

MEETING REPORT
UTAH WOLF WORKING GROUP (WWG)
Meeting #13
12 April 2005
DNR Room 1050; Salt Lake City, UT

PARTICIPANTS:

Trey Simmons, Randy Simmons, Bill Burbridge, Mike Wolfe (for Allison Jones and Kirk Robinson), Robert Schmidt, Sterling Brown (for Todd Bingham), Bill Christensen, Don Peay (part), Jim Bowns, Karen Corts, Clark Willis, Bill Fenimore (for Debbie Goodman)
Technical Advisors: Kevin Bunnell

Alternates: Lee Howard, Byron Bateman

Others: Wes Shields (part), Todd Bingham (part), Jeff Warren (part), Randy Parker (part), Kim Bonnett (part), Cindee Jensen, Alan Clark, Miles Moretti (part)

Facilitator: Walt Gasson - Dynamic Solutions Group, LLC

Recorder: Heather Hill, UDWR

DECISIONS AND ACTION ITEMS:

The draft November 30 meeting record was approved. It will be posted the web site by December 2.

Walt will get the draft meeting record from today out for review by April 15, 2005. It will be discussed and approved at the next WWG meeting.

The Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife representative on the WWG delivered an ultimatum to the group, stating that unless the group approved three points, they would not agree to the plan. The three points did not meet the agreed-upon “consensus minus two” rule. The SFW representative, alternate and a number of others then chose to leave the meeting.

An attempt to reach “consensus minus two” on the remaining points within the livestock depredation section failed.

The draft plan was reviewed page-by-page, and comments were provided by the group. Walt and Kevin will incorporate these comments. The final draft will then be posted on the website at the same time it is provided to the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs). The public has the opportunity to comment on this draft by writing to the RAC chair(s) or appearing in person at the RAC meeting(s). In-person comments are preferred.

The next meeting will be held May 31, 2005. At that meeting, we will review the comments from the RACs and make any changes necessary to the final draft and

develop any recommendations before it is sent to the Wildlife Board. The Wildlife Board will meet on June 9, 2005 to consider this plan.

General opening discussion

- Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife does not agree with plan.
- Utah Wolf Forum doesn't understand problems with plan as written since group had already discussed.
- Utah Farm Bureau cannot agree with plan as it is currently written.
- Bill Burbridge - attempt to fix plan, plan as written needs work.
- Bill Fenimore - would like to hear what disagreements with plan are.
- Sterling Brown - scooping meetings are not reflected in plan.
- Clark Willis - No negative info from Defenders of Wildlife payment process.
- Walt – summary so far....
 - At policy level, groups opposed on management
 - Elements in plan groups/members do not agree with
- Plan does not address...(SFW)
 - CWMU association does not want wolves on private lands.
 - No definitive budget plan, no requirements for when action is taken.
 - Look at other states: promises have not been kept, problems
 - Division needs to identify place for wolves.
 - Treat wolves like coyotes (SFW position)
- Not WWG charter/plan to draft management plan (as per Kevin Conway's charge in 2003). It is DWR's charter to draft management plan.
- Wildlife Board makes final decision, WWG provides comment and advice. If no support for HJR12 or protective status for wolves?
- WWG all approved charter to draft plan and reach consensus.
- Sterling Brown – no point to continue at table, Don Peay – no point if plan is to conserve wolves – does not fit SFW objective, Clark Willis – stay at table
- Overall plan – consensus rule: no consensus if members leave, Wildlife Board will have plan without consensus.
- Jim Bowns - Kevin Conway wanted this group to give validity to plan
- UWF overall would like more proactive approach to wolf management, proactive measures to reestablish wolves, need plan within HJR12, only happen when controlling depredation and maintaining wildlife populations but doesn't seem to fit with HJR12.
- Karen Corts – when wolves delisted, if establish on reservation, tribe must be able to control if compromising objectives. Lethal option must be part of plan.
- Randy Simmons – three people at table can't endorse plan so there won't be consensus plan, should tweak plan and forward to RACs, people who disagree send in minority report. Paragraph about Defenders of Wildlife easily fixed. How do you deal with scooping meetings? Useful but not science, statement of intense preference among particular set of people.
- Trey Simmons – people represented unhappy with plan for opposite reasons, plan is disaster management instead of conservation plan. Why stop compromising now? No one will get everything their organization wants.

- Miles Moretti – Disappointed with discussion, made good faith effort. Were we overly ambitious to get unanimous compromise? Must put plan out, get groundwork for future. Delisting won't be anytime soon. Court rulings have changed the rules. Rules will continue to change. Currently at mercy of Fish and Wildlife, endangered status. When delisted, legislature may change how wolves managed. Need to go forward with a template as per charge by legislature and Wildlife Board. Overall, group has overcome tremendous obstacles. Understands if can't be finished, but as wildlife director, must bring something. Ask groups to finish process even if product not endorsed.
- Walt – recommend to go ahead with meeting and process.
- Bill Christensen – very clear statement/position on wolves. Wolves should be delisted and managed by state. Members do not want to see wolves in Utah. Majority of members are hunters. Big game populations affected by wolves. Yellowstone elk population reduced significantly with wolves. Will stay at table but can't promise to vote for consensus, without changes will not vote for org to support. Strengthen lethal use. Stronger statements needed about impacts on big game. Speaks for Utah and national membership.
- Mike Wolfe – If can't come to compromise on harassment, will vote personal conscience though representing Wolf Forum (willing to compromise).

Break

- Consensus if addressed....(new points)
- Don Peay –
 - First: CWMU's and private landowners want statement in the plan that says if they have wolves on their land, they have the option to kill them on sight.
 - Second: Funding for science needs to be guaranteed.
 - Third: Compensation must be provided to guides and outfitters and houndsmen for any losses in revenue at full market value if loss in game, not from increase in license fees.
 - Sterling Brown – Lethal control option on public land for harassment.
- Review of above points
 - Several groups cannot agree to Don's first point.
 - Second point – same
 - Third point – Houndsmen already compensated in plan. Several groups cannot agree to point being required in plan.
 - Sterling's point – asterisked in plan (no consensus yet)
 - Proposal – proceed with agenda, whether members choose to be part of or not part of discussion
- SFW does not want to continue discussion, left the table
- Bill Burbridge – present points and recommendations and continue
- Jim Bowns – continue, put together for RAC process
- Trey Simmons – are we wasting time if no consensus? Would like to go forward.
- Clark Willis – knew from beginning would be uncomfortable with some points of plan, but write plan to highlight what groups want and give to Division, even though no one will be totally happy – we will have done job. Present plan to RACs and Board with differences acknowledged.

- Bill Fenimore – Supports Jim and Clark’s comments. If SFW left table, will they be able to come back? How do we go forward if major group left/unrepresented?
- Jim Bowns – Need to take plan to RACs and point out areas that groups don’t agree.

Public Comment Review

- Attach content analysis as appendix to plan, have Division make minor technical changes.
- Bill Burbridge – Discussion on legal aspects of when wolves are delisted.
 - Mike Wolfe - Does Division have a mandate to manage for minimum viable population?
 - Kevin Bunnell – Plan and Sensitive Species list (three tier) directs state management. Once delisted, drop to tier 2 status. Does management plan trump sensitive species list or vice versa?
 - Miles Moretti – Our job is to manage, conserve, and enhance protected wildlife. SS list (rule) higher than plan in hierarchy. Threat of legal action can’t keep from moving forward.
 - Bill Burbridge – What legal actions will/can be taken against plan/management?
 - Kevin – management of tier 2 species is to keep from becoming endangered. Are they no longer sensitive species if delisted?
 - Clark – SS list keeps them from protecting livestock???
 - Miles – probably would not be on list if delisted, because doing well across range
 - Kevin – point of SS list is to keep from being listed; once delisted, no need for being on list

Bill Burbridge – Comments seem to want more specificity on when control is used

- Objective is vague, spelled out in plan

Trey – comments objecting to use of “conservation”

- Is there a problem with this language?
- Agriculture world not totally opposed, but doesn’t like context of “increasing population” associated with “conserve”; plan not to conserve, but let them in while protecting wildlife and livestock
- Trey – want some acknowledgement that plan isn’t just about killing wolves only
- Sterling - HJR12 doesn’t mean “no wolves” or “breed wolves”, the term “conserve” seems closer to “breed” side. Maybe use HJR12 language
- Trey – “conserve” is “conserve what you have” or “leave alone”. Already discussed in previous meetings.
- Kevin – is “conserve through management” more comfortable language?

Jim Bowns – Append HJR12 to plan so people see bounds within which plan was written

- Clark agrees
- WWG would like it added as appendix

Mike Wolfe – change in Defenders of Wildlife numbers, other obvious changes needed

- Will be done by Kevin

Trey Simmons – will DRAFT 3 (or what version) be available for review before RACs?

- Kevin will present 3rd draft to RACs

- Post RAC version on website (no longer accepting public comment)
- RAC comment is accepted by letter to RAC

Clark – WWG relation to presentation of plan

- Kevin – will be presented as Division plan with WWG input, but not presented as WWG plan because of lack of consensus

Trey – consensus before or after RACs?

- Talk with Marty Bushman over legal issues of RAC process

Non-consensus items in Plan

- No consensus on harassment, lethal/non-lethal control issues – same issues we identified in March 18 version of the draft plan

Lunch

RAC process – Marty Bushman

RACs make recommendation; WWG meets to review or change plan based on RAC comments; Plan presented to the Board (by Kevin) with new recommendations from RAC and from post-RAC WWG recommendation

Wolf Plan Review

The group reviewed the draft plan page by page, and provided comments. Walt and Kevin will incorporate the changes. The content analysis of the comments provided between March 18 and April 1 will be included as an appendix. The scoping meeting information will also be summarized in a format similar to that in the content analysis, with the long discussion (with numbers included) moved to an appendix.

Approved November 30, 2004 meeting record

Final Comments

Need to indicate on the website the comment process, with order of preference/effectiveness

May 17 – Southern Region RAC; 7 PM at Beaver High School

May 18 – Southeastern Region RAC; 6:30 PM at Powell Museum in Green River

May 19 – Northeastern Region RAC; 6:30 at Uinta Basin Applied Tech School in Roosevelt

May 24 – Central Region RAC; 6:30 at Springville Jr. High

May 25 – Northern Region RAC; 6:30 at Brigham City Senior Center Community Center

May 31, Tuesday – Final WWG meeting

June 9 – Wildlife Board Meeting