

# Cross-Program Cougar Safety Team Status Update

Eric Gardner  
Director, Wildlife Program



Washington  
Department of  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**



**March: Cougar Mgmt Options**

**April: Option 4 Decision**

**May: Next Steps:**

**Game Management Plan**

**Predator Mgmt for At Risk Ungulates**

**Public Safety Effort**

Objective: Manage cougars while being trusted to take action to help people feel safe

Beginning stages  
New work

OUTREACH	RESPONSIVE TO PUBLIC	SCIENCE INFORMS DECISIONS	PARTNERSHIPS
<p>WDFW provides tools to safely live in cougar country</p>	<p>Refine internal protocols to be more responsive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Dangerous Wildlife Response Policy</li> <li>Imp. improved dangerous wildlife response matrix</li> </ul>	<p>Complete research on cougars: Provide relevant research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WDFW (Pred/Prey; West side)</li> <li>Non-WDFW (Kalispel Tribe's cougar study)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to build partnerships with sheriffs, Enforcement and Conflict staff</p>
<p>Refine overarching public safety communication strategy</p>	<p>Improve internal reporting between Wildlife Program and Enforcement to: track incidents, focus response efforts, and inform the public</p>	<p>Create science communication forum to share findings</p>	<p>Reinvigorate partnerships with local elected commissions and NGOs: focus on shared goals</p>
<p>Build on existing models to work with community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce deer feeding</li> <li>Improve husbandry</li> <li>Living with cougars safety messages</li> </ul>	<p>Continue development of Cougar Pursuit/Hound Training WAC</p>	<p>Implement Option 4, review outcomes in hunting seasons 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate review of GMP In May 2021 ensure adequate flexibility related to recreational hunting (18 month process)</li> </ul>	<p>Begin revision process for WAC 220-440-030 Public Safety Cougar Removal, using an external working group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review recs from previous effort: Hound training opportunity and Wildlife feeding regulation</li> </ul>



# Team Logistics

## Team Sponsor:

Amy Windrope - DEPUTY DIRECTOR

## Team Lead:

Eric Gardner - WILDLIFE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

## Director's Office Members:

Steve Pozzanghera - SPECIAL ASST TO THE DIRECTOR

Samantha Montgomery - COMMUNICATIONS CNSLT 5

## Wildlife Program Members:

Mick Cope - DEPUTY PROGRAM DIR

Jerry Nelson - CHIEF SCIENTIST

Anis Aoude - GAME DIVISION MANAGER

Dan Brinson - NATUTRAL RESOURCE SCIENTIST 4

Richard Beausoleil - F&W BIOLOGIST 4

Scott McCorquodale - REGIONAL PROGRAM MGR

## Enforcement Members:

Steve Bear - CHIEF

Paul Golden - DEPUTY CHIEF

Rebecca Bennett - COMM OUTREACH &

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SPECIALIST 4

- **Virtual Meetings: June 17, 2020 and July 9, 2020**
- **Next Meeting: August 3, 2020**

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	PROGRESS	START	END
<b>Team Logistics</b>				
Develop Teams page	Eric	0%	6/3/20	6/2/20
Schedule 1st mtg	Heather	0%	7/28/20	7/31/20
Schedule other mtgs	Team	0%		
<b>Outreach</b>				
Refine communication strategy		0%		
Refine digital communications		0%		
Provide tools for living w/coyars		0%		
Reduce deer feeding		0%		
Animal Husbandry		0%		
<b>Public Response</b>				
Review Dangerous WL Policy		0%		
Implement response matrix		0%		
Improve internal reporting tools		0%		
Focus response efforts		0%		
Develop hound pursuit WAC		0%		
<b>Science</b>				
Complete Pred/Prey study		0%		
External science		0%		
Create science forum		0%		
Implement Option 4; analyze		0%		
Review & Revise GMP		0%		
<b>Partnerships</b>				
Work with local enforcement jurisdictions		0%		
Reinvigorate partnerships		0%		
Reform external cougar safety team		0%		
Revise WAC 220-440-030 (public safety removal)		0%		
Work with influence groups		0%		

## Key Task Leads

Eric Gardner

Samantha Montgomery

Enforcement & Wildlife Programs

Anis Aoude, Jerry Nelson, Scott McCorquodale

Eric Gardner



## Pending - August 3rd

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	PROGRESS	START	END
<b>Team Logistics</b>				
Develop Teams page	Eric	0%	6/3/20	6/2/20
Schedule 1st mtg	Heather	0%	7/28/20	7/31/20
Schedule other mtgs	Team	0%		
<b>Outreach</b>				
Refine communication strategy		0%		
Refine digital communications		0%		
Provide tools for living w/cougars		0%		
Reduce deer feeding		0%		
Animal Husbandry		0%		
<b>Public Response</b>				
Review Dangerous WL Policy		0%		
Implement response matrix		0%		
Improve internal reporting tools		0%		
Focus response efforts		0%		
Develop hound pursuit WAC		0%		
<b>Science</b>				
Complete Pred/Prey study		0%		
External science		0%		
Create science forum		0%		
Implement Option 4; analyze		0%		
Review & Revise GMP		0%		
<b>Partnerships</b>				
Work with local enforcement jurisdictions		0%		
Reinvigorate partnerships		0%		
Reform external cougar safety team		0%		
Revise WAC 220-440-030 (public safety removal)		0%		
Work with influence groups		0%		

1.Task Title

2.Task description

3.Time to accomplish

4.Other critical steps to start or complete first

5.Who will complete the Task (e.g., sub-team; external team, partner, etc.).

6.Other

# RESPONSIVE TO THE PUBLIC

## Improve coordination between Enforcement and Wildlife Programs

Implement response matrix & Director's response memo (*current and ongoing*)

Use revisions to Dangerous Wildlife Policy as a forum to uncover and resolve internal issues for resolution (*Fall, 2020 – Fall, 2021*)

Improve internal reporting tools (*current and ongoing*)

Develop hound pursuit WAC – with public



# OUTREACH

## Communications plan executive summary:

Draft strategic communications plan to guide statewide cougar safety outreach at the community level. The plan's goals include:

- Increase public's awareness of how to be safe in cougar country
- Protection of property so that the cougar complaint rate is steady or declining
- Increase understanding of cougar ecology, behavior, safety awareness, and coexistence in cougar country
- The team will work with key partners to bring customized communications that fit the needs of each community.





# OUTREACH: TOOLS AND VENUES

- Internal staff communications – Teams live trainings, emails, talking points
- Cougar safety community kits: door knockers, printable flyers, social media pre-written posts, pre-written website/newsletter content, etc.
- Videos (distributed on FB, YouTube, and to media)
- Live webinars with chat feature
- Targeted social media ads
- External stakeholder meetings
- Blog posts
- News releases
- Interviews to media
- One-on-one meetings with specific groups
- Create messaging and outreach materials for animal husbandry and wildlife feeding



# SCIENCE INFORMING DECISIONS

## Internal Tasks:

- Collect and review pertinent science to inform Game Management Plan revision
  - Review of other state cougar mgmt. and predator safety plans
- WAFWA survey of human / wildlife conflict
- Finalize publications on predator/prey interactions (2020)
- Submitted publication summarizing density studies in WA (2020)

## Externally Facing Science Forum:

- Create forum with partners on sharing science (2021)
- Provide county specific data to elected officials and enforcement (Fall, 2020)
- Increase trust through information and sharing of concerns

# PARTNERSHIPS

Reinvigorate partnerships - Leveraging interest, perspective and resources to achieve our shared goals

Re-form external cougar safety team (*Fall, 2020*)

Include local elected, revisit the previous list of participants

- Revise WAC 220-440-030 (public safety removal)
- Deer/turkey feeding
- Keep informed on current WDFW steps around conflict

Enforcement and Elected Officials (*Current and ongoing*)

Focus on key jurisdictions for partnership

Regional Directors lead partnerships with local elected officials

Regional Captains lead partnerships with local sheriffs

# WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

## Ongoing - 6 months

- Ongoing implementation of Response Matrix
- Ongoing Education and Outreach
- Ongoing Review of Existing Science and Programs
- WAFWA Human/WL Conflict Survey
- Revise Dangerous Wildlife Policy
- Convene External Team
- Formally Engage Local Partnerships
- Initiation of Hound Pursuit WAC Process

## 12 months Out

- Initiate Game Management Plan Review
- Improve Reporting Tools
- Use of information from Predator/Prey Study
- Initiation of Science Forum
- Initiate Revision of WAC 220-440-030 (public safety removal)

## 18 months Out

- More Formal Analysis and Publications from Predator/Prey Study



Objective: Manage cougars while being trusted to take action to help people feel safe

Beginning stages  
New work

OUTREACH	RESPONSIVE TO PUBLIC	SCIENCE INFORMS DECISIONS	PARTNERSHIPS
<p>WDFW provides tools to safely live in cougar country</p>	<p>Refine internal protocols to be more responsive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Dangerous Wildlife Response Policy</li> <li>Imp. improved dangerous wildlife response matrix</li> </ul>	<p>Complete research on cougars: Provide relevant research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WDFW (Pred/Prey; West side)</li> <li>Non-WDFW (Kalispel Tribe's cougar study)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to build partnerships with sheriffs, Enforcement and Conflict staff</p>
<p>Refine overarching public safety communication strategy</p>	<p>Improve internal reporting between Wildlife Program and Enforcement to: track incidents, focus response efforts, and inform the public</p>	<p>Create science communication forum to share findings</p>	<p>Reinvigorate partnerships with local elected commissions and NGOs: focus on shared goals</p>
<p>Refine digital communication: videos, live events, blogs</p> <p>Build on existing models to work with community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce deer feeding</li> <li>Improve husbandry</li> <li>Living with cougars safety messages</li> </ul>	<p>Continue development of Cougar Pursuit/Hound Training WAC</p>	<p>Implement Option 4, review outcomes in hunting seasons 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate review of GMP In May 2021 ensure adequate flexibility related to recreational hunting (18 month process)</li> </ul>	<p>Begin revision process for WAC 220-440-030 Public Safety Cougar Removal, using an external working group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review recs from previous effort: Hound training opportunity and Wildlife feeding regulation</li> </ul>



Questions?

---

