

Wolf Advisory Group, April 7, 2021
Public Comment

David L

- He asked that we share the notes with the public.
- He's concerned about this local group making decisions about SFAs and what needs to be done. At 1st it was about the Dept. having conversations, and now it appears the group is getting some decision-making power.

Amaroq

- Both Dave Duncan and Todd Holmdahl gave input that they think the discussion and guidance on Special Focus Areas need a more holistic approach.
- We think a more holistic approach is needed regarding the Rule-making.
- Though an update on the Rule-making by the Dept to the WAG was on the meeting agenda for today, none was given. That being the case, I'd like to comment on one clear message given by the Dept during this Monday's public Wolf Committee meeting of the Commission. Which is that the Dept's aim and recommendation to the Commission is that the Dept draft rules only regarding Special Focus Areas and not on livestock-wolf conflict overall.
- This approach is puzzling, disheartening and misguided.
- This approach fails to take into account the need to do the one thing which is the most significant in its likelihood of deterring conflict and promoting coexistence: The need to be proactive.
- This approach fails to consider a number of key factors:
 - o It fails to consider that wolves will, hopefully, move into new areas of the state;
 - o It fails to set things up for success to identify where Special Focus Areas could arise in those new areas and thus work proactively to try to prevent that from happening;
 - o And it fails to consider that WA's Wolf Plan envisions wolf recovery to mean there *will* be wolves across the state.
- It's essential for there to be transparency, accountability and enforceability of how livestock-wolf conflicts can be deterred and addressed across the state and in as many circumstances as possible. A holistic approach to Rule-making, not just rules around Special Focus Areas, is necessary.
- In the Wolf Committee meeting on Monday, the Dept noted that the WAG has worked a lot on the Special Focus Areas and that focusing the Rule-making only on the Special Focus Areas will honor the work of the WAG members.
- It's our hope that the Dept bear in mind that the very need for Rule-making has arisen because over the past 8 ½ years, the WAG's process and products regarding wolves – which the Dept is to be recovering, conserving and managing in trust for ALL of the public – has not been sufficiently protective of wolves. And that the Dept has prioritized WAG process, WAG relationships, and trying to reach consensus among WAG members *over* science and *over* examining whether conclusions or proposed actions are based on valid premises.
- Given these circumstances, to hear that the Dept wants to do Rule-making only regarding Special Focus Areas, and that a key basis for this decision is to honor the WAG, says to us that

Wolf Advisory Group, April 7, 2021
Public Comment

the Dept is inappropriately elevating the WAG over the goals of the Wolf Plan and over honoring the entire public which the Dept serves.

- We ask the Dept to please do some soul-searching to fully grasp why Rule-making is needed. And that it must be holistic for you, as a public agency, to fulfill your obligation to all the public and to have the best conservation outcomes for wolves.

Dave H

- He was responsible for the 5-year volunteer stewardship plan for Ferry County.
- It incorporates interaction between agriculture and critical areas for endangered species.
- When he asked the Dept. for data about cost of agriculture to put non-lethals on the ground, the Dept. didn't have that data.
- Not everyone is able to take advantage of available money, nor do they have the capacity to take on additional non-lethal work.
- The county is teetering on agricultural land conversion, which will never come back.
- It's troubling to hear the Director say if people don't do their part, we're not going to help them out.
- He's concerned about agriculture producers having access to this process. There's never been a member of the WAG with that connection.

Sophia

- It's concerning that discussions aren't operating from factual scientifically proven data.
- It's frustrating to hear so much discussion about collaring, which ignores that the blue blob provides the most useful info for producers.
- Nothing is going to change until producers are held accountable for using non-lethals before killing wolves.

Judith

- Regarding Dave's and Tom's thoughts about taking a more holistic approach, she hopes the group will keep including that in the conversation.
- Rules will apply to the whole state, not just special focus areas.

Chris

- He reemphasize that the rule making goes far beyond SFAs.