

# Wolf Advisory Group

## Meeting Summary<sup>1</sup>, April 23-24, 2024

**WAG members present:** Alex Baier, Amy Porter, Bill Kemp, Caitlin Scarano, Dan Paul, Jessica Kelley, Lisa Stone, Lynn Okita, Nick Martinez, Marie Neumiller, Paula Swedeen, Rick Perleberg, Sammee Charriere, Scott Nielson, Sierra Smith, Todd Holmdahl, Tyler Allen

**Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW, Department) staff members present:** Ben Maletzke, Brock Hoenes, Candace Bennett, Grant Samsill, Jim Brown (Day 2), Julia Smith (Day 1), Kyla West, Trent Roussin, Seth Thompson, Mike Kuttel, Staci Lehman, Annemarie Prince

**Facilitation team:** Susan Hayman, Casey Hart, Tristan Marquez

**Guest Speakers:** WDFW Director Kelly Susewind (Day 1), Jeff Flood ([CPoW], Day 1)

## Meeting Action Items

Responsible Party	Action Item	Target Date
Facilitation Team	Confirm Fall WAG meeting dates and locations	May 10
Facilitation Team	Schedule Compensation Task Group and the Monitoring and Data-Sharing Task Group meetings in preparation for the July WAG Meeting.	May 31
WDFW	Follow up with Department of Agriculture to learn more about the OFFAL group and it's potential to engage with the carcass management issue WAG previously advised WDFW on.	July WAG meeting

## April 23, 2024

### Opening

Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic facilitator, opened the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) meeting at 9:30am by welcoming members, WDFW staff, and meeting observers, providing an overview of the meeting objectives and agenda, and reviewing the [WAG Ground Rules<sup>2</sup>](#). The purpose of the meeting was to:

- 1) Provide an opportunity for WAG members to interact with the WDFW Director; receive responses to WAG advice, recommendations, and comments provided to the Director in 2023.
- 2) Gain WAG feedback on how to allocate funding from the legislature “for WDFW-contracted range riders when a clearly identified ‘gap’ exists that cannot be covered by one of the non-government groups providing range-riding, or under a cost-sharing Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock (DPCA-Ls)” in northeast Washington; identify solutions for prioritizing limited resources in the future.
- 3) Discuss potential options for advising WDFW on its proposal to downlist gray wolves from endangered to sensitive, and whether there is adequate support in the WAG to do so.

<sup>1</sup> This summary is a synthesis of the meeting discussion April 23-24, 2024. The meeting summary will be publicly available following finalization of the meeting documentation package.

<sup>2</sup> WAG Ground Rules: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/about/advisory/wag/member-handout-2022-10-12.pdf>

- 4) Identify and evaluate the benefits and implementation hurdles of conceptual compensation program models.
- 5) Provide opportunities for WAG members and WDFW staff to build collaborative capacity, promote conflict transformation, and strengthen their relationships with one another.

## *Introductions*

### ***WAG Member and WDFW Staff Introductions***

Hayman invited WAG members and WDFW staff in attendance to introduce themselves.

## *WDFW Updates*

### ***Wolf Team Updates***

Ben Maletzke (WDFW) provided an update that the gray wolf [2023 WDFW Annual Report](#) was provided to the WDFW Commission on April 20, 2024. WDFW staff responded to WAG member questions on the Report and related topics of discussion, including information about specific wolves and packs, the status of ungulate populations, how packs break off or form new packs, Canadian vs. Yellowstone immigration influence on Washington population growth, and depredation events. WDFW will seek to provide WAG members the current estimated rate of white tail and mule deer harvest, and the number of 2023 unconfirmed livestock depredations.

A WAG member highlighted that producers in Northeast Washington are concerned about 2023 depredation events in an area with several overlapping wolf packs, which resulted in depredations not being attributed to a specific pack. WDFW intends to increase the number of collars and monitoring of wolves in this area.

### ***WDFW Staffing Updates***

Brock Hoenes (WDFW) reported that WDFW hired Subhadeep Bhattacharjee as the new Wolf and Grizzly Bear Policy Lead, beginning in May. Seth Thompson (WDFW) reported that Jason Earl (WDFW) was hired as a new District 2 and 3 Wildlife Conflict Supervisor.

## *Conversation with WDFW Director Kelly Susewind*

Hayman introduced WDFW Director Kelly Susewind. Director Susewind emphasized the value of WAG advice in his decision-making and priority-setting. He also provided updates on the status of WAG advice and other WAG communications during the past year:

- ***Carcass Management Advice (consensus):*** Director Susewind met with various agencies to discuss coordinating agency actions related to carcass management. He did not detect much interest or momentum among this group for policy changes at this time. Director Susewind acknowledged the efforts being made by many riders and producers to properly address carcass management. He noted the Department was pre-approved through the budget process to incorporate a carcass sanitation program element into the current wildlife conflict management program. He also noted the NRCS is adjusting some of its standards to pay for carcass sanitation and removal when there is a potential impact to species listed under the Endangered Species

Act (ESA). He will keep the WAG apprised on the Department's continued efforts to support responsible carcass management.

- **Wolf-Livestock Interaction Management Petition Comment Letter (sufficient consensus):** While the comment letter WAG developed through sufficient consensus was directed to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission), Director Susewind noted his review and appreciation of the content. WDFW is now pursuing rulemaking per Governor Inslee's direction but does not yet have a schedule outlined.
- **Wolf-Ungulate Advice (sufficient consensus):** Director Susewind appreciated the advice and noted that range riding is a top priority, and its funding will not be displaced by future ungulate habitat enhancement. He noted that seeing where WAG reaches agreement as well as any dissenting WAG opinions is helpful.
- **WAG Sounding Board for the Draft Periodic Status Review (PSR):** Director Susewind appreciated reviewing the comments made by individual WAG members. He noted that the PSR has been finalized, and the decision on whether to downlist wolves will be made through a Commission vote in July. WDFW is recommending to downlist gray wolves from endangered to sensitive. WDFW aims to see wolf populations continue to grow before they are in a place to be delisted.

***The following are key points from the informal discussion between Director Susewind and the WAG:***

- **WAG and the Commission:** The WAG sees value in working collaboratively with the Commission towards common goals. The Director observed that even if WAG doesn't directly advise the Commission, WAG advice does carry weight with the Commission as they are a part of the overall WDFW agency.
- **Ungulate Populations:** Ungulate populations are not significantly declining are also not at desired levels partly due disease outbreaks. Harvest limits will help to rebuild the populations. Brock Hoenes (WDFW) added that even if wolves were removed, ungulate populations may be the same. He noted that elk populations are doing well, predator prey relationships are stable, and road mortalities should be considered in decision making. He noted WDFW continues to coordinate with the USDA Forest Service and Washington Department of Natural Resources on ungulate habitat enhancement.
- **Carcass Management:** Carcass management is a large-scale problem beyond WDFW's management alone. WDFW hopes to gain traction with more agencies, and create more resources for producer support. The Director continues to hope for a legislative funding package for regional carcass compost facilities. WDFW values WAG's ongoing ideas for how to effectively deal with carcass management. A WAG member noted that a group called OFFAL within the Washington Department of Agriculture works on carcass management, and may be interested in collaborating on this issue.
- **Wolf-Livestock Interaction Management:** The WAG could help shape wolf-livestock interaction rulemaking. This is a Commission (rather than WDFW Director) decision. It's important for WAG to be sensitive about this and defer to the Commission to initiate the process.
- **Wolf Post-Recovery Planning:** The Director would value input from WAG on components of the post-recovery Plan.
- **Chain of Communication:** WAG members should approach WDFW staff and regional directors with ideas ahead of bringing them to the Director. Their top priorities are to work with the local communities, and they work closely with the Director.

- **Tribal Coordination:** WDFW meets with Colville Tribal staff annually and are working to identify more opportunities for collaboration, including on a formal data-sharing agreement.
- **Poaching Fines:** The Director would support maintaining the current level of poaching fines if wolves are downlisted (fines would be reduced if wolves are downlisted), recognizing it is a legislative issue and decision. He said the Commission would likely be supportive of maintaining the current level of poaching fines.
- **Producer Viability:** A WAG member stated that studies show that producers are increasingly going out of business in areas where there are wolves. Producers need more help from the State, and improving producer/wildlife conflict specialists working relationships is critical. Director Susewind acknowledged that there are some areas where relationships are poor, and others where they are good. He would like to see a future system in which producers work more closely with local wolf biologists.

**Next Steps:**

- Director Susewind would like to meet more frequently with the WAG (at least annually or semi-annually). The WAG Facilitation Team will work with the WDFW Wolf Policy Lead to get on the Director’s schedule.
- WDFW staff will follow up with the Department of Agriculture to learn more about the OFFAL group.

**Periodic Status Review (PSR)/Wolf Downlisting Rulemaking Proposal--Part 1**

In October 2023, WAG members submitted a Periodic Status Review (PSR) Sounding Board letter to Director Kelly Susewind. Since then, the WAG members held two Zoom conversations to determine whether to submit additional advice regarding the rulemaking (CR 102) to the WDFW Director by May 6, 2024, with an intent to inform the Commission of the WAG’s perspective on whether to downlist WA gray wolves.

To help advance the conversation, Hayman asked the three WAG identity groups (livestock producers, environmentalists, and hunters) to engage in a facilitated “perspectives” activity. She invited them to gather as identify groups and articulate the “forces for downlisting” and “forces against downlisting” perspectives they have heard from a different identity group assigned by Hayman. At-large WAG members dispersed between the groups. As each set of perspectives were reported, WAG members of the subject identity group added their own additional perspectives (in italics and colored font).

The following text was transcribed from flip chart notes captured during this discussion. Statements with red asterisks were perspectives identified by WAG members as having surfaced among all three identity groups:

**“Hunter” perspectives (as identified by the “Producer” identity group)**

Forces for downlisting

- Allow more flexibility for wolf management to reduce impacts to ungulate populations
- This addresses one piece of top predator management in the whole ecosystem.
- Fair + holistic ecosystem management
- Recognizes progress of wolf recovery
- *Additions to this list from members of the “Hunter” identity group:*
  - *Wolf population is 5x beyond the plan projections.*

- *Peer-reviewed modeling demonstrates objectives will be met.*
- *Sensitive status wouldn't allow flexibility to reduce impacts to ungulate populations (this is not a change that would occur but may be a perception?).*

Forces against downlisting

- Reduced poaching penalties at lower listing status\*

**“Environmental” perspectives** (as identified by the “Hunter” identity group)

Forces for downlisting

- Population trends are positive \*
- *Additions to this list from members of the “Environmental” identity group:*
  - *Science based downlisting can help increase social acceptance (for wolves) on landscape gradually.*
  - *Decouple that downlisting means more lethal wolf removal (from hunting, etc.)*

Forces against downlisting

- Gray Wolves haven't reached recovery objectives in 3<sup>rd</sup> recovery region
- New, lower fine structure incentivizes poaching
- Downlisting is a slippery slope to delisting
- Social pressure
- Model validity

**Producer perspectives** (as identified by the “Environmental” identity group)

Forces for downlisting

- “We have to do something about wolves”
- Recognition for hard work to recover wolves -- non-lethal \*
- More agency to producers
- Step closer to de-listing
- Recognition wolves are doing well in parts of WA
- *Additions to this list from members of the “Producer” identity group:*
  - *Appropriately, biologically relevant listing status\**

Forces against downlisting

- Concerns about less resources for non-lethals
- Concern for increasing social backlash

**Other Options: Addressing a Decrease in the Poaching Penalty:**

Before assessing whether there was sufficient consensus to move forward with drafting advice to the Director in support of downlisting, some members wished to discuss an option for requesting a pause in the downlisting decision until increased penalties for wolf poaching could be implemented. These WAG members expressed concern about poaching penalties decreasing with wolf downlisting and that they would support the downlisting if this was addressed in advice to the Director. Other WAG members believe the poaching penalty issue should be kept separate from the PSR/downlisting topic, in part because PSR/downlisting is focused on biological assessment. Poaching penalties became an extensive discussion topic around the following key points:

- Wolf delisting will happen eventually. Raising poaching penalties could strengthen signals that poaching is unacceptable.
- WAG could push for the Legislature to reclassify the Revised Codes of Washington (RCW) regarding penalties. This could be powerful and would be beyond the Commission to enact.

- Wolves are viewed differently than other species. While some WAG members believe all animals should be treated consistently, some species already have higher poaching penalties (e.g., grizzly bears, mountain sheep). Social factors are accounted for when setting penalties. Hunted species often have higher penalties due to detriments of over-poaching.
- Raising a penalty may look significant on paper but it may have little on-the-ground effects.
- The Director is not looking for advice on the PSR/rulemaking—he intends to support downlisting based on the PSR.

### **Determination Whether to Proceed on Developing Advice for Downlisting Support**

WAG members did not reach sufficient consensus to proceed with developing advice in support of gray wolf downlisting (four members within the Environmentalist identity group disagreed). Reasons for the disagreement included:

- Strong disagreement with poaching penalties being reduced as a result of the downlisting.
- Belief that there should be documented recovery of wolves in the third recovery zone (Southern Cascades and North Coast), which is listed as a criterion in the Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (2011). For these members, more consistency is needed for how the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) is interpreted and for following the 2011 Wolf Management Plan versus the WAC.

WAG members agreed to try drafting a letter explaining WAG perspectives for both support and dissent of the PSR/downlisting rulemaking, and explain why consensus was not reached.

### **Next Steps**

WAG members were presented with several options to move forward including a sounding board, a letter to the Director, or to take no action at all. The WAG members present at the time of this discussion (all but two were present) agreed for the Facilitation team and two WAG members to prepare a draft letter to explain the outcomes of the WAG discussion of delisting, including the following four points:

1. A robust discussion by WAG was held.
2. Four WAG members did not agree with downlisting (and here's why...)
3. Acknowledge the positives of downlisting ("dots of consensus" from the flip charts)
4. Support for increasing poaching penalties.

The WAG agreed to review and revise the draft letter at Day 2 of the WAG meeting and determine whether to proceed with submitting the letter to WDFW. *(See Part 2 discussion on April 24, 2024 below for outcomes).*

### **Range Riding Service Gap**

WDFW Staff (Seth Thompson, Kyla West, Candace Bennett, and Grant Samsill), guest speaker Jeff Flood (Cattle Producers of Washington or CPoW and Stevens County) and WAG members Paula Sweeden and Scott Nielsen discussed the current and future situation related to range riding gaps in northeast Washington. After an explanation and time to answer questions, WDFW sought WAG member

impressions and feedback to inform how to define and potentially prioritize responding to potential range riding gaps in the future.

### ***Definition of a “Gap”***

Range riding gaps occur when depredations, or the threat of depredations, occur on cattle allotments without range riders contracted through the two current non-governmental organizations in place in northeast Washington: Cattle Producers of Washington (CPoW) and Northeast Washington Wolf Cattle Collaborative (NEWWCC). Such gaps are identified during pre-season range-rider planning, and may result from an insufficient riders due to funding shortages or other short-term circumstances (sickness, equipment, staffing, etc.).

### ***Current Situation***

WDFW Staff, and WAG members Paula and Scott Nielson explained the current situation of range riding. Roughly 4,000 of 40,000 animals/livestock are covered by range riding in a four-county area of northeast Washington by NEWWCC and CPoW. As of 2023, WDFW will only hire contract range riders in northeast Washington if there is a gap in coverage funded through the Northeast Washington Wolf-Livestock Management Grant Program as provided in RCW 11 16.76.020. This was deemed to be beneficial because local organizations have local acceptance and are on-the-ground, and it alleviates strain on WDFW wildlife conflict specialists. The intent of this change was to spend money more efficiently and ensure as many locations as possible can be covered. New CPoW and NEWWCC range riders filled most spots covered by WDFW range riding contracts last year. Range riding proviso language will expire at the end of 2024 and there will be a reevaluation to see whether to continue the transition to the Department of Agriculture Grant Program in the NE or if supplemental WDFW resources should be set aside for range riding. Preseason planning has started determining priorities and concerns.

WDFW is shifting its prior northeast WA contract range riding funding to the Agricultural Grant Program with an additional \$300-400k for applicants other than CPoW and NEWCC.

WDFW currently has no range riders under contract to respond to a situation where emergency range riding assistance is needed and cannot be met by CPoW or NEWWCC. It is unclear how flexible grant funding agencies can be when it comes to moving people around. Shifting staff causes other areas where cover is needed to open up and become vulnerable. It is important to ensure there are no overlaps in coverage.

### ***Limitations***

The group identified the following limitations for addressing emerging range riding gaps:

1. Lack of available staff and limited range riding applicants to cover gaps
2. Producer receptivity to allowing range riders on their pastures/allotments
3. Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements – Livestock (DPCAL’s) are slow to get in place & require producer willingness to cost share
4. Range riding is expensive, and WDFW has limited ability to address gap areas to allow producers to be consistent with the Wolf Livestock Protocol (i.e., if range riders are required as a non-lethal deterrent as part of depredation considerations, how should this be dealt with if there is a gap in range riding that cannot be covered by the agencies/NGOs?)

***Options – WAG members brainstormed ideas on how to address range riding gaps. Ideas included:***

- Create a virtual team to look at and quantify data and gap needs.
- Establish criteria for when to deploy range riding resources from one area to another in response to emergency situations.
- Create a long-term strategy to resource range riding needs. Consider how to address range riding needs post wolf recovery.
- Add funding from supporters or range riding.
- Determine how to best deploy WDFW funding for DPCALs or contract range riders.
- Continue to be as flexible and adaptable as possible to ask for the right funding and adapt proviso language. Hold a good planning session to prepare for pushing for range riding funding at the upcoming legislative session.
- Codify or define gap language as a starting point for discussions.
- Focus on improving coordination. There are more range riders and funding than ever before, and this may not be the source of the problem.

***Next Steps***

WDFW has an upcoming meeting with CPOW and NEWCC to further discuss range riding issues. There may be a future opportunity for WAG to assist with developing criteria for application under different scenarios. WDFW will keep the WAG apprised.

***Public Comment***

Two persons provided public comment this day, as documented in [Appendix A](#).

***Closing***

Hayman reviewed the meeting’s action items and invited WAG members and WDFW staff to provide final reflections on something WAG members valued from the day’s conversation. WDFW staff remained in person for a brief post-meeting informal session with members of the public attending in person.

**April 24, 2024**

***Opening***

Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic facilitator, opened the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) meeting at 8:45am by welcoming members, WDFW staff, and meeting observers, and providing an overview of the meeting agenda.

***Introductions***

***WAG Member and WDFW Staff Introductions***

Hayman invited WAG members and WDFW staff in attendance to introduce themselves.



## *Compensation Program, Part 1:*

### ***Compensation Program Information and Q&A***

Jim Brown (WDFW) provided an informational program update for how the Compensation program process is likely to be sped up and provided responses to WAG questions. He discussed that WDFW staff are working to handle a large volume build-up of claims. The Compensation claims process should speed up due to hiring of a new staff member, receipt of additional funding, and a raise in the appeal requirement cap from \$10,000 to \$30,000 for crop and livestock due to an agricultural bill change (Substitute Senate Bill 5784 on deer and elk damage compensation). He noted that claims can take 4-6 months to be processed due to a variety of reasons, and it can take up to six additional months if they go into appeal due to the court schedule.

Brown also noted that a proposal for rulemaking will be issued in the next month to align RCWs and WACs for crop damage and livestock claims. As the WAG's potential advice may significantly alter the way livestock claims are processed, WDFW is currently proposing only minor revisions of the livestock provisions in these revisions. The WAG can address compensation at a rule-making level. WAG members will have a chance to see the entire package.

### ***Issues Presenting Challenges for Producers***

Susan Hayman, Facilitator, shared a summary of previous WAG compensation discussion points, including a list of producer challenges informed from prior WAG discussions and other producer input. The document also included five indicators of a successful Compensation Program and desirable program characteristics developed from the January 2024 WAG Meeting. WAG member Paula Sweeden encouraged WAG members to be open-minded and creative in being able to create an original program. Jim Brown (WDFW) encouraged WAG to think about creating a program that is administratively easier and noted that WDFW is happy to entertain anything WAG proposes for an improved program. General WAG comments included:

- The cost of an appeals system often outweighs the benefits of being paid.
  - Jim Brown (WDFW) noted that only a small subset of cases go to appeal and are often above the \$10K amount, which is now being raised to \$30K—this should reduce the number of appeals required to process claims.
- Concern that an improved compensation program will be developed only to be taken away post-delisting. It is important to build producer trust to reduce these concerns. Other states have had funding issues for these programs, even after a lot of money has been provided in the past, and even if programs are utilized.
  - Some disagreed with this point, describing that the Legislature has been supportive of taking actions where stakeholders have broad agreement. State law requires that producers be compensated regardless of listing status, and that this has stayed true for other species. Federal funding can be uncertain in the future, however.
  - The WAG can help WDFW think about what wolf management should look like post delisting. The WAG has a powerful voice to advocate for funding. It helps to show the program is important by showing regular program use and understand why folks might not be utilizing the program.

### ***Updated WAG Issues Table:***

WAG members walked through the issues list and received clarification from WDFW as needed. They encouraged WDFW to be clear of any WDFW limitations to help prioritize the list. See [Appendix B](#) for the updated Issues Table.

### *Compensation Program Part 2:*

WAG members continued their conversation based on Part 1 of the Compensation Program discussion to work towards a decision on next steps towards potential advice development. WAG members were presented with an outlined table of potential conceptual models. WAG members brainstormed ideas for additional model ideas, as well as issues addressed and implementation hurdles with those conceptual models. Common themes were that no matter the model, reducing paperwork and speeding up the process are high priorities. See [Appendix C](#) for the Conceptual Models Table.

Additionally, other international models could be considered (e.g. Scandinavia's Conservation Performance model to pay for successful animal reproduction).

This conversation was intended to note incremental progress and it is noted that all WAG producers were able to weigh into the process. Producers need to be able to better trust the outcomes of this process. The question should be considered: what can be done to support producers if the program cannot be funded? What are all other stable funding paths that can be pursued?

### **Next steps**

A WAG member requested that all WAG members identify any issues that might come forth later based on their identity group needs. WAG members may need to go to their communities for input on this. WAG members noted in response to this that one issue is that advocacy groups may have issues with compensation on public lands. Another WAG member proposed the WAG should think about a spectrum of how much ownership to take in this process. The WAG could take two routes: 1) either providing advice to the Director with pros/cons/, ideas, data, and allow the Director to take if forward or 2) WAG takes more ownership and decides to help create a new program.

The Facilitation Team will work with the Compensation Task Group to create a proposal for the WAG to run through a tabletop exercise (with hypothetical budgets, if possible) at the July WAG meeting. WAG members should inform the Facilitation Team if they want to be a part of the Compensation Task Group.

### *PSR/Rulemaking Part-2*

Based on direction from WAG members on the previous day, two WAG members and the Facilitation Team drafted a letter for the full WAG to review. After the letter was distributed, some members objected to the bullet stating that members agreed with increasing the poaching penalties if wolves were downlisted (see Part 1 notes on April 23, 2024). One had not been present during the previous day's discussion of this point, and others felt that the downlisting and poaching penalty issue should be addressed separately.

WDFW noted that if a delisting occurs, there will be a direct link in reduced poaching penalties. A change in criminal penalty reductions with downlisting will result in decreased penalties. WAG members were reminded that there were other reasons for dissent to the PSR/Rulemaking, including that the three-recovery zone goal of the 2011 Wolf Plan has not been met.

The intent of the letter was to acknowledge reasons that the WAG could not come to consensus on the downlisting recommendation, but could agree to a number of other important points. While some WAG members felt there was broad agreement of an added recommendation to at least keep penalties at their current levels, WAG members did not reach consensus to include it as a specific recommendation.

WAG members did not agree to continue with the current letter approach. They felt they had provided sounding board comments in August 2023, and that there would be no benefit to restating those perspectives. Some WAG members reminded other members that the WAG does not advise the Commission (the decision-maker in this rulemaking) and this was not an issue the WAG needed to act upon. The WAG decided to pursue no further action to provide comments or advice regarding the PRS/downlisting rulemaking.

### ***Next Steps***

While the WAG will not provide comments to the Director/Commission regarding wolf downlisting, a WAG member strongly encouraged a discussion at the July meeting regarding the separate issue of poaching penalties. The Facilitation Team will work with WDFW and WAG members regarding this potential topic.

### ***Public Comment***

Three people provided public comment this day, as documented in [Appendix A](#).

### ***Next Steps and Closing***

Hayman reviewed the meeting's action items and invited WAG members and WDFW staff to provide final reflections. The meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.

## Appendix A: Public Comment

Public comment received at the end of each meeting day is paraphrased below:

### April 23<sup>rd</sup>

- **Joe Carpenter:** I was in Packwood WA this past weekend and saw some potential wolf scat. There are no resources to confirm that. I looked at the dispersal path on the 2023 report and don't see a path where I found that. There are 20% more wolves this year from last year and so it will be harder for WDFW to do their job. I think wolf management is going to be more difficult than other predator management. Wolves are emanating from NE WA on the map. I have not heard anybody talk about what Idaho and Oregon are doing, but it seems like they are a little ahead of us in some ways. When you have a problem with one predator you have a problem with many of them. You look at what is going on with cougars and there are a lot more negative interactions since we got rid of hunting with hounds. I don't think you are going to have enough range riders to counter the wolf population growth.
- **Dave Hedrick, Ferry Conservation District:** I implement the Voluntary Service Program for Ferry County. Volunteers do things to protect critical species and areas. Our income from cattle producers has significantly decreased in the past 20 years. We have the lowest amount of young producers in the state. When you only have three young producers going to manage over 17,000 acres, we are done. We are a lone commodity. Livestock production is being lost. Nobody is buying ranches because it is not profitable. This is directly related to wolf policy.

### April 24<sup>th</sup>

- **Joe Carpenter:** The PSR/downlisting rulemaking does not make sense. Look at all reports from 2011. It never talks about reaching our goal, only if we adjust penalties for poaching. It seems like this is being pushed off to the Legislature. In the Southern Cascades, WDFW used put a map of cameras that is not in recent reports. I was reading an article in the Guardian today and there is an attempt to bring back mountain caribou. Wolves are being culled in British Columbia and Alberta Canada. We are not in an isolated area here and wolves do move around. I want the Commission to think about what they are going to talk about in 3-5 years, maybe including culling or wolfs tags. Jack London has some great stories. White Fang may not be real but it is very entertaining. Thank you for what you are doing.
- **Rachel B:** I am really grateful that these meetings are accessible to those of us who cannot make them in person. These meetings do get a little repetitive though. I hear producers want more money from the state for depredations despite getting a bunch of money from the federal government in subsidies. It is upsetting that taxpayers have to pay for producers keeping nonnative animals in wolf territory. Wolves were in Washington long before cattle producers. Wolves have returned on their own, are part of the ecosystem, and deserve our protection. There are a lot of folks who feel that way.
- **Pamela:** I work at Wolf Haven. Really appreciate the work that all of you do. I have an idea about how hard it is. Thank you for your dedication and your patience and working together during hard times. Each of you represent a very important interest and I value each of your parts. Please do not forget the wolf is an individual group with an interest in this as well and they cannot speak for themselves.

Appendix B: Compensation Issues Table

Issue	Clarifications/Key Points
<p>1. The entity conducting the depredation investigations is the same entity that is determining the compensation for losses—appearance of conflict of interest (e.g., potential appearance that DFW may be hesitant to make a depredation decision because of the potential for need for compensation—lack of a second opinion if there are questions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Currently established in WAC</li> <li>b. There are other states that separate these roles (e.g., Wildlife Services for depredation and depts of ag for compensation) —not all are successful, though.</li> <li>c. Some issues arise around the level of training for depredation investigations (WDFW trains and strives for consistency).</li> <li>d. Currently there is no process for appealing depredation investigations.</li> <li>e. There is a need to re-establish trust in this process.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Lack of clarity with indirect compensation rules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Some of the records required are very specific, and producers may not have that specific kind of record (i.e., they don't track their business exactly in the form the WAC seems to call for). WDFW tries to be consistent in its application of the rules.</li> <li>b. Frequent point of consternation for producers. If a process isn't clear, it doesn't work.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Indirect compensation paperwork process is a hurdle for producers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Complicated and burdensome.</li> <li>b. Helpful if WDFW could identify pinch-points for future problem solving.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Confusing criteria used for evaluating the claim. Claims are often denied due to unexplained issues with producer operations or cause for depredations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The criteria is especially confusing for indirect claims.</li> <li>b. Challenging for the record-keeping—different operations do it differently (e.g., conception rates)</li> <li>c. Can WDFW clarify the criteria? (WAG/producer input on criteria, records needed)</li> <li>d. Transparency and communications could be improved between producers and WDFW.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Producers have unreasonably tight submission deadlines. Claims are often denied due to producers missing deadlines to provide WDFW information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Deadlines need to be on both “sides” —WDFW and producers</li> <li>b. Is there a process for resubmitting paperwork if an application “times out?”</li> <li>c. Need for some sort of timelines, but perhaps could be more flexible</li> </ul>
<p>6. Requirements for establishing the value of the animal don't factor in its future value, or consider high-value animals (e.g., genetics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Currently a WAC-based process for establishing values.</li> <li>b. Every producer's operation is different and the value of the animals differs.</li> <li>c. Using the “auction yard” isn't always the best way to establish the value.</li> <li>d. No market value for some of these high-value animals (private contracts, treaties, etc.)</li> <li>e. Example...California uses time of sale (as defined by the producer)</li> </ul>

Appendix B: Compensation Issues Table

Issue	Clarifications/Key Points
7. Producers have varying operations and record-keeping that don't always fit WAC standards for reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. WAG opportunity for suggested record-keeping to promote buy-in from producers.</li> <li>b. What to keep track of, but not how to do it (feels like it could be so expansive that it would be challenging to create a checklist for indirect losses)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Weight</li> <li>ii. Reduced pregnancy</li> <li>iii. Missing animals</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Is there a way to design this without needing so much record-keeping?</li> <li>d. Other causes than wolves may affect these factors (currently don't ask about other "environmental factors, for instance).</li> </ul>
8. The "preventative measures checklist" (a signed agreement between the producer and the state that is required for compensation) is believed by some producers to undermine their livestock management sovereignty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Doesn't always feel collaborative to determine non-lethals with WDFW</li> <li>b. DPCALs – intent is that ideas from WDFW provide the greatest likelihood for keeping animals safe.</li> <li>c. May need a reset button on trust for how these agreements are being developed.</li> <li>d. Need to "marry" the expertise between wildlife and livestock management. Livestock practices need to be explained well.</li> <li>e. Many of the requirements are from the protocol (conflict mitigation and avoidance, and were developed with WAG input. Used for decisions beyond compensation.</li> </ul>
9. Process from claim to payout takes too long, with no clear timelines or response times for agency action that producers feel they can rely on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staffing and other dept issues</li> </ul>
10. Required information/documentation is time-consuming and burdensome to produce.	Previously addressed.
11. A claimant must exhaust nonprofit funding before being eligible for <del>federal</del> state compensation funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. WAC requirement.</li> <li>b. Not many non-profits to refer to, so this is mostly a placeholder requirement.</li> <li>c. Note the differences in different species of animals and definitions of livestock (horses, sheep, and cattle only for state livestock compensation).</li> </ul>
12. Compensation program funding is inconsistent, which often puts agency ability to compensate in jeopardy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Needs to be a way to create a closed loop for this (e.g., excise taxes – can't be used for anything else...or a "wolf stamp/license plate" model—non-consumptive user models—consistent funding).</li> <li>b. May affect timeliness of claim payout (paid in the order of first in time).</li> </ul>

Appendix B: Compensation Issues Table

Issue	Clarifications/Key Points
<p>13. Indirect claims are assessed for losses in excess of the preceding three-year running average. As soon as one year of high losses becomes the past, it starts to affect producers' "normal" loss %. This is challenging to producers who experience higher-than-average losses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. WAC-based</li> <li>b. Cattle affected over time by continued exposure to wolves...the new normal is not sustainable.</li> </ul>
<p>14. The agency can only pay claims in excess of <del>\$10,000</del> \$30,000 (now) through an appeal process, which is challenging to producers. Some producers are also reluctant to go through this process as information about the claim may become publicly available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The new higher number will be helpful, but the value will depend on the operation (cattle values continually changing).</li> <li>b. This cap only directs what needs to go to appeal (maybe higher cap, or no cap?)—is this a durable decision? Will we be coming back to this in the future?</li> <li>c. Having an appeal inherently built in, even if everyone agrees, is burdensome.</li> <li>d. Currently only \$50k available for funding overall per biennium               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. "Shockingly low"</li> <li>ii. WDFW not in control of this funding</li> <li>iii. There are other funding options within the Dept.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>15. Appeals are cost-prohibitive for producers.</p>	<p>Previously Addressed.</p>
<p>16. Compensation may be held up due to ownership of animal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Appears that producers leasing livestock can make claims by providing a lease contract. Some producers are experiencing this differently.</li> </ul>

Appendix C: Compensation Conceptual Models

Conceptual Model	Issues Addressed	Implementation Hurdles
<p><i>Pay for Presence</i> --Payment structure (e.g., based on # cattle within a core wolf territory for 'x' amount of time.) Expectation of non-lethals, and no requirement for depredation event.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indirect losses</li> <li>• Simplifying paperwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost to the state (CA general fund—pilot program—pay for presence and reimburse for non-lethals and direct losses)</li> <li>• Identifying the core wolf territory (if collars needed to determine this, would potentially be a hurdle).</li> <li>• payments may not equate to actual losses</li> </ul>
<p>Pay for presence for indirect (and improved model for direct.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indirect losses</li> <li>• Simplifying paperwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the requirements for payment the same standard as depredations (one standard for both programs)? Direct or indirect?</li> </ul>
<p>Economically self-sustaining model (other funding...not taxes...funding would go to producers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>	
<p>Tiered Pay for presence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Base level for presence</li> <li>• If you have a direct loss, assume a higher level of indirect loss</li> <li>• Don't have to have paperwork for indirect</li> <li>• Would have to have investigation for direct</li> <li>• Factor in extenuating circumstances (safety net) if there is additional level of loss if someone would want to go through this level of effort.</li> <li>• Maybe some minimal qualification, or in certain areas of the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplifying</li> <li>• Presence of wolf...just near the cattle...not interacting necessarily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paying for presence on areas with packs where there aren't problems, and reduce funding pool for those who are actually experiencing the losses.</li> <li>• WHAT IF? Concern that the funding stream will be reduced or will disappear under future wolf recovery. What is the contingency plan if no funding?</li> <li>• Need to find a way for stable, secure funding. May not be legislative. Explore all avenues for funding.</li> </ul>
<p>Grants/other legislative funding. Use conservation districts, US Forest Service, to help with outreach on programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation, grants for long term funding and viability</li> </ul>	<p>Cost of funding over time</p>
<p>Use the same process as today but make it better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make adjustments based on discussion of current issues</li> </ul>	
<p>Multipliers (2x1? 7x1? 5x1?)</p>		<p>Already used in WA, just a relatively low multiplier.</p>