

Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)

Report on Wolf Restoration Logistics Recommendations November 2021

This report summarizes Wolf Restoration & Management Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) feedback regarding wolf restoration logistics. SAG feedback below is made in reference to the [Technical Working Group's \(TWG\) report and recommendations on restoration logistics](#), and particularly the 'Summary of TWG feedback' sections of that report.

The [summaries of the SAG's August 2021, September 2021, and October 2021 meetings](#) may also be referenced for further detail of SAG member perspectives, questions and suggestions to the TWG regarding clarification of the language and rationale of its report.

The SAG voting members have consensus in support of, and/or without objections to, the TWG's recommendations on the following:

Capture considerations:

- *Donor populations*
- *Capture methods at source*
- *Age ratios*
- *Color ratios*
- *Sex ratios*
- *Genetic considerations*
- *Animal reputation*
- *Disease issues at source sites*
- *What to do with injured animals at source site*
- *Transportation method from source to Colorado*

Animal handling considerations:

- *What to feed during period of captivity, **with the recommendation** that native ungulate meat should be preferred over carnivore logs.*
- *Where and how to hold animals prior to shipping and in Colorado*
- *Immobilization drugs to be used, **with the recommendation** that should a better, reversible drug other than Telazol become available, it should be considered.*
- *Collars/marks on animals initially reintroduced into the state*
- *Samples collected from animals*
- *Veterinarian care in captivity*
- *Disease testing and vaccine treatment*

Reintroduction considerations:

- *Reintroduction technique (hard vs. soft release)*
- *Time of year*

The voting SAG members also discussed the TWG's recommendations on the following reintroduction considerations, and provided the following feedback:

- *Considerations for where wolves could be released.* SAG members recommended that the following factors also be considered, in addition to those discussed by the TWG: recreation in various forms and contexts; finer detailed spatial sensitivity to local livestock operations and potential acute social conflicts; need for direct engagement with immediately affected communities; and the Brunot Agreement lands (i.e., consideration of management and Tribal consultation needs; not, however, a recommendation to apply a spatial buffer to these lands; a spatial buffer to sovereign Tribal lands is discussed in the TWG report and was suggested by SAG members). It was also suggested that considerations for release sites include deer or elk population Data Analysis Unit (DAU) trends and whether they are below or above objective, as well as impacts on populations of other wildlife species of concern, beyond deer and elk, such as moose, bighorn sheep, lynx and sage grouse. There was not consensus (i.e., full support and/or no objection) for these recommendations; there was a range of support for the TWG recommendations with the above additions, along with various concerns and two formal objections that primarily addressed the process, timing, and/or implications of voting on this specific topic during the SAG October 2021 meeting. SAG members emphasized that their support for the considerations for where wolves could be released does not automatically imply support for specific release locations. There were also concerns that a 75 mile buffer from state and Tribal borders would overly constrain release locations that might otherwise be ecologically and/or socially suitable.
- *Number of release sites (and release areas).* SAG members did not vote on this topic. They discussed arguments for a smaller number of release sites including better ability to manage, concentrate resources, and minimize widespread conflict or social tension. Arguments for a greater number of release sites included maintaining the ability to be flexible in reintroduction; distributing reintroduction over a greater area rather than targeting a smaller number of communities; and the possibility that using multiple areas might better align with the intent of those who voted in support of wolf restoration. Comments cautioned against overly constraining locations and sites.
- *Pace of wolf reintroduction and when to stop and/or pause reintroduction.* SAG members did not vote on these topics. They suggested the importance of adaptive management to assess both the success of wolves and additional factors, including conflict minimization, ungulate population trends, and social attitudes. Arguments for a slow pace included listening to requests from the Western Slope to reintroduce wolves cautiously and slowly; to account for the presence of naturally migrating wolves in Colorado; and to ensure that staffing, financial capacity and ability to respond to conflict is not overwhelmed. Arguments for a medium or fast release pace included ensuring a critical mass of wolves; accounting for potential illegal mortality as well as other challenges to survival; minimizing genetic bottlenecks; avoiding loss of investment due to any of these factors; and consideration of when lethal management tools could become available as related to pace of introduction and the presence vs. rarity of wolves on the landscape; it was suggested that these arguments are similar to those for wolf reintroduction, in general. There was concern as to whether a 'medium' pace is a foregone conclusion because it is defined as being between slow and fast paces.

About the Stakeholder Advisory Group:

The Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) offers a broad range of perspectives and experience to inform the social implications of wolf restoration and management strategies for the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan. SAG members were selected by Colorado Parks and Wildlife for diversity in demographics, backgrounds, geographic regions, perspectives, and knowledge in order to constitute a vibrant, diverse and inclusive stakeholder voice in the planning process. The SAG is comprised of 17 voting members and 3 non-voting members. CPW is responsible for writing the Wolf Restoration and Management Plan. The Parks and Wildlife Commission (PWC) serves as the decision-making body responsible for approving the Wolf Restoration and Management Plan. The SAG serves in an advisory capacity to Colorado Parks and Wildlife, offering non-binding input into the development of plan content. The SAG is not a decision-making body and has no authority on wolf management policy, research or operations. The SAG strives to make decisions based on the consensus of all voting members, where possible. Where the SAG is able to achieve consensus, its input will receive priority consideration by CPW. Per the SAG charter, consensus is defined as general agreement that is shared by all the people in a group; it reflects a recommendation, option or idea that all participants can support or abide by, or, at a minimum, to which they do not object. In other words, consensus is a recommendation, option or idea that all can live with. Where consensus does not exist, a vote will be taken and the votes of individual members will be recorded along with a summary of the rationale for supportive and dissenting views.

Stakeholder Advisory Group Members:***Voting Members:***

- Matt Barnes
- Donald Broom
- Jenny Burbey
- Bob Chastain
- Renee Deal
- Adam Gall
- Dan Gates
- John Howard
- Francie Jacober
- Lenny Klinglesmith
- Darlene Kobobel
- Tom Kourlis
- Brian Kurzel
- Hallie Mahowald
- Jonathan Proctor
- Gary Skiba
- Steve Whiteman

Ex Officio Members:

- Dan Gibbs, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Natural Resources
- Les Owen, Division Director, Colorado Department of Agriculture (*designee of Kate Greenberg, Commissioner, Colorado Department of Agriculture*)
- Dan Prenzlou, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

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