

DRAFT

Section 9. Special focus areas (SFAs) for chronic? recurrent? conflict mitigation

Special focus areas (SFAs) for conflict mitigation are areas (e.g., geographic pack territories [regardless of pack name change], landmarks, allotments, pastures, etc.) where proactive non-lethal deterrents have been implemented, wolf depredations on livestock have occurred, and the Department has authorized lethal removal of wolves for two of the prior three consecutive years. SFAs may also be defined by specific locales within a pack territory where conflict with livestock is recurrent.

In these areas, WDFW staff will work with affected producers, associated landowners, and land management agencies to attempt to understand the cause of the conflict and to develop focus area conflict mitigation plans for additional or enhanced proactive non-lethal deterrents. These plans will seek creative alternatives to reduce or eliminate additional loss of livestock and attempt to break the need for repeated lethal removal of wolves in these areas. The intent is to develop these plans and have them ready for implementation prior to the following grazing season.

These discussions might be associated with innovations in non-lethal tools, changes in how they are deployed, and/or priority for funding. Discussions may include an evaluation of local ungulate and predator abundance and management with an effort to draw connections between various management plans (elk herd plans, deer herd plans, Game Management Plan, and Wolf Plan).

The rationale for including this section in the protocol is as follows:

1. The shared goal is to minimize the repeated loss of livestock and wolves caused by wolf-livestock conflict.
2. Designating SFAs recognizes that repeated livestock loss and wolf removals are likely to cause significant hardship for producers and their animals, as well as their communities, wolf packs, the wolf advocate community, and WDFW staff.
3. The present application of lethal removal of wolves in SFAs is not having the intended effect of breaking patterns of depredation and reducing losses.
4. The protocol currently does not address this conundrum.
5. The intent of this section is to provide guidance to WDFW when these situations occur, and work toward possibilities that honor the shared goal of reducing loss of livestock and wolves.

Additional or enhanced non-lethal deterrents* will be implemented prior to considering lethal removal in these areas. Lethal removal may be considered if other livestock producers in the same wolf pack area are experiencing wolf depredations and they have deployed appropriate deterrence measures a sufficient amount of time prior to wolf depredations.

*Potential ideas include...

Commented [SJB(1): The way this is stated drastically underestimates the time and resources needed to actually do this. The predator-prey project is over 1 million dollars and is a 5-year research project. We currently don't have population estimates for ungulates in most places statewide and in the NE we probably never will. There are currently no techniques to estimate abundance in treed environments. This is just unrealistic.

There would also be a need to draw connections with grazing management plans and stocking rates and how that affects ungulate abundance or presence.

Commented [SJB(2): An idea for wording: The shared goal is to minimize lethal removal of wolves by minimizing depredations of livestock.

Commented [SJB(3): Ideas:
1. Remove paragraph from Section 9 and have Section 7 (pg. 17) refer to section 9 to avoid repeated language
2. Accountability and cooperation are important. Do they need to be called out here specifically?