

Wolf Advisory Group Meeting Notes
September 14, 2016
Issaquah

WAG Members: Dave Duncan, Diane Gallegos, Jack Field, Lisa Stone, Paula Swedeen, Nick Martinez, Shawn Cantrell, Don Dashiell, Tom Erskine, Molly Linville, Dan McKinley, Dan Paul

WDFW Staff: Donny Martorello, Anis Aoude, Robert Waddell, Ellen Heilhecker, Tara Meyer, Trent Roussin, Joey McCanna, Stephanie Simek, Scott Becker, Tammy Conklin, Matthew Trendera

Third Party Neutral: Francine Madden

Welcome and Overview

The third party neutral welcomed everyone and went over the agenda for the meeting. She acknowledged that it has been an incredibly difficult month for everyone, no matter what side of the issue you fall on. She said we have seen the best and worst of humanity over the past few months. There are people inside and outside the room who are working incredibly hard towards peace. We need to make an active, cooperative, collective effort towards peace to create a world where you have healthy wolf populations and healthy communities. Both sides lose when the war is perpetuated.

She asked everyone to consider joining the peace process. It is incredibly hard to achieve, but it is stronger, more sustainable, and means a better society.

Before the meeting officially began, members of the Blackfoot tribe performed a prayer and song in recognition of the wolf and the people in the world.

Donny talked about the difficulty of the previous few months. It has been an incredibly difficult process, and the relationships formed have been strained, but we've gotten through it together. He said we weren't prepared for this emotionally, and not just for WAG members. It's an incredibly important issue for everyone, and it is important to the department too.

He also highlighted progress that has been made. This includes revised cost-share contracts to put nonlethal preventative measures on the ground. They have tripled in popularity. There has been progress in other areas. Eighteen of the 19 packs are experiencing success with nonlethal measures. Things are not escalating and are under control in those areas. Compensation agreements are moving forward. So many people are working as hard as they can to bring communities together. There have been several producer meetings that have been successful as well. He emphasized that progress is being made. It takes dedication, and it's very hard, but progress is being made.

Joey said the contract range riders have done a fantastic job this year.

Stephanie said there has been a lot of interest from other entities as well, and projects have gotten underway outside the WAG.

Changes Experienced

The third party neutral went around the group of WAG members so everyone would be able to express changes they have experienced throughout this process.

Jack said that when we started 16 months ago, he had it mapped out that the process would be done by lunch the first day. But now, after being involved in this process, this has been one that has allowed everyone on all sides to pause long enough and have a chance to understand what other people might be thinking. It's also presented an opportunity to learn more about people. He said he thinks it's working, and he hopes folks can be patient and trust the process. Your needs will be addressed.

Stephanie said she has seen huge improvement in dialogue. It's far more constructive dialogue, and it has helped to foster a constructive path forward in recovery and management for the species.

Dave Duncan said he thinks this process is the future of how to approach conflict. He has made many friends in other communities that he is now very close with. He thinks we can get through this with respect and accomplish what they want to accomplish. He said patience is very important.

Shawn said the last couple months have been sad and tragic, but all members of WAG have collectively communicated very well. Recognizing where we have successes is an area that needs to be highlighted more. We want everyone to understand the significant change on the landscape. We are in a much better place overall.

Dan McKinley said that he thinks WAG has the right group of people to accomplish these goals. The strong relationships between members in this group have led to some good things and will continue.

Lisa echoed what Dan said. She felt that WAG was important, and in the time she's been on it, it's been a wonderful opportunity to engage with communities she wouldn't have before. She admires what the conservation community has done over the past few months.

Trent said he has been amazed at the support within the WAG. Groups have put themselves out there to support each other, and knowing someone has your back is important. He thanked everyone for the support.

Molly said that cattle producers are not great at change, and wolves appeared and now people are upset that they aren't changing fast enough. She said it's really hard when these producers are demonized, because cattle producers using nonlethals is huge. They are not enemies, and they are working so hard to adapt, and that is huge.

Nick said that it's unfortunate that it takes tragic circumstances to create true trust. While it's taken a while, he hopes we are all in the same boat, because we're going down the river together.

Dan Paul said people he speaks to are hurting bad and are angry, but there has been true compassion shown in this room, and that's something he never saw before. He has been so gracious to receive that support. Washington is different from every other state, and it can be hard to see what is being accomplished.

Diane said she has a great deal of gratitude for people sitting in this room. WAG members have shown tremendous courage in the comments they have made. The fact that everyone can come together and work on these issues is remarkable. She said she thinks she has failed as a leader in not anticipating the grief felt by people, and not having an outlet for that grief. However, she has a lot of hope for the future, and she is grateful to be a part of this.

Tom Erskine said he was fortunate to be chosen to be on the WAG, and thanked the third party neutral for all of the work she has done throughout this process. There are a number of members under threat, and when those threats continue to families of those members, that is unacceptable. The people here are in it for the long haul, and they are working very hard.

Scott Becker said the fact that members are willing to communicate and listen to each other is fantastic.

Don said it's been five years of wolf conflict, and folks in wolf areas are expected to suffer an awful lot. He said there is definitely more work to do. Tough summers are now the normal summers.

Paula acknowledged that it's been a very difficult couple months. She wanted to make sure that department staff members are acknowledged for the changes they've produced. There's been better transparency. Department members opened their phones to everyone, and that hadn't happened before. The work she's observed from WAG members in the livestock communities has been huge. This is a fast change, and progress is being made. This cooperation is on the next level. Working through recent events with folks in her community, it has been humbling and eye-opening. It's a hard thing to do, and WAG members have done a good job, but it needs to extend even better to everyone else. WAG has more work to do.

Joey said the WAG process from the beginning to right now is completely different. There have been incredible strides forward. Working with range riders has been fantastic, and they have

put in an incredible amount of time. The communication is there, and the support is there, and he really appreciates that.

Anis said coming into this, he was skeptical, but this is the future of natural resource management. Everyone has a stake in what happens on the landscape, and that is important to acknowledge. He said there are a lot of courageous people in the group, and it is not easy to do what they are doing.

Ellen echoed Trent's comments about the level of support. It has been nice to see everyone not only support the department, but each other.

Tara said that WAG has allowed department staff members to reach out to livestock producers in other areas of the state and get them on board with the process.

Tami Conklin echoed Tara's comments and said she appreciates the effort that's gone into this process.

The third party neutral echoed again that she wanted to acknowledge the incredible amount of work from members of this WAG and folks across the state. You are all amazing. She thanked everyone who has been working towards peace.

Information to Include in the Final Operation Report

The next WAG meeting will dive into a full analysis of the lethal removal protocol. This meeting will take place in January. Right now, WAG members will flag the things that need to be discussed. Every person in the WAG has a responsibility to discuss this issue with their groups, staff, and constituents. Flagging these things now will allow those conversations to happen and members will come prepared in January.

The first step was naming what is wanted from the department's full report. The department has promised a full report at the conclusion of the operation. The third party neutral asked WAG members to name what they think needs to be in the final report.

What is needed in the report:

- Detailed accounting of what happened before the grazing season and during turnout
- When were the wolves collared?
- When was the den location known?
- Finer grain details on what has been reported
- Dates
- Details on the pasture, the area, and the size to help explain the terrain
- Nonlethal efforts to keep wolves/cows separate
- Lethal actions used and why those methods were chosen

- Understand what analysis the Director used to initiate the up to full pack removal
- What was it not tiered beforehand
- Requirements USFS has to operate under NEPA (rotation plan, requirements, when process began, and restrictions)
- Recommendation from Regional Director to the Director
- What was the number associated with partial pack removal
- The duration of the operation
- Any documents associated with the Director amending, denying, or recommending removal
- Depredation reports
- Graphical representation (maps for scale and distances) (perhaps not actual coordinates/locations)
- Spatial representation (rendezvous sites, den sites, etc.)
- Do we want to introduce all of this information to the public?
 - Could threaten a wolf pack in the future.
 - Donny said there is a sensitive data sharing policy that will need to be followed.
- Important to include when that information was found in relation to the development of the grazing plan. Not all information might have been available when critical decisions were made on the timeline.
- Consult with USFS on a grazing report to record any additional missing livestock.
- Reference to the amount of time invested by the producer, department, and other parties (in dollar numbers)
- Information about how range riders were used (could be interesting for lessons learned), and how effective they might have been due to terrain, etc.
- Details of depredations from 2013 and 2014 until now.
- Salt blocks
- Don't release information that puts families at risk
- Threats (FBI)
- Livestock depredated (cows, calves, age of livestock)
- What is the process for coordination between WDFW, USFWS, and USFS
- Losses: confirmed, probable, other (including what is considered "normal loss" for that producer).
 - WDFW has this in a process already in the protocol they follow
- Record of public communication thus far (WAG updates, etc)
- Context information with the proximity data (cows near wolves doesn't always create a depredation situation)
- What was the protocol for contacting and communicating with tribes?
 - Also, there is a disturbing lack of tribal representation on the WAG.
- Whether or not the cattle were sick (investigation)
- DNA confirmation in the report
- Communication between department and producer on nonlethal methods
- On map, forested or open
- Other ungulates in the area and sustainability
- What is required from NEPA-EIS study conducted by USFS

Question: Is there a procedure to determine wolf depredations?

Answer: There is a complete investigation, and WDFW goes in with an open mind, spends hours there doing the investigation, and makes the decision as a team. There is a 20-page protocol department staff has to follow while out on scene. There have to be signature marks on the animal that prove was killed the animal.

Once the department learns of a depredation on the landscape, there is a full investigation. A full investigation is done on every animal. Compensation has nothing to do with it at that point.

Question: Is the department bound by NEPA policy?

Answer: The NEPA process is for federal agencies, and the SEPA process is for state agencies. If it's a state authority species, the department is not bound by NEPA. It's not straightforward, and there is definitely more to it.

Question: Does the state historical preservation officer review this protocol and other parts of this group?

Answer: Donny said he would have to go back and get an answer for that. The development of the wolf management plan went through the SEPA process.

Answer 2: The state historic preservation act comes into play with lands, structures, etc. but not with permits for wildlife management.

Question: Could there be a person who could serve as a middleman to oversee everything?

Answer: The county sheriff is called out in Stevens County to ensure the process is right. He is a third party who is trusted by both sides and is already paid for by taxpayers.

Question: Are all producers required to do nonlethal methods or is it voluntary?

Answer: It is voluntary, but the protocol we are operating under, there is an expectation that the producer is using at least one nonlethal method suitable for that area, plus sanitation practices. For the department to move forward with lethal removal protocols, those expectations have to be met. Our conflict staff works with the producer and we make that determination.

Question: Could a lone wolf be responsible? Is DNA reporting possible?

Answer: As far as DNA goes, the department does not have DNA data for every wolf, so it would be impossible to determine which wolf did the killing. However, all pack members are going to feed. A lone wolf traveling in the pack's territory isn't going to be there for long.

Comment: Money is an issue here, so let's try not to make this too complicated.

Comment: The protocol is actually a training manual, and all conflict staff are trained heavily on that protocol. That protocol is available online and folks can go to look at it if they so choose. That is the basis for all of our training in conducting those investigations.

Comment: On the livestock investigations, the decision is not made on-site. The evidence is all collected and reviewed by every person, some who have more experience than others, and only then is the final decision made.

Comment: There is an interagency wolf committee comprised of organizations and tribes (includes USFS, county representation, and several tribes). Everything WAG does is communicated to the interagency wolf committee.

Donny acknowledged that this is a lot of information. He is not ignoring anything, but what he's hearing is an enormous time commitment and he wanted to be honest with everyone. The department wants to get the report out in a timely manner.

Comment from Senator Ranker: Expectations need to be real. A lot of the folks writing this report are also needed on the ground because they are doing very important work. A lot of the points brought up today are important, but being realistic about expectations is necessary.

Preparation for Analysis

WAG members discussed points to flag for discussion in January. There are two categories that these points were separated into, including the Lethal Protocol (needs/concerns) and Enabling Conditions.

The process used by the USFS in terms of setting conditions for the allotment are not things the state has control over, and are not things the lethal protocol could focus on. That would be an enabling condition, but not a particular subject of the lethal protocol.

Lethal Protocol

- How do probable depredations count?
- What does "incremental" mean? Now defined?
- Highlight that the goal of the protocol is to stop depredations, not remove wolves.
- Revisit what full pack really means.
- Revisit what removal options should look like in areas that have depredations frequently (chronic or repeat). Are there changes we can make?
- Human and public safety, staff safety, and that balance with transparency
 - Human safety is the highest priority

- More specificity about what the appropriate nonlethal measures are in certain conditions (pastures, open range). This could be publicly available so it's understood what those expectations are by both producers and the public.
- Should there be higher expectation in areas where depredations have happened in the past?
- Number of confirmed and number of probable cases. Are the wolves too conditioned by then to eating cattle?
 - Does this set up for full pack removal every time?
 - What is the science around this?
- Where does the lethal protocol fit with respect to recovery?
- Humane removal of wolves
 - Want to learn more (not implying the department is not being humane)
- Recognize differences in terrain and that different tools and methods may need to be used
- Pack size
- Cost effectiveness of nonlethal methods (do you use them before you need them?)
 - Nonlethal methods only effective two months
- Western/eastern difference given the different listing status
- Outreach to producers and public with revisions

Enabling Conditions

- USFS process and location of grazing allotments.
- Highlight that the goal of the protocol is to stop depredations, not remove wolves.
- Build public understanding of WAG's role.
- What is the conflict prevention strategy for each pack and communication around this and having it done in advance.
- Cost effectiveness of nonlethal methods
- Western/eastern difference given the different listing status
- Smaller land masses (smaller ranchers on west side of the state)

Public Comment

- Is the overall health of the ecosystem being considered? What studies are being done?
- Do not say humane in relation to the death of wolves.
- Ensure WDFW is following known science.
- Exhaust all nonlethal options before enlisting protocol.
- Federal lease does not guarantee the health of cattle.
- Public lands should not have private producers
- Relocation should be considered before lethal removal is considered.
- Take into account the cooperation of the ranchers with respect to lethal removal.
- Removal of the herds on the land should be considered.
- The land and these animals are the assets of the people.
- There should be broad representation involved in every decision.
- Consider and think about the communication between the department, USFS, and USFWS. If those talks could happen early, most ranchers do not have a problem making a change to avoid depredations. Ranchers do not want depredations.

- The word “probable” needs to be addressed.
- Intervene early in the process, not after packs have become habituated.
- Included in report, is there authority to go beyond the protocol provisions?
- Only one world view is represented on this WAG.
- The people of the land have been erased from this world view. This process is not the way we do it because that is not the way we were brought up. I want to see people from this land on this WAG. I want to see a world view shaped by my culture. These animals are sacred in our culture. You are killing their kin. You talk of avoiding human loss, but we want to avoid wolf loss. The committee should be diversified.
- It seems like the protocol could be different for wolves on public versus private lands.
- It seems management could encourage wolves to go to remote areas by having lethal protocols in more populated areas and no lethal removal in more remote areas of public land.
 - Use lethal as a tool to get wolf packs in the desired areas (remote, public land).
- Are ungulate populations being chased away by cattle in the forest?
- Echo the comment about increased communication between WDFW, USFS, and USFWS.
- Echoed previous comments about communication between WDFW, USFS, and USFWS.
 - Pre-planning could prevent conflict.
- Are wildfires a factor in pushing wolves towards cattle?
- Here to speak for peace. Continuous war will only kill more wolves. Peace is the only option and that is what WAG is working towards. We have to learn from this hard event, and there is no question about that. People have already made such monumental progress. The Humane Society and the Cattleman are saying pretty close to the same thing, which is that they want to prevent these events from happening. Representative government works by people bringing ideas and passion, and this will work with your contributions.
- I understand the desire for peace, but without justice there will be no peace. While peace sounds good, you can't have it without a good policy. Whatever is happening now is not working.
- I don't think this is about number of wolves or cows killed, but it's about western culture of hate.
- Some people's definition of peace sounds like compromise, but I'm not willing to compromise on this. Not one more wolf.
- I want to come here and work together, because I care, and all I hear from certain folks in this area is that they aren't willing to compromise. There are families who will be affected by that outcome. There are producers who will push back. There will be more poaching and more wolves dead if you are unwilling to compromise.
- We need to put a perspective to this. Everyone has a piece on the table here. We all want to protect wolves and protect the cattle. There are so many things involved. Perspective is important. Folks have heard things today that have threatened their families. These ranchers have paid a lease, so they've actually paid more.
- You say that his family was threatened and insulted, but some of us look to nature and look to the wolves, and to us our family is being threatened and being insulted.

Outreach is being done to tribes to get representation on the WAG.

Question: Is the WAG the final authority on taking lethal removal action, or is there authority to go elsewhere for resolution of the issue?

Answer: WAG is just an advisory group, so authority is not accurate. WAG does not have authority. WAG gives suggestions, and final decisions are made by the department.

Comment: Is there any conservation group on WAG that does not support lethal removal on public lands? It seems to me that the group does not widely represent all world views. My fear is that they all support lethal removal on public lands. I want to see more representation from those who stand up to lethal removal and don't want it on public lands.

There was a statement read by a member of the public from Predator Defense criticizing the protocol and the lethal removal actions performed (text below).

Statement on Profanity Peak Wolf Pack Slaughter

Presented by Predator Defense at WAG/WDFW Public Meeting
September 14, 2016, Issaquah, WA

A lot has been said in recent weeks about the great progress that had been made in Washington State, simply because groups with much to disagree about – ranchers, wildlife officials and environmentalists – actually agreed on something. That something was slaughtering the Profanity Peak wolf pack, whose “crime” was depredating on cattle put out in the core of their territory. Reportedly, at least half of this family of 11 wolves has already been killed.

But we are one of the groups that did NOT think great progress was being made. We have always been opposed to the lethal control operations being performed...for ethical, scientific and practical reasons. We request an immediate end to the killing of the Profanity Peak Pack.

Part of the reason we request this is because public lands are our lands; they don't belong to ranchers. They are inappropriate places for livestock, whose grazing denudes, pollutes and degrades the land...OUR land, WILDLIFE'S land.

There are over 1,000,000 cows in the state of Washington. There are roughly 90 wolves. If these magnificent apex predators, essential to the health of our ecosystems, cannot live on our remote public lands in peace, then where can they live?

The other reason we request the Profanity Peak situation be rectified and the killing stopped is because of what we have learned through WDFW's updates to WAG. Specifically:

- We know that 400 cows and calves were released into the Profanity Peak wolf pack's territory. This means cattle were released onto rugged and pristine land, owned by the public, in the remote Colville National Forest.

- We know that the livestock producer hired only one range rider and two foot patrols to protect 400 cows on 30,000 acres of rough landscape. Success would have required an army.
- We know that, within two days of release, cows were grazing in the core of the wolf pack's known activity areas.
- We know that salt blocks were placed on at least one occasion to concentrate livestock at the pack's rendezvous site. (The fact that the rancher later removed the salt blocks upon request is essentially irrelevant.)
- We know that a total of four confirmed depredations occurred within 10 weeks of the cows' release on the wolves' territory.
- We know that lethal control of the wolves began at that time, because the depredation threshold had been met.

Here's what we know from decades of observation, and consultation with the nation's top predator scientists:

- Livestock displaces wolves' natural prey – elk and deer.
- Placing livestock in the middle of known wolf territory – regardless of whether it's a few feet or a few miles – is a recipe for conflict. It is the equivalent of delivering room service to the wolf's front door.
- While nonlethal deterrents are helpful in minimizing conflicts, no nonlethal strategy is going to prevent all predation under these circumstances.
- The most obviously effective strategy would be to prohibit grazing allotments within areas of known wolf activity.

But given that the public lands grazing issue is a federal one, and the matter at hand for the state is cattle/wolf activity, the only reasonable solution at this point would be this:

Help change Washington's wolf plan so that it doesn't value cattle over wolves. If livestock producers put their cattle on public land in known wolf activity areas, they should not be compensated for depredation losses and wolves should not be killed. This should just be part of the cost of doing business on the public's lands.

End of statement

Comment: One Senator has expressed that all lethal removal be stopped until tribes are represented on the WAG.

There was some passionate discussion between some members of the public.

Donny said in order for there to be respect on both sides, it is important to know each other outside of the meeting. If you only see each other in this meeting and in these settings, it only leads to frustration and there can be no progress.

This was followed by a break.

Break

The third party neutral acknowledged the tension that was in the room before the break. There are different cultures in our society. Everyone can look similar and there will still be enormous diversity. She said there will be another 20 minutes of public comment.

Additional Public Comment

- There is no "this side" or "that side" in these comments. Bickering is not going to solve anything. The wolf cannot defend himself. The wolf is depending on the loving people in this group who love it. The Indian freedom of religious act, and there are treaty rights, and there are other rights and freedoms. I have no money, but I represent 50 tribes and organizations. But I am here for the wolf. The cow is powerful, and I know how powerful the cow is. This is an important issue, and I think you all have enough sense to do it. Right now guns are pointed at the wolves head, and ranchers are excited about it. We have a name for the wolf. The wolf you want to kill has a name. I'm not here to beg you or make you feel emotional. This has been harped on for over 31 years, and we've told you the same thing. The answer is right here and you aren't listening. Don't dislike me because I want to wake you up. This is my time. I grew up as a rancher, but I smartened up, because of what the cow did to the buffalo. I have an opportunity here to wake you up. Look at my policy. I really appreciate the range riders in the wolf packs. Find unemployed Indian men to ride with the wolf. You have a chance to bring our society together. There isn't anyone in the Blackfoot society over me except two elders. All I can do is come here and ask you. Look at what the Indians can do for you. You have no trust responsibility to the wolf, but I and the federal government do. If you don't stop killing the wolf, Obama will stop you. I don't want to do your job or insult you, but you have a chance here to wake up and do something for that wolf. I have connections that are unbelievable. I'm nobody until the wolf is protected. Use your brains and use your heart. Thank you and I will pray for you and you pray for me.

- The comment talked about a guard dog that saved 100 sheep from wildfire. It wasn't wolves. It was fire. In this fire, the conservationists stepped up and are helping this man rebuild his life. They replaced the sheep. That is conservationists and livestock producers working together. The conflict staff at WDFW are out there all the time risking themselves, and they are doing a fantastic job. We have to step up and continue to work together. It's happening. I'm out there. Other conservationists are out there. Farmers and ranchers have stepped up and they are donating to this cause. We can do better, and the department is doing better. They are, we are. But you have to recognize it.

- Our tribal governments feel that we have a significant cultural interest in how wolves are treated in this state. It is concerning to see the decimation of the wolves in what looks to be a flawed process. There is no tribal member on your working group. That is a constructive

criticism. The message is that they are drumming, singing, and howling for the wolves in the state of Washington, and their ears are listening very closely. Now is the time to share the truth. The way apex, keystone species are treated is how you treat the indigenous people of the earth. A keystone species like the wolf must be respected.

- Change is incredibly difficult. It is about the hardest thing you can do, especially when there is not an absolute clear destination. I congratulate the WAG on working together on this major issue, and on creating a new protocol that gets more nonlethal methods on the ground. While the issues this year call out grazing policy, I encourage WDFW, the WAG, and the public to increasingly think on the long term solution. Hispanic populations increase from eastern Washington to western Washington. It is important to have inclusion for those populations on WAG and in representation.

- I want to bring up points to be revisited in January. Tightening up definitions is imperative.

- What does sanitation mean?
- What does conclusion of operations mean?
- What do these terms mean?

Transparency from the department should improve as well. I am still a firm believer in providing the public with all information. The information about what the department is doing is going to get out. Instead of rumors, that should come from the department. What is exactly is being authorized and what are plans going forward? I think there is a lot of potential for justifying a decision after the fact. It's very important that government decisions are made and justified before those actions are carried out. Agricultural lime is mentioned in the protocol. I would like the WAG to discuss the science behind agricultural lime and decide whether to include it in the protocol. There is a chance, when trapping, for take of non-target species. There should be standards for trappers in the field (these might exist but I'm not aware of them).

The third party neutral thanked everyone for their comments and went around so the WAG members could say final thoughts for the day.

John said that the whole process has come a long way since 2008. Some people may not be acknowledging that fact.

Donny thanked everyone who shared thoughts. He also thanked WAG for going beyond what the department asked of them. The ability to interact and have this civil discussion now is much better than before.

Joey thanked everyone as well. He said department staff are trying to do the right thing to prevent wolf deaths and livestock deaths. There is a lot of trust in this room. If something is going on, contact can be made and we can address those right away.

Stephanie echoed the previous comments. It is important to hear the different perspectives. It's the same in headquarters as it is in the field. This has been a tough journey. Progress has been

made. This group has been phenomenal. There is still a lot of work to do on outreach, because a lot of misinformation is still out there. Thank you for bringing that forward, and thank you for coming today.

Dan Paul thanked everyone as well. The comments were extremely helpful and showed the passion on all sides. It means a lot to us as WAG members to have you all here.

Lisa Stone said WAG members did not volunteer to do this to make the situation worse. You have to remember that WAG is working towards improvements. It is through no fault of ours that we are made up the way we are.

Trent said he appreciates the public comments, but hearing some comments questioning colleagues on the WAG has been difficult. We've dedicated 18 months to this process, and bonds have been formed, and it did not start that way. People have compromised, but they've compromised towards a goal for wolf recovery and prosperous rural communities. It was a difficult day. If you haven't been a part of the process, it may not look like that, but these people are working hard for wolf recovery.

Molly said she wants it to be clear that her goal is wolf recovery. The question was asked wondering if the environmental community advocated for wolves, and she was offended that something like that would come up. They of course advocated for wolves, repeatedly and passionately.

Robert said it was good to hear comments from all sides.

Tom Erskine thanked everyone for coming to stand on their own merits and own words. The comments do not fall on deaf ears.

Diane echoed what everyone else said and thanked everyone for being here. She said she is incredibly grateful to Francine, department staff, and the WAG members. She also appreciates everyone from the public coming out today. She also thanked the Wolf Haven staff and volunteers for coming to the meetings.

Scott Becker said he appreciates the comments from the public. In the early days of the WAG, the same conversations that occurred today occurred in those early meetings. The primary goal is wolf recovery in this state, but we also have to minimize conflict to the best of our ability as well.

Don said his goal is to implement strategies that do not make rural communities suffer for those supporting wolf recovery. The tribes in Stevens County have their own wolf management plan and manage wolves based around that, and he is glad they do. He said he did appreciate the public input as well.

Paula thanked everyone who showed up today. She is involved in a lot of natural resource issues, and she wished those other issues had as much passion around them. She felt the public comments deeply.

Shawn said he did not think ahead of time about the emotions involved. Today was a good example of that. There is a lot of passion, frustration, and anger. Recognizing the tribal perspective is very important, and he is definitely interested in that. He said he would not use compromise, because that often is perceived as giving up something. What WAG is doing is to meet your own needs, but address the issues of other folks. The intention is not to force anyone to give up any core values. As gutwrenching as the last few months have been, we've seen real progress. There have been marked improvements for wolf recovery and respect for rural communities.

Anis said he appreciates everyone who came today. He also restated that the department is committed to wolf recovery in Washington, which is why everyone was brought together today. It is also a goal to have a socially acceptable solution. These folks are working very hard to get there.

Tara said she was impressed. There is a lot of emotion, and this topic is difficult, but it has been impressive to see these conversations taking place.

Dan McKinley said that he cannot appreciate every comment made today, but respects the right to have those opinions. When WAG talks, you rarely hear I or me or my. Everyone works together and everyone has committed to do this together. There was a reason we were chosen, and it may be pure luck, but this group works very well together. Everyone's opinion is important, but you cannot just take into account your own viewpoint. You will only get a stalemate out of that.

The third party neutral ended the meeting with a story about collaboration and conflict transformation. A shared solution, a shared win, where the needs and values of each group can be met, is the path forward. There is not an either/or, it has to be an "and." She applauded WDFW for creating that path forward.

Meeting Adjourned

Wolf Advisory Group Meeting Notes
September 15, 2016
Issaquah

WAG Members: Dave Duncan, Diane Gallegos, Jack Field, Lisa Stone, Paula Swedeen, Nick Martinez, Shawn Cantrell, Don Dashiell, Tom Erskine, Molly Linville, Dan McKinley, Dan Paul, Tom Davis, Tim Coleman

WDFW Staff: Donny Martorello, Anis Aoude, Robert Waddell, Ellen Heilhecker, Tara Meyer, Trent Roussin, Joey McCanna, Stephanie Simek, Scott Becker, Tammy Conklin, John Pierce, Matthew Trendera

Third Party Neutral: Francine Madden

Presentation by WDFW Chief Wildlife Scientist John Pierce

John Pierce gave a presentation on population modeling for wolves in Washington. This full presentation is available for viewing on the WAG page on the WDFW website. The presentation covered early analysis done by WDFW when the Wolf Management Plan was first created. This analysis looked at different aspects of population dynamics, and looked at how populations may grow on certain landscapes. John hoped that he would communicate to all that wolf recovery is very much on track. They are very robust animals. It gives the department confidence that wolves will be recovered in Washington, and the WAG is very important as a vehicle to achieve social acceptance. That social acceptance is absolutely essential for wolf recovery in Washington.

The SEPA process was followed during the development of the Wolf Management Plan. The population goal is 15 breeding pairs over three years distributed in the three management zones. Because populations were expected to meet expectations in northeastern Washington before other areas of the state, questions were raised about different management strategies in different areas.

A software called RAMAS was used to model population occupancies over time. No data from Washington existed at the time, so data from Idaho and Montana were used. This included pack size, survival rates, reproductive potential, dispersal, and habitat suitability. The model validated using data from Idaho and Montana.

Question: Were there concerns about using data from Idaho and Montana?

Answer: Yes and no. There is a little bit of a different prey dynamic in Washington. We knew the early years of recovery would be in deer habitat and wouldn't have elk. The habitat is also somewhat different, though Washington is a little similar. The forests of western Washington are different as well. Those factors would affect territory size, pack size, and predation rates.

Other factors were evaluated, such as the importance of immigration from neighboring populations and the recovery impacts of lethal removal in the northeast part of the state.

These models were ran 100 times, focusing on 50 years into the future. With a goal of wolf recovery in mind, we wanted to see what populations might look like up to 50 years in the future.

Survival rates in this model include all sources of mortality, including human-induced and natural causes. This was pre-hunting season, but did include lethal removal. All territories were included in the summation estimates. Also, some areas (northeast) were singled out to determine how lethal removal would affect population growth. We can look specifically at those packs to find out how population management affected recovery.

The model included taking 30 percent of all individuals out in the northeast. This was evenly across age classes. It was all hypothetical, but the department wanted to see what it would look like and how it would affect populations. This 30 percent rate was included on top of the other mortality rates. This was 30 percent every four years relative to the total population (so numbers would grow). The department did not want to assume lethal removal would be used every year, but wanted enough to see what level would be acceptable. Over a 50 year timeframe, 100 times, you will see the dispersal within the 50 year timeframe fills in territories across the state. Wolves fill in territory, leave territories, and disperse across the entire state. There is a wave of dispersal happening, and we can guess how long it will take for wolves to occupy the whole state.

Question: This model assumes the habitat will be the same for the entire 50 years?

Answer: Yes.

Question: So you aren't planning for any human growth at all over the 50 years?

Answer: Each territory in this model has at least 40 percent of suitable wolf habitat, with some having up to 80 percent. It is assumed that those territories with more than 40 percent will remain over 40.

Question: This also doesn't include natural disasters like fire?

Answer: It does not.

Comment: You can't convince me that this data applies to Washington. I think this model is an absolute joke with over 7 million people in the state. The territory is so vastly different from the Rocky Mountains.

Answer: This is the forested, remote landscapes of Washington. It does take into account habitable areas in the state right now. It does not plan for public land no longer being public, etc.

Comment: Just to clarify, I think the data taken from the Rocky Mountains included how many packs become breeding pairs.

This is a model, and we can't know for certain. One thing the department really wanted to impress upon folks is that it's important to keep monitoring and evaluate where we are to determine if what we predict is not happening. If our predictions are off, we have to adapt. That is how adaptive management works. There is no question that the model could be wrong, or that information we got from other states could not apply to Washington, but the department will continue to monitor. So far the information we have from Washington is not far off from what the model showed.

A lot of what we're seeing from wolves in Washington isn't that different from what was modeled. We all need to understand that it is a model, and the best we can do is have predictions and track them to evaluate if things are holding or not.

Question: What year was year one in this model? How does translocation affect the model?

Answer: The first year was modeled as the first year recovery goals were met in the northeast. We can definitely run the model with translocation, but generally if you move animals into unoccupied territories, those territories are going to be occupied sooner than if you do not.

Comment: I'm very surprised to see something that has a baked in set of numbers when they should be incremented over time. Why not use the full power of simulation modeling rather than a preselected parameter strategy?

Answer: That sounds like a sensitivity analysis of parameters to see which parameters drive the results. There is a standard deviation for each parameter estimate. Each simulation of the 100 randomizes the parameter based on the estimated deviation from the empirical data. Every year, there are new rates based on our estimate and the standard deviation.

Comment: I'm still curious why you chose 30 percent for the removal rate and not increments.

Answer: We did look at different levels of removal to see at what point removal impacts things.

Comment: Does the base data from neighboring states already include any events on those landscapes (fire, etc.)

Answer: Yes.

Comment: So that data already includes variability in environments, which means you have a good set of data to start with. You're looking for overall impact of variances randomly.

Question: Are we assuming federal ESA protections stay in place?

Answer: Yes. This is for the whole 50 years.

Comment: There has been skepticism expressed regarding some aspects of the model. I think your estimates are good on habitat, but I think the mortality estimates are weak. I think you have to make big adjustments in the mortality estimates. I also think that is why WAG is here. We need to get to that social acceptance so these assumptions are true.

Comment: These parameters can be built on, and you can add those pieces to the model if it is a good, robust system.

Question: When the food is good, the predators continue to grow and have healthy pups. The reality of the landscape in the northeast is that two tons of grass-fed beef has been consumed. There is a study that says for every one kill you find there are seven you don't. If you have a better food supply, does that change the rates or growth? If the model only takes into account a natural food source, that's fine, but we have to accept that wolves are eating cows as well.

Answer: I think you're all hovering on a really good point. Models do not tell the truth, and it is easy to find flaws in models. This is used to inform us, and it can be added to later on to improve it.

Comment: Social tolerance will never allow wolves to occupy those areas.

Answer: We did talk about social tolerance, but social tolerance is incredibly difficult to model. We are hopeful that social tolerance will get there, which is why we are here today. There is a lot there that is so uncertain, so we didn't want to model that because we don't want to make assumptions. However, we are very hopeful that we will be successful with the needs for social tolerance. This model predicts recovery under social tolerance, and if we don't get that, the model needs to be changed.

Comment: Was the data peer reviewed before it was entered into the model? Also, we have studies already that show ungulates go somewhere else when cattle are grazed on their lands.

Answer: This data and this model have been peer-reviewed. We were very up front about the limitations of the model. All of the data that went into this comes from data that had grazing, depredations, lethal removal, and many other factors. All of that was built into the data used in this model.

Question: What effect will this have on the prey base?

Answer: We don't know the answers to that yet. There are many different situations and conditions that results vary depending on what is used. The department is concerned about that as well, so we are undertaking new research to look at predator/prey dynamics in these areas with multiple predators on the landscape.

Question: If Washington follows suit with other states, there will be a hunting season. Have you looked at that factor in any models at all? I think it's something that should be looked at down the road. I can't assume the federal ESA will be in place after 50 years.

Answer: That is a good comment, and I want to remind everyone that the model is focused on recovery and reaching recovery levels. The hope is to achieve recovery before the 50 years. We are really focused on just the plan and how northeastern lethal removal will affect recovery rates. I think you are right that there are a lot of discussions that need to happen after recovery has been achieved. Fifteen breeding pairs is not the population goal. That is the goal to achieve recovery. After that, we can start figuring out what our population goals are. We can estimate when those recovery goals might be achieved.

Question: With the value and work the department is doing towards recovery, I thought you would be farther along with data on effects on prey base.

Answer: We have looked at it, and what we have now shows no evidence that there is a problem. However, we haven't finished the study to be sure. We do have an ungulate assessment of deer, elk, and moose herds around the state. Our annual surveys, harvest statistics, and more should be completed within the month and will be made available then. The deeper study will forecast and model those populations.

Comment: The Mule Deer Foundation is supporting/funding a UW study on how wolves are affecting coyote predation on ungulate species.

Comment: There are concerns around the work of Dr. Wilgaes.

Answer: I understand and acknowledge those concerns, but I will say that this work heavily involved department staff, and my name is on it too, and we believe in this work.

Comment: I'm getting some terms mixed up, including harvest, hunting, lethal removal, etc.

Answer: All of those equal the same thing: mortality. Our model takes into account all human induced mortalities, in addition to natural causes. This is through whatever means that might happen.

Question: I talked earlier about the prey base. PR money directly goes to the department every year, and if we destroy that prey base, those funds will not be there. That money supports

everything we are doing here, and supports all work around wolf recovery. It's very important to me to get some understanding about what those effects might look like. We cannot destroy that funding or we won't get to have wildlife in this state. I'm not opposed to wolves on the landscape, but I want to know what the effects are going to be. I need some answers to how all of this fits together. It's not only important to hunters, but it's important to employees of the department.

Comment: I wanted to speak to those comments and extend thanks to hunters in this state. In this study John is talking about (predator/prey), I was involved in getting funding from the general fund for that, so the whole state is helping. There is also a movement to get funding beyond PR in this country so it isn't all on the shoulders of the hunting community.

Comment: I'm not opposed to the funding going towards wolf recovery, but I wanted all to be aware of the hunting contribution, and our concerns.

Question: I read at one time that 90 wolves remain on the east, and then I heard 160 wolves from another source.

Answer: The 90 was our last minimum estimate from last winter. We have collars in some of the packs, but not all of them. That 90 is a minimum estimate, and it's likely there are more now.

Comment: I'm a hunter, and I know a lot of hunters, and I would say the majority support wolf recovery. Cattle are big influence on wolves. Cattle come in and can destroy a wetland in two days, and that wetland harbors half a dozen deer all summer long. I get what you're saying, but there is a lot of diversity in hunter opinions. What is being said is important, and I know some folks make a lot of noise about predators, but there are a lot of variables there.

Comment: The hunting community is a bell curve just like any other community, and we are hoping we can steepen that bell curve in regards to wolf recovery. My comments more related to the sale of tags being a promise of opportunity. If those opportunities are not there, tag sales may be affected. It's good we have partners now, and we hope we have more partners, but we have to consider opportunity because it equates to dollars.

John continued with the presentation. Conclusions were that the 15 breeding pairs are not a cap, though it is adequate as a recovery goal. If we cap it, we have a 90% probability that we will not achieve the recovery goal, so after 15 breeding pairs are achieved, population goals need to be discussed.

Wolves will disperse, they will establish, and they will occupy other areas. As we achieve our goals, we are able to go in and work with those populations.

Break

Travis gave a small presentation about the forest service and wolves.

Wolves were first known in 2009 to be on the USFS landscape. He went over basic areas of how grazing occurs on the ground.

When a permittee is out on the ground, what are the things that allow that to happen? There are several levels and steps:

- Forest Plan is the first part (forest wide)
- NEPA (range)
- EIS (Environmental impact statement)
- EA (lower level of analysis)
 - Need to find that the activity you will do will have no negative environmental impact
- Allotment management plan
- AOI (details on how we will graze, which pastures, timing, maintenance, salting, etc.)
 - USFS doesn't track where all salting occurs, but there are areas with no salting
- Permits are issued for those who meet the minimum qualifications.

When USFS describes the effects of the use, that is referring to forest production, availability, and standards. How much forage is produced on the landscape? These are all factors involved. All forests are divided up into grazing allotments that vary in size. In the Colville forest, allotments range from 5,000 acres to 60,000+ acres. Grazing guarantees compliance with various documents and laws in place.

Question: Are there studies that look at whether or not livestock push out ungulates and predators?

Answer: We do use modeling to determine how much forage is predicted to occur on allotments. There is a forest plan aspect that allows for 45 percent, so we're leaving 55 percent of forage at least out there. In reality, we're only using 35 percent or so on these allotments.

Question: There are a lot of questions about why USFS allows grazing on these lands at all. How do you answer that question when you get it?

Answer: Grazing was fundamental in the formation of National Forests. Grazing has always been a part of National Forest management. You've heard of the multiple use concept. We manage for multiple uses on national forests, and grazing is one part of that. We are also to provide economic opportunities for those living in our communities. I feel we run those programs well.

Question: The forest is allocated completely into allotments. Are those all active at any one time? (Yes). Is there knowledge and acknowledgement of state endangered species acts in management actions?

Answer: On the Colville National Forest, the entire forest is not allocated into grazing allotments. There are portions where grazing is not permitted. Our better grazing allotments are the drier parts of the forest. Further east, precipitation increases. Of the allotments, about 650,000 acres is contained within about 50 grazing allotments that are actively grazed (permits, used generally annually). There are also some vacant allotments (about 200,000 acres) that are usually vacant due to not having current NEPA.

Question: So each allotment has to have a separate EA?

Answer: Yes but we often pair allotments together to do group allotments.

Question: What obligation is there to make allowances for the state endangered species act.

Answer: We certainly comply with all federal laws, and at the local level, we do a lot of coordination with WDFW trying to address wildlife concerns, including wolves. I'm not sure if we are bound to do anything related to those wildlife.

Comment: The USFS is responsible for the habitat, while USFWS would be responsible for the wildlife on that habitat.

Question: Not everything stays the way it's always been, so are adverse to changing grazing partnerships in the event grazing is proven to be detrimental to the land.

Answer: That is way above me. It doesn't matter how far up you go, we don't talk about what is and what is not appropriate on those broader levels.

Question: You mentioned that USFS is there to protect resources. Does that include wildlife?

Answer: Yes. That goes into habitat management.

Question: Okay. And you need to follow NEPA and EIS, correct?

Answer: Yes. We analyze the effects to all habitats and species in the federal plans. When it gets to lethal removal, the USFS has no input on that topic.

Question: Did Okanogan, Wenatchee, and Colville forests meet with USFWS to discuss wolf management in the state? You can do certain things in the event of a wolf den or rendezvous site. One thing you can do is assign cattle to a different location. Did you do an assessment with the cattle in the Profanity Peak case.

Answer: I think the reality for northeast Washington is that there are wolves pretty much everywhere. All of northeast Washington is occupied wolf territory. The notion that you can move cattle out of harm's way to another spot does not align with the reality of northeast

Washington. There is not a one size fits all solution. We have situations where livestock has been grazed in close proximity to wolf packs and no trouble has occurred, and we have had instances where trouble has occurred. I think it is reckless to oversimplify this to include one set of livestock, one producer, or one wolf pack. There are many different factors included in this process that come into play. I think things have changed dramatically in Washington, and we are interested in doing what we can, but there are a ton of things that work. We have permittees doing all sorts of things to prevent conflict.

Comment: You had a chance to look at alternative feeding solutions. It may be more economically valid to buy feed for the cattle and prevent this. Did you and your team consider that?

Answer: We did not. We would need to clearly describe impacts and recovery objectives with certainty. With the reality that wolves are present throughout the forest, I don't know what success looks like. Right now today I cannot tell you the location of the Profanity Peak den site.

Comment: It just seems there is an opportunity for the USFS to expand collaborative work.

Answer: Certainly we are open to public involvement when working through the NEPA process. Part of that is me being here to share that information.

Question: On that example with the den site, how would WDFW coordinate with you and what stage would that be?

Answer: We start developing the next year's grazing plans in March and finish them in April. The vast majority of allotments begin grazing June 1. This allows enough time to go through the process.

Question: How many different producers are there on the forest?

Answer: I think it's 42 right now, and it varies from year to year. It's usually in the low forties. When we talk about grazing permits, they are good for a 10-year term permit, and we can renew them if the person is still interested. It can't be an all new producer that takes over the allotment.

Comment: I didn't come over 800 miles to ask a question. I came for the pups. There are two points. Did the USFS allow the Profanity Pack to be killed?

Answer: What the USFS knew was found out the same time the press releases went out to the public. Wildlife is managed by the state.

Comment: So you're forced to allow these wolves to be killed?

Answer: We aren't forced, but we don't have authority to manage the wildlife in Washington.

Question: Is there anything from the Black Wolf CRM process that gives you optimism for moving forward?

Answer: I think so. That is a collaborative of different agency folks and people that tackle this issues that affect parts of northeast Washington. The group has USFS, DNR, WDFW, timber companies, conservation organizations, and more. The goal is to identify problems, find solutions, and make things better for people on the land. Range riding came out of this. I think that is a really great thing for folks to get together and try new things that hopefully help with identifying resources that prevent depredations in the future.

A coordination group is the Washington Coordination Group of Resource Management. You can find more information about it online.

Question: Who is funding the CRMs?

Answer: They are funded by a lot of places, and there is funding for a lot of different things. For example, facilitation costs. These funds come from grants, normal budgets from agencies, equip funding through NRCS, and even private grants. CRMs are all across the state, so it isn't just a grazing thing.

Question: I don't understand the role of USFW with how it dovetails the state SEPA process. What communications have to happen between state managers and whoever manages that part of the forest? There are a whole host of other statutes that trigger NEPA. We are only talking about something that benefits a small minority of folks. What communication happens? What report is recorded?

Answer: Between the Colville forest and WDFW, there is an annual meeting regarding issues occurring on the forest. When you get down to grazing, we are continually talking to WDFW conflict specialists. We are sharing information between USFS, WDFW, and the grazing permittee.

Comment: It's legally questionable.

Answer: I want to make one point about who is responsible for what. WDFW is responsible for wolves and all wildlife and they cover the effects of that in the Wolf plan, which was considered in the NEPA and SEPA process. You have the livestock producer who is responsible for the herd. USFS is responsible of the management of the forest. We all need to be respectful of each group's role in this process.

Travis said that during the NEPA portion, thresholds and standards are identified that need to be complied with. Producers are given a bill for the use of the land and they pay. If it's

determined that standards are exceeded, there is another process to see why that was and how it's occurring. Grazers don't graze the entire allotment all at once. They move from spot to spot. The plan can be changed if there is opportunity to do it. That is if standards are exceeded. Most allotments follow increases in elevation. You are not going to the top when snow is still present. There is flexibility, but sometimes you are out of options and permittees are required to go home.

Wolves are one thing we are concerned with on the land, but they are not the only thing considered. We manage a lot of things, and we need to comply with things like the Clean Water Act. When there is chaos on the landscape, that is something that concerns the USFS. Yes, there are impacts to wolves and management, but when do we get to the point where impacts are seen on the resource and we are no longer complying with laws.

Question: There are opportunities for communication right now, and I want to point them out. There is the interagency wolf committee, where wolf issues are discussed and bigger picture management issues are discussed as well. Grazing meetings with conflict specialists attending are also there. Finally there are these CRMs. The reason I'm raising this is because there is a desire to talk about ways to avoid this situation from WAG members and the public. I would like to have a clear picture of what the best route is to handle that discussion.

Comment: It seems there may be additional opportunities in the process for communication between others.

Question: How many allotment plans are passed the 10-year renewal?

Answer: We have completed NEPA (under the Rescissions Act) for about 70 percent of grazing plans. The NEPA is good until there is a changing condition, while the contracts are good for 10 years. We are operating under plans that are older than 1995. The other 30 percent have some NEPA.

Question: Do you take lessons learned from places like Boulder and use them to guide your future actions in other allotments that have similar conditions? Specifically the effects on recreation resources and the new emphasis on elk management in the Kettle Crest.

Answer: I think there are some things we could do. Trail protection can be addressed, but like you said, it is very complex. There should be a full NEPA document on that.

Donny publicly thanked Travis for coming to WAG meetings in the past and now. It is incredibly beneficial to have him here and hopefully provide a better understanding of the facts involved.

Comment: It's almost a real-time issue, and so I'm not sure these interagency groups are the answer for management and risk reduction.

Answer: I was thinking higher level before, but yes. If we are going to do things that have meaning, it has to be at the local level. There have been efforts to develop a sort of livestock working group. Maybe now is the time to get that going. Things have evolved so much and so fast. Three years ago, range riding as a nonlethal measure wasn't even being considered. There isn't a rancher on the Colville forest who hasn't changed how livestock are managed on the landscape. There is an absolute knowledge that wolves are going to be there, and ranchers are adapting in order to survive.

Comment: I appreciate that for real time situations, but what I wanted to get at was a little more related to knowing the year before or years before where you have had conflict in the past, or where there's been a fire, or where a temporary issue may form. Are those higher level forums appropriate to look at some of those issues? Are there other places on USFS land where new pastures can be created? Knowing these patterns, are there higher level, longer term discussions that could be had?

Answer: Absolutely. I would envision that multiple working group strategy would not only discuss issues for the here and now, but also issues well into the future. Within a pack territory, there may be six to eight allotments with five or so producers, and within those allotments there are also pockets of private land. All of those folks involved can get into those discussions and figure out the best way forward.

Comment: It seems like on the Colville forest there have been two major changing conditions with wolves and fires. These factors are affecting abilities to graze. It seems NEPA should be revisited in those areas. As a condition of grazing on federal allotments, since forests are multiple use, couldn't those cooperative agreements be a condition for approval of the permits? So you would have to use nonlethal methods as a condition of getting the permit.

Answer: You have a valid point on the NEPA, but Congress has said that we will continue grazing until NEPA review. Ideally, we would have enough money and staffing and all NEPA would be done. Yes, that would be very nice. On the permit piece, and making requirements there, there have been discussions about what to do in Region 6 (our region). We need to make sure our permittees are talking with WDFW where wolves are present, and there will probably be something in there regarding depredation sites. On the list, it's dangerous to make a list, because what works for one person may not work for another. Where we are is that we want to make sure people are talking.

Comment: Using only my example, when I went in and did my AOI, I was asked not to have cattle in certain areas of the allotment. Were we required? No, but we did write that in and plan for it. If I can get that allotment back to how it was, that benefits me as well as everyone else. Maybe there should be a requirement put in, and I could go with that, but I want everyone to know that we do communicate. Reviews happen prior to meetings, and WDFW sends a representative, and we all talk and communicate a lot. This has been a very hard thing, but you

need to know that producers are trying, and we all do talk. If we can all have a chance to get to the middle and have open conversation, we might realize we aren't far off. What is the next move? We are not out to decimate or destroy the landscape. Our livelihood relies on that, and we rely on it very heavily.

Travis said better things will come from having those conversations rather than putting it in the permit and saying you have to. Permittees forsake a lot to try to make it all work, and that is significant.

Comment: I've heard a lot about adaptive management, but what I've seen on the ground is that this is a complicated situation, but it doesn't feel to me like very many solutions were tried. The cows should have been moved. It makes no sense, and that's not very adaptive management.

Answer: I respect your views and your values, but you have to consider that it's longer term than just right here and right now. There will be a grazing season next year, and we have to think of that. We have seen wolves follow those cattle back down, and depredations continue.

Comment: Who is responsible for the environmental assessments or enforcement on those lands? If it's private land, for instance.

Answer: It's USFS on national forest land, and Department of Ecology monitors the other areas following the Clean Water Act.

Comment: There seems to be a misconception that producers don't do any nonlethals. I wanted to say every producer has at least four nonlethal methods on the landscape. They calf away from known wolf territories, turnout healthy cows, employ range riders, and delay turnout so larger animals are on the landscape. Producers do things ahead of time.

Lunch

Working Groups: Outreach

WAG members discussed outreach and the methods they can use. They first identified target audiences. Molly and Lisa gave the presentation and led the discussion. Several target audiences were identified and discussed.

Target audiences for both mutual learning and collaboration include:

- All (A)
- Hunters (H)
- WDFW (D)
- Tribes (Tr)
- Others (O) (including USFWS, DOT, USFS)

- WAG (W)
- Recreationists (OR)
- Small acreage (SA)
- Education (formal and informal) (E)
- Policy Makers (P)
- Communities (C) (rural and urban)
- Veterinarians (V)
- Tourists (T)
- Media (M)

Acronyms are used because a list of needs will be developed. Acronyms were then assigned to the below points.

What information does WAG need to get out to these user groups?

- Basic wolf ecology: (A)
 - Size, basic history, how they got to Washington, etc. (A)
- Don't feed the wolves (or wildlife in general) (A, SA, C)
- Population status (state and federal listings and what those mean) (A, SA, C)
- Maps (do a better job of visually showing what is going on) (A, OR, H, T, C)
 - Terrain and habitat
 - Use maps to tell the recovery story
 - What is wolf habitat?
- WDFW's website could be updated (D)
- Depredation reports (A)
 - There is misunderstanding about how thorough those investigations are
- Tribal relationships (laws, treaty rights, state versus federal)
- Information to hunting community (H)
 - Status of ungulate populations
 - How do dogs interact with wolves (bird hunters)
 - Answering ecological questions
 - Describe how ungulates will respond to wolves in the area
 - How to carry your harvest out, what to do if you leave parts behind
 - General carnivore awareness
 - Don't assume that all hunters know things
 - Coyote hunters as a subgroup
- What to do if you see a wolf (H, A, T, OR, SA, C)
- Public acceptance (H, A,)
- Effects on opportunity (have real science and projections)
- Forum for hunters to share information (trail cam images, etc.)
- Explain the role of WAG (authority, what WAG does, what has been achieved, etc.) (All groups) (promote consistency in the way WAG communicates)

- Recovery goals and pack versus breeding pair (what do these terms mean?) (A, with different levels of detail)
 - Different words mean different things to different groups. Stay cognizant of that.
 - The message WAG presents needs to keep this in mind.
 - Create a culture.
- Difference between WDFW and USFWS
- Steps to take to prevent habituation (H, A, T, OR, SA, C)
- Glossary (D)
- What to expect with wolf behavior (is it threatening or not?) (H, A, T, OR, SA, C)
- Basic identification between coyotes and wolves (A, H, T, OR, SA, C)

Oftentimes, the purpose we are trying to achieve is going to drive those goals. We could take this information and refine it and flesh it out more. It's important that the message is the same so we can hopefully avoid confusion/misinformation.

Small working groups will go forward to keep working on this outreach issue. Budget must be considered as well. Prioritization will also be considered by the working group. The subgroup is Molly, Lisa, Diane, Tom, Stephanie, Ellen, and Bruce.

Budget Items

Donny talked about budget constraints on the horizon. The current operation budget is \$1.5 million. WDFW received money for the current budget, but that funding will not carry forward into the next biennium. That is \$600,000 that will not be available next biennium. WDFW is able to use \$300,000 for the Fiscal Year 2017. There is still an urgent need for more money for range riders, as well as this budget item that was initially unexpected. WDFW found out about this some time after the July meeting.

WAG discussed whether they should have a small working group or a conference call.

Tom and Paula will be part of the subgroup.

There will be a period of time between now and when the Governor's budget comes out in December where learning opportunities and influence are available. Donny will follow up with the WAG subgroup to discuss options and move ahead. A WAG group letter could be a possibility as well.

Donny publicly apologized to Tom and Jack regarding compensation improvements. Compensation got pushed to the last minute due to the busy schedules since the July meeting. However, he did sit down with them and identify areas to flag as needing attention. These include:

- Always having to send an assessor out
 - Is there another way that is quicker?

- Would not require changes to WACs
- Basing value of livestock on upcoming sale receipts and/or pre-negotiated contract price and/or request a contract appraiser.
- Time stamps are currently associated with the claims (24 hours, 30 days, and 90 days)
 - Recommending that the 90 day language is dropped.
 - This is so the producer has the opportunity to wait until they would normally sell
 - The 90 day is inconsistent with other processes out there
- There is a loop right now that sends producers to FSA first
 - That is very different from county to county
 - This may come up during this upcoming session
 - Working closely county by county and working through the state office

The department is looking to implement this by January 1. There will be a call or meeting within the next two weeks.

The third party neutral thanked WAG and department staff for being flexible with the changed WAG format for this meeting. The normal format will return for the next meeting. It can be hard for the public when they don't feel they are represented on the group, but the WAG members are working their tails off to find solutions that work for all involved. This has been an incredibly difficult time for everybody, and it was a huge benefit for the public to be heard today.

WAG is not a decision-making entity. They work together and advise. The department staff are responsible for also getting the work done. The nature of the WAG's role is humble.

The department is also overseen by the Commission. The Governor appoints the nine members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission. It is a very public process. At each of their meetings there are public comment opportunities as well. They begin each meeting with that public comment session. They do meet around the state, but most often in Olympia. Bruce said the Commission would definitely welcome public input. The next Commission meeting is the first week of November.

Public Comment

- This goes back to the list being written about target groups. There are a lot of misconceptions about what the producer does and what goes into range riding. Some of that information needs to get out as well. Get the correct information out to the people, so they have been presented with accurate information.
- The commenter thanked WAG and Francine for being here over the past two days. Learn names, learn who people are. Talk to a person, not a group. We are not here to be adversaries. We are here to collaborate and cooperate. One thing to remember is that cattle and wolves are both here to stay, and the whole purpose of the WAG is to make that happen. Working together

towards that goal is essential. Extremes are not helpful. No matter what side, extremes make it impossible to work together. Then you have to decide if you are part of the solution or part of the problem. Perspectives are important as well. Can you come to the table with perspective and not judgement? Recognize other perspectives. Unfortunately, we cannot please all of the people all of the time. There is no one solution, and that is why this forum exists. Respect the land and each other. Vulnerability is important as well. Put yourself out there, because although you may be shut down (it's a shame if you do), you are more likely to be accepted and respected, and it will be easier to move forward. The commenter thanked WAG for being vulnerable and showing bravery over the two days. He commended them on wanting to improve outreach. Wag more, bark less.

- Something I might add is the actual impact of WAG, and you may get more help if you show any impacts you've had. If you are reviewing vendors for the website, usability testing is essential.

- This commenter said yes to what WAG is doing and she supports the sharing and the emotions and beliefs. There are several other agencies that could benefit from this process. She said yes to diverse funding sources for WDFW. She'd never bought a fishing or hunting license, but she wanted other ways to support wildlife conservation. She would love to see wildlife corridors. There are so many areas WDFW is needed. She also said yes to safe habitat for wolves and other wildlife. She also hopes for increased respect and dedication to sharing the land.

- The next commenter asked WAG to consider how we would feel if humans and wolves switched places.

- The next commenter would like to know how to participate more in nonlethal deterrents and/or translocation. We don't know where to go and that is why we are here today.

- The next commenter said she put out a lot prayers. She said there is a balance in the world and we live in the balance. We have to believe that the balance can be. There is no meeting halfway if it's 90 percent one way. She sees loss of wolves, eagles, and salmon in the future. These belong in the balance. There are millions of cows and only 90 wolves. The dollar is what people are finding sacred. Her words today are wondering when it will stop. We cannot survive without all of these animals. The wolves hold medicine for us and for all things. Without them we cannot be here. You are talking about them in a way that is not them. She wants to be in a world where wolves exist.

- The next commenter said it has been 31 years. He wants WAG to switch sides. Can we meet with the governor? Money controls us. He asked if WAG would have a vote to say who is for wolves and send a letter to the Director to stop killing the wolves. If Francine has authority over all of you to go help save the wolves. Are we so heartless that we cannot do that? Are we so into this money and these policies that we cannot switch sides? Stop killing the wolves. Is the Governor that heartless? A million cows and only 90 wolves left. Be truthful.

- The next commenter said that she is appalled. From what she heard, it looks like all WAG cares about is hunters, ranchers, and money. We have a WAG that is supposed to make things better and it has not. Supposed conservation groups are now going along with it. This has nothing to do with science or anything like that. It is wrong to kill the wolves. The populations should be considerably higher. Where are the values and morals in this?

- The next commenter said he thinks the WAG process is flawed and needs a lot of improvement. The people in this land are his cousins and family and he has an interest in being here. There are federal laws that protect natural resource trust and tribal treaties trust. The treaties are the highest laws in the land. Your advisory group does not reflect the diversity of Washington or the values stated by the Governor. For indigenous people, the desecration of the wolves is not tolerable. It's an attack on our way of life. It's good that people are making attempts to understand each other. These traditions are included in our culture and religions. It's not about picking on ranchers or farmers. To kill an apex species is not okay. It is a violation of several rights.

- The next commenter said the US population increases a lot every day. Washington increased in the last five hours by 32.52 people. The pack is where my sympathies lie. We're taking up their time while we increase our numbers. Once they're gone, we can't bring them back.

- Jay Shepherd said he met with the ranchers in the Wedge a few years back. He was afraid because he wasn't used to the people. He had dinner with those people last week, and he now considers them friends. This will be won or lost at a local level. There will be fewer dead wolves and more success if you bring in the local folks and they have ownership of this. Keep that agricultural community intact and that is how you will gain public acceptance. He's seen biologists come and go, ranchers come and go, and wolves come and go. He will miss working with everyone on the WAG. His wife and him gave so much for this cause. He will miss the public service the most. He wanted to thank everyone involved because he will miss them very much.

Meeting Adjourned

Additional Public Comment (submitted on notecards over both days)

- There should be a time limit on public speaking.

- Please go back to an "open to public" discussion after the WAG meeting has taken place.

- Why do we need to even identify the pack that may need lethal removal? If there are 19 packs and more to come, why even cause guilt by association?

- I believe a tribal religious ceremony at a state event is against the law.

- I have an issue with “probable” as a call on livestock mortality. Either it is or it isn’t a wolf depredation. If so, then probable cases need to count as a positive kill to enact a quicker lethal removal in an event to avoid total removal of a pack.

- In reference to something Travis said – “It’s too simplified to point to one producer, one pack, or one allotment.” Yet there have been two wolf packs designated for lethal removal, the Wedge pack in 2012 and the Profanity Peak pack in 2016. Both associated with the same producer. This seems like the time to stop making the same mistakes with the allotments for that area – or maybe with the producer.

- As a consumer, I prefer to purchase beef supplied by producers that are fully committed to wolf recovery in Washington State – and other states as well. Has any discussion occurred in having a “wolf safe” designation for producers, much like the “salmon safe” designation?

- What are the costs to kill wolves, compensate ranchers, etc.? What is the tax burden that ranchers pay to the state to help make other taxpayers whole? What is it costing state to kill pack?

- Some grazing allotments on public lands are indefensible. How is the public, which wants wildlife on public lands, supposed to accept killing wildlife to support private profits in places where preventative measures are unlikely to work?

- Need summary cost/benefit analysis on lethal protocol and historical figures for past experience.

- If not wildlands and national forests, then where shall wildlife live to raise their families?

- Science should underlay all wildlife management decisions. There is a growing body of research showing killing wolves does not stop predation on livestock but nonlethal does. Response?

- Wolves in Washington are an asset to our wildlife populations. Cattleman should be able to graze because:

- inexpensive way to manage
- environmentally sound with shorter dry grass to prevent fire
- They should be responsible for the safety of their livestock – tax payers shouldn’t pay for wolf removal
- If livestock ranchers refuse to take responsibility for animal safety. They should not be able to renew their range permits.

Both should be happy – ranchers and wildlife supporters.