

Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Meeting
September 30, 2015
Meeting Notes

These meeting notes are intended to convey highlights from the meeting, including information and perspectives shared and discussed during the WAG meeting. Decisions made during the meeting are included. This document is not a word-for-word transcription, and some overlapping comments made during back-and-forth discussion, or reiterated by another participant, or communicated through nonverbal means will not have been captured in this document. That said, all efforts have been made to capture the main points, as well as the diverging and converging viewpoints on each issue.

WAG Attendees: Bob Aegerter, Shawn Cantrell, Don Dashiell, Tom Davis, Dave Duncan, Tom Erskine, Jack Field, Diane Gallegos, Molly Linville, Nick Martinez, Dan McKinley, Dan Paul, Mark Pidgeon, Lisa Stone, Paula Swedeen, Janey Howe, Tim Coleman

WDFW Staff: Donny Martorello, Trent Roussien, Matthew Trendera

Third Party Neutral: Francine Madden, Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration

Welcome and Overview: The third party neutral welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanked them for participating, and gave an overview of what the two-day meeting activities would include. She mentioned that she spoke with producers in the state and WAG members in the time since the September 3 meeting, and noted there is interest in WAG providing support and backing for livestock producers preventive plans.

She commended all WAG members for their energy and commitment to supporting one another during the previous meeting. Working together is going to get everyone further. She discussed the nature of conflict and the steps in progressing through the process. It is not a linear process.

She told a fable to highlight how human beings look for linear patterns. In complex conflicts and situations, that is not the case. Crisis can be an opportunity, and positives can be celebrated but not permeated on. She also discussed how survival is insufficient for each group. Each group needs to thrive. This process (and other complementary processes going on) and what results needs to ensure groups and their way of life thrive.

Break for Lunch

WDFW Update: Trent thanked everyone for coming and presented a status update on wolf monitoring and activity in the state. Fires affected monitoring efforts over the summer months, limiting trapping and collaring in those areas. As soon as the fire closure was lifted in Carpenter Ridge, WDFW was able to go in and catch two wolves. Two brand new collars are now out on two adult females in the Huckleberry pack area. It still appears that the Huckleberry pack has split into a north group and a south group. Pack determination will be made on December 31, as is Department policy.

Due to concerns with frostbite and wolf health, trapping will not be conducted as temperatures go down. Monitoring efforts (camera sighting, aerial telemetry flights) will continue over those months. Aerial capture efforts will be initiated in December.

Question: Does it look like the southern group in Huckleberry is staying separate?

Answer: It has only been a couple weeks [since the collars were deployed in the southern group], but so far they are staying separate. WDFW will continue to monitor the activity.

Question: Will the burns, are you seeing a change in utilization of areas based on fire damage?

Answer: That's a great question, and it's challenging to answer at this time. Many areas are still closed and WDFW is unable to get in. WDFW will continue monitoring efforts, but it looks like it is too early to tell at this time.

Question: Has the prey base been affected by the fires as well?

Answer: Again, that's a tougher question. By the end of the season, the district biologists will have official counts. By what we've seen on the ground in the Huckleberry region, it looks like the animals are still there.

Question: Is it strange to see two adult female wolves running together?

Answer: There are at least four adults, including an adult male and another adult female. It just so happened the two WDFW caught were these two adult females.

Question: What are your plans in the Blue Mountains?

Answer: A lot of those areas are closed as well, making it tough. They are on top of the WDFW list for monitoring, especially with aerial surveys coming up.

Question: What is the relationship with Oregon, as far as sharing data?

Answer: That data is being provided.

Question: Have you monitored the status of the northern area Huckleberry group?

Answer: The estimate is four wolves, based on howling, but howling is not a great measure for counts. We will get an official count when aerial surveys begin. We will be trying to get another collar in that group over the winter.

Question: Have you had any critical sightings west of the Cascades?

Answer: Just recently, actually. We have a dispersing wolf from the Teanaway pack that was last detected in the north of Whatcom County.

Question: What is happening with Teanaway right now?

Answer: We have no reason to believe anything out of the ordinary is going on. Dispersal is completely normal, and can happen any time of year.

Question: Were the wolves caught in the Huckleberry area healthy?

Answer: They were very healthy. The first female weighed 80 pounds and the second female weighed 74 pounds. The second female had only three legs, but was otherwise healthy. It is suspected that she was born that way, rather than injured or otherwise affected by outside conditions.

Identify Threats / Opportunities: The third party neutral started the discussion by asking the WAG members to consider the macro-level threats to their communities. There are a lot of different threats at a lot of different levels, and having an understanding in each stakeholder group, as well as amongst different stakeholder groups, can help when looking for ways to alleviate some of these threats, identify opportunities, and understand the realities of each group.

There are many things that are out of the members' control. What each member wants is to thrive, and have their communities thrive as well. It's about society working together to not just ensure survival, but thriving into the future.

What is really challenging and making it difficult for your ways of life?

WAG broke into three groups to discuss 1) threats to hunting, 2) threats to livestock production, and 3) threats to environment.

1) Threats to Hunting – Not able to pass on hunting heritage to the next generation. This is impacted by: access to hunting areas, numbers of game animals going down, costs to hunt, carnivores are one more thing, public perception, hunters tainted by poachers, public mind thinks hunting is no longer needed, trophy hunting, anti-gun laws.

Hunters feel that they support wildlife through licensing fees/costs, and that their contributions are under threat now. Population growth into hunting areas, as well as landowners not allowing access, hunters feel that they are losing their voice.

There was a comment that the hunter discussion should be postponed until the hunting community can present at the December WAG meeting.

One issue brought up is that everything in the list of threats to hunters is often argued within the hunting community as well and there is not necessarily consensus across the hunting community. A need was expressed for WAG group leaders to work closely on a larger level. These groups are going to see these issues and not agree with some of them. WAG can work to overcome those issues, and not only improve the approach to wolves but also to our way of life.

While discussing threats to the different communities, WAG members also brought up that there are various opportunities for collaboration between all of the different groups involved. All

members agreed that this new WAG-style dialogue on a broader scale could be mutually beneficial for every group. While agreements are not going to happen on every issue, dialogue on these issues can expand understanding and contribute to finding solutions.

Someone mentioned that we could use a WAG-style dialogue (civil discourse) on a broader scale. The question raised was how to scale this up. How does WAG, as a core group, start seeding this dialogue into the various groups represented?

Comment: some of the funding given to the game areas can be filtered through the diversity section of WDFW. If ESA issues could be separated from other wildlife, it is possible full support would be given from the hunting and agricultural communities. Don't penalize the landowners who have taken care of their land and have good habitat.

One comment suggested building the habitat and caring for it would be much better than managing species. A more holistic management approach would be more effective.

The WAG members agreed that regulating for single-species can hurt overall production in the long term. Regulations seem to punish landowners who are doing something right. There was much interest in reforming management for threatened and endangered species.

One comment that came up was how hard it can be to move forward with something like that. ESA reform is terrifying to anyone in the conservation community because there is a dynamic of larger forces that want to completely dismantle the ESA.

The third party neutral brought up that the issue of opening up the ESA for reform is similar to the attitude seen when discussing a reform of the Washington State Wolf Management Plan. The fear of risk is strong, in that sides feel they could lose everything they gained from the initial plan.

She asked if there was something the group could create or do that could be representative as a model that can then be applied to other forms and areas.

There was a comment about wanting to focus on the state side of things in regards to endangered species. Approaching the federal side would be too large at this time.

Opportunities for collaboration: Habitat for ungulates, youth initiatives, changing public perception, getting youth outside (societal changes), fair chase issues, hunting with drones, more dialogue on public policy issues with nontraditional partners, diversify funding sources to/for WDFW, lack of funding for non-game species that could also help game animals and habitat access, separate ESA from other wildlife in the Diversity Division.

2) Threats to Livestock Producers – Regulatory agencies, concentration of the industry above the producer level (separation between livestock producers and beef producers), rural sprawl, economic impacts of land acquisitions by state and federal land trusts (impacts to rural communities and loss of grazing), water quality issues, predators, commodity price fluctuations, labor issues, H2A, sage grouse management (impacts on producers), and climate conditions.

WAG discussed the possibilities of different distribution methods for livestock producers who wanted to market themselves as pro-coexistence. Both the market and the buyers were discussed, and it was brought up that a production chain would have to be set up. Producers would need guarantees before any action would be taken.

There was a discussion about what WAG is doing right now. Some members felt these were topics more appropriate for a future discussion in light of more immediate decision needs. Other members expressed gratitude for the discussion in that it gives a background for them to take back to their various groups. One comment brought up that the only way to understand producers completely is to have these conversations.

3) Threats to Environmental Community – lack of understanding in regards to recovery (timetable for recovery), perception that some in the community are “wingnuts,” too much emphasis on control versus recovery, concern over how long recovery will take, concern over keeping wild lands wild and protecting habitat, concern about fracturing of land (20 acres), concern that producers control federal grazing policy and that federal lands are only being used by one user group, concern with overuse of public lands by recreationists, continuing decline of species (state and global), perception of social media being used to misrepresent some issues (on both sides, especially in regards to wolves), ineffective implementation of regulations (hard to come up with a good balanced approach), slog of meetings, perception that livestock producing is a threat to environment, user group doesn’t feel the same as the person at the meeting/table, members of community who blame humans (overpopulation), consolidation of economic and political power (at policy levels), how money influences elections and violations of laws, failure to achieve goals, misconception that defeating the opposition would achieve victory.

The third party neutral talked about how having the bigger picture is going to help as WAG moves on and will even help in setting goals and achieving them.

Mutually Beneficial Individual Producer Plan:

The third party neutral started the conversation by having WAG explore the benefits to having a preventative plan. She also said she had an initial conversation with a landowner who contracts out land to producers and it was a good start.

Each side was able to comment on the benefits to having a plan. Benefits include: building trust between the members of WAG as well as between WAG and affected livestock producers, gives certainty* to all stakeholders, gives credibility of WAG, risk mitigation / good stewardship, benefit of grazing for land management, shows Commission and legislature that the process (WAG) is accomplishing something, shows that sides can come together and solve an issue (even failure breeds success), we have a producer(s) that stays in business, could overall reduce number of livestock killed and reduce the number of wolves killed (can’t guarantee success, but can use failures to learn), stop fracturing of landscapes, opportunities to learn as much as we can about the effectiveness of livestock protection and then later apply that knowledge to better protections, finding the reasonable balance, potential to spread knowledge through outreach, learning about issues involved in access to grazing land and resilient range land utilization.

*Certainty is given to environmentalists because it assures producers are using high quality preventative measures that were put in place in advance (at the beginning of the grazing season, rather than after depredations occur). Certainty is given to livestock producers because if the time does come for lethal control, it will hopefully be more widely accepted as necessary and the situation does not arise where a crisis is occurring, yet more and more needs to happen first. This would hopefully result in less social hysteria (on all sides) and spin. Hunters get broader certainty that protocols are being followed.

These benefits can be put into a process for the preventative plan. Plans can be easily misinterpreted, so the details are essential. What the plan looks like:

What the plan looks like would depend on the unique situation. Assessing individual livestock producer's situation is essential. The plan must outline the preventative measures implemented by livestock producers to prevent conflict with wolves. Identifying defensible grazing is an important first step. One issue is when the grazing allotment is not defensible (what constitutes "defensible"?). Part of finding good ground is finding a place where all/most tools can be implemented to keep the livestock safe.

Comment: We need to go beyond the wolf plan that is already in place. What is enough in each individual situation? Money is part of the situation.

Question: Are we working to help Producer #1 or are we starting with going over the checklist and other aspects of the wolf plan?

Answer: Producer #1 is not in the room, and we do not want to agree on that action to help him until he is present. The group agreed that they would like to offer this assistance to producers throughout the state and ensure that producers not on WAG are included.

The group discussed the plan and what it looked like and for whom their efforts were intended.

One comment suggested that if there are problems with the checklist and other agreements, why can't WAG tackle that area instead of focusing on other aspects that may not result in any progress.

Another comment was that producers can have the best deterrent methods available, but if they are used on a piece of land that can't be defended effectively, that won't work. What was agreed upon in the previous meeting was that the piece of land would have to be defensible.

In response, the comment was that WAG would not want to put out the perception that they are telling landowners how to use their land.

Another comment was that this is how the plan can be interpreted. The Department should be taking each individual case as its own and working to form unique plans for those situations. We should be taking this kind of care in regards to wolves, as they are an endangered species.

WDFW: We want to form a customized plan for each type of livestock environment that would be most effective. These details can be flushed out and used in those unique conditions. There are going to be land areas that are very difficult to defend no matter what. Defining those terms for each land area is going to go a long way in moving forward.

Another part of this plan is to have people on the ground with expertise so everyone would know that all preventative measures are being used.

There are some things we can put in the plan that will be similar no matter the situation. Discussion arose about whether or not focus on Producer #1's needs at this time.

Additionally, WAG agreed that they would not put a plan out unless everyone agreed on it completely.

It was noted that if this goes forward with Producer #1, this is not something WAG is doing for Producer #1, but with Producer #1. It needs to be a partnership. We are working together in this and we need to remember that if we are going to move forward.

This needs to be site specific and customized, not prospective. We can't judge that it doesn't work based on one failure. We would need to learn and adapt.

Another piece is how do you define success?

In agriculture, there are two important things you need, water and land. We know the land area that Producer #1 would be using. If we try to get involved with other producers now, it's another thing altogether. Perhaps it would be good to bring in the Department of Agriculture to identify land.

The role would not just be developing the plan, but also supporting through implementation. There was some discussion about having separate wolf plans for each pack, as WDFW has put together this year. Having a project manager on the ground (per pack?) who has access to all the data and shares it with producers has worked in some areas. Other producers may come to us, maybe not individually, but in a pack area.

What do we have in place in this agreement for when the action does happen? Are we going to mess with that by endorsing something?

WDFW: There are multiple goals in regards to wolves, including recovery and minimizing livestock conflict. Working with WAG can help with accomplishing those goals. Having a detailed conversation on the specifics is where we should start.

Everyone jumping in and digging into these details can only benefit. How do we define defensible grazing? Range riding versus herding? What are these terms and what do they mean to us? Defining those terms could help with directing us in the right direction.

WAG members discussed Producer #2's situation and used that information to go through a rough, general draft of a plan. Conditions of the land were discussed, as well as preventative measures in place. Behavior of the sheep was also discussed. The land is mostly forest. Transitory range is best for sheep in that environment. Bedding sites are moved every night.

Producer #2 went over expected losses from predation, disease, and other factors. Wolves were present around the herd and a lot of variability was detected this year. The producer has a cooperative agreement with the state.

The producer asked what else he could do as far as preventative measures, and the environmental representatives in the room expressed appreciation for his efforts. One comment was that they might defer to a professional in evaluating the process, and another suggestion was to increase human presence with another herder if possible. Costs become a factor in that scenario. There was a quick discussion comparing herders and range riders. A herder is not the same as a range rider.

Concerns were voiced for the long term future of Producer #2's operation. When help can no longer be provided after delisting, what happens for that family then?

It was agreed that it would be beneficial to discuss that at some time, but the first steps must be taken and developing them should take priority at this time.

Public Comments: There was a public comment that expressed appreciation for what WAG is, as the person had a different perception of what WAG was (because of the media) before she attended the meeting.

For any of this to work, it has to be economical. The bar cannot be so high that it can't be reached. It was expressed that the conversation is beneficial and it should be kept realistic.

Meeting Adjourned

Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Meeting

October 1, 2015

Meeting Notes

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WDFW Staff: Donny Martorello, Trent Russien, Scott Becker, Jay Shepherd, Matthew Trenda

Third Party Neutral: Francine Madden, Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration

Welcome and Overview: The third party neutral thanked everyone for coming and welcomed all to the meeting. The first order of business was to continue where they left off the previous evening.

Mutually Beneficial Individual Producer Plan

The third party neutral reviewed what the discussion touched on the previous evening, including making sure there is an opportunity for members to discuss options with stakeholders, deciding how much (in regards to preventative measures) is enough, what and how those measures are defined, and ensuring resources are on the land providing expertise throughout the process. The third party neutral also emphasized that WAG members need to address the lethal action portion of the process and have a plan in place. What does the lethal piece look like (time period, numbers, when things go back to zero, etc.)? It is also important to know where WDFW is in this process. A key piece of the process is trust, which needs to be built during the entire process. The third party neutral emphasized that the lethal action part of the process highlights those threats addressed during the previous day's discussion, which is why it is a topic that needs to be brought up within WAG. There is enormous concern on both sides, due to nonlethal/lethal being symbolic of something much bigger – a perceived persecution of rural communities by some and a perceived persecution of wolves by others. It is important to understand what an individual is saying about a specific plan or policy has much more fear, persecution, and history around it, which is why it is so hard for everyone involved.

WAG members discussed a possible framework that could apply to any producer in any situation. Producers want to know if there is a *deficiency* with existing livestock protection / nonlethal protocol / checklist. If so, where and what? Concerns and challenges were addressed, including: 1) why get an agreement if there is no problem, 2) trusting in WDFW through the

process, 3) allocating resources, 4) the role of cooperative agreements in balancing and managing resources, 5) waffling versus certainty, 6) cooperative agreements can feel like getting approval on operation, 7) “solution” needs to mean both nonlethal and lethal, not just lethal, and if more nonlethal works, it needs to be considered a success (though it may not be perceived that way), 8) sustainability over time (funding), 9) the checklist and agreements being proactive, 10) cultural differences – handshakes versus agreements (acceptability differs), 11) how can environmental community trust what livestock producers are doing to prevent depredations when there is no engagement / versus privacy and utilization, 12) current expectations versus desired level of preventatives, 13) not everyone fits into the box, 14) public land use where there is no agreement in place, 15) documentation or not?, 16) Do you differentiate between producers who are in cooperative agreements or not or treat everyone the same? People need to feel they are being treated fairly 17) Can you incentivize based on # of depredations? 18) Are we offering a carrot or a stick?

The Dirty Shirt pack situation was brought up, and the meaning of the word “solution” was discussed. The perception from the environmental community was that when producers used the word “solution,” it means lethal control. With Dirty Shirt, a solution was found that did not include lethal control and was still effective. Some recommended using the word “response” rather than “solution”.

Another comment brought up that lethal control is another tool in the “solution” toolbox. If a producer has done everything else right, and the plan calls for lethal control in that producer’s situation, then that option needs to be available.

There are folks who don’t want to sign a contract with the government, and it was recommended that WDFW have a plan in place for those producers as well.

WDFW went over how it is a different feel in situations with a cooperative agreement versus situations without one. The two references brought up were the situation in Teanaway and the situation in Dirty Shirt over the summer. The two felt very different. In one, the checklist was used and it felt much calmer, while in the other it was not as smooth of a process.

A cultural issue (private property) was discussed. It can feel condescending if someone comes to your operation with an attitude of approving or judging whether or not it is being run well. It was brought up that the environmental community gets concerned when this attitude shows up with producers who are using public land. With public land and no agreement in place in areas with known wolves, it can ignite negative reactions in the environmental community. Another comment brought up that wildlife is a public resource, and so you cannot split this into a private property issue.

A comment was made that the clock towards lethal control should start on depredation count after nonlethal methods are enacted.

It was noted that a third party validation can irk livestock producers who don’t feel like they should have to document everything they do. There is a perception of no action if there is no

agreement in place. This can feel insulting to the producer who doesn't want that third party validation.

The difficulty of assessing different operations, especially if they are close together, was discussed, with WDFW mentioning that wolves don't differentiate between producers who use nonlethal measures and producers who do not. It is never black and white. Each situation must be examined on its own.

A comment was made that maybe producers who refuse participation in the program should be informed that they may not be responded to in the same way as producers who are more open. However, if help is refused in certain cases, some may want to take action into their own hands. If people don't feel treated fairly, they may proceed on their own. Can you incentivize based on the number of depredations. The question of what WAG wants to create out of this (motivation to join in versus exclusion for those who don't) was discussed, building off of these comments.

Break

After returning from a short break, the WAG members expressed gratitude to each other for remaining civil and having the ability to have a productive, respectful conversation on this topic, even as it is difficult, as previous attempts in years past led to more difficult interactions and tension.

The conversation on the beneficial producer plans continued. The steps for an individual producer plan were outlined, including

1) Assessing the individual operation

- a. A dialogue with the producer about operation and current methods, including their assessment of what works, what doesn't, and needs
- b. Technical advisory group
- c. Determine culturally appropriate rules of engagement
- d. Building trust between WAG, WDFW, technical folks, and producers
- e. Get on the land and walk the land with experts
- f. Technical group comes back to WAG with assessment and plan to inform WAG members (learning opportunity and opportunity for complete WAG support).
- g. Get into the details with this pilot version of the plan.
- h. Define shared definition of preventatives as part of the assessment / dialogue.

2) Identifying the point of contact at WDFW to ensure a positive reception and delivery of accurate, needed information.

3) Adaptive management (assessing and learning) happens after the grazing season, not mid-season.

- a. No additions can be made to the plan during the grazing season. The plan is locked until assessment at the end of the season.
- b. Identifying at the end of the grazing season what worked, what didn't, and any additional needs for the producer.

c. Quick response to step up with support if needed during the middle of the season (herder breaks ankle, etc.) to maintain the integrity of the plan.

4) Two pilot projects at the same time (Producer #1 and Producer #2)? Or three so the opportunity is available for those not on WAG? A fourth producer? Two cattle producers and two sheep producers.

- a. Producer #3 should have cattle somewhat at risk.
 - i. Most affected area of concern (NE Washington)
 - ii. Non-WAG member
 - iii. Determined by WDFW
- b. Producer #4 in the Blue Mountains.
 - i. Creates cultural communication across regions.
 - ii. Two non-WAG members means more inclusion
 - iii. Determined by WDFW

5) How do you advertise/recruit/communicate to a potential Producer #3 and #4?

6) Committee needs

- a. Research Committee – Lessons learned elsewhere
- b. Funding – sustainable or seed

7) Public grazing / USFS communications (environmental and livestock producers) – An interagency discussion with WAG should happen.

8) Quality practices

- a. Once producers are identified, focus in on what preventative methods can be used and the technical group can work with the producer
- b. Customized for each individual producer
- c. Nonlethal tools
- d. Grazing practices (bunching up versus dispersal, time management)
 - i. Walk carefully
- e. Husbandry practices

Who makes this assessment? The Department was brought up. A technical advisory group was also mentioned. The environmental community and WAG would have to be comfortable with the group. The group would also have to match the individual producer's needs. The quality of the nonlethal methods would have to be assessed as well.

A comment was made that these guidelines would apply to near term (Producer #1) and not apply to all producers. As a pilot program, this process with Producer #1 could then serve as a jumping off point for other producers.

WDFW could serve as the point of contact for these producers. It is important to determine the culturally appropriate rules of engagement. The long-term goal is to be able to trust WDFW with developing these plans with producers and supplying these technical groups for assessments. Others agreed that trusting WDFW through the process is the ultimate goal WAG wants to get

to. Building trust with WDFW needs to happen. People need to know who to contact at WDFW to ensure the reception is a good experience.

The topic of how much is enough in regards to preventative measures was discussed more. It was expressed that a plan approved by WAG would then ensure that WAG would support the producer in the event of depredation(s). Adaptive management was discussed. The concern comes from producers who may feel they followed the plan set out at the beginning of the grazing season, only to have that plan change when a crisis occurs. These plans would then be assessed at the end of the grazing season to determine what worked and what did not, and can be adjusted based on that information. WAG would step in with support if needed mid-season. Quick response would be essential. WDFW would still have to act for producers who do not have an agreement in place.

A comment was made that wondered how these points are helping Producer #1, who lost grazing land. It was said that during the next six weeks, WAG could help find a piece of land for Producer #1 if he wanted this. It is difficult to make these decisions without Producer #1 in the room. WAG also agreed they would all have to agree with the process completely. Finalizing this plan for Producer #1 can be completed at the next meeting if/when Producer #1 is present.

WDFW commented that it may be beneficial to run parallel plans instead of just focusing on Producer #1.

It was brought up that since Producer #2 is in a different part of the state, there will be different solutions for his unique situation.

It was suggested that Producer #3 and #4 be someone with cattle at risk, and that this person should be identified by WDFW. Producer #3 and #4 should be non-WAG members.

WDFW's role versus the role of WAG was discussed. WDFW said it is appreciated that the group wants to dive into the weeds. The process will impact conflict specialists a great deal. The conflict specialist present has had this role before and does not see the time involved as a problem. The hiccup comes from offering the opportunity to producers. It would be good to communicate with the conflict specialists about the process.

A comment was given saying conflict specialists would be opening themselves to having their work critiqued from WAG. The conflict specialist expressed that he has no problem with constructive criticism. The issue comes from the social angle.

The third party neutral emphasized that this would be an opportunity for mutual learning and sharing, so that everyone's practice evolves together.

It was expressed that WAG should come to conclusions first on the definitions of nonlethal methods and agree on those definitions before recruiting producers. By applying those first, you can then expand them statewide with little to no misunderstanding.

WAG discussed this issue, and several points were raised. Some thought people would like to see some action coming from WAG. While the clarity is important for the plan, working with producers on the ground could give context to those conversations on definitions and better inform the group. However, others noted that experts on the ground who are out talking to producers would like more specificity in order to move forward with this plan. Fleshing out this checklist and coming to agreements on definitions would help those experts on the ground. We need to know how much is enough and where that bar is going to be. WAG needs to have those definitions on the wall in order to ensure WAG is all in agreement. Everyone is not on board yet. WAG can't put the pilot program out without complete agreement on the definitions. That way people can know when action is taken, it is done with the support of WAG.

Another comment said that while we do need to get to that agreement, these pilots will help with that process. If these producers will trust WAG to learn, their situations can be used to develop those specific definitions. This will make the process much faster in the future when developing revisions to the checklist, etc.

One more comment said that without knowing what the goals are, he could not tell producers to join the process. Everyone needs to agree on the goal.

One last comment said that WAG members do not have the knowledge to make those specific definitions at this time.

Draft definitions could be put together for the next WAG meeting and gone over by WAG members to see how that goes.

Any producer included is a part of partnership and would be equally respected. It would be a risk, but could address those threats to the producer. This would have to be a mutually beneficial experience.

Lunch

Upon returning from lunch, the third party neutral said that it is necessary to get finished with the whole picture in regards to the plan, from preventative actions to what it would look like if/when lethal control was necessary. Looking at the checklist and talking about what that means was brought up by some members as well, and going through where the uncertainty was would be beneficial moving forward.

There was concern expressed/reiterated that WAG still did not yet know when the count began for depredations and that the definitions needed to be agreed upon before going public with the plan.

With the checklist, there was a push toward specificity due to a lack of trust in WDFW. As they have seen, this is something that creates conflict, as the real life situations do not fit into the "one size fits all" checklist. Each producer operation is unique and one size fits all checklists will not work. The only way to not micromanage WDFW is to trust WDFW, and the only way to do that is to go through this entire process with WDFW. Creating these partnerships where everyone

knows there is a risk and asking producers if they are willing to come to the table and experiment with WAG on what is reasonable, cost-effective, and what gets those preventative measures in place. In exchange for joining that partnership, the producer would have certainty and support from WAG through any crisis, and support after grazing seasons with adaptive management.

The guidelines and how they are used and when they are used is going to change based on the location and other factors. The producer can also contribute. This process can be supported by all stakeholders.

WDFW said that one issue is when starting a dialogue on one thing, six other things come up. Everything is connected, and recognizing that is important for moving forward.

Copies of the checklist were distributed to the WAG members. The group went through definitions and identified where differences occurred in how they were read. Range riders were discussed first. The term “recommended where applicable” was sighted as an issue. It feels too vague and too optional. There was a comment that the difference between small and large operators needs to be considered.

Principles of Individual Plan

It was decided to go through this checklist and think of definitions in regards to Producer #2's current situation. WAG decided to go through the list step by step and dig into each one as it applies to Producer #2. This is not the actual plan for Producer #2, but the general principles.

Sanitization was the first topic discussed. Producer #2's process was described and the members discussed options and whether they would be practical or not. Carcass disposal was discussed as well. Involving the local conflict specialist in these situations is essential in order to keep working closely with WDFW. The goal is to keep wolves separated from livestock (don't get wolves used to eating livestock carcasses). Make sure carcasses are not keeping wolves in close proximity to living livestock. The applicability to Producer #2 is that whoever is on the ground out there needs to have the right tools to accomplish those goals.

The next topic applicable to Producer #2 was sick and injured wildlife. In Producer #2's case, taking care of these cases is the herder's job. It was asked if there are any steps to take to protect injured lambs overnight. The answer was that it is always better to take care of the healthy members of the herd. It was recommended that there could be more communication with WDFW if injured animals are detected (if feasible). Communication can be difficult (cell service, etc.). The cost-effectiveness of an extra herder was discussed, as well as the balance. Consider the cost of the herder.

The next topic applicable to Producer #2 was turnout. Turnout is more of a dialogue rather than just checking a box. It has to do with the location of the den site, size of the herd, etc. Many different factors go into the turnout process. It is a program, not just a random action. It was suggested to rework the checklist in this case to account for that dialogue. There is a timing issue when WDFW knows where the denning site is versus the grazing allotment plans. One aspect is to make sure WDFW, range riders, and the producer knows livestock and wolf locations for

coordination. It may be worth putting into the checklist just what each producer does action-wise during that turnout (bells, etc.).

The next topic applicable to Producer #2 was range riders and shepherds. Producer #2 walked the group through a typical day for a herder. Producer #2 is trying a new breed of guard dog and has three of those. You want to have at least as many guard dogs as wolf pack members. Herding dogs are also used, and they are separate from the guard dogs. Outreach and messaging should be done in relation to livestock guardian dogs with wolves versus no wolves. Discussion about whether there are some breeds of dogs that are better than others ensued. Dogs don't usually spend a lot of time together. There is a guard dog / liability issue in some cases. Is there an industry standard for the number of herders per band of sheep? This was discussed.

Range riders managing grazing livestock near core areas should be moved from recommended to essential on care taken. WAG members suggested one or more of the range rider section be moved from recommended to essential. This is a piece that is important to the environmental side. Should there be a different checklist for different sized operations? The producer with only 40 head may not need a herder or be able to afford one, for example. Who pays for the range rider in those examples? Are there cost share deals that could be put in place? Are those plans sustainable well into the future? These plans need to be economical. Contract range riders are with WDFW right now, but they may be spread thin. There must be creative structures out there to make these more cost-effective.

A herder is not the same as a range rider, which is why it would be helpful even for producers who employ a herder 24/7 to utilize these ranger rider agreements. If a co-op range rider program can be developed, it may be beneficial for producers to have that additional backup. A definition and training will be discussed in regards to range riders at a later meeting.

Providing clarity on the checklist to account for differences in operation size, as well as cost-effectiveness for each producer was discussed. One WAG member brought up cost, and how WAG should not force producers to hire someone if they cannot afford it. This is a reality that will need to be grappled with at some point.

The next topic applicable to Producer #2 was hazing. Producer #2 uses fladry, noise scare devices, and strobe lights for hazing techniques. It was agreed that Producer #2's hazing practices were sufficient. Support is also provided by WDFW and USFWS is cooperating.

WAG was tasked with explaining the checklist overview to their stakeholders and thinking about the lethal control issue for the next meeting. The lethal control issue will be a major agenda item for the next WAG meeting in December, in regards to the pilot program backed by WAG for an individual producer.

More topics for the December WAG meeting were mentioned. There will be an open public phone call for information sharing and the next few WAG meeting dates will be scheduled. Keeping producers engaged in the process for DPCAs will also be a topic.

Public Comment

The public offered comments on the meeting. One comment was that WAG does a great job. This process should be a model for other decision-making processes in the state.

Another comment expressed pride in what WAG is doing and what they have accomplished already. It has been difficult to hear some things, but it is understandable why they are doing it. It is a different feel than previous years' attempts. The hope is this results in something everyone can be proud of.

Another comment said that the meeting was very enjoyable and they learned a lot.

One comment asked about the tapeworm disease and how it can be passed to domesticated animals. Information is available on the website.

Meeting Adjourned