

# **Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan**

## **Stakeholder Advisory Group to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)**

### **Recommendations on Preventative, Nonlethal Wolf-Livestock Conflict Minimization**

#### **March 2022**

This report summarizes consensus recommendations of the voting members of the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) regarding preventative, nonlethal wolf-livestock conflict minimization.

#### **Conflict minimization program principles: Overview**

- Conflict minimization should be encouraged and explored as the first line of defense.
- Support both preventative and post-depredation non-lethal practice implementation; emphasize and implement proactive actions where possible and reactive actions as needed.
- Provide financial, technical, and operational assistance to promote and implement conflict minimization and risk reduction practices.
- Apply and update, as relevant, regulations to support non-lethal conflict minimization practices.
- Emphasize context specificity.
- Recognize that not all efforts will prevent loss, while encouraging and supporting implementation and innovation.
- Emphasize producer education and outreach, leveraging experiences and lessons of other producers.
- Provide sufficient agency capacity and funding for implementation.
- As necessary based on resources, prioritize support for those that have experienced losses or are likely to in the near future.
- Use public-private partnerships to support CPW in funding, education, and implementation for conflict minimization.
- Adapt the conflict minimization program over time as needed.

#### **Funding & capacity**

- **The conflict minimization program must be robustly and consistently funded for success.**
  - Establish and maintain separate funding sources for conflict minimization and compensation, while providing for adaptability of the program over time to assess and address needs for each.
  - Recognize that long-term funding will be necessary and while there are many potential opportunities, funding sources can be complex and challenging to secure, with competition for a variety of priorities.
  - Funding for each source will ideally be appropriated from taxpayer money (state and/or federal) and/or through multi-year public funds or grants (such as Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and/or federal programs), as well as other sources such as NGOs and private organizations.
    - Sources should be additive to existing funding streams, provide longevity, and be insulated from political debates.
  - Establish a competitive grant or review program to review conflict minimization project proposals.

- Enable additional sources (NGOs, private organizations, etc.) to contribute to funding for conflict minimization.
  - Establish a conflict minimization fund and solicit or encourage external funding contributions early and/or prior to reintroduction while interest is high, so that it is available when needed in both the short- and long-term.
  - External organization funding should support projects and materials; state and federal funding should be used to fund agency staff positions, capacity and services.
  - Match funding mechanisms can be encouraged but should not be required; match could help to increase competitiveness but a requirement should not stand in the way of good projects.
  - Flexibility for external funding contributions is important.
- **CPW capacity should include both depth and breadth of expertise on wolf and large carnivore conflict minimization and management.**
  - Provide a wolf specialist(s) that offers coordination, leadership, consistency and emergency response across the state. The specialist should also broadly understand carnivore conflict minimization. CPW should fund this capacity.
  - Require training for all District Wildlife Managers (DWMs) to create a breadth of experience and insight for all carnivore damage and conflict minimization (bear, lion, wolf).
- **The economics of conflict minimization are a critical consideration for conflict minimization funding, implementation, and management, and will be context-specific.**
  - Economics and efficacy of tools should be considered to inform:
    - Funding needs and sources for the program.
    - Management approaches that consider feasibility of conflict prevention.
  - Economic considerations should be included in training for producers. Community-specific training and insights of resource economists and those with practical experience over time will be important.
  - The specific tools needed, and costs (material and labor) of implementation will vary by situation.
  - Conflict minimization plans ideally should holistically consider not only wolves, but the economics and resiliency of the ranch.

## Delivery and implementation of conflict minimization tools

- **Incorporate producer perspectives and concerns in design and implementation of a program.**
  - Producers want to be proactive and preventative in protecting their livestock.
  - Conflict minimization can feel overwhelming to producers. Concerns include but are not limited to:
    - Capacity
    - Cost (to individuals and for the program as a whole)
    - Uncertainty over effectiveness of practices for specific circumstances
    - Interaction with other contracts, leases, and conservation strategies/requirements
    - Guard dogs and liability
  - There is a particular need to provide early support to producers in initial wolf release areas.
- **Success of conflict minimization depends on providing not just the tools and materials, but also support to producers through technical knowledge, training, funding, labor and capacity to effectively implement them.**

- There are details about the implementation for each tool that matter for success. It is important to have the support and insight of people who have experience and knowledge on how to implement and use these tools effectively.
  - Successful use of some tools and materials requires knowledge of both how and when to deploy them and also how and when to remove them. For example, fladry has a limited period of efficacy and should be lent out and reclaimed for use by multiple producers.
  - The costs and labor requirements of specific tools should be considered when anticipating the level of financial and capacity support that will be needed for conflict minimization.
- **Outreach and training should occur proactively and continuously, and should provide practical insights from producers.**
  - Training and shared learning should occur proactively and in an ongoing manner.
  - Training and messaging should be improved and adapted over time based on initial learnings and experiences.
  - Training should include producer-to-producer insights from those with on-the-ground experience.
  - Examples should include realistic, authentic perspectives on conflict minimization, including when it has and has not worked. Examples should include success stories as well as challenges beyond a limited set of case studies.
  - Training should include economic considerations (material and labor costs).
  - Customize training and outreach with personal and local/community scale approaches.
  - Include field demonstrations as part of training in order to provide hands-on, experiential learning about conflict minimization tools.
- **A community level approach can foster broader implementation of conflict minimization.**
  - Some conflict minimization practices are more effective at a community level, and community wide implementation can help to mitigate displacement of impacts among neighboring producers.
  - Under a community level approach, there are a variety of potential partners with community connections that can help to develop a proactive effort.
  - There are existing community cooperatives and structures used by producers to fund and support conflict minimization, and there are also other kinds of community cooperatives (e.g., conservation districts, watershed groups, etc.) that could provide a basis and structure for collaboration.
- **Producers have different relationships with different agencies and organizations; leverage these relationships for success and do not rely on a single messenger.**
  - Consider the role of and potential for resources to support U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services (USDA APHIS-WS), Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA), Colorado State University (CSU) Extension and other organizations in conflict minimization.
  - Consider the role of both wildlife and agricultural expertise.
  - A diversity of expertise and public and private sector organizational representation can be beneficial in providing information and training.
- **There is a need for better understanding of how implementation of conflict minimization tools and strategies on federal lands interacts with federal land management expectations, policies, permit requirements and allowances.**
  - There may be opportunities for policy level state or regional discussion on these issues; however, decisions are often specific to allotment conditions and modifying permits is difficult.

## About the Stakeholder Advisory Group

The Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan 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 (CPW) 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 Klingsmith
- 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 Prenzlow, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

*Stakeholder Advisory Group report developed with third party facilitation from Keystone Policy Center.*