

Wolf Advisory Group

Meeting Summary¹, November 15-16, 2023

WAG members present: Alex Baier, Amy Porter, Bill Kemp, Caitlin Scarano, Dan Paul, Jessica Kelley, Lisa Stone, Lynn Okita, Marie Neumiller, Nick Martinez, Paula Swedeen, Rick Perleberg, Samee Charriere, Scott Nielsen, Sierra Smith, Todd Holmdahl, and Tyler Allen.

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW, Department) staff members present: Annemarie Prince, Ben Maletzke, Brock Hoenes, Jennifer Johnson, Jim Brown, Kevin Robinette, Joey McCanna (Day 1), Kyla West, Mike Kuttel, Ross Huffman (Day 2), Seth Thompson, Staci Lehman, Trent Roussin, Candace Bennett (Day 1)

Facilitation team: Susan Hayman, Casey Hart, Angela Cruz (Day 1), and Andres Sheikh (Day 2)

Meeting Action Items

Responsible Party	Action Item	Target Date
WDFW	Schedule Director Susewind's to attendance for a portion of the April WAG meeting once the date has been set.	Mid-December
WAG Members	Provide final review and feedback regarding the decision-making advice refined during the November WAG meeting.	Mid-December
Facilitation Team	Schedule calendar year 2024 WAG meeting dates and locations (January meeting will be virtual)	Mid-December
WDFW	Confirm internally to what extent and on which aspects of the proposed compensation agenda item WDFW can participate in at the January meeting.	Mid-December
WDFW	Provide the WAG a clarified timeline for the next steps involved in finalizing the draft Gray Wolf Periodic Status review to determine appropriate opportunities for additional WAG input.	January WAG meeting
Facilitation Team	Convene and schedule a meeting for the Washington/Oregon Cross-Boundary Task Group .	Mid-December
Facilitation Team	Summarize the list of information needs WAG members and WDFW staff identified for the cross-boundary topic and provide this for the task group meeting.	November 30
Facilitation Team	Forward the Ferry County's Voluntary Stewardship Program Biennial Report with the WAG (report was submitted as part of Dave Hedrick's public comment at the November WAG meeting)	Completed

November 15, 2023

Opening

Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic facilitator, opened the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) meeting by welcoming members, WDFW staff, and meeting observers. She provided an overview of the meeting objectives and agenda, and reviewed the WAG Ground Rules. The purpose of the meeting was to 1) Consider proposed WAG advice to WDFW regarding cross-boundary (Washington/Oregon) wolf-livestock conflicts. 2)

¹ This summary is a synthesis of the meeting discussion Nov 15-16, 2023. The meeting summary will be publicly available following finalization of the meeting documentation package.

Understand WDFW's existing program for compensating producers for direct and indirect losses due to wolf-livestock interactions; discuss challenges with the existing program, and identify potential future opportunities to address these challenges. 3) Provide opportunities for WAG members and WDFW staff to build collaborative capacity, promote conflict transformation, and strengthen their relationships with one another.

Introductions

WAG Member and WDFW Staff Introductions

Hayman invited WAG members and WDFW staff in attendance to introduce themselves.

WDFW Updates

Periodic Status Review (PSR)

Ben Maletzke, WDFW Statewide Wolf Specialist, provided an update that the Draft PSR was publicly shared and WDFW received approximately 12000 comments. WDFW is reviewing these comments and will consider them as they develop the final report. Maletzke reported the final PSR will be submitted to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) early next year.

Petition to the Commission

Maletzke reported that a petition was put forth to the WDFW Commission to "amend the Washington Administrative Code to bring clarity, accountability, and transparency to Washington's wolf management decisions," and thanked the WAG members for reaching sufficient consensus on a comment letter that was both emailed to and verbally submitted to the Commission on October 28, 2023. Maletzke reminded WAG members that it's important to remember there is a broad audience in Washington interested in wolf management and posing a variety of ideas for how wolf management should be handled. Maletzke encouraged people to watch [Julia Smith's Draft Periodic Status Review for the Gray Wolf Briefing and Discussion](#) presentation to the Commission on June 22, 2023, regarding Washington's process and current status for addressing livestock depredations and wolf removals. He noted Washington has a lower number of wolf depredations compared to other western states.

Wolf Team Updates

Maletzke noted that the Wolf Team will begin annual surveys and helicopter captures in the winter months. The team values and encourages public submittal of wolf and animal reports and observations as these are critical information that supplement the winter wolf counts. Maletzke also noted that monthly [Gray Wolf Updates](#) continue to be posted online on WDFW's website.

Wolf Policy Lead Position Transition

Maletzke reported that Julia Smith, (previous Wolf Policy Lead), accepted a position with WDFW as an Endangered Species Recovery Section Manager for the Wildlife Program Diversity Division. WDFW will pursue filling the Wolf Policy Lead position. Maletzke apologized to the public that in this transition, publicly available materials were posted later than usual for this WAG meeting.²

WDFW Director Response Update

² Maletzke acknowledged this on both November 15th and 16th

WDFW acknowledged that Director Susewind has not yet provided a response to the WAG's Wolf-Ungulate Interaction Advice submitted to the Director on August 14, 2023, based on action taken the June 27-28, 2023³, WAG meeting. The WAG has also not received acknowledgement of the letter submitted to the Director on October 16, 2023, documenting the WAG sounding board on August 22, 2023, Sounding Board⁴ for the draft PSR. Brock Hoene, WDFW, reported that Director Susewind would appreciate an opportunity to attend an upcoming WAG Meeting in person and provide his response at that time. This would also be an opportunity for an update on WDFW's coordination of the State Interagency group working on carcass management issues (a topic relevant to November 2022 WAG Advice). WDFW will look to schedule this for the Director.

Additional information-sharing

Following WDFW's update, Alex Baier, WAG member, commented that on November 14, 2023, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and several partners closed on a \$15,000 acre acquisition to increase public access to 600,000 acres of public land.

WAG Decision Making (Day 1 and Day 2)

Discussion of the Decision-Making Model (Part 1, Day 1)

Hayman, reviewed the current WAG's Decision-Making (Sufficient Consensus) Model. The WAG engaged in a two-part discussion⁵ to review pieces of the decision-making process that felt problematic or needed clarification. Hayman emphasized that the purpose of this discussion was to clarify the language, think about the mechanics of the group decision making process, and consider consequences to those WAG members and their interests when they are not able to agree to a sufficient consensus decision. The purpose of the discussion was *not* to change the process or alter the intent of the current language. Those WAG members who were on the WAG when the sufficient consensus model was designed ("legacy WAG members") provided insights into how and why the terms of this model were developed and adopted.

The following key points were noted during this discussion:

- **Number required for "sufficient consensus:"** The group generally agreed that bullet 4 (Wolf Advisory Group Guidelines, WAG Decision Making) needed to be reworked to more clearly describe the number of WAG members required to reach sufficient consensus, and the number of WAG members from the same identity group that would prevent sufficient consensus through their disagreement. A legacy WAG member clarified that the current language and chosen numbers stemmed from the previous the WAG's previous facilitator's experience determining an appropriate number of dissenting members based on the group's size.
- **Identity Groups:** For context, legacy WAG members and WDFW staff working with WAG at that time discussed that identity groups originated from the Wolf Working Group and social issues going on at that time. The identity groups were defined as hunting, livestock, and environmentalists (there was agreement that the term "conservationist" could apply to

³ Additional time was required to reach WAG members not in attendance at the June 2023 meeting to ascertain their individual decisions regarding the provisional advice.

⁴ Additional time was required for WAG review of the draft sounding board letter, collection of additional responses and small edits to sounding board comments.

⁵ Discussion of the Decision-Making Model process occurred in two separate sessions on November 15th and 16th, respectively. All notes on the discussion and the final provisional advice are presented together in this section.

anyone). Since that time, WDFW has actively solicited WAG members with more diverse perspectives, creating blurred lines between identity groups. WDFW staff acknowledged this and explained that they chose some members to fill identity gaps while others were chosen to bring diverse perspectives, serving the WAG “at-large.” WAG never discussed or modified rules to include “at-large” members. The following key points were noted regarding identity groups:

- Some felt creating an “at large” group identity group would change the flexibility of this group to identify with any of the existing three identity groups for purposes of determining sufficient consensus on any given decision.
 - Some felt creation of an “at large” group may affect the current understanding that it is okay for *any* WAG member to align with *any* identity group during the decision-making process.
 - Some members questioned the utility of having explicit WAG identity groups, feeling that it sometime impeded open-mindedness and flexibility. They advocated that flexibility between identities should be preserved to allow for open-mindedness, information sharing, and diverse perspectives no matter a WAG member’s identity with one or multiple groups.
 - Some felt an “at large” group would provide benefits, clarity, and strength for WAG:
 - Some felt “at large” members would spread support and create balance between identity groups by encouraging the group to invest time where needed to reach consensus.
 - Some currently considered “at large” felt creation of this as a separate identity group could provide a clearer understanding for their place within the WAG.
- **Constraints during the decision-making process.** Those WAG members who are part of a larger organization may not have full, autonomous control over their decision due to the potential broader implications for their organizations, even if the individual WAG member supports a given decision and the WAG process for arriving at this decision—they may still have to decide against a particular decision on a WAG recommendation. It is important for WAG members to be aware of the complexities and potential implications for members under these circumstances.
 - **Decision approach.** Based on the recent example of sufficient consensus reached with the petition comment letter, some members felt the rushed timeline and lack of ability for WAG members to talk face-to-face about the topic was unfortunate, even though there was sufficient consensus to move forward with the letter. Generally, WAG members felt that future decisions should not be made like this (short turn around, email polling) even if they result in some lost short-term opportunities for the WAG to provide input/feedback into a Department or Commission decision.

WAG Decision-Making Discussion Outcomes (Part 1, Day 1)

1. If sufficient consensus is not reached, it does not necessarily mean the topic is disregarded or tabled. The WAG can discuss whether it is worthwhile to continue the discussion and see if future consensus can be reached.
2. Clarification is needed for where an at-large WAG member (without an assigned identity group) fits within the decision-making process.

3. Clarification is needed surrounding guidelines for WAG members who did not agree to a WAG decision reached through sufficient consensus, will support the WAG's decision based on the decision-making process, and wish to make a public statement of why they disagreed with the decision (nuance needed). WAG members may not agree with a decision but understand they must support the decision once it is made to uphold the integrity of the WAG process.
4. Further clarification is needed for how WAG members should self-identify during WAG introductions and decision-making.
5. The Facilitation Team was assigned the task to clarify (not change the intent of) the language of Bullet 4 of the [Decision-Making document](#) and add a footnoted "statement of intent," and bring this back to the group on Day 2 (November 16).

WAG Decision-Making Outcomes (Part 2, Day 2)

The Facilitation Team shared a draft of the revised WAG Decision-Making process with WAG members and WDFW staff. Following additional discussion, the group contributed to a revised draft, now contained in [Appendix A](#).

WAG members reflected that, overall, the new language is clearer, and cautioned each other to be careful not to change the intent of the process at this time. A WAG member noted that sufficient consensus remains important in preventing small groups from holding power and there needs to be comfort in the decision-making

This is still some discomfort about the "at large" members, and whether the current decision-making process creates a "power imbalance." More discussion is needed on this topic and language. Other ideas posed were to think through scenarios of how the at-large group would play out, or potentially add the fourth "at-large" group to see how it plays out.

Next steps: The facilitation team will make the current draft available for online edits and comments. The group will seek to ratify these clarifications at the January WAG meeting.

Washington and Oregon Cross Boundary Advice, Part 1 (Day 1)

Marie Neumiller and Caitlin Scarano (WAG members) recapped the background and status of the Cross Boundary Advice drafted by a team of WAG members and WDFW staff tasked to do so at the June WAG meeting, with the purpose to advise WDFW on managing wolf-livestock conflicts on a pack-basis for those that cross Oregon-Washington State Boundaries. They emphasized that the focus of the advice is on those packs that travel and hunt across the Washington-Oregon border. They noted that WDFW co-managers borders with other state and Tribal wildlife management entities, but reminded the group that the Washington-Oregon border was chosen by the WAG as a place to start due to similar non-lethal management requirements and depredation protocols. WAG advice-writing group members said they worked hard to come up with a middle ground, inclusive solution and to consider depredations on a pack-basis. They reminded WAG members that producers are negatively impacted when the depredation count towards consideration for lethal removal restarts after a pack moves across state boundaries.

WDFW noted that this topic is uncomfortable for WDFW because they have no control outside Washington, and the topic could create tension with other jurisdictions. WDFW would want to ensure the reason they would be working with Oregon rather than other jurisdictional boundaries would not be due to a lack of trust. WDFW would not prefer to, but is willing to continue having discussions.

Regarding Pack 139 (a pack recently active across WA/OR state lines), Maletzke said WDFW Director Susewind was aware of the depredation concerns in Oregon before the lethal removal thresholds were reached in Washington. WDFW provided more information to the WAG about this situation:

- Pack 139 caused four Washington depredations over four months. The pack moved between Oregon and Washington over a few months and had split after a first set of removals. WDFW Director Susewind was aware of the depredation concerns before the lethal removal thresholds were reached in Washington. When two depredations occurred in Washington, WDFW reached out to ODFW and compiled information into a draft recommendation including non-lethal tools in place before the depredation. WDFW could not verify the non-lethal control measures being taken in Oregon. Maletzke stressed that Oregon depredations were considered in decision making and the case was treated as if it would have happened with Washington documentation, leading to a more aggressive removal of two wolves instead of one, due to the need to change pack behavior and an understanding of the Oregon depredations.
- WDFW has limited staff to reach all Washington producers and obtain documentation of non-lethal deterrents, and verification takes a significant amount of time. Conflict specialists are not able to achieve the same level of documentation for Oregon producers as they do with Washington producers. WDFW staff do their best to act quickly to remove wolves after a lethal removal is issued. WDFW can intervene quicker with greater understanding of chronic issues, pack backgrounds, and with documentation in place.
- WDFW, and likely ODFW, is reluctant to share confidential producer information regarding use of non-lethal practices. Current agency regulations prevent information sharing outside of the state. Producers can share their own information as they wish.
- Cross-boundary depredation issues have been addressed on an as-needed basis and have come up a very limited number of times. Some feel it is more conservative (and preferable) to count depredations only within Washington for the “three in 30 days or four in ten months” provision of the livestock protocol⁶, though considering occurrences in other jurisdictions.
- WDFW currently has transboundary agreements with ODFW for some wildlife species—Colombia white-tailed deer are an example of a species with a formal transboundary agreement.

WAG members continued discussion of the cross-boundary advice, noting the following points of discussion:

- A WAG member proposed adding “Washington–Oregon” to the title of the Cross-Boundary Advice.
- Considerations regarding other jurisdictions:
 - Other jurisdictions were not included in this initial advice simply because qualitatively and categorically, they lack similarity in their non-lethal requirements. A statement in the preamble and body of the advice is included to not alienate others with whom WDFW has co-management relationships.

⁶ If WDFW has documented three depredation events within 30 days, or four events in 10 months, the agency may consider lethal removal. WDFW. 2017. Wolf-livestock interaction protocol. Available at https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-09/20200915_wdfw_wolf_livestock_interaction_protocol.pdf.

- If this advice becomes policy, will it pose legal risks because of the lack of control in and need to demonstrate similar non-lethal deterrent policy and implementation with Oregon?
- If this advice is applied beyond Oregon in the future, it would be important to consider whether another jurisdiction's lack of non-lethal deterrent documentation would prevent the ability to work together.
- The first draft advice bullet becomes invalid if protocol alignment with Oregon ceases.
- Considerations of effects on producers:
 - A WAG member expressed that while producers are encouraged to work with WDFW, WDFW is not always able to act quickly—producers may take direct action (e.g., caught in the act) to prevent chronic depredations from developing.
 - SE WA producers are currently struggling with cross-boundary depredation issues and it is important for the WAG to consider this advice in the way it was crafted to help producers. It is also important to consider how to proceed in the best and most efficient way to help producers while also considering differing opinions and methods to reduce depredation issues.
- Considerations in drafting advice language:
 - The first advice bullet is most problematic, as it would result in depredations in Oregon counting towards the “three in 30 days or four in ten months” provision (3/30 or 4/10) of the Washington wolf-livestock interaction protocol. This is challenging for some members, as the 3/30 or 4/10 provision was a difficult negotiation at the time of its adoption, and represented attempts to fuse the best science and public tolerances.
 - Other WAG members noted the point of the 3/30 or 4/10 rule is to stop chronic depredation. Recommending the consideration of depredations within the same pack regardless of which side of the state boundary would reduce the current practice that, from a producer perspective, can result in “restarting the counts” before lethal action is even considered by WDFW.
- Additional reflections:
 - WAG members and WDFW staff expressed the belief that Washington producers operating in areas with wolves generally do practice non-lethal deterrents, even if not documented.
 - WAG members and WDFW staff discussed that the current requirement for two non-lethal deterrents must include the best options for lethal deterrents, depending on the circumstances for each producer and the area in which they operate. In Washington, range riding is considered a key non-lethal deterrent.
 - An inconsistency was highlighted of the need to wait until the 3rd WA depredation even after previous Oregon depredations to consider lethal removal, while lethal action can be taken if three depredations happen in Washington only, but one happens to lack verification of a producer's non-lethal deterrents.

Hayman asked for a show of hands to determine if there was sufficient consensus to continue refining the advice points for a Day 2 decision. WAG members did not reach sufficient consensus to continue to advance the advice, with five WAG members deciding against moving forward. WAG members decided

it would be useful to discuss what information would be needed/questions to be answered on Day 2 to determine if there is still interest to move forward with this advice.

Public Comment

Three persons provided public comment this day, as documented in [Appendix B](#).

Closing

Hayman invited WAG members and WDFW staff to provide final reflections. Hayman thanked members and WDFW staff for their participation, and members of the public for attending and commenting, and closed the day's session. She reminded the public of the opportunity to join an informal discussion session with WDFW staff and WAG members following the closure of Wednesday's WAG meeting.

In addition to general round-robin closeout comments, the following WAG members provided specific updates:

- Dan Paul, WAG member, commented that he had to rescind his signature on the letter regarding the petition to the Commission. While he supports the WAG and signed letter, the letter differs enough from national policy that the organization can't stand by it. These topics are complicated for states that don't have a body like WAG.

November 16, 2023

Opening

Hayman opened the second day of the meeting by reviewing the meeting agenda and objectives. Hayman. She then invited WAG members and WDFW staff to check in with each other via round robin. Hayman noted if the public ever has any comments or questions to email the WAG Facilitation team at wagfacilitation@rossstrategic.com.

Washington and Oregon Cross-Boundary Advice Discussion (Part 2, Day 2)

WAG members, guided by Hayman, brainstormed the key information they would like available for further consideration of draft advice. As this information was collected on flip charts, Maletzke provided additional insights regarding ODFW's non-lethal deterrents and depredation protocols after talking to two ODFW biologists following yesterday's meeting:

- WDFW Protocol: WDFW frequently communicates and shares data with ODFW biologists and conflict specialists. Shared information goes into recommendations for decision making. Conflict specialists first consider if non-lethal tools could be used as reactionary measures and WA Documentation is needed to confirm non-lethal deterrent methods are properly in place. WDFW accounts for protocol and all depredations in decision making and does not issue lethal removal until required thresholds are met. If one depredation in Oregon adds to reaching the 3/30 or 4/10 requirement and non-lethal measures are in place, the situation may quicken consideration of a lethal removal decision. If the depredations continue, WDFW will likely issue a lethal depredation removal order. WDFW looks at each scenario individually and considers the totality of the pack and how actions may change pack behavior.

- ODFW Protocol:
 - Oregon biologists have historically managed depredation issues but recently, since mid-October 2023, USDA Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services) have assumed this role. Wildlife Service staff need to go out with Oregon biologists five times before they are allowed to conduct investigations on their own—the purpose is to create consistency on depredation determinations between the ODFW and Wildlife Services during this time of transition.
 - For a first depredation, ODFW requires some kind of documentation of the use of non-lethal deterrents by the producer. Producers create a “backgrounder” which is a journal or verbal description to the ODFW biologist. The producer documents their practices prior to the first depredation and whether they have made any adjustments to their non-lethal deterrent measures since the first depredation.
 - Local biologists have discussions and after two depredations, make recommendations to the ODFW Wildlife Division, which determines whether to proceed with lethal removal. When ODFW does reach a decision to proceed with lethal removal, it authorizes Wildlife Services, or the producers themselves, to be conduct the removal. Most cases occur on open range.
 - Like WDFW, ODFW has the option to implement incremental removal.
 - Unlike WDFW, ODFW does not have written specifications for range rider frequency and documentation requirements. Producers are to check on livestock and keep track of how many days they range-ride, but there are no criteria to say or track how many days are required for this to count as a lethal-deterrent measure. Oregon doesn’t have range riding programs like Northeast Washington’s.

Following this information-sharing regarding Oregon’s practices, WAG members and WDFW staff continued the conversation Hayman posed several questions that the WAG and WDFW staff responded to:

Question 1: What would be needed to meet the objectives of this advice?

1. Need for WDFW to verify non-lethal deterrents in Oregon.
2. Need for the “clock to not restart” for producers.
3. Treat a wolf pack as a pack: manage as a pack to benefit wolves and producers.
4. Advice would work for all borders with Washington (state and Tribal).
 - a. Consider challenges and proceed with caution.
 - b. Perhaps start with a pilot program—e.g., start small with one border and expand to multiple borders, or limit application to producers spanning both WA and OR borders.
5. Honor existing thresholds.
6. Act soon—the need for producers is now.

Question 2: What information is needed for WAG members to develop/evaluate whether to proceed with the advice?

1. What does Oregon require for non-lethal deterrents and how does it fit into the framework of Washington's process?
2. How can WDFW verify Oregon non-lethals to be considered for Washington decisions?
3. What is threshold/quality of information that the Washington Attorney General's office would need to protect Washington from legal challenges to lethal removal decision that incorporated both Oregon and Washington depredation data?
4. What is the capacity and willingness for WDFW to meet with ODFW staff for this topic in this region? (e.g., joint information sharing, gathering, documenting, quality of information, etc.)?
5. What resources (e.g., staff, funding) would WDFW require to make this advice work?
6. What is ODFW and WDFW's interest in co-managing around this topic?
7. What does the landscape need to look like for producers to build relationships together? What does this process look like to build increased accessibility of trust and transparency? Can there be a "cross-border producer network" (including producers with their livestock pasture spanning across borders.
8. What does the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) say about any restrictions for using other state's information as a factor to consider in lethal removals?
9. Is there an opportunity for NGOs to play a part in this process?
10. How would the following hypothetical situation be handled and how would it affect recommendations for action (note—some producers have experienced this scenario within WA):
 - a. Producer A implements "everything" required regarding non-lethal deterrents
 - b. Producer B implements partial non-lethal deterrents
 - c. Producer C implements "nothing" in the way of non-lethal deterrents, or non-lethal actions cannot be verified.

That is, if Oregon producers are assumed NOT to implement non-lethal deterrents, how would this affect WDFW's decision regarding whether to include an Oregon depredation into its decision? Does WDFW need to verify non-lethal deterrents for any lethal action consideration?
11. How does ODFW document non-lethals (who does depredation investigations)? How might ODFW be able to share non-lethal information with WDFW?

Cross-Boundary Advice Next Steps

WAG members decided to convene a task group (representatives of WAG and WDFW staff) to help identify where information may be obtained and frame up the next conversation. Rick Perleberg, Sierra Smith, Lynn Okita, Amy Porter, and Marie Neumiller from WAG volunteered to be on the task group. The Facilitation Team will schedule a conversation (including WDFW staff representatives).

WAG Focus for 2024

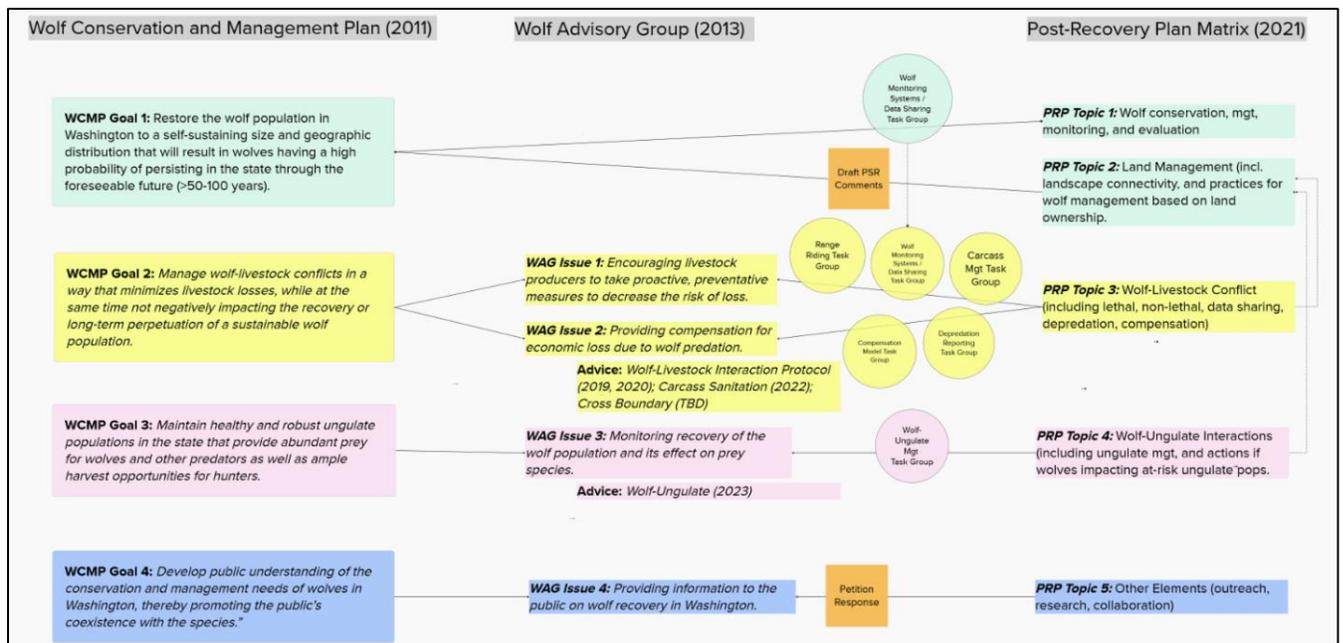
Hayman focused WAG members and WDFW staff on a document titled "Status of Alignment of WAG Discussion with Post-Recovery Planning Topics" provided in the meeting packet. This document highlights the connections between the four goals of the Gray Wolf Conservation and Management

Plan, the issues WDFW identified for WAG to focus on, and Post-Recovery Plan Alternative Matrix topics. These components were also diagrammed on a [Mural Board](#) (linked in Figure 1 below), which also show relationships between WAG advice and WAG Task Groups to these topics.

Based on the discussion with WAG and WDFW staff, Hayman also added Draft “PSR Comments” and “Petition Response” to the diagram, and noted not all task groups have been convened. The purpose of this discussion was to affirm to WAG and WDFW staff members that the topics and task groups that have been underway are connected to post recovery plan topics. It was a mechanism to identify if anything of high priority is missing based on WDFW and WAG needs. Hayman said that any time task groups are convened/meet, they will look at the framing questions posed in the post recovery plan alternative matrix to narrow down and prioritize a topic list.

Maletzke, WDFW noted that it is important to think about how to approach a larger landscape modeling approach as the wolf population grows and consider topics with regards to post-delisting status. He discussed that task groups are good place to start but to refer to the larger document topic particularly for topics regarding post delisting. WDFW wants to know where they are best able to make improvements and what WAG’s advice is on all these topics, to help guide a process and plan.

Figure 1: WAG Topic Alignment



Discussion on the Mural Board

WAG members provided input on the mural and document:

- An “upcoming activities” column may be helpful to consider in the framework. A system to identify information earlier may be helpful to provide enough advance time to tackle specific time-oriented actions.

- WAG could provide advice on how to share information to the public about wolf management, and the work that WDFW and WAG members are undertaking.
- Several WAG members emphasized that there are important, practical topics (beyond delisting topics) that need immediate attention from WAG (such as compensation and depredation reporting topics). A realistic timeline should be presented and each WAG meeting could be constructed to allow time for practical problem-solving topics, with a portion of time for tackling longer term topics.
- WAG members discussed providing comments on WDFW’s recommendations in the final Periodic Status Review (PSR) once it is provided to the Commission. As the timing of this is likely to occur between the January and April WAG meetings, members would like to ensure they have advance opportunity to consider and discuss such comments. A re-grounding of the PSR report would be a beneficial back-up topic in January. There may be pieces that are relevant to discuss even if a final draft of the PSR isn’t ready by January.
- Some members would value a future WAG discussion on how to resolve situations where producers feel there are discrepancies with how implementation of the protocol is being perceived by WDFW versus local producers.

Discussion on Topics Prioritization and Timeline

WAG members and WDFW staff used the following buckets to group topics into for future WAG meeting topics: Near Term (time-sensitive), Ongoing, and Post-Recovery Planning. Some of the “ongoing” topics . WDFW discussed to think about what pieces of ongoing topics will be needed for agreement in a Post Recovery Plan to bring forward to a broader audience of Washington constituents. Task groups can further refine what these conversations would mean and how to consider these pieces within a post-recovery plan:

Buckets	January (Virtual)	Virtual Interim (if needed)	April (West Side, In person)	To Be Scheduled
Near-Term (time sensitive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSR refresher (on deck) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final PSR 	TBD	TBD
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Boundary • Compensation (limited topic) 	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring/data sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range riding program • Depredation reporting • Wolf-livestock protocol implementation and reporting • Range riding operations
Post Recovery Planning (PRP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation (limited topic) 	---	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range riding (pertinent to PRP) • Depredation reporting (pertinent to PRP) • Wolf-livestock protocol (pertinent to PRP) • Carcass management (pertinent to PRP)

WAG members recommended the following practices for 2024 work planning:

- If an agenda topic needs to be changed at the last minute, WAG and WDFW staff can fall back to discussing post-recovery topics that are preselected and “on deck.”
- It is important to try to coordinate/sequence wolf-related topics under discussion at Commission meetings with WAG meeting topics, as appropriate.

Future Meeting Next Steps

- WAG members and WDFW staff agreed to hold WAG meetings in 2024 in January (virtual), April, June, and November.
- WAG members agreed through sufficient consensus to schedule a compensation discussion at the January meeting, focused only on what a successful compensation would “look like,” and the WAC and RCW requirements for the current program. If WDFW is unable to speak to this due to ongoing litigation, perhaps some other credible, objective source could do so.
 - WDFW staff will seek guidance as to whether they are able to observe (if not participate) in such a discussion during litigation.
- The Facilitation Team will:
 - Poll for and confirm meeting dates and locations by mid-December.
 - Plan topics for the January and April meetings based on priorities identified at this meeting. The Facilitation Team will coordinate with pertinent task groups to frame up topics for discussion.

Public Comment

One person provided public comment this day, as documented in [Appendix B](#).

Closing

Hayman reviewed the meeting’s action items and invited WAG members and WDFW staff to provide final reflections.

Before closing, the group recognized Joey McCanna’s contributions to WAG, after he informed the group that he was moving into a different position at WDFW, and this would be his last WAG meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.

Appendices

Appendix A: Revised Draft WAG Decision-Making Process

WAG Decision-Making

WAG chooses to use a sufficient consensus model for decision-making (on recommendations to WDFW or problem-solving efforts among WAG), defined by WAG as:

1. Diverse views are fully and genuinely welcomed and considered
2. The issues are sufficiently discussed and understood from all angles
3. Absent members have an opportunity to provide input and be heard fully by all members
4. No more than three individuals disagree with the decision and all three cannot be from the same side (same side or in-group distinctions, for the purposes of WAG, are environmentalists, livestock producers, and hunters. Where there is overlap in in-group identities, the member may self-identify and align with the group they feel the strongest connection)
 - a. *[Suggested replacement text] If 1) four or more WAG members disagree, or 2) if three or more members from the same identity group disagree, sufficient consensus is not reached. As previously determined, WAG identity groups are defined as environmentalists, livestock producers and hunters. Identity group members may or may not represent an organization. Members-at-large who don't identify with one of these three groups may choose to align with the group with whom they feel the greatest affinity on a given recommendation.*
5. Once a decision is reached, it will be supported by the entire group, including those who opposed the decision
6. Dissenting voices recognize that maintaining the long-term integrity of the process and relationships is more important than the decision and therefore will work outside WAG and within their own group or community to 1) uphold support for the decision within their community or group and 2) ask for their organization or group to "stand aside" and not take action to oppose or overturn the decision, even if they themselves did not secure their preferred decision

Intent [suggested additional text]:

The intent of the WAG's sufficient consensus process is that every opportunity is made to reach consensus, and that where consensus cannot be reasonably reached there is a way for WAG to move forward with recommendations. Once a decision is made, WAG members expect all members to respectfully support the WAG's decision and the integrity of the decision-making process. While WAG members who dissent on a decision may share the reasons for their dissent with those outside of the WAG, all WAG members support moving forward with the recommendation once sufficient consensus is reached.

If sufficient consensus is not reached, the WAG will determine next steps, including the flexibility to continue the conversation, seek additional information, and/or look for other creative ways to address the issue. The WAG may also choose to discontinue further action on this issue.

Appendix B: Public Comment

Public comment received at the end of each meeting day is paraphrased below:

November 15, 2023

- **Dave Hedrick, Ferry Conservation District:** Four committee members. Recommended WA Dept of Agriculture provide \$1,000,000 plus non-lethal funding to NE Washington counties (Okanagan and Pend Orielle). We implement a Voluntary Stewardship Program for the County. We are required through Washington RCW to write a county report for on an implementation program every 2 and 5 years. I will send the report to the Facilitator to distribute to WAG members. It is also available at www.ferrycd.org. The current level of requirements for non-lethal deterrents is non-sustainable. WDFW funding of non-lethal deterrents is just a band-aid, and the legislature is tired of funding this. Before every biennium we get contacted by anxious producers wondering if the program will be funded this year. We don't know until the last day of the legislative session. WDFW has never funded and never kept up with expansion of wolves and this won't go away. This affects how the County can do business. I will expand on this during my public comment tomorrow.
- **Rachel Bjork:** I appreciate the explanation for late notification for the meeting and the robust discussion on a variety of topics. It sounded like the letter the WAG put together for the Wolf Petition was rushed. I hope WAG can make more thoughtful decisions in future.
- **Jettrell Stetner:** I followed this group throughout last year. I probably read your name and where you're from. Thank you for the-time commitment from throughout the state. I appreciate being able to read your mission. I am a local Ellensburg resident. I enjoy biking and recreating and I genuinely am excited when I see wolf tracks in the wild, doing what they are doing while I am doing what I am doing. I really appreciate the work you are doing to be aware of wolf recovery in our state but recognizing conservation and management is complex. I am excited you are here. Keep doing hard work so we can find our way forward.

November 16, 2022

- **Dave Hedrick, Ferry Conservation District:** (Continued from Nov. 15th Comment): I am starting where I left off yesterday. 94% of Ferry County agricultural land is grazed forest land, Livestock is the sole commodity in the community due to the terrain and climate. The Voluntary Stewardship Report I talked about yesterday was provided to the Facilitator. I understand you may have not had a chance to look at it. We provided it to the WDFW Region 1 Director several months ago. We do farm planning and understand the capacity of producers to meet requirements for lethal removal. Producers of the County don't have that capacity without being subsidized. Subsidies come with more and more strings. It is hard for producers to see a path forward. So what does that mean? Land conversion? Habitat loss? Community economic loss? Wolf advocates tell me they don't want to push producers out of business. How would they know? WDFW doesn't have measures to find out. It is a weapon effectively used against people in the County. How is putting livestock producers out of business a win for WDFW environmental groups? Read the letter and ask: how do you know if producers are going out of business and what comes next? Look people in eye and see if the community has a quality of life. We ask for you to show up. The legislature shows up with funding independent of WDFW. It is making a difference, but has more strings and is unsustainable. Try to address this.