

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

The Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Plan) and its associated technical rules were first adopted by the Commission in December 2005. The Plan calls for an evaluation every five years, similar to other plans, with the first scheduled update in 2010. Following mediation and a settlement agreement, a few areas of the Plan and associated rules were modified in July 2013. In early 2015, Plan criteria were met for the Department to consider delisting wolves under the Oregon Endangered Species Act and the evaluation process consumed Department staff for much of the year. The Commission ultimately removed wolves from the list of Oregon Endangered Species in November 2015, and following that change in legal status the Department initiated the Plan review process in 2016.

The process was not a re-write of the original Plan, but rather an update, and consisted of an evaluation of the Plan, reorganization of content, a review of the primary issues, and composing a draft update of the Plan. To focus the Plan review process, Department staff outlined and adhered to the following guiding principles:

1. Adhere to the factors included in the delisting analysis when considering any proposed changes to the Plan.
2. Maintain conservation focus for wolves in all population phases even though wolves are (state) delisted.
3. Maintain the overall principle of increasing flexibility in management options to deal with conflict as the population increases.
4. Address Department staff workload and resources when evaluating future commitments.
5. Develop a more effective workload-sharing program with the USFWS to monitor expanding wolf populations and address wolf-livestock conflict situations in the federally listed portion of Oregon.

The update reflects the Plan's adaptive management approach by evaluating implementation of the Plan and seeking practical changes to improve implementation and to accomplish Plan objectives.

Draft updates were released in April and December 2017 and the final draft proposed for adoption was released April 15, 2019.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Numerous informal/impromptu communications occurred with various stakeholder groups, state and federal agencies, landowner groups, and the public at large throughout the entire duration of this process. A large number of public meetings, discussions, and reports occurred throughout this process, including stakeholder meetings conducted through a professional facilitator.

- **January 2016 Commission (Salem) Director's Report-** Staff provided a proposed timeline for the review and update of the Plan.
- **March 2016 Commission (Salem) Director's Report-** Following the presentation of the 2015 Oregon Annual Wolf Report, invited panelists representing multiple organizations and perspectives provided testimony and engaged in Q & A with the Commission regarding the review and update of the Plan.
- **June 2016- (The Dalles/La Grande) Stakeholder Meetings-** Small group meetings with stakeholders.
- **July 2016- (La Grande) Wolf Plan Stakeholder Meeting-** Representative stakeholders attended a meeting in La Grande to discuss in depth the most common issues raised by stakeholders.
- **August 2016 Commission (Salem) Director's Report-** Staff provided an update on Wolf Plan review.
- **October 2016 Commission (La Grande) Agenda Item D-** Staff provided a detailed summary of the issues/concerns raised during the review of the Plan. Much of the content addressed comments provided by Wolf Stakeholder panelists in the March 2016 Commission Meeting. Public Testimony was received.
- **January 2017 (Salem) Wolf Plan Stakeholder Meeting-** Plan stakeholders attended a half-day meeting in Salem to discuss in depth the most common issues raised by stakeholders.
- **April/May 2017 Commission (Klamath Falls & Portland) Exhibit I-** The first draft update of the Plan was released prior to this meeting. Staff provided a detailed summary of the draft update of the Plan and public testimony was received. At the request of some stakeholders, a duplicate meeting was held in Portland in May where staff provided the same presentation and public testimony was again received.
- **June 2017 (Salem) Commission Work Session-** In a public forum, the Commission met with staff to ask questions and to have in-depth conversation about the Plan. No public testimony was received although members of the audience were occasionally called upon by the Commission.
- **September 2017 Commission (Welches) Director's Report-** Staff provided the Commission with an update on the progress of the Plan review process. No public testimony was received.
- **December 2017 Commission (Salem) Director's Report-** At the request of stakeholders and the Commission, a Working Copy of the Draft Update of the Wolf Plan was composed and made available to the public leading up to the meeting. The Working Copy of the Draft Update contained and highlighted the changes made to the Draft Update since it was first shared in April 2017. Staff provided a summary of the Working Copy and panels of invited stakeholders provided testimony. The consideration of the Plan update that was scheduled for the January 2018 meeting was postponed as part of the discussion. Chair Finley directed staff to

have a third party facilitator get representative stakeholders together and work towards consensus or compromise on the last few issues.

- **Facilitated Process**
July 2018 (Multiple Locations) Facilitator Convening Interviews- Facilitator conducted Wolf Plan stakeholder interviews to learn about respective roles and responsibilities, interests and issues, as well as ideas and suggestions for how to provide for a productive and constructive process. The interview summary was released in August 2018.
Facilitated Meetings: Aug 30 (The Dalles), Oct 9 (Salem), Nov 5 (Conference Call), Nov 27 (Pendleton), and Jan 8 (Clackamas). Final Report completed and released April 2019.
- **December 2018 Commission (Salem) Director's Report-** Staff and the stakeholder facilitator provided the Commission with an update on the progress of the facilitated process. No public testimony was received.
- **April 15, 2019 (Salem) Draft Plan Release-** Department produced news release announcing the public release of the draft Plan, two months prior to the June 2019 Commission Meeting.
- **May 17, 2019 (Salem) Commission Work Session-** The Commission held a Work Day conference call to discuss the Wolf Plan in anticipation of the June Commission meeting. Staff participated in the call as a resource to aid in the discussion. Members of the public could attend or listen to the discussion via our website however opportunities for testimony were not scheduled.

ISSUE

UPDATE OF THE OREGON WOLF CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

ANALYSIS

The current Plan has been successful in conserving and managing wolves in Oregon and the draft 2019 Plan builds upon those successes. Many of the proposed changes in this evaluation and update of the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan are a direct result of input received from stakeholder groups and the public. Department staff incorporated the input on key issues, looked toward the next five-year period of implementation, and adapted the Plan using what we have learned to address the challenges ahead. Throughout the entire process of updating the Plan and meeting with the public, Department staff continued to uphold the guiding principles identified at the onset of the process.

The draft 2019 Plan differs from the current Plan in the following broad categories:

1. Incorporated large amounts of new scientific information related to wolves and their management.
2. Updated with most recent Oregon-specific wolf data to inform better decision-making.

3. Expanded, condensed, or combined some chapters based on their frequency of use by the public and managers.
4. Retained appendices pertinent to present management of wolves in Oregon.

Numerous significant policy issues were identified early on in the process and were addressed in the April and December 2017 drafts. Efforts to find consensus on remaining unresolved issues consisted of a facilitated stakeholder process in 2018. The draft 2019 Plan is the product of edits made to the December 2017 draft after the conclusion of the facilitation process. Most of these recent changes occurred in Chapters II, III, and IV, with minimal changes elsewhere.

Oregon Administrative Rules were edited to reflect draft 2019 Plan changes.

To retain historical context and documentation, earlier versions of this Plan will continue to be made publically available on the ODFW wolf website.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt staff proposal for Wolf Plan update.
2. Modify staff proposal for Wolf Plan update.

**STAFF
RECOMMENDATION**

Option 1.

DRAFT MOTION	I move to amend OAR Chapter 635, Division 110 as proposed by staff.
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon Filing