

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Plan) Wolf Plan Stakeholder Representative (WPSR) Work Group Process *The Dalles, OR – August 30, 2018*

OVERVIEW

The Oregon Wolf Conservation Management Plan's (Plan) Wolf Plan Stakeholder Representative (WPSR) Work Group met at The Dalles ODFW Screen Shop in The Dalles, Oregon on August 30, 2018. Curt Melcher, ODFW Director, Shannon Hurn, ODFW Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs, Doug Cottam, Wildlife Division Administrator, Kevin Blakely, Wildlife Division Deputy Administrator, Derek Broman, Carnivore/Furbearer Program Coordinator, and Roblyn Brown, Wolf Program Field Coordinator, represented ODFW leadership at the meeting. Amira Streeter, Natural Resources Policy Advisor represented the Governor's Office.

Attendance included eight WPSR Work Group members representing stakeholders from throughout Oregon.

Over the course of the meeting, WPSR Work Group members discussed the following topics with each other, ODFW staff, and the Governor's Office.

- Welcome and context for the WPSR Work Group process;
- Confirm Work Group scope, structure and proposed operating principles;
- Framing Work Group hopes and expectations/defining success;
- Discuss WPSR Work Group facilitation topics/key issues, interests, develop ideas to address differences and propose outcomes; and
- Discuss and confirm approach going forward, upcoming meeting dates and topics, and next step tasks.

This report summarizes the major meeting discussions, action items, and next steps for the WPSR Work Group process.

1. Welcome, Introductions, Context, and Agenda

Curt Melcher, ODFW and Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West

Curt Melcher, ODFW, welcomed the attendees and thanked them for their work in the Plan update process. Curt introduced Amira Streeter, Governor's Office, who thanked everyone for coming and engaging in the conversation and relayed the Governor's hope for collaboration and agreement on the Oregon wolf issue.

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West (K&W), asked for a round of introductions. The WPSR Work Group members and audience introduced themselves by name and affiliation.

Deb walked participants through the proposed agenda and logistics, meeting materials, and explained the approach. She noted that this process is open-ended and will continue if the members of the group feel that there is more to work through and that they could find common ground. Curt Melcher, ODFW, said that if the group finds common ground and creates a set of agreements it will become ODFW's recommendations to the Fish and Game Commission (Commission).

Deb reviewed the ground rules and procedures and advised the group that she is a neutral facilitator meant to help the group and process. She asked the members of the press in the room to notify the group if they choose to record the proceedings.

2. WPSR Work Group Structure

Shannon Hurn and Derek Broman, ODFW and Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West

Shannon Hurn, ODFW, explained that the desired outcome of this process is to show the Commission a list of agreements that will be ODFW's recommendations to the Commission.

Derek Broman, ODFW, reviewed a timeline of the previous Plans and Work Group processes. He noted that many of the topics on the table today are topics that stakeholders have discussed for years.

Mary Anne Cooper, Oregon Farm Bureau, identified some stakeholder meetings that were not on the timeline.

- Salem in January of 2017
- The Dalles
- La Grande

Additionally, Oregon Wild and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association (OCA) met with the Governor's Office recently.

Shannon Hurn, ODFW, stated that if the Work Group does not come to any agreements or recommendations ODFW will maintain the 2005 plan with the 2010 update. ODFW, hopes to have a product for the October Commission meeting. ODFW will present a report, hold a Q&A session with the Commission, then finalize the draft and submit it for adoption. Deb Nudelman, K&W, added that Work Group members might be asked to join the report out to the Commission.

Deb Nudelman, K&W, went through the draft operating principles. The purpose of the Work Group is to try and find alignment and report that to the Commission for the update of the Plan. The Work Group can decide how best to represent what happened at the table. The notes to this meeting will be part of the packet to the Commission.

The outcome of the group is not a vote, but the expectation is that the Work Group members will support the eventual product if they have agreed to it. Some members noted that they will not be able to agree to any outcome without presenting it to their Boards or decision-makers. Deb Nudelman, K&W, stated that a provisional yes or no is sufficient for this process. The expectation is that each Work Group member will review the agenda items before each meeting and speak to their Board Members about areas of potential agreement so the conversations at the table can go as far as possible. It is expected that if a Work Group member agrees to the final outcome here, they will support the outcome to the Commission.

3. Framing WPSR Work Group Hopes and Expectations/Defining Success

The Work Group members, ODFW staff, and Governor's Office went around the table and stated their Work Group hopes and expectations and defined success. Comments included:

- Many members expressed hope for collaborative process, that the group can identify areas of agreement, areas of discussion, and develop a plan to work from there. They would like to develop more trust around the table and develop tools and techniques to discuss the issues.
- Hope for substantive agreement on the wolf plan because this Work Group has been able to find agreement in the past.
- Several members reiterated the desire to see fewer dead wolves, fewer dead livestock, and less conflict overall, and that killing wolves would be considered a last resort.
- Hope for a coexistence model that prioritizes non-lethal methods.
- Desire for WPSR work Group members to be active participants in the Wolf Plan.
- Desire to develop a real look at how to manage the wolf situation in Oregon, since wolves constantly come into conflict with livestock, and look at lessons learned from other states as Oregon develops its plan.
- Several members hoped that the Plan could focus on wolf management. One expressed hope for a plan that provides scientifically-based management plan for wolves that is provided by state wildlife managers and provides them the tools they need to manage wolves in accordance with the law.
- Hope to see successful wolf management to stem the elk population decline, and an effective toolbox for management that includes non-lethal responses. OHA agreed with the May 2017 proposed updates to the Plan and feel that small groups of hunters can help as part of a management plan.
- Hope to have a practical discussion that creates an efficient process for determinations on the ground; and focus on the details of what would make a successful management plan that works for the parties rather than focus on core values or politics.
- Hope to see a thriving population of all native wildlife in the state.
- Several expressed a desire to use the best current science and hope for a plan that is science-based, framed well, clarifies unclear terms, and contains a compensation plan that is fair to

taxpayers. Hope to incorporate what we have learned and experienced with wolves over the years into the plan and create a plan to prepare for the challenges ahead, using data specific to Oregon.

4. Discussing WPSR Work Group Facilitation Topics

Deb Nudelman, K&W, asked the group to identify their key issues – what they have to get done and what they think is critically important to talk about.

Derek Broman, ODFW, presented the *Proposed WPSR Work Group Facilitation Topics* document and explained that the list was developed from the convening interviews and the convening interview summary. These topics are a starting point for discussion today.

The group identified key issues and topics (*see attached photographs*) and then out of those identified three topics/issues to focus on today:

1. Controlled take/scale of hunting
2. Chronic depredation
3. Collaring

Controlled Take/Scale of Hunting

Deb Nudelman, K&W, asked the group to explain why controlled take and the scale of hunting is a difficult issue, and to lay out some of the points of view on controlled take. Participants discussed and highlighted these key issues:

- Some cultural mindsets have difficulty accepting the death of a wolf or have an emotional response to the deaths.
- Producers have difficulty accepting the economic loss incurred after a death of livestock.
- Depredation carries an emotional response.
- Different views of when and whether controlled take is necessary. For producers, controlled take is sometimes the only conclusion that seems to work for protection of livestock. Controlling a problematic animal is an appropriate management action that resolves the conflict most quickly. Others are of the opinion that the best management action is one that focuses on solving the problem, and controlled take is not necessary because wolves respond well to effective non-lethal measures.
- One participant noted that if the Plan authorizes wolf hunting it would likely be further contemplated by public referendum.
- Some participants see controlled take as a tool to manage social expectations and wolf populations and expressed hope that the group could talk about the details of regulation and implementation. Another participant noted that controlled take can be a tool, but it sends a particular message to the public about how Oregon cares for its wildlife and carries a potential for abuse.

Deb Nudelman, K&W, signaled for the lunch break and asked participants to ask themselves what they would do as the Commission and needed to update this Plan. What amendments would this

Work Group say yes to? How would you decide on this topic? She asked people to think about their answers to these questions to discuss after lunch.

One participant suggested that the Work Group simplify their discussions by focusing on three points:

1. Limit ODFW's participation to basic collaring and monitoring to ensure the minimum viable population of wolves.
2. Give broad "caught in the act" authority to livestock producers and the agricultural industry, with the caveat that there could be a temporary stop if the wolf population decreases too much.
3. Maintain the Department of Agriculture's compensation program that compensates for lost livestock and non-lethal measures.

The participant notes that this update is meant to cover five years and so could revisit other issues, like hunting, later when wolf populations are larger. One participant stated that "caught in the act" is difficult in practice because it would require constant monitoring at great expense, and ranchers need protection from chronic depredation. Another participant noted that hunting is included in the current Plan, so removing it from future plans would be a step backwards. One participant noted that the Plans are meant to be updated, which might mean taking items out from older Plans if the items are not working or are no longer relevant. Other participants noted that hunting was included as an option in the 2005 and 2010 plans as an option, but never intended as a first resort to resolve livestock conflict.

Some participants noted that hunting is considered one of the management tools available to ODFW and that ODFW should be able to use all the tools available to it if it is the best option. One participant noted that Oregon can look to other states' hunting plans to learn from their mistakes and help manage conflict in the areas of the state with larger wolf populations.

Another participant stated that controlled take was framed well in the 2010 plan because it had limited application and could be used when wolf populations had grown beyond stable populations and conflicts with livestock were due to chronic wolf problems. One participant noted that the 2010 plan included controlled take for both livestock depredation and ungulate species decline. Another participant said that controlled take may cover both of these circumstances but the participant worries that ODFW is shifting controlled take discretion from itself to the public.

The group discussed that the language of "controlled take," "hunting," and "lethal removal" describe different actions but are sometimes used interchangeably. The current draft Plan does not consider proposing any controlled hunts for wolves but does consider having "special permit agents" who are ODFW certified hunters and/or trappers to complete specific lethal removals.

Some participants see controlled take as part of the ODFW toolbox of management options. Other participants expressed disagreement at the idea of contract hunters performing lethal removals. They stated that this part of the Plan should also be founded on achieving goals – do lethal removals help save money and stop livestock depredation? One participant noted that if these three proposed points addressed what ranchers could do to stop chronic depredation, then that participant would have more buy in. Another participant felt that hunting must be part of the Plan.

One participant noted that hunting is used in wildlife and predator management, and the idea of using special permit agents comes from cougar and other large predator management plans that ODFW currently uses. This participant stated that ODFW has the responsibility and authority to manage wildlife and must continue to have controlled take available as an option.

Shannon Hurn, ODFW, noted that ODFW is required to manage wildlife population and does not have the staff or resources to handle management on its own. It has collaborated with hunters to help manage wildlife populations.

Shannon Hurn also stated that there is a definition of chronic depredation in the current Plan and that ODFW would like to see evaluated. She asked to hear proposed definitions and what the group would like to see in Phases I, II, and III.

Collaring

Shannon Hurn, ODFW, stated that ODFW does collaring for two purposes, (1) to monitor wolf populations and collect data, and (2) to identify places ODFW should go to count wolves and investigate pack activity. Derek Broman, ODFW, noted that it is logistically implausible to put a collar on every pack, and so they want to develop a strategy for collaring that is supported by the stakeholders.

Some participants noted that collaring helps them identify and keep track of problematic wolves so that they can protect their livestock. Another noted that collaring helps collect data on how wolves move around the state and volunteered financial assistance to increase collaring.

Roblyn Brown, ODFW, noted that the issue goes beyond financial difficulty. Other considerations include:

- Difficulty in catching wolves
- Collar failure
- Collar life span
- Inherent dangers of flying to locate wolves, and
- Temporal or geographic limitations

Some participants noted that collaring is an important tool for them to use in conjunction with non-lethal methods, because they can assess the pack locations. Another participant noted that Washington State producers have had great outcomes by using collaring data to identify areas of high wolf activity.

One participant asked about using professional trappers to help trap and collar wolves. ODFW has hired professional trappers before with extensive experience with wolves, but there is always a challenge when the trappers were unfamiliar with Oregon geography. Another participant stated that they are supportive of using collars but would like to limit sharing the data. One participant stated that if the collars are purchased from public funds meant for non-lethal methods they should not be used to track wolves for lethal removal or any type of controlled take.

Shannon Hurn, ODFW, asked the participants about the standard of non-lethal measures. She would like a standard for non-lethal measures that is more than a check-list. Some participants noted that there should be a clear understanding and transparency before any lethal removal order is issued. Another participant noted that the group should assess the cost/benefit analysis of having individual plans for each depredation. Another participant stated that they would like to see ranchers and producers provide more description of the non-lethal techniques used and why those tools were appropriate for the situation. This participant offered to work with ODFW to draft a list of non-lethal techniques and when they would be appropriate to use. Another participant agreed with parts of that proposal but noted that producers should maintain their ability to determine the best steps for protecting their herds.

5. Approach Going Forward, Upcoming Meeting Topics, Next Steps and Summary

Deb Nudelman, K&W, asked the group if they would like to schedule future work group meetings. Most participants agreed to continue working on a pathway forward. Some participants noted that they were concerned about how some of the conversations went but are interested in continuing the conversations.

Public Comment

Deb Nudelman, K&W, opened the floor for public comments.

One audience member stated that the voice of the impacted communities is not apparent in the Work Group. This audience member detailed the economic struggles of ranchers and farmers in their county and expressed a desire to have the Association of Oregon Counties added to the Work Group.

Another audience member noted that wolves are critical members of a healthy ecosystem and hoped that the decisions are based on science rather than emotion. This audience member stated discomfort at using public tax dollars to kill a wolf.

Deb thanked everyone for their discussions throughout the meeting and interactions with each other. The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 pm.

Upcoming Meeting Dates	Location
October 9, 2018	Salem, venue to be determined

WPSR Work Group Representatives

Name	Organization/Entity
Jim Akenson	Oregon Hunters Association
Nick Cady	Cascadia Wildlands
Mary Anne Cooper	Oregon Farm Bureau
Rob Klavins	Oregon Wild
Quinn Read	Defenders of Wildlife
Todd Nash	Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Amaroq Weiss	Center for Biological Diversity
Dave Wiley	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

ODFW Team

Name	Title
Curt Melcher	Director <i>(as available)</i>
Shannon Hurn	Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs
Doug Cottam	Wildlife Division Administrator <i>(as needed)</i>
Kevin Blakely	Wildlife Division Deputy Administrator <i>(as needed)</i>
Derek Broman	Carnivore/Furbearer Program Coordinator
Roblyn Brown	Wolf Program Field Coordinator

Governor's Office

Name	Title
Amira Streeter	Natural Resources Policy Advisor

Team Members and Audience

Name	Organization/Entity
Mark Bennett	Baker City Commissioner
Rocky Dallum	Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Mark Gibson	The Dalles Chronicle
Paul Halladay	Oregon Wild
Eric Lubell	Member of the Public
Veril Nelson	Oregon Cattlemen's Association
George Plaven	Capital Press
George Rollins	Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Jerome Rosa	Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Sean Stevens	Oregon Wild

Key Issues Identified by WPSR Work Group Members

