, Bonnie McDonald, Joe Bridges, Scott Becker

Opening Presentation – Donny Martorello

Donny started with a presentation to update the members on Wolf Packs around state. The Smackout pack is still single animal. Ruby creek pack is still single female. Dirty Shirt and Carpenter ridge have two possible members each. Huckleberry denned up north of the reservation. At the Huckleberry rendezvous point staff found a deceased pup that appeared to be a natural death. A couple days later staff caught a live pup but it was still too small for collar. Strawberry had denned and it is possible the Nc'icn did as well. There is some wolf activity in Wedge. Recently staff captured and collared a lone male between diamond pack territory and Salmo pack territory. Washington may have two possible new packs. Staff captured yearling female from the Lookout pack. Wenatchee pack has had no recent confirmed sightings. Teanaway has collared animals and produced pups. Question: When do we stop considering it a pack? Answer: When we do not have two animals traveling together in that area for a period of one year.

Item 1: Post-delisting – Monitoring Protocol - Donny Martorello

Looking back to the early years, 2002, from the get go of wolves we have placed a collar or two in each pack to monitor animals and breeding pairs. This practice is labor extensive and expensive. Some of the down sides is all you get is a single estimate. The variability is large on this type of monitoring. The more time that this sampling is practiced may make the sampling/min size data more skewed. The preferred method we will use in the future will have the following attributes: acceptable accuracy and precision, includes measure of uncertainty, robust assumptions, repeatable, appropriate for variety of areas, cost effective. Some challenges that may arise are as follows: Past method too expensive, wide distribution, animals under forested cover, hard to see, quick learners. Donny explained the patch-occupancy model as to if a territory is occupied. The agency receives reports, places these reports in territories that have been overlaid on a state map, then mark the territories as occupied or empty. Montana uses this method to give an estimate of the Wolf Population. Question: On Estimated Area slide of Donny Presentation there is a decline in pack size, what is the reason? Answer: Possible answer is possible harvest/lethal control. Montana has observed smaller numbers of individuals in the packs but more packs. Question: On the Method used by Montana, are there places that are not surveyed that might miss wolves? Answer: Random samples of hunters receive a mailing that they can participate in the survey. There may be fewer samples in the locations that are more remote areas. National parks areas are more closely monitored and the model accounts for this. Idaho uses a similar model but added predicted rendezvous sites and surveys and put this in the model as well as the telemetry data. Question: What is a rendezvous site? Answer: It is the site that the pack moves to after denning and birth. The site is an area that the young are moved to that allows the pups to start to

acclimatize to the wild. Washington wants to build on the best available science, continue evaluating the patch-occupancy models, possible use of facial recognition software, as well as possible citizen science/hunter data. The facial recognition data may make more precise estimation. Washington has several years to use several models in conjunction to verify feasibility and accuracy. Question: Are you going to try out several measurements to do this? Answer: We are going to work with WDFW staff to look into possible methods. Question: Are the wolf data observations in Montana and Idaho wolf hunters or ungulate hunters? Answer: All hunters are able to be surveyed. Question: How will these methods get you to better estimation on breeding pairs? Answer: Rapid colonization models show we know of about 70% of packs. The new methods may allow for us to more precisely estimate based on our science. Comment: I am confused on how relevant the topic is on Post-Delisting because we still have a lot of work to do on recovery before we need to worry about this. Answer: Bringing this issue forward at this time to allow the committee to start thinking about and working on the project. There is a requirement in the wolf process to continue to monitor post de-listing to make sure that they do not back slide. This at least gets us started thinking on the post de-listing ideas. Question: Is there a way we can come up with a master schedule and timing on Wolf post de-listing plan. Answer: Donny provided a basic schedule last meeting, but we may need to pull it out and get more comprehensive. Also we want to talk about other aspects to help the wolf recovery plan in terms of implementation of the plan. Comment: Regarding Dave's priorities, it seems we are launching into post de-listing discussion but there is so much more to work on.

Item 2: Scenario – Relocation where wolves are listed as Endangered under Federal ESA - Donny Martorello

(Handout to Website Donny's slide of coordination strategy) WDFW has talked to USFWS on who had the lead on wolf issues when the wolves do make it to the west side. The USFWS delegated to us Monitor wolf activity and Livestock depredation investigations in the western 2/3 of the state where wolves are still federally listed. There may come a point to where repeated depredations will occur and USFWS has the lead but may ask for assistance from WDFW and WS. Question: Can the Feds legally remove a problem animal? Answer: No, they do not have legal authority to remove a problem wolf unless it is a matter of public safety. Question: USFWS has to give authority for removal of problem animal? Answer: If USFWS delegates the removal then it can be removed. When relocation is an option some questions that are going to come up are: are you going to collar it, are you going to monitor it, ext. Relocation is the only legal option at this point that the USFWS can do. They could go through NEPA to possibly lethally remove animals. Comment: Relocation can be problematic because if you move a problem wolf and put it in another area, it may just transition the problem to a different location. When USFWS has done relocations in the past, it generally has moved those animals to more open spaces such as national parks, ext. WDFW has requested that if USFWS has to relocate a wolf that they find a relocation site in the same recovery zone. Question: If there comes a point in time when a recovery zone has met the requirements, would WDFW request the animal be moved to a new recovery zone? Answer: This is a possibility but it would require SEPA review. There will be situations where relocation may not be effective. Question: Are we assuming that in most cases non-lethal techniques will be used before relocation? Answer: Yes. That is under item two on the list of duties we discussed with the USFWS. Question: WDFW has the authority in delisted eastern 1/3 of the state? Answer: Yes, we are the leads on eastern 1/3 of state. Question: Do we have data on the success rate of relocation? Answer: Donny has some of the papers and data. Success rates are not terribly high on relocation based on single wolf relocation. Question: In Oregon there was only the one time that the wolf pair had been relocated and success? Answer: No, we have not heard. Question: Who has jurisdiction on Wolf-dog hybrids? Answer: As soon as a domestic dog is involved it is up to the county ordinances. Putting

out Hybrids is not on any organizations priority lists. The only authority WDFW has if the wolf hybrid is chasing big game. By the fall WAG members may see a document on coordination strategies for wolves. Question: In the eastern 1/3 of the state regarding habituated, accidental depreidations and repeated depredations, is relocation an option or lethal removal the only choice? Answer: No, these are handled on a case by case basis. WDFW has not ruled out relocation. Question: Who decides if the wolf behavior warrants to be classified as habituated? Answer: This is a group discussion in regards to if the wolf is believed to be habituated or not. This may entail being around populations during day times and not fleeing.

Item 4: Update on Caribou and Wolf concerns – Donny Martarello

This presentation is a FYI on woodland Caribou and possible conflicts with Washington wolves. The caribou occur in the most north eastern corner of Washington state. They are a federally and state listed species. There is elevated concern regarding the number of animals currently in the herd because at last count it was at 18 animals. Recently the USFWS established a Distinct Population Segment (DPS). There have been no detections of caribou entering into Washington in the last two years. This may be an issue in the future but so far it is not. Last march there was a caribou mortality, which had wolf tracks around the carcass. The USFWS and their Canadian counterparts have discussed targeted wolf removal in areas the Caribou frequent in Idaho and British Columbia if they look like they will pose a threat to the herd. WDFW direction has been predator-prey management guidelines. There is no WDFW objection on the removal programs in British Columbia and Idaho. There is no removal discussion at this time in Washington (members of Salmo or Bunchgrass Packs may be taken outside Washington). Question: What is causing the Caribou decline? Is it diminishing habitat? Answer: As Donny understands it is a habitat issue. Predation is probably not a limiting factor. If the predation can be limited then it should help the caribou. Dan Paul Commented: Given this preliminary look I would be in favor of removal or relocation of pack members. Question: Can habitat be impacted in a wilderness area? Answer: There is a succession of habitat. Question: Do the caribou have collars that we can monitor and make sure that the wolves are away from the caribou? Answer: We don't know. WDFW will deliver any changes on this. Tribes would like us to be a bigger player on this. British Columbia and Idaho are not worried about wolf numbers in the affected areas.

Item 3: Status report of non-lethal efforts – Stephanie Simek, Joey McCanna, Jay Shepherd, John Cotton, Joe Bridges, Steve Wetzel, Bonnie McDonald

(Stephanie)The wildlife conflict program is relatively new within Wildlife program. We have 14 conflict specialist positions across the state with two stationed in Olympia. Question: What is the status on Region four replacement conflict specialist? Answer: The position just closed and resumes are being reviewed. WDFW would like to have them onboard before fall. Tom Davis Comment: I lobby for landowner(s) on the interview process regarding the position. Mike smith will be assisting in the interim. Most of conflict work is prevention of conflicts. WDFW staff is working with landowners to improve fencing, deploy fladry, contract range riders, educate about sanitation, and various forms of hazing. Question: How many Range riders does the State have? Answer: As an agency we have contracted with four range riders. Comment: Conservation North West (CNW) has five range riders that are supported by CNW funds. Currently we have 33 DPCA's active in place. More agreements are currently being negotiated. Since April 1st WDFW has received 11 calls for possibly wolf depredations needing investigation. So far this year zero wolf depredations, four of unknown reasons, six non-wolf depredations, and one other. Question: What seems to be the sociological thinking on these investigations and what the reporting parties thought? Answer: The investigations have been mostly

positive based on the time and effort the staff has given the landowners/producers. Conflict staff is providing outreach with local groups and community resources while fulfilling their jobs. Stephanie encourages ideas to be sent to her on collaborative efforts with WAG. Question: How is it working out for landowners who do not have agreements with WDFW? Are they getting the help from the conflict specialist? Answer: Yes, they are still able to have access to conflict specialists. With contracted range riders we can call them to possibly get to an area where there is a potential problem faster than staff. Efforts WDFW is working on is continuing to working one on one with landowners, engaging local government entities, participate in outreach, inform and train collaborators, continue testing new techniques and improving existing tools. Question: Does Idaho have a lot more Wolf/Dog interactions? Answer: Yes. This is definitely a concern that we have as well. There may be more interactions that are undocumented. Question: Is WDFW going to be trying the bio fence again? Answer: This is a possibility. We are looking into new funding for approaches that have been tried elsewhere. WDFW is not going to commit to it at this point.

(Joey) Outreach and education is what our conflict specialists do day to day. They cover wolf biology, status, monitoring, delisting process, landowner rights, preventative measures, and also what to do to prevent conflicts. Sanitation is the key. DOT has recently fenced an open pit disposal facility that has been an issue for other species. Over the last 14 months presentations to sheep producers, Audubon groups as well as other organizations. We follow up with sighting reports when there are several reports such as tracks, visual reports, trail cameras, and we provide an educational opportunity at the time of contact. District 2 currently has no confirmed wolf packs. Currently there are no DPCA's in district 2. Multiple livestock depredations have been investigated but none have been confirmed as wolf. We follow up our investigations with trail cameras and education. District 3 presented to the Washington Cattleman's Association, Bi-state cattleman's Association, and has daily public interactions. There have been several reports in the area. Oregon emails Washington on location data for the last 7 days of their wolf movements. We are coordinating with Idaho on Possible collared wolves missing. District 3 makes phone calls to DPCA folks on wolf movements. Currently there are no wolves in district 3. There are 17 DPCA for livestock, multiple depredations but no confirmed wolf depredations. Question: Have you noticed shifts in attitude when out with public. Answer: Yes and I believe that it is due to our educational process. Question: Do you talk about all the predators in your outreach? Answer: Yes, we let them know about all of the predators.

(Jay) There is a significant amount of grazing area on managed by national forest staff in district 1. Since 2009 we trapped a diamond pack member, which is the first pack that had been located on a federal allotment. Since then several packs have taken up occupancy on federal allotments. We have a cost share range rider in the Smackout allotment area and they are also on call. We are working on proactive measures, non-lethal hazing, and possible lethal removal. Range riding seems to be the most effective preventative. Range rider tasks are to records predator sign, monitor cattle behavior, observe injuries and illnesses, as well as removing and carcasses. The smackout pack traditionally uses 440 square miles but we have range rider in only 40 square miles. Question: Is the ruby wolf being followed and/or hazed because she was depredating? Answer: She is being hazed due to proximity to pigs, chickens, and horses. She has since moved nine miles south and has also been seen in a hound pen with cougar hounds. Proactive measures we are using in district 1 are fladry fences with electric lines. We are now working on composting facility on Sherman creek wildlife area. This facility will have bear proof fencing that ranchers will be able to move domestic animal carcasses to start the compost. Some of the non-lethal harassment methods we have implemented are, FLIR, Rubber Bullets, Paintball guns, Cracker shells and spotlights. These are not as effective as our proactive measures. We are starting to see wolf sign in close quarters with homes and dogs. USAF uses Colville National forest for survival school where

they teach students on how to survive in a wilderness location. Students have had close encounters with wolves based on their camp techniques. We have started working with them to get their camps cleaned up and use better techniques to avoid wolf conflicts. Question: After the confirmation of the wedge pack depredation, what happened? Did you step up non-lethal harassment methods? Answer: Yes we stepped up non-lethal deterrents such as range rider, staff hours, ext. Question: Did they come back into the area? Answer: Hard to say because of how dry it was there was a lack of sign. They were present while staff was there. Question: There have been no confirmed depredations since then? Answer: No, no confirmed wolf depredations.

(John)One range rider is working in the area of region 2 in the area of where the lookout pack was historically living. The lookout pack migrated into the area south of their historical range. The landowner we are working with has been very open to the collaboration. So far there have been no depredations in the Region 2 area. CNW and conservation district is working on a composting facility. Currently I am working with the WLA managers to determine if there is a possibility of placing compost sites on their WLA.

(Joe) So far there is only one non-wolf depredation. I am working on getting another DPCA in the Region 2 area. Working in Chelan and Douglas counties where it is really quiet lately.

(Steve) I work more with Elk conflicts than with wolf conflicts. There are two areas where wolves are located here in Region 3, Teanaway and Naenum. One dedicated range rider in both Teanaway and Naenum that is dedicated to wolves. One range rider is contracted by a local sheep herder. No known wolf incidents in 2014. Two confirmed cougar depredations to date in Teanaway and one in Naenum. Staff have placed fladry to get cattle used to the area as well as to allow elk calving.

(Bonnie)A pilot project started on livestock monitoring in Klickitat County. There are individual contracts with producers for range riders. The project started in September of 2013 and the main goal is to start range riding activity. The producers can be reimbursed for up to \$5000 on range rider activities. Also the project has mapped out all the different locations that are able to be grazed. I am working with producers on sanitation efforts. The project has grown to be a very beneficial program and has been a preemptive strike on wolf outreach. We have had sightings and sign in western Klickitat County. There are also two confirmed photos of a wolf near Dalles Mountain. Question: Is there an educated guess as to where the wolf in the photo is from? Answer: We don't know. A couple biologists theorize that it may have come from the north.

Closing comments by Dave Ware: Differences with starting out early on outreach and education in different areas before wolf sightings have occurred has been greatly beneficial. Dave Ware thanked Dave Duncan and Jack Field for getting WDFW and producers together on these issues. Where there are likely corridors the wolves may use to spread out over the next few years already have conflict specialists that are starting out with outreach and education efforts.

Next meeting agenda items: Scheduled for Sept 25th.

- USFWS Discussion
- Post De-Listing Plan
 - Outline
 - Timeline
 - Process
- Research Update

- Wrap up of Summer Conflict work
- Wolf Plan Implementation Priorities
 - 2015 workplan
- Determine schedule 2015 meetings

Game management plan update with wolf management: WDFW is sticking with wolf recovery plan and will have the WAG help develop updated plans. The Game Management Plan(GMP) schedule was outlined. WDFW has received petition on the wolf plan. This petition had rule language associated with it and the commission will conduct a conference call on Aug 1 to make a determination on this petition. Once this is decided we will know what our course of action is at this point.

Public comment: Question: With regards to the Caribou issue, it is possible that some members of the Salmo pack could be removed but if it is suitable habitat wouldn't it be recolonized? Answer: Yes, it is possible. Some predators seem to focus on a particular prey item and this may be an issue. Question directed to Bonnie: What topics do you usually cover with the producers? Answer: Generally I go over how the predators hunt, what injuries may occur, what rendezvous sites may look like, and the basics of wolf hunting and movements. A couple things noticed in conversations was the opportunities on wolf-dog hybrid issues. It is possible that we should take another run at the legislature to outlaw this practice. There was a huge kudos given to the conflict program and conflict staff member's efforts with the producers and landowners. With respect to GMP, it is premature to address wolves at this point. The SEPA process will hopefully vet status and address the issue.

Question: Has anyone talked about having a work session with Senator regarding conflict specialists?

Answer: This may be something that happens in the future.

Adjourned at 3:40