ODFW Wolf Depredation Investigation Summary

Date: 5/21/13  
County: Umatilla  
General Area: Weston Mountain area – private land

Situation: A private landowner found four dead sheep (1 ewe, 3 lambs) and one injured sheep (ram) in a small pasture near their house on the morning of May 21, 2013. One lamb was also reported to be missing. Large canid tracks were observed and wolf depredation was suspected. ODFW examined the sheep the same day.

ODFW findings: Confirmed

Evidence of wolf presence in the area? Three single, large, canid tracks were observed in the pasture within 50 yards of the dead sheep. A GPS collared wolf (OR14, Umatilla River Pack) was recorded as being within 0.8 miles of the dead sheep at 3am and 1.2 miles at 6am that morning.

Summary of evidence: After a field investigation and available evidence was identified and collected, the dead sheep were transported to the ODFW Pendleton office and skinned. All three lambs showed bite wounds over their back and sides and all bites showed corresponding marks or holes through the hide. Bite wounds on all three lambs showed subcutaneous hemorrhage indicating attack on live animals. The ewe showed no bite wounds and the cause of death could not specifically be determined by physical evidence. Her proximity to the other dead sheep in the pasture and the estimated same time of death are compelling that her death was directly related to the overall depredation event which killed the lambs. The injured ram showed multiple bite wounds on its rear legs, anus, tail, and it also had an unspecified injured neck (crooked). The ram also showed signs of extreme stress and physical exhaustion consistent with its wounds. It is unknown if the ram will survive. The bite wounds on the ram were similar (in appearance and location) to previous wolf depredation events in this area in 2012. Wounds on all of the examined sheep were consistent with wolf bites (size and spacing), and combined with confirmed wolf presence in the nearby area, and tracks observed within the pasture, represent clear evidence of wolf depredation. The reported missing lamb is presumed to be a wolf-caused loss as part of the same incident.