



# COLORADO

## Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Director's Office  
6060 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80216  
P 303.866.3203 | F 303.866.3206

To: Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

From: Dan Prenzlów, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Date: January 7, 2021—**updated February 16, 2021**

### **Re: A proposed blueprint for public involvement to inform the development of a Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan.**

#### **Summary**

Colorado citizens voted Proposition 114 into statute on November 3, 2020. This directs the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission (PWC) to develop a plan to restore and manage gray wolves in Colorado by December 31, 2023 (Appendix A). To that end, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) staff have developed this document describing a proposed public involvement process to draft the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan (hereafter Plan). This effort was informed from conversations with relevant staff from the six western state Wildlife Management agencies that have gone through a process to develop a wolf management plan. On January 4, 2021, the final rule to delist the gray wolf as an Endangered Species went into effect, which means that the species is federally delisted and is under state management authority. It is anticipated that there will be litigation challenging this decision. The effect of this litigation on the federal status of the species, and therefore the management authority, is uncertain. If the litigation results in the species being federally relisted, and development of the Plan proceeds, close coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will occur throughout the process. If the species is federally delisted, consideration of the potential for the species to be re-listed in the future will inform consideration of the development and implementation of permits and tools to provide future regulatory assurances and management flexibility.

#### **Public Involvement Objectives**

- Share information to build public awareness and promote engagement across the state.
- Collaborate with technical experts and stakeholders to share knowledge and draft management and conservation strategies.
- Foster commitment and collaboration toward plan implementation.
- Design and implement an inclusive and transparent process to meet requirements outlined in Proposition 114 (Appendix A).



## Coordinating Bodies, Roles, and Decision Making

Parks and Wildlife Commission. The PWC will serve as the decision making body for the development of the Plan. This role will include three primary responsibilities: (1) to consider options for public involvement and approve the public involvement process to develop the Plan, (2) to receive input from the CPW staff, public, stakeholders, and technical experts and provide feedback on draft management concepts and strategies, and (3) to approve the final Plan. The PWC will also monitor the process and products throughout and provide feedback and guidance as necessary.

The PWC will convene two groups, in consultation with CPW, to support the management planning process: a Technical Working Group (TWG) and a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG; described below). These groups are advisory bodies to the PWC. They are not decision-making bodies and have no authority on wolf management policy, research, or operations. A member may be removed from either the TWG or SAG at the discretion of the CPW Director based on conduct or lack of participation.

Facilitator/Consultant(s). An external facilitator will be contracted to run SAG and TWG meetings, statewide hearings and other engagement forums, and public comment opportunities in coordination with CPW staff. The same or a different consultant may also be contracted to conduct human dimensions research.

Technical Working Group. The TWG with CPW and other state and federal agency experts (listed below) will convene to provide objective, scientific-based information to inform the development of the Plan.

1. The TWG will propose conservation objectives and management strategies that CPW will incorporate into a draft Plan.
2. The TWG will share information with the SAG throughout the planning process, including the development of draft management strategies and actions for stakeholder review.

CPW Director, in consultation with the PWC, will approve members of the TWG. Member representation may include:

- Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- USDA U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA)
- Tribal representation
- **National Park Service**
- Other state or federal agency representation as deemed appropriate ● Parks and Wildlife Commissioner; as ex-officio/non-voting

The Technical Working Group may include several subgroups, such as Communications, Implementation and Research (Reintroduction/Monitoring/Public Opinion), Local and Landowner Outreach, Damage and Compensation, Wolf and Ungulate Interaction, Research, Funding/Finance, and others as deemed necessary.

Stakeholder Advisory Group. The SAG, with a broad range of interests in wolves and wolf management and conservation, will be convened to support the development of draft strategies by providing consensus recommendations (where possible) to CPW with dissenting views captured. The TWG will be responsible for the content of the Plan, while the SAG will be provided opportunities to make substantive contributions for consideration. Where the SAG is able to achieve consensus on conservation objectives or management strategies, their input will receive priority consideration.

CPW Director, in consultation with the PWC, will approve appointments to the SAG following an application and review process coordinated by CPW. The external facilitator may also have a role in coordinating this process. CPW will seek a diverse and inclusive membership that is balanced between interest areas. Member representation may include:

- Stakeholders representing wolf advocacy groups
- Livestock producers
- Representatives of local/county government
- Members at-large/ representatives of general citizens
- Representatives of environmental interests
- Sportspeople
- Academic institutions/Cooperative Extension
- Parks and Wildlife Commissioner; as ex-officio/non-voting
- The Executive Director of DNR, or their designee; as ex-officio/non-voting
- The Director of CPW, or their designee; as ex-officio/non-voting
- Commissioner of Agriculture, or their designee; as ex-officio/non-voting

SAG members will represent themselves as individuals, not an organization. Upon completion of the Plan, the SAG will be disbanded. Members will demonstrate:

- Inclusive representation from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and geographic regions in Colorado and familiarity or interest in wolf management and conservation;
- Diverse wolf management interests, e.g., conservation, advocacy, education, hunting/trapping, recreation, livestock, socioeconomic; and
- Composure and respect in working with those with different experiences, backgrounds and perspectives.

CPW staff. The CPW Director will coordinate with the PWC Chair on the planning process. CPW staff are primarily responsible for developing language for the Plan based on input from the TWG and SAG. CPW staff will be represented as members of the TWG and the various Technical Subgroups.

General Public. The general public will have several opportunities to comment. First, during a CPW education and listening tour to be conducted spring of 2021. Second, on draft management concepts about midway through planning in the summer of 2022, and a final time on the proposed draft management plan expected the summer of 2023. Public engagement opportunities will be offered through multiple forums with attention to including voices from traditionally underrepresented communities. These could include webinars, online comment forms, public hearings, focus groups, PWC meetings, surveys, and more. CPW will provide regular updates throughout the planning process using a public website, media releases, social media, and by interacting with a maintained email list for interested individuals.

## Proposed Involvement Process and Timeline

Public involvement (or stakeholder engagement) processes are critical to the successful implementation of and outcomes related to wildlife and natural resource management efforts. Human dimensions research has identified a suite of factors and recommended approaches to best engage stakeholders. Ultimately, successful processes are inclusive, equitable, collaborative, and participatory in nature and in doing so, help to minimize conflict, legitimize planning processes and outcomes, improve trust in wildlife management agencies, and increase knowledge, awareness, and overall support for decision making. On the contrary, when public opinions and values are not taken into consideration unintended consequences can occur leading to mistrust, disregard for process outcomes, and intentional derailment. As such, we have identified a comprehensive public involvement planning process (Table 1; Figures 1 and 2.) that includes multiple opportunities to learn from the public and interested stakeholder groups.

Public involvement will occur in two phases. Phase one will focus on building public awareness and obtaining input through an education and listening tour to understand issues perceived to be critical for success. This phase will ensure that CPW develops a robust process, while helping to understand public expectations for content and the planning process, developing trust for the process, and identifying interested parties. Phase two will be the process undertaken to develop the Plan.

**Table 1. Public Involvement Process and Timeline**

Proposed Methods	Responsible Party	Proposed Timeline
<b>PHASE ONE</b> (Winter 2020-21 - Summer 2021) Engage key partners, stakeholders and general public to build awareness and support for the planning process.		
A. <u>Communications</u> - provide talking points, fact sheets, webpage, etc. with information to build awareness and promote engagement opportunities.	CPW Staff	December 2020 launch, continued throughout planning
B. <u>Develop Planning Process</u> - the PWC will first review CPW's draft public involvement and planning process and provide feedback. Then, the PWC will finalize the process.  <u>Decision:</u> PWC approves final planning process.	CPW Staff, PWC	1. Presentation January 2021 2. Finalized March 2021
C. <u>Hire External Facilitator</u> - CPW will solicit qualifications and select an external party to facilitate stakeholder and public involvement throughout the planning process.	CPW staff	March 2021, facilitator hired through December 2023

D. <u>Conduct Education &amp; Listening Tour</u> - CPW will hold virtual meetings to share information with the public and stakeholders and to provide opportunity for public input on wolf conservation/management in Colorado.	PWC, Director, CPW Staff	February-May 2021
E. <u>Technical Working Group Formation</u> - CPW Director, in consultation with the PWC, will form the Technical Working Group, bringing together CPW and other management entities to provide biological and other information that will inform the Plan.	CPW Director, PWC	February - May 2021

F. <u>Stakeholder Advisory Group Formation</u> - CPW Director, in consultation with the PWC, will form the Stakeholder Advisory Group, bringing together a broad representation of interests to work toward consensus recommendations to inform the Plan.	CPW Director, PWC	February - May 2021
G. <u>Stakeholder Contact List</u> - Build and maintain a database of interested individuals to share information/updates and opportunities to engage throughout the planning process.	Consultant	March 2021- December 2023

**PHASE TWO** (June 2021 - Dec 2023) Engage key partners, stakeholders and general public in implementing the process developed during Phase One.

A. <u>Technical Working Group</u> - will provide and consider scientific information and management/conservation experience in the drafting of the Plan. Meeting reports/summaries will be made available to the public.	Consultant	June 2021- Fall 2023
B. <u>Stakeholder Advisory Group</u> - will consider technical information and provide recommendations to help inform the Plan. Meeting reports/summaries will be made available to the public.	Consultant	June 2021- Fall 2023
C. <u>Survey Representative Population</u> - gather data on general population opinions toward wolf conservation and management. Results would be presented to the Technical and Stakeholder groups and CPW to inform plan development.	Consultant	Winter 2021-22

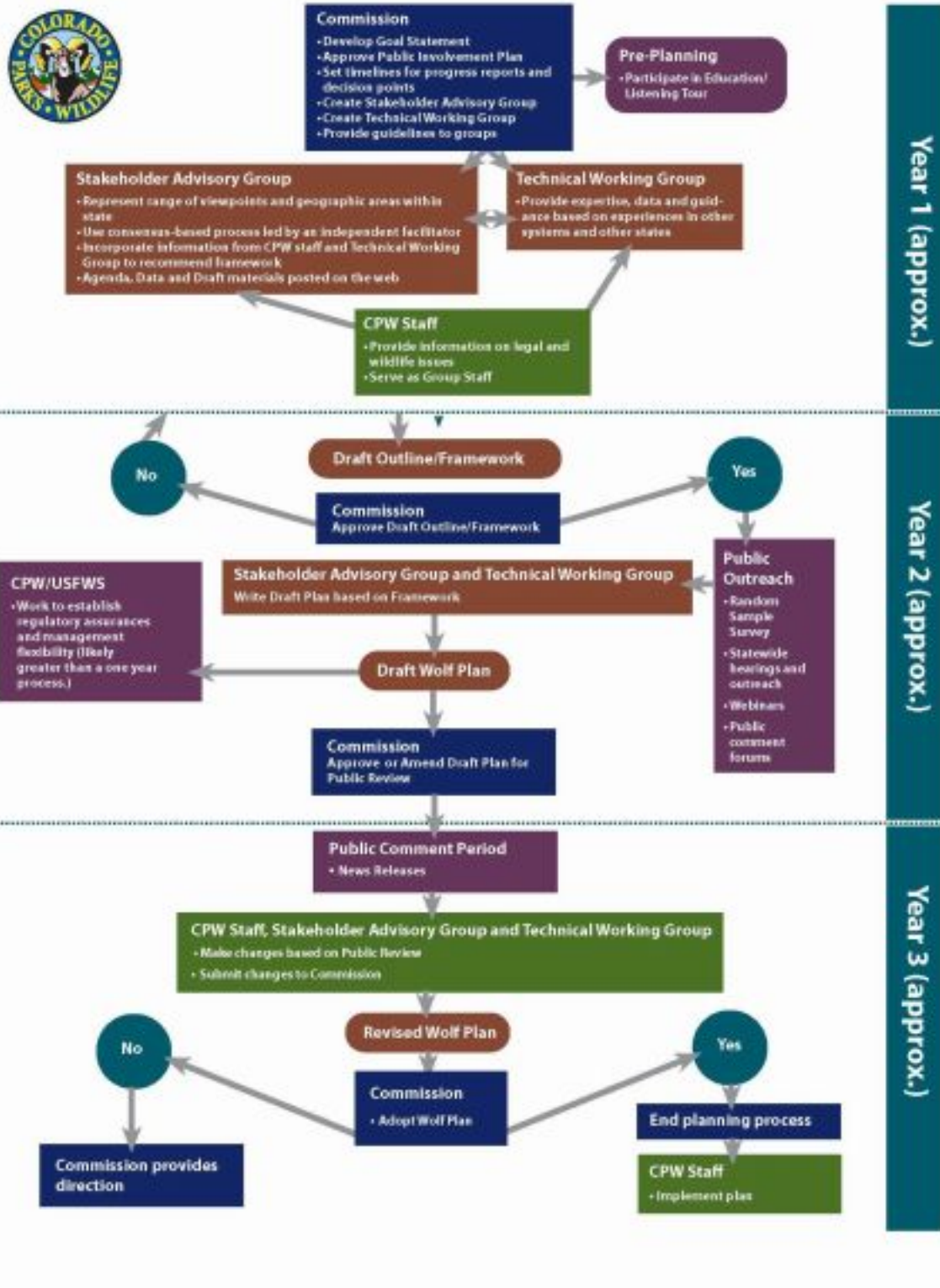
<p>D. <u>Public Outreach</u> - present and provide opportunities for input on draft outline/framework. See proposed timeline below. Details will be decided in collaboration with the external facilitator.</p>	<p>Consultant</p>	<p>Winter/spring 2022</p>
<p>E. <u>Public Review</u> - provide public comment opportunities using tools and tactics to accommodate large volumes.</p>	<p>Consultant</p>	<p>Following release of draft management strategies.</p>
<p>F. <u>PWC</u>- provide public meeting/ comment opportunities. PWC Will be monitoring the process and products throughout and providing feedback and guidance as necessary.</p> <p><u>Decision:</u> PWC Makes the final decision on the Restoration and Management Plan.</p>	<p>PWC, CPW Director</p>	<p>1. PWC meetings occur throughout the planning process 2. Finalize December 2023</p>

**Figure 1. Proposed timeline for the development of the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan.**



**Figure 2. Flowchart describing the process and organizational structure for development of the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan.**





**Appendix A. Proposition 114**

*Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Colorado:*

**SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 33-2-105.8 as follows:

**33-2-105.8. Reintroduction of gray wolves on designated lands west of the continental divide – public input in commission development of restoration plan -**

**compensation to owners of livestock - definitions.**

(1) THE VOTERS OF COLORADO FIND AND DECLARE THAT:

(a) HISTORICALLY, WOLVES WERE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE WILD HABITAT OF COLORADO BUT WERE EXTERMINATED AND HAVE BEEN FUNCTIONALLY EXTINCT FOR SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS IN THE STATE;

(b) THE GRAY WOLF IS LISTED AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES ON THE COMMISSION'S LIST OF ENDANGERED OR THREATENED SPECIES;

(c) ONCE RESTORED TO COLORADO, GRAY WOLVES WILL HELP RESTORE A CRITICAL BALANCE IN NATURE; AND

(d) RESTORATION OF THE GRAY WOLF TO THE STATE MUST BE DESIGNED TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS WITH PERSONS ENGAGED IN RANCHING AND FARMING IN THIS STATE.

(2) NOTWITHSTANDING ANY PROVISION OF STATE LAW TO THE CONTRARY, INCLUDING SECTION 33-2-105.5 (2), AND IN ORDER TO RESTORE GRAY WOLVES TO THE STATE, THE COMMISSION SHALL:

(a) DEVELOP A PLAN TO RESTORE AND MANAGE GRAY WOLVES IN COLORADO, USING THE BEST SCIENTIFIC DATA AVAILABLE;

(b) HOLD STATEWIDE HEARINGS TO ACQUIRE INFORMATION TO BE CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING SUCH PLAN, INCLUDING SCIENTIFIC, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS PERTAINING TO SUCH RESTORATION;

(c) PERIODICALLY OBTAIN PUBLIC INPUT TO UPDATE SUCH PLAN;

(d) TAKE THE STEPS NECESSARY TO BEGIN REINTRODUCTIONS OF GRAY WOLVES BY DECEMBER 31, 2023, ONLY ON DESIGNATED LANDS; AND

(e) OVERSEE GRAY WOLF RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF STATE FUNDS THAT ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO:

(I) ASSIST OWNERS OF LIVESTOCK IN PREVENTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS BETWEEN GRAY WOLVES AND LIVESTOCK; AND

(II) PAY FAIR COMPENSATION TO OWNERS OF LIVESTOCK FOR ANY LOSSES OF LIVESTOCK CAUSED BY GRAY WOLVES, AS VERIFIED PURSUANT TO THE CLAIM PROCEDURES AUTHORIZED BY SECTIONS 33-3-107 TO 33-3-110 AND, TO THE EXTENT THEY ARE AVAILABLE, FROM MONEYS IN THE WILDLIFE CASH FUND AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 33-3-107 (2.5).

(3) (a) THE COMMISSION'S PLAN MUST COMPLY WITH SECTION 33-2-105.7 (2), (3), AND (4) AND MUST INCLUDE:

(I) THE SELECTION OF DONOR POPULATIONS OF GRAY WOLVES;

(II) THE PLACES, MANNER, AND SCHEDULING OF REINTRODUCTIONS OF GRAY WOLVES BY THE DIVISION, WITH SUCH REINTRODUCTIONS BEING RESTRICTED TO DESIGNATED LANDS;



(III) DETAILS FOR THE RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT OF GRAY WOLVES, INCLUDING ACTIONS NECESSARY OR BENEFICIAL FOR ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A SELF-SUSTAINING POPULATION, AS AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 33-2-104; AND

(IV) METHODOLOGIES FOR DETERMINING WHEN THE GRAY WOLF POPULATION IS SUSTAINING ITSELF SUCCESSFULLY AND WHEN TO REMOVE THE GRAY WOLF FROM THE LIST OF ENDANGERED OR THREATENED SPECIES, AS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTION 33-2-105 (2).

(b) THE COMMISSION SHALL NOT IMPOSE ANY LAND, WATER, OR RESOURCE USE RESTRICTIONS ON PRIVATE LANDOWNERS IN FURTHERANCE OF THE PLAN.

(4) IN FURTHERANCE OF THIS SECTION AND THE EXPRESSED INTENT OF VOTERS, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

(a) SHALL MAKE SUCH APPROPRIATIONS AS ARE NECESSARY TO FUND THE PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED AND OBLIGATIONS, INCLUDING FAIR COMPENSATION FOR LIVESTOCK LOSSES THAT ARE AUTHORIZED BY THIS SECTION BUT CANNOT BE PAID FROM MONEYS IN THE WILDLIFE CASH FUND, IMPOSED BY THIS SECTION; AND

(b) MAY ADOPT SUCH OTHER LEGISLATION AS WILL FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESTORATION OF GRAY WOLVES TO COLORADO.

(5) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "DESIGNATED LANDS" MEANS THOSE LANDS WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE IN COLORADO THAT THE COMMISSION DETERMINES ARE CONSISTENT WITH ITS PLAN TO RESTORE AND MANAGE GRAY WOLVES.

(b) "GRAY WOLF" MEANS NONGAME WILDLIFE OF THE SPECIES CANIS LUPUS.

(c) "LIVESTOCK" MEANS CATTLE, HORSES, MULES, BURROS, SHEEP, LAMBS, SWINE, LLAMA, ALPACA, AND GOATS.

(d) "RESTORE" OR "RESTORATION" MEANS ANY REINTRODUCTION, AS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTION 33-2-105.7 (1)(a), AS WELL AS POST-RELEASE MANAGEMENT OF THE GRAY WOLF IN A MANNER THAT FOSTERS THE SPECIES' CAPACITY TO SUSTAIN ITSELF SUCCESSFULLY.