

Meeting Report Wolf-Livestock Stakeholder Subgroup September 19, 2014

CDFW Wildlife Branch Conference Room 1812 9th Street, Sacramento, CA 95811



California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	. 3
2.0 Meeting Objectives and Mechanics	. 3
3.0 Meeting Outputs	. 3
Introductions and Logistics	. 3
Updates/Housekeeping	. 3
Review/Discuss Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategies	. 4
Action Items and Next Steps1	11
APPENDIX A. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS1	12
APPENDIX B. AGENDA1	13
APPENDIX C. PHASE I WOLF-LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION STRATEGIES 1	14

1.0 Introduction

On September 19, 2014 the Wolf-Livestock Interactions Subgroup (WLIS) of the California Wolf Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) convened in the Conference Room of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Branch Office in Sacramento. This was the twelfth meeting of the WLIS, which was established to assist the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW, Department) in developing recommendations on a consensus-driven framework of management strategies for effectively dealing with potential wolf impacts on California's livestock.

2.0 Meeting Objectives and Mechanics

The purpose of the meeting was to continue building consensus through discussion of potential topics for inclusion in a Wolf-Livestock Interactions chapter in the California Wolf Plan.

Objectives of the meeting as initially planned were:

- Determine points of agreement on Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategy
- Confirm Wolf-Livestock schedule moving forward

The meeting was attended in person by the meeting facilitator Mr. Mike Hardy, eight stakeholders, three CDFW staff, and one legislative representative. In addition one CDFW staff attended via conference line. Appendix A provides a list of participants, their affiliations, and their contact information. Appendix B contains the meeting agenda.

3.0 Meeting Outputs

Introductions and Logistics

After the group members introduced themselves, Mr. Hardy read over the agenda and asked for any questions or additions. Mr. Stopher requested, given time, adding to the end of the meeting some discussion of potential conservation measures recently developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, to reduce wolf conflicts with livestock on public land allotments.

Updates/Housekeeping

- Mr. Pat Griffin will present this group's update at the next full SWG meeting
- Mr. Stopher informed the group that he may not be available for the next scheduled Wolf-Livestock Interactions Subgroup meeting scheduled for October

- 1st, in which case he will have to reschedule. He will update everyone as soon as he knows his schedule.
- Ms. Kovacs announced that the Department will help any group wishing to caucus outside of scheduled meeting dates by setting up meeting space and providing outside facilitation. Anyone wishing such help should let her know.
- No comments were offered on the August 4th meeting report; members requesting additional time were asked to submit comments by September 23rd.

Review/Discuss Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategies

Mr. Stopher informed the group that he intends to integrate the Wolf-Livestock strategies into the strategies developed for the Wolf Conservation subgroup, which breaks implementation into three phases. Phase 1 is the period when wolves are first establishing in California and beginning to form packs, and because the wolf population will be small, the effects on livestock and wild ungulates is expected be small. Phase 2 is the period when reproduction within California's population becomes more important than immigration to population growth, and Phase 3 is a more long-term period when the wolf population is occurring within a greater portion of suitable habitat. There will be less detail in the strategies for Phase 3 because of the amount of uncertainty that far out in time. The goal is to have a single strategies document that integrates wolf conservation, wolflivestock, and wolf-ungulate strategies within the phased approach. Lethal control will not be proposed as a management tool for wolf conflicts during Phase 1 because the Department will not have the authority to do so under the federal and existing state listing statutes. However it will be important to have a strategy in place that will minimize or alleviate any effects that may occur to livestock producers from wolves, such as nonlethal deterrents and compensation.

General Comments

Subgroup members' comments and questions are listed below, with Department responses in italics.

- It's important to clarify here that the proposed numbers of breeding pairs for the phases are not yet agreed upon.
 - We did have near universal agreement to take out the 10 year intervals for the phases and limit it to wolf population characteristics but we did not reach agreement on the number of breeding pairs that should constitute a new management phase.
- If lethal control of wolves will not be allowed, what steps will you take for dealing with a pack that develops a tendency to depredate livestock when nonlethal deterrents don't work?

- As long as wolves are federally listed lethal take is not lawful unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides authorization. It will likely be some years before delisting occurs because of the likelihood for litigation. When authority for management does eventually fall to the state, wolves will still likely be state listed. Incidental take and NCCP authority will be extremely unlikely, and take will only be allowed for human safety. Under Fish and Game Code 219 there is the option for an emergency 12-month period to take wolves that are impacting isolated elk populations, but it does not apply to livestock management purposes. We completely understand your concerns, and ask if you have any proposals.
- What are the delisting criteria? How long will they be listed?
 - We are not proposing delisting criteria in this plan. The definition of endangered provides some guidance, but that's not very clear. We may never get to delist if the future shows us that we are a sink for wolves, they always depend on Oregon for immigration, and the population remains small. That might mean fewer conflicts. Section 2061 defines conserve by stating that the Department must take measures to bring the species to the point at which such measures are no longer necessary. It also states that regulated take may be appropriate in some cases even if that standard has not yet been achieved. It could be that with more information about wolf population growth we may be able to argue that regulated take consistent with Section 2061 is warranted and appropriate.
- We should develop a plan that can be used under both current law, and can change if the law changes. We've looked at Oregon's and Washington's experiences with depredations, but we have more livestock and fewer wild ungulates than they do, so we may have more conflicts. It's a dilemma because if fewer ungulates means fewer wolves, then that translates into fewer tools for people who need them to protect their livestock (because we never progress through the proposed phases).
 - Something we discussed before was a regional approach to managing with Washington and Oregon similar to waterfowl management. If we are on the southern fringe of the wolf range and we can't support large numbers, does it make sense to approach their management regionally? There would likely be complications but it's something we have thought of.
- Regarding the wolf population estimates in the phases, is there value in revisiting
 those later once wolves arrive and we have a better sense of the habitat they use?
 The recommendation would be at the outset to have wolf population targets tied to
 the available biomass, and what is needed to support wolves. Then in Phase 1 we
 develop population figures based on actual habitat use, and Phase 2 starts earlier.

- We are actually currently revising the ungulate chapter to reflect targets in the conservation chapter, and demonstrate graphically the amounts of deer and elk wolves would take at different percentages in their diets.
- Given the amount of effort needed to get at more accurate ungulate population estimates, is it realistic that the Department would be able to get those figures in a timely manner and incorporate in the plan?
 - We've had lengthy conversations about what the best approach is. We want to reduce confidence intervals to less than 20% so we need a bigger sample size and 5 to 10 years to detect change. We're moving in that direction but we're not there yet.

Element A

- How do you define "short-term"? It should provide a deadline; be more specific.
 - We're cautious about making gifts of state property (i.e. state purchasing equipment for use by private citizens). Also we hope that it would be an interim remedy to a longer-term solution, e.g. through a wolf damage prevention cooperative agreement. It would mean at least through a grazing season. Because each producer may have unique needs it may be best to say "short-term and site specific."
- What is more important is that the equipment is being used properly.
 - The specific agreements should include details about when and how the equipment is used.
- We haven't agreed on what focused disclosure should mean.
 - We intend to follow what ODFW is doing; to generate a polygon specific to each producer.
- We are not in favor of this method of focused disclosure. Some of the information provided shows up on anti-wolf sites. It's hard to understand why ranchers would risk losing access to the program when it's such valuable information.
 - There may be a way to flag the information so it's traceable. We could say that the information sharing agreement includes no subsequent sharing, and to caveat the agreement with penalties.
- The polygons should be the smallest area possible. The more focused the information the more targeted you can be with your limited resources.
- But because wolves can travel so far the larger polygons are most useful.
- Focused disclosure should not go to anyone without a cooperative agreement. In Oregon ranchers without an agreement can look at the Areas of Known Wolf Activity on the internet and get general information on wolf locations.
 - So you are in disagreement with A then because that's not how it's set up here. Because the money to support the Cooperative Agreements will be

limited, there will not be many agreements available, and the vast majority of producers would not have access to focused information.

- Are there examples in Oregon where information was shared and wolves were hurt?
 - There were a couple of incidents of wolves being killed but we're not sure if they were related to the information sharing.

Element B

The group discussed the changes made in Element B from the previous version:

- 1. A provision to set aside some monies for emergencies.
- 2. The total dollar amount available for a cost share was increased.

Subgroup members' comments and questions are listed below, with Department responses in italics.

- I am concerned about the funding source for these agreements.
 - This whole program will require resources in the form of money, staffing, legal actions, but if we don't propose them here they will not get accomplished.
- The reporting requirement should be as simple as possible, and the Department should get feedback about effectiveness directly from the producer.
- It would be useful to talk with Oregon and Washington about their reporting requirements.

Element C

Mr. Stopher explained that this Element is completely new, and is based on the work of the Mexican Wolf Coexistence Council. The program has been developed over years of trial and error, with the goal to make funds equitably available; applications are scored by a team. One problem they've encountered has been how to handle producers with multiple allotments, some of which are not in wolf range. The emphasis is on compensating producers for coexisting with wolves, but participants cannot also receive compensation for lost animals. The other big concern is how to generate the funding for the program.

Element D (Labeled as E in the table):

- Suggest adding "but not limited to" after "Non-injurious harassment includes:"
- Suggest putting a distance limit on chasing wolves on foot or horseback, specifically stating that "this does not include the use of motorized vehicles," and adding that this may constitute "pursuit" under CESA.

- Suggest adding language reiterating the importance of cleaning up any attractrants
 - There is language in the conservation strategy addressing that
- What was decided in our conversation about harassment to chase wolves from pastures in advance of cattle being brought in?
 - Carter Niemeyer suggests that wolves are regularly in proximity to cattle
 and are not always a problem. Also, hazing wolves not in proximity to cattle
 has limited value as it probably does not teach them anything specific. As
 addressed in our mountain lion policy, just because they are present does
 not mean they should be harassed.
- With respect to limiting the chase distance, the enforceability of such a limit is low.
 - o There is value in providing a distance as a guideline to folks
- The language about using motorized vehicles to chase wolves was moved to Nonlethal injurious harassment which means it cannot be used in Phase 1. It is a tool to prevent depredation which is better for wolves in the long run.
 - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers it within their definition of pursuit so it is a form of take and is not legal
- Why was the language about firearms changed from "into the ground" to "at an angle of 45° or greater away from wolves"?
 - There are circumstances where it's not appropriate to fire into the ground;
 45° is an angle that people understand without having to think about it too much. This is not something we can prohibit people from doing because it is not take.
- Suggest adding "of these locations" to "CDFW will advise affected livestock producers"
- It would be helpful if locations of dens and rendezvous sites were provided in advance of folks turning out their livestock in an area.

Element E (labeled as F in the table)

- Under E-3 it might be helpful to state "...provide access to CDFW or its agent..."
- Under E-4 it might be helpful to state "...within 6 months or as soon as possible..."
- In a previous discussion CDFW was the agency to confirm depredations
 - o We can have an agent investigate but we make the final determination
- Suggest adding "or injured" to E-2
- In the absence of coexistence payments, the 100% and 50% of market value for losses won't cover lost revenue; given the good data showing the inability to confirm or find all losses, some multiplier would be more appropriate.
 - There are a couple of models for compensation. In Wyoming you can be compensated at a 7:1 ratio for confirmed missing animals but nothing for probable losses. The alternative is to compensate for probables but not

- possibles. If the cattle are enclosed it's easier to confirm than if they are in steep terrain. There is no perfect system.
- Under E-7, what if the two depredations occur 10 months apart and the producer hasn't used any nonlethal deterrence? They would still be eligible even though they had time to implement nonlethal.
 - They would be eligible. If they are accumulating depredations they may find it in their best interests to apply for a cooperative agreement.

Element F (labeled as G in the table)

Mr. Stopher explained that non-lethal injurious harassment was defined in the Conservation Objectives subgroup meeting recently as any harassment that causes an object to contact a wolf or using motorized equipment to follow or pursue a wolf. For Phase 1 the Department had proposed that it be prohibited, but it will be changed to state that it is not currently allowed under federal or state statute, and not proposed for Phase 1. For Phases 2 and 3, if legal to do so, allowed when specifically authorized by CDFW subject to criteria for when, where, and how it may be implemented.

- Although we've seen proposals for what Phases 1, 2, and 3 look like we don't know what they actually are, so it's difficult to talk about this without those specifics.
 - Good point. I will be working to integrate the Conservation and Livestock strategies and hope to share it with you by next Wednesday.
- Have you decided against having Phase 1 end when wolves are federally delisted, and Phase 2 end when state delisted? There is broad agreement that injurious harassment and lethal take are prohibited under federal ESA. We do have the ability to make recommendations to the Commission and the Legislature on how to manage under CESA. There could be increased flexibility to have population based sub-phases under Phase 2.
 - O Phase 2 considers the possibility of lethal control with the proper legal authority and appropriate numerical objectives so that we meet the requirements of Section 2061. To have the phases correlate with the federal and state listing, we would have to remove any thoughtful and deliberative incorporation of lethal control or injurious harassment options.
- At the Conservation subgroup meeting we discussed that Phase 1 should remain
 as is with both federal and state listing prohibitions; and we would not develop
 concepts for Phases 2 and 3 until we have the science to guide our objectives for
 those phases.
 - I do not recall that being what we discussed. I can say that we will likely incorporate objectives because we should be looking down the road even if those objectives change once we have more information.

At this point, the group decided that there was insufficient time to thoroughly discuss Elements F and G, and they would reconvene to discuss and vote on those items later. Mr. Stopher will integrate the Wolf-Livestock and Wolf Conservation strategies into a single document, which he will make available as soon as possible.

In Summary, members' votes on the elements discussed were as follows:

Element A:

- California Farm Bureau Yes
- California Woolgrowers Association Yes
- Defenders of Wildlife Yes with a provision that sharing the disclosure information has a consequence, or there is a non-disclosure agreement required. Also I have concern over a lack of specificity of the size of the polygons.
- Center for Biological Diversity No
- Siskiyou County Agriculture Commission Yes
- California Cattlemen's Association Yes
- California Wolf Center Yes
- UC Cooperative Extension Yes

Element B:

- Defenders of Wildlife Yes
- Siskiyou County Agriculture Commission Yes
- California Cattlemen's Association Yes
- California Woolgrower's Association Yes
- California Farm Bureau Yes with one concern that the reporting requirement be made as simple a process as possible
- UC Cooperative Extension Yes
- Center for Biological Diversity Yes; it may be good to get some guidance from Oregon's and Washington's reporting systems
- California Wolf Center Yes

Element C:

- Defenders of Wildlife Yes
- Center for Biological Diversity need to confer; I have concerns about coexistence payments to producers who receive reduced grazing fees on public land
- UC Cooperative Extension Yes
- California Farm Bureau Yes
- California Cattlemen's Association Yes
- Siskiyou County Agriculture Commission Yes
- California Woolgrower's Association Yes

California Wolf Center - Yes

Element D (Labeled as E in the table):

- California Woolgrowers Association Yes
- California Wolf Center Yes with the added language about distance and the "not limited to"
- California Farm Bureau No
- UC Cooperative Extension Yes
- Center for Biological Diversity I cannot give 100% agreement; will have to get back to you
- Defenders of Wildlife Yes if additional language is added to the last bullet to clarify that motorized vehicles are not allowed under this element, that a maximum distance is stated, and that this could be construed as "pursuit" under CESA
- Siskiyou County Agriculture Commission Yes
- California Cattlemen's Association Yes although I share the concerns about being able to use ATVs

Element E (labeled as F in the table):

- California Cattlemen's Association Yes
- California Woolgrower's Association Yes with the adjustments we discussed
- Defenders of Wildlife Yes with the changes we discussed
- UC Cooperative Extension Yes
- California Wolf Center Yes
- California Farm Bureau Yes with the changes we discussed and the same caveat that the funding is not in place.
- Center for Biological Diversity Yes with some lingering concerns over eligibility for compensation in a twelve month period
- Siskiyou County Agriculture Commission (absent for this vote)

Action Items and Next Steps

- Department staff will consolidate the Wolf-Livestock and Wolf Conservation strategies and provide to members as soon as possible
- Members will provide comments on the Diseases chapter and the August 4 meeting report by Wednesday, Sept. 24th
- Members will provide comments on the Other Wildlife Species chapter by close of business today
- Department will provide date for next Wolf-Livestock meeting when their schedules are confirmed

APPENDIX A

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Name	Affiliation	Email		
Stakeholders				
Noelle Cremers	California Farm Bureau	ncremers@cfbf.com		
Bob Timm	UC Agriculture and Natural Resources	rmtimm@ucanr.edu		
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Pat Griffin	CA Agriculture Commission – Siskiyou Co.	pgriffin@co.siskiyou.ca.us		
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California Department of Fish and Wildlife Staff				
Karen Kovacs	Wildlife Program Manager – Region 1	karen.kovacs@wildlife.ca.gov		
Karen Converse	Environmental Scientist – Lands Program	karen.converse@wildlife.ca.gov		
Mark Stopher	Senior Policy Advisor	mark.stopher@wildlife.ca.gov		
Pete Figura	Environmental Scientist – Region 1	pete.figura@wildlife.ca.gov		

PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS AND COMMENTS

Name	Affiliation	Email	
Legislative Representatives			
Catherine Bird	Senator Ted Gaines' Office	catherine.bird@sen.ca.gov	

Is there a reason to not say in Phase 1 "absent statutory changes, lethal control is prohibited?" That would leave that possibility in place so people feel there is some hope in case our experience in California is different than in other places.

APPENDIX B - AGENDA

PROPOSED AGENDA

Wolf-Livestock Subgroup 11-3 PM September 19, 2014 1812 Ninth Street, 2nd Floor conference room, Sacramento Teleconference Line 877.860.3058, PC 758045#

*Parking is available on the street (bring lots of quarters) or parking garages on both 10th and 11th streets between "O" and "P" streets

Objectives:

- Determine points of agreement on Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategy
- Confirm Wolf-Livestock schedule moving forward
- 1. Introductions and Logistics (5 minutes)
- 2. Updates/Housekeeping (15 minutes)
 - a. Identify Stakeholder member for update at next SWG meeting
 - b. Review, discuss, and revise August 4 meeting report
 - c. Discuss Wolf-Livestock Subgroup Scheduling
 - d. Status of Wolf-Livestock chapter
- 3. Review/Discuss Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategy (90 minutes)
- 4. BREAK (20 minutes)
- 5. Discuss Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategy-Continued (90 minutes)
- 6. Public questions (10 minutes)
- 7. Discuss Action Items and Next Steps (10 minutes)
 - Action Item Review
 - Next Steps

APPENDIX C PHASE I WOLF-LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION STRATEGY

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP

	Component	Actions
A	Non-lethal Deterrent Assistance by CDFW	 Provide technical information (e.g. telephone and email assistance, web access to information, local public meetings).
		On-site evaluations and recommendations if requested by livestock producers.
		3. Focused disclosure when GPS collared wolves are detected within a geographic area (i.e. polygon) developed for a specific livestock producer. An information sharing agreement between CDFW and the livestock producer must be in place for this to occur.
		4. Short-term loan of equipment (e.g.
		fladry, RAG box, noisemakers) 5. Technical assistance, funding and
		approval for Wolf Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements.
В	CDFW Wolf Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements (WDPCA) ¹	Implemented in priority counties with
		sympatric distributions of wolves and
		livestock. List of priority counties to be updated as needed, but at least annually by CDFW.
		2. CDFW shall withhold 10% of available funding, on an annual basis, from regular allocation, as an emergency response fund.
		 Cost share (i.e. 50%) funding up to \$10,000 annually by State for CDFW approved plansⁱ
		 Plans are valid for 12 month period from time of approval and may be renewed or amended.
		5. CDFW may cap the funds to be allocated

^{1.} ¹ Potential Cooperating entities include: County Agricultural Commissioner, USDA Wildlife Services, Univ. of CA Cooperative Extension, NRCS

		by county.
		6. On-site evaluation by CDFW required.
		7. Livestock producer must report on
		implementation and effectiveness of the
		actions.
		8. An evaluation by CDFW is required prior
		to amending or renewing an Agreement.
С	Payments for Wolf Presence	Implemented in priority counties with
	,	sympatric distributions of wolves and
		livestock. List of priority counties to be
		updated as needed, but at least annually
		by CDFW.
		Applications by livestock producers will
		be scored based on a formula which
		accounts for wolf presence, number of
		livestock exposed to wolves, and
		implementation of non-lethal deterrents
		by the livestock producer.
		3. Payments for wolf presence will be
		reduced by any amounts paid in compensation for confirmed
		depredation by wolves on livestock.
Е	Non-injurious harassment of wolves	Allowed when wolves are within 100 yards of a
	,	residential or agricultural structure (i.e. barns,
		shops, storage sheds or lambing sheds) or within
		0.25 mile of livestock.
		Non-injurious harassment includes:
		Air horns or whistles
		Firearm discharge aimed in a safe direction
		at an angle of 45° or greater away from
		wolves
		Cracker shellsShouting
		Throwing objects
		Motion activated lights or sprinklers
		Using deterrent sprays
		Radio activated guard boxes
		Chasing wolves on foot or horseback
		Haracement is prohibited within 0.35 mile of
		Harassment is prohibited within 0.25 mile of

		known den or rendezvous sites. CDFW will
		advise affected livestock producers.
F	Ctate managed compensation program	·
Г	State managed compensation program	Through CA Victim's Compensation and Covernment Claims Read with
		Government Claims Board with
		supporting documentation by CDFW
		Livestock producer must notify CDFW
		within 24 hours of discovery of dead
		livestock
		3. Protect the carcass(es) and site and
		provide access to CDFW to investigate
		4. File a claim within 6 months of CDFW
		determination of confirmed or probable
		wolf depredation
		5. 100% of fair market value for confirmed ⁱⁱ
		6. 50% for probable
		7. After two confirmed depredation
		incidents in any twelve month period,
		future compensation for the affected
		producer is available only if that
		producer has applied for a Wolf Damage
		Prevention Cooperative Agreement with
		CDFW and the application is still active
		or has been approved.
G	Non-lethal Injurious Harassment	Prohibited in Phase 1.
	-	Allowed in Phases 2 and 3 when specifically
		authorized by CDFW, subject to criteria for when,
		where and how this may be implemented.
Н	Lethal take of chronically depredating	Prohibited in Phase 1.
	wolves	Allowed in Phases 2 and 3, and carried out by
		CDFW or its agent, consistent with the
		framework in the conservation strategy and the
		following specific criteria:
		There have been at least two separate
		incidents of livestock depredation
		confirmed by CDFW in a six-month
		period by the same wolf or wolves
		Non-lethal deterrent methods
		recommended by CDFW to the producer
		have been implemented after the first
		depredation incident
		3. The livestock producer has applied for a
		WDPCA.
		WDI CA.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Phase I Wolf-livestock Depredation Strategy
Version 3.0 09032014
DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP

ⁱ Funding priority will be established by relative scoring of all plans received during the designated application period which exceed a previously established minimum acceptable score.

ⁱⁱ Process claims in the chronological order received and pay claims on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year basis until annual funds are exhausted.