

**Wolf Advisory Group  
April 7, 2021, Meeting Notes  
Zoom Meeting (Day 1)**

**WAG members:** Samee Charriere, Tom Davis, Dave Duncan, Diane Gallegos, Todd Holmdahl, Jessica Kelley, Bill Kemp, Nick Martinez, Lynn Okita, Dan Paul, Rick Perleberg, Caitlin Scarano, and Lisa Stone

**WDFW staff members:** Candace Bennett, Dan Brinson, Ben Maletzke, Donny Martorello, Annemarie Prince, Grant Samsill, Julia Smith, Kevin Robinette, Trent Roussin, and Jeff Wade

**WDFW Commissioners:** Molly Linville and Lorna Smith

**US Forest Service:** Robert Garcia

**Facilitator:** Rob Geddis

**Welcome and check-in**

Rob welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda for the day.

**Meeting Purpose**

Share Department updates, seek acceptable language for a Special Focus Area (SFA) section in the Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol, and get group guidance on protecting time for topics other than the protocol.

Comment

Any questions before starting?

Comment

Will we be discussing post-recovery?

Comment

Post-recovery topics are not specifically identified as a topic for this meeting, but we can if the group finds it useful. At minimum, we have the last agenda topic to talk about that if we stick to the agenda.

Comment

To acknowledge folks leaving early today or not here tomorrow, we should take the time to hear a synopsis of the summary from this morning because the purpose of that is to pass along the public comments heard before diving into Special Focus Areas (SFAs).

Comment

I understand wanting to jump right in, but I really want to hear from staff on what they're doing right now. The process is taking longer than we thought. We're already in mid-April.

I'd like to hear what staff is already doing. My understanding from the last meeting is that staff would be implementing things discussed, and I would like to hear how that's going.

Comment

Let's shorten the Department update to include what was heard in breakout rooms today and what our progress is to date. Then we can go into SFAs. Any objections?

## **No Objections**

Comment

With that, Department, would you like to first share highlights from this morning from the public? I jumped around so if we could have staff from Group 1? Then we'll go 2 or 3? We set up three breakout rooms and staff could join whatever one they wanted. Breakout Group 1?

Comment

I was in Group 1. Our group was fairly small; it consisted of two staff members, two WAG members, and one or two folks from the public coming in and out. Fairly small group, not a ton of discussion wolf-centric until the end. When we did start talking about the rulemaking process, this public member had ideas on what should and shouldn't be included in the rulemaking process and questions on us and what our thoughts were. We didn't talk about wolves a whole lot.

Comment

Thank you. Room 2? How about you?

Comment

We also had a small group, some clarifying questions on Leadpoint press, and past situations with fladry. We also had discussion on rulemaking and questions about public input. We weren't quite the people to answer about that, but we took notes and will give it over to the right folks. Rulemaking questions and why it is restricted and focused on Special Focus Areas (SFAs). We also weren't the people to provide the right details on that.

Comment

Thank you. Room 3?

Comment

As others have indicated, light on public input. We did have input from two public members that gave feedback on the new website and appreciating the new information that's on there but feeling there are potential holes on website. They think we need more science-based information on there. Another comment was opposing excessive collaring on wolves, and the public being provided information on the cost-benefit of that and also sharing that information, like how Yellowstone does with the public. Another comment was about range riding and how they don't think that the public is receiving information and

documentation for the public to evaluate if range riding is effective. Also, more accountability for work being done because it is being paid for by the public to be done. More information on range riding failures and when cattle can't be located. Especially since range riding is publicly funded, so having a large amount of cattle identified up to 100% would be preferred. Also, about depredation reports being available to the public so that they can evaluate reports because of lack of trust. Transparency was great until 2017, then it dropped off. Quality was great until then too, but they request that reports be published as soon as they are completed. They also provided information/comment about Leadpoint and concerns about deterrence last year; what were range riders doing? Did range riding fail and were other WDFW deterrents deployed and asking for data on that for the public to evaluate why it failed.

A different member of the public brought up recovery objective; There was a lot of discussion about recovery objectives in the plan and brought up reference to wolves being down listed in 2022 based on prediction a couple years ago. Thinking that current recovery is fine for northern and eastern areas, but not for the coastal areas, so looking at two different options: Translocating wolves to southwest Washington and using information on the ground to different recovery objectives. Second, more depredation reports, they did not feel like they need to be provided before lethal removal, that we are sufficient. But it is good to inform at the end of the year; a summary would be helpful. Last comment by this person was about range riding as a tool. They wanted to indicate that there is no "silver bullet tool" that is 100% successful. Washington is doing a better job than neighboring states and is more successful than others. But that doesn't mean that all depredation is successful. That is the gist of what was said.

Comment

Thank you. WAG members, any questions based on those public comments?

### **No Questions**

Comment

Department staff, next we are asking for updates on actions toward SFAs on this season.

Comment

Could you also share with the group the innovations, pilot projects, and equipment ordered for SFAs?

Comment

Right now, we put orders in for different types of pilot projects or expansion of pilot projects that we are hoping to try in SFAs and other locations in northeast or southeast Washington. These are those VHF ear tags, and we will be receiving approximately 70 of those biometric/location ear tags. Three packages of those are coming and additional fladry. We are trying out some different vendors, which are hard to come by these days. Last week, we demoed a new rag box. We will be trying those out come next week and providing developer feedback. It is increased functionality for producers' range riding, and it's its own hotspot. That's all in the hopper for orders, as well as other stuff heard about

before. I'm prioritizing those in SFA locations and areas with chronic depredations as well.

Comment

What do you mean by biometrics on ear tags?

Comment

There are a couple of different companies with different levels of development. We ordered HerdDogg, and it should be here soon. They are essentially the size of a half-dollar, and you get 25 ear tags as well as a receiver and an app that you can use on a phone, tablet, or desktop that gives you information on how cattle are doing (are they stressed, eating, sleeping, etc.). You can get additional tags that also come with a GPS portion. Like we've been doing with cattle with bells, we are trying to look at how to increase visibility of livestock for range riders or producers, and which method helps to get more eyes on cattle. We're also going to try out infrared drones to do that as well. We've heard that a portion of time that range riders use for several years is locating cattle; locating more frequently or locating ones that end up in a far location. These methods will produce additional assistance and help locate cattle.

Comment

On that equipment, are you thinking that you've got a home for most of that? What's it look like? It sounds like that's ordered, but how will it be deployed?

Comment

A lot of these ideas we shopped around in 2018. There was activity to try something new or try a drone, which that idea came from livestock producer. There will be more of a desire to try it than before with the pilot projects. We had discussion on where to place those different ideas but really wanted to make sure we are trying it on different types of terrain, with different range riding techniques. The proof is in the pudding, so they want to see how it works. Bells have taken off on their own, so we will compare and contrast and see if it's worth the money.

Comment

Any idea on having a control group to determine whether these things are working or determine efficacy? How good would a drone work, range riding work, or no drone work? I'm trying to understand if you are able to determine, with a certain level of precision, how good things are working.

Comment

Yes, that was one thing we thought. Where do we place things in comparison? To be statistically significant, we need a lot more. We are trying it on a minimal level, but we do have information by collecting guest data on range riding for years now. We can look at if this does help them. We do have a few locations, not in non-wolf areas, but there is also a Ph.D. project that is looking at the efficacy, as well, of range riding and we are totally fine with sharing that information. Right now, we are still putting together the design, but we have locations laid out to get that control piece that you are talking about.

#### Comment

We are working on deployment on SFAs. We have people in a subgroup if they want to jump in.

#### Comment

We had a wolf internal and we talked about SFAs and start putting ideas down on what we would be doing in those. We went around and came up with a draft but struggled, looking to the WAG for direction on things that WAG wants to see, or WAG must-haves. With that said, we are not in a place at the moment to provide a ton of input on what the WAG stops are. We are just waiting for more insight on what the WAG would like to see. One thing we did discuss is, given the current WAG direction on what WAG SFA is, we look at these packs more closely and figure out how this might play out this summer. We talked about packs such as Kettles and Togo territory being SFA packs this year and then we start looking more deeply at those packs. There are questions on what we should be doing. Kettles – we only documented one wolf in there so we don't envision that territory being something where we could do wolf-centric, heavy stuff, considering there is only one wolf. Maybe putting multiple collars, but we can't do that if there is one wolf. We got hung up on those details, which actually might be good because then we can work through challenges of figuring out SFAs, like some things that would work in a large pack wouldn't maybe work with one wolf or a small pack. I'll defer to conflict specialists on this but as far as planning goes, that's where we are at.

#### Comment

We had developed the subgroup based on information put out in January in one of the chats about what a template might look like for the SFAs. We got feedback, also got stuff from WAG, and made sure that's in it. We have a draft template to see how it works, how the flow is, and if it gets everything. One other concern is the timeline: putting a plan together is to note and has a lot of moving parts. There is another meeting at end of April. Range rider coordination meetings with the NGOs also providing range riding services and discussions about coverage of SFAs and other concerned areas (obviously a budget component is there) not on the ground and collecting the feedback. I think we shared the older template version in WAG so I'm interested to see if there's any critical things we may have missed. But we are in April, so we need to move forward and fill those in.

#### Comment

Thank you for sharing the coordination on NGOs with range riders. As said, we are at that stage now where we have equipment ordered, have new twists on old tricks, we got receptivity to get that stuff out (some are SFAs and other areas closely watched, not only going to SFAs but also where we anticipate conflict), and a template shared a meeting ago that we have worked on since then, a template for proactive plan. What I'm hearing from conflict staff is that there is receptivity from some and not from others. We are at that stage where it hasn't gotten across the finish line yet to now have interactions with producers. We need to work towards that. If there are any questions, we are happy to try to answer them.

#### Comment

Thank you, staff. Time for questions or comments from WAG members.

#### Comment

Thanks for the update. I had some questions regarding deer tags and cattle biometrics. I heard there are 25 tags to a package. That seems like a small number. Can you speak to that a little? Is it because of resources or just doing a trial run so you don't want to invest too much?

#### Comment

Yeah, so some of it is we have a cap essential of \$10,000 that we can spend for contracts, so we tried to stay under the \$10k for the pilot projects. It is a whole process if it goes over. Second, we want to make sure we were trying it in select locations and not a blanket approach, so we can control the information we are getting. If there is receptivity or benefits, there is interest in expanding those things. But we want to keep it small because of the contracts piece of \$10k and to keep a good head on it. Did that answer your question?

#### Comment

For the most part, yes. I don't know how many tags you need for how many cattle to be an effective tool so it's hard for me to gauge.

#### Comment

That's why we are starting off small because we don't really know either. We know anecdotal stuff for bells, so going at some kind of rate to see if it works then we will see how many we need. Part of the pilot project is trying to figure out, "Is this enough? Do we need to purchase more?" Starting out, we did the approximate 10% and selectively putting collars with ear tags in them in each location. Maybe it needs to be all of them but that's how we chose the starting point.

#### Comment

If you think about these tags as the dispersal cattle, you're going to need more than 10%. The big expense is the readers and the antennas. That's the big expense as far as getting an area set up, correct me if wrong. As well as the data and who gets the data.

#### Comment

Yeah, so the VHF ear tags are, because of Covid, more expensive than normal. The cheapest, longest-life ones are \$200 apiece. Receivers – we had several – are what picks up the VHF frequency, and depending on which you buy, are \$45-\$100. Then the collars themselves are \$7 apiece, so pretty inexpensive. The other system is \$1200 for receiver and 25 ear tags, and then the software comes with that piece. The receiver is expensive; they used to be \$80 and now I think they're \$1100. It depends on how many ear tags, but these will last about 800 days so potentially two seasons if you don't lose them. But normally those ear tags are \$100 each so hopefully the price will go back down after

Covid.

Comment

So, any VHF receivers can read these tags?

Comment

Not any, they have to be within the frequency range. We use same frequency range for other collars we use. You have to specify a four-band range so not *any*, but you can order it specific for these. Did that answer your question?

Comment

Yes. I'm hearing its grazing season, so you guys are going ahead with SFA documentation which there's nothing in the protocol saying you need to, should, or can do that. That's concerning that you guys are moving ahead with something not in protocol and not necessarily agreed on. I'm just expressing concern, not saying we don't need to carry on working with producers. But writing SFAs, there is no approval for that.

Comment

A couple of items: To your question, part of innovation is to get a sample and see what works before putting all eggs in one basket, but I understand what you're saying. For the whole group there is a few things that the team looked at that weren't ready for this year. Three or four nonlethal tools and fancier stuff never heard of, weren't ready to jump onto those yet. To what you were sharing, that conundrum, we are in a holding pattern right now. We ordered equipment but are waiting, as we need guidance from WAG before making it an official capacity. It could go in different directions.

Comment

We are in April. Because WAG hasn't come to agreement, I expect Department staff, as professionals, to be implementing stuff but also certainly expect you to move forward with guidance from WAG.

Comment

I've spent bit of time talking to hunters and have been to several board meetings and am definitely not opposed to utilizing new tools. We do have great concerns and SFA being designed is just dealing with symptoms and not causation. I think we went wrong years ago when we named the protocol "livestock interaction protocol"; I think we should've included "wildlife" on that. I think we need to change the management process from single-species management to all. Wolves cannot be successfully managed in isolation. I think they're taking a lot of blame. We feel if we are going to have an SFA and agree to it, we have to get more causation into an SFA. I think, if carried out, these actions by the Department will also build trust. Colville has been successful in the Kettle Mountains, identifying 49 different wolves in the south half of the reservation. What we're trying to do in the north half, divided by Highway 20, is protect more wolves because of management failure or whatever happened up there. We are trying to protect more wolves, where south of the highway we've got a lot of wolves. I'll rest my case here for now.

## Comment

Thank you. Any more questions on Department updates before we go into what we want to achieve with SFA discussion?

## No Questions

## Comment

To attempt to give us a reference point, we had three separate meetings. One of those was different perspectives of producers with Department staff, one was environmental perspectives with Department staff, and one-on-one intakes with members representing all of those perspectives.

What I think I'm hearing from the producers meeting with Department staff, a main producer concern was that we're working on additional work for SFAs and producers have doubt on whether the Department can make good on that. Point back to protocol – those thresholds were years in the making. Acceptable to different values. Yet from producer perspective, when we implement those thresholds, the time it takes from when the threshold is made and decision to implement lethal removal, that time is too long. Time of decision to time of action is also too long. They think the Department might not be adhering to the original agreement and, here we are, talking about new things.

In the meeting with environmental and Department staff, what I think I heard from the environmental perspective was concern with accountability. If in an area with chronic depredation a party doesn't do their role regarding use of nonlethals, then lethal removals should not be an option. Concern with accountability. The Director was able to participate in both those meetings, share his thinking, and address concerns. From one of those meetings, someone recommended the Director come to this WAG meeting and do the same. What I'm hearing from Department staff at these meetings is a sense of exasperation. As you imagine, state agency is stuck in the middle trying to serve all values, putting forth efforts, and yet getting a sense of "it's not good enough."

The hunting community, those members are being patient because they recognize the importance of protocol and reducing conflict, but patience is starting to get thin because we aren't addressing other issues of the future, such as post-recovery plan. But I also heard agreement; common desire to reduce conflict especially in SFAs. We seem to have implied agreement of the SFA being if lethal removal has been used in the two of the last three years. I think it's implied in agreement that more resources should go to SFAs, new equipment as an example. I think I'm hearing potential for agreement on a third party but not sure. In the meeting between producers and environmental group, it was nice to see in that interaction members of the environmental community wanted to help in SFAs and not be an extra burden. We've heard producers voice that concern of "extra burden." One person offered the group to think about getting agreement on paragraph language we've been wrestling with might be too far at this point. An idea might be to get agreed-upon guidelines. That's my summary of what I think I'm hearing. Anything to correct or clarify?

## No Objections



Comment

That's encouraging. Now we have paragraph language, but we haven't had success there, just bits and pieces. What is your thought on another WAG member's idea, which is that we focus on guidelines to give staff this season rather than paragraph language?

Comment

For some of us not in those subgroups, what paragraph language are we stuck on? Do you think its insurmountable?

Comment

In subgroups, we did not pull out the specific language. We've heard a couple members that are really not in a place to agree to SFA language. I have a sense there's a barrier there and we don't have consensus. How much time in this meeting do we want to spend seeking consensus? Should we be accepting we might not reach consensus? Does that answer your question?

Comment

I guess. What exactly are we not going to be able to agree on? Collaring? When lethal is used? Curious of the detail.

Comment

My question was I want to make sure we're all understanding the guidelines, the nuggets we have left, and things we processed pretty well are intact and the piece around the elements you described in breakout rooms.

Comment

One thing that would help me is to have better understanding relating comments made related to discussions had where you felt stuck and needed guidance from WAG. Are there nuggets in particular that you feel are most critical to us giving guidance?

Comment

Good question. We are moving forward with some SFA-type stuff. As we went through, we do SFAs or areas of special concern to us but, being that the SFA was a weak process to begin with and not fully fleshed out yet, that's why we were stuck spinning our wheels. We don't want to do something not in the vision of the WAG. We will do what we need to do but we need to also honor the respect and time that the WAG has put into this. It's one of those things where the WAG hasn't settled anything yet, so we were stuck holding the document and waiting for WAG to say, "go for it." Nothing super specific, even the concept on an SFA for some members seems off the table.

Comment

I'm sure the hunting community would not be opposed to the Department trying everything they can to stop depredation of livestock. I think monitor and reply with those actions and see if they work or don't work. Open to that. Not open to the SFA as it's kind of written.

Comment

I want to touch on this more. As the WAG has this conversation and starts shaping something, we staff speak up on the process and if that will work. The more we've worked, the more we've gone down a path that works for us too. I echoed what was said, that the little hesitation you hear is not in the concept, it's that we want to make sure we honor the process and build something together with WAG. If it's 70% built, we are trying to implement concepts built here. We're not going to back away from SFAs. We have been in the conversation and say it's worth our time and effort. We just don't want to act like this is already done and it's not, and jump ahead, and do something different than you might land.

Comment

I want to go down to the written language and point out specific areas for us that we agree on and where we still debate. I'm going to list: current language we are wrestling with agree on definition of SFA. Agreement on the goal to reduce conflict. But in assessment, language not agreed upon. We are asking Department staff to go through a more formal analysis process with all players in SFA documenting it into a SFA plan ahead of time, so that's an additional step that the language has right now. Language also attempts to specify some techniques like for any packs in SFA the language is saying get two collars in on that pack. As an example, and another point of contention, whether or not the language should include consequences if Party A doesn't do what they're supposed to, what are the consequences? I think those were the main issues. Did I forget any or did someone else have anything different?

Comment

I think you completely ignored what I had to say. Trying to find where wildlife and prey populations are in those areas. I think we've also not answered the questions on what we've had on these areas from the very beginning. A list of 4 or 5 of them.

Comment

Referring to list that you shared with us a few minutes ago?

Comment

Yes, sir.

Comment

Question for you and who you represent: When I hear the list of items you shared with us, they sound to me – and I'm no expert – they sound bigger than the SFA that we're talking on. But what I think I'm hearing is that they are linked for you. Those questions, you want answers to before you can provide guidance on SFA.

Comment

SFA as written is trying to manage the livestock/wolf problem without taking into consideration of other populations. I can quote the federal register that comes from the

service of what it takes to manage wolves. And you can't manage them in isolation, you're going to have to put your arms around all of it to resolve it. I don't see how we can buy in.

Comment

I want to support that comment. I've only been here for a few months, but we are focusing on a narrow area. We're not looking at complete landscape and that is a very important step if we are going to manage on a wide scale. They all accrue to other goals. It feels like we have a lack of data to support what's going on. There is a predator-prey study coming out in April that I'm looking forward to seeing. I heard two things that seem incongruent... He said 49 wolves and another person is saying there is one. Maybe I don't understand the geography, but I feel we need to recognize this.

Comment

I wanted to add to what was just talked about. On the template we were talking about, it had conversation on the prey base side to this. It's one of those things that is site-specific and time-specific so we were thinking we would document what we know on the prey base. It may be better suited there on the template/proactive plan versus the overarching guidance document. It's not a lot, it's an acknowledgment that as we go forth with a proactive plan, what we know about nonlethal deterrents and also document what we know about prey base.

## **Lunch**

Comment

I'm in total disagreement on the SFA thing. I'd like to explain why.

Comment

We've got time while we're waiting for the Director. I might interrupt once they join.

Comment

First, I'd like to read from the federal register. I would like to further explain it, but I will wait for the Director.

Comment

Thank you.

Comment

Seems like I never get to say what I want to say.

Comment

I'm sorry about that but we will come back to you.

Comment

I will gladly step back for the Director.

## **WDFW's Director joined the meeting**

### **Comment**

Thank you for joining us, Director. We had time on this topic before lunch but what I did share with the group is topics from the subgroups that you attended. I shared that on the producer side there is frustration with slowness about deciding on lethal removal and acting. On the environmental side, concern about accountability; if a party is not meeting expectation then lethal should not be done. What I was proposing is if you could share your thinking on that decision-making with the group and have them ask any questions from there.

### **Comment**

That sounds fine to me, it sounds like you covered a chunk of what I was going to talk about. I did think the best approach would be to talk about the two meetings we did have with subgroups. I think you were spot on. The two takeaways from producers: if we are doing our part and we are fully implementing nonlethals, we can give assurances that the Department will use tools available to them when appropriate. My intention, my belief, is to follow guidelines set out for considering that but once we hit a threshold, now that makes this tool of lethal removal available to us. The other thing from producers, is timeliness. If we get to a spot where we are going to lethal removal, assurance that is timely and I believe in honesty in conversation. I agree with the group that I defend the hard work of staff and reasons it has taken time, but we can also streamline. I have asked staff to provide a timeline for once I have it in my hands, how long do I have to act on it. I fully acknowledge that has been a slower process in the past. I'm willing to put a timeline. Again, that's a timeline to make decisions and start an action. I agree it's appropriate to provide some timelines. Those were my takeaways.

On the environmental group, there was really concern around accountability. We want to know it's not a – excuse me, I'll use my own language here – half-ass effort, people are actually stepping up and implementing nonlethals in serious way. I told the group that is my intention, we are expecting people to step up to the bar. If they are not stepping up, that influences the decision making. That's where I start sounding like broken record because every situation is truly unique. Nonlethals in place in a meaningful way is my intention. If we have 3 or 4 producers that are stepping up, A-plus, and one that is a C, does that prevent us from going lethal? The general principal is we need producers implementing nonlethals before we consider lethals and that certainly is the threshold for me. There is also a desire not to be jumping to nonlethal; I don't think we've ever done that. We've always hit those thresholds and then considered. When I say we put a deadline on, that doesn't mean we jump to lethal. It just means we don't have a delay in that process.

What I took away from both groups was everyone wants this to work, wants to make sure the other group is doing their part. We need to make sure everyone is making their best effort. We need to build that trust. I appreciate the work you're all doing – I should've started with that – this is one of the most diversity-of-opinions advisory group, but we do this through hard and diligent work. That's what goes through my mind when making these decisions. With that, I get a lot more value out of conversation than a speech so...

Comment

Yeah, thank you, Director. Can you compare this to another predator control, or other predators interacting with livestock? Do you have the same tools at your disposal? Just trying to look for consistency around the whole predator realm.

Comment

Certainly, tools are available for other predators. I actually have to issue for wolves. Cougars and bears, we do lethal removals when appropriate, but it doesn't require my prior approval and the decision doesn't require my signature to move on it. They are at a different level. Those species are not on our threatened species list.

Comment

So, if cougar was on the threatened list, for example, it would go to your desk?

Comment

I think there are multiple places in the statute that would move it to my desk on endangered species. Staff could probably tell you more. I know I get the joy of being the final decision maker and we take it seriously. Our goal is to recover wolves, and we believe this is a necessary part of doing that but only when it's one of the only tools left.

Comment

Director, thank you for joining. It means a lot when you show up in a meeting and give guidance. Hearing from producers, I've had questions that range from "how do we become an SFA area?" meaning they want their area to be an SFA to get that additional guidance; the other side of that is we've had producers that don't want that additional help and guidance. I think you're getting to some producers in terms of "we want help" versus "we don't want help." I found that interesting. One big thing for producers is "I don't want to be punished for what my neighbor chooses to do." That's something we should all keep in mind when talking about consequences and putting that on paper. I don't think that's productive.

Comment

Speaking to what was asked, what are the Department's goals as far as how wolves are managed versus other predator species? Would the Department like ideally for them to be managed similar to other species?

Comment

Going through rulemaking on wolves, I would like to see us get to a more normalized management on wolves. Just a plan that doesn't require decision making from staff to me, where entire agency is involved. I want it to be more routine management and we are developing what that looks like now as we are recovering wolves. Other species we are not worried about managing species because we do that through game management plans. When we have a recovered species, it won't need to basically include all agency or basically all Wildlife or Game parts of the agency.

Comment

What are the major barriers to that?

Comment

I don't know if it's a barrier, but time. We are early in wolf recovery. We need to develop that process and plan. Not a barrier, rather we need to make advances on recovery of the species first.

Comment

How can we best help you? Being one of your advisory groups. We may not be able to reach complete agreement on language, but some elements we can reach as a group. That would potentially help guide our conversations as staff.

Comment

I would hope agreement, but I know how difficult that is. The more concise about where we have differences and why you can't agree would help me, so I could take that into account when making decisions. It's our obligation to take in all perspectives, so knowing that would help me dig a little deeper when it's time for decision making. Again, thank you, this is an incredible donation of time and overall effort. I'd be glad to come off at any time.

### **WDFW's Director left the meeting**

Comment

I'll throw a proposal out then open for discussion: You graciously gave up time for us to listen to the Director and you started reading regulations for us. You've asked for time to finish. What I will propose a plan how we use this hour and a half and if you see a logical place where you see yourself fit in later or if you'd like to now. Make sense?

Comment

I'd like to finish it upfront if possible. It won't take long.

Comment

Couple of concerns: I get lost, and what's the point of reading that reg, and then I don't know how much time you need...

Comment

I wasn't reading regs, I was reading from the federal registry. I think I was asked some question between north and south. You can't blame the laws of wildlife on weather or anything else when it's just a range of mountains separating management in the north half and the south half. The south half definitely had some of the best wildlife management and lots of ungulates. In my opinion, it's the Department's job to manage wildlife. I feel on Section 9 they are trying to hide behind the "why" on making a decision. It isn't holistic. I don't feel there's really any need for Section 9; I feel the Department has lots of directives and legislative management and protocol. Thank you.

Comment

Thanks. I guess my proposal is that I will throw up that on the list, reminding us on not focusing on single species, but to getting to what the Director said, agreement. And if not agreement, where is there disagreement and why. Maybe we can tease that out in these seven topics. Identify where we have agreement and where we don't, at least capturing the 'why.' We can go down one by one and ask the group if there is any disagreement, worry, or concern. Also give time for discussion to hopefully alleviate concern. That's my proposal so I will pause here for any objections to that.

## **No Objections**

Comment

I'm going to throw up the list. The first two we have agreement on: "SFA where lethal removal has been authorized in two of the last three years--"

Comment

We discussed a few different times a two-pronged goal of minimizing depredations and also limiting lethal removal.

Comment

Okay, next one being considered: "Staff coordinate with what's called 'the group,' in the language we call that affective producers, range riders, land management agencies, to assess the situation and develop and form a plan." Is there still concern on this one?

Comment

I wonder if c.) doesn't just roll into that one. The Department we would be fine if there is a need for third-party review, as that language talks about the group. The group would identify someone who would be an outside expert. The outside expert would do a review of that plan and serve as an independent review.

Comment

So, you're clarifying that a third-party review is part of that?

Comment

I'm proposing it would be, based on conversations I've had. It would be proactive for us to identify who those are. We want to empower the local group as much as possible. And that entity they chose to be an independent.

Comment

You started to explain "the group" ... I'm just curious what that group looked like. I believe that third-party review is an important part of this working through. And then who makes up that group and what type of partners do we reach out to?

Comment

In the draft – maybe someone has it – I believe it’s the local producer, the conflict specialist, wolf committee, range rider, outside expert, forest service... They develop a local team that sits down and problem-solves and comes up with an assessment and a proactive plan. That independent person that they would grab would do the review.

Comment

Thank you. My comment is regarding third-party review and how it’s placed but just wanted to highlight the way that sentence begins. “*Staff* coordinates the group.” Just want to flag that we may not be comfortable facilitating that conversation.

Comment

I think you’re saying that it might not be comfortable with staff identifying that third party. Is that right?

Comment

That is exactly right.

Comment

That makes sense to me. The way I understood, staff would take first swing at putting a group together, then the group would pick the third-party reviewer.

Comment

Okay. Is there any concern with that we’re asking staff coordinate the plan? But separate from the third party, is there any objection with staff coordinating?

Comment

Not objection, just commenting on making it really explicit. Coordinating means pulling that first discussion together, it does not mean picking the independent. It is not independent if we pick it. We will contact the range rider, arrange the first get-together, then the group owns it at that point.

Comment

Next one: “...Two collars on wolves within SFA”. On the two collars on wolves within an SFA, what are the concerns there?

Comment

I just wanted to add narrative tying up loose ends. Again, our language is the Department would commit to trying – no guarantee – attempting to deploy a conventional collar in these SFA areas if there is a pack. As we heard today, in the Kettle area there is one or two wolves at the moment (that could change). The GPS collar would have the capacity to do these four attempts per day. Something to think about also is do you turn it out with four attempts per day or crank it up when needed? A bit of new info: I’m going way too technical here, but we did make a change where our main frame computer/corporate computer used to get to satellite and sweep the data once a day. It’s now changing where the collars have collected data and the data goes to the satellite, and it will update once an



hour. That doesn't mean it will get locations, but a different attempt from our main frame.

#### Comment

I acknowledge how important this is to the producers. And we've had lot of discussion on collars. I feel like I have to say I have real concern about this. I'm not saying that it's not something we could try but I do think a statement of two collars on wolves without knowing how many family members there are in a pack... We could be putting a ton of pressure on the wolves that end up creating more problems. Just had to say that.

#### Comment

I agree. That's a big concern is having a two-collar thing in here, particularly with small packs. That's a good goal on a larger pack but for Kettle, when we counted a single wolf this winter, the chance of getting a collar on two wolves is low. And is that necessary? We should wrestle with that. Back to the computer point, we should be clear that despite the new computer system with data once an hour, that doesn't change the fact that our collars only upload data once per day or every other day. I don't think folks should expect to see data coming in more frequently, that's just how the collar is set up. It is a bigger battery drain, so we have to balance how often the collars talk to the satellites. Currently, the collar companies are once per day, others every other day. I don't want folks to think we will be getting data every hour.

#### Comment

I respect your comments about the two collars on small packs and I see your concern there. I don't know what is considered a small pack, or maybe one collar is enough? I want to be fair here. I think the two collars is very much needed and also the fact that if lethal action is used on bigger packs, the likelihood of them breaking up is higher as well. I find the two collars to be needed. It was alluded to, but there is a person who watches the collar data. The data is concerning to me because if someone goes in and takes action into their own hands and kills the wolf, the first person looked at is the person who sees the data because they know where the wolf is. We don't want to be the ones looked at in those situations. Just wanted to call that out and put some language in there. Let's compromise – I don't know what a smaller pack is? Four and under?

#### Comment

This collar data conversation is always interesting or puzzling. I had a conversation with various staff about this issue. As long as we land on new GPS collars on March 10 that we would be part of the plan to increase the number of uploads per day in those critical areas to make it more advantageous to all... I don't want that to get lost in this conversation. It makes complete sense in small packs, but it doesn't make sense to hold the Department to a standard to put two collars. There are ways to assess that and I fully support that. I was a little confused with comments about upload opportunities, given what was talked about a month ago with those newer collars. Maybe some clarification there?

#### Comment

This might be a good spot where it's a principle/guidance for the Department– You can

see how technical this gets. I talk to them every day and it is so technical that we have to draw out the nuances. That kind of detail in the document doesn't seem like a great fit. We might say "looking to get these four attempts a day and try to get that to the producers in a timely way." What we're talking about today I can guarantee in six months the technology is already different.

Comment

Due to the great variety of situations, we may never come down to great compromise to small details. My recommendation: why don't we let "the group" decide? They could decide if they need more collars. Setting up the group would eliminate a lot of this conflict because there are always going to be exceptions so why don't we set up that group to look at these different parts and pieces. I don't think we'll be able to come to total agreement on this. I agree, for all species, the group can look at local population of predators and prey. The group are the specialists to look at one particular problem, not for a general problem. We are beating ourselves over the head and don't really need to.

Comment

A few thoughts. One, by and large I agree on letting the group figure out what kind of collars in what pack, when to put the collars out, do we put them out strategically... It's smart to let the group decide. The only potential drawback is the recognition that these collars take months, as we have to order months in advance. If we want to do something different it will take us 5-6 months ahead of time to get a new collar in possession to put out. But smart way to approach. Speaking to the comment regarding collar fixed rates, we don't have collars that are capable of transmitting data to our system more than once per day and that's not necessarily on the horizon as we are aware. We do have those collars that are four fixes per day, that we have identified for these areas, already in our possession. The collars are still only capable of transmitting data once per day.

Comment

So just to clarify, the ones we currently have transmit once per day. But now we have in hand ones that do more but are just not deployed?

Comment

No. A few things go into the GPS collar... GPS have a VHF signal which allows a reg box to work. That VHF signal takes battery life. To preserve battery, the VHF turns off at night and is only on during the day. Another thing that sucks up battery life is the number of fixed attempts per day and the number of time to transmit data to collar. Currently, all collars we have in possession or envision having, can get a different number of fixes, or something like four fixes per day. But they still only transmit once per day. That goes back to battery power. Other tradeoffs, they might not even make it through summer as I'm not sure how quickly the battery will drain. It's not something that has been really explored with these collar companies as I'm aware. Does that clear up some technical questions?

Comment

It was helpful, but what I have in my notes and what I was told a month ago is different

from what you're saying now. Upload rates, what the collar is capable of, etc. but maybe I misunderstood...

Comment

That's what we might have think happened. With this whole idea of the computer programmed to be sweeping more frequently, that might have confused things.

Comment

Our system only updates one day right now, the new system will allow uploads more... Data will be available as soon as uploaded.

Comment

So, you're asking is that accurate? I want to avoid getting too technical, but that may be something we might take offline and clarify later.

Comment

I think we can clarify. We can't get more transmission rates from the collars currently. In that conversation, our DFW system is going to but that doesn't change fixed rate.

Comment

Many rely on collar data or would like to more so. Not all, but many in the northeast. This issue I might be beating it to death, but I feel it's important.

Comment

No, it's understandable. I want to be clear to make sure everyone has the same interpretation and understanding on what is possible.

Comment

Thanks, really good discussion. We hear the need loud and clear. There are so many nuances to the technology and variables that it is easy to get confused. But at each place, we try to get the most utility out of the collars as we can.

Comment

I don't feel like we're that far off on this. We could maybe come across some clear direction. Producers and their desire to use collar data... I don't feel like we're that far off.

Comment

The next one is specificity of consequences if a party doesn't fulfil their expected role. I'd like to open up to reasons why or why not we should have this.

Comment

I think this is another area where "the group" would decide. If there's only four or five landowners involved, it should be another job of the group.

Comment

I think what we heard from the Director is – anybody push back if I’m not articulating this right – it’s an expectation that the nonlethal deterrents are done practically. In that realm of uncertainty of consequences, the best way to understand is to implement the nonlethal tools. If not fully implemented, the Director can’t pre-determine the decision. But it is still an expectation that the nonlethal deterrents are in place.

Comment

I agree with that. We can add a brief general statement that the Director will retain flexibility regarding response according to the unique circumstances of an SFA, something like that in the lethal decision making. Because I don’t think it can be specified in this section what the outcome will be, because there are so many unique circumstances.

Comment

I’ll say it again: I don’t think we should write consequences on the piece of paper. The very first page, it says the Director has the ability to do as he sees fit. If you talk about consequences for one party, you have to talk about it for all. I think it’s simpler and cleaner, and every bit of protocol is at the discretion of the Director.

Comment

I’m not suggesting we use the word “consequence” for accountability. I think it’s implied. I just think that specifying that there will be flexibility regarding unique circumstances is not a bad thing to add. But I hear what you’re saying.

Comment

It’s good discussion. I understand what you’re saying too; listing consequences then creates a box where the Director doesn’t have that decision space that he’s asked for. I’m wondering if I get that part... There’s a statement at the beginning of the protocol. That will be the question in their mind when they’re reading it, but I’m wondering if there’s a way to say that in a different way as it relates to the SFAs. You want to close that thought on this section of the protocols.

Comment

A general statement that starts with all parties will make a good faith effort. There are a million different reasons on why something might not happen, but we should have a sort of good faith statement on all parties.

Comment

I think we missed one. The Director spoke to giving us direction on the timing. When thresholds have been met in the protocol that when it’s time for the district team to make recommendation, is more timely and the time that the Director looks at it is more timely. Didn’t want to lose sight on that one because it seemed important.

Comment

Timing for staff to get it to the Director, the Director to make a decision, and acting on the

decision.

Comment

I think the Director was pretty direct; he's asking us to put together a timeline for him that is not specific, it's a general "more timely" ... We're looking for ways to be more efficient and reduce from weeks to days.

Comment

The last item there, I've got it phrased as "whether SFAs focus too much on single-species management instead of all species." Does that capture the essence, or do you need me to adjust it?

Comment

I'm not ready to adjust it on the fly. I think one thing that really needs to be done is change the title of the protocol.

Comment

Something you offered was "wildlife livestock conflict?"

Comment

"Wolf, Wildlife, Livestock Conflict."

Comment

Back to a process we were in the middle of, before going back to collars, there was a recommendation to changing the title of the protocol. Any concerns on whether or not SFA are focusing too much on single-species management?

Comment

Related to that, I will say I know this is great frustration for some. But while wolves are still listed as endangered and because wolves are unique as far as social structures of carnivores, all of that points to a more focused effort.

Comment

I think we're getting really close, but I think we could condense that and maybe agree group discussion should include a) more collars and b) consequences. "The group" should make their recommendation based on their specific situations. Because we can condense that section, these four items should be included in the group's discussion.

Comment

So, to clarify, "the group" should discuss the number of collars, the consequences if party doesn't do their role?

Comment

Yes.

Comment

I like that idea, but I worry if you leave it to the group and there's dissention in the group... How does the group make a decision if there are no guidelines? I don't know if you had a decision-making process that you'd already worked through that might be a way to solve the problem, but I'm worried we're just pushing it down a level and letting them solve it.

Comment

I don't think we're kicking the can down the road so far; we're just giving it to a group that has a lot more information than we do. If there's half a dozen landowners, the group will have that information. I think it would be much better for the group to come up with solutions.

Comment

I love pushing decision making down to the right level, but what if there's dissention in the group? Is it just a majority vote? Do they push it to the Director?

Comment

I think just like our group, we just give recommendation and the Director gives the final word. We aren't making solid rules here, we can't do that at this stage.

Comment

Yeah, I guess we jump back and forth between putting solid rules in and escalating things to the Director. If the group doesn't come to decisions, then the Director would make the decision.

Comment

Well, you'd hope the group would have enough discussion to come to consensus. Sometimes it's a challenge, but at least the group would have area-specific information.

Comment

I like to empower the locals as well, but we should ask, "Does it fit?" Or "Is it appropriate?" For example, we need overarching guidance on a little bit of the collaring stuff. We collar throughout the year, so it doesn't necessarily lend itself to group. There would be overarching general guidance. I don't know if you just push it onto local group, just some pieces. The consequence discussion, that doesn't seem like a good fit to me. The plan here already says that's the Director's decision. I think if we look at the items one by one and say, "Is there a piece here that is a good fit for this community group?"

Comment

I was thinking the same thing. I'll use collars as an example; I could see there being flexibility within that group. Some producers have expressed that they will use collar data for their nonlethal deterrent work and we're giving them the umbrella onto two collars in packs larger than four, if that is so chosen. There could be some in an SFA that don't use collars. We have to have some overarching guidance. It's still taken us a year and a half to make a decision so I can imagine the same with a small group.

## Break

### Comment

I'll share the notes again. I think we were wrestling with the parts we're still considering. The local group: what is appropriate to give to them and what is not? What do we do with all these topics? Do we fit them under "the group"? Maybe some are appropriate, some are not? Do we need to give the group some overarching guidance or not?

### Comment

I have a thought. On this collar piece, what if it was up to the SFA group on what collars those were? For example, if they want four collars or two GPS collars or one of each, that group could decide on that based on whatever reason they have.

### Comment

To me, that's a perfect example of what I said before the break. Coming up with proper boundaries. It's specific to the conditions of the producers and how they run their operations, so I think that is nice.

### Comment

Yeah, I wondered if that would work instead of specifying. If everyone is okay with specifying that's okay too. I'm wondering if the number can be four or more in the pack? Say we can target two or more collars in that pack?

### Comment

So, when you're talking about the number four, you're talking wolves in a pack?

### Comment

Yeah. I heard if there's only two wolves it doesn't make sense for two collars, etc. This is just brainstorming. If there are 4+ wolves, maybe 2 would be appropriate.

### Comment

How does the group make a decision? Do they need majority or 80% or? Do we need to specify how they make decisions or where are we at with that?

### Comment

Yeah, I think we're all wrestling with that. Throwing around ideas, seeing what sticks.

### Comment

I was just going to add... Maybe that's better that it says not too specific "two collars." We can't make a wild animal step into something it doesn't want to.

### Comment

With the pack size thing, I'm just going off what I think. I think a pack of five or more; five or more wolves in our minimum count at the end of winter. That gives me a little more of a

feeling that we could get the potential of two collars in there. It's kind of arbitrary, I'll admit. The more wolves, the more likely you are to get those two collars out.

Comment

I think what's highlighted there is getting the nugget at the level it should be operating. Even putting a "four" or a "five," we're getting pretty specific. For larger packs, generally five plus animals, let's not act like there's a significance between four, five, or six. The other one is a comment about how they should make decisions. A smaller group should be able to talk about how they're going to make decisions. We're all part of groups, that's something you tackle when you are part of a group. And the Department default if they can't.

Comment

The only thing I would add for clarity, is just to say, "four or five *adult* wolves." Adding the 'adult' piece because that could change through the year.

Comment

Thank you. I'll ask for the highlighted portion, any objection to moving that highlighted portion to the agreement section?

## **No Objections**

Comment

So, attempt two collars, and let the group decide what types of collars. For larger size packs, you define generally five plus adult wolves?

Comment

Yes, currently that's what's being offered.

Comment

I would say to take out "adult wolves."

Comment

Okay, let's tackle types of collars. Can you clarify types of collars?

Comment

Yeah, so we have a couple of different types of collars. VHF's, long-term monitoring GPS collars with two fixes per day, others four fixes per day. I could see the group picking which ones they wanted and if they wanted something different it could be discussed what's possible but, as I mentioned, that would need to be months in advance. We'd have to go with collars on hand to be realistic. And then the "adults" is the recognition that we don't collar pups. When we say adults, it's the adults we counted in the winter count.

Comment

Understood. What you said and what's on the paper are different. You said –



Comment

You're breaking up but what I think you said was: what was said and what's on paper is different. The paper said five plus adult wolves but was said was when doing winter counts, if it's a pup they consider it an adult for the season. Is that accurate?

Comment

Yeah, and I think it's worth recognizing a pair of wolves that we count in the winter is likely going to reproduce and have a litter of five to six pups. That pack would potentially be seven mouths to feed, so under that definition, that number would have to be larger.

Comment

It depends on the time of year you're trying to collar. Pups or not, the size of them is what matters. In my eyes, what I see on the paper is a definition for a large pack. I see you're point, if there's three adults and three pups, there's only three to collar. But what is a large pack? So, it's muddy water. I don't see another benefit from that but when you start talking three or four pups, those pups are going to be adults eventually. So maybe you can't collar them in the spring, but by fall or early next spring there's potential to get the collar there. I don't like that. I don't like the definition of the pack size.

Comment

I hear where you're coming from. I think it's worth recognizing that there are two times of year we collar; one in the summer when trapping and we won't collar pups. In the winter, we could potentially collar a pup – we've done that – because they're big enough to collar, so those animals now count as a number in the pack. I think we're thinking the same thing but maybe there's some translation issues.

Comment

Good discussion. I wonder if the part that's highlighted, do we just delete "for larger packs" and leave "generally with five or more adult wolves" so it's not defining a large pack. We're not defining what a large pack is. Let's not go down the rabbit hole of what time of year; this is just a general guiding statement. We're going to attempt to get two collars out if that's feasible.

Comment

For this one, I disagree a little because we get into a situation where people can pick and choose time of year. So as soon as a pack has a litter, potential is there. I wonder if we can just say "packs with five or more wolves *observed during our annual survey*"?

Comment

Thank you. So, if we take that suggestion, any concerns with that?

## **No Objections**

Comment

Next topic is the “specify consequences” topic. We had a couple thoughts here, anything from “it doesn’t help to have it here, the Director has flexibility” but also “it might help remind the reader that the Director has flexibility.” Anyone want to open?

Comment

Yeah, I don’t know if we need to make this much more challenging than it needs to be. Wouldn’t the simple solution be if you don’t put forth those nonlethal measures, resources simply aren’t going to flow your way? If you’re not going to be a good partner, maybe resources just don’t flow your direction. I agree with the chat comment.

Chat comment: *“have we lost focus that we are looking for new ideas to manage problem wolves? if we keep managing the way we have we will not get a different result”*

Comment

To that comment, I thought I heard the Director say today that might be an issue where you could have three producers who are supposedly playing by the rules and one who is not, and you don’t want to penalize the ones playing by the rules. I worry about this type of statement based on what the Director said today. The Director has flexibility to look at each situation as a unique situation as opposed to defining certain consequences.

Comment

I think the Director has flexibility and that does not make it prescriptive; It allows for him to determine given unique circumstances in an SFA. There may be producers affected and he can make a determination. We can’t prescribe everything in this section.

Comment

I think I’m getting it; on one hand there’s an expectation to use nonlethal deterrence, but you also want the Director to retain flexibility. I don’t know if that’s completely accurate so I’m open to coaching.

Comment

I think we could preface it with what was mentioned earlier–

Comment

Start with a general statement that all parties will make a good faith effort?

Comment

Exactly. So, lean into it with a more positive direction and then follow up with the Director retaining flexibility regarding the unique circumstances.

Comment

I do think there’s a place in that opening statement where it says “participating in a proactive plan, there will be additional resources” ... We are doing these innovative ideas and those become available to folks if you’re participating in one of those plans. I think we need to capture that this is a good thing. We want folks to participate and give them added

resources. It's a carrot.

Comment

I think one key thing is in iii. And iv. Are you saying it's an expectation AND the Director... or BUT?

Comment

I think it's a 'but', but what does the group think?

Comment

I don't know if it's a 'but' or an 'and.' Maybe a 'period.' We're serious about the expectations. The Director is acknowledging that he's not going to make a decision without knowing unique circumstance. I don't know that it has to be a 'but' or an 'and'. That's what I think about it.

Comment

I would agree. It makes sense to me to make it two separate sentences and take the 'but' out of it.

Comment

That sort of implies an 'and' though. I'm not an English expert.

Comment

I'm glad you're challenging it. Any concerns with the highlighted section? Any objection to moving it to the above agreed section?

## **No Objections**

Comment

Next topic. Is this section not taking into consideration the ecosystem at large and being too single-species-focused? Or because of the uniqueness of wolves listed as endangered species, is it okay to be a focused effort? There is nothing at this moment that touches on this, so does there need to be?

Comment

I would like to say, in all due respect, the purpose in Section 9 and in our meeting is not to change the title of the protocol. That's a totally different subject, and we can talk about that at a later time, but I don't think we should discuss it at this time.

Comment

It should say "Wolf, wildlife, livestock interaction protocol."

Comment

Okay, I've captured that.

Comment

And under that, I would want the Department to deliver all ungulate data possible. Which would be historic and present by species... Hunter success, historic and present by ungulate prey species –

Comment

Is that different than the first thing you told me? Now you said historic and present by ungulate prey species.

Comment

Yeah, hunter success is a different thing.

Comment

Okay, go on.

Comment

If an SFA is declared, the Department should be required to do studies on neonates and juveniles' survival by ungulate and prey species. I guess it should be called ungulate prey species because there's not data on rabbits and stuff like that. In all cases, it should say ungulate prey species.

Comment

Okay, so with these ideas, and in each Special Focus Area, is your visions with this that the Department gives that data to the group? Or to the WAG?

Comment

To this group.

Comment

Oh, to "the group" that's working it. Okay, thanks. Anything else?

Comment

It's a good start.

Comment

I'll just say that we already do that stuff, so that's publicly available information. The number of deer, harvest, and so on. And that's not just deer, it's all available in status trend reports. And I can speak to neonate studies; they are incredibly time-and-fund-intensive, while an SFA is a seasonal–

Comment

So, time and funding involved in a study, may be a season-by-season situation with an SFA, so it's hard to compare the two? Is that it?

Comment

Yeah, it would be hard to compare because neonatal can swing wildly from year to year. We could do it, but it would have to be for a long period of time. If we were deeply focused on one SFA, and then no wolves depredate any livestock, we couldn't just pick up and start neonate survival there.

#### Comment

I anticipated that response. It makes me wonder if there's another way to come at this. Because I think in an area that we, based on this document, have identified as being an area that needs more critical review or response than others because of a history of depredation, it seems that this is also the time, in addition to ramping up nonlethals, that we also take a closer look at the wildlife ungulate population. I agree with what you're saying on the time consuming, but is there another way to come at this where the group provides what you as staff know currently about the wildlife populations? So that all becomes part of the greater conversation about wolf management? Just thinking that information is critical, so how do we take what data you folks already have and immerse that into the conversation?

#### Comment

I've been thinking about this as well, knowing it's important to a lot of folks. This dives into a whole other subject matter that could likely be outside of protocol and include other kinds of diversity of people that we don't have, including ungulate specialist/biologists. We have some, of course, but there are others. The other part is to really get up to speed on this, we need to think about the Predator-Prey Project. The Department is investigating in the Blue Mountains, where there's an idea that predation is a factor in the Blue Mountains. Taking a step to monitor neonatal. Part of me is like we can't roll this all into the protocol, but is there then a reach out to the ungulate community to say, "What do we know about the population here? Do we have research data?" Once determined as an SFA, it's the time to start asking those questions. That feels like it's a launching spot for a bigger question. Thank you.

#### Comment

You make a really good point. We've heard this, so when we developed the conflict mitigation plan outline that the group in the SFA would put together, we have a section on ungulates in there. And that would be an appropriate place to dump information on ungulates in the area. It probably will be a game management level, but we do have harvest data at that level. We run surveys at that level, so it would be put in one plan in that place. In general, district biologists look and if something stands out to us, we will try to look into it as much as we can. We're monitoring our ungulate herds and looking for red flags all the time.

#### Comment

What holistically is going on with the predator and the prey and do we really have all data we need? We have conflicting data – this 1 versus 49 between the north and the south seems something that needs to be reconciled. But I feel like we need to have a dedicated section on predator and prey and understand what the plan is. With respect to wildlife

biologists, doing all this great stuff, maybe that's the stuff that we need to have available at our fingers at all times and understand tools available to you if there is depredations in the white-tailed deer herd, what kind of tools are at disposable to address the situation. It's not surprising this is a launching point for predator-prey stuff, just given where we are in some of the discussion.

Comment

There was a lot in there so I might miss some of it. I'll start by saying we'll never have *all* the data they'll want, but it's really complex and it's hard to get from the ungulate side and the carnivore side. Going back to the confusion on the south and north Colville number of wolves, it's a little inappropriate for us to talk about that in this situation. They don't publicly share that information, as a sovereign nation, and we should respect that. I will say we have heard something that is not consistent with what was said but I'll leave it at that. I think we will get great information from the predator-prey report. That is a really great project and data is coming out of that and being analyzed. I sort of disagree that it needs to go into that much detail in the protocol. Other thing, we do have predator guidelines, so if ungulate population falls below 25% of the average, we can enact those. We are doing that in the state, and we do have guidelines.

Comment

I didn't realize the sovereign nation with the tribes – I appreciate that – and some of the tools at your disposal. Thank you.

Comment

Just to add to that 1 versus 49 number... We co-manage with the tribes. Our count of 1 in the Kettle pack is not inconsistent with what they've seen. That number of 49 was not from the north half, if that makes clarity. That Kettle pack is in the north. That count of 1 is consistent with that pack they've seen. It's confusing but–

Comment

That was confusing to me because they are a sovereign nation not sharing information.

Comment

On the north half, we co-manage wolves. I'm speaking specifically on that 1 versus 49 wolves.

Comment

You co-manage on the north half where they have hunting rights. Got it.

Comment

Yes.

Comment

She did a good job summarizing that up in terms of... Ungulate stuff is on her mind, obviously she works on it constantly. We document and we speak to that in the template

we are working on with small groups. I wouldn't be opposed to a statement in Section 9 that it's a component we're interested in, but I don't know if it's a direct thing. We have a large multi-year project partnered with UW (University of Washington), the best information we can get on this bigger question. I'm glad we already have years under our belt. I think it would be appropriate to flag ungulate prey base as a factor, but that we're looking at it at a local level. I wanted to put a plug about a video that we're happy to share that is an overview of the Predator-Prey Project.

#### Comment

I would like to make some corrections. I did not say there was one wolf, I know there's more than one. I did say that they say there are 49 different wolves in the south Colville on their own property and the Department was made aware of that. I didn't say they found them in the north, they didn't even fly the north half this year. I'd also like to say that I don't think the Department is operating the legislative mandate what the wolf plan says, as far as the balance between the prey and wolves. They certainly are not following what the Commission said in '81 years ago, as to how they envisioned this coming down. In the meantime, all we got as hunters is promises, promises, promises. I knew the Department would come up with excuses when I brought this up. But it is a problem that can be identified in one area when we're talking about an SFA and the south half is extremely opposite. I'm extremely disappointed in what the Department's answer is. Unless the Department takes a shot at this, it doesn't even fulfill a goal. All we're doing is single-species management and... It's not going to work. It hasn't worked.

#### Comment

Thank you for sharing that. I'm troubled you think we're giving you excuses. We're not. We're sharing with you our perspective. I'd never think anyone on WAG is giving us excuses. We're trying in a genuine, authentic way to communicate our needs and I know you are sharing as well. I'm troubled that you think it's excuses. It's not. We want to work toward something that is good for everybody. We also need to share our values and perspectives as well.

#### Comment

I want to clarify one thing, so it doesn't get confused. There is one wolf in the Kettle *pack*, that's different than the Kettle *range*, which is a mountain range. There is more than one wolf within the Kettle range. The Togo pack is also within the range. But within the Kettle wolf pack, there is a single wolf counted this winter.

#### Comment

We've talked about this for 14 years. The hunters have been ignored no matter what is said. We've been swept out of every discussion and nothing has been done. If you look at the NRM's (Natural Resource Management), we're the most important thing for habitat for wolves, and the Department is ignoring it. They've ignored us for years and now you want us to sign on to this document. I don't think we can.

#### Comment

That's a bigger discussion than what we've got in the nine minutes left. It's something to learn more from you separate from this meeting and really dive into that. But thanks for sharing that perspective. One topic we should better understand is timing. To propose a timeline for a variety of decisions. Is the intent to insert that recognition in this SFA?

Comment

That was my intent. The background here is that we heard the trust issue from the livestock community, that time it takes for us to do steps is a concern. It's not an exact timeline, but it's going from weeks to days. I would like to have a nugget in there that describes that so people can see we heard it and we want to live up to it.

Comment

Thank you. We moved quite a bit in that agreement section. We are wrestling now with timing, and how do we capture the need to think bigger than just wolves or not in this SFA? We've got tomorrow set for more discussion, but we have six members not available tomorrow. I'd like to ask for feedback: we start the day with spending the hour to hear what others are frustrated with and next steps to address it. Then after listening, see if we can clarify the two topics we're still wrestling with. Any reactions back?

Comment

I want to second that we made a lot of progress and I appreciate the Game Department with the data they supplied. I'm wondering if we can just say the broader is not for the SFA, and that we would just put it on the agenda that we will discuss it, but it doesn't go on the SFA. Then we just have the timing section to go on which seems more logistical to me. That way we can wrap up the good work and continue.

Comment

Similarly, my comments about ungulate needs and perspectives and whether it's a good fit or not, doesn't dismiss it's a need. That, in my mind, is part of discussion for tomorrow. When we branch into other topics, part of it will be useful for post-recovery solutions. It's a good one to start with. I don't want to dismiss it or send a message that I'm dismissing. It's important to talk about but in a different umbrella.

Comment

Thank you. I'll also send the notes out to you after the meeting so you can use them as a reference. Anything else before opening up to public comment? Then we'll check out and reconvene tomorrow.

**No Objections**

**Public Comment & Meeting Adjourned**



**Wolf Advisory Group  
April 8, 2021, Meeting Notes  
Zoom Meeting (Day 2)**

**WAG members:** Tom Davis, Dave Duncan, Diane Gallegos, Todd Holmdahl, Lynn Okita, Dan Paul, Rick Perleberg, Lisa Stone, and Caitlin Scarano

**WDFW staff members:** Candace Bennett, Dan Brinson, Ben Maletzke, Donny Martorello, Steve Pozzanghera, Annemarie Prince, Grant Samsill, Trent Roussin, and Julia Smith

**WDFW Commissioners:** Molly Linville and Lorna Smith

**US Forest Service:** Robert Garcia

**Facilitator:** Rob Geddis

**Welcome and check-in**

Rob welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda for the day.

**Meeting Purpose**

Share Department updates, seek acceptable language for a Special Focus Area (SFA) section in the Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol, and get group guidance on protecting time for topics other than the protocol.

**Comment**

I was going to recommend the Department give updates, like rulemaking, then the next topic should be questions for the group. Should we protect time to discuss topics other than protocol? Then after that, we continue discussion on SFAs and continue the good work done yesterday. That's the proposed plan and I'll put in breaks and lunch as usual. Any concerns or comments on the agenda?

**Comment**

On the SFAs, are we going to go through the language or is the goal to come up with a set of principles like yesterday? I feel like we are close with the principles, so I'd love to finish that, if possible.

**Comment**

That'll be one of my questions for the group. I think I want to ask the group at that time. Does Department staff want to provide updates that we were not able to get to yesterday?

**Comment**

You bet. I think we have a rulemaking update and an update on recent depredation activity. We have a different group of staff today also, so this is going to feel a little out of sync with what was said yesterday. As the commissioners spoke to, they have a directive. We are tasked with working with the Commission through that process and, as we thought

about that, there will be three prongs to this: Actual rule, the SEPA component on that rule, and likely a small business impact statement.

With the draft rule component, we know there's going to be folks deeply engaged and very concerned about it and the implications. They'll be involved in the APA process of public testimony, whether oral or written. Rather than waiting for that stage where folks are reacting to a CR-102, let's call folks before we even draft the draft rule. We did that. We reached out to many different folks, Department staff, Commissioners, WAG members, petitioners, other citizens... These were classic intakes. We decided to do this together because we're all human beings. We had two folks listening and capturing nuggets we heard and took notes. Opportunity to hear what folks are thinking before we put pencil to paper. We asked three general questions: What are their expectations of the rule? What concerns do you have? What process advice do you have for us in terms of drafting the rule? We had 34 intakes with, I think, 42 different folks (a couple of them we had multiple people on the phone). I couldn't stress enough how useful it is to hear those perspectives. We essentially have 34+ hours of public input to help guide us in drafting that.

Communicating with the Wolf Committee of the Fish and Wildlife Commission, they like the summary on the post-recovery plan where she took comments heard and reported back to the Commission with all the detail if they want to dive in. We did that on Monday, April 5, we attended a Wolf Committee meeting and provided summary on those intakes. Then we walked them through the process, gave a summary of what we heard, and then providing the full ones because it's very useful. Then we distilled down the nuggets and provided a recommendation to the Committee on what we think the rule should focus on, that CR-102. Our recommendation to the Wolf Committee is the rule should focus on SFAs. Hearing all the intakes and various components on all this, the items from the letter from Governor Inslee, the process that the WAG has done, the protocol and the plan and all that, we felt that the path forward is to focus where the bulk of this conflict occurs. The protocol has been serving us well.

With that being the recommendation, we thought about a process that is greater stakeholder-involved; a process where the Department would draft and share with stakeholders, the Wolf Committee, WAG, and others. Our recommendation was the latter because on SFAs, you all have worked this hard for nearly two years. A huge investment of time. So, it felt like we had done that process with a diverse stakeholder group. It didn't seem the best use of time to do that process again, so the proposed process we said was a small team of staff would draft the rule, we would share that with the Wolf Committee for feedback or direction, we'd share that with this advisory group for feedback, and we would also be available to share that with stakeholders in the virtual world we live in now. We would take all that we hear and incorporate items in that draft rule best we can, then forward that with SEPA and small business economic statement becomes CR-102. That was the recommendation we gave to the Wolf Committee and they said we could move forward, so we will move forward and have a small internal group draft that first draft of the rule that you all will see later on in the process. Now I will pause for any corrections to what I said or any feedback?

Comment

I think that was a perfect summary. Nothing to add but to thank the members of the public on rulemaking. We've heard you and let's keep the discussion going.

Comment

I'm wondering if we could check in with our conflict staff on the latest work they're doing – anything not shared yesterday. And then we could talk about recent depredation.

Comment

I can just briefly go over some stuff. This is the time of year that we start prepping our range rider deployment. That being said, we do have a group that's slightly different from previous years where it includes both NGOs (non-governmental organizations) in northeast Washington and DFW staff to discuss the tentative deployment of range riders and where the budget is at. We've had two meetings and should be having another at the end of the month to start firming up which organ will be providing range riding services. So, just a more concerted effort across all NGOs for range riding services. We just look at the spreadsheet and figure out who has the capacity and knowledge and historically where producers have been receptive to those specific types of range riders. That's moving along.

Also, usually March or April are times we meet with livestock producers, so I have 12 meetings scheduled with more to come. There's also incorporation in the eastern portion in District 1, eastern Steven's County, incorporations in NGOs, and sometimes range riders jump in meetings as well to have first-season discussion, and to set out a plan about when and how many. In some cases, there is participation from the Sheriff's Office or the Forest Service, so it depends on meetings. We have tentative plans for when grazing starts to occur. Stalking hasn't started but, depending on the weather, once the grass starts growing, those will start to stalk up. We've also been working on WDFW range riding qualifications. That should be going out next week. This is to contact potential range riders, interest for range riders to renew or do another contract with WDFW. Some of the changes in there we made included a pay increase more reflective of what other NGOs are paying the range riders, more information on track logs, etc. We already talked about pilot projects from yesterday, but also in those producer meetings we will re-adjust pack locations for data sharing. So those are some things and then we'll fill you in on depredation after other updates.

Comment

I can follow up on the RFQ (request for qualifications). Great job summarizing. I do want to bring up an important item addressed in that RFQ and that is the definition of a range rider. We updated the RFQ in providing the language in the protocol, so you'll see the same duty description on what a range rider does is also in the RFQ.

Comment

In Togo and Kettles, I'll be one of the primary staff implementing and possibly executing these agreements and plans. Leading up to this, I've really not been included in these discussions or it's been happening above my level, so yesterday was a good time to call in, tune in, and learn things for the first time in what I'll be doing this season. I'll echo what

was said, just working on planning, collaborating, some NGOs (non-governmental organizations), meeting with producers, trying to prep for this season.

#### Comment

We received some information from a producer in the Leadpoint pack about a different producer that keeps a small herd of cattle in the valley in the Leadpoint territory. On March 26, early that morning, there was a concern about a bull that had injuries. Myself and an officer went out to conduct a depredation investigation and the Sheriff's Office was unavailable that morning. We went out to look at the bull, which was approximately 1500 lbs. with vertical marks on the side of its body, definitely not indicative of a wolf depredation, so it was classified as non-depredation. But while out there, we did notice that a calf from last year – they have a mixed herd of Dexters, Angus, random scattering – we noticed that one calf from last year about 400-500 lbs. The animal had missing a tail and blood on the inner thigh. So, we put that animal in the chute and took a look at it, ruled it as a probable wolf depredation. The injuries were fairly new, probably happened within a 24-hour period. There's multiple pastures this producer has, and they also lease forest area in approximately five different locations. Where the cattle were mostly located were within a pen where they were fed at, but the gate was open, and they could leave into a larger pasture. The cattle would kind of migrate back and forth.

In this location, the previous year we had reports of potential wolves in the area coming across the field, so we came out and put fladry up throughout the year. It was completely surrounded again in December. Also, foxlights were provided to producers. When we waited to meet up with the landowner, we identified at least one set of tracks that were likely wolf related. Based on producer-provided concerns of other interactions with wolves, potentially the first part of December and end of January with one of their domestic dogs, we moved the water within the two-acre pasture and closed that gate up which also has a hot wire around it as well. We have been working with the producer by fortifying their fence.

#### Comment

I thought you were going to cover the deterrent measures.

#### Comment

Working the producer, I just saw a DPCA-L (Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement - Livestock) with that livestock producer come through last night or this morning on the fencing, so what we'll do is place welded wire on the forested side so the cattle don't have to stay confined to the pasture. We'll also be putting more fortified combination of barbed wire and fencing to electrify the different sides of those pastures. We also moved those cattle for the short term into a more protected area. They're also contacting one of our WDFW range riders to provide assistance in the evenings if they need additional help or evenings that they weren't going to be there to keep eye on cattle. They had two little ones who just dropped so they will have 10-15 dropping probably any day. I need to connect with her today about the DCPA-L. Anything else?

#### Comment

Our district wolf team, we talked about potentially using our trapping effort as a deterrence measure. There is research to indicate the act of trapping may deter wolves from pastures such as this. We need to put a collar in this pack anyways because last year, a collar dispersed. So to help us mitigate anyways, we thought we would use that collaring activity like attempting to trap or multiple animals in the pastures where these depredations occur with hopes that trapping activity acts as a negative stimuli, at least for wolves that are caught or with a wolf caught to deter. These are techniques that are not fully vetted. There is research. Just like fladry or foxlights, we are trying new and creative ideas and hoping this works. I went out last week after her depredation investigation and we walked the pasture and placed some cameras so we can monitor for the next week or so to see how frequently the wolves are coming into the bottom valley pastures. If so, we'll set traps and collar an animal or two and see if that's effective.

Comment

When we talked about this with District team recommendation, we wanted to buy ourselves some time, so having the cattle in the smaller pasture while we were waiting on fencing money and volunteers to build... Some techniques we are just trying to buy some time. We have a small location and a cooperative producer, until the other fences for the other pastures are built.

Comment

Thanks for that update. You mentioned something about the Sheriff Department involvement. I haven't heard anything in a while, and I wondered what their role is.

Comment

We've been directed in northeast Washington that every time there's a depredation that we coordinate. With the special depredations, and then we also still do monthly coordination meetings with the Pend Oreille Sheriff's Office. We've been coordinating on every depredation.

Comment

What does 'coordinating' mean? Are they playing a role with the group on this?

Comment

Yes, so for example, in this circumstance, information came through email to WDFW. If it doesn't come through county dispatch, which is sometimes the case, if the county wasn't notified before us, we have been directed to reach out to the Sheriff's Office and let him know this depredation investigation, we're about to coordinate. For example, I called the Sheriff's Office and told them that there's a report of a potential bull depredation and asked, "Are you available to go out?" Normally they're in the field with us conducting the investigation, but there have been times they goes out without us. Does that answer your question?

Comment

But then are you getting the information from him when they do them?

Comment

Sometimes they provide the information. They don't provide a report, usually just a voicemail or call to one of us.

Comment

I wanted to follow up on a question because I didn't quite hear. Are there discussions when the Sheriff's Office is doing investigations and not notified DFW on the opportunity to participate in the investigation?

Comment

Yes, it's rare, but there have been times where the Sheriff's Office has gone out before notifying DFW, conducting a partial or full investigation and notifying us later. I can count a few times they've gone out, but normally we're notified some time afterwards. We obviously don't know what we don't know.

Comment

I was wondering who has directed the Department to contact the Sheriff's Office?

Comment

We are working hard at maintaining and developing a relationship with the local Sheriff. And as of part of that relationship, the coordination has been very important going both ways. The expectation is that the county will be coordinating with the Department and the Department will be involved with that depredation investigation. Similarly, if we receive a report, we are reaching out to the county and letting them know so they can also take a role on the depredation investigation. We recognize there has been a lot of discussion relative to the degree with which different landowners choose to work with the county over DFW, whether that's depredations or range riding. We are trying to develop as strong a support base and coordination base in northeast Washington and strongly believe the best way to do that is to coordinate with the local sheriffs. So, I think that direction would come from myself, managers in the Wildlife Program, the Director himself. There are multiple sources of direction being provided. We can't be successful in northeast Washington if we're a lone ranger.

Comment

Thank you. One other question: if the Sheriff's Department reports a depredation, does a Department staff member also respond and investigate?

Comment

If we are including depredation that are associated with a particular pack, that work has been done and that work has been reviewed, identified, confirmed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Please feel free to correct me if that's not the case. I'm trying to think of an independent investigation, where we said the county evaluated this and this is the information going with. I'm not aware of that situation being played out, but we can always improve coordination. I'm not aware of a situation where we are not included in some

aspect of a particular depredation.

Comment

There have been times the Sheriff's Office has gone out and DFW has not been there. Has it been wolf-related? Not to my knowledge. But there have been plenty of times with cougar depredation and other types of depredation where DFW was never on the scene. But I do say there is an effort this information gets to DFW about depredations. We make a concerted effort to build that effort but there have been times that for whatever reason WDFW was not involved.

Comment

I want to circle back, to make sure I heard clearly. You said the Department has investigated all wolf depredations, correct?

Comment

Yes, that I'm aware of. I cannot think of one that we, even after the fact, haven't investigated.

Comment

Okay, so that would mean there aren't any strikes against wolves that haven't been investigated by the Department?

Comment

No, but if someone wants to jump in. But not to my knowledge.

Comment

Thank you both. Topic shift – in my intakes and talking to members, there was frustration that we're spending so much time with protocol and we are not spending appropriate time on other topics. Other topics I hear the most are post-recovery planning and ungulates, maybe doing some mutual learning and what we know/what's going on with ungulate estimates. I wanted to put space in the WAG to give members opportunity to share, then we as a group can ask ourselves, "Do we need to do better protecting our time? Are we out of balance?" Wanted to open up for any WAG members to share thoughts.

Comment

I want to say thank you to the Department for covering that update. Again, just to press about the conflict work going on... That's very urgent and has to happen so it's good to see progress there. There are opportunities for us to look at the other areas and better understand the predator-prey relations. Wolves are here to stay; we want them part of the ecosystem so how do we make sure the rest of the ecosystem is good too? A lot of hunters out there are interested as well, so getting the data together on that is important. The predator-prey relationship will be interesting to dive into that. We should have a vision of what post-recovery looks like, as maybe that will help us in our rulemaking as we go forward. This is what we want to do with wolves in Washington and all animals in Washington, and maybe that can help us give some level of alignment and criteria. The

more criteria you have, and you agree upon, the more helpful in making decisions. So that's my thinking.

#### Comment

I wanted to respond to the question of balance of time, SFAs versus other topics. I don't really understand what the goal is, as in, what the product is for SFAs? Are we trying to finish the statement? Are we trying to come up with guidelines? Are we trying to identify the agreements versus disagreements? What is our goal? I think that determines how much time and the timeline we should reserve for this.

#### Comment

In that big umbrella, that space for other things, there are two that I'd like for us to think about. First, not a surprise, we are begging for space to talk about post-recovery planning. I'll just say we're working on important stuff so I'm not feeling negative on it, we've all been working hard. We really need to dive into post-recovery. We're at a spot now where we have to move. We really need to get into that conversation. The other thing is I do think there is a need in that umbrella. I do think the hunter community has been more than patient as we've been on wolf livestock stuff since 2014. They've been patient and we haven't given a lot of dialogue to that and we need to. I think it falls into post-recovery conversation, as it can be mutual learning to fall into post-recovery. In that realm, we have a major cooperative project with UW (University of Washington) on the Predator-Prey Project and looking at predator-prey things in the Blue Mountains. That includes some survival analysis and neonates. That's the other one I would put some stars on as something to create space for.

#### Comment

Thank you, I want to concur with that. I do think the SFAs are very important and we are to a point where, I think, we've had success on moving forward and I recognize timeframes. But I am one of the people frustrated. I feel like at this point we've spent a year and a half on SFAs and it's difficult to engage in these meetings because I don't have much to say about livestock or SFAs, so I wanted to express my frustrations with that. I am looking forward to post-recovery discussions. The predator-prey may not seem significant to some on WAG, but we hunters think it's important. This is something I want you guys to ponder and realize we are trying to be patient, but I've been on here for a long time and we haven't had much to talk about.

#### Comment

I apologize for not making yesterday and not hearing the Director's comments. Where are we with SFAs right now? Are we going to get a tangible guidance? It would be helpful to reset for me to understand.

#### Comment

I understand and if it's okay with you, when we switch topics to SFAs, I'd like to reset us all before we jump back in. Is that okay?



Comment

Yes.

Comment

Alright, any more thoughts on balance of time?

Comment

I think the agency has a lot of projects that are going to inform WAG's direction. Not only is there upcoming modeling work from UW that will inform us about how far along we are in recovery. We've got the Predator-Prey Project going and answering a lot of questions asked. Sometimes it feels it's not acknowledged that WDFW is putting a lot of effort into answering big questions. Again, about wolf population viability and ungulates in the northeast. Also, rulemaking is happening that is about wolf livestock conflict. And post-recovery planning is about all of those things. But many of the questions you think about in post-recovery planning are not about biology and not about predator-prey; they're about social values. That's WAG's role and wheelhouse. So, I would say wait for those things to come out, wait to see results of the Predator-Prey Project, wait to see UW's results. All of those will inform post-recovery planning.

Comment

I appreciate that update. I know the Predator-Prey thing is in April from UW, and I'm assuming the population modeling is, but having the timeline on those things would be great. There's a ton of work going on and if you see it on paper you can just see all the work being done. Maybe it's on the website but it would be great to get all down on piece of paper. Thank you.

Comment

I agree, getting that stuff out. But heads up, the Predator-Prey Project is an ongoing project, and grad students are working on publications from that. But the predator-prey results will start trickling out this next year and it may take some time to get results and analysis finished up. The population modeling – our first draft of that status review for wolves will be out end of April. We will be working with UW and refining that model and final results will be the end of the summer if I'm right. But first draft in April.

Comment

The video is awesome, by the way. Great work.

Comment

Thank you.

Comment

Okay, so what I'm taking from this is there is opportunity to take time, but I want to still get your guidance on finding the right balance.

**Break**

Comment

What I thought I'd do to help us with this topic is attempt to answer questions from three of our members: What is our goal? Is it principles or is it text language? And then also helping folks catch up on what are we trying to achieve.

What are we trying to achieve? Well, we have this protocol and that protocol represents WAG consensus, guidance for the Department, to minimize conflict wolves and livestock, and that document WAG attempts to represent values across our state, and if we have consensus it will be an enduring. The past few years there are locations in our state where depredation happen repeatedly, and we've asked WAG members, "Can we add guidance for the Department?" and how to focus in on chronic areas and reduce the need to kill wolves and reduce the attacks on livestock. So, I think the goal was to create the language that will supplement the existing protocol. We've been working the last year and a half and we have a draft, but we don't have sufficient agreement. This is our last meeting before grazing season kicks off. One idea from the previous meeting was if we're not sure we're in efficient consensus, then in the meantime can we at least come up with guidelines or principles to give the Department guidance for this grazing season?

Yesterday we attempted to pull out key topics from the draft text we've been working on. Then we were asking WAG members which of those they agree on, so you'll see a set under "agreement" and which of those we are still discussing. So, now getting to the question, how far do we want to take this today? I think the initial goal is to seek agreement on the guidelines as you see in the notes and then it's a check-in with the WAG if we want to take it further. I guess what I'm offering is first see if we can get guidelines we can agree on, then decide as a group if we want to develop that further or if that another discussion in the future. Any WAG member have a different vision on what we're trying to achieve?

## **No Objections**

Comment

Okay, then did that answer your question?

Comment

It did. I think I have a second question which is what happens if we don't land where we should land today? Will this be punted to another meeting later? What needs to happen for that to be enforced? I know we're allowing for the process, but I would argue that allowing this open dialogue may be degrading our process.

Comment

I think you summarized it well and did great expressing the need. It does seem we get  $\frac{3}{4}$  way there and then we have to restart in each meeting. It's been a year and a half.

Comment

Before we start, can we say what our end goal is? And how we're going to hold each other accountable so it's not just punted to another meeting? What is the goal we're going

toward for SFAs? I don't think we're getting joint approval so what do we need to do today if we don't want this to continue to the next WAG meeting?

Comment

I think what I have in mind based on where we're headed, is in our notes from yesterday we have a set of ideas where we appear to have agreement with WAG members. I think our goal for today is to populate that agreement section with as much as we can. And then whatever is in that agreement section, that's the guidance that the Department uses for their actions this season. That's my interpretation for the near-term goal. Populating that agreement section, that's the guidance for the Department and they use that as a template. Subsequently, we as a group discuss what is next after we come up with this "agreed" section? Any reaction from WAG members in my attempt to answer that?

Comment

If we're focusing on agreement, then if we discover a disagreement, are we not going to spend time diving into those topics?

Comment

Yes, we will spend time on them because when you heard the Director yesterday, it's valuable when WAG has agreement, but when there's disagreement it is valuable to know why, or what the points of disagreement are. So, for those topics at least capturing why we have disagreement is also an objective.

Comment

Everything we work on is of high value, every nugget, every word. It seems like we have two things in play: we have the draft Section 9 from the last meeting that's got a definition of SFA, a goal statement, discussion about local groups, and then we've got agreements that we put upstairs yesterday. The new one would be the "collar" nugget. That feels like stuff that's had a thorough discussion and we got across the line. And then we can continue onto the other ones as guidelines. That your recommendation to the Director can be guidelines; it doesn't have to be protocol-looking, language massaged, all that. It can be a bulleted list of guidelines. That form is fine.

Comment

Let me throw the notes we were working on yesterday then propose our next steps from there. I didn't change these at all from yesterday. Up here is the agreement section and as we go down, we have topics still being considered. The "two collars on wolves within an SFA" really captures a lot of the discussion, but I think the group came to an agreement for a summary statement up above. Then we had another topic for discussion on timing. I think you wanted to find a nugget to show that the Director has asked his staff to propose timelines for decisions. The last one we're wrestling with was our focus on SFAs, being too focused on wolves and not considering ecosystems at large. We have not really come to agreement for guidance for the Department so that's my attempt at orientation. Thoughts?

Comment

Just wanted to say that that piece that says “limit” should say “minimize.”

Comment

I guess my proposal is 1) checking in to see if that got him caught up and 2) recommend we address timing first, similar to what was done yesterday. I’m going to pause for any hands before I go forward on that proposal.

Comment

I wanted to respond on the change just made. I was going back to the January version of Section 9 and the wording there was “*reduce* the need for removal,” rather than “minimize.” I don’t know if that’s consequential, but it is different, so I just wanted to highlight that. So, is it minimize or reduce? Those words have different meaning.

Comment

I’m good with that, I think we should be consistent.

Comment

Regarding this language, Governor Inslee’s letter says, “to significantly reduce the need.” That was the language in his letter in 2019.

Comment

I can’t let that pass. I don’t report to the governor, WAG doesn’t report to the governor. He can have his own opinion, but I strongly infer that the language in the governor’s letter does not sway what we as an independent group put, as far as language choices into this document.

Comment

Yeah, it’s a good dialogue. There’s the bridging of the various perspectives and needs. I think what we have is a good blend of those. At some point it’s semantics but I’m trying not to focus too much on words. But we’re all in a spot where the fewer wolves and cows killed, the better. We all wish that was zero. The way we left the language provides that balance without getting into wordsmithing. So “minimize depredations, reduce lethal removal” in a guiding principle, I think that captures it.

Comment

Since I was not here yesterday, I’m outside looking in on this list. It seems like in the agreement section, most of it we’ve come to a place that is a significant addition to the protocol. It looks like good conversation, but I don’t see a lot of tangible additions that will be made from this. So, is this exercise just to spin our wheels or is there something beyond five agreement areas that cover the scope of the rule that we haven’t agreed to?

Comment

I thought about that too. I think it is a good lift, I think it’s really value added, as it recognizes we’ve got areas where there’s repeated depredation/lethal removal, and we

can focus on those areas and do better. Then it branches to innovations and pilot projects and creative ideas and you see that list that staff have been working on and fostering with producers. And then empowering the local group is the boots on the ground. I do think for trying to do something on wild landscapes like this and the big conundrum this is, those are really value added. It's people doing things for the right reason and making a change on the landscape for the benefit of wolves and cows.

Comment

Is what we have in the agreement section sufficient for now? From the Department perspective, is that guidance that's useful to you? The other WAG members, is that sufficient for this season from your perspective? Is this good enough right now?

Comment

I'm comfortable with that.

Comment

Yes. Other staff speak up, but as I look through these things, yes.

Comment

It feels like we have what we need here; guidance, which is what the WAG is. It's advisory. Section E iv. is critical, it stops at the Director anyways. But there's enough for the staff to get creative with nonlethals and deterrents in place.

Comment

To me, a goal should be where you want it to go. And I don't have a problem with that, we are allowing this group to monitor. From there, we are limited to what they can look at. This is where I struggle with the wildlife part; we are just assuming that part has no value at all. We don't look at it. To me, when we wrote this goal, we need to look at that because it's one of the causes, and I'm tired of being shuffled into the corner about what the causes are. Yesterday we were told the Department has that information. I don't think they have it by district, let alone by GMU, and these chronic areas are maybe even smaller than a GMU. Can you tell me or show me the 20-year curve on moose populations? I suggest we try to do something on population today. One of the most important things to keep the wolves on the landscape is to have an excellent predator base for them. We are ignoring that and telling this group what to do and it just flew against what I know when it comes to solving problems.

Comment

I was trying to recall the discussion yesterday. You were coaching all of us to consider these topics through lenses, such as, "it's bigger than a wolf livestock interaction, what's the prey base?" I think we were talking about the values of a local community group and how that is one of their considerations. We didn't necessarily put words in there to that effect, but if that is valuable, maybe think about words we could add that prompt this group to make that consideration. I just offer that to you based on what I recall from yesterday discussion.

Comment

I would hope that if you did that wasn't a problem. That's our main thing is to have those wolves on the landscapes. If we don't have an adequate prey base, we don't have wolf habitat. And maybe they clean out one area and go to another, they look suspicious right now in the Kettle. The population of wolf has changed north and south. What caused that? Those are things we need to put to bed and sort out. We can't just rely on range riders and all these kinds of things. If our goal is what it says, then we need to look at all causes.

Comment

This list of agreement, it sounds like where the group landed was rather than wordsmithing, if we can capture these areas of agreement, we ask staff to go back and include these agreements on Section 9. Is that correct?

Comment

Yeah, there's a nuance here so I want to make sure I'm clear. Yes, the intent I think is providing these bulletized guidance for staff to use to guide their actions this season. I don't think we specifically said we are going to write it into Section 9 protocol at this point. I haven't asked this question so that's where I hesitate.

Comment

Okay, so it is odd, I guess, or it's different to think about the amount of time and effort going into building that section of the Livestock Interaction Protocol for the result to be a bulleted list. Which, if that is implementable and the group is okay with that, then I'm on board. It's odd to me we are looking at it as a conduit. I'm wondering if it had been asked to respond to the definition component of an SFA, "lethal removal in the last two years"? Staff perspective, does that encompass what we believe resources should be focused on?

Comment

Does the definition include private grounds or just public grounds?

Comment

From my perspective, the information is good, and I have a good understanding of the SFA. So, having data or understandings of the ungulate populations. At least requiring you have a part of the problem solving that needs to be included in the agreed upon stuff, I'm good with that.

Comment

I think on the question about public or private, we've had that conversation a couple of times over the last two years and have not discerned land ownership. I think it's both. The statement is what it is, it doesn't discern between ownership. That's my recollection from past conversations. Hearing perspectives and needs, I don't know that ungulate policy goes into this guidance. It's a bit of a stretch, but I'm not de-valuing that. I think that is real and I want to pursue that, but I don't know it's in that A-through-E bullet points. That would create a major policy change for the Department, but I don't want that conversation to

end. I want us to make space for it to dive into that. But I'm wondering if we can put on the agreement list – this goes back to what staff said yesterday – have the group that's working on this in their assessment to describe what's known about the prey base.

Comment

For those not able to see, I'm highlighting and adding "ask group to describe what's known about the prey base." Does that help your need?

Comment

No. That doesn't help fix the goal unless you take some action on it. If that group says there's not enough prey base, will we just ignore it? In that case, it doesn't fit the goal. We need to say a little more there. If the prey base is way down, and that's one of the causes of it, action needs to be taken. I'm not there.

Comment

Thanks, that's why we ask.

Comment

Thank you for sharing that. I'll use an example; there is that process step that happens with the agency. For example, our district biologists and many others look at that prey base question a lot and compare it to guidance, including wolf and predator-prey section and the harvest data, research data, etc. When we think the prey base is being impacted – that actually occurs and that is occurring in the Blue Mountains right now. I don't think this is the right place for that. That exists in a game management plan that ties together predator and prey dynamics. I don't know that that ungulate policy goes into this Section 9. It's bigger than that. I agree with you that is needed but it lives under a different umbrella. The example of that is what you just described is occurring in the Blue Mountains.

Comment

Circling back to reframe this, this is not a punitive action; this is additive. We should know about the prey base but if there were lethal removals in the last two years, they are an area that needs help. We are just adding resources to the area. We need to keep that framed.

Comment

Going back to the flyby how many years ago, there were a lot of moose in the north Kettles. Today you can't find a cow moose in September. If I look at data out of Wyoming, species hit the hardest was the moose. Look at GMU 108 in District 1, there was an excellent moose population that is not there anymore. We've had a lot of excuses as to why that happens from the Department, but if you go back to the Kettles, they do exist in pretty good numbers. We need to look at that. There's enough data to say something caused this. I'm not saying it was all wolves. I believe in the north Kettles that wolves took the blame since the cougar referendum, the populations took a dive, the moose population took a dive, and the wolf has taken the blame because we do not have an

integrated predator-prey program in the state. The Department denies that we even have a prey problem in some areas and unless we go explore, we can't put that to bed. We are just saying in our goal that we are going to minimize lethal removal of wolves and we're going to ignore one of the potential causes. I think I'm being danced around and I'm not happy about it.

#### Comment

I want to speak about the Department making excuses for moose. That's not true. We did a research process where we put collars on cow moose in 2013 in a northern study area and a southern study area which was around Mount Spokane. In Mount Spokane, throughout the study period, there were no wolves. There are still no wolves. The north had at least two packs: The Dirty Shirt pack and the Carpenter Ridge pack. We followed the moose, followed calves around – we didn't collar moose calves – and what we found was calf survival in both study areas. So, we dove in and found body condition was pretty low in both areas. Pregnancy rates were low which is known to happen with poor body condition. We fully admitted that wolves probably were responsible for eating calves in the northern study area. But there weren't wolves in the southern area. I've never made any excuses why moose are a certain way. I want to clarify that. I'm more than happy to send that paper to the group when it does get published.

#### Comment

I wonder – without assigning blame – if we're looking at this as an SFA when it comes to wildlife, how to address this. I don't know how to word this but adding "other Department staff may need to be notified if there's an issue" or something. I look at the SFA, yes, it is a livestock wolf issue, but there obviously could be other mitigating circumstances so it might give the Department staff to look at different areas that they haven't in the past. I'm not assigning blame at all, there just could be something going on that no one knows about.

#### Comment

I'll elaborate a little more on where we are on elk assessment in the Blue Mountains and potential carnivore work moving forward with what we are seeing. There is now a southeast Washington stakeholder group formed. It includes a commission from each Blue Mountains county, and then an interested or concerned stakeholder. It's a small group, an eight-member stakeholder group and team of Department staff led by ungulate and carnivore researchers, district biologists, other Game Division staff. Beginning this spring, we will collar elk calves, and that work should continue the next two springs, minimum. We also will be looking at and working toward questions associated to cougar populations in the Blue Mountains and cougar predation, and that herd having calf recruitment issues. We are taking a deep dive in predator-prey interaction in the Blue Mountains, as discussed. We are in the analysis phase of the northeast, not specific to the Kettles area, but there will be a number of pieces of information that we can learn from the Predator-Prey Project in the northeast. We are interested in these questions. We are not turning a blind eye; we are addressing these issues.



#### Comment

I'm tickled to death about what you're doing in the Blues. I've been trying to get something like that to happen. I know it's difficult and money is tough, but we should be doing that in SFAs and potential SFAs. You can even say where I live is potential because we've got two to three wolf packs and I've had cougars on top of me all winter. I've lived here 35 years; elk population is good except recruitment is down 14% according to the Department. I'm not sure it's the wolves' fault but if we're going to have wolves here, we need to maintain a prey base. This Blues thing is exactly what I'd like to see happen. But I think we need to do more of it. Especially in areas where we have a hard time counting prey, difficult areas to monitor. That's why I suggested yesterday doing survival on neonates as a way to see if our herds are going up or down. But thank you for what's happening in the Blues.

#### Comment

To respond to the Blue Mountains work going on right now, I'm part of the internal group working on it. We are taking a deep dive and looking at everything from a bad winter in 2016-17, the first kind of drop of the population, and trying to build since then. But we look at the fires, the impact on habitat there. Looking at landowner tolerance, we know there were a lot of depredation tags issued in the past in those areas. And we're taking a deep dive to find out what impacts each of those components has on the population and what contributes but also how the population rebounds. A lot of folks' focus is on the carnivore issue, but there are a lot more issues to focus on to get the population to rebound. We hope for good weather and are trying to balance all that stuff. Looking at a deeper dive, I think it's important to consider all the factors that influence that.

#### Comment

Thank you. Our goal here is: "What guidelines can we give?" We have highlighted words trying to address concerns, we're sharing a lot of background information, addressing studying predator-prey, and then I come back to this wording here. What would be helpful to the Department this season but also address concerns? What words can help? What words help address members of WAG?

#### Comment

After a day, I couldn't think of something. I agree with what was talked about, we hopefully have the prey base out there. All we have to do is put the blame game down and really be able to answer the questions. Just be able to talk about looking at north and south of the Kettles. They both have the same weather, are subject to the same environmental problems, and there's a big difference in the amount of prey base with different management. We can't get into that but if we had the Colville data, we should look at that. But we have to concentrate on this harder than we're concentrating on range riders and everything else in this document right here. We need to bear down on this if we are going to have success for wolves on the landscapes. If not, we won't have success for wolves or cattlemen or the hunting community. And I know this is difficult to do, but let's quit fighting about it and get out there and do it. How you want to word this, I don't know. To leave prey base out of that discussion doesn't fly with me. You need to look at everything that

may have caused it. We can't just point at one thing and say we're going to achieve this goal. I don't want to be the bad guy; I just want to have success.

Comment

I hear what you're saying. I think it's important. I don't think we'll be solving this in Section 9, I think it's outside of the scope of this section. I think the groups that get together to analyze the SFA will be discussing the prey base and what they can find out in a timely fashion. I think extended studies can't be accomplished in the scope of a season in an SFA, so I would just say I think we've discussed this extensively and it's time to move on so we can finish discussion the other pertinent things about Section 9.

Comment

I like that it acknowledges prey base. If there are concerns about prey base in the group, that is a cue to get that information to the broader Department that really dives into the science arena. I'm supportive of having that discussion at the local level. There may not be or there may be concerns on the prey base, so if so, pass it along with the broader agency. That is the bigger, broader agency that tackled what's going on with the Blue Mountains. It's about cross-walking concerns from this group to other arms of the agency.

Comment

We've had good discussion on this prey base concern. Maybe it's time to move on to other topics. I think my question is: are these bullets under agreement good enough for now? I wanted to check in and see if there's anything you want to add to this agreement section that's not there.

Comment

There isn't. I'm just suggesting we have a lot of things that are still to be considered. I want to get to those sometime today if possible.

Comment

On the SFA topic?

Comment

Correct.

Comment

Would you like to share the other SFA topics you'd like to discuss?

Comment

I'm not prepared to answer that, actually. I was just wanting us to move forward to anything that anyone wanted to talk about.

Comment

Oh, okay. I was thinking, have we had enough discussion where we go around the room and see if this section is good enough? Maybe we haven't found the right words, but is it

good enough? Any reaction to that?

Comment

I would rather wait until later to go around the room but that's my preference.

Comment

I'd be ready to go around the room to see where people stand. I think there was a lot of good discussion today and yesterday. I'd be open to consider that.

Comment

Here my proposal: Let's break for lunch and then what I'd like to ask for people to think about over lunch is whether they can support the current list or not. After lunch, let's start by asking where people's heads are, how many of us can support, and if not, what concerns are holding that person back? Any concerns with that?

### **No Objections**

Comment

I really appreciate all of you. This is really hard stuff and I really appreciate everything on that page. Coming from this group, it means so much. I just wanted to thank you before lunch. It's not perfect, but for the conundrum we have, I appreciate all of you that you tough it through this.

### **Lunch**

Comment

Let's look at the bullets we've identified. I think the bullets' purpose is guidance. Let's go around the room and see if we're at sufficient consensus to provide guidance to the Department, and if we're not there yet to capture why. Before I go around the room, I wanted to give opportunity for anyone that might have concerns about that approach.

### **No Objections**

Comment

I'm going to share my screen with the latest agreement language. I'm going to go around the room and probably use the same order we did with check-in for simplicity. The question is, can you live with this guidance going to the Department this season? Is it acceptable? Understanding it's not perfect.

Comment

Yes.

Comment

I think good work has been done on that. I don't see issues moving forward. It remains enough flexibility for the Department and some clear expectations for producers. I will say

that I'm in favor of moving forward on it, but I have heard from constituents that the whole SFA situation is something they're concerned about.

Comment

Yes, this could work.

Comment

This morning my answer was no, but I kind of would like to see a final document. I don't think we have a final document here. I'm leaning heavily toward accepting this. But I'd have to read the final document.

Comment

Yes.

Comment

I'm fine, this is the recommendation and guidance from WAG, so I prefer to just pass but I think you guys are moving at a great direction.

Comment

Yeah, I'm okay with the way everything is worded here.

Comment

I'm also okay.

Comment

Yes.

Comment

Yes.

Comment

Yes.

Comment

Yes.

Comment

I really don't know how to answer that question. If I said yes, there would be a big asterisk after the word. I think we're heading in right direction. So maybe I'll leave comments as we continue to discuss this. I'm a bit troubled that we're – it's hard because we're virtual – asking so many Department staff what they think about this when it is a WAG discussion. So, that's part of my asterisk.

Comment

Can you go through the WAG members?

Comment

Yeah, I can. I'm checking my list. I think I've gone through everybody that's here but essentially seven are missing, at least from this check-in. Did I miss anybody from WAG? From my perspective it's important for Department staff to be part of the conversation, especially when we're asking about the guidance helping them. But I apologize if that was a process fault.

Comment

WAG members that are not a part of the Department; Most of them are saying yes, they can live with this, question marks for a couple. So, in effort to capture those questions marks or flesh them out, can I ask for help to describe the concern for the group to see if it's something we can address now or not?

Comment

Generally speaking, I like the direction and appreciate the conversation. Not having the bulk of the producer representatives on the call today is troubling to me. They're the experts I lean on. So that's part of the asterisk. These general statements I am comfortable with, but the devil is in the details. How they're applied by Department staff and decision making and as they're put on the ground. It comes back to conversations in the many months, on the producer side, that this is something that feels it's being done *to* them, in a time where if this is applied, all hell is broken loose where they are raising cattle. I'm just concerned it'll have to be done very wisely how this will be applied on the ground and work with producers. How do you take that and put it onto this piece of paper? How this will be applied is critical to the producers I represent. So that's why it's not an outright support for this document.

Comment

I appreciate that. I think you've done a great job explaining concern about predator-prey concern. Could you phrase your main concern that is keeping your asterisk mark?

Comment

Is this a final document or will it be word smithed? That is my concern, because I've seen wordsmithing change documents. Is what you have up here "it"? That's my concern.

Comment

Yeah, the words that are on the page right now.

Comment

There's probably some areas we need to word a little better. I don't know, I'll need to read this thing and see what we're really saying and in order to shake my head yes. I am sitting up on the fence but leaning toward yes. But not confident. This is a final document? Or is it not?

Comment

Well, I think when you say this is a final document, we are answering the question whether the words on the page right now are acceptable. Whether we want to do something with these words, I haven't asked that question. But can you live with the words on the page right now? I think someone had their hand up.

Comment

My understanding is that we're agreeing to the general concept stated here and that it was going to go to the Department to be refined because it's clearly not a finished product right now. Is that correct?

Comment

That sounds good. Other hands?

Comment

If you look back several years, in the WAG process you all have done the element like you see on the page right now. Then we would go back with our best effort so that when you read it in paragraph form, all this jumps out. It's your words, but it's in a sentence structure. We would go do that and, absolutely, we would kick this back to you and say, "did we capture this on the spirit of this particular page?" You would hold us accountable to make sure we captured your words. We would usually put in paragraph form but was can discuss that.

Comment

I would definitely say yes to giving this to the Department to try to come up with what we are saying here without any changes. Before I say yes, I have to read and think about the final document. That's where I'm at today.

Comment

I will pull up the WAG website under the mission tab where it talks about decision making. When I thought about absent members, I highlighted the part that specifically mentioned it: "Absent members have an opportunity to provide input and be heard fully by all members." That may be a good way to roll in the absent people who aren't here today, offering them the general concepts in paragraph form. Is that okay or am I missing a step?

Comment

That works. At this stage we would take this back and, emphasize, turn into paragraph form, kick back to all of you and the public. When I read this and it says, "to be heard fully by all members," we have that mandate permission from you to turn this into paragraph form, then we would kick this back to you very quickly. I'm thinking early next week we could orchestrate a quick conference call so other members can comment on that. Then we would try to move this one across the finish line.

Comment

I want to add to that. I think that process builds consensus and makes sure the words we put down today are transcribed into paragraphs.

Comment

A little bit on that process – I’m going back to past experience. I think at that stage, what I just described where we put these concepts onto paragraph stage... We’re at the stage of “did we really mess up here?” I just don’t want us to get back into another round of wordsmithing.

Comment

Okay. Sounds like the way ahead, I’m assuming because of the supportive vote we just had, it’s okay for us to give the Department to take to paragraph form, share with the group and setting up a conference call, giving members not here an opportunity to weigh in. Any objection with that process?

### **No Objections**

Comment

Okay, I see none. Did we just accomplish what we needed to for today? If so, I have some agenda future meeting topics to go over with you, but I will pause in case someone has something that we missed.

### **No Objections**

Comment

Alright, we went around the room to support the general concept or ideas that we want the Department to use for this season. We are using that supportive vote to then take those concepts and put it in paragraph form to make sure they capture agreed upon concepts. Then share that paragraph with the group, estimated early next week, share included members that aren’t here today, then set up a conference call with WAG members where we hopefully have another opportunity to judge, “did the paragraph the Department made significantly capture the ideas agreed upon?” And give opportunity in case of a fatal flaw. I hopefully did the next steps of the process justice, but any reaction to that?

Comment

We had another document we’ve been working on leading up to this meeting that we weren’t in full agreement. My ask is that staff use as much from the previous words as they can. Kind of a marriage of the two. I appreciate where we’re going on this and I like the idea of kicking it back to allow them to have comment.

Comment

Thank you for that. Yes, that is what we’ll do, we’ll take exactly the page shared on the screen now, incorporate it into paragraph form, and we will look to build sentence structure based on that familiar document and blend these together. We will get on that immediately, expect early next week. I will check with the team to make sure but emphasis on *fast track*. We will get rolling right now on these elements. We have no time to wait. If

you heard a little hesitation yesterday, we want to get that mandate and start forming groups, so if you're troubling with that please speak up now. I'm kindly asking your permission and mandate to move forward because days really matter right now.

Comment

Thank you. Any concerns with what was said?

### **No Objections**

Comment

So, I'm hearing permission to move forward working with that. Let's let members of the public offer their comments.

### **Public Comment & Meeting Adjourned**