

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

**Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Plan)
Wolf Plan Stakeholder Representative (WPSR) Work Group Process
November 5, 2018**

Webinar and Call-in Locations:

***ODFW Headquarter, 4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE, Salem, OR
OSU Extension Office, 668 NW First Street, Enterprise, OR***

OVERVIEW

The Oregon Wolf Conservation Management Plan's (Plan) Wolf Plan Stakeholder Representative (WPSR) Work Group met via webinar and conference call on November 5, 2018. Some participants also gathered at two locations in Salem and Enterprise. Curt Melcher, ODFW Director, Shannon Hurn, ODFW Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs, Kevin Blakely, Wildlife Division Deputy Administrator, and Derek Broman, Carnivore/Furbearer Program 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.

- Proposal on Developing Ranch and Farm Specific Gray Wolf Non-Lethal Deterrence Plans
- Approach Going Forward, Upcoming Meeting Topics, Next Steps and Summary

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

1. Welcome, Introductions, Context, and Agenda

Shannon Hurn, ODFW Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs and Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West, kicked off the meeting. She reviewed the meeting agenda, meeting materials, and virtual meeting protocols.

WPSR Work Group members and audience participants introduced themselves by name and affiliation. Deb asked for updates since the last meeting. Members did not provide any updates.

Curt Melcher, ODFW Director, thanked participants for their efforts.

2. Review and Discuss Proposal on Developing Ranch and Farm Specific Gray Wolf Non-Lethal Deterrence Plans

Derek Broman, ODFW Wildlife Division Carnivore/Furbearer Program Coordinator and Shannon Hurn, Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs

Derek Broman, ODFW, reminded participants that at the last meeting WPSR Work Group members developed and discussed a proposal to move forward to support non-lethal methods. ODFW reflected on the proposal and developed a document that provides some context, details, and questions that would be useful to consider in looking at the proposal; this is outlined in the *Evaluation of the Proposal on Developing Ranch and Farm Specific Gray Wolf Non-Lethal Deterrence Plans* handout. Derek walked through the components of that handout.

The proposal developed by Work Group members essentially indicates that ODA and ODFW would work with producers to develop specific non-lethal deterrence plans. If the producer were to meet the plan in the face of chronic depredation, the producer could then send a request for lethal control to ODFW. If ODFW were to find that the plan had been adequately implemented, the agency would then be able to issue an authorization for lethal control. Under the proposal, if the producer did not have a nonlethal deterrence plan or did not implement their plan, then no lethal request would be allowed.

ODFW analyzed this proposal and considered how it could be implemented. The handout lays out some of the core values and interests served by the proposal. It then explains the current situation and the number of farms that have livestock. The document also outlines statutes in place, how agencies currently seek to reduce livestock conflict, and the processes for responding to lethal requests.

Currently, wolf removals are not specific to one property or location where the lethal control request came from. Cost effectiveness is a priority in the proposal and ODFW recommends that a business case could be useful to compare and contrast the current system with the proposal.

ODFW also outlined a number of questions regarding the proposal to help participants get into the details, to help understand the values that participants are coming from, and to understand the interests that overlap among the various groups.

Deb asked participants to provide initial reflections and clarifying questions. She encouraged members to think about what needs to be agreed upon now, and what could be deferred until after the Commission decision.

Members made the following reflections:

- Members expressed appreciation for ODFW's work in writing out and evaluating the proposal, providing more specific information, and coming up with pointed questions.
- **“Caught in the act” authority:** Participants noted that it is important to livestock producers that they continue to have the authority to carry out takes in the moment. Others clarified that the proposal is not intended to change that authority. The framework of the proposal applies to lethal control in the face of chronic depredation—not caught in the act situations. The proposal specifies that if a producer does not develop and implement an agreed upon non-lethal plan, then it cannot turn to lethal control. ODFW staff added that it would take a statute modification to end “caught in the act” authority.
- **Compensation:** A participant stated that compensation should continue to roll through at the county level.
- **Difficulty with webinar/conference call discussion:** Several participants noted that this webinar should serve the purpose of outlining various issues and that deeper discussion and coming to an agreement should occur at the in-person meeting on November 27.
- **Questions posed by ODFW:** One member noted that ODFW did a good job in framing the questions (as listed in sections IV and V of the handout). Several advised that, in advance of the November 27 meeting, members should review the questions and prioritize which are most important to discuss as a group.
- **Include additional participants:** A member suggested including Oregon Wildlife Services Program staff in conversations moving forward because they are capable of doing non-lethal methods, are a source of funding, and their participation could be useful.
- **Concern about complexity and cost of the proposal:** A member questioned whether the proposal is an appropriate topic for the workgroup and noted that as compared to the current Oregon Wolf Plan the proposal looks unduly complex, expensive, and additive to ODFW's many other activities. The member expressed support for conducting a business case for committing state resource dollars to the proposal.
- **Concern about resources for ODA:** A member asked about ODA's ability to participate and noted that the agency will need additional resources to support their role. ODFW staff clarified that ODA has the expertise on livestock, and ODFW has the expertise in wildlife management. ODA would need additional resources to conduct this additional work.

Members asked questions, discussed, and made the following comments:

Members discussed **what should occur after ODFW finds that a producer has implemented its approved nonlethal deterrence plan and authorizes lethal control**. Some said that if ODFW makes such a finding, this should not translate into automatic use of lethal control. For example, there may be circumstances in which lethal control would not resolve a chronic predation problem

because the cattle are about to be removed from the land or already have been. Other members noted it is important for there to be as little delay as possible between the request for lethal control and the ability to implement lethal control. ODFW staff expressed concern that, if the producer is not provided with a preapproved process to take care of depredating wolves, they will see no benefit to developing a nonlethal deterrence plan. The producers must see some benefit, or else they will not be encouraged to participate.

Members discussed their **level of support for the Proposal on Developing Ranch and Farm Specific Gray Wolf Non-Lethal Deterrence Plans**, as currently written:

- Some expressed that the proposal is good progress, seems to speak to core values and interests of the group, and can be a way to improve management issues for a broad range of stakeholders. They suggested continuing to work on the proposal and focusing on the places where stakeholders do align.
- Others noted that the plan seems overly complex and expensive and had concerns about ODFW district biologists' availability to implement the plan. They were also concerned that the proposal does not move toward normalization of the wolf species. Participants discussed different points of view on normalization of the wolf population.
- ODFW staff asked whether participants are concerned about asking every producer to develop a plan, and whether it is necessary for every producer to have a plan. Members noted that this is worth discussing. One suggested conducting risk hazard mapping in Oregon to understand where resources need to be allocated.

Members discussed the **approach for future meetings**. Some suggested limiting the conversation of the group to more manageable and simpler topics for resolution. Another suggested that all members aim to provide as many answers as possible to the *"Questions for WPSR to Help Define the Proposal"* prior to the November 27 meeting. Others noted that today's meeting should be an opportunity to check in, and that further discussion should occur on November 27.

Members discussed ODFW's **recommendation to develop a business case** for committing state resources to the proposal. Some noted that if this business case is conducted, the proposal should not just be compared against the status quo but take into account the indirect costs and benefits as well. Some noted that the business case should analyze the cost to producers and to ODFW/other agencies. They added that producers bear greater cost in implementing non-lethal options as compared to occasionally doing a lethal take. A hunting interest added that the best way to reduce expense is by managing the number of wolves through a hunting and trapping program, like in Idaho and Montana; others responded that Oregon has a drastically smaller wolf population than those states, and that it is premature to discuss population control methods.

Members discussed the **appropriate agencies or groups to authorize non-lethal deterrence plans**. ODFW staff suggested that the county be involved in monitoring and implementing the non-lethal deterrence plans. Others noted that county involvement would lead to better buy in by the communities, but the counties would need funding to be involved.

Members suggested **conducting pilot projects with ranchers** to develop sample non-lethal deterrence plans prior to the November 27 WPSR Work Group meeting. The rancher could then report on how the process went. Members are curious to see how much time it would take a district biologist to produce a plan and the expense to a rancher to truly implement non-lethal methods. A

participant suggested using the Warnock ranch in Wallowa County as a sample case, as the owner is already a willing participant. Some suggested using two or three pilot projects rather than one, as a better basis from which to draw conclusions. Members would like to see a report out of the pilot project at the November 27 WPSR Work Group meeting, and possibly at the December 7 Commission meeting. ODFW clarified that it is not realistic to conduct a true pilot project over the next few weeks, but it is likely feasible to develop one or more model plans in partnership with willing producers. They also noted that the agency provides informational packets about conflict deterrence plans to producers, and these packets essentially add up to a non-lethal deterrence plan example.

A participant ended the conversation by noting that the intent of the Proposal is to respond to the **mutual desire of all stakeholders to ensure that lethal control is an option of last resort**. The agreed upon goal of all participants is to reduce conflict overall and see fewer dead wolves and fewer dead livestock. The participant expressed hope for finding a solution that reduces conflict and avoids lethal take.

3. Opportunity for Public Input

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West

Deb Nudelman, K&W, opened the floor for public comments. Four members of the public provided public comment.

John Williams: Normalization of wolves is important. Any plan or proposal that comes out of the WPSR Work Group process should be less complicated and restrictive than the current practice and make it easier to move to lethal control. Moving into Phase 3, wolves should become a more normalized species, not more protected.

Roger Huffman: The outcome of this process should not be more restrictive than what is in place today. In Phase 3, when there are many wolves, producer support should not be lost or reduced. There are already a lot of plans that have been altered. ODA is not equipped to do the level of work that the proposal suggests because ODA staff does not have expertise in predation or wolves; it is simply a grant program to them.

Cynthia Warnock: Producers spend a lot of their time implementing non-lethal methods, and this is not well understood or acknowledged. Also, other ungulates are pushed into producer lands. Producers are interested in putting together a cost estimate of implementation of non-lethal methods, and whether this is an unreasonable financial burden on producers.

Jerome Rosa: ODA's understanding is that their involvement in non-lethal deterrence plans would be fairly limited, and they have just become aware that they may have a more inclusive role going forward. They are not equipped to have a larger role than in the past.

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

Curt Melcher, ODFW Director, and Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West

Members discussed ideas and suggestions to continue to refine the proposal and discuss other topics related to the Oregon Wolf Plan.

Members suggested and agreed upon the following next steps:

- **Respond to Questions for WPSR to Help Define the Proposal:** Members are encouraged to review the Questions for WPSR to help define the Proposal listed on page 7 of the handout and to answer these to the best of their ability prior to the November 27 WPSR Work Group meeting. The facilitation team encouraged members to collaborate with other stakeholders that hold different points of view, and attempt to answer the questions together to find where there is mutual interest and a path forward. Members should aim to provide their responses via email to Kearns & West by close of business, Monday, November 12.
- **Develop Sample Non-Lethal Deterrence Plans:** Members agreed that it would be useful for two or three producers to work together with ODFW biologists to develop sample non-lethal deterrence plans. ODFW staff noted that they would send out via email various non-lethal methods resource materials to help in crafting the sample plans.

Members discussed alternative dates for the next WPSR Work Group meeting, as Todd Nash is not available for the November 27 date. Participants were not able to find a suitable alternative date. The Oregon Cattlemen's Association is requested to find an alternate to attend the November 27 meeting. Members agreed that the November 27 meeting should be held in Pendleton for the benefit of eastside stakeholders and members of the public.

Curt Melcher, ODFW Director, closed the meeting and expressed appreciation for participants' time and interest.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 pm.

Upcoming Meeting Dates	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 27, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pendleton, OR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 8, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portland, OR

Meeting Participation**WPSR Work Group Representatives**

Name	Organization/Entity
Jim Akenson	Oregon Hunters Association
Nick Cady	Cascadia Wildlands
Mark Bennett	Oregon Farm Bureau
Sean Stevens	Oregon Wild
Suzanne Stone	Defenders of Wildlife
Todd Nash	Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Amaroq Weiss	Center for Biological Diversity
David Wiley	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

ODFW Team

Name	Title
Curt Melcher	Director
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
Roger Huffman	Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Diane Gellegos	Wolf Haven International
Jim Dundan	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Oregon Hunters Association
Roger Huffman	
Ken McCall	Oregon Hunters Association
Danielle Moser	Defenders of Wildlife
George Plaven	Capital Press
Jerome Rosa	Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Cynthia Warnock	Wallowa County Rancher
John Williams	Wallowa County