

## **Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Meeting**

September 3, 2015

Meeting Notes

*The meeting notes are intended to convey highlights from the meeting, including information and perspectives shared and discussed during the WAG meeting. Decisions made during the meeting are included. This document is not a word-for-word transcription, and some overlapping comments made during back-and-forth discussion, or reiterated by another participant, or communicated through nonverbal means may not have been captured in this document. That said, all efforts have been made to capture the main points, as well as the diverse and converging viewpoints on each issue.*

**WAG Attendees:** Bob Aegerter, Shawn Cantrell, Dave Dashiell, Tom Davis, Dave Duncan, Tom Erskine, Jack Field, Diane Gallegos, Molly Linville, Nick Martinez, Dan McKinley, Dan Paul, Mark Pidgeon, Lisa Stone, Paula Swedeen

**WDFW Staff:** Donny Martorello, Scott Becker, Jay Shepherd, Steve Pozzanghera, Matthew Trenda

**Third Party Neutral:** Francine Madden, Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration

**Welcome and Overview:** Francine welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave an overview of the previous meeting in May, the accomplishments the group made, as well as an overall of current conditions in the state. She talked about the hardships experienced across the state since the last meeting, especially due to the unprecedented wildfires, and how that increases the stress and lowers the resilience of individuals and groups. She also talked about grazing seasons and how that can also be a difficult time for all involved. She noted that during the grazing season, people will experience stress, even if nothing happens, because the reality is that something could happen. She praised WAG members for coming together, for their resilience and commitment, and for continuing to seek to understand each other's perspectives. She noted this within the impressive context of only having met once before as a group of 18. She also stressed the importance of engaging the broader stakeholder groups and public in this process in order to continue to grow and progress together. She encouraged WAG members to share the results of each meeting and garner input from each member's stakeholder group so that WAG can serve as a conduit of information, wisdom, and guidance from the broader public.

Francine remarked on some of the common qualities of each stakeholder group – optimism and hope, hard work, and a strong commitment to hard work. She noted that these qualities that everyone in this room share and possess are important to bring to the work of WAG.

There was also a brief outline of the meeting to come, spending a few minutes on each agenda item.

Donny conveyed that the department is pleased that everyone could be here, and is grateful to everyone involved. He also thanked everyone for taking the time out of their schedules to be engaged with one another and this process. He noted that one of the things discussed in the

department is that everyone is aware of the controversy with wolves, and it can be discouraging to see other states still dealing with the same conflicts 10-20 years after wolves arrived.

Washington wants to be different, and it will be a challenge, but WDFW and many members of the public are optimistic. WDFW wants to see success. WDFW and stakeholders have had some challenges this year, yet on the positive side two months have passed and producers in the Dirty Shirt pack have not experienced any further losses due to wolves. Another positive in Washington is WAG. Washington has a huge opportunity to set a new trend in deepening productive engagement with stakeholders.

Donny provided feedback to WAG on their question from the previous meeting about the role of WAG. Donny remarked that the department is looking to WAG to provide advice, in the form of recommendations, on the implementation of the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. Donny commented that the Department envisions WAG recommendations focusing on policy and striving for consistent, durable, and sound management. He noted that it is also important that communication is kept up throughout the year, not only when the group meets in person.

Donny highlighted that as the group goes forward, sub-committees are something to think about – how and when or if you want to use them. As for alternates, Donny clarified that while there were alternates in the first WAG with 9 members, there are no alternates in this new WAG group of 18. He explained that this is intentional due to the learning experienced and built on during each meeting. He also noted that from the department's and his perspective, there are no bad questions. It is important to know that everything is going to be heard, be it an idea, a question, or a suggestion.

Donny introduced Scott Becker.

**WDFW Presentation:** Scott presented a Washington Wolf Monitoring Effort overview Power Point (included in meeting materials). He went over the general monitoring techniques used for wolves on a year round basis. Scott commented that wolf monitoring never stops. He discussed there are certain techniques used in the summer, and other used during the winter. Direct observational counts (ground during summer and air during winter), surveys of roads and trails for signs, and remote camera surveys are all used. Scott added the information is used to estimate minimum packs size and total state populations. The information also contributes to knowledge of pack territories, new areas of wolf activity, and capture efforts. Signs are also used to help mitigate conflicts with livestock.

Scott described the steps for identifying new packs. The department looks for clusters of public sighting reports before going out into the field to investigate. Follow-up surveys are conducted. Every little piece of information helps the understanding of what is on the landscape. Camera deployed helped WDFW biologists document four new packs in 2014.

If sufficient sign is documented, captures are then initiated. Trapping is done in the summer, while aerial captures are done in winter. The success rates in the winter determine the focus and the priorities during the summer. The target is to get at least one collar in as many packs as possible. Trapping wolves is unique. Traps must be placed where wolves are already traveling, and the goal is to draw them in that way. Efficiency is the goal, as traps left out too long can

become problematic. Late spring and early summer are the best times to trap wolves with pups, as there is a hub that adults will consistently return to in order to feed the family. Late summer and early fall are also good, because pups are getting more mobile and are large enough to be collared.

Scott remarked that there are many things to consider while trapping, including responsibilities, ethics, animal welfare, public safety, weather status, and state/federal rules and regulations.

During winter, aerial captures target packs with functional collars only. The chances of finding uncollared packs are very low. Aerial captures have been successful. Four packs and one lone wolf (036f) were able to be collared over the 2014-15 winter.

During summer, uncollared packs are targeted. Six wolves have been captured and collared so far over the summer of 2015.

Scott indicated there will be more challenges as more wolves occupy the landscape. The proportion of wolves and packs wearing radio collars will likely go down. Developing alternative population estimation techniques will be essential.

### **Questions and Answers:**

Question: When we talk about 16 packs, does that include the Wenatchee packs?

Answer: It does not. At the end of the year, we will have a better idea of where they are.

Question: Are packs in the reservation included in that count?

Answer: They are.

Question: How do you make the decisions about which types of collars to put on the wolves when you capture them?

Answer: That is a challenge we face continuously. We want to get a high level of precise locations during the grazing period especially. The type of collar deployed depends on the research objectives. No matter what, the first collar in a pack is a GPS collar. The second wolf in a pack gets a collar, but the objectives for that pack determine the type.

Question: What's the percentage of unknown against known numbers of wolves?

Answer: In general in the northern Rocky Mountains ecosystem it is about 30% unknown.

Comment: But that is very imprecise, correct?

Answer: Absolutely.

Answer: You also have to think about other northern Rocky Mountains areas having a lot more wolves than Washington does at this time. When wolves pair up, it's two animals running in a large territory, so they might not be documented until they have pups and leave more sign. It is very challenging to document two wolves running around.

Question: What is the battery life on the collars?

Answer: VHF collars last about 4-5 years, while GPS last about a year and half to two years. There are other factors that determine lifespan as well.

Question: How many non-functioning collars are still out there on wolves?

Answer: There is a list of seven wolves right now, and we don't know if they are even in the state of Washington right now.

Question: Do you target failing collars to replace them?

Answer: Yes, especially during the winter time.

Question: What's the main cause of wolf mortality in the wild?

Answer: There are several, including disease, interpack strife, humans (car accidents, etc.). They can even get kicked by a deer. The majority in Washington have been human-related.

Question: How will the fires impact the department? Are you anticipating problems?

Answer: Our ability to access areas is limited right now due to fires and closures. We cannot access these areas right now. It could be a benefit during the winter months, as dense areas could now be opened up. Right now, there is not a certain scenario.

Donny: We were in the process of getting ready to start trapping Huckleberry South, but because of the fires, we had to head out of the area. So it has limited our ability recently.

Question: What's the best matrix for measurement going forward?

Answer: It will be an increasing challenge. The wolf population has grown, which is good news. However, it is likely the department will fall behind. Growing wolf numbers make it more difficult to keep up with trapping as well as the department would like. We will stick to the strategy, and make sure to replace collars as they age.

Question: Are darts used in the winter?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Has the department looked at the change in movement patterns in packs that are collared due to fire developments?

Answer: Yes. Obviously, the packs are staying out of fire areas and have moved to thicker, cooler areas.

Donny: The other part of keeping up with growing wolf populations is to maintain at least a number of collars in a recovery zone that lets us monitor each zone effectively. We want to use our resources to effectively meet those recovery goals.

Donny introduced Jay Shepherd, who gave a Conflict Section Update. Jay went through how the department prepares for grazing season, which typically starts around June 1, going over grazing allotment meetings, pack updates, trapping/collaring efforts, and Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for livestock producers (DPCA-Ls) and data-sharing agreements. There are also pack deterrence plans, which talk about pack location and other information regarding each pack. The final step is a risk analysis, which tries to identify the high-risk areas throughout the state, as well as what trapping priorities may be during the season.

DPCA-Ls are mainly used for human presence, but can also be used for sanitation and cost-share fencing. Contract range riders are distributed throughout the state, with most being active in the northeastern part of the state. With contract range riders, the department can tell them where to go. It is an important tool to be able to move people around where they can be most effective. Jay went over methods used by the range riders.

Question: Where are we in the Blue Mountains, as far as going back and meeting the needs of the producers who are wanted to sign up for DPCA-Ls?

Answer: The ones presented here are the ones we know for sure. Others may be in the process of signing up. There are more than likely more coming, even though they have not been quite finished yet.

Donny: Initially when we developed the DPCA-L agreements, we were trying to encourage as many producers to sign up as possible, as the program was new and we wanted to build exposure of this option for producers. Now as the program has gained popularity, we need to consider being more strategic, to focus on the areas of greatest need and within a limited budget.

Comment: How you deliver that message is important, because several folks have come to me and said the department does not want to work with me on this issue.

Answer: We have to acknowledge the progress that has been made so far, as these agreements were not nearly as popular initially, but have gained significant popularity recently. With the increased demand for agreements, when the 2015-2017 budget was uncertain, we had to put a temporary hold on issuing new contracts.

Question: Have we turned down a producer who wanted to enter into one of these agreements?

Answer: To close out the 13-15 budget, there were producers who wanted to sign up that we could not sign up due to budget restrictions. Once the budget situation was clear and we had a budget going forward, we were able to re-engage on these agreements.

Question: We want people who want these agreements to be able to enter into these agreements. This is a topic I want to add to a future agenda because it does need to be talked about.

Comment: The department has been good about providing a checklist of nonlethal methods to use. Many folks don't want these agreements simply because they don't want to enter an agreement with the government. My question is what do you see as the budget going forward?

Answer: That's where we are right now. It's not necessarily that there are suddenly no funds available for this. At the close of the biennium, we had to slow down a little as we closed out, and now that is behind us so we can move forward. We want these conversations to keep happening and we want to keep getting the word out that these agreements are there to enter into.

Comment: One issue that came up was that folks were frustrated they had to go and sign up again.

Jay continued with the presentation, going over carcass composting methods and area construction. He outlined the 2015 known wolf depredations. There are six total known for 2015. One major factor this year was fires, which affected the ability to range ride, to track wolves, and to herd livestock.

Question: To do follow-up with Dirty Shirt, are you saying you don't know what is happening right now because range riders couldn't stay there due to fires?

Answer: We filled in with staff, but it did affect us in several ways. Some people had to go home and protect their belongings, and people were exhausted due to smoke presence. It was particularly troubling in the Kettles. We couldn't get into that area at all.

Question: Does the department have plans to develop compost locations in any other parts of the state?

Answer: From a cost perspective, they are reasonable to install, and they have been popular. Region 1 is currently looking into further development. There have been discussions, but not a final decision at this time. There are several factors to consider, including size and permits.

Comment: I just wanted to say that many conservationists would like to help with those opportunities.

## **Break for Lunch**

**Other Business:** The agenda adjusted and Francine and the group discussed future meeting dates and the structure of scheduling future meetings. After discussing concerns and opportunities, two day meetings were decided upon, with a noon start time on day one and a 3 pm end time on the

second day to accommodate people's desire to maximize time together and minimize the amount of nights they spent away from home. It was also decided that the west side meeting would no longer be in Olympia, but on the east side of Seattle to accommodate people coming from the east side and to help minimize driving in traffic.

**Exploring Spectrum of Human Needs:** Francine led a discussion on "levels of conflict" – a model that was introduced to the group in May – and the spectrum of human needs as they relate to conflict. Levels of conflict were discussed. Multiple levels of conflict may exist in any conflict include the dispute (current, tangible issue), underlying conflict (history of unresolved disputes), and identity/deep rooted conflict (identity is how you see yourself in relation to the rest of the world; identity conflict is when you perceive someone else's identity is a threat to your own). If people feel their identity is under threat, they will fight. Creative, problem-solving discussions will not happen under the cloud of this threat. The underlying and identity levels drive the deeper-rooted conflict, and make these issues harder to address. Different processes are needed to reconcile conflict when underlying and identity conflict exists. Francine reminded the group that when they analyzed the conflict over wolves in May, one of the key lessons the group reported was that the conflict over wolves was largely at the underlying and identity conflict level and that the group particularly noted that identity was at the root of all aspects of the wolf conflict.

Francine shared what was at stake in underlying and identity conflict. She explained these conflicts in terms of unmet human needs. She noted that while people talk about their "needs" in terms of economic and physical (including physical safety, ecological integrity), there are actually many more needs that need to be met. She shared the spectrum of needs and asked the group to explore in small groups what needs affected each of them and their groups. These are listed below:

**Unmet human needs:**

**Identity:** how one sees oneself or one's group in relation to the rest of the world

**Recognition:** Acknowledgement, appreciation, respect, dignity in terms of self-worth, saving or regaining face

**Security:** emotional, social, cultural, spiritual, physical, economic

**Belonging:** love and connectedness; being accepted by others

**Meaning and personal fulfillment:** meaning in terms of context or place; ability to reach one's potential

**Freedom:** meaningful participation, voice, control

Francine then shared with the group another model for conflict intervention. She explained that the "what" (substance), the "who" (relationships), and the "how" (process) elements all play a role in creating or addressing conflict and fulfilling the above needs. The relationship and process aspects are very important. If you feel that the process is unfair, even the act of getting what you wanted in terms of substance carries less satisfaction with it. She noted that when core values and deeper-rooted conflict come into play, a reconciliation process is necessary to make progress.

The group broke into smaller groups and explored their unmet human needs with one another. All of these needs are being threatened in some way or another in regards to the wolf issue. When everyone reconvened as a large group, the participants presented their small group work and discussed their unmet human needs. Francine noted that when these needs are unmet or when a group's identity is threatened, from the outside, people's actions can look irrational if one doesn't understand what is driving that behavior. Francine gave real world examples of this phenomenon and explored reasons why with the group.

The unmet needs brought up by the groups included belonging, identity, freedom, security, and recognition from one side to the other, livelihood and work ethic, and concerns with the future of hunting. It was noted by participants that finding common ground is the first step to making progress on the wolf issue in Washington State.

Francine commented to the group that every line of the assessment she did earlier in the year can fit in with levels of conflict and unmet human needs.

**Topics for WAG:** Francine captured on the flipchart the group suggestions for topics WAG and WDFW would like WAG to consider when WAG gives advice to the department. The department expressed their keen interest in getting input from the Wolf Advisory Group on these topics. These topics include:

1. Post-delisting management plan
2. How we prioritize WDFW resources
3. Ungulate level protections
4. Revisit nonlethal/lethal protocol
5. Cooperative agreements and criteria for prioritizing
6. Checklist (and what is on the checklist)
7. Relocation of problem wolves
8. Simplified recovery regions
9. Livestock review committee for indirect loss, pregnancy, and weight loss
10. Changing matrix counting rules (breeding pairs, packs)
11. Ongoing educational opportunities to keep abreast of new or improved developments on nonlethal methods
12. Identifying high risk areas, the characteristics of high risk areas, and unmet needs for research in those areas
  - a. Align deterrence plan risk assessments with nonlethal tools available
13. Identifying needed tools and resources, focusing on wolves in general
  - a. Are we taking advantage of the latest and greatest technology?
  - b. Washington should be driving technological advances in this field
14. Public outreach
  - a. What can WAG do to help build support for the department
  - b. WAG can also support the department in conveying the message in a way that can be seen with greater transparency
  - c. Explore other mediums for a more constructive dialogue
  - d. What is the message and how does WAG/WDFW get it out there?

15. What is WAG's and WDFW's responsibility with respect to outreach and education on what it means to have wolves on the landscape? It's all about the message.
16. How to generate additional resources for wolf management
17. What is the definition of a depredation event? Define what this means.
  - a. Type of livestock
  - b. Severity of damage
  - c. Age group
18. Loss of opportunity
19. WAG to help with rural community security
  - a. Creative ideas
20. Crisis/emergency situations
21. What can WAG do when there are ongoing issues that may affect USFS, BLM, Hancock, etc.

Question: Do you mean what is on the checklist or how the checklist is used?

Answer: How it is used in relation to cooperative agreements.

Comment: Then I would like to add what is on the checklist to the topic itself.

Comment: There should be something in place in case there is another budget issue where producers cannot sign up for an agreement due to funding or something else.

After this initial list was brainstormed, Francine asked that WAG members bring this list of topics back to their stakeholder groups and get comments, feedback or suggestions for anything potentially overlooked. She also suggested they think about the list and what additions they may want to add. She noted that at the next meeting WAG and WDFW will augment the list as needed and discuss a sequencing of topics for future WAG meetings.

Comment: This ties into the definition of a depredation event. We have had one operator put out of business this year, and we should be discussing operation protocol. What are we doing right now to get this operator back in business? We should be able to handle an issue like this. It seems like it has been ignored so far and I think we need to talk about it today.

Francine acknowledged the worrisome nature of having a producer off the land and that this is concerning for the entire community.

Comment: We can't put this off another month and a half. We need to do something now.

Francine asked the impacted producer directly if this was something he wanted to work on and he responded that he did, explaining what his needs were. She then asked WAG if they wanted to explore this issue now and change the agenda. She asked if there was interest in WAG coming together on this crisis issue.

Comment: What I hear you guys saying is that there are a number of factors that have made producer #1 move off the land. Part of it is wolves, but there have been other factors as well. WAG can discuss these issues, be they access to lands, certain protocols, and wolves. If there are

other factors beyond wolves, are there ways we can all be supportive in a real way. Are there policy changes that can happen? Are there more creative ways we can approach these issues? None of us want to see any producer go out of business because of wolves. That is not good for anybody.

Comment: It is my opinion that the landowner does not want to be in the political spotlight over this issue. So now that land is not available to lease. It has been taken out of the scenario. All the grass is being used. It is extremely competitive to find a source. The industry changes quickly, creating a very difficult situation. It was a wolf that started it, and while there was a series of events, it was a wolf that started it. I like what we're doing here, but we have some topics that we need to discuss. Producer #1 has gotten very little money back, and we are 15 months into this thing.

Additional discussion focused around the reality that a host of factors impact the viability of an operation, that wolves were not the only issue, but that the conflict over wolves and wolves themselves have an influence. The producer shared his perspective and clarified his situation.

Francine commented that what she was hearing the group discuss is that this issue isn't just about wolves, but that the group was acknowledging a number of factors that are working against rural communities and endangering rural economies across the state.

Comment: It's about trust.

Francine acknowledged that trust was, indeed, a critical issue..

Comment: I'd like to task this group with solving this specific problem for this specific producer. We need to get our hands dirty and get this done so Producer #1 can stay in business.

Comment: I will play a little bit of devil's advocate. I have heard from some today that you are not interested in partnering with the government, and less interested partnering with the environmentalists. I don't want to go down a road where some suggestions are dismissed without any consideration.

Comment: Well, let's have the discussion first before we jump out there.

Francine clarified that the environmental community has felt frustrated when they offer to engage and are dismissed. She noted that they are concerned that there will be repercussions and encouraged discussion around this.

Comment: But in this case, it's not us giving ideas so much as hearing ideas from Producer #1. I feel like that is different than bringing suggestions.

Comment: I will say, if there had been no wolves there then we wouldn't be having this conversation.

Comment: When we go somewhere new, you try to get a handle on that people's culture. In farm country, there is a culture as well. For someone from outside saying he or she wants to help, that can be looked down upon because of other reasons besides ideals. I would ask you to be sensitive to that, because you may not get rejected because of who you are, but because you are not a part of that culture.

Francine noted that being culturally sensitive is definitely a part of this engagement and that it was each person's responsibility to both try to be sensitive and also help others understand their own needs for cultural sensitivity.

The WAG agrees to address the issue raised and amend the agenda accordingly. The affected producer is asked if this is what he wants and the WAG is asked if this is something they are interested in tackling. All agree.

### **Producer Discussion**

Francine begins the discussion asking the producer what he would like to see happen.

Comment: What this group can do is communicate what is going on, what the circumstances are, and what methods have been tried. This group could contact Hancock, saying we are working on a plan. Give Hancock some recognition so they know they wouldn't be standing alone in this situation.

Comment: Could WAG put a preventative plan together to present to Hancock from the beginning?

Comment: The landowner would benefit from the use of the sheep, for brush control, etc.

Comment: One advantage we may have next year is that the area is more open and there are less places to hide. It will be a better place to graze and easier to defend.

WDFW: This group carries a ton of weight. Hancock is no different from the department, in that they have stakeholders. If WAG had a statement about their position on grazing, would that change Hancock's position?

Comment: That's what I was getting at with presenting something to Hancock. Saying this group is behind this producer.

Comment: Not to mention, this group will defend Hancock.

Comment: Can we control those constituents who are putting pressure on Hancock? If we can't, we could have trouble. We also can't guarantee that the plan we present to Hancock will work. As WAG, all we can say is that we can do our best. I want to make sure we aren't guaranteeing something we can't back up.

Francine asks the group what it will take from all sides to make it possible and what would make it not possible to defend this plan?

Comment: We need to recognize that the best forage would be to give the fire-affected area a few years to recover. Grazing lands are dwindling, but those allotments are being developed. It is not only Producer #1 who is having a problem, but it is a problem for producers across the region. Science argues against grazing that land the year after a fire.

Comment: I would have to respectfully disagree with the grazing comment. I think you can find a number of studies saying just the opposite, that grazing those lands would be effective.

Comment: Let's take a look together at where the science is at on these issues.

Comment: Why don't we say we can find a piece of Hancock ground that didn't burn, and that Producer #1 would feel was a decent option, and that the group would feel comfortable supporting. All of the deterrence plan options would be in place. Assuming WAG is in a good spot regarding this land. We don't want to promise things we can't deliver, but we can state that the groups represented by WAG will support them. Communicating with Hancock would be a good place to go with this as well. We can say that, to the extent possible, the groups represented here would not generate negative press for Hancock if anything were to happen. We can then back Producer #1. We should find out the nature of Hancock's concern.

WDFW: I did sit down with Hancock in late July. I think they would be very willing to sit and have that conversation. It is not a blanket policy approach. Having that dialogue with a producer and a third party neutral would be a good decision.

Francine asks the producer if this is something he wants.

Comment: It certainly wouldn't hurt.

Question: Didn't we go into this discussion because the producer was out of business? Now we are discussing it like he is still going along.

Producer #1 gave an outline of what exactly happened during the grazing season. The land provided was not a good plot. There was no other option. With fires involved, he elected to take the sheep mostly home and provide feed out of his own pocket. While he is not out of business yet, this will be a significant hit. The sheep are up for sale. Right now he is assessing the situation and will make further decisions as he learns more about the situation.

Francine clarifies that feeding hay to the sheep is a few hundred dollars every day, which bites into the economic margin of livestock production at a time when livestock are typically grazing, not consuming hay.

Comment: That is correct.

Comment: This is a great opportunity.

Comment: If this group can put out a statement that can show that we aren't just here having meetings for the sake of having meetings, that would go a long way to demonstrate that what we do is effective and necessary.

WDFW: There is strength in a consistent message. Having a position statement that is supportive of the wolf plan may be an option.

Comment: This is not just about wolves as well, it's more than that.

WDFW: And that can be a part of the message.

Question: Is this something we can do for every producer, or just producers who are members of WAG?

Comment: I think we can provide this service for every producer affected.

Comment: If someone has an issue with wolves, the department will know who that is, and can offer WAG's services.

Francine cautions the group that for this to be something all of them can support and defend, it needs to be something they believe in. She notes that each side needs to see they are getting benefits while they are supporting one another. She asks the group how they can help each other toward a shared goal.

WDFW: Concern expressed that while this is a fantastic discussion, sustainability of this kind of action is one issue and how this all relates to the original mission of WAG is another.

Commenter noted that it seems like WAG is moving in a different direction from original mission and the group may need to think about and articulate what topics result in advice to the Department (as WAG) compared to services to a producer (while not officially representing WAG)

Comment: Right now, just as the department cannot sustain the level of staff presence in conflict territory, this counts as a crisis situation that is very similar. Having WAG focus on this, even though it is beyond the overall mission, can also inform the rest of the other topics as well. It can be helpful for the producer, the wolves, and the trust going forward. In a few years, we wouldn't be having this discussion, but now, it makes sense.

Comment: I agree with the previous comment. It would be a huge missed opportunity to step back from this crisis situation. This situation can inform future situations and help with actions we may deal with later. It is frightening, but from a process perspective, we will be able to see all of this and make sure we can deliver. In the absence of allowing us all to be comfortable, it could cause problems from the groups we represent.

Comment: I'd like to echo the previous comments.

Comment: Me as well. I want to see the details, and would want a level of security for the wolves as well. Range reform is long overdue, and it affects all elements of public land use, water use, and our wildlife. Wolves are only bringing it to the forefront.

Comment: I am still not following where the wolves are having an impact in this circumstance. We are still the Wolf Advisory Group, and this summer's events were not wolf driven. It was related to fire.

WDFW clarifies that the department supported just what the plan said, putting the sheep back where they were, with nonlethal deterrents in place. What Hancock said is that they get that, and they were talking about other grazing opportunities, but to put them back in that particular spot, with the history, was not something they were willing to do. And that is the tie to wolves. That series of events last year, caused by wolves, influenced this situation.

Francine clarifies further that even if wolves are not the only factor making the producer's operation viable or desirable, the messaging right now is that the wolves are putting Producer #1 out of business. She notes that this is a concern to both sides because perception is reality. She explains that wolves are symbolic of many other things going on in this system and only by acknowledging all the factors can this group explore where working together can leverage power to solve shared problems, provide security to each side and help those impacted. She also notes that this is an opportunity for a partnership so everyone can be supportive when lethal control comes into the mix. Francine interprets from the group discussion that what each side also wants is different, more accurate messaging on each side. She cautions that while this is not going to be easy and it has risks, the group should consider whether each side will be better off in the end for doing the hard work together and taking the risk.

Comment: It is all about trust between everyone involved.

Comment: Maybe when we talk to Hancock, we can help resolve this whole situation of presenting unsuitable land.

Comment: I think we need to discuss this letter we want to write to Hancock, and the policy changes we want to see.

Comment: I want to say very clearly why this benefits wolves. If WAG, an incredibly diverse group, takes these very visible steps, it shows the community coming together and coming up with real life solutions and getting Producer #1 back on the landscape. It shows other producers that we can come together. They aren't going to fear predations as much, because they know this group is behind them in these situations. Let's get these numbers where they need to be.

Comment: I'm not sure I'm hearing correctly what it means to "have your back." If this is WAG coming together saying we want producers in our state to be successful, and we want all nonlethal methods to be used, and lethal control is viable in certain circumstances. One thing I haven't heard is the fact that a landscape can change drastically. Public values change very quickly in relation to animals. Is this something in regards to defensible grazing landscapes and mutual messaging?

Comment: I was focused on this specific problem with this one producer. We seem to be somewhere else, as we keep doing.

Comment: Producer #1 had an idea, and that was to put a grazing plan together and finding an appropriate area. Would we then, as a group, contact Hancock to make sure the producer would have access to that area? Range quality also comes into play. We want to explore this opportunity in a way that is appropriate. The environmental community doesn't want to make the producer sorry that he asked us for assistance.

Comment: How are we managing the expectations on the ground relating to wolves? Are we setting expectations that operators will not lose any animals at all? The reality is we are in a recovery stage of an endangered species here. It is unrealistic to say we can deal with wolves the same way we can deal with cougars.

WDFW: I feel we are talking about WAG coming together to find agreement on situations on that landscape. There is an opportunity here, and we have to step out of our comfort zone. This is where we can be the state that is going to be different.

Francine observes that what this group can learn, and what the actions can do for communities, is huge. She also notes that the environmental community needs to speak up and express their views and needs. She talks about the role of providing recognition for a listed species. Recognition creates movement, willingness to work together.

Comment: I'm sorry that message has been skipped. We want a world where wolves and livestock can coexist.

Comment: That plan is a huge piece of not only having a checklist, but also implementing the nonlethal methods the right way. And I hear that you want to do that. We really appreciate the effort you put in this year to avoid conflict with wolves. Last year at a meeting in Colville, we heard very aggressive stances from the livestock community that have not been called out. We are trying to acknowledge the positive efforts put forth by the livestock community. What we want to hear is an acknowledgement that nonlethal methods can work, and that maybe these methods can help producers into the future.

Comment: To that you can look at the number of cooperative agreements that were presented earlier today. Ten in the Northeast may not seem like a lot, but it's huge from what the past has shown. I'm not going to get into a battle throwing stones back and forth. That does nothing for me. The main message is that we can work to understanding and a middle ground.

Comment: Action on the ground speaks volumes for your intentions.

Comment: If we can act as a unit and show boots on the ground, I think it would go a long way for the ranching communities.

Comment: In the guard dog example, my expectation would be that the department would work with that producer and determine what happened. Instead, we got a message saying with one more depredation we are going lethal. Now, in my view, that is a nonlethal method that worked, and going to lethal actions on an endangered species in this case seems excessive.

Comment: I would like to support your comment. If a dog comes back injured, as insensitive as it might be, that is a nonlethal deterrent that worked.

The commenter shared an example with their own guard dog getting injured protecting their livestock and that despite how hard it was to see their dog severely injured, they viewed it as a success because the livestock was uninjured.

Comment: One risk with this situation is that there seems to be multiple understandings of what these words really mean. I don't know that in 45 years of environmental work, anything important hasn't been risky.

Comment: What will the role of WDFW in this? That is something to consider.

WDFW: WDFW's role is to support the synergy of WAG. We will work through the grey areas about the role of WAG, but let's not get there yet at this conceptual brainstorming stage.

There was an agreement that the situation with Producer #1 would take 100% support from WAG before any actions moved forward. Each member of the group spoke and supported this view. It was brought up that even if this effort failed, it would be worth the risk and going through the process would build trust that wasn't there before. It was also voiced that one concern was misinterpretation not by the WAG group, but from other sources, such as the public or media. One more opinion was that WAG would want to make this option available to more than one producer.

Comment: We are not doing this for Producer #1, we are doing this in partnership with Producer #1. It needs to be a goal that all involved will benefit.

## **Public Comments**

Public Comment: Producer #1 has been through a lot, and I think all can be sympathetic to that. The only elephant in the room I see is that WAG as a group can come up with a lovely plan that all can agree with, but if the department takes certain actions, it can be blown away. If something radical happens, all the good work that goes on here can come undone. The department needs to be on board.

WDFW: It brings up the short term and long term plan. If something were to happen in the next month, for example, it has the potential to disrupt everything. We will need to think about those steps.

All other comments by the public were to express support for WAG's collaborative work, honest discussion, and courageous efforts today. People expressed appreciation to the livestock

producer. Members of the public noted the positive, constructive change of WAG and their hope that WAG could be a positive influence across Washington.

WDFW: I want to echo the positive atmosphere expressed by others. What I would recommend is to try to maintain this positive energy outside the room. We must keep positive, forward momentum.

**Meeting Adjourned**