Wolf Restoration & Management Plan
Public Outreach & Advisory Group Facilitation

Keystone Policy Center

Update to Parks and Wildlife Commission

November 18, 2021

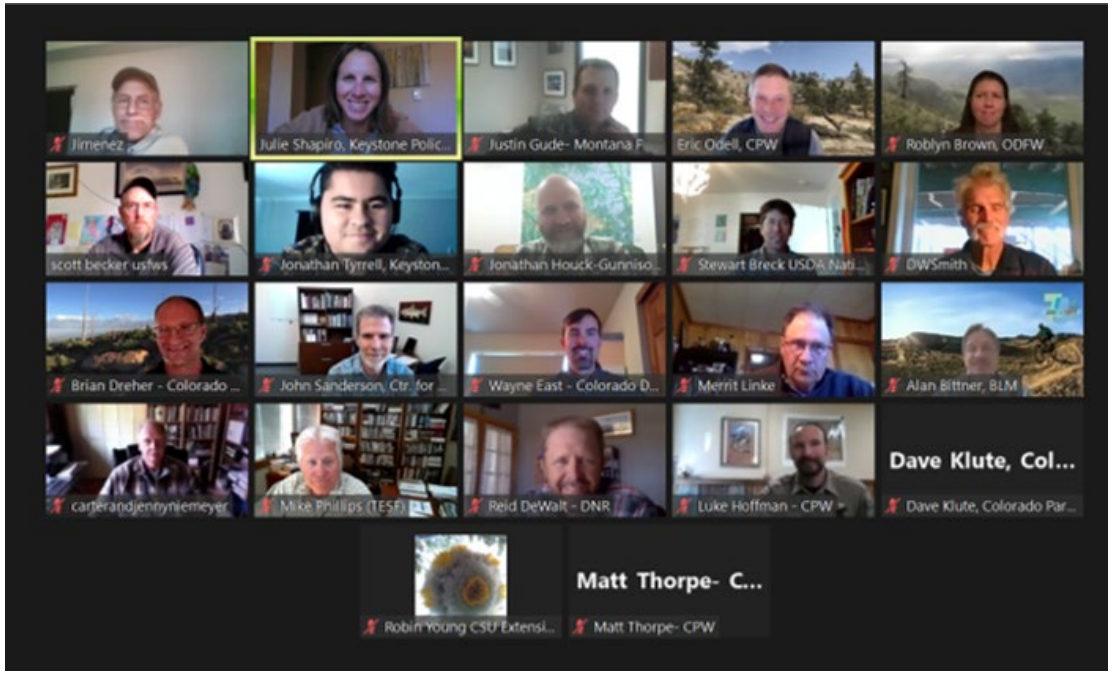
KEYSTONE POLICY CENTER

Advisory Groups

KEYSTONE
POLICY CENTER

Technical Working Group

- Reviews objective, science-based information as well as provide its own knowledge and experience.
- Members selected by CPW bring experience in wolf reintroduction, wolf management, conflict minimization, depredation compensation, and other relevant topics.
- Meets monthly, virtually (not for observation).
- Meeting summaries & information about members and charter are available at https://www.wolfengagementco.org/



Stakeholder Advisory Group

- Offers a broad range of perspectives and experience to inform the social implications of wolf restoration and management strategies.
- Members selected by CPW Director in consultation with the Parks and Wildlife Commission Chair, 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.
- 17 voting members; 3 non-voting.
- Monthly SAG meetings are in person, are open to public observation, and include opportunity for public comment.
- Meeting summaries, schedule, public comment info & information about members and charter are available at https://www.wolfengagementco.org/

Summer 2021 Public Engagement Report

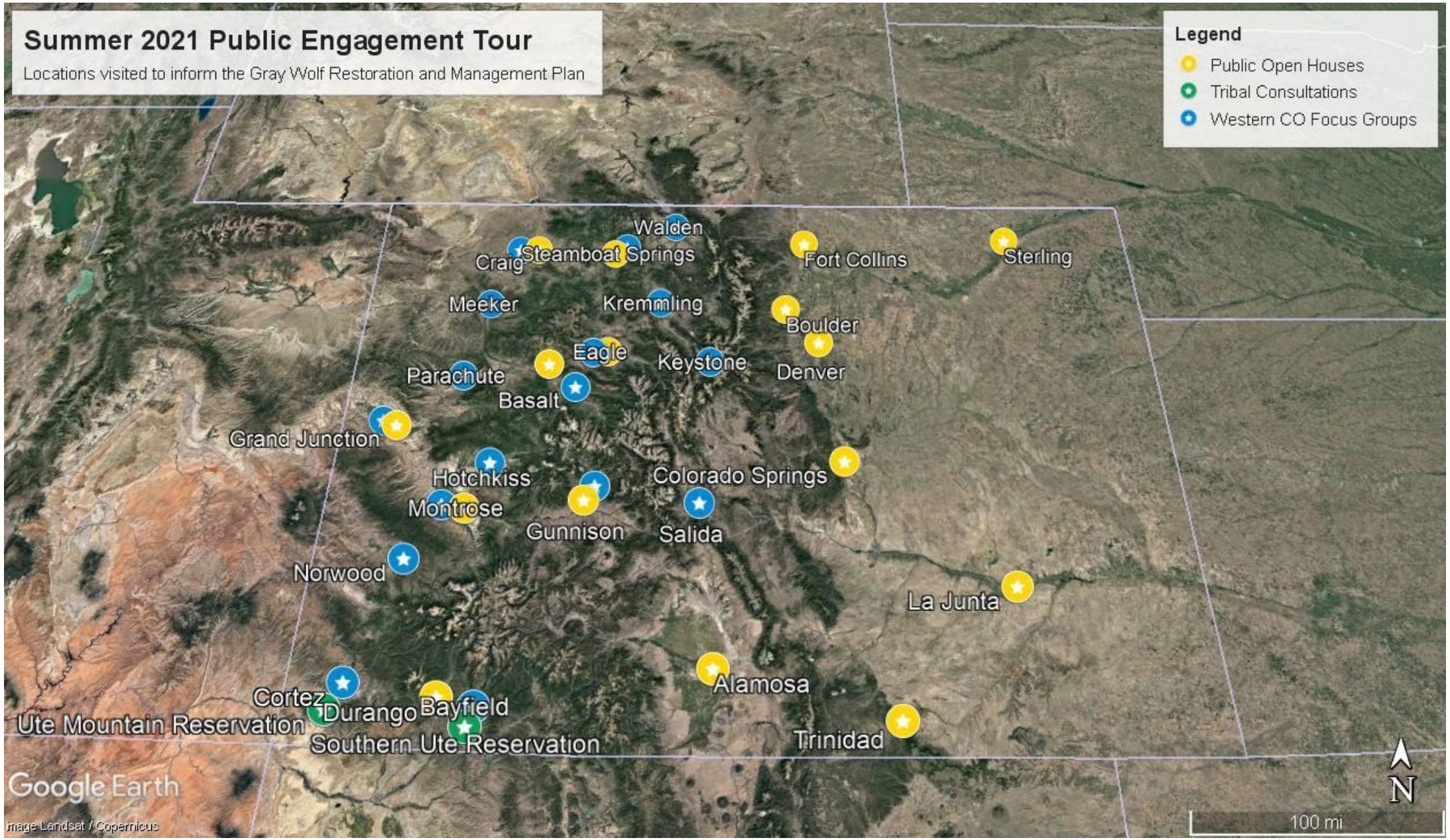
KEYSTONE
POLICY CENTER

Phase 1 Public Involvement (Summer 2021)

47 meetings plus online comment

- 16 in-person regional open houses (8 on the Western Slope)
- 17 in-person Western Colorado geographic focus groups
- 2 in-person Tribal consultations
- 10 virtual interest-based focus groups
- 2 virtual statewide town halls
- Online comment form and online open house materials

More than 3,400 members from the public participated in the opportunities above

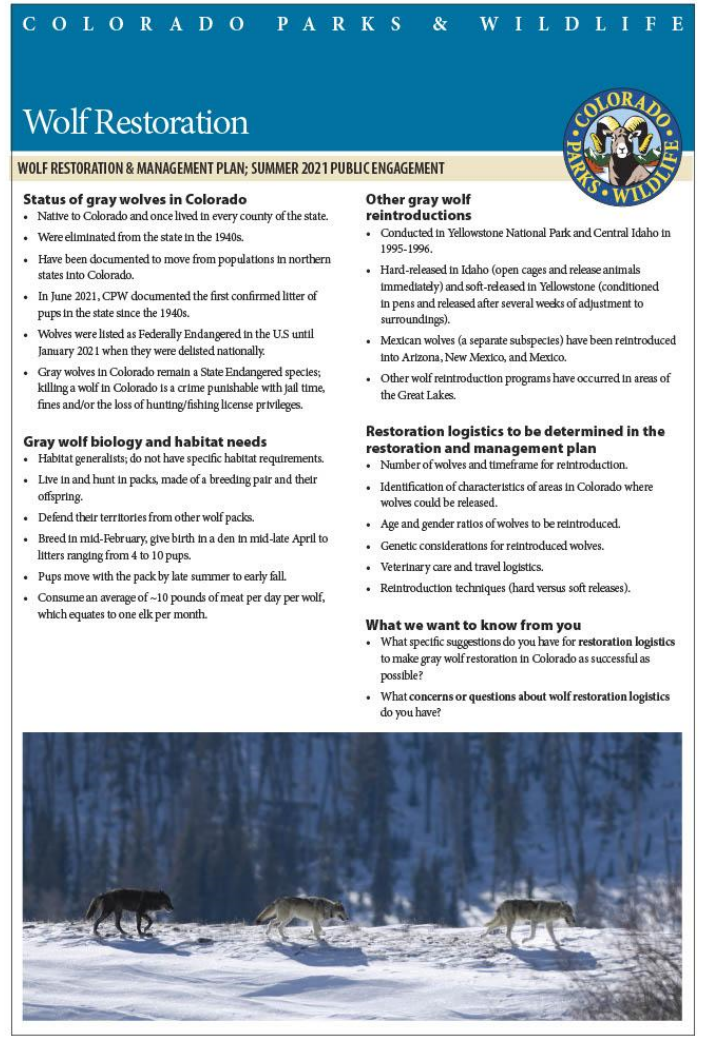

Summer 2021 Public Engagement Tour
Locations visited to inform the Gray Wolf Restoration and Management Plan
Legend
Public Open Houses
Tribal Consultations
Western CO Focus Groups
Walden
Craig
Steamboat Springs
Fort Collins
Sterling
Meeker
Kremmling
Boulder
Eagle
Keystone
Denver
Parachute
Basalt
Grand Junction
Hotchkiss
Colorado Springs
Montrose
Gunnison
Salida
Norwood
La Junta
Alamosa
Cortez
Durango
Bayfield
Ute Mountain Reservation
Southern Ute Reservation
Trinidad
Google Earth
Image Landsat / Copernicus
N
100 mi

Public Engagement Topics

- Wolf Restoration
- Wolf Management
- Livestock interactions
- Engagement, Education & Outreach

Wolf Restoration Comments

- Where, when, how many?
- Geographic source, subspecies, genetic diversity, family and social structures
- Concerns about sourcing conflict wolves from other states
- Mexican wolves – interbreeding and connectivity
- Natural migration
- Release location vs. dispersal
- Hard vs. soft release
- Pace of restoration



COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

Wolf Restoration

WOLF RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN; SUMMER 2021 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Status of gray wolves in Colorado

- Native to Colorado and once lived in every county of the state.
- Were eliminated from the state in the 1940s.
- Have been documented to move from populations in northern states into Colorado.
- In June 2021, CPW documented the first confirmed litter of pups in the state since the 1940s.
- Wolves were listed as Federally Endangered in the U.S until January 2021 when they were delisted nationally.
- Gray wolves in Colorado remain a State Endangered species; killing a wolf in Colorado is a crime punishable with jail time, fines and/or the loss of hunting/fishing license privileges.

Gray wolf biology and habitat needs

- Habitat generalists; do not have specific habitat requirements.
- Live in and hunt in packs, made of a breeding pair and their offspring.
- Defend their territories from other wolf packs.
- Breed in mid-February, give birth in a den in mid-late April to litters ranging from 4 to 10 pups.
- Pups move with the pack by late summer to early fall.
- Consume an average of ~10 pounds of meat per day per wolf, which equates to one elk per month.

Other gray wolf reintroductions

- Conducted in Yellowstone National Park and Central Idaho in 1995-1996.
- Hard-released in Idaho (open cages and release animals immediately) and soft-released in Yellowstone (conditioned in pens and released after several weeks of adjustment to surroundings).
- Mexican wolves (a separate subspecies) have been reintroduced into Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico.
- Other wolf reintroduction programs have occurred in areas of the Great Lakes.

Restoration logistics to be determined in the restoration and management plan

- Number of wolves and timeframe for reintroduction.
- Identification of characteristics of areas in Colorado where wolves could be released.
- Age and gender ratios of wolves to be reintroduced.
- Genetic considerations for reintroduced wolves.
- Veterinary care and travel logistics.
- Reintroduction techniques (hard versus soft releases).

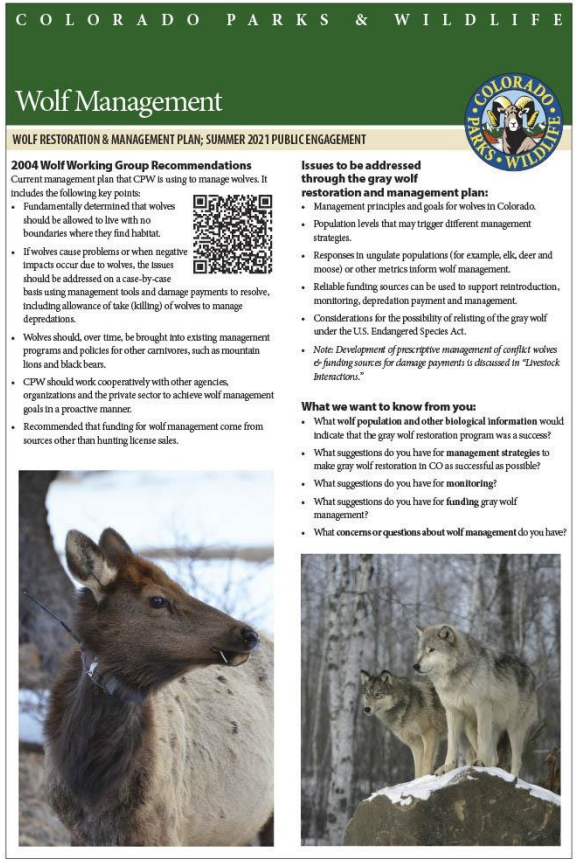
What we want to know from you

- What specific suggestions do you have for **restoration logistics** to make gray wolf restoration in Colorado as successful as possible?
- What **concerns or questions about wolf restoration logistics** do you have?

Wolf Management Comments

Defining success:

- Numeric population thresholds (opposition vs. support)
- Lessons from other states
- Additional wolf population considerations, i.e., geographic distribution
- Other wildlife, habitat, ecosystem indicators
- Social, economic factors, i.e., impacts to livestock producers, outfitting and hunting, recreation
- Public attitudes and values



COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

Wolf Management

WOLF RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN; SUMMER 2021 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2004 Wolf Working Group Recommendations

Current management plan that CPW is using to manage wolves. It includes the following key points:

- Fundamentally determined that wolves should be allowed to live with no boundaries where they find habitat.
- If wolves cause problems or when negative impacts occur due to wolves, the issues should be addressed on a case-by-case basis using management tools and damage payments to resolve, including allowance of take (killing) of wolves to manage depredations.
- Wolves should, over time, be brought into existing management programs and policies for other carnivores, such as mountain lions and black bears.
- CPW should work cooperatively with other agencies, organizations and the private sector to achieve wolf management goals in a proactive manner.
- Recommended that funding for wolf management come from sources other than hunting license sales.

Issues to be addressed through the gray wolf restoration and management plan:

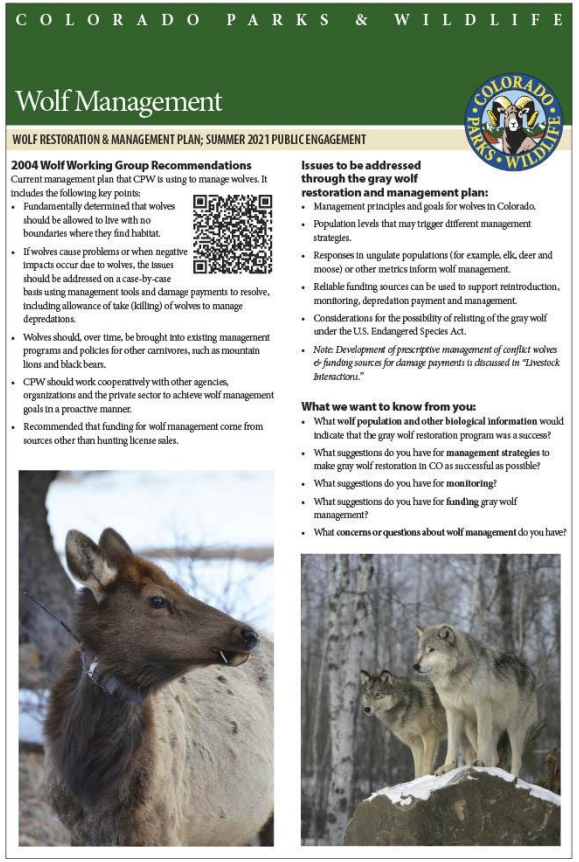
- Management principles and goals for wolves in Colorado.
- Population levels that may trigger different management strategies.
- Responses in ungulate populations (for example, elk, deer and moose) or other metrics inform wolf management.
- Reliable funding sources can be used to support reintroduction, monitoring, depredation payment and management.
- Considerations for the possibility of relisting of the gray wolf under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.
- *Note: Development of prescriptive management of conflict wolves & funding sources for damage payments is discussed in "Livestock Interactions."*

What we want to know from you:

- What **wolf population and other biological information** would indicate that the gray wolf restoration program was a success?
- What suggestions do you have for **management strategies** to make gray wolf restoration in CO as successful as possible?
- What suggestions do you have for **monitoring**?
- What suggestions do you have for **funding** gray wolf management?
- What **concerns or questions about wolf management** do you have?

Wolf Management Comments (cont.)

- Management for:
  - Multiple species
  - Multiple uses
  - Multiple jurisdictions & government engagement (federal, state, county, Tribal)
- Listing status
- Human-wolf conflict
- Hunting
- Monitoring
- Funding



COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

Wolf Management

WOLF RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN; SUMMER 2021 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2004 Wolf Working Group Recommendations

Current management plan that CPW is using to manage wolves. It includes the following key points:

- Fundamentally determined that wolves should be allowed to live with no boundaries where they find habitat.
- If wolves cause problems or when negative impacts occur due to wolves, the issues should be addressed on a case-by-case basis using management tools and damage payments to resolve, including allowance of take (killing) of wolves to manage depredations.
- Wolves should, over time, be brought into existing management programs and policies for other carnivores, such as mountain lions and black bears.
- CPW should work cooperatively with other agencies, organizations and the private sector to achieve wolf management goals in a proactive manner.
- Recommended that funding for wolf management come from sources other than hunting license sales.

Issues to be addressed through the gray wolf restoration and management plan:

- Management principles and goals for wolves in Colorado.
- Population levels that may trigger different management strategies.
- Responses in ungulate populations (for example, elk, deer and moose) or other metrics inform wolf management.
- Reliable funding sources can be used to support reintroduction, monitoring, depredation payment and management.
- Considerations for the possibility of relisting of the gray wolf under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.
- *Note: Development of prescriptive management of conflict wolves & funding sources for damage payments is discussed in "Livestock Interactions."*

What we want to know from you:

- What **wolf population and other biological information** would indicate that the gray wolf restoration program was a success?
- What suggestions do you have for **management strategies** to make gray wolf restoration in CO as successful as possible?
- What suggestions do you have for **monitoring**?
- What suggestions do you have for **funding** gray wolf management?
- What **concerns or questions about wolf management** do you have?

Livestock Interactions Comments

- Trends and context
  - Depredation trends
  - Additional environmental, economic and social contexts
- Livestock conflict minimization
  - Strategies
  - Partnerships
- Compensation
  - Investigation, direct costs, indirect costs
- Conflict wolves

COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

Livestock Interactions

WOLF RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN; SUMMER 2021 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

CPW Livestock Damage Information:

The Game Damage Program is a Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW) prevention and reimbursement program that compensates ranchers, farmers and landowners for damage caused by big game animals.

CPW Game Damage Program History: Since the inception of the Game Damage Program in 1931, the original broad legal language has evolved to specify what game damage laws cover. Twenty years ago, the program was expanded to include damage prevention.

Game Damage Program Funding: The program is funded by the appropriation of sportspeople's dollars from the Game Cash Fund. This funds the two key components of CPW's Game Damage Program, damage compensation and damage prevention.

What is considered damage? Damage is any change in the quality or quantity of any property which reduces its value. Damage shall include all costs necessary to restore property to its condition immediately prior to damage, to replace it with property of equal value or to compensate for restoration or replacement.

The state is liable for damages to livestock caused by big game wildlife and wolves: Up to $5,000 per head of livestock injured or killed, and damages to livestock are limited to physical trauma resulting in injury or death.

The State is not liable for: Livestock damages caused by coyote, bobcats or domestic dogs; damage to motor vehicles caused by wildlife; injury or death of any person caused by wildlife.

Value of Livestock: Payment for all livestock claims are based on sales receipts/contracts. This excludes transportation, yardage, feed, and sales costs. If sales receipts/contracts are not furnished with claims, payment of calf, lamb and adult range sheep claims are based on prices from USDA-AMS reports. Payment for all other livestock claims are based on the fair market value at the time of loss.

Damage Claim Process

- Contact your local CPW office and ask to speak to a District Wildlife Manager (DWM).
- DWM will conduct an on-site inspection, provide the claim forms and answer claim procedure questions.
- Claim forms must be fully completed and submitted to CPW.
- The claim is recommended for either approval or denial.
- All denied claims are reviewed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

Issues to be addressed through the gray wolf restoration & management planning process

- Development of a depredation compensation program.
- Roles and responsibilities for investigation.
- Compensation rates and format.
- Development of conflict minimization Best Management Practices.
- Consideration for development of cost share programs to encourage conflict minimization practices.
- Development of prescriptive management of conflict wolves (also in Wolf Management) - for example, non-lethal and lethal control methods. Generally, a conflict wolf is any wolf that has been confirmed to have been involved with a human or livestock conflict.
- Funding Sources.

What we want to know from you

- What suggestions do you have for **conflict minimization best practices?**
- What suggestions do you have for **compensation programs?**
- What suggestions do you have for **management of conflict wolves?**
- What **concerns or questions** do you have?

Engagement, Education & Outreach

- Feedback on overall process (SAG, TWG, Summer engagement)
- Importance of ongoing engagement & education
- Approach, tools & techniques

COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

Engagement Process, Education and Outreach

WOLF RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN; SUMMER 2021 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Proposition 114

Citizen-based initiative passed November 2020 requires:

- Colorado's Parks and Wildlife Commission to develop a plan to restore gray wolves to the state, using the best scientific data available.
- Statewide hearings to acquire information to be considered in developing the plan, including scientific, economic and social considerations.
- Taking the steps necessary to begin restoration of gray wolves no later than December 31, 2023 in Colorado west of the Continental Divide.

Public meetings

- Outreach events are underway to obtain public input as the restoration & management plan is being developed.
  - public open house meetings
  - invitation-only focus group meetings
  - virtual town hall meetings
  - online input
- A draft Wolf Restoration and Management plan is not available at this point in time.
- After public input, CPW staff, with input from the Technical Working Group and Stakeholder Advisory Group, will prepare a Draft Plan for further public input.

Additional educational resources

- CPW Wolf webpage: https://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/Wolves-Stay-Informed.aspx
- Three education sessions have been recorded and are available on the CPW Youtube Channel

What we want to know from you

- What suggestions do you have for **engagement, education and outreach** to make gray wolf restoration and management as successful as possible?
- What concerns or questions about **engagement, education and outreach** do you have?

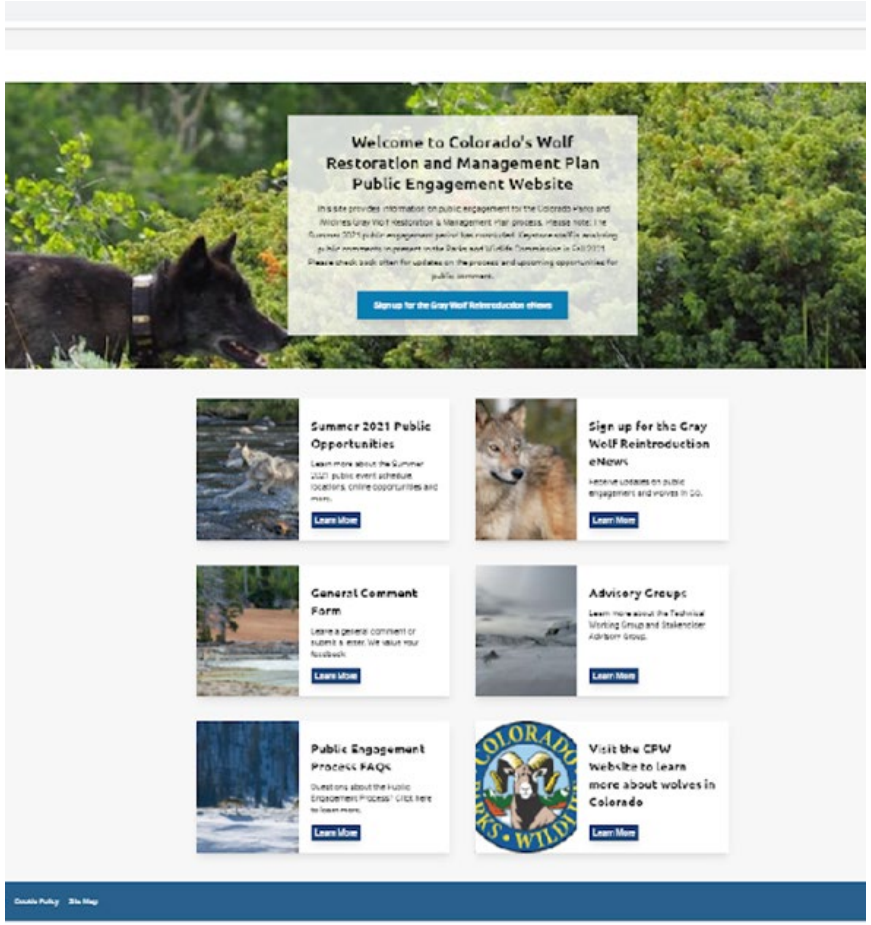
Conclusions

- Geographic patterns in input
- Divergent values

Potential Principles for Common Ground

- **Reflect diverse interests and values of the state**, incorporating science along with societal input.
- **Provide an adaptive model for wolf management** with flexibility to address ecological, social and economic interests.
- **Proactively minimize livestock conflict** where possible, and **fairly compensate** when loss occurs.
- **Offer educational resources** that are factual and tailored for specific audiences.
- **Value meaningful, ongoing engagement and trust-based partnerships** with a variety of stakeholders and communities in the development and implementation of the plan.
- **Build capacity and funding** to successfully and sustainably implement the plan.

Stay Informed

https://www.wolfengagementco.org/

- Sign up for the Gray Wolf Reintroduction eNewsletter
- Information about public involvement opportunities and advisory groups
- Provide a written comment
- Link to additional information & educational resources on the CPW website
  - Including CPW education sessions on wolf planning topics available on CPW YouTube channel
- Updated regularly