

**Wolf Advisory Group
December 2, 2020, Meeting Notes
Zoom Meeting**

WAG members: Samee Charriere, Tom Davis, Dave Duncan, Diane Gallegos, Jess Kayser, Jessica Kelley, Bill Kemp, Lynn Okita, Dan Paul, Lisa Stone, Caitlin Scarano, and Paula Swedeen, Nick Martinez

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

US Forest Service: Robert Garcia and Travis Fletcher

Facilitator: Rob Geddis

Welcome and check-in

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

Review the agenda and make any adjustments

Rob presents the agenda to the group.

Meeting Purpose

Finish proposed protocol language for Special Focus Areas (formerly Chronic Conflict Zones).

Comment

I think where we left off last meeting is, we have a document with the proposed language. You should all have the reference points that were sent to you. Any member that wants to share what they thought after reviewing what we did last time?

Comment

I want to let folks know that, we sent what you all worked on (draft Section 9) to Director Susewind. He did look at it and gave some feedback. No surprise, he recognized the areas that you all want to work on some more. He acknowledged the difference in the title, so he noticed the change away from the chronic conflict zone. He said that it could be a shift that others aren't following, he just wants to make sure everyone understands why. He brought up the discussions with the governor's office and other things, and if we look like we're going in a different direction we need to address that. I told him we weren't, and he acknowledged that. He also recognized that it's important we define the SFAs. I told him we are still grappling with that, and how we approached the discussion. He just said that it's important we all have an understanding of these SFAs. He also immediately recognized, there's a part here where if the ball gets dropped so to speak it affects this. So, what happens if there's an SFA indeed and there's no proactive plan in

place, That can impact decision space. He said that's the department's job to make sure that's done. He owned that and said we'll make sure we get that done. He noticed the unglute language as well and recognized that within our known data and populations that those types of considerations are important but also acknowledged that it is data-limited.

Comment

The definition is important, which was the Director's main point. A little more on the unglute piece, you have resources in place to answer those questions but regardless of the outcome, we're not sure how that would affect those areas.

Comment

The last piece was an acknowledgment and discussion about what we're working on and what our process is. Also, the importance of building this thing and reaching out to the Commission's Wolf committee and the same thing with the Governor's office, we need to be inclusive of those perspectives so that what we're building works for the bigger audience.

Comment

I think that what hit me after the discussion was how to find the balance between a definition that's right enough where we all have the same understanding but not being so tight that there's a situation that doesn't work. I'm still struggling with that.

Comment

I was noodling around with different language. I'm trying to develop an approach and some language that addresses the concerns that we have in the underlying language with responsibilities. I'm looking for guidance after this meeting on what to do with that.

Comment

Sounds like you have ideas to share, is it something that would be useful to throw the text up during this meeting so everyone can see?

Comment

I'll leave that up to the group.

Comment

I'm struggling with this still. The people I talk to both hunters and cattlemen don't like it as is.

Comment

Any particular part that they don't agree with?

Comment

I think we're burdening the livestock producers more. The department has less authority in the way this is written.

Comment

I agree that the definition needs to be not too specific but also have meaning. When I was reading the document, I highlighted the second sentence that talks about defining SFAs.

That's a very broad statement. Why are we defining it all when we could just say any locale where there's conflict? The second sentence of the document seems to highlight the issue.

Comment

I think it's about that the time to throw the document up and talk about a few things members have to say. The part that I was going to mention, from an earlier conversation, it's not something we have handy right now, but we do have documentation of the number of depredation events that we've seen in packs over time. It wouldn't take very much to provide that as a resource to this group.

Comment

I'd like to comment on what was previously said about producers feeling like this document takes some authority away from the department. So, when we get to open the document, I would be curious to understand what specifically is being referred to. It sounds to me like it might be another example of there are sentiments out there about how folks are feeling with this document. I have heard producers say it feels punitive to them or a burden. Several of us in conservation have said the hopes of this document is to provide more resources to reduce the loss of livestock. I would like to look at pieces of the document that point to that language where we could change the wording or if there are ways to work through that.

Comment

As a starting point, let's highlight the sentence that was previously mentioned that states "SFAs may also be defined by specific locales within a pack territory where conflict with livestock is recurrent". Please share your ideas.

Comment

I rewrote the thing, with the shared goal of this section at the beginning point rather than defining what an SFA is. It's kind of apples and oranges at this point. This document and my document are very different.

Comment

I like the idea of a goal statement at the beginning. It helps to set the stage with what this is all about.

Comment

On that topic, when I look at this draft, you the group are playing with the goal statement that's in the middle. Do we want to move that upfront? Is bullet number one meeting that?

Comment

That is what I used as my initial point for the shared goal of this section.

Comment

At least, we can consider moving that goal to the front.

Comment

It was upfront originally, I'm happy with just moving it up rather than just adding a comment to move it.

Comment

I like what was said, I would be supportive of starting with a goal statement at the top. We did move things around before.

Comment

How about we take that sentence and move it up top or ask the group what they think?

Comment

I like the idea of just putting bullet number one up to set the context for that section and leaving the rest where it is.

Comment

I can share some of my edits. So, the shared goal for implementing an SFA is to limit livestock depredations in areas with repeated conflicts. I also talk about how an SFA is met or what are the conditions. As I said, I borrowed from another member's language suggestions. I put placeholders in the drafted work for discussion. I can send them to the staff so we can throw them up if time allows.

Comment

Any other thoughts on this section from members?

No responses

Comment

I'd like to hear from everybody if they have other things in Section 9. I want to make sure we're not missing something. Also, when we go around the room, I want to hear from folks implementing this.

Comment

In general, I'm sort of comfortable with the content. It needs to be smoothed out and organized a little. It does bother me to have the rationale at the bottom rather than the top.

Comment

When other people read this, producers are seeing this as more work for them. Obviously, that would not be my intention. How does this section change the way the department is going to manage wildlife, without recognizing ungulates in the management of wolves? We're not ever going to, there's no way going around the fact that ungulate populations have a lot to do with depredations on livestock. How is this going to change that or help the department do its job? I think there needs to be more emphasis on the management of wildlife going back to the department rather than producers. Producers feel like they take care of their cattle 365 days a year. Department staff only work from Monday through Friday until five o'clock. Producers feel they aren't getting any contact from the department. I spoke to someone who hasn't heard from a conflict specialist in over a year. What's the point of this section if we can't even do the things right now?

Comment

I would say to your comment; I think it's like if there are other frustrations between the producers and the department but also, I think we're writing this to prevent future issues. If we can not inflate those different frustrations, then we can stay focused. I think it's worth acknowledging but it does get us off track.

Comment

I think this document looks benign from the United States Forest Service's standpoint.

Comment

I'd defer to WAG members at this point. While I appreciate the previous comments, there needs to be a recognition that there are things that are actually offensive that are stated. I don't think that's your intent. I know for a fact that we have a group of employees in this agency where five o'clock means nothing. Make your points and get them across but try not to be offensive.

Comment

In terms of the words on the page, I feel like we've made a lot of progress. I appreciate that. I don't have specific wordsmithing at the moment. I am concerned about what was previously said about recognizing that getting this done is important for everyone. That was helpful and gave me hope. But the comments now, about "I don't know why we need this in here" or "this is all about causing more work for producers". That troubles me. Lots of people have said many times that that is not what it's about. This is a thing about when WAG is working well, mutual recognition of the needs of all groups and people seated at the table. I have personally tried hard to acknowledge and listen and problem-solve around the issues the producers brought to us. Every time we hear from producers that they don't want this section; it completely ignores and rolls over the needs of conservationists. We need to have something and some way of acknowledging the social upset and negative impacts both socially and publicly of lethal removals of wolves every year on public lands. For those of us who work for conservation groups and represent sectors of the public who care about wolves, when you say we don't need this section you're not acknowledging our needs and a sector of Washington's public. Within these areas where there is repeated lethal control, they need help. We on the conservation side, need to hear more often the acknowledgment of the issues we have. Being able to successfully negotiate language in this section to address this problem, it would be helpful to have more livestock members of the community recognize that. We're happy to make sure the words don't cause more hardships to producers and we're happy to do what we can to facilitate the issues with lack of trust with the department. I've personally worked my tail off to get these points to the legislators about non-lethals every year. It's difficult and demoralizing and destructive to not have conservation needs recognized by producers.

Comment

That was well said. Talking about those core needs, it was a need from the producer's community to step back and look at their needs. Its important for us working in this group to address these repeated chronic conflict areas. With the words on the page, it seems balanced and well written to me. We need to work on organization, but I want to thank everyone for their work.

Comment

My feelings and emotions are high right now. This is hard stuff. We're taking the most challenging piece of wolf-livestock conflict and trying to move this forward in a way that benefits everybody. You're all being pushed and pulled by your communities. I want to acknowledge that. I also can't emphasize enough how important this section is. The department needs it and we need you to help us with it. All of Washington is asking for this, the Governor is asking for this and the Commission is asking for this. Producers, I'm

not trying to put words in your mouth, but we know you don't want any more cows lost. Wolves and cows dying every year isn't working for any of us. Let's assume the best in each other. We are under stress; we haven't had the time together to be people and be human and it is taking its toll. In the past couple of meetings, we've been hitting some red zone words that have been offending people. I think we're close. I don't think it's perfect, but I think that all the ways we could accomplish this collaborative process with all of you is the right way.

Comment

There has been in the last week in my discussions with producers, a lot of talk about the needs of conservation. I think the resentment of this document is more on the department's part. Producers feel like the department has let them down in the years. We feel this document is reducing the accountability of the department. This document seems more like a policy. You can't have a policy without firm directions. The people I talk to say that it is the fact that the department continues to let them down and does not perform according to the wolf plan or legislative mandates. It isn't a problem with the conservation community.

The conservation community has stepped up when they needed to. They have backed us, and we've backed them. Our problems are with the department.

Comment

I want to echo what was said earlier, there is a lot of interest in this section. I think if we can all come together and get the document moving forward. This should be seen as another opportunity to look at what we can do better and see how they do affect things moving forward. It is a frustrating thing as field staff to hear some of these comments as we implement these things and they "don't work". There isn't just a hard and fast answer to these things. It is looking at how do you adapt and look at the decision made to improve them? Do I think this whole section is going to fix everything? No, but you have to keep coming back to the table and look at what you've done in the past. Can we do something with more heads together? It's hard but it doesn't mean that we can't provide ourselves with a path forward.

Comment

It's a good conversation. I feel like there's a fair amount of emotion. I do take offense to some of the comments I've heard. For a person who donates most of their summer to be away from their family to be where this stuff happens. We don't just work by the clock; we are working and taking a holistic look at all of these situations. Every situation is different each one must be dealt with differently. With all the staff I work with we work very hard in the summer to do this stuff and we get very little respect. Some producers will just reem on you right away. It's tough to build those relationships when there's a lot of emotion built into this thing. There's not a staff member that wants to see cows

injured but we also want to see wolf recovery happen and have balance. We try to do our best to make this stuff work for wolves and livestock and producers. This year we ended up with five dead cows. We have several injuries, but it's all-in-all been a pretty good year given the number of cows and wolves in the state. Getting a little respect for the stuff we do doesn't hurt from time to time. I appreciate everyone's time and advice and bringing it to the table. I think this is an important section and we need it moving forward. This was more of an emotional rant, but I needed to get that out. I'm sorry.

Comment

The group needs to understand those feelings so don't apologize.

Comment

I can appreciate everyone's perspective here. I do think we need this section. I think we need to address the cycle that is repeated conflict in these areas, and it is stated in the rationale of why we have the section. I see it as promoting and enhancing collaboration between all entities versus trying to put a burden on producers. I'm sorry to hear that they feel that way about the department, a lot of this does rest on the shoulders of the department to make it happen. I think that we need this section and should do whatever it takes to make it work. It's going to take all of us to make it work.

Comment

I think this is an important conversation. I also think that I view this as holistically as possible, so I look at what's typically good for cows is going to end up being good for wolves. I think all of us want to try and do something different and maybe more enhanced to break the cycle that's bad for everybody. I will address some department staff and communications; I would say that it's helpful that there's more information now getting to the public about what you all do and the complexities in those jobs. I'll end by hoping that we can have an entrepreneurial spirit of wanting to solve a problem and trying to agree on Special Focus Areas. I look at this as an opportunity for us to consider the long-term objectives. We're still learning about how wolves use the habitats in this state. I can understand the frustration about things not being resolved quickly. We need to have accountability, but we also can't be dictating too much because there are too many variables. I believe we need to have this. If WAG doesn't come up with this language, then the Governor's office and Commission will.

Comment

You can add me to the list of offended people. I'm shocked and disappointed by some of the stuff I've heard. We started this process and conversation with good intentions. We've worked well into the evening hours to work on this language. I was impressed with everyone who sat in and was in the subcommittee groups who spoke to make themselves and their views known. I feel like we came up with a good product. To a

previous comment, I'm a writer too but I don't write things by myself for the department. Everything I write is written by a committee, WAG and it's reviewed by a million people and it should be. What I can create alone is not as strong as what a group can create together. I think that when things are independently written by group members, I worry about that setting us back. I know you're coming with good intentions, but I am lost on what to do. I don't think that people should write the language by themselves without including people from the opposite perspective. I know that all of us went into this document doing our best not to offend anyone or use terms that are triggering for folks. I am disappointed that that didn't come through in this conversation. I'm lost.

Comment

I'll agree with what other staff members have said. I do think we've heard loud and clear that folks think this section should be in the protocol. There may be disagreement on that, but we need this. Folks are calling for this. With that said, one of the points about folks feeling like the agency hasn't done its job, I understand and sense that but some of that comes down to the fact that when we write a document many people come away from that document thinking we're doing that job but others think we aren't. Making sure that whatever is written here that, producers, conservationists, everyone should agree with what the department should do. I think the disappointment comes from others interpreting these things. We're reading this document as well, and we're trying to do what the document says and its guidance. Giving up is not a way to make it any better. To get more on track, I don't feel comfortable about the definition, if we just pick an SFA, there would be folks in the WAG that would agree and disagree with the decision. That sets us up for more disappointment. It's critical to have this laid out.

Comment

I was on the subcommittee and we did the best we could. I have a different take on the subcommittee, we kind of looked at this and tried to represent different groups on WAG. This is a document that needs to be done. I think it would be best done by WAG and department staff. We knew the document wasn't working but we did feel when we were done that, we did the best representing all groups in the best way possible. I think in these Zoom meetings; the human element is gone. I think it does make it difficult to communicate. I'm hopeful we can all think about why we are on WAG and why we continue to do this work.

Comment

I think there's been a lot of courage here and good intent. It was important for this group to hear if, for example, some producers are frustrated with the relationship with the department. It was equally important for people to hear that from the department how offensive that can come across. I heard everyone try to do it as respectfully as they

could here. It's equally good to know where the frustration is and now it's out on the table so we can address it. I appreciate hearing from you all.

Comment

I don't think this was helpful at all. I had a "let's work together" attitude when we started rather than having a crap fest. I'm frustrated now. I don't think this exercise got us any further. Someone said that everyone wants this language but that's not true. There's a lot of people on this call who don't like this language. What's the next step? Where we're at now, we're not going to get anything done. By putting my own words on paper, I didn't mean to offend you. If it's offensive to you then you just have to deal with that. For the rest of the group, can we move forward?

Comment

I hope we can find a path forward. On your offering, you had moved things around and that's not a complete rewrite. If what you have is along those veins and we can look at the kinds of words that are tripping the producer community up.

I think that at this stage in the game, I don't see your offering as throwing away everything there.

I see it as taking what people have done and making it something closer that works towards what works for you guys. I do appreciate what someone was trying to do with protecting fairness and collaboration in the group with their earlier comments. Two other things, I would offer these in hopes that they contribute to us moving forward constructively. I heard references several times about the needs of the department to provide ungulate population information and how that relates to depredations. I think WAG needs to spend more time on the ungulate population health subject and to the extent on how that does or doesn't contribute to livestock populations. I agree with the department's concern about the definition being vague. If there are vague expectations around something as meaningful and complex as ungulate populations in this section people are going to be upset. Maybe once we finish this section up, we can set time aside for this too. We need a common understanding of those dynamics and the things in which the department can and can't do. We need to see if there's a way because we cannot ignore it but maybe just put a circle around it, for now, so we can get this section done.

Break

Comment

We have this language that we've been wrestling with. We have general support with the content there and have some recommended language changes. Let's see what this member is proposing. I encourage folks to have the subcommittee's language pulled up as well, so we have a way to compare any new language.

Comment

We're at three o'clock with an hour left and I still feel like there needs to be a conversation about the definition of an SFA. That's key to everything else that follows. I would be interested in hearing from the department staff.

Comment

I'm wondering, looking at what's been provided by another member. If I'm reading this proposed language right, it looks like there might be a definition in there. Getting the definition of these areas hashed out is important right now.

Comment

Quick question on the bulleted list, is there new stuff, or were you reorganizing original content?

Comment

I think it's largely the same. What's in red there, is new language based partly on what was in the right-hand column.

Comment

Just so it's clear to everyone, I put the proposed language in red. You can look at the suggestions side by side.

Comment

Any comments?

Comment

I kept thinking about the comments made by others. As said today, clarification on what one of these areas is, where I think having the staff ground truth that would allow it to work. I was starting that work to clarify what an SFA is.

Comment

I think for staff that are participating and reading this, the group would benefit from your thoughts on that, going back to the concern on clarity.

Comment

I'd like to see the "pack of six or more" in the should be evaluated for risk section. Maybe it needs to be seven or eight, but these larger packs need to be looked at to prevent the problem before there is one.

Comment

So, I agree it's a good thing to look at, but I wonder if there are additional criteria by which you would make the determination. To the point of the agency evaluating a pack of six or more being a problem and then someone else says it isn't, I wonder if department staff have ideas about the conditions of which a pack of six or more would qualify as an SFA or additional scrutiny. I remember there were discussions in past years, about department staff prioritizing areas with additional issues by putting more resources there. They were not chronic conflict zones but still getting at what you were talking about. I think it's a good idea but are there additional criteria where certain packs of six or more would meet the criteria when others wouldn't?

Comment

To address what was said, we internally consider things like pack size and composition already. We currently recognize that larger packs due to their caloric demand could be an issue but it's not a given. We also need to consider any allotment overlaps which could be both spatial and temporal, the size of the pack, and how the ungulate populations are doing in those areas. There's not a ton of research that shows ungulate density influences depredation activity. Except there might be areas with largely migratory ungulate herds where packs may be forced into situations where they switch to a different prey source. We already do think about those things.

As far as SFAs go, I'm a bit leery of including pack size, only because these areas in my mind are areas where we have issues regardless of pack size. I feel like by putting a pack size in there we may miss obvious ones.

Comment

It's looking to work with the producer to identify if there's a pack there to get the non-lethals in place and mitigate potential problems going forward. I don't think a pack size should be an automatic trigger, but it should be considered. Not looking to avoid lethal all together just have more direct communication with producers before it starts.

Comment

In my mind when I think of SFAs, the core part is the pattern of depredations that resulted in a lethal removal decision in two of the last three years. We are using non-lethal and lethal tools and yet this pattern is occurring over multiple years. In the definition, where it says "Special Focus Areas exist in one or more of the following..." looking at the bottom of that, it would read as any area with lethal removal at that point. We're trying to identify where are those challenging areas where we could focus? I'm worried that if we identify every area then it dilutes the importance of this. We asked staff in our last meeting what they thought would be SFA packs and let's go back to that to think of the definition. I'm wondering if the definition is very solid and clear, but the department also considers these elements as we think about this. Our staff are talking about pack size, where it's been through winter, how many producers are in the area,

what their operations are like and there are so many more variables, but we can't have it all in this.

Comment

When you say that two out of three consecutive years feels core to you, do department staff feel that same way?

Comment

No, we have not decided on the timeframe yet.

Comment

How do we balance making sure we got a clear definition without having specific numbers that don't reflect what we know is historical in the recurrent conflict? Initially, I thought that being able to just say recurrent conflict would work, but now I'm interested in hearing from department staff on their recommendations.

Comment

One of the things I was asked to do was to have the depredation information as ready as needed. Something that struck me with this data is that in 2016, we count each year individually, the packs I have listed are Profanity, Smackout, Dirty Shirt, and Tucannon. The others were just a few and it was really just Profanity. Then if you look at 2017, it's still just packs we don't really talk about like Sherman, Smackout, and Tucannon. If you move to 2018, 2019, and 2020, you have Togo, Wedge, OPT, Leadpoint, and others. Just thinking about that stuff brings up two questions. Is it a three years cusp where something maintains or losses relevancy? Or is it area based rather than pack based?

Comment

To follow up, I think it's important that we consider the area rather than the pack name. Where we did the removal in Sherman was when they shifted to Profanity pack territories. Animals change over time but there's a number of these physical areas we keep going back to.

Comment

Would adding a phrase to the first bullet be sufficient to bring the concept back to the area focus rather than a pack focus?

Comment

Yeah.

Comment

What do folks think about that? I'm picking on staff here, as you were thinking about this last time regarding the Togo, Kettles, and Wedge areas, is the best definition two out of three consecutive years? Does the definition fit those examples?

Comment

I think it does. I know the biggest part though; we need to make sure we get that feedback from WAG, so we know what you think it looks like. In our pre-season meetings, we're thinking of it on a continuum. We're looking at this specifically, I want to make sure that we get feedback from you guys, so we do have a document where you feel represented. I would say the two out of three consecutive years or whatever that looks like is good. I'm thinking about this longer-term.

Comment

When you say long term, that's longer than three years?

Comment

It's usually for how long I've been involved in stuff. I'm thinking as things are sometimes cyclical, does it look like there's a pattern emerging. I think the two out of the last three years is a good mark. I just want to make sure that fits the vision of stakeholders.

Comment

I agree, incremental removal in 2/3, and the last bullet, we have a protocol in place that identifies those areas. If we've been to the point where we're doing incremental removals or even full pack removal in the 2/3 years, then it rises to these special focus areas. When I think of these I think of Togo, Profanity, and Kettles area. The Wedge hadn't had a ton going on between 2012 and this year. We're always weighing where our resources should go each year just following the protocol. Even in Smackout where we seem to have a few depredations each year. Trying to figure out how to pull those pieces out.

Comment

I think internally we have been thinking about the first bullet on the list. I think that it could be reworded, so it says something more along the lines of "within a territory where lethal removal actions have occurred". I think the full pack piece is important to note since it could indicate a change in the area, but I also think the definition needs to capture locations where we've had multiple incremental removals.

Comment

I've got a question for the producer community or anybody. We know as we have this conversation that when we say lethal removals or decision attempts over two out of three consecutive years in pack territory, we know that that means there were depredations that led there. With the words on paper, is that one of the things you feel like is a miss for you? Should we be more explicit and say something like "repeated depredations of livestock and the associated lethal removal of wolves"? Should the criteria just be lethal removal? Is this a problem in terms of both dead livestock and wolves?

Comment

I think the question is confusing.

Comment

Should we be explicit and break apart and say the criteria are, repeated depredations over two out of three consecutive years and end that statement with "repeated lethal removal attempts over that same time frame"? Should we acknowledge both of those pieces?

Comment

No, I don't think we need that.

Comment

Okay, thank you.

Comment

From listening to staff talk, in a general sense, it seems like there was cautious recognition of the incremental lethal removal being okay but there was reluctance on the other two bullets. Staff were asking WAG members if those definitions sound reasonable. Reactions?

Comment

I think it should be in there. If we've had lethal removal in two out of the three consecutive years, there's a problem. That's what this section is for, trying to figure that out. Why would you wait longer to focus on it?

Comment

So, the three-year period is about right?

Comment

Yeah, two of the last three years is a long enough period to say something is going on there without letting it get carried away.

Comment

The pack numbers of six or more, that could be adults or pups, the department is watching the packs and know that. The bottom bullet is already covered in the protocol and the department is going to take care of that anyway. I think the comment about the full pack removal should be in there but should be in the second part of the definition.

Comment

I think I would be happy either way, I don't think there's much difference.

Comment

I want to make sure I'm tracking the conversation. So, it feels like where we're straw dogging if you will, is that starting with the second bullet about incremental lethal removal, it needs to be moved to the top and then grabbing the second sentence of the second bullet. Is that where we're going? It may not be full pack removal as a requirement and then what was just talked about in the third bullet is already somewhere else. Thoughts on these changes?

Comment

When we have an SFA how do we know we have one? Again, whatever it needs to work on the ground and be something department staff feel comfortable with. I'd lean on the folks that work this on the ground with how this matches up with reality.

Comment

One recommendation was to add to the first bullet the phrase "in the same area" maybe at the end.

Comment

I think the idea is already there. Would it be useful for us to quickly look at the past three years and tell you what packs would meet these thresholds?

Comment

Yes.

Comment

Can we do that now or not? As we work on this, we need clarity and to understand what the definition means from that.

Comment

Staff, please correct me if I'm wrong. My thoughts of packs that would meet the criteria are, Grouse Flats, Leadpoint, Togo, Wedge, OPT, Smackout, and by looking at the past three years I wouldn't say Profanity. So, it would just be those.

Comment

Are we were talking about incremental removal in the past three years?

Comment

I misunderstood, I thought it was any one of the last three years. You would take Wedge out of there and potentially Smackout.

Comment

Grouse Flats as well since we've had incremental lethal removal in the last two out of three years.

Comment

No, one of the last three.

Comment

Togo?

Comment

Yes.

Comment

Kettles or the greater OPT?

Comment

Yes.

Comment

Smackout?

Comment

Yes.

Comment

Wedge?

Comment

No

Comment
Leadpoint?

Comment
No.

Comment
So, under that first bullet, we would have Togo, greater Kettles, and Smackout.

Comment
Smackout we just had lethal removal in 2017 and 2018. So, it wouldn't fit that definition.

Comment
So, we would have two. It almost looks like bullet one may be enough of a definition. I'm interested in hearing from staff and stakeholders.

Comment
When you talk about lethal removal authorized, had it actually occurred or was just attempted to be implemented?

Comment
It was authorized but it wasn't actually implemented.

Comment
I think it's a semantics thing. I can't think of an instance when lethal was authorized where we didn't try to remove wolves. I think the real question is were any wolves removed? If it is authorized, we implement it to the best of our abilities.

Comment
Correct, so I guess it would be unsuccessful. So, are we considering the unsuccessful authorizations? If it's authorized but we did not remove any wolves if that counts or is that part of the review process? Producers look at it as you authorized but it didn't occur so is that a failure on your part or the non-lethal?

Comment
I think when the non-lethals don't work it's not the producer's fault. When non-lethals don't work there could have been resource limitations, they were implemented the best they could, but they didn't work that year and in hindsight, we reconsider how we implement them. From my perspective, that piece of this, just because we're talking about the need to evaluate the non-lethals we're not blaming the rancher. I do think if wolves were not removed but there were enough depredations to qualify for that

authorization it should still be on the table. I do think if the question is should we include the two out of three years even if wolves weren't removed, I would say yes.

Comment

If we go into lethal removal, we're going to be trying to carry that operation out. A lot of time we also focus our efforts to break that cycle so we might be trapping in a pasture or using the helicopter to remove wolves. Just because a wolf isn't removed doesn't mean the wolf hasn't changed their behavior. I think incremental lethal removal is a better way to determine it. There's behavior at that point. I like that in the definition.

Comment

I will say that we do talk about this when we're doing pre-season stuff but also when we're having any types of depredations in those same areas where there's been a lethal removal attempt, but we haven't removed wolves we do consider how that will play out. We do look at everything holistically because all of those things could play a role.

Comment

Any reactions to the first bullet and then looking back at what we've changed specifically related to the Kettles area?

Comment

I like the simplicity. If we can go with one bullet and that covers the need, then I like that. I think that this would be one of the areas where producers would have an issue. It's a known problem area if it meets that requirement.

Comment

I'd like to hear reactions from the environmental community as well. Any reactions to that first bullet?

Comment

I'm okay with the first bullet.

Comment

I can live with it.

Comment

Yup, I think it might be good to talk about any additional criteria we may want but this is good.

Comment

I think however far we get here; this will be the starting point for our next meeting. Any “what do we do next” questions?

Comment

I re-wrote this document and reworded this bullet so it has an active voice and I want to see if folks are okay with deleting these or if we need to talk about this more?

Comment

Knowing that there are some other elements here that members want to change, using the rest of our time to figure out how to make progress from now to our next meeting so that we can improve our process.

Comment

We’re not going to solve this today. Our next meeting is scheduled for January 6th and 7th. One thing that I was thinking about, was that there wasn’t a lot of time for talking across members. It would benefit if outside of our meetings members could share and test ideas with each other. I would encourage that. Other than taking the progress from today, I don’t know if there’s another step we can take on this right now.

Comment

What kind of feedback needs to happen with the Commission and the Director? Is there a way that there could be an interim loop with them to make sure we’re meeting what they’re also looking at?

Comment

This is not the ideal situation in this virtual world. Do we want to do this step now or we can take it, clean it up and circulate it back to you? We won’t lose content but we’ll put some of the stuff in the columns so we can still review. And you folks can review and let us know what still needs to happen. By then we could have your reactions and present them to the Wolf Committee. Something along those lines where it’s early enough to where if one of those entities say that doesn’t work for them that we can fix them now.

Comment

Are you asking if staff helps us clean this up today is that the draft that would be shared? Or are you requesting the WAG members review the cleaned-up version and let us know which parts they are and are not comfortable with?

Comment

I never want to share something with another entity without WAG knowing what we're sharing. I don't want to lose your content, but we would clean this up and move forward with sending this to the Wolf Committee. It's a draft open document but I want you to see it and react to it. I would save your wordsmithing and nuggets until our next meeting.

Comment

To clarify, did I hear consensus that WAG wanted this rationale moved up, or was it just the first bullet or should I leave it for now?

Comment

I don't think we did come to a consensus on that. Let's maybe keep it there for now but open to suggestions?

No objections

Comment

Does anybody have any parting comments before we move to public comment?

Comment

Thank you for the good conversation. We got one small part done but there are still elements of this that continue to be a concern for producers. Great to see this small step.

Public Comment at 4:00 pm

Meeting Adjourned