

Wolf Advisory Group
December 19, 2013
Meeting

- Initial discussion on the role of the group, concern expressed about other groups who are not on the Advisory Group coming and addressing the WAG; we seem to be wavering from the agenda; should take votes on major items so that it is clear where each group is coming from.
- Shared letters regarding Federal delisting to inform the group on WDFW position.
 - WCP supports, Hunter Heritage supports, CPOW supports, County Commissioners, HS support WDFW managing wolves in WA does not support national delisting, Sierra Club appreciates the letter but do not support national delisting, Wolf Haven delisting is premature but support the State in managing the population to lead us closer to recovery.
 - Update provided on status of wolf populations in WA (monitoring and capture efforts).
- Review of draft WAC
 - 232.36.040 Introduction on how this came to fruition in 2010. The proposed addition in the WAC was to include contractors as we have used contractors for wolf management.
 - New Section 232.36.041. This is proposed to be specific to wolf conflict. This is where the WAG suggestions from previous meetings were captured. Components include: compensation, the landowner agreements, non-lethal measures, includes reference to documents needed, numbers were not included but the documents with the numbers are referenced.
 - Question on subsection 2: is it necessary if it refers to “may”
 - 232.36.052 Caught in the act authority that was codified. Not proposing to change at this point but we can discuss if there are points we may want to consider in the future.
 - 232.36.053 describes how the agency would deal with lethal control of wolves. Components: creating the rule, items the Department considers (much of this is directly from the plan), allow the Department to establish written procedures.

- Question: How is depredation defined? Is this from the plan? What about the number? Suggest that by including in the WAC then we are establishing a threshold. Suggested setting a threshold is premature.
- Don stated thought a good place to start, supports vague language at this level. Discussion on the numerous items to consider to reach what drives the decision and action by the Department. Suggested that be equal for the landowner as well as the Department.
- Other suggestions for items to codify:
 - Previous items: investigations, defining translocation and when we move forward and what would be required,
 - Items to codify suggested by members: Range riders (Paul),
 - Farm Bureau: holds a lot of value on the plan...would like assurance that the plan is not going to change.
 - Full intent is to continue to follow the plan,
 - Caught in the act is an example of slight variation from the plan. Do we want to go back into this and look at potential changes to this
 - Note: Items put into statute or WAC supersedes the plan
- Introduction to Center for Biological Diversity request to present their recommendation for codifying portions of the wolf plan.
 - Presentation from Center for Biological Diversity
 - WCA cannot support proposal by CBD but can support the Department. They do not want to tie the hands of the Department. Management needs to be fluid. WCA if the Department doesn't need authority then it doesn't need to be in WAC.
 - Hunter Heritage said no to codifying the Plan. Not one item in the proposal from CBD can be supported by HH.
 - CPOW too many variables not supportive of writing everything in stone. Too restrictive, need more flexibility.

- County Commissioner don't support the CBD proposal. referring to CBD recommendation for 232.36.051
 - Farm Bureau proposal goes farther than where we would go...goes beyond where they can operate.
 - Wolf Haven: many of the items in the CBD proposal would fit well into the Lethal Operational Detail.

- Proposals for future discussion (March Agenda)
 - Question: does the department need these in WAC to manage these issues and execute the plan?
 - Answer: once the Department begins doing actions in the same manner each time then the counsel was to put this in WAC.
 - Response: if there are specific items then WDFW needs to bring those forward to WAG and then WAG can address those points.
 - HS suggest that further discussion on codify more into WAC
 - Sierra Club supports more discussion on codifying the Plan.
 - Question: Is there still flexibility to change documents even though placed in WAC.
 - Conservation NW: justification of the various pieces to assist the WAG members in addressing the issue.
 - Recommendation that WAG address 040 and 053 for the March meeting.

- Game Management Plan: Introduction to inform WAG that WDFW is in the process of updating the Game Management Plan. Updated six years ago in a SEIS and we will be doing this again. Knowing wolves are a part of the plan so bringing this to the WAG. Time period for GMP is 2015-2021, recognize in that time frame wolves may reach recovery. So do we want to think ahead and address how we deal with wolves when they may no longer be classified?
 - Presentation on background information.
 - Review of items taken from the Wolf Conservation Management Plan.

- Review of Classifications of Wildlife
- Game Management Plan
 - describes how we manage various species
 - 2015-2021: may reach wolf recovery during this time
 - Process: scoping, public opinion survey, SEPA review, final plan anticipated fall 2014.
- Demonstrated a simulated draft wolf chapter for the Game Management Plan; explaining each segment of a chapter. Each chapter is a written document of the highest priority items for each species (each chapter is approximately 8-12 pages).
- Discussion on potential wolf chapter in the Game Management Plan
 - Members suggested have a plan because recovery is likely to happen sooner than later. Further stated how soon will you have a draft for us.
 - Others question should we have a chapter in this upcoming plan.
 - Question whether it would be a game species
 - Question whether we have the ability to address the topics related to wolves when we haven't reached recovery.
 - Member suggested may be an opportunity to inform and educate people. The chapter would need to address questions and illustrate the need for the management be based on science. High level principles.
 - Either we address wolves in other species chapters or we put it up front in a stand-alone chapter.
 - We know we will reach a point where we will need to have something. Is it better to get something out, including any data we have, or to wait.
 - Encourage to do it and create it under a separate chapter. Items like ungulates and harvesting are of importance. Do not set the "game" species classification.
 - Frame it without classifying the animal.

- Discuss the science, what information needs we have, let the process be known to the public so there is better understanding.
- Discuss the principles on techniques that may be used if harvest became an option.
- Opportunity to address ungulates and potential impact of wolves on ungulates.
- Opportunity to start delving into items such as: How will we monitor this species when we reach recovery, what type of management will we use (e.g. zone management), etc?
- Time line for this?
 - Early February WAG may see a draft
- Suggest the Department look into “Scoping” more as a tool for the Department to use.
- Question on role of WAG in the development of the Game Management Plan.
- Shared WDFW is working on creating an article appendix H.
- Protocol for Lethal Removal Action by WDFW
 - On page two the definition talks about at least one kill and one other depredation but the stipulations section talks about two and four, why the difference
 - Add the flowchart to the narrative; for better clarification might also attempt to capture the flow chart in the narrative
 - Give the group a better understanding of the science and/or professional recommendations behind lethal actions
 - Are there examples of wolf packs that have depredated four (multiple) times and then stopped depredating?
 - Some in the room expressed that they do not support further discussion on the number of depredations required before lethal removal is considered
 - Some expressed a desire that the minimum livestock kills be raised to three.

- Outreach:
 - Livestock outreach: WSU project; UW project related to interviewing producers including market opportunities for wolf friendly beef; WDFW continues to work with producers directly
 - Hunter outreach: work offline with hunting organizations to determine the best way to get information out to them.
 - General public: more TVW type forums with Wolf Managers; updates on wolf status; what to expect with wolf re-colonization
 - Western Wildlife Outreach: broad spectrum of products and projects to get messages out to different audiences
- Before the group would commit to providing oversight to Wielgus, they would like to see the revised work plan. And have him tell them how to participate.
- Need an email from WDFW to WAG expressing what is required from the group for WAC review; protocol review; GMP chapter draft out and timeline for comment.
 - Send out my template of the WACs for using track changes for comments
 - Send out revised flow chart for fatal flaw review
 - Western Wildlife Outreach; will send out the scope of work
 - Send out a list with links to papers regarding effectiveness of non-lethal techniques (Donny)
 - Draft GMP wolf section to WAG mid February return with track changes by the first week of March; discussion at the meeting
- Rebecca:
 - Objects to the term wolf harvest, its killing
 - Oppose the addition of wolves to the GMP
 - Does not support hunting of wolves
 - Utilize Defenders new video regarding non-lethal techniques

- John:
 - Does not support having wolves in the GMP

- Rob McCoy:
 - Would like to be on our mailing list
 - Would like to get access to the recorded meetings
 - The scoping survey seemed hunter centric

DRAFT