

MEETING REPORT
UTAH WOLF WORKING GROUP (WWG)
Meeting #7
29 June 2004
DNR Room 1050; Salt Lake City, UT

PARTICIPANTS:

Sterling Brown (alternate), Randy Simmons (part), Debbie Goodman, Clark Willis, Bill Burbridge, Robert Schmidt, Bill Christensen (part), Kirk Robinson (alternate for Trey Simmons), Allison Jones, Don Peay, Jim Bowns

Missing: Mark Walsh, Karen Corts

Technical Advisors: Alan Clark, Mike Bodenchuk, Jim Karpowitz, Laura Romin

Others: Kevin Conway (part), Miles Moretti, Bill Fenimore (alternate), Byron Bateman (alternate), Steve Nadeau, Joan Digiorgio, Larry Dalton (part), Lee Howard (alternate), Trey Simmons, Tom Wharton, Bryce Petersen, Mike Medberry, Philip Costaschuk

Facilitator: Walt Gasson - Dynamic Solutions Group, LLC

Recorder: Dana Dolsen, UDWR

DECISIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

Walt will get final May meeting record out by July 5, for posting on the web site.

Walt will get the draft meeting record from today out for review by July 8.

Comments on the draft are due to him by July 15.

Doug Smith will speak at our July meeting. Allison Jones will coordinate with Smith to get him here.

The following plan for completing the plan was approved by the WWG and UDWR:

1) Walt and Alan Clark will develop an outline for the plan, based on Craig's most recent outline. They will get that outline to you via email at least two weeks before the July meeting. We will discuss, modify and approve that outline at the July meeting.

2) At the July meeting, philosophically diverse but nonrandom subgroups of WWG members, plus the appropriate technical representative and/or a DWR representative, will be assigned to major thematic sections (i.e., livestock conflicts, ungulate management conflicts, research and monitoring, conservation interests, and information and education needs) of the above outline. These subgroups will draft the major points to be contained in that section of the draft wolf management plan.

3) The subgroups will submit these key points to Walt at an agreed-upon time (some, but probably not all will be due before the Aug. meeting). Walt will take the key points and develop first drafts of the various sections, then

submit them to the entire WWG along with the original submissions. The WWG will have the opportunity to comment on all drafts, using a process to be determined at the July meeting.

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF 5/25 MEETING RECORD

The group approved the suggestions made to the May 25 meeting report. Walt will make these changes, and the final version will be posted to the website.

UNAUTHORIZED LISTSERVE USERS

During the past month, it was discovered that multiple unauthorized users were using the WWG listserv. A forwarded message may have allowed these users access. These users were removed.

The group agreed that Alan Clark will review all user names with UDWR staff. Authorized users will be retained, and access to the listserv will be closed.

JULY 27 MEETING AGENDA

Doug Smith will speak to the WWG in the morning. Two papers were distributed as homework assignments from Doug. Allison will distribute a third by email to WWG members. The representative from Parks Canada will be unavailable for that date. Randy Simmons will arrange for a future date, if needed.

COUNTY REPRESENTATION

Walt reported on his telephone conversation with Mark Walsh. Mr. Walsh has yet to attend a WWG meeting. He indicated to Walt that he could not name an alternate, but said that he would attend the July 27 meeting.

INTERIM REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

The status of the interim progress report to the legislature, discussed at the May meeting, was again discussed. Alan Clark will check on the status of that letter and report back to the WWG.

PROGRESS ON THE PLAN – KEVIN CONWAY

UDWR Director Kevin Conway led an extensive discussion with the WWG on this topic. Major points of this discussion are summarized below:

- The WWG was established to assist UDWR in drafting a wolf management plan. This plan must be in accordance with HJR 12 and the UT Wildlife Code.
- The legislature did not tell UDWR to set up a working group. UDWR and the Wildlife Board chose to do so.
- The WWG represents all the interests needed to proceed on the plan.
- The WWG has not failed. No one person is to blame for lack of progress on the plan. UDWR accepts part of the responsibility, since they set no specific numeric

target for wolf numbers, like WY, MT and ID had to in their wolf management plans.

- The “consensus minus two” rule for decision making may be contributing to lack of success, due to the strongly held values and views of the group members.
- Is there another way the WWG can help UDWR write a wolf management plan? If not, UDWR will write the plan and submit it to the Wildlife Board.
- The Wildlife Board wants UDWR to proceed in getting the wolf management plan done, with or without the WWG. A plan will be written, perhaps by the technical experts.
- Is this a management plan, a recovery plan, or a conflict management plan? Can we manage wolf conflicts with big game populations, livestock, and economic interests? Can we manage wolves in congruence with the position of the Ute Tribe?
- If a wolf management plan can do the above, is there room to incorporate elements of a conservation plan?
- The Utah Legislature had three initial priorities for this plan: 1) Primary concern: Can we have any wolves in Utah? 2) Secondary concern: Management of conflict. 3) If the first two can be handled, maybe conservation concerns can be addressed.
- Zero wolves is an unacceptable answer. But if conflicts cannot be managed, then zero wolves is acceptable. Too many (i.e., 30) wolves is equally an unacceptable answer.
- The WWG reflects the diverse values of Utah people. It should not be that difficult to write a management plan for Utah. Zero wolves is not realistic. Conflict management should be a major focus. What are the control action triggers for both livestock and wildlife? Wildlife triggers will be harder.
- Focus should be on conservation of wolf population. We should use conflict resolution wisely.
- An adaptive approach is necessary. Let natural migration occur, and set rules of engagement to guide responses to the situations dependent on the context (geographical location, alpha wolf, study/research). Look at prescriptions for an array of scenarios based on the rules of engagement.
- Adapt management prescriptions over time, based on an active research program.
- Prescriptions and triggers are part of the cougar plan. We could use these as modified to reflect wolf predation. DWR professionals could write the plan and ask the WWG for a response.
- All the stakeholders should be involved. The UDWR was very proactive to involve all interests. We need input from all interests to create value. The WWG could respond to a plan written by UDWR.
- The WWG is getting too much into the details of the plan. We should focus on the generalities instead.
- WWG efforts may need to focus more on managing humans. Group members are entrenched. We should draft an outline of a conflict management plan as a major task, knowing that the biological issues will show up.
- We should be managing wolves on the concept of handling conflict. Who puts the pen to the paper is unimportant.

- Where can Utah have wolves? How can we deal with the research and study needs? There has been too little focus on actual impacts. How much will wolves cost and who pays for them? Utah has a greater economic value for big game than other states.
- A fund has been established to cover costs of depredation. It will begin in 2005. If the money generated is insufficient, then decisions will have to be made. If there is not enough money coming in to cover the management costs, then maybe the number of wolves will have to be reduced.
- We are not dealing with a 20-year time frame for this plan; rather it's a contingency plan with triggers and adaptive responses. The WWG could proceed with writing the plan.
- Defenders of Wildlife is now paying for wolf depredation, and is willing to do so in UT, if the plan is acceptable.
- The ability to pay all the costs of managing wolves plays a role in the plan.
- The amount of money spent on killing wolves may be controversial. Some people will be uncomfortable with seeing their money used to kill wolves. Others will be very comfortable controlling wolves that kill livestock. They should know that management is more than just killing wolves.
- The results of the public scoping meetings do not agree with the results of the USU study on attitudes of Utah residents on wolves.
- What should the WWG do? What do UDWR and the Wildlife Board want?
- What is the WWG willing to do?
- The WWG is ready to proceed with a plan for more than one wolf. The plan needs to disclose all the costs and impacts for decision-making.
- USFWS says Utah doesn't have to have wolves. SFW is not willing to have wolves now. Utah has no voice in wolf management now, until they are delisted. SFW wants no wolves until delisting occurs.
- UDWR is guided by state laws, and must respond to the Utah Legislature.
- Does the plan only kick in after de-listing? Yes.
- The WWG needs specific direction from UDWR to proceed more effectively.
- Perhaps the WWG could list conflicts and wolf status, and then figure out which control actions will be implemented when.
- To what extent is this a conflict plan? To what extent is it a conservation plan? What role is the WWG going to take? We could bring the technical experts to the table, and let them take a more active role in developing the plan. Or we could make the WWG an advisory group.
- Experts ought to write the plan, and then WWG can critique it.
- We should narrow the focus of the tasks entrusted to the WWG.

Kevin then proposed that a subgroup of WWG members could take each major section of the plan, each subgroup being made up of diverse interests, and a technical expert if needed. These subgroups would develop major points of the section, and turn them over to an author for the actual writing. Walt could serve as the author. Discussion on this proposal ensued, with the following points being captured:

- Certain "given" representatives could serve on the subgroups.

- How should different chapters relate to each other? Integrating these chapters requires some overarching, agreed-upon framework.
- The plan should address implications of wolves in Utah regarding wildlife depredation (with triggers and prescriptions) and livestock depredation (with triggers and prescriptions, research and monitoring, and funding).
- Some discomfort with current proposal from Kevin. This should not be like the cougar and bear plans. How does conflict resolution get addressed?
- Guidance in each section should be given, with specific parameters for how prescriptions are developed.
- A chapter on likely conflict scenarios was envisioned by the WWG.
- The intent of the subgroups is to develop a straw man, or good first draft that can be brought to the WWG.
- Subgroups should be more or less representative, so that contention is minimized in review by the larger group.
- This plan must be adaptive, so that as the scenario changes over time, with the presence and impacts of wolves, it can be changed.
- Can triggers of meaningful value be set in advance of wolf presence?
- Can a set of principles be developed across all depredation scenarios to guide management responses, that is, the triggers being set and put into play?
- Hypothetical management prescriptions are tough to develop, when there may be intervening variables that impinge upon the recommended actions. We might over-react and jeopardize the conservation of wolves in Utah.
- UDWR technical expertise will be incorporated into all management response scenarios to validate the approach proposed.
- The issues summary chapter is almost drafted now. Allison is willing to pull that chapter together.
- Although Walt is serving as the scribe for this effort, Alan Clark or his designee should be listed as the lead author.

WWG members considered this proposal, and the associated discussion. This discussion was tabled through the lunch break and through the following presentation.

PRESENTATION: STEVE NADEAU, IDAHO FISH AND GAME

A copy of Steve's presentation and summary (taken from notes by Alan Clark) appear as an appendix to this meeting report.

PROCESS FOR COMPLETING THE PLAN

It was agreed that the plan should be developed as a short-term, contingency document, with an adaptive approach. The sections should be developed by sub-groups with balanced representation. It was also agreed that when the entire WWG reviews a section, they need to see both the material provided to Walt by the sub-group and the section that Walt writes from that material. A discussion then ensued on what process the WWG should use in reviewing that material. The following points were captured:

- The WWG should have the opportunity to comment on the initial points developed by the sub-group.
- The master draft from Walt should go to all WWG members. They should submit their comments as red and/or blue line copy. Walt could then incorporate all the comments and edits for discussion at the next meeting, when the entire group approves the text, line by line, using consensus or consensus minus two.
- The sub-group meets to develop bullets for the section. They send bullets to Walt, and he writes the text of the section. He sends it back to the sub-group for edits. They return edited section to him and he distributes it to the WWG, with a time limit on their discussion. At the end of that time limit, a vote is called for and the individual votes recorded.
- The draft final plan will go to the RACs, then back to the WWG for final changes and approval before it goes to the Wildlife Board.
- We should not get bogged down in process.
- At the July meeting, we will discuss/modify/approve the outline for the plan. Subgroups will be identified. Each will have an array of interests represented.
- Bullet points will be prepared by the subgroup and sent to Walt.
- Walt will rewrite these bullet points into draft text, and send both bullets and draft text to all WWG members. At a subsequent meeting, the WWG will discuss, modify and approve the draft text.
- WWG members and alternates can use the listserv to volunteer for specific sections and provide comments.