



**Meeting Report  
Wolf-Livestock Stakeholder Subgroup  
August 4, 2014**

CDFW Wildlife Branch Conference Room  
1812 9<sup>th</sup> Street,  
Sacramento, CA 95811



**California Department of Fish and Wildlife**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

On August 4, 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 eleventh 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 populations.

## **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. Sam Magill, seven stakeholders and three CDFW staff. In addition one stakeholder and 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. Magill read over the agenda and asked for any questions or additions.

### **Updates/Housekeeping**

- Ms. Karin Vardaman will present this group's update at the next full SWG meeting
- Two comments were provided on the June 19<sup>th</sup> Wolf Conservation Subgroup Meeting Report:
  - On page 5 clarify that referenced buffer zones are around known den and rendezvous sites
  - On page 4 a typo saying "provide by" should say "provided by"

- The next WCS meeting was previously scheduled for September 9, but due to a conflict will have to be rescheduled. Mr. Magill will poll the group for an appropriate date and time.
- The Wolf-Livestock chapter is mostly complete, and only needs the strategies to be considered ready for integration into the plan.

### **Review/Discuss Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategies**

Because the Wolf-Livestock chapter is essentially complete, the bulk of the remaining work of the WLIS is to discuss the strategies. The most recent version of the strategies document was distributed previously (Appendix C) and will be reviewed today. The approach for this discussion was to start at Element A and work through each element, asking for any comments or suggestions in effort to reach consensus before moving to the next element. Comments and questions are as listed below. CDFW responses are in italics.

- Element A: No disagreements.
- Element B1: It may help to clarify that CDFW will provide information that may be necessary but not potentially harmful to wolves; We don't want people to assume they will have unlimited access to information.
  - *We haven't worked out the details yet but an example is folks in Oregon who have signed up to receive text updates have access to information that isn't generally available to the general public. CDFW does not put specific information on our website such as sage grouse lek sites.*
- Could you insert the word "general" in front of "information"?
- It appears that Element B was about non-lethal deterrents since it follows A
  - *That is a good distinction; this is specific to non-lethal deterrence assistance*
- Element B2: We haven't agreed on whether the non-lethal deterrents are mandatory or voluntary. Are producers required to allow onsite evaluations?
  - *Non-lethal is always voluntary, there is no way we can require these; however it is possible if we have a situation where lethal methods are necessary, non-lethal will have to be a prerequisite, provided they are implementable. We could reword to say "onsite evaluations and recommendations upon request by livestock producers."*

Element B3: Mr. Stopher provided some additional information for Element B3 about the disclosure program in Oregon. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) enrolls producers in a program which provides them with information on collared wolf locations. Each enrollee works with ODFW to define a specific polygon of interest and utility to that producer. Polygons vary in size from a single pasture to large allotments, and the larger the polygon the less utility the information has. Producers also specify which months their

livestock are in the prescribed polygon. ODFW receives four downloads daily indicating the location of the collared wolf. The system integrates this information and provides once daily automated text messages to producers in whose polygons a collared wolf has entered. A downside to the system is that the information tells the producer that a wolf was in their polygon at some time in the past 24 hours, not where the wolf is currently. Nor does it have the capacity to provide information on uncollared wolves which may have been within the polygon. The value of the system is that the producer is aware that wolves may be in the vicinity, which may inspire them to both increase their non-lethal efforts, and check their herd for possible depredations. Enrollees are required to sign a no disclosure agreement, stating that they will not share the information. Comments and questions from SWG members are listed below, with CDFW responses in italics.

- Is there a way to speed up the rate of downloads so producers can get the information in a timely manner?
  - *It is possible to increase the rate of downloads but it shortens the life of the collar's battery.*
- What the Environmental Caucus intended by suggesting providing polygons in Element B3 was at the level of Areas of Known Wolf Activity (AKWA), not the smaller producer-level polygons, to prevent people from sharing specific location information
  - *The AKWAs will already be known areas, and a text informing that a wolf is in an AKWA is not valuable information; also ODFW does not have any examples of people abusing the system; it may be possible to detect inappropriate sharing of information.*
- Another factor to consider is the variation in dispersal of livestock; some herds range over huge areas. In winter they tend to be more concentrated.
  - *So a winter and a summer polygon?*
- It would be useful if the producer could be allowed to identify two polygons, one larger and one smaller. The first alert could be a forewarning, and if the animal enters the smaller polygon the alerts are more frequent; that way the producer could be prepared. Even the larger of the two needs to be smaller than Oregon's AKWAs to be of value.
  - *It is difficult to monitor wolves that are not part of an established territory. Once a collar is on an animal in a pack we can define the territory and can monitor their movements within the territory.*
  - *When a collared wolf visiting the same location repeatedly, this may indicate a kill site, a den site, or a rendezvous site, and we have to determine what kind of actions should be taken in those situations.*

- *To clarify your suggestion, there is a smaller area that can move across the landscape with the animal and we notify the specific landowners that it's on their property, as well a larger buffer area around it? (yes)*
- We are concerned about the safety of the animals; the more people who have location information the harder it is to control the flow of that information. We know that not everyone desires to kill wolves but many do and it's not a leap to infer bad intentions.
- There are also large coyotes. It would be important for producers to know that there are protected animals around and they should be sure of their target before they shoot at the animal.

The group decided to move on to other elements (see discussion below), and come back to B3 later after the Environmental Caucus had the opportunity to caucus. When the discussion of Element B3 resumed it was apparent that each caucus had a different interpretation of the intent of that element. As written the Environmental Caucus interpreted it to mean that the Department was proposing wolf location disclosure at a level comparable to Oregon's Areas of Known Wolf Activity (AKWA) available to the general public, and were in support of that level of disclosure. The Agriculture Caucus was under the impression that the Department intended B3 to refer to disclosure specifically for livestock producers as a non-lethal deterrent measure, which would require a greater level of detail of wolf locations, and were thus in favor of the element. Department staff acknowledged that as worded it was confusing to know what their intention was, and clarified that the items listed in Element B were intended to provide a general list of components for non-lethal deterrence assistance from the Department, and that E was intended to then go into greater detail on location disclosure. As such, there was no agreement on Element B3. The Environmental Caucus asked the Agriculture Caucus to suggest what measures could be employed to prevent the sharing of information in the event that more detailed location information is provided under such a program. Members of the Agriculture Caucus agreed to solicit ideas from members of their organizations.

- Element B4: Does loaning of equipment cause concern regarding gifting of state funds?
  - *Grant assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for purchasing equipment is provided to the states, but under a cooperative agreement with county Agricultural Commissioners it would probably be okay.*
- How will you determine who gets the equipment loans?
  - *Not all producers will get equipment; there are limits to our budget and ability to manage the program. This will be a temporary loan where need is*

*demonstrated or foreseeable until a Wolf Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement is in place which would provide some funding.*

- NCRS has the EQIP which is a competitive program in which they use a protocol to review the applications; we recommend the Department use a similar approach so people in most need get the assistance. It would also be of value to establish a way to score a producer's vulnerability.
  - *We would look at their existing practices and willingness to cost share.*
  - *There would have to be a limit on the term except in cost share situations, and a reasonable demonstration of need.*
- Element B5: In the absence of the Department having the money to fund this, will the plan allow for other entities in counties to do this type of work?
  - *We would not exclude other entities from assisting producers.*
  - *There may be some Cooperative Extensions that are active in some locations, and as long as they are acting within their authority we would not preclude their participation.*
- Element C: Did the agriculture caucus mention that several producers might lease the same land and run their cattle together?
  - *It would seem important that cooperating producers manage consistently*
- It could go both ways; if one producer is working with the Department in a cooperative agreement, that producer's actions would benefit his/her cooperating producer's herd. On the other hand if one individual is unwilling to sign an agreement, the other producers could be penalized. And if the one producer's management techniques differ it could create risks for the partner.
  - *The agreement would have to account for the risk that the non-lethal methods may not be as effective if all producers are not using the same practices.*
- Would the agreement be per rancher or per location; some ranchers run livestock in multiple locations? For simplicity one agreement should cover all their locations.
  - *If a producer is agreeing to abide by the terms of the agreement at all locations then it would be much simpler for everyone to have one agreement*
  - *There may be some locations which do not need to have the measures put in place*
- What are these plans ultimately for? Are they required in order to get funds for compensation for losses?
  - *No one is required to do this but if you look ahead at element K6, if the producer has more than two depredation incidents in a twelve month period for which they have received compensation, they will not be eligible for additional compensation unless they have an approved Wolf Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement in place.*

- Element C1: Will you only choose far northern counties initially, or those that OR7 entered? Further, why would the list of counties not be updated as needed as opposed to annually?
  - *So update as needed but at least annually?*
- Element C2: We're concerned about the chronological order of funding plans. A higher priority request may come in after a lower priority one.
  - *Maybe it would be better to have an application window with priority scores*
- It would also be good to have an emergency fund set aside; if the agreements are in place and the wolves move or something comes up it would be nice to have that fund
  - *That would be valuable but may not be feasible.*
- In Washington and Oregon they funded range riders. \$5000 would not go far.
  - *As part of a cooperative agreement this is meant to be a cost share. \$5000 is what Washington used but it may not be the right figure.*
  - *It makes sense to change it to \$5000 instead of "up to \$5000", or change to up to \$10,000 and we're willing to fund \$5000 or \$7000 depending on the circumstances.*
- Since at the beginning there is likely to be fewer requests you could start out with a higher amount but spell out that the intent is to cut back as we learn more.
  - *Internally personal services contracts managed by CDFW, like range riders, entails a very lengthy process. It would have to not be a contract.*
- You might check with folks in the southwest on the Mexican wolf program. The California Wolf Center would administer the funds that came through as grants from foundations. The Wolf Center might be able to provide some information.
- The Wolf Center is planning something here to help with contract services.
- Could these agreements include a third party who might wish to contribute funds?
  - *We should clarify that up to 50% of the cost share between the state and the second party. We could consider 50% from the state and 25% from each of two private parties.*
- If the state came up with \$5000 and two other entities came up with \$5000 each, it would be a bigger pot of money.
- In the southwest the US Forest Service would contribute some amount, and the Mexican wolf conservation fund another amount, and the rancher would also contribute funds and/or funds and in-kind services. So you had agency, NGO, and rancher all contributing.
  - *We would say the value of the state's contribution would be up to 50%.*
- Element C3: by "what they are doing on the ground" do you mean the producers or the wolves?
  - *The producers. If methods take longer to implement or to become effective we may want to give them more time to demonstrate that.*



- There is value in learning together but the more you require of the landowner, the more likely it will turn some people away because of the level of commitment. They will also want some assurances there won't be changes made on the fly.
- Element C4: This gets back to the discussion we had about a competitive application process, but applied at the county level. I would just be concerned that you allocate funds for a county that doesn't have wolves yet or no interested participants, and then you've limited the funds available to another county that does have wolves and interested participants.
  - *This wasn't necessarily a proposal to specify criteria; it was an acknowledgement that we may do that in the future, and an effort to avoid being accused of favoritism.*
  - *The priority counties idea is a good one, but I also like the idea of holding some funds back for emergencies*
- You could have a separate fund for that, rather than giving people the impression you are withholding funds for someone with greater need.
  - *That might work if we disclose that there is a separate pot of money for contingencies; we will partition the monies with the bulk to be allocated, and a separate reserve fund.*
- Element C5: Will there be a problem with a producer allowing Department staff to do onsite evaluations to verify what's happening on the ground?
  - *In the agreement it would specify if and what monitoring should occur.*
  - *It would be interactive especially if there are wolves present. We will want to know if methods are working and learn from the producers how to be more creative. The concept of a multiyear agreement similar to the 1600s might work so we don't have to recreate every time, but modify as needed and subject to periodic inspections.*
- Element C6: So the report is mandatory, but how will producers evaluate the effectiveness?
  - *That's a great question. We want to be able to say the money is spent correctly and the method warrants doing again. Clearly, the producer would report if there were depredations, if so how many and when.*
- What are the implications of these reports? A producer should not be precluded from receiving additional grants if the methods they used were unsuccessful.
  - *As long as they are implementing methods according to the agreement, lack of success will not be held against them.*
  - *So when this goes into the chapter we should be more explicit about what goes into the report and what we mean by effectiveness of the methods. It could be a form they fill out with photos showing how they implemented the methods.*

- Element D: The Department mentioned the California Wildlife Foundation. Should they be added to the list?
  - *They would only be a funding entity; they would not be assisting in developing the cooperative agreements, which is the intent of this element.*
- Having USDA Wildlife Services at the top of the list will cause problems for many constituents.
  - *We could footnote the element to state that entities are not listed in priority order*
- Consider listing them according to the level of government: county, state, federal
  - *That provides structure without implying a preference*

By the end of the discussion the following elements were checked off as having consensus with the group as written: A, B1, B2, B4, B5, and C1.

Elements B3, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, D, and E will need some edits and additional discussion at a subsequent meeting.

Elements F through Q will also be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

### **Action Items and Next Steps**

- CDFW will make corrections/edits to the June 19 WCS meeting report
- Mr. Magill will poll the group for the next WLIS meeting date
- Members of the Agriculture Caucus will solicit suggestions from their organizations' members for ways to limit the sharing of wolf location information to those not specifically intended to receive the information
- CDFW will make edits to the Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategy based on today's discussion

## APPENDIX A - WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Name	Affiliation	Email
<b>Stakeholders</b>		
Noelle Cremers	California Farm Bureau	<a href="mailto:ncremers@cfbf.com">ncremers@cfbf.com</a>
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## APPENDIX B – AGENDA

PROPOSED AGENDA

PROPOSED AGENDA

Wolf-Livestock Subgroup

1-4 PM August 4, 2014

1812 Ninth Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor conference room, Sacramento

Teleconference Line 877.860.3058, PC 758045#

\*Parking on the street (bring lots of quarters) or parking garages on both 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 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 June 19 meeting report
  - c. Discuss Wolf-Livestock Subgroup Scheduling
  - d. Status of Wolf-Livestock chapter
3. Review/Discuss Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategy (1 hour)
4. BREAK (10 minutes)
5. Discuss Wolf-Livestock Depredation Strategy-Continued (70 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**