

VII. INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

This chapter describes some of the methods that will be used to inform and educate people with an interest in wolves about wolf behavior and wolf management in Oregon. Developers of this Plan believe that implementation of the strategies in this chapter provides a cornerstone to long-term success for the rest of the Plan and strongly recommend adequate funding for this purpose.

A. Communications Plan

In several of the preceding chapters, strategies are directed at a strong information and education program. They include the following:

- Actively educate livestock producers about non-lethal wolf management techniques (see Chapter II, Section C).
- Provide wolf monitoring information to livestock producers as needed to keep them informed of wolf activities and movements (see Chapter II, Section C).
- Educate livestock producers to prevent or reduce wolf-livestock conflicts (see Chapter II, Section D).
- Work with livestock producers, landowners living near wolves, livestock producer organizations, county extension services, ODA and others to develop and deliver a comprehensive educational program to prevent depredation (see Chapter II, Section E).
- Inform and educate the public regarding appropriate responses to encounters with wolves (see Chapter VI, Section A).
- Develop and implement a comprehensive education program that prepares citizens to co-exist with wolves (see Chapter VI, Section A).

Oregonians require and deserve to have access to information about wolves and wolf management from wildlife managers. Wildlife managers need information from Oregonians on sightings, depredation events and wolf behavior to effectively manage wolves. Without a process to create and support two-way communications, implementation of the entire Wolf Conservation and Management Plan will fall short of success; neither managers nor Oregonians will have needed information to make appropriate decisions and evaluate achievement of plan objectives.

An effective plan for communication will require consideration of all groups of people who may be interested in wolves and wolf management. Each group, or audience, may desire or require a slightly different method of communication. The following are some of the audiences that could have an interest in wolf management issues and the implementation of a wolf conservation and management Plan. In cases where most of the audience resides in Oregon, it is noted with (OR).

- Livestock owners (OR)
- Hunters who hunt in Oregon (OR)
- Trappers who trap in Oregon (OR)
- Pet owners in areas with wolves (OR)
- Teachers
- Students (i.e., the next generation)

- The Wildlife Society, Oregon Chapter (OR)
- OSP (OR)
- Wildlife Services
- ODFW staff (OR)
- Reporters
- County governments (OR)
- Legislators (OR)
- USFWS
- Federal land managers
- Large Oregon timberland managers
- Native American tribes
- Wolf advocacy groups and individuals
- Fish and wildlife agencies in Idaho, Washington, Montana, California and Nevada
- Wildlife viewers
- Backcountry recreationalists
- People with an interest in wolves
- People who own wolf hybrids

Communication plans often are written to describe the tools to use to reach specific audiences and achieve desired communications goals; such a plan would be appropriate for wolf management. The wolf communications plan should include at a minimum the communications goals, the audiences to reach, the tools to reach each audience, and the messages to be communicated. Some of the tools chosen will meet an immediate need, while others should be selected or designed to meet long term or future communication needs. Some of the specific tools suggested for inclusion in a wolf communications plan include the following:

- Maintain, as a permanent fixture, the ODFW wolf Web site and some of the pertinent documents (e.g., the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan).
- Create an annual report on management activities that is distributed through the Web site, mail, Commission meetings, and information meetings.
- Develop posters with information on what to do if people need to report wolf depredation or sighting.
- Distribute written materials and educate the public about the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and wolf biology at meetings hosted by other organizations (e.g., Oregon Hunters Association local chapters, Oregon Cattlemen Association, county commissions, fraternal organizations).
- Include information on wolf identification in *Oregon Big Game Regulations* and *Oregon Furbearer Trapping and Hunting Regulations*.

Because the wolf management strategies throughout the rest of the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan must be adaptive, the information and education strategies also should be adaptive. The chosen strategies, or communication tools, should allow flexibility and be based on ongoing management activities and available funding.

B. Strategies for Information and Education

Objective

- To have an informed and educated population to prompt two-way communication between wildlife managers and others with an interest in wolves.

Strategies

- Develop and implement a comprehensive communications plan to meet the following goals:
 - Inform interested parties about ongoing wolf management activities;
 - Educate interested parties about the biology and behavior of wolves as a species in Oregon;
 - Inform domestic livestock and pet owners how to prevent and react to cases of depredation;
 - Inform rural residents, hunters and back country recreationalists about avoiding human safety threats and what to do if human safety is threatened by a wolf;
 - Inform hunters and trappers how to avoid targeting wolves during legal harvest seasons;
 - Receive and provide wolf sighting information to aid with wolf surveillance; and
 - Receive comments on implementation of the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for adaptive management purposes.
- Coordinate information and education efforts with other agencies and non-governmental organizations to ensure that accurate information is disseminated to interested parties and that costs are kept to a minimum.
- Develop written materials for distribution and Web-dissemination on wolves and the wolf management program.
- Ensure that members of the public and media have access to the most current information on wolf management through written materials, Web site content, oral presentations and news releases.
- Create a “bulletin board” monthly notice on the Web or elsewhere that describes: “This is the situation now.”