

# Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Guidelines

## Mission

To promote equitable, inclusive, and respectful dialogue and decision-making among diverse people to foster durable peace by transforming the root causes of social conflict and providing high quality recommendations on wolf recovery, conservation, and management.

## Vision

The Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) envisions a future for Washington whereby:

- People have equal and balanced voices in decisions that impact their communities
- Diverse perspectives are welcomed and heard
- Mutual understanding of the needs of diverse communities and groups is achieved and respected
- Wolves are an opportunity for shared, constructive problem-solving
- The deeper roots of social conflict in Washington are continually transformed
- Healthy, sustainable populations of wolves and wild ungulates are achieved and maintained in balance
- Livestock and financial losses to livestock producers are minimized
- Diverse communities, including rural communities, livestock producers, hunters, environmental communities, and the interested public, are kept whole (in terms of quality of life), vibrant, and resilient
- The best available science is used for decision-making on group recommendations
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and the Washington legislature are provided creative, inclusive recommendations for effective decision-making
- Public dialogue and mutual learning around wolves, ungulates, and natural resource issues are significantly improved
- There is continual fostering of high-quality dialogue and decision-making around wolves and related or emerging issues now and into the future

## Meeting Ground Rules

(Adopted January 2022)

### **WAG Ground Rules**

*Behaviors to help create and sustain an engaging, collaborative environment, build relationships, and find common ground.*

1. Assume good intent from others – be patient with one another if something said reflects a lack of knowledge, information, or awareness
2. Be curious and open-minded – seek to understand context before reaching a conclusion
3. Be transparent – give a holistic view of your opinion as opposed to holding something back
4. Be respectful and kind -- treat people the way you want to be treated
5. Actively participate and voice your perspectives
6. Actively listen and be present -- make space for others to be heard
7. Let others finish their thoughts before speaking
8. Acknowledge when conversations are hard, and emotions get heated
  - a. Remember there is a real person on the other side of your comments
  - b. Understand that people's livelihoods are affected by some decisions
9. Reach out and work with members outside your "identity"/"in-group"
  - a. Demonstrate interest in each other's lives and identities
  - b. Initiate one-on-one calls and meet-ups outside of WAG meetings
10. Allow sufficient agenda time to work through differences

## Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Guidelines

### WAG Decision-Making (Adopted January 2024)

WAG chooses to use a sufficient consensus model for decision-making (on recommendations to WDFW or problem-solving efforts among WAG), defined by WAG as:

1. Diverse views are fully and genuinely welcomed and considered
2. The issues are sufficiently discussed and understood from all angles
3. Absent members have an opportunity to provide input and be heard fully by all members
4. If 1) four or more WAG members disagree, or 2) if three or more members from the same identity group disagree, sufficient consensus is not reached. As previously determined, WAG identity groups are defined as environmentalists, livestock producers and hunters. Identity group members may or may not represent an organization. Members-at-large who do not identify with one of these three groups may choose to align with the group with whom they feel the greatest affinity on a given recommendation.
5. Once a decision is reached, it will be supported by the entire group, including those who opposed the decision
6. Dissenting voices recognize that maintaining the long-term integrity of the process and relationships is more important than the decision and therefore will work outside WAG and within their own group or community to uphold support for the decision. Members who represent a specific organization will ask their organization or group to "stand aside" and not take action to oppose or overturn the decision, even if they themselves did not secure their preferred decision.

#### **Intent:**

The intent of the WAG's sufficient consensus process is that every opportunity is made to reach consensus, and that where consensus cannot be reasonably reached there is a way for WAG to move forward with recommendations. Once a decision is made, WAG members expect all members to respectfully support the WAG's decision and the integrity of the decision-making process. While WAG members who dissent on a decision may share the reasons for their dissent with those outside of the WAG, all WAG members support moving forward with the recommendation once sufficient consensus is reached.

If sufficient consensus is not reached, the WAG will determine next steps, including the flexibility to continue the conversation, seek additional information, and/or look for other creative ways to address the issue. The WAG may also choose to discontinue further action on this issue.

### WAG Agreements (As of May 2019)

1. If a member feels they need to take an action (e.g. make a public statement) critical of Dept. wolf-related decisions and/or WAG recommendations, that member agrees to inform the other WAG members as soon as possible ahead of time.
2. If the Dept. makes a lethal removal decision for a 1<sup>st</sup> time with a wolf pack, the Dept. will host a call for all WAG members (and members of the public that would like to listen) how the Dept. used the 2011 Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and wolf-livestock interaction protocol to make that decision.