

**Wolf Advisory Group
August 5, 2020 Meeting Notes
Online Meeting (Day 1)**

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

WDFW staff members: Julia Smith, Donny Martorello and Steve Pozzanghera

Facilitator: Rob Geddis

US Fish & Wildlife Service: Gregg Kurz

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 presented the agenda to the group.

Updates: Filling WAG Member Vacancies, Conflict Specialist/Biologist Updates, Lethal Removal Actions (and Decision Speed) and Existing WAG Subcommittees

Department Updates

Comment

What does membership in the WAG look like and how do vacancies affect the WAG?

Response

The whole point of the WAG process is to bring in new perspectives and share differing opinions. I want to stress that the dismissal had nothing to do with their perspectives. All of you bring different perspectives to this process. Different perspectives are welcome and much needed. The dismissal had to do with WAG's process steps and ground rules. Over the past couple of years, a few of you have (not purposefully) stepped on each other's toes regarding news releases or statements. We acknowledge that we felt that was inconsistent with the ground rules of the WAG. WAG members agree to give each other and the department a heads-up regarding litigation or whatever it is. We were put in a difficult position to decide how to deal with that.

It's more than just you WAG members, keeping in mind our many stakeholders. The other thing is that when we see those times where we step on each other's toes, it starts to diminish and impact your space, comfort, respect, and your ability to talk about very hard things. You have this collaborative process and it becomes diminished when that occurs. The director does not dismiss members for their opinions but for affecting the

collaborative process and the working group. This is a place where it is time for us to pause and look at our ground rules.

Question

The WAG member was dismissed on the June 2019 incident? Lawsuit and email?

Response

Yes, there was a time gap there. To be honest, we have been wrestling with this. For one, if we dismissed them, we want to make sure we continue to have that environmental voice on the WAG. Secondly, we have looked into bringing on another person to keep the environmental background/identity in check. Not to replace the member but to keep the perspective present in the WAG. Do you understand?

Response

Yes, I understand.

Comment

You know me well enough to know I shared that information with that member. Thank you.

Comment

I think very highly of the dismissed member and I appreciated the opportunity to work with them. My concern is that when there are groups in a collaborative environment working together and members of that group are involved in litigation related to the environment it becomes an impediment to the conversations and working together. For those of us who represent the livestock producers on the WAG it was becoming more and more of an issue. I don't know if it would have been repairable, it would have damaged our group if it didn't change. It was not done with great joy at all. I hope the dismissed member remains involved because their voice is important to the discussion

Comment

This highlights to me, WAG members don't dismiss other WAG members. I question the appropriateness of letters to dismiss someone from the group. The removal of someone is out of bounds of our seats.

Response

That would be a good discussion point when moving into what WAG looks like.

Comment

There was a lot of consideration into the dismissal. I want to emphasize; I don't want there to ever be a perception of a gag order on WAG members. There's not. Everything we have talked about such as different forms of voice is okay. I see no harm or foul in that. It is a matter of adhering to process steps and ground rules. If we start to let those slide, then you take that step you never get it back and it damages the process. WAG

doesn't have a process step for notifying each other of the work outside of the things you touch.

Response

I suggest that when we get to the process and purpose of this discussion, we bring up our WAG mission statement and consensus agreement. If we make a formal decision as WAG members that we agree or not, then we do not undermine that decision out in public. I think that's refreshing ourselves and thinking through the process more would be helpful. I think lawsuits are an appropriate civil tool for voice, but I also think participating in a lawsuit that has dismissive language of WAG and their products that, to me, is a violation of our agreement to not undermine what we come up with. Every expression is fair game, but you have to look at it in the context of our agreement. As long as something went through with consensus, you still agree to not undermine the decision in public. When we revisit the process, we should talk about that.

We were careful to say we support the process and protocol, so we came up with agreements about coordinating statements. It doesn't mean that we can undermine the body that we participate in or the decisions we made. Sometimes as a group we can devolve into our positions without truly acknowledging each other's issues. Moving forward, that is lacking, and we don't have firm agreements on what that looks like. In our lives outside of WAG, we need to uphold the decisions we made together.

Comment

I wanted to agree with your concerns over process. I have shared those concerns with the dismissed member when I had them. I also want to support what has been said about the importance of environmental voice at the table. The dismissed member represented a large group of environmentalists and stakeholders who should have a voice. I'm interested in how the department is going to fill that spot.

Response

I have shared that we have a WAG member that will be joining soon. We just recently offered them the position. As I said, I wouldn't consider that a replacement. All of you are unique; there's probably not a single person that could represent all the things you do. It's a work in progress, but we're trying to bring as much diversity of Washington communities in these nineteen people as possible. When we started, there were three main identity groups (environmental, livestock, hunters). In the beginning, when we had 18, it was roughly balanced between those identity groups. With any group like this, people move on and we are still trying to capture that diversity. How does this person support WAG? We probably have a dozen different variables when we think about positions and the recruitment process. The group composition is going to be different.

We're wanting to strike a different balance in WAG. We still have more vacancies to fill. When we look at who you all are, we have solid representation. However, we know folks leave and move on to other things. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Question

Can we get an update on the conflict side of things?

Comment

I will be providing an update for District 1 and District 2. Starting with District 2 which consists of Spokane, Lincoln, and Whitman counties. Prior to this meeting, I met with the conflict specialist in that area (former pack territory). The specialist is continuing to look at the Mount Spokane and Five Sisters areas. There's nothing to report at this time and things look normal.

District 1, where I'm located, has been an incredibly busy year. I'll go through three different packs in particular. Since mid-May, (in Wedge pack) we've had over 23 depredations (including mortalities). The most recent was at the end of last month. In that location, all depredations have occurred on the west side of pack territory. Now I'll talk about deterrence. Three producers have now been affected by wolf depredations. CaPow and other range riders have stepped up to help and supplement areas. Half of the depredations have occurred on private property. In addition to range riding, FoxLights, sanitation on top of a multitude of other things have been implemented. For the Leadpoint pack, there have been six confirmed injuries starting mid-June. One producer was affected. All incidents occurring on private pasture. We have worked with other producers in those areas as well to implement deterrents. For the Smackout pack, there's been one injury and one mortality with a second mortality on July 24th. Two producers were affected both on private pastures. Lots of deterrents are being implemented in the Smackout territory. Specifically, CaPow/WDFW riders, FoxLights, and sanitation in the areas. Throughout the rest of the areas where I cover, we have a total of ten WDFW range riders. We're working to get more riders. Like previous years, we are implementing FoxLights and fladry and helping other organizations like CaPow. Our weekly coordination calls have been more sporadic due to Covid-19.

Question

Can you share more about the coordination calls?

Comment

Yes, on those calls we usually cover everything that has happened in the previous week- population updates from biologists, conflict updates from the previous week, depredations, help with things we need such as fladry, safety concerns, and threats. Others that jump onto those calls as well. Last year we added coordination calls with WDFW range riders and other riders (CaPow, forest service) and cover that exact information. During those calls, anyone who has questions or concerns can be addressed. We try to keep them short due to frequent communications. We're still doing all this coordination with all of these people outside of scheduled calls. Did that answer your question?

Response

Yes, that answered my question.

Question

What are the total depredations in Wedge?

Response

22 confirmed depredations and one probable.

Question

I think it's confusing when we talk about events such as 16 depredations events involving 23 individual livestock, could you clarify?

Response

That's an important distinction. Lots of these depredations have predominantly been calves. When I saw a 23 total, that's 23 individual animals. We're doing our best to determine the age or range of mortalities to see if they are singular events or patterns. Thanks for asking.

Question

The Wedge Pack is currently in the evaluation period?

Response

Yes, they are. They have had more depredations since then so there is the consideration for more removal for Wedge Pack.

Question

What about Leadpoint?

Response

There have been five total depredations, and the team is coming together to make a recommendation.

Question

The 23 depredations in Wedge Pack is not reflected in the updates the department puts out. Are these not included yet? I would like to know how many range riders are in the Wedge territory daily. And is that amount covering most of the allotments?

Response

There have been more depredations since last week. Two of those were indicative of being after removal. This is newer information that will eventually be updated. To answer your question, we're focusing on Wedge which is good-sized in total of CaPow riders and WDFW contracted riders. Wedge territory is half service allotments and half private. If you want to focus on where depredations occurred there is one CaPow rider assigned

to affected producers. Occasionally a second rider. Two more riders have been assigned to the area and this deterrent doesn't include other producer efforts. Does that answer your question?

Comment

In the Wedge territory, have they increased range rider presence over the years?

Response

I can say this year in particular; range riders have increased. Depredations have always been cyclical. This year, depredations started early (mid-May) and its continuing. Depredations typically center on a June-July deadline. This year, depredations have been sporadic. It's not uncommon to see different hot spots. Leadpoint has had depredations in the past that have been higher than normal. Smackout pack usually has a lot but this year they're at two depredations. We do have more riders out there depending on locations.

Question

For the Wedge pack area, what's the scope and scale of operations out there?

Comment

Can we just do an update on population monitoring? Hit the highlights there and then we can dive deeper into the spot we missed regarding the Wedge pack situation and rationale, etc.

Comment

Looks like, since last WAG meeting, we've captured a total of 12 wolves in eight packs. These collaring captures occurred from helicopter operations in winter. We are planning on getting into four more packs before the trapping season ends in September. In addition, the wolf section has been assisting wildlife conflict staff by helping with investigations, implementing non-lethal deterrents, and removal. We responded to one mortality in the Teanaway pack. We've also placed over 120 cameras to develop ways to accurately monitor wolf populations project.

Break

Comment

I am going to give more specifics on Wedge pack information. Some of it will be a repeat. My thought was that I would specifically go over the depredation situation regarding the Wedge pack in the 2020 season. Then I'd like to go to their depredation history as it relates to recommendations for lethal removal or not. Then go back to the depredation summary specifically after lethal removal of a single wolf (occurred on July 27).

As we've talked about, we have not had depredations in these areas since the removals that occurred in 2012. It has not been considered to be an area on our screen or

chronic conflict zone. There has been a total of 16 depredation events resulting in 22 confirmed one probable since May 11, 2020, through August 1, 2020. Those depredations have occurred on private and public lands, which is different than what we've seen in the past. These depredations have affected three separate producers (1,2,3). With seven depredations occurring on private lands, 16 of the depredations have been on public lands. All depredation activity has involved calves. As a total, depredations have included four mortalities, two injuries at first, then both dying being considered mortality. There's been a total of 19 injuries. Looking at the situation from the impacts on the three producers: Producer 1 has had two mortalities and one injury occurring on private lands. Producer 2 has had 17 depredations, one mortality and 16 injuries with one private land incident, and 16 public lands incidents. Producer 3 has had one probable mortality and two injuries both on private land. Those are the totals. With all that information in mind, let's go back and talk about intervals for which staff evaluated or considered lethal action.

Following the May 11 and 19 depredations on Producer 1's on private grounds, which resulted in three injures within 20 days, an evaluation period was started. There was no movement towards lethal action. Working with the producer staff believed there was space to implement additional measures. Non-lethal measures were recommended and acted upon increase range riders, FoxLights installed and the team also recommended trapping activity. Trapping activity can alter pack behavior and depredation behavior. We also get a collar back so we can analyze movement better. Trapping was then initiated, and the wolf was trapped and collared on June 7, 2020.

After June 17 and the injury of a calf for Producer 2, staff members moved through team coordination and discussion. There was a recommendation for removal of one wolf at that time (four depredations in ten months). Additional response measures were provided. There was a suggestion of incremental removal which was warranted at the time. Following the regional recommendation to the director, we believed we had an opportunity to improve range riding work happening. Since then, there's been great improvement in range riding and consideration for specific gaps in coverage. Despite a team recommendation for removal, the recommendation to the director was not to implement incremental removal at that time. There was work to bolster range riding activity and work related to providing guidance on a daily or near-daily basis through discussions. At a minimum, guidance was given four days per week with nothing more than a two-day gap, as a three-day gap would be problematic. Also, the recommendation indicated that we needed to gather range riding activity from each producer. All information was pooled and caused difficulty in understanding what coverage was occurring from what producers. Eventually, we were able to narrow down activity to each producer. There is an ongoing effort to keep coordinating with wildlife conflict specialists and range riding logs used by them too.

At that point in time, now looking at four depredations in ten months, incremental lethal removal was not implemented. Fast forward to July 11, where we had seven confirmed

depredations, so the total number of injuries went from four to eleven. With a single depredation review, depredations occurred or confirmed where determined to be over the course of multiple events. At that point, the team and regional recommendation provided was incremental removal of one wolf. Director approved on July 22; one wolf was removed on July 27.

Now I want to talk about a subset of depredations that occurred since the removal of one adult non-breeding female wolf on July 27. Within the totals already provided, which were nine depredation events since the removal of the one wolf, there have been six depredation events with eight confirmed injuries and one probable mortality. Producer 3 has experienced three depredations, two confirmed injuries, and one probable mortality. All of those were determined by staff to be prior to the July 27 removal.

Producer 2 experienced five injuries, four occurred prior to removal of the wolf, one injury determined to be after removal. Producer 2 on August 1 experienced another depredation (injury) also determined to be post removal from July 27. Of the nine depredations, two have occurred after removal. Given, the fact that following the removal we go into the evaluation period, if depredation starts again, we move back to the recommendation phase. I should be reviewing a team recommendation this afternoon. Hopefully, that was a good summary. Questions?

Question

How many cow: calf pairs are there in the Wedge territory?

Comment

I visited with staff over the break, so this is an approximation. Again, we are talking about multiple producers. There are approximate, 2,000 cow: calf pairs in the Wedge territory. Thinking about the operations we are working with regularly and the size of their operations.

Question

Thank you for that summary. I'm wondering has the compensation process has been started by any of these producers.

Answer

Not aware of any compensation being started. However, it has been discussed with all three producers.

Question

You talked about ramp-up of range rider presence after initial depredations, so at that point in time was there coverage on any federal allotments? I don't know the distance between allotments. Prior to the cows being moved, were range riders starting to work on federal allotments?

Answer

Yes, following the Cattle Producers of Washington initiating action on Producer 1's private property. There has been beginning work on both private and public ownerships. That activity started prior to the seven confirmed depredations on July 11. Started in the latter part of May ending in June. We identified the fact that we felt it could be improved upon. There was no initiation of lethal removal but instead went back and provided guidance regarding range riding. We are in a position to provide guidance for cattle producers. We provided guidance at a minimum, guidance four days of the week on range riding (no gap larger than three days). And yes, ramp up began with Producer 1 and continued into June.

Question

Does the department have a good sense of total range riders patrolling the area on various landscapes, public lands, and private? Do you have an estimation of the amount?

Response

Yes, we've touched on this already. Producer 2 is primarily working with one to two riders that transition from private to a public allotment. We were interested in working on that coverage. Number aspect of how many range riders was focused on the logs and information that the riding activity was happening within the frequency from WAG and protocol. We haven't thought about it specifically that we need more for any given producers. We are still having relevant discussions. Producer 3 has recently brought on new range riders. They work with multiple entities. Producers vary.

Question

Does the department feel it was adequate to observe roughly 2,000 cattle in that area with range riders?

Response

Range riding is a finite resource. Does that mean that all pairs have eyes on them? No, I can't tell you that. Are we focusing our efforts where we believe it is most appropriate and readily available where and when we have cooperation with producers? I cannot tell you that there are range rider eyes on all pairs in Wedge territory.

Question

Excellent report, I agree with everything coming out of the field. How many wolves are in this pack?

Response

We believe the Wedge pack consists of three adult wolves and that goes back to observations during winters of 2019 and 2020. Observations since that time, starting with a pack of three adults, now two adults remain. Originally in the year, you have a

breeding pair and there's an assumption that pups will be produced. Currently, no pups have been produced in this pack so two adults only, no pups.

Comment

Adding to that, in the scope of this to present, they have mapped out coverage of range riders on a calendar. Understanding where they're at and what producers are working and what days for how long. Range riding is a big issue, in this landscape however it is the best-suited tool when cows are out there. We want to emphasize that this is why range riding and roles in addition to responsibilities need clarity. We need guidance so we can operate on the same page.

Comment

We need to touch on two of our items on the agenda which are decision speed and subcommittees. I recommend that we can handle it better offline rather than take up this time.

Comment

The time of depredation that queues up the process, from the start period to the time the director makes a decision can be an extended period of time. We think that we can do better there. It's not excuses. To share with you, though, we are doing a comprehensive and exhaustive process. Recommendations start with our team, move to regional recommendation then to the director. During that time, we are packing these recommendations with facts and information. The Governor's office is aware of potential actions. The amount of work effort that goes into that is why it takes so long. We are looking to now recalibrate that time. However, it works against us in a couple of ways, so you may ask yourself: "What's the department doing?" We recognize that's how you feel. With each passing day, there is a pattern emerging of wolf depredations on livestock. The swifter we can change the pattern the better. We would like to move as swiftly as we can if necessary, removal is authorized. That's why we are recalibrating what the process looks like. Over the fall and winter months, we will streamline that process and you wouldn't see a time gap you see now.

Question

I wanted to go back to the Leadpoint pack. Can you confirm the total of Leadpoint pack depredations?

Answer

Yes, five depredation events involving six calves. A severely injured calf was being treated by producers, but its fate is unknown. Leadpoint staff are now involved in putting a recommendation together for Leadpoint.

Comment

I imagine there are questions on Togo, up to you guys if you want to talk through it. I've heard questions and it might be helpful to go over Togo pack updates.

Response

We can. We were going into grazing season with depredations occurring in the fall before. The trapping period to deploy a collar was May 26, 2020, to June 5, 2020. Depredation reported June 5, confirmed, and investigated (fourth depredation in ten months). The team provided a recommendation and the director authorized lethal removal. The department made multiple efforts through different methods all of which were unsuccessful. The director then went into the evaluation period for the Togo pack.

Comment

We are in the evaluation period, which did come with some specific discussions with producers in Togo territory. Conversations with producers following activity believed that the attempt to remove may have caused wolf activity to shift. The main sense for producers and riders were that things were quiet. Discussion and consideration are important while we're in evaluation. We have not received any reports of depredation activity in Togo territory since then.

Comment

Thank you for the response.

Question

I have concerns with the Togo pack. My understanding is that there was a long period where the department was continuing to trap with the intention to collar and release. Is that true?

Response

I checked; the trapping window was May 26 to June 5. That is quite a time gap between depredation and the decision made on June 19. Your point is correct. If we had talked about recommendations and what the options were, in that mode (if we initiated trapping period) it would have been to capture and collar a wolf. The issue is using that collar to remove other wolves. We do trap in a lethal removal mode, it's part of the recommendation packet. The decision was made on June 19 to move to lethal action for the Togo pack. Early in the second week of July, it goes to the evaluation period.

Question

What happened on June 19 and the second week of July?

Response

The department made ground method and helicopter methods to attempt to remove a wolf. There was a collar on one pack member already. During the long period between the lethal and evaluation period, the Colville Confederated Tribe agreed to share collaring information with the department. The department was not able to remove a wolf. That's why the effort was made later in the period.

Question

What were the specific ground efforts made?

Answer

The primary effort was ground calling with a rifle. I think it's important to acknowledge that there were no depredations in May (this calendar year). Togo pack was a high priority for us due to their history. The department was unsuccessful in any trapping to collar. We did go in there in an effort to get a collar on, we thought this pack may be involved in more depredations than they have so far this season.

Comment

I am still trying to figure out what efforts were made in this large period? I feel like I am prying information from you to understand what efforts were made.

Response

A lot of the time we do not share specific information due to the staff members being involved. I think asking for the information later is fine.

Comment

The department is not trying to hide anything. In the protocol, we talk about our efforts being minimal. We try to keep a high level of transparency while not using details. We tell you here's what happened and the outcome.

Response

As an advisory group, how can we advise if we don't know what's going on? If we know some details here and there, that's fine, but as an advisory group, it's important for us to give advice. I am trying to understand the timeline of the process.

Comment

One of the realities we face is that without an active collar in the pack, it is incredibly difficult to remove a wolf from a pack. The Togo pack has had so many trapping attempts. We knew from early efforts that this was not going to work this way. You're seeing the reality which is that when you're in a lethal removal effort, you're not there every day. We're looking for opportunities where there is a reasonable chance of carrying out the directive. We went into this without a collar to use to carry out the removal. At the tail-end of the operation, it became available to us.

Question

Going forward, we know this pack is hard to trap. What efforts are going to be made and what's happening moving forward?

Response

It took time to reach an agreement with the tribe. At this point we think we have access to the collar information; I don't think the situation is changing. Attorneys with the tribe

and WDFW are working on a data-sharing agreement for when they have collars out and there is a need for mutual information sharing.

Comment

It all depends on if the data is still available in winter. We are planning to use that collar information to collar another wolf in that area. Generally, in trap shy packs, winter aeriels are the best way to track them. We're hoping to maintain access and put one of our collars on this winter.

Next subject: range riding language and department rules

Comment

The big thing that cattlemen want to know is the responsibilities. There is a want for clarity on the responsibilities and roles of the department. We wanted WDFW to actively manage this, but it doesn't have to be WDFW necessarily. Could be any range rider but you can't expect the livestock producer to manage wolves or wildlife. It was just pushed off onto producers, and producers have pushed back. From the beginning, the carnivore division has not gotten a lot of issues to the director. I think producers are a victim of these faults and the decisions of the last WAG meeting. I think we need to talk about this general area.

Response

I want to say that you have an opportunity for timing right now. I'm on board with moving forward with clarifying roles. We have seen this season that the clarity in range riding is something that makes a tremendous difference. Riders can make adjustments to the landscape. You saw that we sent out a letter to the Governor's office and attached your draft range rider language. Communities out there right now are looking for clarity on these subjects. The opportunity is right in front of us. We need to come together.

Question

Are we going to take the time to approve the language today? Or are we going to do another round of edits and discussion regarding this?

Answer

Yes, we are working on the two documents sent. Can we go around the room and ask if people can live with the range riding language as it is now? Our decision-making process allows for three people not to agree. We need to figure out how many approve and do not. If we don't reach a decision, then we need to rework and open the discussion.

Comment

First, let me say, I thought the small group of us that met together over sections 3A went well. I appreciate the time invested by the staff. Sections 3 and 4 are moving back to

WAG for approval. I thought that was where we were at. I'm supportive of doing that but I wanted to say thank you to staff for the time invested in the process.

Comment

The department has asked you to do a change here. I think its fair to say, here's what small groups came up with regarding range riding language. We're not diving in for deep edits, we just want to see if there are any fatal flaws. If its ground we've covered then let's focus on parts where we talk process steps for each person.

Comment

Going back to what was thrown out. The wolf plan on page 143 states that the department will "respond to wolf events in a timely period while working with livestock owners to reduce conflicts". The first part was taken out. But it is the department's responsibility to respond. It's a small thing but I just feel the department should have the role and responsibility to manage wolves. How do you expect producers to manage these items?

Question

You need those word changes to be considered before you could support the changes?

Response

The new protocol needs clarity. If the department can't manage wolves, how does it assume that producers can? We need to draw this line, or it will breed acceptance of wolves on the landscape. We've thrown this language out in several places, but we have not put it elsewhere. Maybe this belongs in the Chapter 3 section.

Comment

If we're diving into this discussion, there may need to be wording changes. If there just tends to be a couple of wording changes, let's just do them. Let's agree that we won't make a bunch of edits, but we can make a couple of changes. I think it's going to take time.

Lunch break

Coming back by starting with range riding language changes and other edits

Comment

My comment solely relies on the area of the responsibility of the department. If I'm going to sign off, it needs to be loud and clear that it is the department's responsibility to manage wolves. If I'm a producer, I have no issue with it. The department's responsibility is to expedite the process to provide the range riders when there is a current overlap with activity. Whether it's WDFW's range riders or NGOs, it doesn't matter as long as the responsibility is clear.

Question

What change do we need to meet that need?

Response

The content is simply adding clarity to what daily means regarding range riding. I'd like to get the roles document edited (Section 3). In the documents that we have, Section 3 starts with "WDFW role is to...". If that's not enough of a statement, we may need to take the next sentence to articulate clarity regarding that role. Maybe someone can toss out something that gets at that?

The seventh bullet is regarding ungulate populations and refers to the wolf plan. I'm trying to set up the discussion to be successful. Whether we are adding or removing a bullet. We need to edit this document to address the clarity concern regarding WDFW's responsibility.

Response

Coming full circle, the lines in the document that are in question are still there. The line in question was moved to a different portion of Section 3.

Comment

My biggest concern is that it would be nice to have a line here regarding WDFW's mission. Producers are feeling the pressure to manage their livestock and wolves. We need to draw a bright line that says that it's the department's responsibility to manage wolves.

The language of having a response in a timely manner was struck and taken directly from the plan. It's in the plan, but in this one section it was struck, and it would be important for producers to add it back in.

Comment

Management means a lot of different things to people. When you say manage, what does that mean to you all?

Response

Management is the delineation of authorities. Livestock producers have responsibility for livestock. Anything to do with wolves (hazing for example) should not be required of the producers but clearly marked as the responsibility of the department.

Response

One of the confusing things is that the bullet in question is still there. It is not crossed out and I want to make sure we're all on the same page. I don't think there's any disagreement about the clarification requested. I want us to focus on making sure the words are already there or if they're not let's add them where needed. I'd like to focus on what's already there and figuring out what's needed. Both versions I have up and

sent out have that the line that states “the department should respond in a timely manner” and that it is their responsibility.

Comment

Having been the one to type all of this up from the sub-group conversation, it was only struck out because it was repeated. It is important to have within the document and it is in there.

Comment

We have to say it somewhere. You can delete the third bullet or add to the fourth, but we do see where the bullet is pulled from the protocol itself (p.143).

Response

It is the responsibility of the producers to manage livestock. Keeping their livestock safe. It's also my opinion that the department should be keeping the wolves away from livestock.

Response

Part of that I can agree with. At the first sign of depredation, it's the department's responsibility to put a range rider in there. It's a non-lethal tool that isn't there but could be and we're moving in that direction. At the first sign of conflict, the department will look at its resources and other entities to deploy range riding.

Comment

It might be there, but it is not in the 612 Protocol.

Comment

It is in the 612 protocol, there are just no track changes. Let's stick with this document. I just want to emphasize that they are all the same document.

Comment

Bullets three and four both include the concept of timely response and working with livestock owners. The way you see it now, does it meet your needs?

Comment

I can't live with just half of the fourth bullet. I don't know what work with livestock producers means.

Comment

I see. We can remove the third bullet and add clarity to the fourth bullet. Does that meet your needs? Challenges to that?

No objections

Question

How about the range riding matrix? Any potential concerns with the matrix since the last meeting? I had one suggested change; I would insert a sentence that clarifies the intent of this expectation that implies there will be an adequate number of range riders to allow all portions of grazing allotments with livestock presence to be checked on a near-daily basis during times. WDFW can determine the extent to which this expectation is being met. My proposal is adding that middle sentence about covering all portions of the allotments when wolves are present.

Question

In the third section of the matrix, it says “when wolves are seen in close proximity range riders should haze wolves”. I understand that producers don’t want to haze wolves when they are close. However, I’d say it is a basic response to protecting cattle and not necessarily wolf management.

Comment

Group, please comment on this proposed change.

Comment

I agree. I don’t have problems with either suggestion however, there could be cattle scattered throughout an allotment and sometimes there are not wolves present.

Question

I want to look at this from the economic side of things; how long will this be sustainable down the road? Does the department have enough money to fund all these range riders daily? What happens if there’s not enough?

Response

When I look at the language which was circulated and after listening to you all, I feel as though there can’t be an ultimatum in terms of requirements. There are limitations such as resource availability and clarifying that there are other variables that are outside of our control.

Comment

I agree and understand. Maybe another way to put it would be that when the resources are available the intent of this is as implied. Legislatures across the state have been willing to allocate resources to this issue due to keeping conflict down. The legislature has passed and made clear in bills that the legislature will commit to funding non-lethal deterrents regarding wolf conflict. At least we have intent and follow-through. It certainly doesn’t mean things won’t change. This year and next year we have funding.

Comment

We should add in “whenever resources are available” in front of intent.

Comment

Any other questions or concerns regarding this document? The requests have been completed and done. We can review it if needed. We just left in the two notes that are relevant to these pieces of the document. We are asking to see if you would move forward with the matrix with the edits, note edits, and other notes relevant to this document. Notes that are not relevant to this document will be deleted. Can you live with that range riding protocol and language change in the protocol?

Everyone responded with “yes”.

Question

Do we want to add this in as an addendum or replace it within the document itself?

Response

Go in and replace the language in the protocol with the proposed new language otherwise, there could be contradictions in there.

Response

I think it should be an addendum because there will be conflicting information.

Comment

If it was an addendum, we would be leaving the protocol as it is but have pages on the back with new information regarding range riding expectations and the matrix. What was also described is just editing the protocol with new changes and making it the 2020 protocol. You would prefer to just insert new language? We can check in more tomorrow.

Break

Comment

Reviewing our leftover agenda items, we still need to discuss WAG's purpose and process and dive into what the group would like to do with the language regarding chronic conflict zones. I recommend we have the conversation regarding WAG's purpose and process. We can start with conflict zones tomorrow. Any have a different offer?

(No objections)

In my discussions with some of you, I have heard clarifying the process is needed. What issues does WAG provide advice on and who identifies those issues and what's important in these communities? I've also heard feedback that the group wants to do better with setting deadlines and goals. Two or three people requested a CCT refresher (conservation conflict transformation). That's my background on the topic, but I want to open it up to any member.

Response

I want to acknowledge that this group is different than any other department group. You do give advice to the director like all advisory groups do. It's not laws or rules but you're giving advice to the director from a citizen stakeholder perspective. I'm going to set the stage here, from the ground we've covered before, is that your advice is helping set a standard and plan for department response. The general guidance for the department is not case-specific. It's a larger arch that you are providing insight on. This is where it has been different when we started this conflict transformation process, we wanted to give you and other stakeholders a voice. We asked WAG what you want to focus on what are your priorities. It has not been where the department has said this is what we're tackling next. It's a group effort and we all decide where to move next.

Question

One thing I would like to talk about at some point is how we're onboarding WAG members. I feel as though, those of us who have been here from the beginning have the benefit of a lot of instruction and opportunity to build relationships and those personal relationships play a big role. I wonder how new members are being onboarded, maybe we should discuss that process.

Response

The onboarding for members of the WAG has typically been a two-day training. They look at core things related to conflict transformation. Twice, we have met with folks for onboarding (condensed to a day). We have essentially taken presentations from the commission and wrote that information out in order to have a long conversation about conflict transformation. It is such a brief introduction, one thing we are not able to replicate is the constant learning and real-life classroom feeling. I feel the need to be open to conversations about onboarding and what that should include/who.

Comment:

Thanks, that's great information. I think the relationship building is something the WAG as a group can help with.

Comment

I want to echo what was said. I just had a short course and felt it to be truly valuable. Especially since we are not able to meet in person. I think it would be a great time to have a refresher on that. The online meetings are taking a toll.

Response

After talking with a handful of you, I think it's a potential. A refresher is a good thing, look at how diverse you all are. You're breaking ground. A refresher in maintaining that is a good thing. My bosses above me are in agreeance with a refresher. I have to find out if there are resources for a refresher, especially during these difficult fiscal times. If we can make that happen, we will.

Comment

We did the two-day deal training on conflict transformation. There wasn't much WAG background just learning CCT. To me, that would have been a good time to identify groups and what we're working on. I felt entirely blind and confused as to where things were at with the conversation. I still feel completely blindsided sometimes. I had no idea that some sub-groups exist. I feel like we're advising on things that aren't needed or don't need work on. I would like the department to specifically say what the director wants from WAG. I feel like we give advice and we're not being useful because it is not being used.

Response

I like that. I think it is great for the director to be a part of these conversations. It would be helpful and great to hear where the director believes he needs the most guidance. I think this is a good touchpoint. You see the peaks and valleys in the group. I'm going, to be honest; I think we are not right now at our peak performance like in the past. You can feel it and I want to get past that. The world we live in right now is taking a toll and it is impacting our group. Without the dinners and laughter and we just focus on these difficult issues. What are our core values as a group and how do we get back to those things?

Comment

Thank you for that. I agree, I think it is needed. I also appreciate your reflection on the times we're in right now. It makes it hard to be a cohesive group. The polarized political environments also play a role in the wolf topic itself. There are more depredations and we have not met recovery goals. Everybody in the WAG is hearing a lot of angst and displeasure and its hard for us to carry. Stepping into the room and meeting with each other we try to remain human and this is a hard setting to do that in. If we can get some outside help, it would be great because we are faced with unprecedented challenges in the wolf world and outside of it.

Question

Where do we go from here without the department giving us advice? I can tell you a lot of things that aren't working with the department, but I don't think that's what they want.

Response

We do want advice on elements on the protocol and package to be completed. You have all shared that with us too. There are various entities in WAG that want to touch on other places. We have said what our priority is which is post-recovery planning. From the department's perspective, we would like to see what the post-recovery plan process looks like.

Response

I'm looking forward to participating in the post-recovery process, but it's been pushed to the back burner. One of the things I miss is the person to person contact. As a new

person coming into the WAG, it takes a while to feel a part of the group. Some of our best decisions are during breaks or lunch. I'm looking forward to the future of the WAG.

Question

I'm wondering, as a new person, are there rules for WAG members to follow? We have a handbook but it's generic. Are there some written rules for members that I'm not aware of?

Response

Yes and no. WAG has its core mission and intention in writing on the department's website. WAG has a set of ground rules that lives on flipchart notes in past meetings. We want to learn and improve to reflect as we move forward. One of the things we might do is bring all of that together and make sure we understand it all the right way.

Comment

Having worked with this incredible group for so long, you go through highs and lows. We have been grappling with difficult issues over the last year and today showed what we can do when we are willing to mutually learn from each other and what we can live with. I think we need to continue to all have a higher mission in our minds and be willing to mutually learn and emphasize with each other. I hope we can continue this.

Comment

I was going to make a suggestion on the point of setting goals and timelines. I think that it is generally good to do for whatever we're taking work on. I love the suggestion of hearing what the director would like to hear on and everybody else who's involved in this every day. I think one of the things that made this so hard was that we never had a cut-off point. Once we would get close to something, something else comes up. Next time we decide to open the protocol maybe we have set opening and closing times. After that closing time, we're done for at least a season. For instance, we could say every November (after grazing season) go over lessons learned and changes to the protocol. We have a cutoff date until the end of March for any changes that may be needed. That way we have closures and we work hard to address everyone's issues. That's just an example, I think it would help and we could use the rest of the time to devote to other topics. We could devote more time and set boundaries and thereby reduce frustration and increase efficiency.

Response

I think we need a process step to acknowledge and celebrate our successes. We are very humble which is great, but I think about the cross-section of who you are. You guys just agreed on something. We somehow must call that out and that we can work collaboratively.

Question: Who's going to tell us what our role is in WAG?

Response

The director and myself.

Response

When will you tell us?

Comment

I will go back to the director and talk with him about that. I think the role is clear, but I can get clarification on the work WAG is doing next.

Question

I thought subcommittees and groups were going to be discussed more?

Comment

We can go into that briefly. Are you ready to answer that now?

Response

I'm aware of two subcommittees (longstanding outreach and education committee) I have not heard from those committees and believe they are not super active at this time. We at WAG want more clarity on subcommittees and their work.

Response

There is a data-sharing group that has WAG members on it, but they have not met in the past year. I think maybe we should have standing updates from existing committees. We want to keep WAG up to speed on those things.

Question

Is the compensation group a department group or WAG group? I'm confused about the categories.

Response

It is confusing, the outreach and education group are the only long-term subcommittee groups. The data sharing and other groups are not WAG based groups. They have WAG members on them. You're all spot on and need an update on this.

Question

Since we don't have the rosters, when we lose someone or change membership are, we are replacing members on the WAG based on identity groups? Thoughts on that?

Comment

I wanted to highlight on the data sharing group, one of the things so important to producers is that individual producers use data availability, which is being ratcheted down if it's true it is problematic for producers. To be honest, I think I've been asking at each meeting where is the data sharing group? What is the plan for the next grazing

season? And hearing that the data sharing is being ratcheted back, I feel as an advisory group it would be helpful to know and why.

Response

Yes, the data sharing group which includes some WAG members has not met in quite some time. For the 2020 grazing season there is not ratcheting down or restriction of use. No changes in which the way the information is available other than improvements. For example, enhanced views and quite a bit of other work. Point data, density data, and township data remain available. At this point, there is no proposed change or restriction on how that is shared.

Open to public comment

Meeting adjourned

**Wolf Advisory Group
August 6, 2020 Meeting Notes
Online Meeting (Day 2)**

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

WDFW staff members: Julia Smith, Donny Martorello, Steve Pozzanghera and Dan Brinson

Facilitator: Rob Geddis

US Fish & Wildlife Service: Gregg Kurz

Welcome and check-in

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

Rob reviews what was accomplished yesterday and presents the agenda to the group. Collected feedback regarding how to implement new protocol information. Recommended to insert new language into the existing protocol.

Develop Proposed Chronic Conflict Zone Language

Comment

The plan today is to bring up the language shared on June 27 and have a discussion. We will also review additional edits that were brainstormed back in May. I propose that we discuss the original document sent out. Some other edits have additional language.

Response

What we did in Section 9 was about what was proposed in other sections. The comments you'll see are regarding concerns with an area as a chronic zone. Having seen what's going on in the northeast as it spreads across the state the whole state can become a chronic conflict zone. I know that's an overstatement but I'm trying to address this rather than have a blanket chronic zone.

Response

My problem with the chronic zone is that I think we need the department to perform its duties as defined in their mandates. Then we probably wouldn't have these chronic zones which are simply areas where wolves are killing livestock. I think if we had an adequate supply of ungulates in this area, we wouldn't have chronic zones. Other predator populations are down fourteen percent and deer herds are practically gone. Other predators are one of the large causes of this. We don't have a lot of wolves yet but when we do, they're going to take over.

Response

I would go back to the opening quotes that we pulled. It is helpful to be reminded that the department's commission has already spoken on this issue. As we move forward, we need to understand the map laid out for us by the authority of department rules.

Comment

We need to discuss the future of wolves in Washington. We talked before about the intersection of chronic zones and ungulate populations. Talking internally, one of the things that might be useful is to hear from our staff in terms of how things are looking from an ungulate specialist. Also, there are some decisions being made by the commission in terms of carnivore management. How do we take those other elements and wrap them together? There are things happening out there but there is not a common thread tying them together.

Comment

As usual, I appreciate hearing other perspectives on this. That's what we're here for. I am frankly not comfortable with these language changes. It comes down to a couple of reasons. I hear loud and clear that producers feel like the reason that there are lots of livestock depredations is because there aren't enough ungulates. I don't think that's established as a known fact. I think we need to be more open about potential causes. I remember a comment from someone who studied drivers of livestock depredations and made some good points about when you have a consistently high overlap of wolves and livestock that you increase chances of depredations. We run into problems if we state for sure what the issue is, and we only solve it from that lens. I would have a hard time including language that makes those assertions. If we need different language to describe the conflict zones that fine. There are ways to look at trying different deterrents, but I would also say that the language there already directs the department and involved parties to assess what the cause is. If there is a particulate shortage of ungulates in an area, then the protocol already allows space to investigate that. Even if it is an ungulate issue, you're not going to change the population for that season. What is it that we can try to do differently to prevent additional depredations in the upcoming season given all the variables? I think there are research and processes in place to figure that out. Last thing, the conservation community asked for this language due to social tolerance on the other end of the spectrum. It is too hard on the system to have wolves shot every year in the same place, what can we do to stop that? That piece needs to come loud and clear. That part of public input is important, and part of the commission statement made.

Response

I appreciate your work on this. Reading it this morning felt like cold water. Retyping quotes and past documents kind of limits what we do on the WAG. We're here to provide guidance, those documents and statements exist already in the universe. We're trying to build a protocol suggestion based on multiple stakeholders from different walks

of life foraging different agreements. Reading this I can't tell if you're stonewalling or willing to address the killing of wolves in the same place every year.

Comment

One thing that would be helpful for me is to address certain group's needs. There is a huge element of the unknown here. There are some items we have here and the question of where to draw the line. I'm going back to the conversation we had earlier regarding ungulate populations and I'm wondering if it's better to think about it more in chronic conflict zones since we're exploring lots of things to address this issue. Many of those are going to be in the range of things we have in our toolbox. We need to acknowledge that. Certainly, prey is a natural element. Some of us would draw a line some would not. We need to acknowledge that the department manages for prey abundance.

Comment

I was interested in hearing thoughts related to moving the statement about land management. Several quotes talk about WDFW working with land management agencies. Would like to hear your thoughts on that?

Response

I think that the thought there is that DNR and land managers do not manage wildlife. WDFW manages wildlife. The clarity in the protocol is why we were thinking of sticking with that language.

Response

I appreciate that. But I think in the plan it specifically talks about the importance of the work between the department and other land managers. Those agencies that oversee grazing permits and den sites are important. It is clear in the plan. I would be against removing that language.

Question

Line numbers 26, 27, and 28 did not correspond. I'm looking for insight on the cross out in this document.

Comment

My first comment is for the line above. I seem to remember us last year determining that changing wolf behavior is an unrealistic expectation. Our goal is implementing deterrents and sort of controlling what humans can control, not putting the success of a wolf plan on wolf behavior. I think striking out and replacing with the old language is going backward. Going back to the section you read, I want to know the rationale for removing anything about innovations and only focusing on ungulates. I want to hear why?

Response

I don't know if I can one-hundred percent answer your question. Our feelings are that I don't know what the additional tools are that work for hardwired wolves that are killing livestock. Cowbells are not helping. I wish they would, but I think we are kidding ourselves with innovations and tool changes and how they are deployed. I don't know what the tools are. I think that's what we're talking about in these chronic conflict zones.

Comment

Relative to this we do engage with the forest service on ungulate issues. Several months ago, the USFS talked about managing for openings and ungulate abundance. There is a dialogue that goes on. The forest service is not the lead, but the department has conversations that are relevant to moving forward with this situation. For this edit, I think that the best example of that are creative ideas and using those on a pilot project. We don't want to do these things blindly. We want to have conversations with producers and landowners when we're trying these approaches. Make sure we acknowledge that we're trying to go above and beyond to resolve the issue but doesn't convey that this will solve it.

Response

To follow up on what you said about forest service, USFS manages wildlife habitat. This is explained by looking at the way they manage timber and how it affects ungulates. Looking at ways to tailor their management to help those species. In our elk and deer plans, we state we work with partners to manage habitat. We're not talking about chronic conflict wolves but zones. We have removed an entire pack in one area, the wolves in there are not hardwired for anything. Folks should remember that distinction. We cannot stifle ourselves with creative solutions that we don't know. Technology and innovations are rapidly evolving.

Question

With all due respect to the work you've done, I don't understand how we have this version of the document. I feel like certain people are driving this conversation, I may be alone, but I don't understand how this occurred.

Response

I can share with you my thinking. I'm the one who started with this. From my thinking, all of us gave some thoughts on what this should say. Certain people had taken extra time to put some words down. We know from their perspective these are important to them. We know some of our members have this point of view. Sorry if I gave the impression that this supersedes other folk's thinking, as anything with this group we change the way we're doing this.

Response

To your point, we developed edits back in May. This document has been around for four months. So, I apologize that it repeated as that was not our intention. These edits

happened at the same time, we provided our thoughts on sections three and four. To cut to the chase, for many of the producers the concept of a chronic conflict zone is not popular. For the producers that means that they're having a lot of problems. They want the problem resolved not to be treated differently. Important thought as we have this conversation, this may be one of the more difficult issues but a conversation necessary to have.

Comment

I want to reflect on what has been said. Thanks for sharing your frustration. I think there have been people who have taken a deep dive into this document. Not by purpose or anything like that but seems like its just a conversation brought to us now. Others should share where they have issues or struggles, comments and changes. Thank you for saying that producers are struggling with CCZ, that's probably why you're feeling angst around the language. Why is the CCZ not acceptable language? Are we at the editing stage here? It is new to me that producers are struggling with the CCZ concept.

Response

I am struck by your description of how producers are feeling. I've heard it before in past meetings that some don't like this section. I think there might be a fundamental misunderstanding of intent like it's an "us versus them" thing. I want to harken back to the genesis for having this section in here. My intent with wanting to see this CCZ section is to prevent situations where producers are losing livestock regularly and prevent situations where the state is killing wolves year after year. That situation is stressful for everybody. What I'm hearing from the producer's perspective is get on with killing the wolves. Don't keep putting in the time to deter them but just rid of the problem. I don't agree with the idea that wolves need to be killed in the same place year. I can't imagine that having there be depredations that take a while to find and going through the stress of lethal control (success or not) and the rest of the world getting upset doesn't seem like a good state of affairs. Having language in the protocol that states that we need to direct resources to see what is driving this is important. We garner resources to everyone's' benefit. This isn't one-sided, so you have fewer efforts on having to go lethal. Let's solve it so producers lose less and the rest of the public who are against annual wolf removal can move forward. We need to clarify that we are not trying to make producers' lives harder.

Response

I think the livestock community has a lot of concerns about CCZ as written. It appears as just burdensome to them and only treating the symptoms not the problem. I think you touched on that. They're more interested in what you said, they would like to figure out what is causing the CCZ and I don't think this is written towards causation but more towards trying to resolve the issue. I think we should be thinking about causation.

Comment

First, when I say CCZ concept I said I don't think we need that. There's no reason to apply additional burdens to the victim (producers). We don't need to come up with more creative solutions. I think there is a question about this being developed by WAG and then being changed. The reason the producers are not happy with it isn't because wolves won't get killed fast enough which happens rarely and the process takes forever. Having the CCZ distinction doesn't slow it down but it requires the producers to deploy more effective things earlier or not consider you important if something dies. Nobody has created an effective deterrent. There are bells and collars amongst other things. I did like the discussion regarding ungulates. The department says we don't have enough but there's nothing we can do about it. I think there is. I don't think you want me to write a report. You can get rid of the CCZ if you provide ungulates for the wolves and see if they switch. If they ate them and not the cattle everyone would be happy. CCZ doesn't need to be there just put another block in or reason not to do something.

Response

It's a bigger circle than just us weighing on this. Regarding the CCZ concept you hear it clear from the governor and I think that its reasonable to ask the question in these areas where you have repeated conflict (every year or not) even when you remove wolves and it resurfaces, do we treat that the same or different? We must acknowledge that the governor's office is in the system, they have asked us to try to recognize that there some things we can do. It's tough but it is real, and I think we should address it. It may be that there isn't any great idea right now and we continue to explore. You've already seen the department step out and try to do this with range riding and pilot projects to us those are steps forward for thinking about chronic areas. These may not be getting to the causes but we're not turning a blind eye. This isn't something the department drafted but took from previous flip notes from the group.

Comment

I'd like to address the question regarding the ungulate shortage. In the current predator-prey project with all the collared ungulates, they have yet to identify wolf depredation. They had no DNA of wolves at kill sites where animals where deceased. Wolves are not killing ungulates in those areas.

Comment

The department shared that the governor's letter indicates we need to do something different. The language that exists now is an attempt to reflect past discussions. In other words, we're trying to find the right balance to meet everyone's needs but I think I heard you don't believe in or support this section?

Response

This one is interesting for us working together and coming to an agreement. More challenging than we thought. I'll be honest with you; from our perspective, this section did not help. The governor's letter politicized an already difficult wildlife issue. We all

have our buttons that people push. For some of us when referring to governor it does not encourage us to move in that direction. The last thing we want is the politicization of wildlife management. I guess from a producer's perspective is when they have a problem with that happening to their livestock want it dealt with and now. I think it's a good discussion, I don't think we're going to reach an agreement on language. We may need to have more of a conversation like WAG does so we can see where everyone is coming from. I think this will take more time.

Response

The Governor's request for creative solutions to end the conflict is what you need to do. You don't need a CCZ to get more creative. I think when it pops up you fix the conflict which results in fewer cattle dead and wolves. The wording now asks the producers to come up with this. I think the department needs to apply creative and solutions to the wildlife they want to manage. Let the producers manage their livestock.

Response

I agree. Coming up with creative ideas needs to be on both sides not solely on producers. We need creative ideas on how to keep wolves at bay. We have lots of experience working with cows but need to refocus on wolves. I understand the concept of the section and the concept of having or preventing CCZ. I think that the concept of not having them is equal on all sides of the playing field. We don't want them. We should be using these tools while it is progressing. As the situation progresses you move forward with it. Not sure why we would write up a CCZ section that has tools withheld. I think we all agree that nobody wants to get to a CCZ. Maybe there's another place where we can write up these things. I'm not sure this section needs to exist.

Comment

In response to the view of the governor's request, we are an advisory group to WDFW. The director works for the governor. It's not politicizing but it's our role to recognize that this is managed by a state agency overseen by the governor ultimately.

Comment

I'm remembering back to the genesis of this discussion. This idea didn't come from the governor, it came from knowing how awful and stressful things had become in the summer of 2019 while the OPT pack was being eliminated on top of reactions of 2018/2016 events. There were removals in 2017 not as socially tense. The idea of this from my perspective came way before the governor's letter. My wanting language here had nothing to do with the governor but had everything to do with worry that all parts of a social system that interact when these things happen are there's too many conflicts and it wouldn't be manageable. It would result in less of everything. I'm struck by the perceptions about what this language says and does. It doesn't reflect what I thought was the intent. With the remaining time maybe we can agree on the intent of this. If there are innovative tools, we should prevent the CCZ from happening in the first place. But we already have some of these zones and want to break the cycle. Maybe can we

go through an exercise to see if we can agree on the elements that meet the original goals of this section? If we can agree on intent and objective maybe, we can figure out how to make this section work. I appreciate people's commitment to work through this.

Comment

I agree that we should come up with something that works for both of us. I'm looking at it from the hunting perspective. My hunting dollars and where those dollars are going and they're going towards managing that conflict. We're invested in this type of conflict. That said, it would be nice when looking at CCZ that we do have time to come up with some solutions that take it away from producers. We need to come up with something that considers other options since they are doing all they can do.

Question

I just want to say I understand where everyone is coming from. Somewhere we need to look at translocation and dispersion to help spread the wolves around. Why don't we look at translocation again and see where wolves would then be ideal to relocate? The other area is hunting. Right now, we can't do that. Idaho has made it so anytime you have CCZ you have unlimited hunting season with no limit wolf kill. If we have a CCZ maybe we need to get that tool, they make a lot of money on special drawings for that. Also, an increased human presence in those areas will help disperse the wolves. Maybe we need to revisit these two areas.

Response

I want to quickly respond to you; wolves are a state endangered species therefore not eligible to be hunted by the public. This is a hard discussion to have over zoom. I think that there were some good points to the genesis of the issue This came from a great deal of social unrest and pain from the OPT situation and blowing over for a while. So, I want to reach out to the producers and understand your perspective on how and why this is viewed as a one-way burden on your community? I want to see if we can find ways to reframe it to sort of rework it and find a way to break through this and the key here is to find new ways to not put extra burdens on anyone and to heal the social dynamics that are important from all sides. Not just flush this one or push aside. Find a way to gauge it for the confidence in what we're doing here.

Comment

To follow up on that, it is a state policy that the wolves would be delisted when there are wolves in all three sections. The federal government delisted wolves in eastern Washington to allow special cases where we can use this as a tool. The policy can always be changed.

Comment

As for CCZ, we all know it happens year after year in the same areas. Feels like on our side it's just one more stone we must step over to get relief from depredations. Our side of the deal is that we don't want any cows or wolves to die.

Response

I think this goes back to the difference in perception in what a CCZ does. In my eyes, it acknowledges these areas have chronic issues and focusses our retention as an agency to resolve those by whatever means. I don't envision this as falling on producers, but it is focusing those issues to be addressed for fewer cows and wolves to be killed. It is frustrating to hear that people think that this is an impediment rather than an effort to reduce conflict overall.

Comment

I thought the reason we started this conversation was because we wanted a focus on resources by staff. Maybe focus isn't in a negative way but more looking towards the use of resources.

Comment

If our goal is to truly have acceptance of a sustainable wolf population on the landscape it is important to look at lessons learned, and management already applied. Three states and game departments that have a lot of time invested in managing wolves. Not just try to recreate the wheel here. I think we should take a hard look at how they're doing it. The livestock industry is certainly not opposed to sustainable populations. I think we could look at years' worth of wolf management for insight.

Response

Thanks for that comment. Lessons learned are important, but I also think innovation is important. I'd like to see a system for if a rancher came up with an idea then they could try it and help them.

Response

I'm not opposed to that.

Comment

I think CCZ gives us something to put in grant applications. Another way of getting money to do the things that are in there to reduce conflict.

Comment

We need to capture in here the objective of reducing livestock loss and killing wolves. I think sometimes we might be talking past each other or coming from different places. I'm thinking about sustainable populations (the Rocky Mountains for example). From the conservation side, the issue is having wolves killed repeatedly. Its not a population issue but wanting a state of affairs where wolves are not killed.

Comment

I think it's important to spell out in a CCZ especially that accountability is shared. It is not fair for one side and then it's all their fault. It is not fair to say they have no accountability either. In my experience in the field, no solution works where all parties aren't working

towards a shared goal. I think we need to emphasize a statement regarding shared accountability for everyone.

Response

I think the goal is changing. I thought the goal was to have a sustainable wolf population across the spectrum. I think the issue of accountability needs to include the department.

Comment

Any other thoughts on intent and goals regarding a section for CCZ or not? Let me ask this, the intent here is that you have an area that is different because of repeated conflict and repeated lethal removal, the desire to do something different when you have that information. That something different is more resources to alleviate that conflict. All parties share in that situation. I think the CCZ section is trying to do this. Some of our producers have mentioned that we don't need a separate CCZ just by saying that it gives the impression of additional burdens on producers. I'd like to offer that question, based on that and what you've heard on goal and intent does this make sense to you? I think we're capturing the intent, is there another way to do it?

Response

Not sure how much of what was captured is different than what needs to happen anyway. That's what my issue is, if there are these additional things that can be done, why aren't they? Accountability should be happening anyway. I struggle with that and if there's something we're going to put in there that's more demanding for the livestock community. That's not fair and isn't going to work. I guess that's where my struggle is.

Response

I have to manage a lot of lands and I'm into cause and effect. Looking at the cause and then examining tools and seeing what happens. Just dealing with the symptom is not problem-solving. This should be about studying and what's causing these zones, so we don't have more zones in the future. Should not be about trying to get livestock communities to use more tools however I'm not opposed to trying stuff, but the big deal is the future CCZ, not the current ones.

Response

It was clarified that we don't want this to just be about burdens on producers. We wanted you to know that the objective of doing something is there for a shared burden but to provide more options and tools for ranchers. Not that you have to do things, but they should help you. I wanted to say I agree with your point; we should be looking at cause and effect. I think we can do that in a couple of different levels. I think that if there are efforts by the department and other research institutions with formal ongoing research and lessons learning why those zones exist and how to prevent them provides a long-term framework. I think those answers are going to take more than a season to come up with. Regarding the protocol, I don't think these problems pop up everywhere. For example, looking at the Rocky Mountains wolves, not every pack does it (a minority

of packs get in trouble) we see that here too. If the department has limited time and resources and the purpose of this section is to focus those resources to apply them based on that. Now that we see we have a problem we want to focus our attention on cause and effect and what we can do for ranchers. I hear what you're saying about why don't we do this everywhere, but I don't think everywhere requires it and there's a lack of resources. We need a mechanism to look at areas where the problem was attempted to be resolved and then we can refocus.

Comment

I see everyone's points and agree with most of it. I understand no one wants it to keep happening repeatedly. However, my community feels like it will make it harder to go to lethal and getting relief whatsoever.

Comment

I completely hear that fear, but I think the goal of this is that repeated lethal control is not providing relief. Looking into other options other than lethal since we have not seen relief there.

Comment

Let's try to set deadlines for when we want to have a solution for CCZ.

Discussed potential meeting dates in future - Rob pulled up the calendar and proposed dates in November, January and/or May.

Rob did check out for the group.