

MEETING REPORT
UTAH WOLF WORKING GROUP (WWG)
Meeting #9
31 August 2004
DNR Room 1050; Salt Lake City, UT

PARTICIPANTS:

Trey Simmons, Debbie Goodman, Robert Schmidt, Sterling Brown (alternate), Allison Jones, Karen Cortis, Byron Bateman, Jim Bowns, Randy Simmons, Clark Willis, Bill Burbridge

Missing: Mark Walsh

Technical Advisors: Alan Clark, Mike Bodenchuk, Larry Dalton

Alternates: Bill Fenimore, Kirk Robinson

Others: Joan DiGiorgio, Cindee Jensen, Miles Moretti

Facilitator: Walt Gasson - Dynamic Solutions Group, LLC

Recorder: Dana Dolsen, UDWR

DECISIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

The July meeting record will be posted on the web site immediately.

Walt will get the draft meeting record from today out for review by September 9. Comments on the draft are due to him by September 20.

The preliminary report will not be sent to the legislature. This is a UDWR responsibility, not a WWG responsibility.

The Outreach (Information/Education) and Wolf/Human Interaction subgroups presented their bullet points. They were discussed, modified and approved by the WWG.

The Wolf Monitoring subgroup also presented their first draft bullet points. These were also discussed, modified and approved by the WWG.

The Funding subgroup presented their draft bullet points for discussion. Their revised bullet points will be presented for discussion, modification and approval at the September 28 meeting.

The Livestock Depredation and Wolf/Wildlife interaction subgroups will present their first draft bullet points at the September 28 meeting.

An Objectives subgroup was formed. This subgroup will review and modify the draft objectives developed by Alan. The objectives they develop will be measurable. The following WWG members volunteered to serve on this subgroup:

Allison J.

Byron B. or Don P.

Clark W.

Randy S.

Debbie G.

Technical Advisor: Alan Clark

Due Dates: First draft – Sept. 28 meeting; Final Approval – October meeting

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF 7/27 MEETING RECORD

The group approved the July 27 meeting record, with no changes. Walt asked UDWR to post the meeting record to the website.

PRELIMINARY REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Miles Moretti has made the decision that it would be inappropriate for the WWG to report to the legislature. UDWR will report to the legislature in November.

OUTREACH SUBGROUP BULLET POINTS

Larry Dalton presented the bullet points for the Outreach (Information/Education) Subgroup. These bullet points were discussed, modified and approved, point-by-point, by the WWG. The approved bullet points are presented in Appendix I to this meeting record.

WOLF/HUMAN INTERACTION SUBGROUP BULLET POINTS

Mike Bodenчук presented the bullet points for the Wolf/Human Interaction Subgroup. These bullet points were discussed, modified and approved, point-by-point, by the WWG. The approved bullet points are presented in Appendix II to this meeting record.

WOLF RESEARCH AND MONITORING SUBGROUP BULLET POINTS

Mike Bodenчук presented the bullet points for the Wolf/Human Interaction Subgroup. These bullet points were discussed, modified and approved, point-by-point, by the WWG. The approved bullet points are presented in Appendix III to this meeting record.

FUNDING SUBGROUP DRAFT BULLET POINTS

Debbie Goodman presented the bullet points for the Funding Subgroup, for discussion only. These bullet points were discussed, and the major points of that discussion will be considered at the next subgroup meeting. The subgroup will present bullet points for approval at the September 28 meeting.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives drafted by Alan were reviewed and discussed. An Objectives Subgroup was formed. This subgroup will review and modify the draft objectives developed by Alan. The objectives they develop must be measurable. The following WWG members volunteered to serve on this subgroup:

Allison J.

Byron B. or Don P.

Clark W.

Randy S.

Debbie G.

Technical Advisor: Alan Clark

Due Dates: First draft – Sept. 28 meeting; Final Approval – October meeting

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on September 28, 2004 at the UDWR Office in SLC. It will begin at 9:00 AM.

APPENDIX I

Outreach

Publics that should be targeted for outreach efforts:

- General public
- Sportsmen & wildlife watching groups, including but not limited to the CWMU Assoc. & other wildlife interest groups such as the, Utah Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, Utah Audubon Council, NRA, Foundation For North American Wild Sheep, Boone & Crockett Club, Pope & Young Club, SFW, RMEF, TU, DU, WWC, UWF, and so forth ...
- Utah Department of Tourism's Utah Travel Council
- Livestock producers via woolgrowers, Cattlemen Assoc., and Utah Farm Bureau

- Politicians--Utah's congressional delegation, Utah legislature, county commissioners & councils, Association of Governments, city mayors
- Education community--Utah's universities & primary/secondary education institutions
- Other government entities - federal agencies (e.g., BLM, USFS), state (e.g., SITLA) & Ute Tribe, etc.
- Other established groups who will have an interest in wolves dispersing to Utah

Note: The aforementioned targeted publics in turn can provide their members and interested parties relevant information.

Media to be used in order to facilitate outreach efforts

- Newspapers (47 of which 6 are daily)
- TV (13 stations--channels 5, 2, 4 & 13 are most viewed)
- Radio (28+ regularly contacted by UDWR's Discover Utah Radio Program)
- UDWR magazine (maybe others) & UDWR TV program
- Make available to constituent group newsletters
- UDWR Wildlife News (weekly press release to nearly 280 writers)
- UDWR Web (1.3 million visits/year--provide timely updates to web site & enhance its attractiveness to stimulate usability). Facilitate an electronic subscription process for Wildlife News via UDWR website.
- UDWR brochures
- Direct presentations by UDWR & WWG pre-plan

Note: Do special segments on wolf when timely or appropriate.

Timeline for outreach efforts

a. Pre-Plan

- Begin now & keep an outline that grows to become a complete plan current on UDWR's web site.
- UDWR to brief Utah's legislature in early November 2004.
- UDWR to brief RACs & Wildlife Board in the Feb/March 2005 sessions (recurring briefings of RACs about wolf ecology and status).

b. Post Plan

- Target all identified publics using the recommended media
- Assess a web approach that allows colonizing wolves to be tracked by the public on time delay and in general geographic locations via a web map.
- Develop brochures once plan is done as a synoptic outreach tool

Note: UDWR will fund & conduct the aforementioned and also seek partners to broaden outreach effort.

APPENDIX II

Wolf/Human Interactions

Context

- The WWG expects that for the duration of the initial Utah Wolf Plan there would be few, if any, human/wolf interactions beyond those described in livestock depredation.
- Human/wolf interactions are envisioned as being both positive experiences (wolf viewing opportunities) and potentially negative experiences (hunting dog killing, habituation to humans).
- Having a plan to manage those interactions is, however, a proactive approach and may be important to gaining public acceptance.
- However, because of the low number of wolves expected and the nature of dispersing wolves, few interactions are expected.

Main Plan Direction

The following points are suggested by the WWG for inclusion in the plan:

- The Division adopt a 3 level response for wolves (similar to bears and cougars) which address nuisance, chronic nuisance and human safety responses.
- Nuisance and chronic nuisance wolves may be harassed, trapped and relocated or aversively conditioned (e.g., less than lethal munitions) according to established protocol.
- Wolves that pose a direct threat to human safety would be lethally removed.
- The Division and WS will work with private landowners and land managing agencies to mitigate negative impacts due to wolves.
- In general, the presence of wolves will not initiate a DWR request for public land closures and/or allocations with the exception of small, seasonal restrictions to protect dens and rendezvous sites.
- The Division and the land managing agencies will retain emergency authority to address legitimate human safety concerns (e.g., an aggressive wolf in a camp area), but these restrictions, like those used for bears, would be for a short period of time and limited in size.
- The use of hounds for cougar and bear hunting will not be curtailed due to wolves.
- Hounds killed by wolves may be part of the compensation program, but wolves that kill hounds (during the act of hunting) will not be removed.
- Recreational and commercial trapping of protected and unprotected furbearers will not be curtailed due to wolves, but seasonal restrictions may be appropriate to protect den and rendezvous sites.

- UDWR will develop a contingency plan to deal with incidental captures of wolves by commercial and recreational trappers, including protocols (e.g., radio collaring, medical attention and relocation) as appropriate.
- The Division will coordinate with the Utah Trappers Association to address their concerns.
- The Division and WS will participate in proactive strategies to preclude the habituation of wolves to humans.
- This may include educational programs for rural residents, collaborating with land managing agencies to prevent “campground wolves,” removing road-killed wildlife if wolves begin feeding on the carcasses, and training in appropriate responses (e.g., less than lethal munitions, RAG boxes).
- When wolves are confirmed in an area, a communications plan should be implemented that protects information regarding the location of the wolves to preclude unnecessary harassment (from either wolf viewing public or would-be wolf shooters).
- This information may be shared with members of the local community that may be negatively affected at a level that educates them but would not impact the wolves.

APPENDIX II

Utah Wolf Research and Monitoring

- To the extent possible, radio collar and monitor every wolf identified in Utah, consistent with the depredation policy.
- The use of GPS collars should be a priority.

Protocol Development

- Develop a comprehensive protocol for procedures to be followed when a wolf is handled.
- This protocol should include, at a minimum, procedures for minimizing stress to the animal during handling, as well as for determining the health of the animal, and for collecting relevant biological data (e.g., age, sex, blood and DNA samples).
- Ensure that DWR field personnel and WS personnel are trained in methods for field identification of wolves (i.e., howling, visual ID, scat, tracks).
- Identify other reliable sources for wolf sighting information (e.g., USFS, BLM, trappers) and provide similar training to those sources.
- Offer similar training to livestock producers and hunters.
- Provide more intensive training for a subset of DWR and WS field personnel.
- Intensive training will include implementation of the protocol for handling wolves described above, as well as other relevant skills.

Monitoring Actions

- DWR & WS will develop a “reactive response” program to verify reported wolf sightings.
- As wolf numbers increase, it may be appropriate to actively search for the presence of wolves in certain areas.

Database Maintenance

- Maintain a comprehensive database of relevant wolf information, such as:
 - wolf sightings,
 - current wolf locations,
 - wolf movements,
 - relevant biological data, and
 - results of any wolf-related investigations.

Out-of-State Coordination

- Coordinate tracking and monitoring efforts with the appropriate agencies from surrounding states.

Pre- & Post- Wolf Arrival Patterns

- To the extent practicable, establish baseline data (i.e., numbers & distribution) for big game herds and livestock before wolves arrive.
- When wolves “frequent” a given area, monitor that area to determine wolf impacts on big game herds and livestock.

Follow-through & Measurement

- If one or more mating pairs form, be prepared to locate and monitor den sites and assess reproduction.

Reportability & Adaptation

- Publish a comprehensive annual report including the activities under this section.
- When wolves disperse into or near Utah from the Southwest DPS Recovery Area, expand the above strategy to include those wolves.