

## **Wolf Advisory Group meeting notes**

May 1, 2018

Spokane

**WAG members:** Shawn Cantrell, Tim Coleman, Don Dashiell, Tom Davis, Dave Duncan, Diane Gallegos, Molly Linville, Dan Paul, Paula Swedeen, Nick Martinez, Ralph Kratz, Lisa Stone, Jessica Kelley, Samee Charriere

**WDFW Staff:** Donny Martorello, Candace Bennett, Trent Roussin, Ben Maletzke, Steve Pozzanghera, Stephanie Simek, Robert Waddell, Annemarie Prince, Dan Christensen, Joe Bridges, Joey McCanna, Tara Meyer, Kile Westerman, Melia Devivo, Dan Brinson, Matthew Trendera

**Fish and Wildlife Commission members:** Kim Thorburn, Barbara Baker, and Jay Holzmilller

**Third party neutral:** Francine Madden

### **Welcome and overview**

The third party neutral welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone checked in around the room.

Good coordination between the department, WAG, the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and society is essential for any wolf plan to work. Everyone needs to be aligned as we go through this process. There are stakeholders that haven't been engaged yet, there are sectors of the public that will still need to be involved (many have been, but others haven't), and there are over 7 million people in the state of Washington. It is important that we all have patience, because each piece of the plan is only a piece, and it doesn't tell you what the final, whole product will look like. You will be able to support the plan you come up with because of the diversity in the pieces. Have patience, have compassion for each other, and have faith in the process you have created. You have created this space so that you can make decisions together. Even if you don't like a piece, have patience, because, again, that piece does not tell you what the whole will become.

So much of this WAG meeting is about what the public wants and how the public wants to engage, so the public will be more involved in the meeting today. This will be similar to how it was handled in Ellensburg, with public participation. If you do not have a good, clear, positive process for engaging the public, your plan will fail. A lot of people have an interest in developing this plan, and they have a right to be involved in that process. If you don't work to design that process early, the public will not feel like they were involved or engaged for the development of the plan.

It might be that nothing will be perfect, but making the effort is essential. The process needs to match the content and match the people involved.

Comment:

I have a few concerns that I'm not sure are addressed in the current agenda. Are we going to be able to discuss our thoughts on the protocol, accountability, and areas of concern as we go into the grazing season?

I appreciate you bringing up revisiting the plan and the concerns. For this agenda, the bulk of the energy was with public engagement.

From the department's perspective, we know that we don't get much meeting time, and we want to use as much time as possible in development of the process for the next wolf conservation and management plan. I think there is room for subgroups within the WAG to discuss those other items. But I think the department's goal, with the larger group, is to focus right now on the development of the next plan.

At some point I think it would be good to have the review of the protocol. I think a puzzle piece that needs to be explored more are the ranchers in the northeast of the state.

As a new member, I don't feel like I can give good input on the post-delisting plan without that protocol review.

### **Public Input Session**

Department staff members outlined the public comments/questions received during the public work session this morning (see meeting materials for more information).

- On monthly wolf updates, provide list of deterrents being used at the time
- Logistical comments on the meeting location (release location earlier)
- Diversity within WAG
- Comments regarding social and societal engagement
- Comment on having the listening session after the WAG, rather than the morning before
- Public information sessions around the state
- Maybe show more empathy and compassion towards wolves
  - Better convey that the department cares about the conservation of this species

### **WDFW update – new packs**

Department staff discussed the question of how new packs are formed and confirmed. There are a few ways that we can find packs. The simplest way is when a pack shows up out of nowhere. We know nothing about those wolves. That is pretty simple. It's when wolves are in a place where we've never seen wolves before.

When we have collared wolves, it can be a little more complicated. We follow that wolf, and we see that it has left the previous pack and moved to a different area. We don't necessarily assume that any depredation history it had is going to follow it. There is a landscape effect, a pack effect, and a lot of other variables that must be taken into consideration. We initially think of it as a new pack and then wait and see.

We also have cases where wolves from one pack will kind of carve out a section of other pack territory. There have been questions about where those wolves come from. Unless we know where those wolves came from, we don't just assume they're wolves from other packs. We work really hard to find out if they're different (trapping, cameras, etc.), and if they are, we call it a new pack. However, it could be that those wolves are members of previous packs. It's incredibly difficult to tell sometimes. We tend to wait and see in these cases as well.

With collars, it can be easier to figure out. Without collars, it's even more difficult. You have to go with the most information you have and make decisions based on that. You try to keep up with information as best as you can. A lot depends on the area as well. The geography of the spot plays a role in determining a new pack or not.

We constantly have conversations amongst ourselves as well, so we understand how it can be confusing.

Comment:

I've heard from some that there's a perception that the department just renames packs to "reset" the depredation count. I'm not saying that's happening, but the perception is there. How do we get that messaging out there that this isn't actually the case? That's a red flag to me that we need to figure out.

It's a trust issue.

This is coming up strongly in the northeast, and is definitely something people wanted to know about.

Question: So when the department gets a report about a wolf sighting, how many observations before you go out to see?

It kind of depends on the quality of the information. A good, quality photo of a wolf track will get us out there right away, while other cases might take two or three reports. It also depends on the area of the state. We would probably be quicker to go take a look in the north or south Cascades, rather than the northeast where we know wolves are there already.

### **WDFW update – predator/prey study**

Department staff members are also always in communication with each other.

Melia Devivo gave a presentation on the predator/prey study, starting with a basic understanding of predator/prey dynamics (see meeting materials for model). This project was funded by state legislators to find out how predators are affecting Washington's deer and elk populations. This is not a simple question to answer.

In a situation where there is one predator and one prey, as prey population rises, so does predator (with a slight lag). As prey population falls, so does predator (with that same slight lag). There are assumptions that this model does not address, which is why this model cannot be applied to the real world. It assumes that without predators, prey populations would grow forever. We know that's not true, because prey populations are also limited by resources. It also assumes that without that one prey species, predators would starve. We know that's not true, because predators have diverse diets.

The model also doesn't account for handling time or the fact that predators, like humans, get full and don't constantly eat. The other assumption is that predators and prey encounter each other randomly. But we know that's false, because they come in contact in certain environments.

With our predator/prey project, we're collaring the prey, monitoring them, and investigating their mortalities. With that data, we can find what those mortalities are and how these populations are affected. We are also collaring wolves for the study and investigating kill sites. We'll have information on what species wolves are killing, and the condition of the prey. We can also look at predation rates.

Since both predators and prey are collared in this study, we can see where these animals are occurring on the landscape and where prey are more vulnerable to predators.

On the logistics side of the project, we are collaring deer and elk for the study. We want to also have at least two wolves collared per pack. There is a cougar component to this study, and cougars will also be collared. We are focusing on two distinct areas: the northeast and the Methow Valley (Okanogan area). We are collaborating with the University of Washington on this study as well. Each faculty member has at least one graduate student in the lab working on this project.

We're slated to collect data over the next four years, and we are currently about 16 months into the study. Our plan is for 100 mule deer in the Okanogan study area, as well as 50 elk and at least 65 white-tailed deer in the northeast.

Question: Do you anticipate any information before that four years is up?

We will have annual reports. We don't want to draw too many conclusions without the full set of data, because there will be annual variation.

Question: Do you have any deer or elk collared in areas without wolf packs?

We do not. We are just looking at areas with wolves. We do have those collars in areas with higher and lower wolf densities.

Question: What packs does the study area overlap?

Carpenter Ridge, Dirty Shirt, Huckleberry, Stranger, and potentially the Five Sisters. In the Methow, it overlaps the Lookout and Loup Loup packs.

Question: Do you reapply collars or are you just going with the ones in there now and seeing how they phase out?

If an animal dies, we can potentially redeploy the collar. The plan is to not do any sort of massive capture effort after all are deployed. This does depend on funding.

Question: Is there a mortality expectation for elk and deer over the study period?

We have a set minimum sample size from year to year. That will be our goal.

We are wanting to get two collars in those packs in the study areas. If there's a new pack, we'll try to get two collars there as well.

Question: Has this kind of study been done before, and if so, how does Washington differ?

I think most of the predator/prey types of studies have been conducted in systems like Yellowstone National Park. You don't get the human component in those types of projects. We're dealing with a different landscape. While we can draw from those projects, we still have to conduct these types of studies in the areas we are interested in because there may be other limiting factors.

### **WDFW update – conflict prevention**

Candace Bennett led a discussion on conflict prevention with respect to the upcoming grazing in Washington. In southwest Washington, there have been some historic DPCA-Ls, but that's shifted as of last year. Department staff are still working with producers, as well as private timber companies to discuss the protocol. In the Skagit, we're starting coordination and making preparations before depredations hit. We'll be doing more outreach with producers in those areas.

In the Ellensburg area, U.S. Forest Service meetings are ongoing, and DPCA-Ls are being deployed. We also have three WDFW-contracted range riders to work with producers.

In the Okanogan, staff members are going to coordinated resource management (CRM) meetings and working with both ranger districts (Tonasket and Methow). Information sharing is also ongoing.

Southeast Washington department staff members have been meeting and working with producers for years. There have been a few public meetings. Cattle will be going on allotments in the first part of June. Long term relationships with livestock producers are established.

In Spokane, staff members have reached out to individuals and given presentations on wolves and how things have gone over the past year.

In the northeast, staff members meet with producers and attend CRM meetings. Discussions are already happening with producers who are about to turn out livestock.

On the funding piece, some money has come from the Department of Agriculture for deterrents on the ground. There is an upcoming meeting on deterrent measures for the area. This month (May) is going to have a lot of prep. The demand for DPCA-Ls is actually bigger than the amount of money available. We'll need to work with producers and internal staff members to determine how best to allocate those funds.

Question: If more funding was provided, has the department done an assessment on where that would go?

We have, and we have an idea of where hotspots might be this year. I will caution you that every year we've tried to predict the hotspots, they've been in another place entirely. We look at previous years' depredation, pack size increases, and other factors. We tried to look at those things when deciding how the money is allocated. It has been a bit of a juggle, but the path forward is trying to incorporate the science and figure out the best way to allocate that money. There has also been an acknowledgement of trying to have a reserve in case things do pop up.

The department just had this meeting on allocating funds, so we can have more exact answers soon. We now have a more improved system, which allows us to be more strategic. Assessments are still ongoing.

Question: What would be the response when you identify a high-risk situation?

My plan is to meet with every producer individually. We are having those conversations. We can't predict. There are indicators, but we can't predict. We are discussing these scenarios of, "if this happens, what do we do?" and so on. It's one of those things where we play through scenarios. We don't play through every single possible scenario, but we look at how to improve for next time. Is there flexibility in that area? What worked and what didn't? We are trying to use the tools we have to the best of our ability and try creative solutions to these issues.

Question: Could we have a more standardized log for reports and range riding?

This year we have standardized a range riding log. It doesn't limit those involved on gathering any additional information. It's a two page document, and it's made to be simple but able to capture all the relevant information.

Question: Is there research happening in the state regarding preventative measures? Is there any effort on new and creative tools? There are so many good institutions in our state, and it seems like we could tap those outlets.

There is a study out of WSU that is wrapping up soon. Other than that, there isn't anything currently happening in Washington to further explore deterrents. There was a guardian dog study out of Utah State, but it focused on sheep and not cattle. There is interest in looking more at nonlethal and lethal deterrents.

Question: Your meetings have been mostly with those who have allotments (lots of cows, fewer producers). A lot of the other producers up there don't know they have a problem until they have a problem. What does outreach look like for those producers? I don't expect you to get to everyone, but we have to do what we can.

You're right. Luckily the county commissioners are helping there. We've had cases where we only found a producer because there was a depredation. It makes it more difficult to make those connections. There are a lot of people on private land that may be missed.

Comment: Our dogs go out on the perimeter and push predators away, which is good for cats (cougars). However, because of that, with wolves, it's possible my dogs would go out to a wolf den site and cause more problems than they would solve.

It's important to remember that all of our tools are going to vary. We have funding from different sources. We have producers changing some things based on what happened the year before. It's a dynamic system, and it's going to look a little different for each and every producer. We don't really have a project that's looking at the effect of prevention, but there is opportunity for staff members to perform some kind of pilot project in certain areas.

In regards to funding gaps, some areas may be a funding gap today, but those things can change quickly. That piece could change by July or September. Every year that can change.

Question: If I come to you with \$10,000 and ask where it needs to be spent, will we have an answer?

Absolutely. We'll know where that money can be spent.

Question: It's good to hear a lot of the strategies are adaptive and based on what happened in previous years. I wanted to highlight the question on why can't you just move the cows

somewhere else. I remember that in a lot of cases, there isn't anywhere else. I wanted to ask how possible that would be, and how limited it is as well.

Yes, it is limited, and there are some dynamics on elevation and other factors.

The U.S. Forest Service said that they don't have the authority to tell a permittee to move the herd. That permittee has a signed permit, and is allowed to go there and graze. Also, WAG and WDFW don't have the authority to change that. They have entertained some possibilities at times, but that hasn't worked at all in the past. They've offered some vacant allotments, but are never taken up on those offers. It sounds good, but in practice it hasn't worked out because it's not practical for a producer. It's also important to remember that, especially in the northeast, there are wolves everywhere, no matter where you move the herd.

Comment: It worked for Dirty Shirt, if I recall. You know before the season starts about risk. You just don't put the cows in the pasture where the risk is located. Put them some place away from where the wolves are located.

There's more to it than that. It's important to remember that these options aren't always there.

In the long game, we have to focus on the best management practices producers can use.

#### **WDFW update – data sharing**

Donny Martorello discussed the data sharing program. WDFW has a data sharing program where they share the GPS coordinates of collared wolves with producers as a proactive deterrent. After a few years, it's now time to look at that program and see how effective it's been. That program is incredibly important for producers.

The department is reaching out to producers to discuss what is working for wolf conservation management and where improvements can be made. We've looked closely at how packs and denning are both dynamic. Some packs den earlier or later. We are considering alternating the blackout period based on this. We are already hearing from producers about creative ways to meet their needs and serve the department's needs as well.

We are sharing the raw points about where wolves are located. Those points are always behind (where a wolf was, not where a wolf is). Also, when folks see those points on a map, it draws their focus to that spot. It doesn't tell you about where the pack is or where the animal is now. We are hearing some creative feedback on this idea as well. Some feedback asked for cluster locations.

Question: What's the difference between showing a spot on the map and telling a producer the location? You talked about a cluster?



We should explain the data sharing agreement for folks. Producers sign an agreement and get into this program. Den sites cannot be shared, because people cannot visit a den site. That is unlawful. Our blackout period for the data sharing agreement is from March 15 to June 1. Right now we are exploring better ways to conduct this program that would meet the needs of both producers and the department.

Comment: There are also producers who do not want that data, because if something happens to a wolf and it gets out that they had location data, it could bring negative attention to them even though they didn't do anything wrong.

Going into any given grazing season, we don't necessarily know where a den is going to be located. It takes about a month or so of location clusters (on a map) to confirm a den site. It's always retrospective. We've also had cases where the den site becomes the rendezvous site.

Question: Is the blackout period based on the previous years' den site?

The blackout period is when all the data turns off so the identity of the den is not known. We are discussing how we can go forward, keeping the den sites safe but still meeting the needs of the producers.

In many cases, the timing of denning differs in the same pack from year to year. That makes it tough to really nail that denning period. It's incredibly hard to predict. Right now we're just sitting down together with producers and looking at the data.

We have areas that are high potential, and our confidence builds throughout the season, but at the beginning we really don't know where a den site may or may not be located.

Comment: One thing we are glossing over is that a den site could be on private ground, and there's not a June 1 turnout date for private lands.

Comment: There was a meeting last week of producers coming together, and data sharing came up as a topic. There was concern that it might be shut off entirely. So it's incredibly important to start messaging to producers.

We're anticipating some changes and we're sharing that with folks, but we're engaging with communities and we are set on finding that creative solution that works for wolves and works for producers. So help us get that message out there, and contact us if there are any concerns or questions.

Comment: Capital Press accepts guest columns, which could be a good way to get that information out to folks.

Comment: I just want to say one more thing. I think it's good for range riders to use GPS data to move cattle away from those spots, rather than chase wolves based on the data.

## **Break**

### **Fish and Wildlife Commission presentation with question and answer session**

The commission has a very significant role in the development of the post-delisting wolf conservation and management plan. It's important that WAG, the department, the commission, and the public are aligned in their approach to the development of that plan.

Commissioner Kim Thorburn gave a brief presentation on the role of the commission. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor. Three commissioners fill eastern Washington slots, three fill western Washington slots, and three are at large. Terms are six years. The commission appoints the Director of WDFW as well, which is how WDFW differs from other agencies where the Governor appoints directors.

The commission meets throughout the year, with most meetings being in Olympia. There are also some meetings throughout the state. The commission wants to serve that role of communicating with the public. They create policy, adopt rules (like hunting and fishing), and consider public comment in all decisions. One area of policy is the listing status for species. When the time comes, the final decision for classification of wolves will fall to the commission. As part of that decision making, the commission gathers all relevant information, then directs the department on management going forward. We'll adopt a policy based on best available science and public input. There are also annual reports provided by the department after that policy is applied, and sometimes adjustments are needed as new information is provided.

In a recent meeting, the commission was discussing the effort from the Legislature on opening a SEPA on translocating wolves. Some commissioners thought it might be good to look at other things about wolves as well. We asked the department what it would look like to look at the wolf conservation and management plan and see if it's time to make adjustments and move forward. We've had some years of experience now, and some assumptions that were made have not come to pass. The geography hasn't really panned out so far, for example. Most of the breeding pairs are still in northeastern Washington, and that wasn't necessarily expected at the time.

So we thought it might be time to reengage, because we do have this responsibility and do have to make these decisions. In our August meeting, we will receive a briefing on that question (SEPA, translocation) and also what it would look like to expand that activity beyond translocation. No decisions have been made, but we are going to start discussing our options.

So that's why it's important to understand our roles. We don't want to be stepping on each other's toes. We thank Francine for reaching out to us, and the timing is optimal since our conversations are starting now. We have committed to having commissioners at WAG meetings

going forward. We haven't decided quite what that will look like yet, but we did commit to that.

Commissioner Barbara Baker seconded everything Kim said, but also added that when we have groups like WAG and the commission that work together on these issues, we hit times where transition may be needed. We have WAG transitioning, we have some new members on WAG and the commission, so we need to be really clear in that process how we are going to work together. The commission has basically deferred to WAG at this point, but the commission does have to make those final decisions. We don't have the benefit of the hundreds of hours you've all spent. I think our message right now is we need to be mindful of transitions and how we integrate those.

Commissioner Jay Holzmilller added that he had figured the wolf conservation and management plan development would end with no winners. However, we got very lucky in having Francine come to our state, and I want to thank all of you for all of the work you've done. We do have some heavy lifting in front of us, but nothing compared to what has already been done. When you can set this diverse group this close together, and make strides forward, you are in a good situation. Let's try to frame it and keep it as simple as we possibly can. Remember that when we get to those decisions, I am all open for any suggestions, and we're committed to making this work.

Question: Where is the information coming that makes you believe that we're not on track? We got a presentation a couple years ago that said everything was on track with the model.

We're not implying that wolf recovery/WAG isn't on track. We're implying that we're not on track. Wolves kind of got off of our radar. We need to do our diligence and get more involved with the process.

What I've heard is that the commission wants to ask the question: is wolf recovery where we want it to be in this state? They've heard a lot about it and want to be caught up.

Comment: And that's a very different frame from what I heard from the commission after the last meeting.

Question: In terms of content, the geographic distribution isn't random, right? Are the reasons behind those recovery zones and everything that went into the population modeling going to be in that presentation in August?

Yes. If we've got packs establishing in the North Cascades, that is good news for having wolves in the South Cascades. You need to have that source population to feed those other populations. They all work together and that makes the population more resilient. We saw this flat line in Montana as well for a while before it started to ramp up. I don't know the magic number on when that's going to happen, but I think having that source population is a positive aspect for

filling in those recovery zones. We can talk about translocation and other aspects, but I don't expect we'll see things happen much differently from Idaho or Montana. I think being patient as well is important. We're still seeing growth rates and other things consistent with growth.

You'll see growth in the coastal and the Cascades regions, and you'll see growth kind of pause in the northeastern as they go self-sustaining.

Question: Just a question for the commissioners to consider. Who makes the policy?

The commission does set the policy, but within what we're able to within state law. We will follow up on that and see what we can figure out.

Comment: I've seen data that wolves are moving west and south, and the source populations are coming out of Canada. Those are the wolves that will populate the Olympics eventually. I don't support the change of recovery zones right now.

I would love to see these data that were mentioned about the migration patterns.

Question: Is there anything the commission would like or need from WAG for the August meeting? Let Francine know if or what would be good to have.

Question: When you mentioned self-sustaining populations in northeastern Washington, to some that can seem like the populations will manage themselves and that the department will leave them alone. Could you explain what that means?

Yes. At some point, that landscape will be saturated and you won't see more packs in those areas. That's when dispersal happens. This is how territories are established. If you look at Montana and Idaho, you'll see how those landscapes saturated and then populations expanded. WDFW would still have management responsibility.

Question: Are those landscapes similar to the northeast? With private and public land?

In Washington, we primarily have wolves coming from the east from Idaho and Montana. As we were talking about the growth a couple months ago, we talked about how the growth is the strongest in areas next to the source populations.

Question: We don't have the vast wilderness area in the northeast, so the landscape is a little different.

It is different from Yellowstone and some other areas, but I'd think of it closer to northern Idaho, where those source populations saturated and populations expand.

Comment: What the wolves have done is put a tremendous tension on people in the northeast. Where I live in the Cascades, there are no wolves. It's very hard to have conversations about wolves on the landscape unless you have a way to give people some relief. We have to give these people relief. The people have been waiting a lot longer than the rest of the state. This tension and hardship on those people has really hurt the acceptance of wolves in the state.

Question: Do the commission members have thoughts now on how WAG interacts and communicates with them as we develop the post-delisting plan?

We really have not had that discussion. August will be that discussion, and I think we can answer your question more specifically then. I think it would be helpful to hear from WAG about what desires you have for your role going forward. To hear that from WAG in August, along with ideas and desires you have in engagement with the commission, would be very helpful for us.

The southeast just got a third pack, and I would agree with the previous comment that said we have got to get some relief for those producers affected by wolves. Hopefully we can find an answer for those people before they completely go out of business. That would be one solution I would ask WAG to look for, as a commissioner. We need to stay the course, but I think we do need some adaptive management in there.

Commissioner Baker said that in terms of the August meeting, the nine commissioners are just as diverse as the 18 WAG members. The plus of being on a team like this is you do start to understand each other's perspectives. I think it would be good to have a WAG member come in and let us know about the decisions you will be making over the next year. And I think it's important that when we talk about relief for these producers, there are things we can do that don't rise to these difficult policy decisions. There are still problems with getting compensation when it's asked for. There are glitches with things now that can be fixed. The main thing is that we all knew this was going to be hard from the beginning, and unfortunately that hardship has fallen on one region heavier than the others. Our goal is to get to recovery so we can help the people affected. The commission just needs to reinsert ourselves in the process, and we don't want you to think about it too hard.

### **Societal engagement process: Part 1**

WAG discussed several things at the last meeting, including human needs and how there are a diverse set of voices in Washington that all need to come together. You also brought up how the hunting community hasn't had the representation yet in the discussion. You also recognized that there are a lot of west side people who haven't been engaged at all. How are we going to meet the needs of those different stakeholder groups? Each person engages in different ways (some written, some in person, etc.). I want you to make the public involvement piece explicit early on. You have to get that process for public engagement started early.

If you have a good public engagement process, what are the positive aspects? If you don't have good public engagement, what are the negative aspects? What are the positive and negative aspects of each?

Question: Are we all understanding that the wolf plan is being opened up now?

No. This is focusing on the long term conservation and management for wolves. The commission is on that path and will have that conversation soon. WAG is not focused on that now. This is for how recovery looks years in the future.

There was a group exercise listing the pros and cons of good/bad public engagement process.

Goals, reasons, and needs for engagement with broader public

- Support for the plan for the future and process
- So we understand the issues
- Broad ownership in plan
- Hope that we keep it out of the court system
- Clarify/manage expectations
- So that the public also has a greater understanding of the issues and the approach
- Reducing opportunity for surprise
- So public feels genuine ownership so they can help implement
- Maintain a sustainable wolf population
  - Four goals in current plan in perpetuity
- Garners support from elected officials
  - Likely that elected officials will be more inclined to be part of it if public support is there
- We don't know what we don't know
  - Get more perspectives and views
- Durability and resiliency in plan policy
- Reaching out to broad public will lead to more creative and durable solutions
- Reassess values of society
  - Have those values changed since the last plan?
- Different goals for different areas of the state
- Chicken vs. pig in breakfast donation
  - How values and impacts for each community are weighted
  - Raw numbers of people in different areas of state
  - There may be surprises at the results
- Build capacity in our public to have respectful dialogue
- Increase mutual understanding across stakeholder groups
- Honor sideboards
- It's a public resource
- Must be economically feasible
  - WDFW and impacted people

- Because it's really cool
- Common understanding and common acceptance of the science used in the plan
- Ability to have adaptive management

Who is the public: 7.5 million people in state, as well as those living out of state

Goals, reasons, and needs for engagement with broader public

\*These items were added by the public during their own brainstorm session

- Need science update
- If there was adherence to the principles of the "public trust doctrine" / "wildlife trust doctrine" the public would be more supportive of your plan
- It could be viewed as an acknowledgement that this was not done for the wolf killing protocols and now it is imperative for broad public inclusion in decisions about the public's wildlife and how things blow up when you don't. This isn't the right question. The right question is why didn't you include the public then?
- You've excluded the public through the WAG process and it's time to do it right.
- I agree the public was shut out. Most people don't know what "WAG" is. What was possibly a good idea has shifted to how wolves impact producers. Period. They are the focus. Never mind that they are using public resources, allotments, terrain not meant for cattle, etc. Where is the information on the wolves? What is the benefit of having them in our state/ecosystem? Why aren't you educating the public about WAG, what they do, and how they benefit our population as people and the wildlife they interact with?
- Producers have outgrown their private resources for their cattle and rely on public resources (public land). Too much emphasis on producers' profits, not the right of the public to a healthy environment and protection of endangered species. Producers must realize loss of cattle on public land is a risk of doing business. Wolves must have priority for their survival. Moving cattle into the natural range of wolves will result in loss of cattle. If this happens, move the cattle, do not kill the wolf.
- I echo this (the previous) statement 100 percent.
- You should address a more holistic approach to your discussions. You're addressing symptoms, not the cause. The cause being displacing native wildlife with domestic livestock. You're also not addressing the pollution of our public lands by cattle.
- Science needs to be paramount in your discussions and analysis and processes.
- Plans do not predict the future, so there is a public expectation of adaptation. If that is not there, there will be much less willingness to participate.

Consequences

- Buy in (positive)
- Always having moving target (negative)
- Time consuming (negative)
- If we take too long, people go out of business (negative)
- Increased polarization if not good process (negative)
- If not good process, we are being reactionary (negative)

- Not having resources, get mired, set up wrong expectations (negative)
- Is the same thing going to happen as the first wolf plan? (negative)
  - Science vs. public opinion
  - Science drove rather than informed plan
- If not good process, people go back to war mode (negative)
- If good process, you have a creative and durable plan that is also adaptive (positive)
- If not good process undemocratic process and division, bad policy (negative)
- Common understanding and common acceptance of the science used in the plan (positive)
- Ability to have adaptive management (positive)
- Learn from last process with first wolf plan (positive)
- Make it a meaningful process – can the suggestions made by the public even be implemented (within the confines of the law)
  - I hope there already isn't an end goal in mind, because that would be wasting everyone's time
  - There are legal sideboards
- Need to be clear and honest about the boundaries of the plan
- More people will want to engage in Fish and Wildlife issues (positive)
- Trust in WDFW
- Bad process leads to apathy and lack of engagement

#### Consequences

\*These items were added by the public during their own brainstorm session

- Plan will fail and be challenged without
- Lawsuits (without a good process)
- I am puzzled that there needs to be a discussion of the pros and cons of having a good, effective, broad public process. Is it because you have excluded the public for so long that the idea of doing so has a controversial issue that requires discussion.
- The vast majority of the Washington public favors wolf recovery. But those voices on the WAG have been largely co-opted by the agency and convinced that the ultimate goal is “consensus” within the WAG. The agency, and the WAG, need a reality check about what is really important to Washingtonians.
- When you bring everyone in and tell them they have as much of a say as those who have rights to use land, the process becomes circular.
- Decisions based on emotion are doomed to fail.

WAG will consider all of the goals, needs, reasons, and consequences, and talk more tomorrow about how to go about finding the best process we can have for Washington.

#### Public comment

- I spent many years as a schoolteacher. I hear the term depredation all the time. Depredation and predation are not similar. Depredation means pillage and attack.



Predation is a predator preying on a prey species. It's a semantic thing, but as a schoolteacher I have to correct grammar.

- I tried to get a lot of people to come down to this meeting. Mainly due to what happened with the original wolf plan, you can't get people to come down here. What they said over and over was that it doesn't matter. I contacted a ton of folks, and none of them are here. You try to compartmentalize this post-management thing and ignore what happened the first time around. It was just a plan a long time ago. You should also listen to the meeting when the wolf plan was adopted. All they talked about was that they didn't know what would happen and that we need to adapt to what is happening on the ground. That adaptive management didn't really happen. The department said they would adapt, but here we are at this stage of recovery. I know the model says we're right where we should be, but people wouldn't have gone with this plan if this was the situation we were going for. Why wouldn't you go back, look at the plan again, and adapt to what we have on the ground. For delisting to happen statewide, it's not numbers, it's breeding pairs. We took a step backwards this year. We have to acknowledge where we are with the first plan before we can get any good public engagement on the next plan. If you can't get people who live this close, who are affected by wolves, I think it says a lot about this process.
- I also spent a lot of time talking to people trying to get them to come down. It's not all because they didn't want to today, but those who agreed to go, it was like pulling teeth. They asked why they should bother. They feel we're skipping right over what matters and going to a post-delisting plan that won't be here until years in the future. Also, Togo pack should have two depredations that follow it, and Leadpoint should have one. Producers were wondering what happened there. Also, we talked about the wolf plan, which says no one recovery area should hold the weight of the whole state. Right now the east side is holding that weight. We need to get the wolves elsewhere, or we need to do something different in northeast Washington.
- My thoughts after today are that this is an advisory body, not a decision-making body. Like any advisory body, there are a couple things important to me. One thing is for the agenda, I would like to have a say in the agenda before the meeting. I didn't really see that done today. I heard Tim raise the question, and I know he raised it at the last meeting. It was good to hear interest from others as well. I would also want to have as much information as possible about critical things that are happening right now in order to decide how we can advise the department. There were a couple things not discussed today that I wish were. There was a question about the caught in the act policy and Donny mentioned the agency was going to look at that. There wasn't much discussion about the protocol today or whether there should be changes. There was no discussion of how close the cattle are to the den site. It would be good to have that information because there are science papers out there saying cattle close to den sites are more at risk. I think the public wants to know, and it helps the advisory group advise. I was out

in Smackout and there is fladry out there that needs to be picked up. It was out there all winter, and it won't last as long now. That's a taxpayer issue, and we all know with fladry that it is only effective for 63 days. It now smells like a natural substance. Now the ranchers are going to get the idea that fladry doesn't work. That fladry should have been picked up and it didn't happen, and I think the advisory group needs to know about that. I think the advisory group needs to know that there are court cases related to the protocol going on right now. Should you not be talking instead about what happens after that court decision? My concern of the vision statement that was put forth is that it is 226 words long and it only uses the word wolf once. I found that troubling. I would urge examining the purpose of the vision statement. It reads to me like not promising people things that can't be done. I think making the public think the wolf plan is going to take care of their social and emotional welfare is unfair. That is not the place for the wolf plan. I don't think the department has the competency to do that. It's not what the law says the agency is supposed to be doing. I'm concerned about the vision statement. I'm concerned mostly about how we're heading into a grazing season and we're talking about 2028. The public wants to know what's going to happen this summer.

- You have to look at both sides, and I really do try to do that. I just feel like it's sometimes a waste of time to come to these and have our input in it. It feels like a decision is going to be made without us. I don't think anyone is thinking about the lives of the wolves. I'll tell you what will hurt the business: each time a wolf life is taken, the public looks down on the livestock industry. We're seeing a lot of changes. You're going to hurt your business if you keep killing wolves. People will stop eating beef and will protest you. You have to take precautions and security. If one thing doesn't work you have to try another. I keep seeing resistance. I don't see a rotation of different deterrents being tried. And if that's happening we need more transparency, because I haven't heard of it. If the decision is to kill wolves, that's going to hurt the rancher. It's very frustrating and it seems like nothing ever changes. It seems like no one is thinking about the lives of these animals and their little pups.
- I'm a fifth generation rancher in northeast Washington, and there're three generations on our ranch. I was on the wolf committee that put this plan together. I want to say thank you to not only the WAG, but also to the commissioners who are here, and also to the public for being here. My family followed the original plan to the T. We have used every measure tool that was included in the toolbox. We've literally shook the hinges off the toolbox to avoid killing wolves. I've got 50 years of dirt on these boots in wildlife management, water quality, range management, and more. That's 50 years of experience out there seeing what happens. We know we have five packs, even if the biologists disagree with me. It always comes back to, "Well if you weren't on public lands grazing, the wolves would leave you alone." That's just not the case. When I say our private lands, that's comingled with public lands. We cannot remove the cattle from the public lands. We've had wolf attacks on our private property. It doesn't work that way. We may as well fold up the whole works and leave because there are no other options for

us. When we talk about these tools, I know someone mentioned fladry. I have no idea if that fladry is still out there, and it's worked for us a bit in the past. We've used every tool. We have a 24-hour day every day trying to keep our cattle safe and wolves safe. I want to thank the WDFW staff members we've worked with, as well as the folks with Conservation Northwest. They've helped us a lot. But what kills me is that we cannot have a birthday party at home without the subject of wolves coming up. I take offense when a wolf is lethally removed, done by the plan, and we get death threats. Then those same people question whether or not we managed our permit correctly. All the public gets is a snapshot of our life. We are there 12 months out of the year. We don't get to turn the light off and forget about it at night. When we talk about turning in a claim for a dead cow, or the pregnancy rates are off because of harassment, or weaning rates are off, or your cattle are 100 pounds off, you are reluctant to turn that in. The reason is because it's then all out there for public disclosure. I don't think there is anyone in this room who wants their bank statement out there for everyone. We don't want our life out there for everyone to see, or used in a courtroom. That plan was put out there to be flexible and move with time, not be locked down. We knew it was never going to work to the degree that everyone thought it would. We should have done a better job visiting with our neighbors who have dealt with it. That's really where we're at, even though I know some of you will disagree like hell with me. Maybe we need to back up and realize there were some flaws in the original plan. We might not need to have them statewide. We're at a level now where the pack levels have shrunk our ungulate population, which is why we're seeing attacks on our livestock. Biologists will disagree with me. But the wolf needs protein. At one point you would see moose everywhere in that country, but now you have to work to see one. I want to talk a little bit about the collar information. We have worked with the department on collaring. It's critical when you're out there. We are not out to remove wolves, but we do want to keep a buffer between the wolf and the cow. I can't be there all the time because we have work at home we're doing. I understand the blackout period, but don't curtail us on that collar information. We need that. We have a good idea where the cows are, and we can't wait until that cluster shows up. By then the fatality is over with. We're too late by that time. The reason we need those up-to-date dots is because we need to check those cows. We can be more effective if we had real time. If we're going to make this thing work better, maybe this kind of thing could help in the future. I think we get put in a hole sometimes that we're out there just to hurt wildlife, and that is not the case. Hell, we're the ones allowing for this open space that everyone can enjoy. We get no credit for it but we sure get beat up on the other end. The data is important to keep up on. I really do commend you all on the time you've spent on this. I think sometimes it's hard to grasp the degree of what we're going through. There is one other thing though, and I will throw the department under the bus here. There is not one ranch that is the same, and I feel there's this one ranch that has gotten the black eye sometimes, but they're doing the best they can. There is no way in hell that they could have implemented the same things we had due to the conditions they had. I believe the department has used that to drive a wedge between these two

families, and I will say that isn't going to happen. We aren't going to allow that to happen.

- I'm a wolf advocate in a big way, and that speech touched me. I'm not inclined to support the grazing of cattle on public lands. There's a number of things I have trouble with. I would like to ask what's the percentage of cattle killed by wolves and other predators versus the number of cattle that die overall? It's been my understanding that the percentage killed by predators is small. The main thing I want to say is that my wife and I started a technology business in 1989, and we had nobody helping us out as we dealt with constant change. I don't see a lot of difference here. I understand producers are having a hard time of it, but I think it's been made into too big a deal. Owning a business is a risk. My wife and I struggled, and we had to make our way on our own. There was nobody standing by to help me out or give me anything free. No matter who you are, owning a business is risky and you take your chances. You work your ass off, and you either make it or you don't. I see that my tax dollars went to killing a bunch of wolves last year, and I didn't want them killed. It goes both ways.
- Frankly, I didn't think I'd have courage to say anything. Our cattle association, along with other groups, are joining with WSU to collect the data of the economic impact of wolves on our businesses. We are looking at ranches that have had wolves for a while and ranches that haven't had wolves. Just from our early returns, I would say this is a huge impact economically. But it's not just that. The phone calls you get, I just can't comprehend. I can't imagine every single family gathering centering around wolves. We will give you the economic information. Every dollar on one animal is seven dollars back to a community. We're looking forward to having that data for you.
- I think I want everyone to acknowledge that the wolf has economic value to the state as well. I don't think that's being looked at equally as well.
- Eco-tourism is the future. It's unfortunate that it's come down to all about cattle. I thought it was supposed to be about wolves. You can see everyone picking sides. I don't know that it's always been like that, because I had a lot of hope. Most people on the west side don't even know who you are or what you're doing.

**Meeting adjourned for the day**

## **Wolf Advisory Group meeting notes**

May 2, 2018

Spokane

**WAG members:** Shawn Cantrell, Tim Coleman, Don Dashiell, Tom Davis, Dave Duncan, Diane Gallegos, Molly Linville, Dan Paul, Paula Swedeen, Nick Martinez, Ralph Kratz, Lisa Stone, Jessica Kelley, Samee Charriere

**WDFW Staff:** Candace Bennett, Trent Roussin, Ben Maletzke, Steve Pozzanghera, Stephanie Simek, Robert Waddell, Annemarie Prince, Tara Meyer, Dan Christensen, Joe Bridges, Kile Westerman, Kevin Robinette, Joey McCanna, Dan Brinson, Matthew Trenda

**Third party neutral:** Francine Madden

### **Welcome and overview**

The third party neutral welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone checked in around the room.

### **Design of stakeholder process (re: plan)**

The group continued the conversation from yesterday about how best to engage the public in a way that isn't just people talking past each other. They want to engage in a way that prevents people from thinking there wasn't a public process if they don't get their way exactly. We really need that public engagement piece on how to design this process, because we want as many people as possible to be involved. What can we do to get people involved so we have a good result on the other side?

If you think about the three causes of conflict and the three points of intervention, it's not just the substance needs. It's also the nature of the process (does it feel meaningful to people involved?) and whether that process builds relationships. We need to be both aspirational and grounded in reality (budget for the department, workloads for department staff), but also recognize the process needs to be more than SEPA. That isn't going to be sufficient. You also need that social aspect. There have been parts of the process so far that haven't felt sufficient to folks. Consider elements of the plan (intake and information from public), then sharing that information, then getting more feedback from the public.

Think about elements you came up with yesterday. How do you find the balance of doing a good process with also not taking so long that you don't get a plan? Get into timelines and what is feasible now and later on.

WAG also wants to get constructional input from the public in the room today on what would be good for the various communities. However, the public can do whatever they want during the exercises today.

WAG broke into groups (the public participated as well) to brainstorm five to seven options of types of engagement that get to broad stakeholder engagement. They were to think about the substance process that allows for relationship building. Think about what will work for your community. Every stakeholder group has unique community characteristics. What would be a comfortable, easy, and accessible way for them to engage? They then broke down those options to determine who is best served by each. Where does this engagement need to happen? How? Why? When (timing)? What is that engagement? What information does the community need to give, and what information do they need to receive?

Considerations:

- Unique needs/approaches with diverse communities
- Information
  - To ask for?
  - To anticipate for them
  - Specific questions
  - Other?
- Logistics and timing
- Roles and responsibilities
- Pros and cons
- Money

Each group (and the public) presented what they brainstormed.

Public

- Tourism
- Social media is a good way to do outreach
  - Creating an app that allows the department to send out good news and bad news alerts to create a positive vibe around things they are doing
  - Survey123 – could also receive info
- Social events and meetings
  - We have people that get together and have monthly science discussions
  - Smaller listening sessions in rural areas
    - Technology harder in those area
- Tailored listening sessions
  - Have different groups come together and share points of view without feeling like that comment is going to be immediately counterpointed
  - Refine our outlooks by listening to other outlooks
  - Those meetings moderated, and the moderator can take that information and funnel it to the department
  - There are people in ranching community who are unable to speak
    - They don't feel comfortable talking about this topic in public
    - These meetings can get input from folks who may not be comfortable in a larger setting

- Listening sessions at places where people are already meeting
  - County fairs
  - Valley Fest
- Different methods on contact
  - People without email or answering machines
- Collecting metadata on each method to determine how well that outreach worked
  - Who was reached and who was not?
- Will the info be put to use after it's submitted?
  - From the public
  - Putting sideboards up front
    - If collecting public comment, put the language there that says, "This is what the law says we have to do."
    - Knowing the sideboards up front would be helpful
- Be realistic with what we can achieve

#### Group 1

- Booth at county fairs with neutral messaging
  - Potentially including surveys relative to ways in which there could be greater engagement
  - Also specific questions about the plan itself
- Series of meetings around the state
  - Cross pollination approach (WDFW and WAG representatives attending)
  - Partnering with TVW to make them available to broader audience
- College tours
  - Panel discussions
  - Question and answer opportunity
  - Could provide forum for this discussion
  - Testimony and comment approach is often not very rewarding
    - Three minutes and buzzer goes off, then you go back and sit down
    - What's really needed is a dialogue
  - Logistics issues with this one
- Multimedia approaches
  - Social media
  - Printed media
  - Electronic surveys and questionnaires
    - Phone surveys, mail surveys
    - Funding issue with this piece
  - Educational videos tied to development of the plan
    - Opportunity to be "on the ground" with a producer or a conservation organization.
    - Hunting videos (day with hunter in the field)
- Have to travel
  - You have to go to communities and meet folks on their turf

- Banquets
    - Monthly meetings
  - Coupled with county fair idea
- Including an introduction, during meetings, from department and WAG members about the process forward and the decision space and sideboards
- Set the tone of meetings
  - CCT prep and background
  - Conversations have to civil
- Need for general wolf ecology 101 as part of educational process
- Considerations for success
  - Clear guidance on the decision space and how big it is
  - WAG needs to recognize and be able to specifically talk about input being received
    - How does WAG work to incorporate ideas being received?
  - There is a disconnect with some outreach approaches
    - Some tools are not available in some communities (lack of internet access, etc.)

## Group 2

- Some kind of big event at the Mountaineers in Seattle and Spokane
  - In response to the sentiment that a lot of folks don't know what WAG is
  - Involves general wolf information and also to explain CCT and the idea of substance, process, and relationships
    - Really get into how WAG works and how we want to engage
  - Social media to get the word out
  - Evening so people who work can attend
- Idea of local newspapers in rural community
  - Local newspapers are often looking for material
  - Works for those lacking internet access
- AMA (ask me anything)
  - Make it feel like the person is very accessible and responding directly to questions
- Hunting pamphlet
  - Would be helpful to get information into the hunting pamphlet
- Meetups, annual banquets
- Leadership outreach is usually easier
  - Connecting with leadership of groups to connect with the most people
- Connect at zoos, REI, Cabelas, etc. so people can feel informed
- Signs at federal refuges and wildlife areas
- WAG website revamp
  - Make it easier to engage with the website
  - Needs to be user-friendly, clean, simple, and modern
- Local public meeting forums around the state



- Importance of smaller groups and one-on-one engagement
- Recognize that in some communities, this isn't well-received
- Needs to be a dialogue
- Setting the tone and starting with the WAG process
  - Here's how we're trying to respect everyone in the room
- It would be beneficial for WDFW staff to show humility and ask these communities how we can do better.
  - Not a lot of trust in WDFW staff from rural communities
  - Big part of this is rebuilding that trust

### Group 3

- Online forums where a discussion can be had
  - Allows people to comment
  - Not direct dialogue, but could be a good start
- Video media
  - WDFW television station
  - Department doesn't paint its own picture well enough
  - Mini documentaries (producers, conservation organizations, etc.)
  - Successes and challenges
- Radio stations
- More face to face interactions
  - Small meetings in smaller communities
  - Timing (make them available to folks who work)
- Podcasts
  - Lower costs
  - Gives people opportunity to have a voice
- Community events (fairs, sports shows, etc.)
  - Turn bear trailer into a wolf trailer
    - Wolf ecology as well as the issues and concerns from different communities
- Working with zoos for public exhibits
  - Woodland Park, Wolf Haven, etc.
- Reach out to diverse audience (not always doing that now)
  - More conversations in other languages as well
- What happens when the public comments?
  - Follow up after that engagement and let folks know what happens when they submit a comment, who reads it, etc.
  - Explain how we got to that draft plan based on all the feedback
    - Build this step into the process
- WDFW can be more visible
  - Challenges with this as well
  - Visibility can work to humanize the department
  - Helps people understand role of department

- Reaching out to hunters hasn't been well done yet
  - Hunters may not understand the benefit of WAG to them
  - Where are hunters included in the WAG process?
  - How do we reach out and explain the benefit to the hunting community?
    - Need more topics that relate to hunting
    - The longer we go without discussing these topics, the more risk we have of losing people
- WAG members reaching out within their own constituents
- Hunters themselves could help us
  - Hunters concerned about the challenge of wolves
  - Hunters who have already adapted to wolves on the landscape (other states)
  - Hunters hearing from other hunters could be more powerful than WDFW staff talking
- How to make science and message accessible to people
  - Relate it to them
  - WDFW could take training on this to improve

### **Sideboards for WDFW**

WAG discussed the sideboards/limitations of the department due to funding and other issues. All the ideas we come up with in WAG need to live within those budget constraints.

There are things that can be prioritized, and we can all work together to get those other things rolling in the future.

Comment: While it's important to think about expenses, we also don't want to give up on these ideas we've come up with. I think we can go to the Legislature, as multiple stakeholder groups, and educate them on the fact that we're trying to get ahead of the game. A well-crafted message has a good chance of being funded.

We know our sideboards right now, but we have the chance now to collectively get going and get more funding for the future.

Comment: If we can come to the Legislature with a united message, that makes it much easier for them to support it.

The department is working on the 2019-2021 biennium budget right now. We will be bringing an ask for WAG as an enhancement to the executive management team.

Comment: Outside of the department's work, if members of WAG could bring that ask forward to the Legislature as well. In some ways, that could be more powerful than a budget ask just coming from the department.

**Break**

There were three themes on the types of engagement:

- Tapping existing face-to-face events
  - Fairs, sports shows, etc.
- Creating new face-to-face events
  - Small meetings, forums, etc.
- Social media/online
  - Podcasts, videos, etc.

Comment: It would be good to know the connection between this process we've outlined and the SEPA process. If SEPA is going to tell us the time period for public comment, is all this other work irrelevant? Knowing the relationship between our engagement work and that SEPA process is going to help us there.

Comment: Add accessibility and recognize the limits of it. How do we not miss the people who don't have email?

Comment: I also don't want to miss one of the public suggestions of doing monitoring and evaluation of the public engagement work we do. Also, how to track that.

Comment: There are also significant urban communities who aren't engaged for a number of reasons, whether it be low income or something else. I think we need to recognize that there are communities that are difficult to reach in all areas of the state, not just rural communities.

Are there things that can be done with little funding in the shorter term? How do you set yourselves up to be able to do some of the more expensive things in the future?

Comment: The first thing we need to do is figure out what it is we want to do with the messaging, and that's going to be a body of work. What is the goal with the messaging? Let's try to whittle down what that is along with the stories we want to tell.

Comment: I think one thing we can do is let people look at where the wolf activity is right now. I think some people may be interested in that. The public could just want to see where the wolves are hanging.

I'm kind of in the realm of the long term wolf conservation and management plan. So one part here is, what can be done for that in the near term. Is this something that will help with the engagement for this plan?

Comment: It can help and get some engagement before we dive more into public engagement for the plan.

Anyone who wants to talk about that information and outreach aspect can talk to the department, but that idea of wolf locations being shared has some legal aspects that would need to be addressed. That is outside our sandbox at the moment.

Comment: Sometimes something that small can spark an interest in a group.

Comment: I am more than willing to distribute flyers and make social media posts and things like that. However, that goes back to the message. I want to be really clear on our messaging before I do that. That is one of the reasons I wanted to be on WAG because I feel like there are a lot of people I can reach out to right now. All we need is the messaging.

Comment: The website will be launching in November. I also think once the messaging is there, you push it out to the media. They'll deliver that message and it doesn't cost us or the department anything.

Comment: I would love if we had a united message packet that could be universal and go with any user group. Maybe there's two, with one being basic and one being tailored. I just want our information to be the same information, no matter who is distributing it.

Comment: There are also communication firms that could help with this messaging aspect. The department could hire a communication firm for \$30,000-\$40,000. That's not the less expensive way, but I think it is something to consider going forward.

Are there other things you need to consider while we're here so you meet your goals and needs and don't have those negative consequences in public engagement?

Comment: I'm not clear on the process yet. Is this something WAG is doing? Is it WAG and the department? Is it the commission? Let's figure out what "it" is on that. What is the definition of "this?"

Having that discussion in August with the commission could help with that aspect.

Comment: It seems like what we are attempting is increasing public awareness of wolves in Washington. As we go through all this outreach, how do we know if we're succeeding? Let's establish benchmarks before we begin, then determine our monitoring and evaluation plan to see if we're being successful.

We also want that intake on the future plan and post-delisting. We need a way to collect that information and determine what that looks like. When we send people out to do intakes, how are we going to bring that together and analyze it? We don't want to just talk to people. We want to bring what they're saying back with us. How do we understand and utilize that feedback?

I'd like to have some discussion on the timeline as well. A lot of it is about putting together a better wolf story right now, and those are strong foundational pieces. At some point, we want to push the go button on the process that says we are now starting a process to look at the development of the plan for wolf conservation and management in the future. When is it time to push that go button? Before we hit that button, we want to make sure we have everything in order. Depending on when that is, it could change a few of our strategies. SEPA is not the triggering piece. However, it is the department announcing and initiating that transition.

Do you feel like that's a separate piece? Or is there a way to tell the wolf story and enter that other phase at the same time? Can those two parts be together?

I think that's worthy of a discussion. In my mind, you're putting the building blocks in place before hitting that go button, but that doesn't mean I'm right. I'm sure there are a number of models that can be effective.

I think it is a little bit of time of telling that story and initiating public awareness before we ask about the plan development. However, I think we need to lay that groundwork early because it may not reach everyone. We are also not clear on roles yet, and I think that's important to get clarified. What is everyone doing, and can we get confirmation of that? If WAG is going to function as the body that takes this input and processes it in a certain way, we need that clarified. What is the desired date that we want the plan done, and can we work back from that? How much time do we spend gathering information, processing information, and other things? We need to map all of that out in order to really understand the task ahead of us. We're going to need some guidance. It feels like we need to spend the next WAG meeting on clarification of roles and mapping out a process so we don't have miscues on expectations.

I wonder if it would be a good exercise to look at the four goals of the original wolf working group and decide if those are still relevant.

Is there anything else on the public engagement piece that you need to puzzle through?

Comment: There hasn't been a lot of execution on public engagement, even though they are good ideas. I think it needs to be done by people who have the expertise on this. It really needs to be formulated before SEPA. Right now we're just kind of doing the same public awareness work we've always done for years and years. I think it needs to go beyond WAG at this point.

Getting the messaging nailed down will be a topic at the next WAG meeting.

I've got an alarm going off in my head. I think we're going to put all this work and effort into this, and WAG is going to melt. I would feel much more comfortable if the commission came and told us what our role is. I don't think that's our role, to tell others what that is. I'm getting really uncomfortable right now.

So before this meeting, I talked to the commission about what was safe for the sandbox. This public engagement piece was in that sandbox as something that can be successful and safe.

I feel like I need to hear them say that very publicly. And then we need to figure out that piece. This feels like busy work until the commission is prepared.

I think given the limited time we have, to come out of this meeting without any actual thing, I think it feels a little incomplete.

I think there's an expectation on the commission's conversation in August that is a disconnect. As I understood this request, I don't think the department's presentation or the commission's conversation are really focused on a post-delisting process and engagement and role of WAG in that. I'm feeling like there's some degree here that that will happen in August. Right now I'm sensing a disconnect though, with what the commission will be spending time discussing. It's not this.

For the last three years, WAG has been doing the wolf work and the commission has not been involved. Suddenly, WAG is taking on this bigger thing, and the commission has responsibility and authority over approving this future plan. I think now there's an awareness that the commission needs to figure out those roles. The commission also usually asks the department to provide the draft plan. It's the department's role to ask WAG what they want. The department has told WAG that they really want WAG's help in developing this plan. I will say that I don't want to set you up for coming up with something that gets rejected by the commission because that alignment wasn't there. There's that commission, department, advisory group piece of it.

I don't think the time we just spent was wasted. In the trajectory of the work WAG has done, there has been a recognition that the commission is thankful we have been engaging in wolf issues so they can do other stuff. The department knows they have an obligation to produce a post-delisting management plan. The commission relies on the department for those recommendations. The department has asked WAG for help with those recommendations. This is going to have to happen. It's just a matter of how we do it so it's not just us. We are going to have some role in interacting with the public and ensuring as many stakeholder groups as possible are heard.

It's a change of mindset, after developing a plan, to getting into a more advisory role.

The WAG is an advisory group to the Director, not to the commission. The Director has a number of advisory groups, so our relationship is to the Director, not the commission. It's helpful to have them here, but our main communication needs to be with the Director's Office. Also, the wolf plan says to develop public understanding of conservation and management needs of wolves in Washington, thereby promoting the public's coexistence with the species. If the wolf plan is our roadmap, we need to look at those goals. This group was designed to create and provide that feedback to the department. We are expanding beyond the plan by going

statewide in that conversation beyond just the Wolf Advisory Group. If we are going beyond the plan, we need to be aware of that.

I would say though that the plan has a really comprehensive section in it that focuses on outreach and communication. All of this information here can help inform our subcommittee and then help inform the WAG as a whole. This is a go slow to go fast case. There has been criticism about how we're talking about post-delisting now, but we're talking about it now because there are a lot of moving parts. If we want to have a fair and good process, we have to get started now.

I don't think the role of WAG has changed. This is an advisory group and all along, you have been asked to assist us in a number of things. Please don't be discouraged, because your role has not changed. The thing with the commission is, while we do provide annual reports and updates, they are asking a specific question: where are we and are we meeting the objectives of the plan? Your work is going towards developing these pieces and getting us to that path forward. Right now it might not feel tangible, but we're going to get there. This is flattening the sand before laying the bricks.

I feel as though WAG needs some clear direction on what is specifically wanted from us. What are the goals? What are the options? I kind of just want to be a soldier.

I think this is probably a conversation the department has with the commission. I will tell you that it's not clear to me yet. That discussion needs to happen. But as you have all said, regardless of all of that, the plan process has to have robust stakeholder engagement. That makes it an easy topic to tackle while the department and commission discuss those roles.

What I need from WDFW is an assurance that these things are going to be done. When are we going to start telling these stories?

I do think we are doing a better job of telling the story, and I think we are on the right path. We're getting there. I'm not saying it's all going to be great once the new website launches, but that will help. We have to ask for patience. And we need the input from you all and the public to make sure we are meeting those needs. I'm sorry if we haven't conveyed enough how valuable this is for us. All of these things help us improve and get to where we want to be. I will tell you honestly that this agency is changing and it is a positive change.

I thought my role was to take all of this back to my community and see if we forgot anything or what they think or whatever. Then we can bring that feedback back here and it will be valuable for the department. Attaching them to timelines and a plan.

That timeline aspect I think will help with the uneasy feeling. It needs to be taken down and delivered. We will get to all of that. What needs to happen this year? Next year? In the future?

Bring that feedback from your communities back and that will help with those timelines and will help with the development of that post-delisting conservation and management plan.

I will say my concern is that the department is stretched pretty thin already. I agree that the agency has improved, but there are still things there that don't get done in a timeframe.

It seems helpful to make some distinction between the protocol and this thing we're now focusing on. There were decisions already made with the protocol, and we were advising the department on a question. We did as much outreach as we could, took public comment, and despite not getting everything, we made an attempt. But that was a narrow box. This is a much bigger thing. This is a much bigger journey, and we're being asked to help develop it.

I am completely frustrated. We give updates to the commission all the time, and this is nothing different in August. If you think you'll get a golden nugget from the commission in August, you will be disappointed.

I don't think the role of WAG is just to provide input. We also envision the WAG doing that with us. We want you to be part of that.

One thing to be mindful of on that, is that half of this group sort of gets paid to do that. The other half doesn't. We're not going to do as good of a job because that's not our job. How do the different communities do that? I'm really worried that there is a section that's well covered because it's their job, while other sections won't be as well covered because it's not their job.

As a WAG member, let us know when you're meeting with people. We'd be happy to come along.

## **Lunch**

### **Meeting design and facilitation going forward**

WAG talked about five options at the last meeting:

- Department staff on facilitation
- Non-wolf department staff on facilitation
- External facilitation
- State employee who is not with WDFW
- WDFW wolf staff with third party neutral consultation

WDFW currently does not have funding for an external third party neutral. We have been training internal staff in the CCT process. There may be funding in the future, but at least until June 2019, that funding is not there.

If you don't have the funding for this, and you're choosing between the two internal options, how do you evaluate that and determine a plan of action?



Pros and cons of different options for meetings going forward:

- Department wolf staff on facilitation
  - They know the issue (pro)
  - Bias (con)
  - We don't know who would be picking it (con)
  - Trained on CCT process (pro)
    - Is that enough to say one of WDFW is ready?
      - Would do well, but would need help from other people
    - Charisma is needed
  - Could make process hard to breathe (con)
  - History (pro/con)
  - Trust from public's point of view (con)
  - Trust from WAG (pro)
  - Within funding limits of the agency (pro)
  - Not huge public tolerance of that (con)
  - Workload for that staff member (already overworked) (con)
  - May appear regressive (con)
  - They were invested in terms of time investment (pro)
  - Know in-house (WDFW) system better (pro)
  - Building capacity for CCT over long term facilitation (pro)
  - Building capacity for other issues within the department that need facilitation (pro)
  - Public disclosure requests (con)
  - Could hinder relationships (con)
- Department non-wolf staff on facilitation
  - CCT (pro)
    - Is that enough to say one of WDFW is ready?
      - Would do well, but would need help from other people
    - Charisma is needed
  - Still WDFW (point was department didn't own outcome and perception would be that department is taking that ownership) (con)
  - Little more neutral (pro)
  - Trust (con)
  - We don't know who would be picked (con)
  - Bias (con)
  - History (con)
  - Workload (bigger deal for nonwolf person) (con)
  - Public tolerance (con)
  - May appear regressive (con)
  - They live in the state (pro)
  - Within funding limits of the agency (pro)
  - Building capacity for CCT over long term facilitation (pro)

- Building capacity for other issues within the department that need facilitation (pro)
- Public disclosure requests (con)
- Could hinder relationships (con)
- External facilitation
  - Not a lot of CCT people out there (con)
  - Expensive (con)
  - Don't know who's going to pick the person (con)
  - Neutral (pro)
  - It's their job (pro)
  - Sole focus (pro)
  - Still have to put it out for bid (con)
  - Less/no history (pro/con)
  - No existing relationships (pro/con)
    - More like an arbitrator (con)

Comment: I think it would be a different third party neutral role. I think the WAG has built up capacity to function through training and practice. Just someone to keep us on track would maybe be necessary. That would have to be added to the contract.

Question: This is for department wolf staff. Could you guys stand up in front of the room and not have an opinion? Because as that person, you don't get to have an opinion. Then we don't get those comments out here if that happens.

I think we could do it, but I will acknowledge that it would be a challenge. We would have to think about who that would be.

When you take over that role, there's a switch in your mind. For me personally with the internal wolf group, I didn't mind that I didn't get to have an opinion in that.

I think that does work in our internal wolf group because we've all had that training. I don't know if it would work as well in our public group.

For some historical perspective, when WAG first started, department staff weren't allowed to speak. In three years, this is a radical difference that WDFW staff can speak now.

Question: Is there money outside of the government sources we always go to that we have not looked at to bring in a third party neutral?

I think one of the pros in using state money is that it's a neutral source and there's not a perception that one group is funding it. However, government money is limited, and there has been more trust built up, at least within the WAG. Some of us are in nonprofits, and I don't

want to speak for others, but I do think it's possible for conservation groups, livestock producers, and hunting groups to pool resources together for that funding.

Comment: Thinking about how much time Francine has put in working with us beyond the WAG member groups and beyond the WAG meetings themselves, I don't think it's possible for a WDFW staff member to do it.

With another third party neutral, you won't get the work beyond the WAG. WAG is going to have to take this on. My organization wants to leave that capacity in the system before we leave, and that capacity is here in this system. Whatever you decide, realize that you are all an asset to that process.

I was just thinking about how a president of an organization, in a meeting, using Robert's Rules and Orders, that president kind of serves as a moderator/facilitator. I think it is possible within our organization to fill that role. As long as we have a feedback loop that holds that person accountable, I think it could work.

I agree that there could be a person doing a very good job hosting the actual meetings. It's the work done outside those meetings that is going to be a real challenge. We could change that and run with what we have, but that behind the scenes work is going to suffer.

I wonder if, when that department staff member is picked, is that going to impact internal relationships? Just something to think about.

I remember at the last WAG meeting there was some public comment. I think the trust issue is a big deal, and it's not based on individuals. Yes, the department has invested and made huge strides. However, because the wolf plan is such a big deal, and because so many people aren't in this room with us, there's going to be a trust issue. I want to make sure that department staff knows this isn't that they wouldn't do an amazing job. It's just to say that it will be a heavy lift because of that mindset. I just wanted us to think about that as we move forward because I know that's a concern of the public and I want to make sure the public is heard.

Going through this plan development, it'll be really important for WDFW staff to build relationships, especially in the wolf world. I think being put in the third party neutral role might hinder those relationships.

The third party neutral went around the room to see where WAG members were with their thinking (did not request WDFW staff to respond). She heard two choices that came out of the discussion. First, working with the department to find a solution. Second, finding outside funding to find a third party neutral.

- Third party
- State – other
- Third party

- State – other
- Third party neutral
- State – other
- Third party neutral
- Third party neutral
- State – other
- State – other
- State – other
- Third party neutral (really dependent on individual and funding)

If members could meet the potential person and interview them, that could make all the difference. Exploring both options (state – other and finding outside funding for a third party neutral) was agreed upon.

I'm wondering if WAG can interview the person and ask if they're willing to work with us and department staff.

I don't want a scenario where we first meet the new person at a WAG meeting.

I also want to say that if we do go with the WDFW option, I think it should be a team. Two people with two different personalities could be helpful. No one is at this point yet, as we're trying to go with another state agency person or finding funding for a third party neutral.

WDFW staff will reach out to other state agencies.

WAG is also exploring options for all of them to meet with the person before they're chosen. By June 2, Paula will get back to Francine with information on finding outside funding for a third party neutral, and Steve Pozzanghera will get back to Francine on the state – other option.

### **SEPA overview and process**

Lisa Wood, WDFW's SEPA coordinator, gave an overview of the SEPA process.

SEPA means state environmental policy act. It's been around since 1971, and is modeled after NEPA. It is an environmental review process, and provides a disclosure to the public and is important for being transparent. It does not apply to tribes or the federal government (they use NEPA).

We have to go to SEPA when we want to do an agency action. This is for a plan, a process, issuing permits, or things like that. There can also be exemptions, for things like season setting, forest practices, emergency actions, and certain kinds of research. But SEPA is required for any significant impacts.

There are two parts to SEPA. One part is for our agency actions, and the other is how we review and provide comments for other agencies.

WDFW is the SEPA lead agency for our own projects. We do coordinate with other agencies on that.

The environmental checklist is an important part of making a threshold determination. It's about 15 pages and has different categories for the environment. The person filling it out would say how the project will impact that environment. For the wolf plan, we would do an EIS (environmental impact statement). Lisa will be involved throughout the SEPA process, which will make it easier to go through it.

On the WDFW website, there is a link for SEPA projects available for public comment. Anyone can go look and review that, as well as the other kinds of projects that have gone through SEPA in the past.

The Department of Ecology is the manager of SEPA for the state. If I have questions, I go to them. They also keep the SEPA register, which is the official list of everyone's SEPA (counties, cities, or state). They even include attachments so you can go see the full documents.

After we put out our SEPA for review, we have to consider all the comments received, and that means providing a written response. If you get a ton of comments, it's pretty much impossible to respond to every one individually. So we set up a table with the questions and answers so the public can see that their questions were received.

Now, EIS must be finalized 7 days before any action can be taken.

After a SEPA/EIS is done, if the plan changes a little bit, it's probably not a big deal. However, if it changes enough, it needs to have an addendum. We prepare the changed information and send it out for comment as well. I make that decision on whether or not the addendum is needed. It doesn't have to be just me. I could also work with you folks to make that determination.

The EIS is about 75 pages long, but it can be up to 150 pages if the issue is a complicated one. It examines the environmental impacts of a plan. The EIS examines the different options and gives reasons why.

The reason we do SEPA is because it's the law, it helps us avoid delays in the project, and it helps us be transparent with the public. It also helps us build relationships with other agencies and groups.

Sometimes things become way clearer when you put the pieces together in a draft EIS. That's when you really consider comments and could change your mind based on that. It's important to have a separate document for the plan and for the EIS.

The department sends out SEPA notices over email and on the public website. There can also be public meetings for collecting comments.

Question: How much flexibility is there in receiving comments in different methods?

It's pretty open. You can click the commenting link or send me written comments. You can fax something to me. Pretty much any method would work except a phone call because I have not public record of a phone call.

Question: Can the input we collect years before the plan is developed be included? I want to make sure the input we collect is included in the process.

Yes, and it's good to remember that you also may get more detailed responses after the draft EIS. The ones in the final EIS are the ones received in the draft, but you can certainly put more in there. The whole point is to be open and transparent.

Question: Do you accept a petition with 400 names on it or do each of those people need to submit a separate comment?

I would be fine with accepting that.

Question: This would be a supplemental EIS, correct? Since it is a supplement to the existing.

It can be that or it can be a new SEPA and incorporate all of the work done in the past. All of that can be brought in.

Question: An agency project has people who fill out the checklist and you determine the threshold?

Right, if it's an agency project, a biologist fills out that checklist. Then I review to make sure it's properly filled out.

Question: I remember in our last WAG meeting, we were talking about whether or not NEPA and SEPA would be required for certain actions.

Just one or the other would need to be done. If the federal government wanted to be involved, NEPA would take precedent. What we would do at that time is adopt that NEPA.

Question: So a supplemental is building off an older EIS, and you don't start over with scoping or anything like that?

You can do a supplemental draft or a supplemental final, but you don't start at the bottom.

Okay, my current understanding is that the current plan expires once we hit recovery. So there wouldn't be an option to carry on with that one. It would have to be a brand new process.

Except the plan won't be expired because this is happening before that time.

I think that's a good conversation to have as we move forward.

Question: When you get comments on a SEPA document and say they're considered, what does that mean? Do you actually ever change anything because of feedback?

The rule says considered, and that a written response is required. We absolutely have changed things based on that feedback.

I just wanted to say to think of the plan and think of SEPA as separate things because they are. It won't be a brand new plan that's not informed by that past plan. Plus, supplemental EIS usually lets you narrow the scope of what's considered.

#### **Public comment**

- I just wanted to say this has been an incredibly frustrating two days for me, mostly because of where I live and the issues that were brought forward yesterday. It seems like it's kind of the way of the WAG. There was a brief note of concern, then it just blows back to the original agenda. My main issue is with the fact that we're discussing post-delisting management when I feel like we're standing on a train track looking way off into the horizon and there's this train coming right at us. That's what's happening in northeast Washington. We have increased need for money, and decreased resources available. This group is the one to talk about that. And when that train does run over everybody, and there's a big social upheaval, there's no baseline here for dealing with that problem. We're back to an emergency situation and it just deteriorates. If you're going to continue this process and go to northeast Washington, you're going to get no engagement. You can't just go up there and tell them what you want to talk about. When that happens, it just creates this cycle of isolation. It just goes on and on and on. There are lots of rural communities that haven't felt the effects of wolves yet, and they are supposed to comment on what they want after delisting? It's hard for me to see how they can comment. You guys are putting all this effort into all this, using up your funding, and it just seems so premature. Even though there's this big need to talk about northeast Washington, they have no power to bring it to the forefront. I know it's a tough issue, but that doesn't make it go away. It makes it worse. There's one meeting left with Francine still here. Is there any way you would consider tabling this and actually

talking about those issues for at least one meeting before we move on to what happens next?

- I wanted to largely agree with that comment. I think we are talking about this way to prematurely. We are nowhere near meeting the definition of recovery. We're moving in the right direction, which is good news, and there is a lot of new science coming out we should be incorporating into the current plan. But I don't think we're in a place where we should be talking about this. I want to see more emphasis on new emerging science, and I want to see more work on outreach and education. Wolves are the public's resources, and everyone is affected one way or another. We need a much larger engagement so when issues come up there are ways to address those. I don't think WAG is a good planning entity.
- Circling back to discussion earlier on third party neutral facilitating. If the thought is to use internal agency staff, the rest of the public, we will view that as someone who works for an agency that has a mission statement, has mandates, and is totally different than a third party neutral. Most of the staff has been involved in decisions that are now being called into question, and they don't qualify at all to be third party neutral. I would agree on the prematurity of this. It's baffling to me. This year there will be a SEPA started on translocation of wolves, when what I've heard from agency staff is that we're on the trajectory. Same thing with doing a SEPA now for this wolf plan process. This is not a critical matter. However, the protocol is different from the wolf plan. We advised that, and that was ignored. There should be a SEPA process for the lethal protocol. I don't know what directives WDFW may have given or gotten in regards to the agenda. If there are conflicts this summer and bloodshed this summer, and anyone asks the agency or WAG if they talked about the protocol and how it played out last year, and you say no, you are going to be in hot water with the public. There is a disconnect here with not understanding what is the big issue here. I think this meeting was a missed opportunity. I would also note that the meeting cost more than others, and yet everyone walks out frustrated. That's just too bad. Take all the comments you heard here and figure out what you can do for that July meeting.
- I agree with the others. These past two days talking about this were a waste. This is so far beyond what people are thinking about that they just didn't see the point of coming out. This is way too early. Northeast Washington feels like we're left out there alone. The people have stopped thinking there's any use in any of this. There are three counties up there that wouldn't put a dime into this because they see no point. People want to know what the depredation count is for Togo and Leadpoint packs. Can we get an answer on that? This shouldn't be a hard thing to figure out. There's lots of discussion about public engagement, and that hasn't worked. People don't care about what's happening on WAG. We see all these ideas, but there hasn't been any action. We haven't had a family event or even a public event in over two years where wolves weren't the topic. Wolves are always the topic, and it's frustrating when that runs your life. There's a businessman



who stood up yesterday who said that he knew what it was like because he had an electronics business in Spokane. But we can't just go out and do our business. It's not the same thing as owning an electronic store. Don't try to associate. This is a whole different ballgame. None of us is better than the other, just different. Accept those differences. Accept that this is our livelihood. We're not selling it. We're trying to keep these tracts of land in our family. Remember that the people who deal with it 12 months a year aren't willing to engage because they don't think you care.

- This adds on to a previous comment. All last year, there was no meeting. After the March 2017 meeting, there was nothing until this past March. We get to read a report, but there was no follow up. Then we start up this March, and no one is talking about last summer's depredations and lethal action. We have pressing issues coming up on grazing season and it wasn't even discussed.
- Same thing. I'm terrified and I don't know what's going to happen this summer. I'm just going to pray. Who can we trust? I don't want any wolves to die. I'm here to represent the wolves because they don't have a voice. They're voiceless. I just feel like who can we trust? We drove here and spent a ton of money, and to me it feels like what the public thinks doesn't matter. We're not there. We're not seeing what's going on. I just worry thinking about that.

**Meeting adjourned**