

Public Comment at the January 27, 2021, Wolf Advisory Group

Tim

- We have problems with killing off wolf packs and them coming back; wolves aren't dispersing into SW WA; and certain ranchers are continuing to play politics. Accountability is a key factor. There has to be an incentive to participate in doing things to reduce conflict and to do something different (e.g. changing the location the cows are dropped off).
- He's concerned about a tactic that says there are no deer to hunt. He sees lots of them in the NE. The only way we're going to address some of these issues will have to be through rulemaking.

Sophia

- She thanked Lynn, Dan and Caitlin for bringing up the accountability topic. Without that, it won't change the status quo. The status quo is not acceptable, as stated by the Governor. Many other communities also don't accept the status quo.
- She understands the WAG might not come up with a solution, and she's looking forward to the rulemaking process.
- She hopes for some WAG, agreed-upon language before the next grazing season.

Samantha

- She thanked the group for the time they're spending on these issues.
- She thanked Lynn for speaking out.
- She wants to highlight the accountability and compliance piece, and transparency is important too. Producers should be cooperating with the Dept.
- 29 wolves killed associated with one producer. That's unfortunate.

Paige

- There are 123 wolves in the state, while millions of cattle exist in the state. One rancher has experienced cattle losses in the same area, and in 2016, a pack was removed. Killing wolves doesn't solve the problem.
- It's foolish to graze cattle in wolf habitat, and the rancher has refused money to help.

Chris

- He thanked everyone.
- He thanked the environmental caucus for standing firm.
- Regarding Special Focus Areas, the discussion is falling short of the Governor's request. For example, Range Riding doesn't have clear standards.
- Regarding collar data, there needs to be more information about the KDE estimate (superior data) to show where the wolves are.
- Great to hear the statements that status quo won't work.
- Without accountability, section 9 is worthless.

Amaroq

- She thanked the conservation group for being forthright with their positions: Lynn – about accountability, Caitlin – pointing out the nuances, Paula – bringing up the different assumptions people are making may be holding the group back, as well as Dan and Diane looking for points of agreements.
- Regarding comments that Sec 9 is being created for situations when the protocol has fails, she agrees that the protocol has failed, each year.
- WAG has had conversations on the same topics for years, without progress.
- The protocol without accountability/transparency/enforceability doesn't work.
- The WAG process has been 7 years of problems not being resolved. Wolves are suffering; producers are suffering; and communities are suffering.
- She's heartened by the rule-making process, and it should have been the process from the start.
- She thanked staff for their comments about the limited effectiveness of collaring.

Zoe

- She echoed the thanks to the WAG and conservation members. This is a huge topic (accountability).
- The meeting outcome feels disappointing. Sec. 9 exists because a few producers refuse to use strategies to reduce conflict.
- Everyone involved needs to take responsibilities for their roles to reduce the conflict. When one party doesn't fulfill their role, it doesn't help anyone.
- Showing written reporting/documentation shows all that they are doing their part.
- There should only be a few SFAs in the state at a time.
- Without compliance language, section 9 won't address the Governor's guidance.
- Even without WAG agreement, she encourages staff to build these Special Focus Area plans.

Martha

- She agrees with Amaroq, Chris, and others.
- She thanked Lynn and others for standing up.
- She valued Trent comments about the limitation of collaring.
- Regarding accountability documentation and transparency, there are about 2000 cows in a 30,000+ acres area. We're kidding ourselves to ask the public to pay for range riders to cover this area for that many cows. There are probably a couple hundred of cows/calves not seen.
- Yet, the protocol calls for killing wolves with only a couple cows dead.
- We need to talk about accountability for every cow/calf, otherwise don't count depredations.

Steph

- She thanked Caitlin and Lynn for their comments.
- This process has been super painful.
- During the last meeting, she heard the group couldn't move forward because they didn't have time to talk to their constituents. But that's their job, and they shouldn't hold up the group for not doing their homework.

- Regarding Special Focus Areas, all public lands should be 1st offered to native species and last to livestock. All wolf habitat on public lands should be Special Focus Areas.
- Rulemaking is necessary for accountability.
- She would like to see language finalized before the grazing season.
- She would like to see a better public outreach campaign.

Rachel

- She echoed sentiment about the painfulness of the meetings, and appreciates the time spent on these topics.
- She's disappointed about the lack of cooperation from the producer community. It appears they're trying to slow down the process.