



Meeting Report
Multi-stakeholder meeting on wolves in California
April 23, 2012



Gray wolf OR7. DFG photo by Richard Shinn (5/8/2012).

California Department of Fish and Game

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The gray wolf is a species that has been believed to be extirpated in California since 1924. On December 28, 2011, a radio collared, GPS tracked wolf entered California from Oregon. With its entrance into the state, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) immediately began a series of actions to follow and protect the wolf while informing stakeholders and the general public about these actions. On April 23, 2012 DFG held a stakeholder meeting to review actions to date and to obtain input on future actions. This is a report of that meeting.

Stakeholders were asked to offer 'one word' of wisdom that would help DFG manage wolves in the best possible way during introductions.



2.0 WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES AND MECHANICS

The workshop was conducted on April 23, 2012. The stated overall purpose of the workshop was to inform and collect input from attending stakeholders regarding the Department's handling of OR7 and to seek early input to future actions.

Objectives of this meeting were to:

1. Communicate the status of OR7.
2. Communicate observations of the Department to date, from the OR7 experience.
3. Solicit participant feedback from the participants on the OR7 experience.
4. Receive input on future Department actions.
5. Commit to future communication and actions.
6. Evaluate the meeting and receive participant comments.

The workshop agenda is provided as Appendix A. In the first part of the meeting the facilitator moderated presentations given by DFG representatives. These presentations provided an overview to the current status of the wolf, information learned from the OR7 experience, and some thoughts about future actions (see brief summary below).

The meeting was attended by 19 stakeholders, 7 DFG representatives, 2 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representatives who attended to answer any specific question related to their agency, and 2 facilitators. A list of the attendees is presented in Appendix B.

The stakeholder feedback on the OR7 experience was primarily a facilitator-led discussion capturing the participant's opinions.. These were described on a large display in the front of the room and have been transcribed in Appendix C.

In an effort to identify the most important issues to be addressed and to help prioritize the long list of suggested opportunities and concerns, the participants were asked to vote on their three highest priority items. This gave a ranked list of the most important problems or opportunities. This is also presented in Appendix C.

The participants were asked to evaluate the meeting. 17 evaluations were turned in and the comments are provided at the end of this report (Appendix F). The meeting was then adjourned.

3.0 Workshop Outputs

3.1 Presentations (a synopsis)

Background and update on wolf OR7

A brief overview of the DFG's efforts to gather information regarding gray wolves in California (prior to OR7's arrival) and other states' experiences and publications was presented including the preparation of public outreach and information materials and a website should the need arise in the future. Copies of the slides shown during this presentation are in Appendix D.

Having previously prepared materials regarding gray wolves greatly assisted the Department when OR7 arrived in California late last year. We were fortunate in that this animal had been captured and collared by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) so that his movements could be closely followed principally via his GPS collar. It is also because of ODFW's wolf program that we know OR7's individual and family history.

OR7's movements are tracked daily via a satellite download. This information is used to update the DFG's gray wolf website and map. DFG has also used this daily and compiled information to initiate contact with respective county Boards of Supervisors, local agricultural producers, media, and others to provide factual and current knowledge about gray wolves in general and OR7's movements in California.

DFG field staff has visited sites frequented by OR7 after he has moved to learn about food habits and anything else of note. To date, while in California OR7 has fed on deer, a wild horse, possibly ground squirrels, and scavenged a livestock bone pile. He has frequented both public and private lands and with our federal partners (USFWS and Wildlife Services) has prepared informational materials and initiated a number of landowner contacts when OR7 has remained on private land for longer duration. As of this writing, OR7 has not exhibited any depredation behavior even when in proximity to livestock.

Lastly, the Department provided some general statistics regarding dispersing gray wolves and documented mortality factors.

Department observations based on OR7

So far, it has been more about providing information and coordinating with people having diverse interests than thinking about management of a potential wolf population.

1. We recognized there was value to DFG in starting early—thanks to Mark/Karen for the initial efforts over a year ago and their coordination with our counterparts at Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
2. We have learned a good deal about how other states and the federal agencies have addressed wolves from both a conservation perspective as well as public policy perspective —we are working to make sure we capitalize on the good work of others, while also paying attention to avoid where things did not go well.
3. While the individual event (presence and movements of OR7 in California) is historic and interesting, we (DFG) view this as more about the potential for a wolf population and the implications of that.
4. Tremendous interest from the public and the media- 32,000 web hits on the wolf page the first month; and over 17,000 hits during April 2012. We recognize there is a wide range of perspective from the public on the topic of wolves in California.

From stakeholder meetings and DFG regionally participating in county meetings, we have heard some common issues:

- Concern about depredation on livestock
- Concern about public safety
- Concern for this particular wolf's well being and safety
- Concern that California's elk and deer herds will suffer

Policy and Regulatory issues

Wild wolves are considered a nongame mammal, the taking of which is prohibited by State law except under limited circumstances. The California Fish and Game Commission may promulgate regulations to authorize management of fish and wildlife resources. A Petition to list the wolf in California as threatened or endangered, under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) was submitted to the Commission by The Center for Biological Diversity, Big Wildlife, Environmental Protection Information Center, and the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center.

A 90 day petition evaluation process is underway (April-June 2012) and the DFG recommendation on whether the petitioned action may be warranted will be provided to the Fish and Game Commission, likely at its August meeting. The DFG's role at this stage is to evaluate the listing petition to determine whether the petition includes "sufficient scientific information that a petitioned action may be warranted".

The related workload for the DFG, which began well before OR7 reached California, has been accomplished by redirecting existing staff from ongoing work. To date, there is no foreseeable mechanism to fund what is likely to be an ongoing and increasing demand for wolf related planning and management.

DFG has contributed three other substantial documents related to the gray wolf since January of 2011.

1. Comments on USFWS Intent to initiate a status review on the gray wolf including California.
2. [Gray Wolves in California \(PDF\)](#) Our team worked on this document for about a year. It includes an evaluation of historical information, current conditions, potential natural recolonization and management implications.
3. A draft Coordination planning document among the DFG, US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Wildlife Services should there be damage or loss from a wolf be reported; or if a wolf is determined to be injured or killed. This document will be posted on the DFG website when final.

Feedback from participants on OR7 experience

What Can DFG Do Now?

Participants were asked for their opinions about what they would want to see DFG do now. A list of responses is presented in Appendix E. The suggestions include a wide variety of suggestions. To summarize in broad categories, the participants suggested that DFG:

1. Collect information that will aid in the preparation of a management plan
2. Secure adequate funding for the plan preparation and management of wolves
3. Create a clear process for completion of the plan
4. Provide training to staff and others dealing with wolves
5. Continue to engage stakeholders

DFG plans from here

DFG plans to:

- Get back to meeting participants with a written summary of the meeting.
- Maintain email contact with the participants (and add additional participants as appropriate) regarding DFG progress and work on wolves. This will involve providing information, products, or informing of significant progress that might generate feedback from the group.
- Initiate development of a framework for a “plan” related to the future possibility or likelihood of a wolf population in California. Whether the plan is an initial plan for wolves in California; a wolf management plan; a wolf in California response plan; or some other title, has not yet been determined.
- Include input from this meeting as possible elements of a plan. For example, Outreach was mentioned as a needed component-- we will be including a strategy for outreach.
- Continue providing website updates about OR7 in California.
- Improve and broaden our survey and monitoring efforts on the potential primary prey species (deer and elk) that a wolf population would rely on in California.
- Seek funding and cooperators to effectively plan for, and manage wolves in California’s future.
- Continue our coordination with USFWS on developing habitat capability/suitability modeling that is tailored to California’s ecosystems and habitats.
- Communicate with stakeholders and interested parties to indicate what we do know, what we don’t know, and where we are uncertain.
- Continue to learn and gain experience and knowledge about managing wolves and working with those interested in wolves.

Participants had several questions and observations. Here we attempt to address some of those:

Who is DFG point person? Currently, two people, Karen Kovacs (Regional office in Redding) is our field and on-the-ground point person. Karen also is lead for media inquiries. Eric Loft (HQ office Sacramento) is point person for policy development. If the wolf moves into our Region 2 area (e.g., Plumas County), Tina Bartlett will join Karen as a key contact for on-the-ground coordination.

We have wild canid veterinary expertise within DFG to address health/disease related issues.

We are working with USFWS on a joint letter to engage tribes and solicit their perspective/involvement in being stakeholders.

APPENDIX A. Agenda

**Multi-stakeholder meeting on wolves in California
April 23, 2012**

***California Department of Fish and Game
Office of Training and Development
1740 North Market Boulevard, Sacramento
(916) 928-8330***

1:00 Welcome

Purpose
Objectives
Introductions

Background and update on wolf OR7 (Kovacs)

Department observations based on OR7 (Loft)

Feedback from participants on OR7 experience (Group brainstorm)

Break

What needs to be done by the Department now? (Group brainstorm)

Follow-up commitment to action by Department (Loft)

Conclusion

4:00 Adjourn

APPENDIX B. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association	Pat Griffin, 530.841.4033, pgriffin@co.siskiyou.ca.us Mary Pfeiffer, 530.224.4949, mpfeiffer@co.shasta.ca.us
California Cattlemen's Association	Margo Parks, 916.444.0845, margo@calcattlemen.org
California Deer Association	Jerry Springer, 209.951.5188, jerry@westernhunter.com
California Farm Bureau Federation	Noelle Cremers, 916.446.4647, ncremers@CFBF.com
California Houndsmen	Josh Brones, 916.288.1676 josh.brones@pearson.com
California Outdoor Heritage Alliance	Bill Gaines, 916.337.9031, bill@outdoorheritage.org Rich Bulloch 916.643.4607, Rick@outdoorheritage.org
California Wolf Center	Amaroq Weiss, 707.779.9613, amaroq@californiawolfcenter.org
California Wool Growers Association	Lesla Carlton, 916.444.8122, lesa@woolgrowers.org
Defenders of Wildlife	Kim Delfino, 916.313.5800 ext. 109, kdelfino@defenders.org Pamela Flick, 916.313.5800 ext. 105, pflick@defenders.org
Mule Deer Foundation	Randy Morrison, 707.823.2707, randy@muledeer.org Rich Fletcher, 925.989.4372, richfletcher@sbcglobal.net
Natural Resources Defense Council	Matt Skoglund, 406.222.9561, mskoglund@nrdc.org
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	Mike Ford, 530.842.2021, MFord@RMEF.org
Sierra Club	Terry Davis, terry.davis@sierraclub.org
The Nature Conservancy	Scott Morrison, 619.209.5830, smorrison@tnc.org Jay Ziegler or Liz Forsburg
The Wildlife Society	Linda Leeman, 916.612.2378 lweeman@gmail.com
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Mike Long, 916.414.6478, michael_long@fws.gov Lisa Ellis, 916.414.6741, lisa_ellis@fws.gov

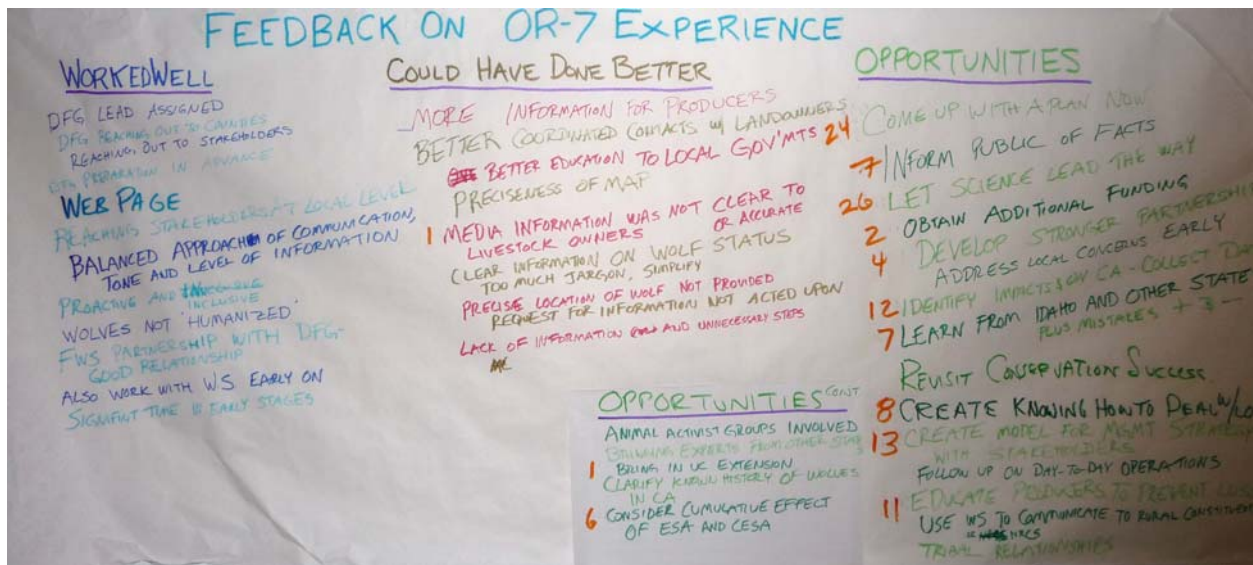
DFG:

1. Mark Stopher, mstopher@dfg.ca.gov
2. Dan Yparraguirre <DYparraguirre@dfg.ca.gov>
3. Eric Loft <ELOFT@dfg.ca.gov>
4. Karen Kovacs <KKovacs@dfg.ca.gov>
5. Tina Bartlett <TBartlett@dfg.ca.gov>
6. Lisa Stone
7. Dale Steele
8. Facilitator: Jim Nelson (530) 275-1590 NelsonFacilitation@gmail.com; Randi Logsdon, assistant facilitator

APPENDIX C. RANKED RESULTS OF BRAINSTORMING FEEDBACK EXERCISE

Participants were asked to give feedback on DFG efforts related to OR7. Feedback was collected with each person giving on item at a time in three categories (Worked Well, Could Have Been Done Better, and Opportunities). Ultimately the entire group of stakeholders was asked to rank the opportunities and items that could have been done better. This is a list of the output from that exercise.

Please note that while we try to give verbatim comments from this kind of process, the facilitator has added clarifying works or comments in [brackets]. We have done this for the sake of clarity and still strived to maintain accuracy. Minor changes in tense may not be shown to keep it simple.



Worked well

(not scored)

	DFG assigned a lead [to cover the OR7 project]
	DFG reached out to counties
	DFG reached out to [other] stakeholders
	DFGs preparation in advance
	Web Page [provided desired information to stakeholders]
	Reaching stakeholders at local level
	Balanced approach of communication, tone and level of information
	[The effort was] proactive and inclusive
	Wolves not “humanized”
	FWS partnership with DFG – Good relationship

	Worked with Wildlife Services early on [in the process]
	[DFG committed] Significant time in early stages

Could Have Been Done Better

	More information for Producers
	Better coordinated contacts with landowners
	Better education to local government
	Preciseness of map [=map precision]
1	Media information was not clear or accurate to livestock owners
	Clear information on wolf status – too much jargon, simplify
	Precise location of the wolf [was] not provided
	Request[s] for information not acted upon
	Lack of information and necessary steps

Opportunities

In the order collected from participants:

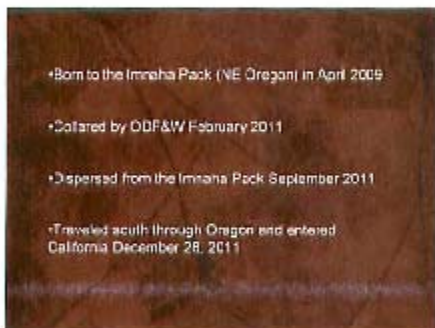
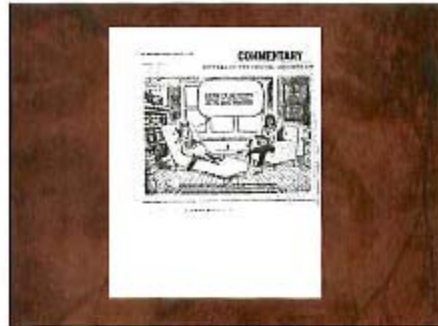
24	Come up with a plan now
7	Inform [the] public of facts
26	Let science lead the way
2	Obtain additional funding
4	Develop stronger partnerships
	Address local concerns early
12	Identify impacts on California – collect data
7	Learn from Idaho and other states [good and mistakes]
	Revisit conservation success
8	Create knowing how to deal with loss [clarify how to deal with livestock and other losses]
13	Create [a] model for management strategy with stakeholders
	Follow-up on day-to-day operations
11	Educate producers [on how and why] to prevent loss
	Use Wildlife Services (or NRCS) to communicate to rural constituents
	[Build] Tribal relations
	Information distributed throughout the state (education)
	Brochure on wolf status information / Brochure with targeted audiences (e.g., stakeholder groups)
	In-person discussions with diverse groups

	Catalyze relationships between groups
	Focus area workshops i.e., avoiding conflicts [etc.]
	[Assign] point-person for northern counties
	[Prepare] fact sheets – myth busters
	Wolf mission statement
	Partnerships in communication
	Early discussion on depredation issues

Sorted by score (ranking by meeting participants):

26	Let science lead the way
24	Come up with a plan now
13	Create [a] model for management strategy with stakeholders
12	Identify impacts on California – collect data
11	Educate producers [on how and why] to prevent loss
8	Create knowing how to deal with loss [clarify how to deal with livestock and other losses]
7	Inform [the] public of facts
7	Learn from Idaho and other states [good and mistakes]
4	Develop stronger partnerships
2	Obtain additional funding
	Address local concerns early
	Revisit conservation success
	Follow-up on day-to-day operations
	Use Wildlife Services (or NRCS) to communicate to rural constituents
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	[Assign] point-person for northern counties
	[Prepare] fact sheets – myth busters
	Wolf mission statement
	Partnerships in communication
	Early discussion on depredation issues

APPENDIX D. Copy of Slide Presentation







Field visit to location in Lassen County after OR7 had remained in the general area mid February.

- Concern of constant presence of OR7 around locations on private lands particularly during calving.
- No evidence of reproduction of livestock even with close proximity.
- OR7 using an open pit of cattle carcasses.
- Carcasses were not fresh but bone was consumed, and
- After contact with landowner, carcasses were buried and OR7 moved off.

Gray Wolf or Coyote?

Development of Additional Public Education Materials Distributed in Lassen County and Posted on DFG Website

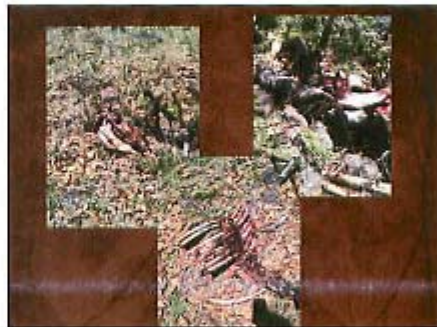


OR7 left California March 6, returned March 31st to Siskiyou County, returned to Oregon April 10th, then came back to California April 17th again to Siskiyou County where he remains currently.

OR7 has traveled over 2,000 air miles since he left his pack in Oregon.

Department staff visited a location last week in Siskiyou County after OR7 had moved off.





General statistics on dispersing gray wolves:

- 60% survival (compared to 74% of all wolves).
- Of wolves that disperse 180 miles into U.S. (5 out of 100), mortality is close to 100% annually.
- Mortality is mostly human caused due to:
 - confirmed livestock depredation removal;
 - illegally killed (shot, trapped, poisoned);
 - accidental (vehicle collisions), and to lesser degree
 - natural mortality (wolf conflicts, disease, accidents, killed by prey, etc.)

APPENDIX E. What Can DFG Do Now

These suggestions were provided by stakeholders to DFG. They are not ranked, but were heard by the project team and the executives who were at the meeting. Again the use of brackets is added by the facilitator to create greater clarity of the paraphrased flipchart notes.

1. [Start to] capture data [now] – the list of [relevant] science is long
2. Start collecting [data] from other states:
 - a. historical,
 - b. prey base,
 - c. ungulate herd trends and health,
 - d. livestock predation,
 - e. eco [economic? Ecological?] benefits,
 - f. habitat suitability,
 - g. efficiency of single dispersal's hunting,
 - h. know the population level at which hunting would be allowed,
 - i. logical management benchmarks for management
3. Start securing funding and staff
4. [Create] a roadmap for the management plan – costs, staffing, project management
5. [Address] habitat suitability across state lines coordinating with stakeholders and other states
6. [Provide] agency staff training [for multiple agencies] – broad, handling, depredation, forensics, etc.
7. Update federal legislation for California funding – reauthorize wolf compensation fund
8. [Create a] wolf mission statement
9. Identify DFG needs and gaps
10. Identify what stakeholders can do
11. Learn from experience in the Rockies
12. Obtain stakeholder information and experience in California and other states.
- 13. Reengage Boards of Supervisors after 6 months.**

APPENDIX F

PARTICIPANT'S EVALUATION OF THE MEETING SUMMARY

Total number of evaluations received = 17

1. In general, I felt the overall meeting was:

10 great (59%) 1 very good (6%) 7 good (35%) 0 Fair/poor

2. Were your concerns about wolf management discussed? 15 Yes 2 No

3. Comments?

2 Nos:

- Nothing concrete about the management plan was discussed.
- Great meeting of discussion

15 yes's

- It was very helpful to have this meeting facilitated. I look forward to future participation & finding ways to help DFG with this endeavor.
- Good group, contributed.
- I appreciated the meeting and hearing diverse stakeholders represented. I know it's really early in the process, but it's important to have an outline of the issues that need to be discussed and included in the future plan. The meeting was at the 30,000 foot level and we need to get into the details. The meeting was a good first step in what I expect will be a long process.
- I think the meeting was effectively facilitated, well-attended by diverse invitees, appropriately provisioned by data and presentation, and very timely.
- Mostly. Far too much to cover in one meeting.
- This was very helpful to find out about next steps + provide feedback on the management plan next steps.
- Great meeting. Very well run and well planned.
- How deer population + low elk population + high numbers of livestock in remote range and wilderness = high probability of livestock impacts by wolves.
- Continue to engage stakeholders to build relationships + provide pragmatic solutions.
- The details of a plan is where things will becoming interesting. Pretty easy to agree when speaking in generalities.
- Critical that the Department continue to use this group as a productive tool. Continue to make progress and communicate. Depart. Must show progress.
- Glad to see science-based decision-making is what we all want + that we are aware how budgets play into this + that we want to use our strengths to help the department, the public & wolf conservation & management.

4. In my opinion, the best part of this meeting was...

- 'What we do now' steps we'd all like to see the Department take.
- More details regarding the language of the management plan.
- Bringing together diverse stakeholders – despite the potential formula for a painful process. I'm so glad we all got into the same room together.
- Sharing, listening, diverse group. DFG stepped up.
- Prioritizing opportunities/future actions

- I think that the capture of **Worked Well, Could Have Done Better**, and **Opportunities**, followed by **What can DFG DO Now** effectively set a clear focus and follow-up steps.
- Having diverse groups calmly discuss the issues.
- The honest communication displayed by all.
- Feedback discussion and next steps because it helped frame up where we go from here.
- The respect and civility demonstrated by every person in the room. What a great foundation for future meetings (when the issues/details get tougher).
- Hearing other's concern and overlap.
- Open communication.
- Allowing opportunity for feedback (DFG).
- Respectful/civil tone. Balanced. Lots of opportunities for each person to be heard.
- Input from everyone.
- Getting diverse group together to open dialogue and start to hear why people feel certain ways. Understanding other parties will go a long way towards obtaining common ground.
- Finding out the priorities of the group for CDFG moving forward & the calmness in the room.

5. This meeting could have been improved by...

- More details of actions taken and what will happen in the future
- (I hate to say...) extending it to 4 or more hours to include lunch & more breaks for building relations and trust.
- Tribal participation, animal rights, Oregon FW participation. Brief overview of WA and OR plan process.
- Providing clear next steps for DFG, but more importantly for stakeholders.
- I think that each person should have been asked what their expected goal or outcome of the meeting would be.
- Clearer picture of concrete next steps.
- A better timeline with concrete steps going forward.
- Keep the momentum going and the group engaged without overwhelming already busy people.
- Being 1 hour longer to allow for 2 breaks so we could speak w/more individuals during the breaks. (Can you imagine that? Asking for a meeting to be longer! 😊).

6. Other comments:

- While I sometimes cringe at the "round the room" exercise, I really appreciated it today to ensure that everyone's voice was heard.
- Good setting, facilitation very helpful.
- Great Job, Much Appreciated!
- Keep this stakeholder committee together + utilize it.
- Keep reaching out to stakeholders - - it's a great way to move forward.
- Great move by DFG to have this session.
- This [meeting] can be improved by follow through and future utilization of this group as an available resource.
- Thank you for including the Wildlife Society. Role of professional science-based organization of wildlife biologists will be important going forward with developing management plan.