

# Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan: 2019 Update



DEREK BROMAN  
CARNIVORE-FURBEARER COORDINATOR  
JUNE 7, 2019  
SALEM, OREGON

# Presentation Outline

2

- ▶ Wolf Plan History
- ▶ Current Update Timeline
- ▶ Guiding Principles
- ▶ General Comments
- ▶ Changes by Chapter
- ▶ Summary



# Wolf Plan History

- ▶ **2005- First Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Plan)** (0 known wolves in Oregon)
- ▶ **2010- Plan five-year review and update** (21 known wolves in Oregon)
- ▶ **2011- Federal delisting in eastern 1/3 of Oregon**
- ▶ **2013- Settlement agreement, Phase I amended** (64 known wolves in Oregon)
- ▶ **2015- Commission delisted gray wolf under State ESA** (110 known wolves in Oregon)
- ▶ **2016- Current review and update Initiated** (112 known wolves in Oregon)

# Current Update Timeline

## 2016

- ▶ January 2016- Timeline outline (Director's Report)
- ▶ March 2016- Stakeholder panel (Director's Report)
- ▶ June 2016- Stakeholder meetings (The Dalles/  
La Grande)
- ▶ July 2016- Stakeholder meeting (La Grande)
- ▶ August 2016- Staff update (Director's Report)
- ▶ October 2016- Update and public testimony  
(La Grande)

# Current Update Timeline

## 2017

- ▶ January 2017- Stakeholder meeting
- ▶ April/May 2017- First Draft and public testimony
- ▶ June 2017- Commission work session
- ▶ September 2017- Update in Director's Report
- ▶ September-October 2017- Commissioner meetings
- ▶ December 2017- Working copy released and stakeholder panels

# Current Update Timeline

## 2018 & 2019

- ▶ July 2018- Facilitator convening interviews
- ▶ Facilitated meetings: August 30 (The Dalles), October 9 (Salem), November 5 (Conference Call), November 27 (Pendleton), and January 8 (Clackamas). Final Report completed April 2019
- ▶ December 2018- Facilitation update in director's report
- ▶ April 2019- Federal/State Coordination Strategy
- ▶ April 15, 2019- Draft Plan
- ▶ May 17, 2019- Commission conference call

# Guiding Principles of Review

- ▶ Adhere to state delisting analysis factors when considering any proposed changes
- ▶ Maintain conservation focus in all phases
- ▶ Maintain increasing flexibility in management options as the population increases
- ▶ Address Department resource limitations when evaluating future commitments
- ▶ Develop more effective workload sharing with USFWS in federally listed area

# General Comments on Plan Update

- ▶ Structure and flow is similar to current Plan
- ▶ Maintains overall conservation focus
- ▶ Reflects current situation in Oregon
- ▶ Uses Oregon-specific data and information
- ▶ Additional scientific research references
- ▶ Retained pertinent appendices
- ▶ Earlier versions will continue to be available



# Notable Changes by Chapter

# Chapter 1- Introduction

- ▶ Combined the Introduction and Chapter 1 of current Plan
  - ▶ Reduced overall content of chapter
  - ▶ Historical and background information is well documented and easily referenced



# Chapter 2- Wolf Conservation and Management

- ▶ Maintain a three-phase approach and associated objectives
- ▶ No established population targets or caps
- ▶ Modeling needs:
  - ▶ effective management zones
  - ▶ viability thresholds
  - ▶ population objectives
  - ▶ effects of management options



# Chapter 2- Wolf Conservation and Management

- ▶ Created Potential Conservation Threats section:
  - ▶ Human-caused mortality
  - ▶ Genetic health
  - ▶ Habitat and connectivity
  - ▶ Diseases
  - ▶ Human attitudes towards wolves
- ▶ Documented human-caused mortality, Oregon mortality rates, and scientific findings
- ▶ Evaluation of documented wolf mortalities and state delisting viability analysis



# Chapter 2- Wolf Conservation and Management

- ▶ Monitoring section updated to identify priorities
- ▶ Continued use of radio-telemetry, VHF collars can be preferred over GPS
- ▶ Phase I and Phase II collar at least one member of a pack with emphasis on breeding adult
- ▶ Phase III collaring for population monitoring and research, wolves in new locations, and livestock conflict
- ▶ New survey techniques in Phase III
- ▶ Non-invasive monitoring and citizen science



# Chapter 3- Special Status Game Mammal

14

## *Background*

- ▶ Game Mammal status called for in 2005 Plan, formalized by 2009 Legislature, allowing use of Pittman Robertson funds for wolf conservation and management
- ▶ Statute requires Commission to define in rule



# Chapter 3- Special Status Game Mammal

15

## *Background*

- ▶ 2005 Plan states the use of hunters and trappers in very specific situations are available tool in Phase III (Controlled Take)
  - ▶ Wolf management requires extensive personnel
  - ▶ Future use of hunters and trappers to assist management is consistent with management of other wildlife species and the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation
  - ▶ Continues principle of increasing flexibility with population increase
- ▶ Plan states no general hunting seasons allowed
- ▶ Does not replace non-lethal efforts to minimize depredation

# Chapter 3- Special Status Game Mammal

16

## *Current*

- ▶ New chapter compiles and adds specificity, satisfying statutory requirement
- ▶ Draft Plan maintains current Plan approach but further defines Controlled Take in Phase III
  - ▶ Requires Commission authorization
  - ▶ No general season hunts. Proposed controlled hunts require separate public process
  - ▶ Controlled Take includes public hunters and trappers
  - ▶ Can only used for specific areas and situations

# Chapter 3- Special Status Game Mammal

17

- ▶ Propose Addendum 1 to further clarify Controlled Take authorization occurs in separate process to Plan
- ▶ Chapter 3, Page 31, lines 28-29  
“2. When in Phase III, the Plan also directs wolf protection and authorizes lethal removal but includes the use of controlled take with the following stipulations: Use of controlled take as a management tool requires Commission approval through a separate public rulemaking process.”
- ▶ Chapter 4, Page 51, lines 43-44  
“4. Controlled take through a separate public rulemaking process would be by ODFW special permit authorization for the public, and focused on a specific area or situation experiencing conditions that warrant a management response.”
- ▶ Chapter 4, Page 73, lines 39-41  
“Actions involving lethal removal by controlled take, which requires Commission approval through a separate public rulemaking process, will be considered on a case-by-case basis (see Chapter III) only as follows:”

# Chapter 3- Special Status Game Mammal

18

- ▶ Controlled Take to address long term, recurring livestock depredation:
  - ▶ Take will only address situations in a specified area, and
  - ▶ Take will not impair wolf population viability or reduce overall population health factors within the region
- ▶ Controlled Take to address ungulate populations not meeting established management objectives or herd management goals:
  - ▶ Consider numerous factors when determining if wolves are a major cause of failing to achieve these objectives or goals, as well as alternate options to Controlled Take
  - ▶ Take will not impair wolf population viability or reduce overall population health factors within the region

# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

19

- ▶ Oregon-specific wolf depredation data
- ▶ Increased scientific literature related to wolf-livestock conflict including tools to minimize depredation
- ▶ Maintain principle to allow flexibility as populations increase
- ▶ Voluntarily use Phase I requirements in Phase II and III
  - ▶ Coordination with area livestock producers and officials
  - ▶ ADW's and AKWA's
  - ▶ Use of wolf website and listserv
- ▶ In all Phases, non-lethal tools remain first choice when addressing conflict



# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

20

- ▶ Livestock conflict strategies now include requirement that livestock must be present for injurious harassment
- ▶ Clarification that non-lethal measures must be appropriate for the situation and be documented before lethal control is considered in Phases II and III
- ▶ Department issued lethal permits in Phase II and III to address chronic depredation:
  - ▶ must occur within area of depredating wolves,
  - ▶ the wolves present a significant risk to livestock present in the area, and
  - ▶ all take reported within 24 hours



# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

21

## Chronic Depredation

### ▶ Current Plan

- ▶ Phase I: 4 depredations/6 month period
- ▶ Phase II & III: 2 confirmed depredations with no timeframe, or 1 depredation & 3 attempted depredations with no timeframe

# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

22

## Chronic Depredation

- ▶ Following analysis, Department proposed Phase II & III definition to be 3 confirmed depredations in 12 month period
  - ▶ No stakeholder support, none "could live with it"
- ▶ Stakeholder proposals in facilitated meetings:
  - ▶ 3 depredations in a grazing season (6-9 months)
  - ▶ 2 depredations in a 12 month period
- ▶ From this facilitated process, Department staff proposes **2 depredations in a 9 month period**

# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

23

- ▶ Greater detail regarding Department discretion and criteria evaluated for decision-making
- ▶ The Department evaluates each situation on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate response
- ▶ Depredation level is only one factor used when determining the appropriate response



# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

24

- ▶ Wolf-specific considerations:
  - ▶ number and ID of depredating wolves
  - ▶ pack area and status
  - ▶ proximity to dens and rendezvous areas
  - ▶ health
  - ▶ frequency, severity, and distance between depredations
  - ▶ depredation history of the pack
  - ▶ wolf behavior and travel patterns
  - ▶ terrain and remoteness
  - ▶ potential of lethal control to change pack behavior and minimize depredation

# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

25

- ▶ Livestock specific considerations:
  - ▶ type of livestock and level of vulnerability
  - ▶ time of year
  - ▶ grazing season
  - ▶ changes in husbandry practices
  - ▶ continued presence of livestock
  - ▶ pasture size and remoteness
  - ▶ non-lethal measures used
  - ▶ implement of effective non-lethal measures
  - ▶ livestock stocking density

# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

26

- ▶ Merely meeting chronic definition does not automatically result in lethal request or lethal removal actions
- ▶ 20 Requests (4 during ongoing lethal removal efforts)
  - ▶ Agency response
    - ▶ 6 denials ( $\bar{x}$ =2.8 depredations in previous 12mo)
    - ▶ 10 approvals
      - ▶ 6 approvals resulted in the take of 16 wolves

Period	Primary Requests	Approvals	Avg. Depredations in previous 12 mo (range)	Wolves Taken
Phase I	4	4	6.5	4
Phase II	7	1	5.0	4
Phase III	5	5	4.0	8
Total	16	10	5.1 (2-10)	16

# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

27

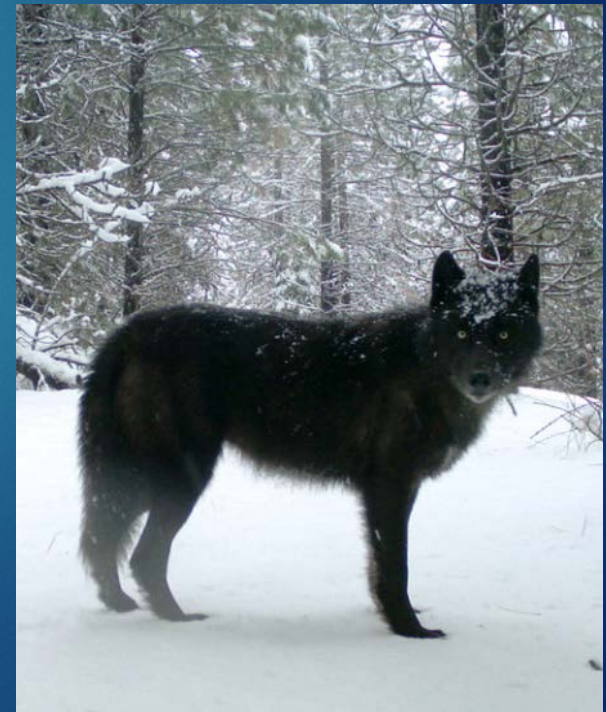
- ▶ Draft follows current Plan that allows Wildlife Services to conduct depredation investigations in Phase III
- ▶ Department protocols must be followed and Department makes final determination
- ▶ Investigations will continue to be rigorous, objectively conducted, evidence-based process ensuring consistency across Oregon, regardless the investigator(s)



# Chapter 4- Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

28

- ▶ Investigation determinations are product of local District Biologist and Wolf Program
- ▶ Investigation evaluations include:
  - ▶ use of Department protocols
  - ▶ amount of physical evidence
  - ▶ agreement between physical evidence and determination
  - ▶ consistency of interpretation with previous experiences
  - ▶ quality of documentation



# Chapter 5- Wolf-Ungulate and Carnivore Interactions

29

- ▶ Oregon ungulate data from occupied wolf areas

# Chapter 6- Wolf-Human Interactions

- ▶ Human safety section



*Few Changes in remaining chapters*

Chapter 7- Information and Education

Chapter 8- Reporting and Evaluation

Chapter 9- Research and Information Management

Chapter 10- Budget for Implementation

# Summary

30

- ▶ Update adhered to guiding principles
- ▶ Maintained a conservation-based plan that is true to its origins, while providing additional clarity
- ▶ Build off successes of the current Plan but has been refined to be more effective and focus on contemporary issues
- ▶ Uncertainty reduced and assumptions avoided
- ▶ Filling remaining knowledge gaps is priority and imperative for future decision-making
- ▶ Reflects current actions and understandings of wolf conservation and management while serving as a foundation for the next cycle of implementation

# Questions

31

