

# Wolf Advisory Group

## Meeting Summary<sup>1</sup>, January 9-10, 2024

**WAG members present:** Amy Porter, Tyler Allen, Bill Kemp, Caitlin Scarano (Day 1), Dan Paul, Jessica Kelley, Lisa Stone, Lynn Okita, Paula Swedeen (Day 1), Samee Charriere, Rick Perleberg, Sierra Smith, Todd Holmdahl, Scott Nielsen, and Marie Neumiller (Day 2).

**Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW, Department) staff members present:** Ben Maletzke (Day 1), Jim Brown (Day 1), Seth Thompson (Day 1), Trent Roussin (Day 1), Brock Hoenes, Kyla West, and Mike Kuttel (note: other WDFW staff observed the meeting as Zoom webinar attendees)

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

## Meeting Action Items

Responsible Party	Action Item	Target Date
Facilitation Team	Schedule June and Fall WAG meeting dates and locations	Late-January
Facilitation Team	Follow-up with absent WAG members	Late-January
Facilitation Team	Update the online WAG Roster with confirmed identity groups	Late-January
Facilitation Team	Schedule 2-hour PSR conversation in mid-February	Late-January
Facilitation Team	Follow-up with WAG members regarding a potential April WAG meeting student presentation	Late-January
Facilitation Team	Schedule calls the Compensation and Monitoring/Data-sharing Task Groups; follow up informally with the WAG members of the Cross-Boundary Task Group on next steps	Late-January
Facilitation Team	Send out Tyler Allen’s backgrounder for a “Pay for Presence” Program in California	Late-January
Facilitation Team	Send WAG members a current list of task group members.	Late-January
Brock Hoenes (WDFW)	Check on whether the Commission will address/discuss Compensation	Late-January
Facilitation Team	Provide the public a two week heads up with the meeting packet and location	Late-March

## January 9, 2024

### Opening

Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic facilitator, opened the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) meeting 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) Discuss additional information gathered in response to outstanding questions raised by WAG members for the draft Oregon-Washington Cross-Boundary Advice introduced at the November WAG meeting, and

<sup>1</sup> This summary is a synthesis of the meeting discussion Jan 9-10, 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>

determine if there is sufficient consensus to move forward with developing this advice; 2) Build foundational understanding about Washington State’s compensation program for direct and indirect losses due to wolf depredation, and begin exploring what an “ideal” compensation program would look like and accomplish; 3) 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) noted that the WDFW Wolf Team has begun annual surveys, camera monitoring, helicopter captures, and collar distribution around the state. This will help determine wolf pack dynamics and movement. Lost collars have prevented some wolf traceability. The Wolf Team values and encourages public submittal of wolf and animal reports and observations as these are critical information to finding impacts and obtaining wolf counts. An annual progress report will be presented later in April. Trent Roussin (WDFW) added that the cause of the recently reported uncollared wolf’s death is unclear and is being investigated. Monthly [Gray Wolf Updates continue to be posted online.](#)<sup>3</sup>

### ***Periodic Status Review (PSR)***

Brock Hoenes (WDFW) reported next steps for the PSR process, as a clarification to the November meeting discussion of this topic. WDFW is completing revisions of its draft PSR, and preparing to submit the proposed rulemaking order (CR 102) on or around February 7, 2024 (subject to change), which will initiate a new 30-day public comment period. If WAG wishes to submit advice or recommendations regarding the CR 102, it would be most useful during this period. The final CR 102 will be presented at the March Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission (Commission) meeting, and will incorporate any changes made following the public comment period. The Commission is expected to act on whether to move forward with rulemaking as proposed by WDFW.

### ***Wolf Policy Lead Position Transition***

Maletzke reminded everyone that Julia Smith, (previous WDFW Wolf Policy Lead), accepted a position with WDFW as the Endangered Species Recovery Section Manager for the Wildlife Program Diversity Division. The Wolf Policy Lead position is open for applications until January 30, 2024.

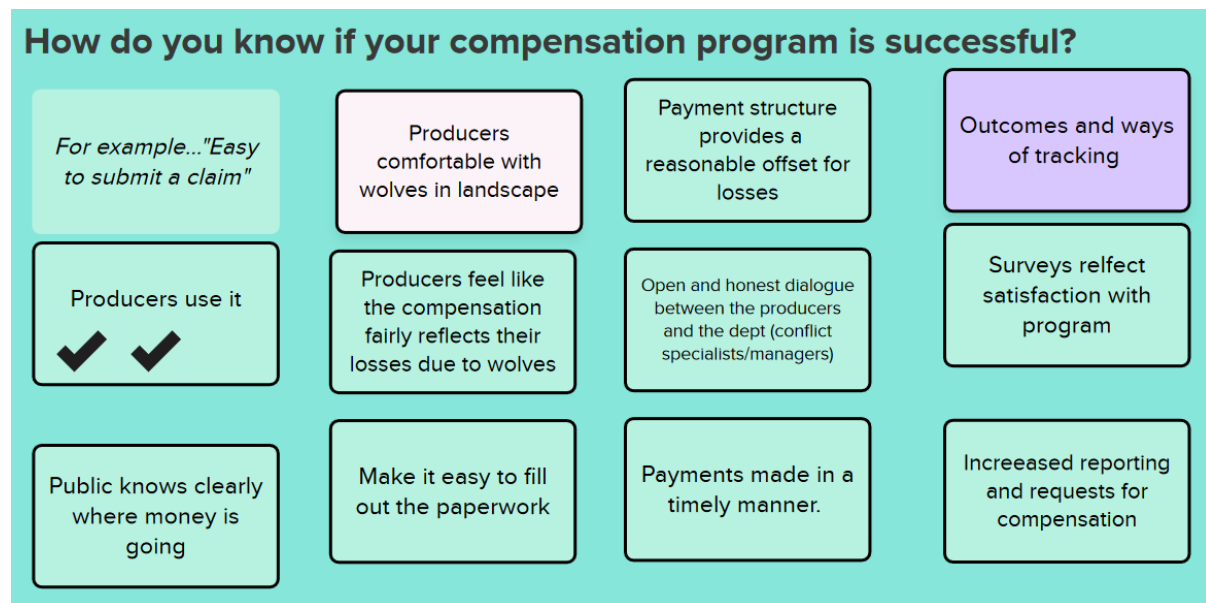
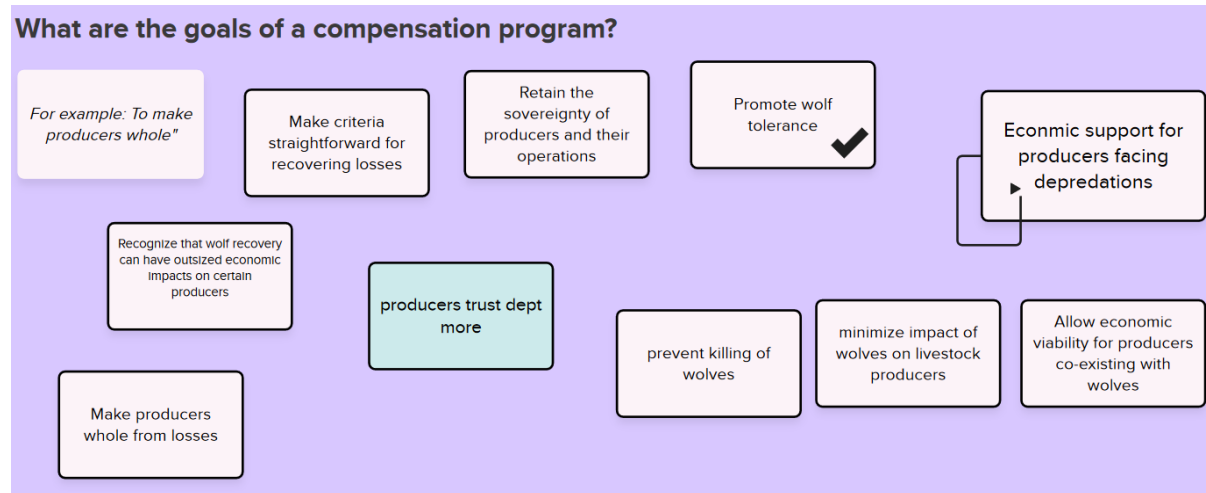
## *Compensation Program*

### ***January 9<sup>th</sup>: Brainstorming Activity and WDFW Presentation***

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<sup>3</sup> Gray Wolf Updates: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/at-risk/species-recovery/gray-wolf/updates>

Susan Hayman, Facilitator, presented a brainstorming exercise for WAG members to think about goals, outcomes, and indicators of a successful compensation program. The following Mural Board reflects WAG member responses:



Following the brainstorming, Jim Brown (WDFW) provided a presentation on the Department’s current program for managing wolf/livestock damage claims. Hayman reminded members that today’s conversation would be focused on current regulations in place and how WDFW implements them—it would not necessarily reflect what people may be experiencing day-to-day. Hayman said this conversation would occur at a subsequent WAG meeting. He focused on wildlife damage statutes and rules within Chapter Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 77.36 and Chapter 220-440 Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

Brown reviewed: definitions in law, what can be claimed, authority to pay for damage, who/what/how one is eligible for a claim, WDFW department duties, process rules, burden of proof, maximum claim amount, livestock valuation and claim types, what constitutes a direct and indirect loss, direct and indirect damage claim calculations and criteria, Livestock Review Board information, denial of WAC

claims, a process overview, and claims data. The following are key points of WDFW clarification during the subsequent questions and discussion:

- Current regulations do not address:
  - Students facing depredations of their “show” livestock may not receive compensation, as the regulations refer to commercial operations. Claim applications are always accepted, however, and WDFW will review each on a case-by-case basis to determine any potential compensation.
  - Future value of livestock, specifically regarding increased value through selective gene pool breeding. Livestock value is determined as the current or next livestock sale value.
- Claims are often denied due to producers missing deadlines to provide WDFW information and unexplained issues with producer operations or cause for depredations.
- A market value benchmark for livestock must be determined to set a compensation value. WDFW is willing to work with producers and their specific circumstances to establish the livestock value.
- The former Livestock Review Board advised WDFW on compensation claims prior to WDFW making its decision. The WAG could advise WDFW to reestablish the Livestock Review Board, but doing so would require an amendment to the WACs. Alternatively, WDFW would be interested in the WAG potential advising WDFW on the value of convening a Livestock Appeals Committee to review WDFW compensation decisions.
- WACs (determined by state agencies) can be amended as long as they are consistent with existing RCWs (determined by the State Legislature).
- The Preventative Measures Checklist referenced in Brown’s presentation is a signed agreement between the producer and the state.
- A claimant must exhaust nonprofit funding before being eligible for federal or state compensation funding.

WAG members highlighted:

- Livestock Review Board discussions were interesting and helped the WDFW improve methods and accuracy for approving claims. Discussions helped create fairness for producers and provide transparency to ensure the compensation process was not abused.
- Individual animals are often insured by producers, rather than an entire herd. A producer can pay a premium on any value they want to insure an animal.
- Producers do not always sell livestock through traditional markets, and values are not always accurate when using traditional markets versus other specialized outlets.

### *Washington and Oregon Cross Boundary Advice*

Washington-Oregon Cross Boundary Advice was drafted by a subgroup of WAG members as a result of discussion from the June WAG meeting, with the purpose to advise WDFW on managing wolf-livestock conflicts within wolf packs that cross Oregon-Washington State Boundaries. This advice was discussed at the November meeting and as a result, WAG members decided they needed more discussion and a set of questions answered before determining whether to pursue the advice further. WDFW presented responses to WAG questions from the November 2023 WAG meeting. Key discussion points are noted below:

- 1. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) does not require non-lethal deterrents.** However, if an Oregon producer wants a permit to lethally remove wolves (or have ODFW take

that action), producers need to demonstrate that they have applied appropriate non-lethal deterrents. See the [ODFW Non-Lethal Measures document for more details](#).<sup>4</sup>

2. **Oregon biologists work with producers to document and verify non-lethal deterrents in Oregon.** There are no conflict specialists or funding for range riders. Producers provide documentation of human presence and non-lethal activities to protect livestock. The “Backgrounder” is a document ODFW staff use to determine whether enough non-lethal measures have been deployed to warrant lethal removal via permit or through USDA Wildlife Services. *Note: the level of documentation (and staffing/resources devoted to this) differs between Oregon and Washington.*
3. **ODFW trained biologists or trained US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Service staff** conduct Oregon depredation investigations.
4. **If able and willing to, ODFW may share information about the use of non-lethal deterrents with WDFW** through its non-lethal documentation in a document called “the Backgrounder.”
5. **WDFW currently needs to verify if non-lethal deterrents were implemented by producers (WA producers) prior to any lethal action consideration in Washington.** This is done via range rider logs throughout the season, producer notes, and producer checklists which involves documentation by the area conflict specialist.
6. **Nothing in WAC/RCW regulations would prevent WDFW from considering another state’s information when WDFW is considering lethal action in Washington.** The Washington Attorney General’s (AG) office would make a case-by-case call as to whether to include information from another agency and if the other agency’s information is adequate.
7. **WDFW would require verification of the use of non-lethal deterrents in Oregon prior to including any depredations in Oregon in Washington’s threshold.** WDFW would prefer (and the AG’s office would likely require) similar non-lethals and level of documentation by ODFW. Range riders in Oregon, for example, do not have the same requirements (e.g., daily/near daily) as those in Washington.
8. **If Oregon producers are assumed NOT to implement non-lethal deterrents, this would affect WDFW’s decision regarding whether to include an Oregon depredations into its lethal action decisions.** The number of depredations of a pack is considered to determine potential chronic depredation patterns. They may not be counted in the 3/30 days or 4/10-month threshold, but the depredations may influence the department in of preparing to move swiftly if the 3/30 or 4/10 is reached Washington. It would be beneficial to prepare a recommendation to protect livestock before reaching 3/30 or 4/10 in Washington by maintaining updates with the latest information and ensuring proactive measures are in place.
9. **ODFW and WDFW management both have an interest to “co-manage” around this topic, and this is already occurring.** There would not likely be a formal state compact or reopening of rules at this time. Lethal removal is currently not undertaken in either state, however, if that state is not meeting its own depredation threshold.
10. **Resources WDFW would require to make this advice work is “to-be-determined.”** More staff time would be required, at a minimum.
11. **NGOs may have an opportunity to play a certain part in this process,** potentially for sharing non-lethal approaches.

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<sup>4</sup> ODFW Non-Lethal Measures Document: [https://dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/non-lethal\\_methods.asp](https://dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/non-lethal_methods.asp)

Trent Roussin and Ben Maletzke (WDFW) provided context for two Washington-Oregon Depredation cases in which WDFW was working closely with Oregon, the 139 Pack and the Grouse Flats Pack.

- **139 Pack Case Study Outcomes:** Director Susewind was aware that depredations were occurring in both Oregon and Washington. Once WDFW staff determined a chronic pattern, they acted quickly and sent a recommendation to Director Susewind on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Two days later, Director Susewind decided to remove two wolves, which were then lethally removed on August 26<sup>th</sup>. The depredation pattern in Washington was very different than the Oregon depredations. The knowledge of the Oregon depredations was used to decide to remove two wolves rather than one. None of the wolves lethally removed were reproductive females. No more depredations with this pack have occurred since August.
- **Grouse Flats Case Study:** The Grouse Flats pack has approximately six adult wolves and six wolf pups. Over the course of September and October 2023, Oregon and Washington both faced two depredations. Recently, Oregon faced another depredation and the responsible wolves were identified. There are many fine nuances to navigate before making decisions. Should Washington take into account Oregon's depredations in reaching the 3/30 or 4/10 thresholds, even if it is unclear which wolves are causing the losses?

**Following WDFW's presentation and discussion with the WAG, WAG members identified potential considerations for advice:**

1. Assist Oregon in finding resources for similar non-lethal requirements and verification.
2. Determine whether to coordinate with USDA Wildlife Services or other state services. Maletzke (WDFW) clarified that ODFW makes lethal removal decisions and Wildlife Services carries out work.
3. *Do not* reduce the quality of information required for making a decision regarding lethal removal.
4. Construct a pilot program to see what documentation would look like for various scenarios.
5. Advise that the Director be aware of and consider Oregon depredations in Washington lethal removal decisions involving cross-boundary packs:
  - a. Option 1: *Do not* include Oregon depredations in Washington thresholds.
  - b. Option 2: Include Oregon depredations in Washington thresholds.
6. Consider if there would have to be a certain number of depredations in Washington out of the total Washington-Oregon combined threshold.
7. Retain the ability for WDFW to continue to make nuanced decisions consistent with protocol.
8. Discern wolf depredation patterns before deciding on lethal consideration, and include producer perspectives in identifying patterns.
9. Ensure producers properly apply appropriate non-lethals before lethal removal.
10. Consider that a producer facing depredation may have land that extends into both Washington and Oregon and be meeting both state requirements.
11. Remember that the WAG and WDFW have worked hard to evolve and maintain the system.
12. Consider that the level of trust varies between and among all agencies and publics involved.
13. Encourage a group of producers and conservationists to talk to ODFW about collaborating.

### Final key discussion points included:

- WAG members generally agreed that ODFW and WDFW do not have similar processes. WAG members expressed that counting Oregon's depredations towards Washington's threshold would only make sense to pursue if Oregon and Washington have substantially similar lethal removal determination methods. This would include a comparison of depredation investigation methods.
- WDFW believes it already considers the nuances of cross-boundary wolf behavior in its decision-making.
- Similar documentation methods would be important to for legal defensibility (e.g. how non-lethals are applied, how investigations are conducted).
- WAG and WDFW worked hard to reach the 3/30 and 4/10 thresholds documented in the protocol. If Oregon depredations were to start counting towards Washington's thresholds, WDFW would ask for WAG to advise on a wolf-livestock protocol change.
- WDFW stated that including Oregon's depredations in Washington's thresholds would require an update to the [Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol](#) change. The WAG could advise WDFW on amending the protocol.
- A workshop could be held with a small set of producers in cross boarder packs to work to make documentation that would be significantly similar to Washington's documentation requirements. Washington could look at the documentation and determine on a case-by-case basis whether to include the cross-boundary depredation into Washington's count. Continuing progress on this topic benefits producers and WAG's credibility.
- WDFW maintains an excellent relationship with ODFW biologists, but the two agencies differ in their documentation requirements and resources available to address prevention and investigation of depredations. WDFW has no jurisdictional authority with ODFW.
- WDFW and ODFW would need to consider where a potential pilot project would fall into their overall priorities given time, resources, and staff capacity, and ensure that clear parameters for a potential pilot project would be in place.

**WAG decision:** The WAG decided not to move forward on advice at this time, primarily due to concerns about the differences in non-lethal requirements and depredation determinations. And fundamentally, for some WAG members and WDFW staff, there is a concern that including Oregon cross-border depredations in Washington's threshold determinations may increase the number of wolves lethally removed, while others believe such removals may serve the purpose of breaking depredation patterns more quickly and, ultimately, result in fewer losses of both livestock and wolves.

Several WAG members said they intend to continue discussions to see if any creative solutions can be found, including those that might involve pathways in addition to the WAG.

### ***Next Steps***

WAG members of the Washington-Oregon Cross-Boundary task group expressed interest in meeting to continue brainstorming and discussing possible paths forward for addressing the ongoing impacts to producers. There is no expectation to bring anything back to the April WAG meeting, and this group will not be developing advice.

### Public Comment

Three 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. She noted the differences in sharing these reflections online versus in person. Due to the online format, there was no opportunity to join an informal discussion session with WDFW staff and WAG members following the closure of Tuesday's WAG meeting.

## January 10, 2024

### Opening

Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic facilitator, opened the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) meeting by welcoming members, WDFW staff, and meeting observers, and providing an overview of the meeting agenda and WAG Ground Rules. Many WDFW staff that were present on January 9<sup>th</sup> were absent due to a conflicting WDFW training.

### Introductions







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

Hayman invited WAG members and WDFW staff in attendance to introduce themselves with their WAG interest and WAG identity group.

#### **Compensation Program Part-2:**

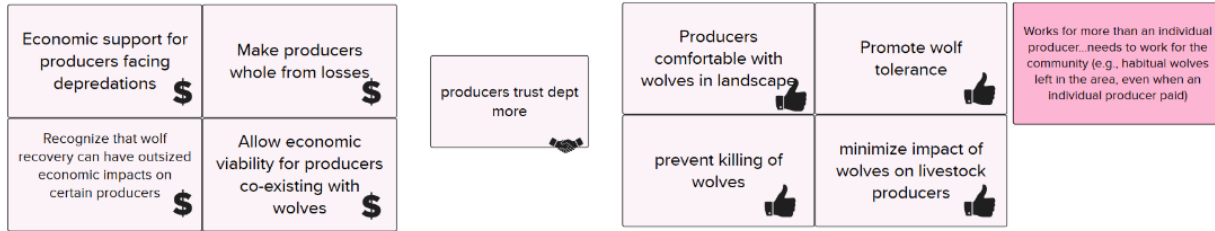
Hayman provided a recap of the previous days Compensation brainstorm, presentation, and discussion. The following Mural reflects a reorganized version of the WAG's discussion from January 9<sup>th</sup>, in which Hayman grouped the WAG's responses from "what are the goals of a compensation program" and "how do you know if a compensation is successful," to "program goals/outcomes," "characteristics," and "indicators."

Key:

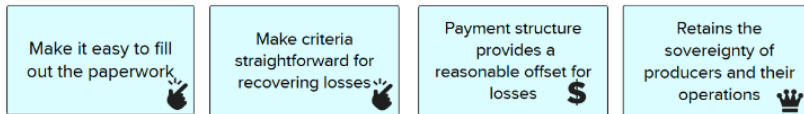
-  = Financial Aspects       = Trust       = People can tolerate/accept the presence of wolves
-  = Easy/Straightforward       = Sovereignty       = Program is in good shape



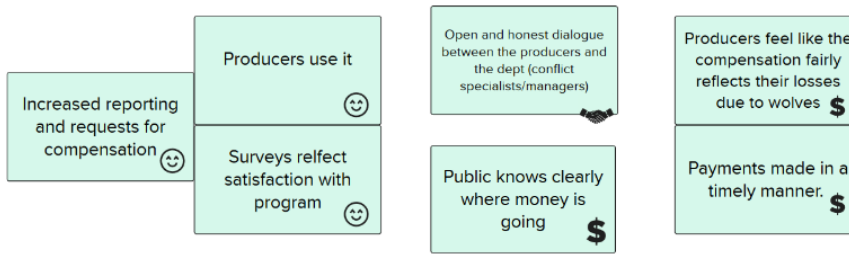
## Brainstormed Program Goals/Outcomes



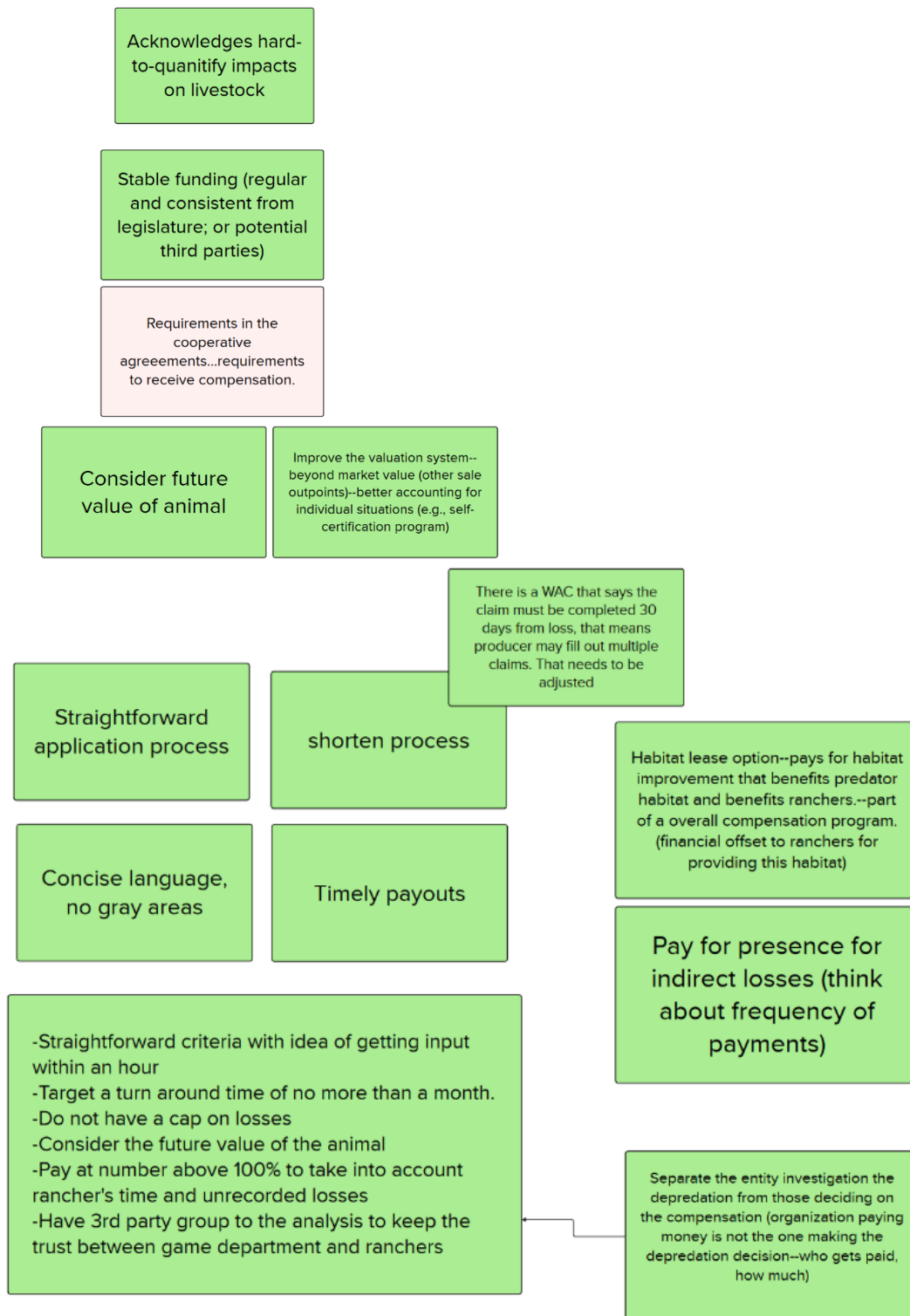
## Characteristics



## Indicators



For this meeting, Hayman emphasized that a conversation discussing what is working or not for the current program will occur at a later date. Rather, Hayman asked the WAG to focus on: **If WAG could design a compensation program to achieve the desired goals, characteristics and indicators captured in the Mural above, what might it look like?** WAG members responded via Mural Board:



WAG members discussed their Mural Board inputs, and Hayman repositioned the notes to show connections and relationships among the suggestions. Several additional thoughts included:

- The entity that conducts the depredation investigation shouldn't be the same entity that decides on the compensation claims. Use of a third party would relieve potential conflicts between parties.
- Appeal and Claims processes are expensive for producers.
- There is currently a Habitat Lease option model through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency. The program would be an addition to the Compensation Program. Maintaining high quality habitat provides additional financial offset for ranchers. This fits between a Conservation Reserve Program and Depredation Compensation Program and does not have a clear depredation event nexus.
- Stable and adequate funding are needed to ensure payouts. When wolves were initially in recovery, Defenders of Wildlife were a primary source for Compensation funding. Claims would be postponed to the following year when compensation funding was exhausted.
- Consider Impacts of a depredation beyond the individual producer and what solutions would be beneficial for the community.
- A self-certification program would simplify the compensation process timeline to ensure quicker payments for producers.

Kayla West (WDFW) emphasized again that WDFW would consider options for a third-party review process (e.g., appeals committee) if the WAG is interested in advising on that option. She noted compensation program funding is allocated by the legislature biennially. Kayla provided links to [RCW 77.36.170 on the Exceptions for the Limit on amount paid for injury or loss of livestock caused by wolves](#) and [WAC 220-440-180 Procedures on application for cash compensation for livestock damage or domestic animal](#). The WAC is currently written based on sale receipts. WDFW appreciates WAG inputs regarding how to capture as many individual scenarios as possible.

WAG member Tyler Allen provided background on New Mexico's Pay for Presence Program, which was enacted during the 2013 Mexican Wolf recovery phase. Livestock producers were paid a percentage of market value for having a herd of cattle in wolf pack territories. The program faced funding issues and is no longer used. Now there is a direct model and indirect compensation program to offset lost reproductive rates. California is the only state with a Pay for Presence model. They are operating a pilot program based off lessons learned from the Mexico program. They pay 3.5% of fair market value in wolf territory. A major complaint is that payments are made once per year. Similar models are used elsewhere for other animals. Allen will share a paper on California's Pay for Presence Program with WAG members.

### **Next Steps**

WAG members expressed that they have a clearer understanding of the current Compensation Program but they need to hear from producers on their perspective of the Compensation Program as well as have a more holistic picture of compensation before pursuing recommendations.

The Compensation Task Group will convene, review information from the current WAG meeting, and provide next steps on a follow-up conversation (e.g. barriers and what other people are experiencing). In response to a comment from a WAG member, Brock Hoenes (WDFW) will investigate if the Commission is going to address/have further conversations on compensation that WAG should try to coordinate with.

### **2024 WAG Calendar Topics:**

## **WAG members provided input on 2024 meeting dates and locations:**

**Regarding the PSR:** WDFW is expected to release the CR-102 and invite public comment around February 7<sup>th</sup>. The WAG decided to hold a two-hour conversation to discuss the CR-102 and potentially provide comments. The Facilitation team will schedule an internal WAG 2-hour meeting the week of February 12<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> between 5-7pm.

**Regarding the April WAG meeting:** Monitoring/data-sharing and Compensation will be two major discussion points at the April WAG meeting. The Facilitation Team will reach out to these task groups to convene meetings (the Facilitation Team will send WAG members a list of current task group members). The next WAG meeting will be held April 23-24, 2024, in Olympia. It is currently anticipated that WDFW Director Kelly Susewind will attend a portion of the meeting.

**Regarding the June/July and Fall WAG meeting:** The June meeting will be held in the Methow Valley/Omak/Okanogan area and a fall WAG meeting will be held in Colville. Topics will be decided after more clarity from April WAG meeting conversations. The Facilitation Team will poll members to schedule a summer (June/July) meeting and a fall (October/November) meeting.

**Regarding future virtual meetings:** Most WAG members and WDFW staff believe virtual meetings are more challenging and less desirable than meeting in person, and especially lack in strengthening relationships with one another. As this is a budget issue, WDFW will take this feedback under advisement.

## **Public Comment**

One person 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.

WAG member Rick Perleberg, presented the idea to the WAG for his students to present at the April WAG meeting for 45 minutes on the topic: "will the American model continue to be successful with or without the Commission?" Hayman will check-in with WAG members following the meeting to gauge their thoughts about whether to include this in the April WAG agenda.<sup>5</sup>

The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.

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<sup>5</sup> Note: Rick Perleberg later communicated to the Facilitation Team that it was decided his students will not present at the April WAG meeting.

## Appendix A: Public Comment

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

- **Rachel B. (January 9<sup>th</sup>):** I appreciate Jim Brown's presentation and hope it can be made available to the public. I appreciate members of the WAG expressing the big deal it is to remove wolves. Counting depredations in Oregon seems to be about killing more wolves, I don't see how it isn't. Members of the WAG are asking specifically to see if kill orders can come. I hear members of the WAG talking about trusting ODFW, but producers in Washington don't trust WDFW. Do you trust the Department or not? Regarding potentially coordinating with Wildlife Services, they have a bad reputation with the environmental community. It wouldn't go well if WDFW started working with Wildlife Services. Given how complicated it is for WDFW and ODFW to work together on issues of fishing, I don't see how they can come together on agreement for carnivores. Livestock producers receive lots of taxpayer money. They get a lot of free expenses so they can continue to make money raising nonnative animals on land to be killed. Yet here we are spending time discussing how native animals can be allowed to live without being massacred. I appreciate how hard everyone works but it is frustrating how little recognition from the producer community there is of this work. I appreciate the opportunity to make public comment.
- **Dave Hedrick, Ferry Conservation District:**
  - **(January 9<sup>th</sup>):** I have compensation concerns. WDFW had 12 years to work on compensation but it remains inconsistent and underutilized by producers. I don't believe with much confidence they can get this right either. WDFW made a choice not to understand the actual cost for producers, so I don't understand how they will go to the Legislature, who is responsible for the program, without how much is enough. It is unclear until the end of the Legislative session if part of the Washington Department of Agriculture non-lethal funding for ranchers will be funded, bringing anxiety to ranchers. During the last funding cycle there were additional requirements the Legislature attached to the funding. There is no reason to think this will not escalate until it is a non-functional program for producers, but the WAG and WDFW don't have a final say. Compensation doesn't have a viable solution; it needs to be policy. This is something the WAG and WDFW have control over. In interest in putting policy forward, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is trying to develop standards for non-lethals. This would provide producers the ability to use farm bill funding. Taking the politics out, WDFW and WAG could help with this and get money out of the state. Policy is a solution, but additional federal funding would be helpful.
  - **(January 10<sup>th</sup>):** Federal compensation programs from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and NRCS do exist. They are not money makers for the producers and come with deliverables. They are hard to qualify but a way of getting good conservation practices on the ground without landowners being out of pocket. In Ferry County, FSA and NRCS don't really exist. We have a full time NRCS employee who I haven't seen for months. The availability of funding is competitive. I am on a statewide committee for conservation district funding. There is no such thing as sustainable funding unless it is meant for school districts or transportation. We have to re-apply for funding every two years. There are key legislators who support us, but funding can't be guaranteed the next application cycle. Range riding funding is independent and DFW opposed it

aggressively to the point where I have to file a complaint with the Attorney General's Office. The Compensation program is complicated and a dead end.