

Wolf Advisory Group April 8, 2021 Notes

Special Focus Areas:

1. Agreement
 - a. Definition – lethal removal authorized in 2 of the last 3 years
 - b. Goal – minimize depredations, reduce the need for lethal removal of wolves
 - c. Staff coordinate (facilitating that 1st discussion, not picking the 3rd party) “the group” to assess the situation and develop a formal plan w/ a 3rd party review
 - i. Group: affected producers, associated landowners, range riders, county sheriff representative (if applicable), land management agencies, and Dept. staff
 - ii. Ask the group to describe what’s known about the prey base. If there’s an issue, notify applicable Dept. staff.
 - iii. An independent person does the 3rd party review
 - iv. The group would select the 3rd party
 - d. In this guidance: attempt 2 collars, and let the local group decide what types (VHF, long-term monitoring, or 4-fixes/day) of collars are best, based on their analysis for packs with 5 or more wolves observed during our annual survey
 - e. Regarding consequences ...
 - i. Start with a general statement that all parties will make a good faith effort.
 - ii. If participating in a proactive plan, then get them added resources.
 - iii. It’s an expectation that non-lethal methods are used proactively.
 - iv. The Director will retain flexibility regarding the unique circumstances

Concerns:

- Not having the bulk of the producers on the call is troubling
- How will these general guidelines be implemented on the ground? Concerned about those details.
- Some producers feel this is something that’s been done to them, when they’re already under a lot of pressure.

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2. Still being considered
 - a. “The group” should consider (the four topics below)?
 - i. How does the group resolve differences? What’s their decision-making process? (Should we specify how they make decisions?) The Director makes the final decision?
 - ii. Are we pushing this down one level w/o solving it?
 - iii. The group would have more information to help with decisions?
 - iv. Need some overarching/general guidance for the group on collaring topic?
 - v. Which pieces (below) are a good fit for the local community group?
 - b. 2 collars on wolves within SFA
 - i. Attempt to deploy a conflict and GPS collars

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- ii. Capacity for 4 data points/day; transmit once per day (to preserve battery life)
 - 1. Increase frequency in SFAs
 - 2. Need to better clarify these rates.
 - iii. Main frame tries to “sweep” data once/hr
 - 1. Current collars only upload data 1/day or every other day
 - iv. Concerns
 - 1. May be something we try
 - 2. 2 collars on wolves w/o knowing the family members, could put a lot of pressure on wolves causing more problems than good (stronger concern when dealing with small packs)
 - a. Small pack = ?
 - b. Needed for bigger packs (e.g. 8 wolves)
 - v. Worried collar data may lead people to falsely think producers may have killed a wolf?
 - vi. Is this a guideline/principle for the Dept.? Is this too technical for this document?
 - vii. Let “the group” decide about collars? List what the group should consider.
 - 1. FYI, collars take months to order and get in hand, need about 5-6 mo. lead time to get different collars
 - viii. We’re not too far off.
 - ix. If not fully, implemented, the Director can’t predetermine a decision.
 - x. Ask “the group” to decide?
 - xi. If you don’t fulfill your role with non-lethals, than resources don’t go in your direction?
 - xii. We shouldn’t write consequences on paper. The first page of the protocol has this Director-flexibility statement. It’s simpler without a consequences statement?
 - xiii. Don’t use the word consequences or accountability?
 - xiv. A flexibility statement may answer an expected reader’s question?
- c. **Timing**. When thresholds are met, what’s the timeline for staff recommendation to the Director, the Director’s decision, and acting on a decision?
- i. The Director asked staff to propose this timeline.
- d. Whether SFA’s focus too much on single-species management instead of all species
- i. Change the title of the protocol to something like Wolf, Wildlife, Livestock Interaction Protocol?
 - ii. Want the Dept to deliver to “the group” all possible ungulate data (historic and present by prey species, hunter success, historic and present by ungulate prey species)
 - 1. Already do this for the public
 - iii. If an SFA is declared, the Dept. should be required to do studies on neonates and juveniles’ survival by ungulate prey species
 - 1. Time and funding-intensive and is hard to compare/use with an SFA?

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2. Intent is to take a closer look at the ungulate populations in SFAs. Is there a way to do this?
 - a. Reach out to people doing existing, related studies for useful information? (e.g. Predator-Prey, Blues Mtns.)
- iv. Wolves are still listed as endangered and their uniqueness point to a more focused effort.
- v. Is this outside the scope of the protocol?
- vi. What's realistically going on with predators and prey? Do we have enough data?
 1. Need a section on predator and prey?
- vii. Add a statement acknowledging ungulates are a factor, and we're awaiting the completion of current studies?
- viii.