

**FINAL MEETING REPORT**  
**UTAH WOLF WORKING GROUP (WWG)**  
**Meeting #2**  
**20 January 2004**  
**Salt Lake City**

**PARTICIPANTS:**

Jim Bowns (part), Sterling Brown (alternate for Wes Quinton), Bill Christensen, Bill Burbridge, Debbie Goodman, Allison Jones, Byron Bateman (alternate for Don Peay), Robert Schmidt, Randy Simmons, Trey Simmons, Clark Willis (part).

Missing: Karen Corts, Mark Walsh

Technical Advisors: Craig McLaughlin, Laura Romin, Mike Bodenchuk

Others: Becky Johnson, Cindee Jensen, Miles Moretti, Kevin Conway, Richard Warnick, Kirk Robinson, Joan ?

Facilitator Note: For this report, decisions and action items were left in their original places for context and are not repeated. Decisions and action items are underlined for easier reference.

**EXPECTATIONS**

**Question: (for Bill Burbridge and Byron Bateman only) Why are you here? Why would you take the time and expend the effort to be part of this Working Group?**

- Bill: Utah Wildlife Federation supported House Resolution 12, and I'm excited about the Wolf Working Group. The diversity of viewpoints here is good. I want to put together a plan that will serve Utah.
- Byron: I want a plan to deal with wolves. The sportsmen are concerned about this, and they want to see zero wolves.

**IDENTIFYING ALTERNATES:**

Each participant was asked to identify one alternate who may sit in when the participant is unavailable. We will distribute meeting reports and agendas to these individuals. Information on these alternates is included in the attached list.

**CHARTER REVIEW/APPROVAL:**

Participants were asked to review and approve the WWG Charter. One minor change was identified in Item 4: Time Frame. The WWG will continue their work after RAC review of the plan, but only to the completion of the plan.

**APPROVAL OF THE LAST MEETING RECORD:**

Participants approved the meeting record of the November 10 meeting, with no changes.

## **PRESENTATION: CRAIG McLAUGHLIN:**

UDWR Technical Advisor Craig Mc Laughlin gave a presentation outlining the legal, biological, economic and socio-political issues associated with wolves in Utah. Craig received 68 questions and ideas from WWG members, and incorporated them into his outline. He reviewed the outline, in its entirety, with the group. Questions on his presentation, along with associated discussion points are summarized below:

### **Legal Issues**

**Question: Could a captured wolf be released in another county in Utah?** USFWS has the authority to do so, but probably would not. APHIS-Wildlife Services would call USFWS, and notify UDWR. Informal agreements exist, governing this protocol, but no MOUs. The wolf would probably be simply collared and released. If it were a depredation situation, this could be different – an established protocol exists between USFWS and WS. The recent situation near Morgan was handled well – there were a lot of heroes on this one. This is a high profile issue. We are dealing with a very controversial, state-protected species. The RACs role is established in the Utah Wildlife Code, and they must be involved. We have the ability to present the plan to them in a single-agenda-item meeting, or make additions to the normal RAC process.

**Question: Is there a permit process for take of state protected species, and what are the criteria for it?** The Wildlife Board would have to define how they could be taken. The Board will probably have to deal with depredation regulations before they deal with this.

**Question: Regarding the I-70 line, what if a wolf from northern Utah crosses I-70?** The wolf is classified by where it is standing, not where it comes from. The wolf in question would be considered “endangered”. Kevin has asked for help from USFWS on this situation.

**Question: Which Board (Wildlife or Animal Damage Control Board) is involved in wolf damage?** A joint board like the one that deals with cougar and bear damage.

**Question: Are there any bills/resolutions concerning wolves in this session of the legislature?** No bills yet. There is a lot of interest in the WWG. If this group stays within the framework of HJR 12, they will have a good chance for success without legislation.

**Question: Are there any active lawsuits regarding wolf recovery?** No.

**Question: Has anything changed in federal land management planning (i.e., AMPs, RMPs, etc.) because of wolves?** No. No population exists in UT.

**Question: When wolves are designated threatened, what about harassing big game?** The protocol from the state management plan should cover this situation.

**Note:** The Wildlands Project did a study of wolf habitat in the Book Cliffs.

**Note:** If wolves did not have “protected” status under state law, they would be administered by the Department of Agriculture. If the legislature were to remove their “protected” status, they would be managed like coyotes are now.

**Note:** Utah has no state Endangered Species Act. Wolves are considered a “sensitive” species. Craig McLaughlin will provide a description of the criteria for a species to be listed as “sensitive”.

**Note:** If wolves did not have “protected” status under state law or were not federally listed, they cannot be listed as a “sensitive” species.

**Question: Are there other legal issues not noted above?**

What about incidental take? WS has a 1 wolf per year quota for Utah. They are in consultation with USFWS regarding this.

Has UT had to make changes in trapping regulations for wolves? No.

The definition of “take” is important.

What about tribal issues? So far, very limited involvement. Other tribes have been involved in other states.

What about local governments? Again, little involvement to date. How can we help them participate?

### **Biological Issues**

**Question: How do we answer all these questions?** Craig will write the draft legal, biological, economic and socio-political assessment. This must be consistent with the intent of HJR12. Habitat needs must be considered, since UT is much different than WY, ID or MT. There should be ties to the big game management plans. Impacts to concentrated big game (especially mule deer) on winter ranges must be considered.

**Question: Do we have cow: calf and doe: fawn trend data in UT?** Yes.

**Question: Is there historical data (circa 1910) data available?** Not much, and most of it is anecdotal. There is a difficulty separating accounts of coyotes and wolves.

**Question: Is there value in including information on wolf predation on people?** This issue came up in the legislature, and it may come up again in scoping.

**Question: What about disease transmission?** Distemper, rabies, and parvo may all be issues.

**Note:** We need to ask the question, “What happens when you add another predator?”

**Note:** Craig should move the “How might grazing permits be viewed by the courts...” question (page 8) to the Legal Issues section.

**Note:** We need a breakdown of all livestock losses from areas with wolves.

**Note:** We need to include basic geographic data about Utah. Things we might include:

- % public/ private land
- % grazed
- % currently under protection
- Breakdown of BLM/state/tribal/Forest Service/private lands
  - o North of I-70
  - o South of I-70

**Note:** We need to include assessment of wolves on non-prey species.

**Question: Are there other biological issues not noted above?**

Other plans have population objectives. What is the population objective for wolves in UT?

*Note: UDWR will purchase a wolf book for each member of the WWG.*

### **Economic Issues**

**Question: Can we draw on economic impact data from WY, ID and MT?** Hopefully, yes. We need all the information we can get on economic values, both positive and negative, from areas with and without wolves. Allison will provide URLs for wolf plans from other states.

**Note:** We need to consider the economic impact of any lost hunting opportunity.

**Note:** We may also want to consider the positive economic impact of wolf viewing. This may be hard to get, and could be difficult to use.

**Note:** We should consider economic impacts to the Conservation Permit program.

**Note:** License sales data and sales tax data is solid. Other sources of data can be less so.

**Note:** Some summarizing and editing will be needed.



- March 11                      Ogden
- March 12                      Logan
- March 15                      Cedar City
- March 16                      Richfield
- March 17                      Moab
- March 18                      Price
- March 19                      Spanish Fork

**What format will be used for the public scoping meetings?** Walt described the proposed format for these meetings. The typical public meeting process was as follows:

- The meeting would be opened with a welcome from the WWG.
- Craig would provide a brief summary of the issues involved in this effort.
- The DSG representative would provide an explanation of the meeting process, and specific instructions for providing their ideas.
- Individual tables would be set up for use by participants; each table is an independent working group.
- There should be 5-8 people per table.
- A member of the group writes the group's ideas on issues or concerns about wolves or wolf management on flip chart paper, in round-robin fashion.
- The group picks the top two or three most important issues.
- The group follows a similar process for recording suggestions and advice to the WWG as they prepare the state's wolf plan.
- The top three issues from each small group are posted, and all participants again prioritize issues from all individual groups, using small adhesive dots.
- At the end of the public input parts of the meeting, WWG members and UDWR employees should plan to informally answer questions and engage in further dialogue with members of the public.
- Meetings should begin promptly at 7:00 pm and should be over by 9:00 pm.

### **Questions/comments on the proposed format**

Perhaps we should have a local UDWR person introduce the WWG member who starts the meeting.

Perhaps we should present the issues we have identified. Or perhaps it's better to leave it wide open, and let whatever come out that needs to come out.

Do we need all the issues identified for the assessment for the meetings? No.

We should make clear the parameters imposed by HJR12.

When we promote these meetings, we should emphasize the importance of being there promptly at 7 PM.

We should encourage RAC and Wildlife Board members to be there.

How will we promote these meetings?

- WWG website
- UDWR news releases to statewide and local papers
- WWG member networks
- USU public radio (Robert Schmidt volunteered)
- Local radio and TV

Which WWG members can commit to attend?

- |            |                 |                                     |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| - March 8  | Roosevelt       | Trey, Bill C.                       |
| - March 9  | Vernal or Heber | Trey, Bill C., Bill B.              |
| - March 10 | Salt Lake City  | Trey, Allison, Byron, Debbie        |
| - March 11 | Ogden           | Debbie, Bill B., Byron, Trey, Randy |
| - March 12 | Logan           | Randy, Trey, Byron, Bill C., Clark  |
| - March 15 | Cedar City      | Jim, Bill C.                        |
| - March 16 | Richfield       | Jim, Sterling                       |
| - March 17 | Moab            | Bill C., Trey(?)                    |
| - March 18 | Price           | Trey(?), Allison                    |
| - March 19 | Spanish Fork    | Allison, Trey, Debbie(?)            |

**For the February 24 meeting**

The following experts were suggested for a presentation, if time allows:

- Mike Bodenchuk – Wildlife Services perspective
- Ed Bangs – USFWS
- Economists from USU
- Merrill Nelson – determining wolf kills
- Economists – MT
- Carter Niemeyer – USFWS
- Suzanne Stone – Defenders of Wildlife
- Jessica Montag
- Nicole McCoy

Walt and Spencer will confer to determine how much time is available, and work with the WWG and UDWR to schedule any speakers.

**EVALUATION – TODAY’S MEETING**

**What did you like about today’s meeting?**

- Kevin was here for most of the day.
- The technical advisors were here all day.
- Craig is doing a great job on the assessment.
- WWG members are calm and rational.

**What might be changed, to make it better?**

- No suggestions.

Prepared and distributed by:  
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