

# Wolf Restoration & Management Plan Interim Update on Draft Plan Written Public Comment

Keystone Policy Center

Update to Parks and Wildlife Commission

February 22, 2023

# Public Comment Context

## Summer 2021: 47 meetings plus online comment

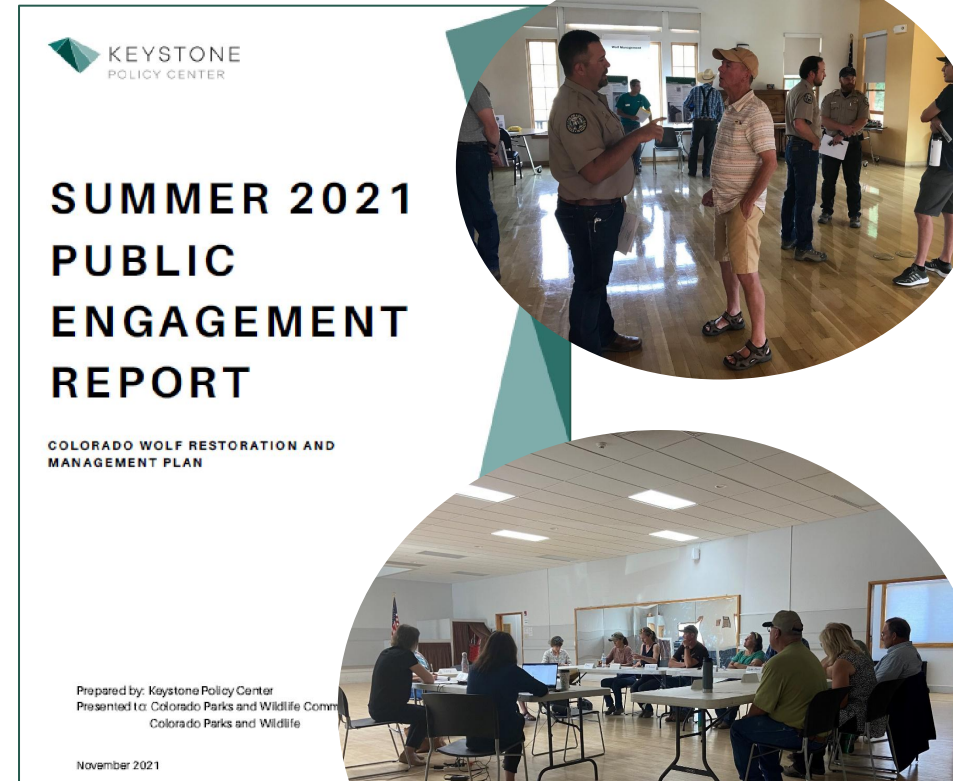
- 16 in-person regional open houses (8 on the Western Slope)
- 17 in-person Western Colorado geographic focus groups
- 2 in-person Tribal consultations
- 10 virtual interest-based focus groups
- 2 virtual statewide town halls
- Online comment form and online open house materials
- Summarized in November 2021 report
- Approximately 3400 participants

## June 2021 through December 2022:

- SAG & TWG advisory meetings (through August 2022)
- Tribal consultations
- PWC public updates
- Public comments at PWC & SAG meetings
- General online comment form at [www.wolfengagementco.org](http://www.wolfengagementco.org);  
written comments provided direct to PWC for each of its meetings

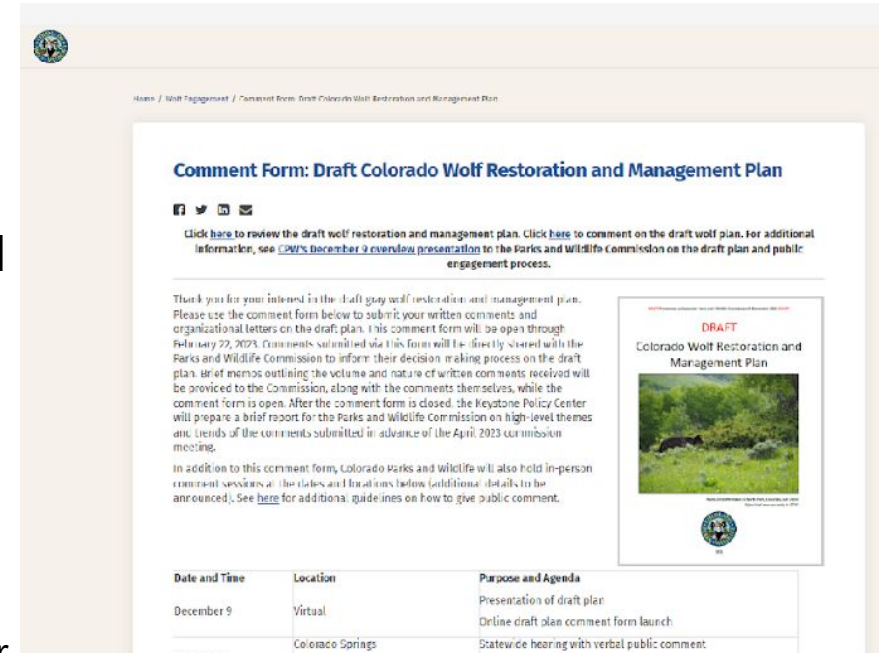
## Draft Plan Comment Period, December 9 through Present:

- 4-in person and 1 virtual Commission hearing for verbal public comments
- Online written comment form



# Draft Plan Written Public Comment Process

- Online comment form at [www.engagecpw.org](http://www.engagecpw.org)
- Open December 9, 2022, through midnight on February 22, 2023
- All comments provided via the online form are directly shared to Commissioners through periodic mailings
- Brief memos outlining the volume and nature of written comments received are also provided to the Commission
- After February 22
  - A final batch of draft plan comments will be sent to PWC
  - A general wolf comment form will be available; comments will be sent for upcoming PWC meetings through plan finalization
  - Keystone Policy Center will prepare a brief final report for the Parks and Wildlife Commission on high-level themes and trends
  - Comments must be received through the draft plan comment form on or before February 22 for inclusion in the draft plan comment report



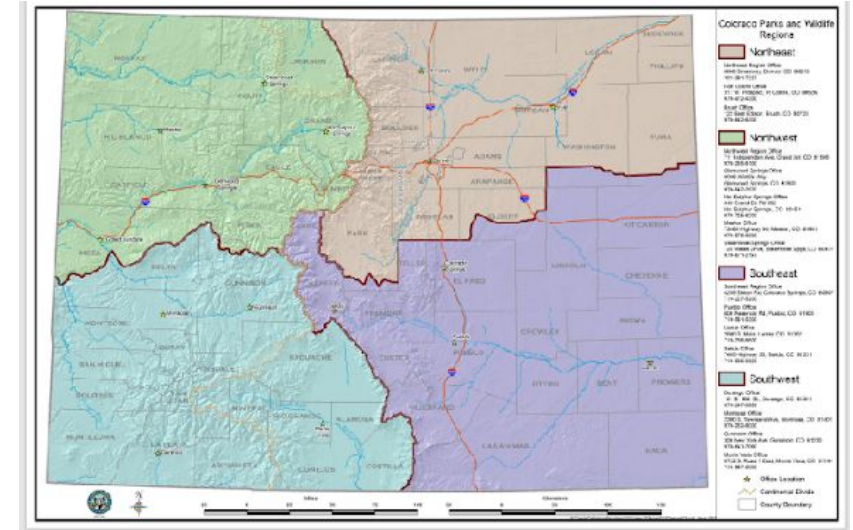
The screenshot shows a web page titled "Comment Form: Draft Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan". It includes a navigation breadcrumb, social media icons, and a link to review the draft plan. The main text explains that comments submitted via the form will be shared with the Parks and Wildlife Commission and that a brief report will be prepared. A table at the bottom lists the dates and locations for the presentation of the draft plan and the online comment form launch.

Date and Time	Location	Purpose and Agenda
December 9	Virtual	Presentation of draft plan Online draft plan comment form launch
	Colorado Springs	Statewide hearing with verbal public comment

# # of Written Comments

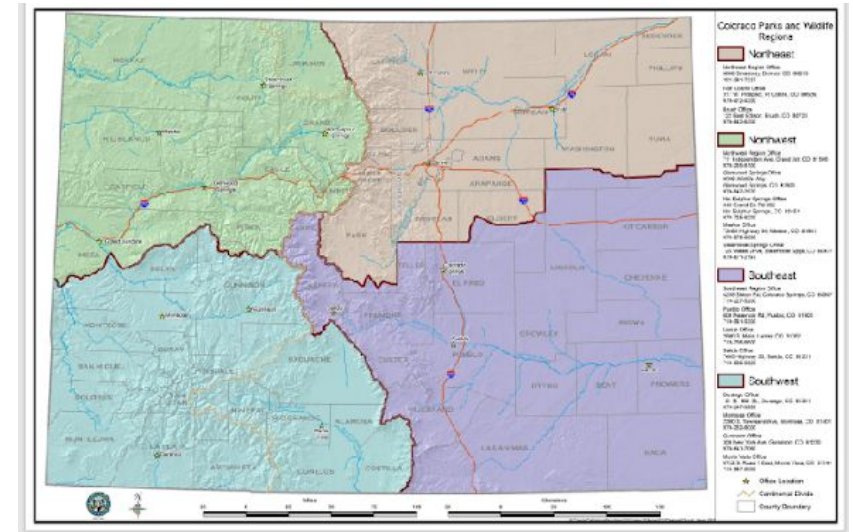
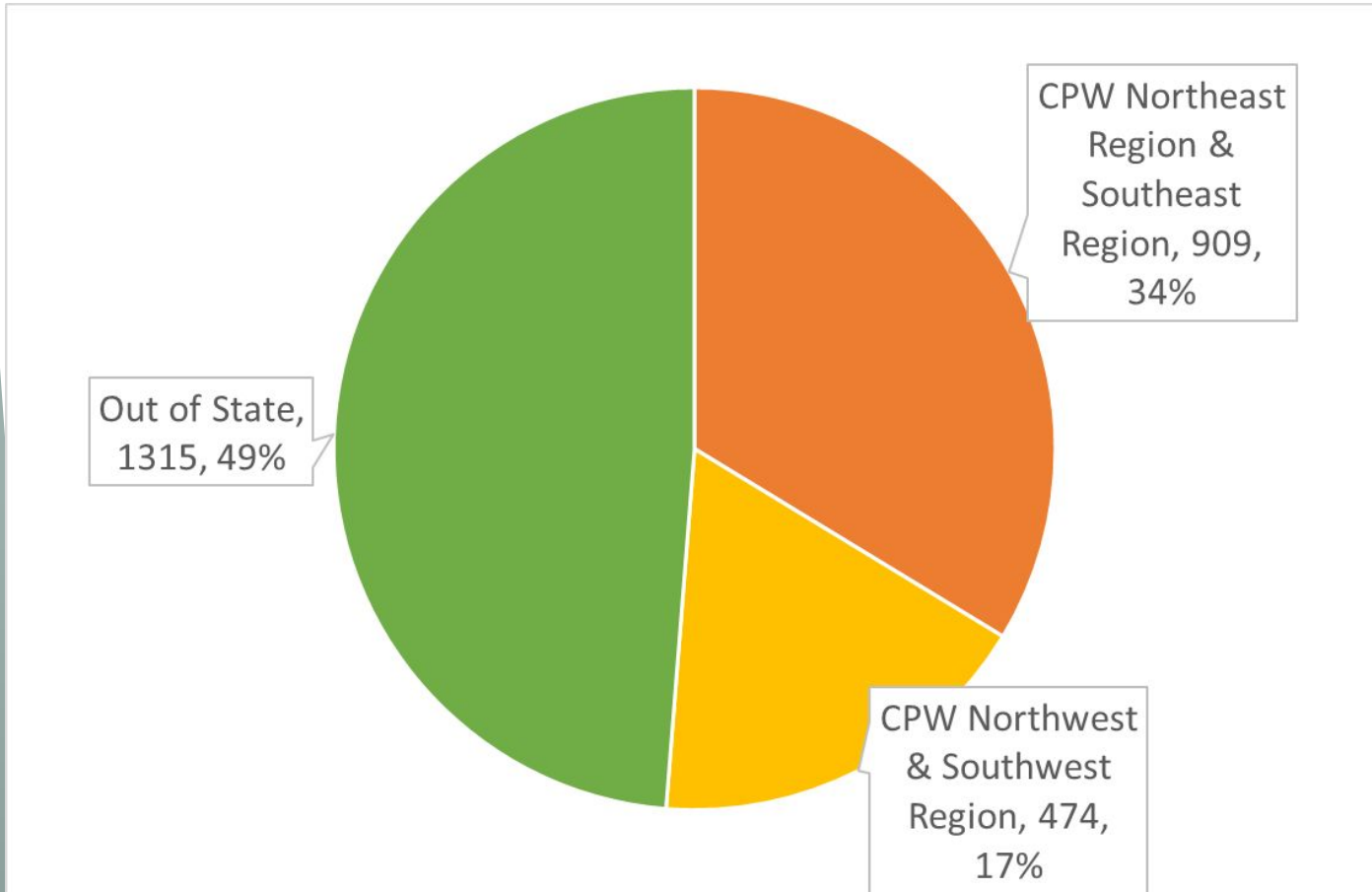
Interim Summary (December 9, 2022–February 12, 2023)

- 2698 public comments received
- 2694 comments were submitted by individual members of the public
- 4 comments were submitted by organizations



# Residence of Written Commenters

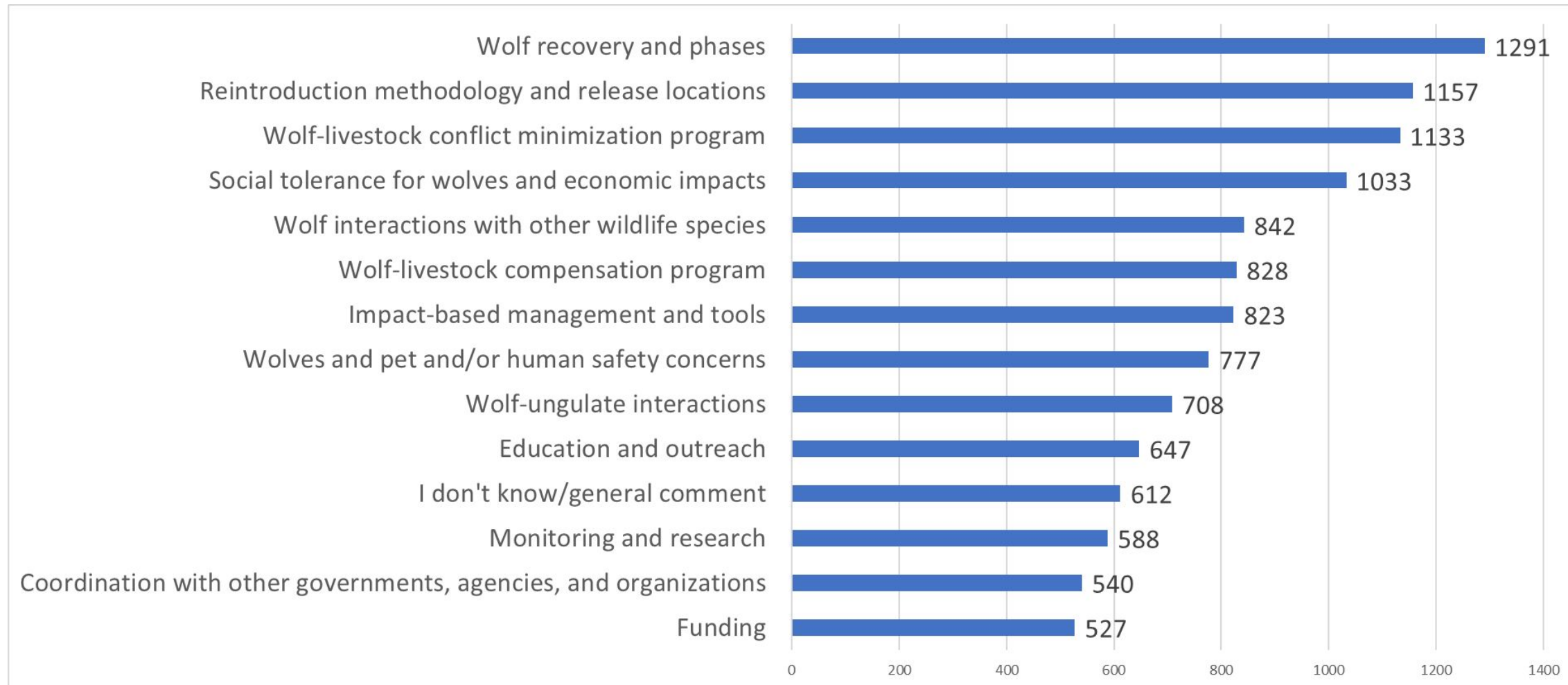
Interim Summary (December 9, 2022–February 12, 2023)



# Topics of Written Comments

Interim Summary (December 9, 2022–February 12, 2023)

*Self-selection* of draft plan topics that the comment is addressing




# Themes of Written Comments (interim)

- High consistency with themes of verbal comments as well as recent Commission discussion topics
- Many comments expressed general support or opposition for reintroduction and did not provide specific feedback on the details of the plan
- Many comments related directly or indirectly to social tolerance
- Many comments (detailed or general) used common language offering similar perspectives
- Analysis is qualitative, not quantitative. Purpose is to provide Commission with overview of perspectives being shared.

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 US 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.

**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.

**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.

**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?



# Themes of Written Comments (interim)

Most common 'key' themes/topics of specific comments, with divergent perspectives offered on each:

- Release area, including west and east of the Continental Divide
- Phase 4 and wolf hunting; North American Model
- Downlisting/delisting thresholds, fixed objectives
- Conflict minimization; lethal management of wolves that depredate on livestock
- Interactions with ungulates; impacts for hunting and outfitting
- Agency funding and capacity

*See memo for more details*

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## 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 1991, 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?

**Wolf Management**

**WOLF RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN; SUMMER 2021 PUB**

**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 (killings) 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.

**2004 Wolf Working Group Recommendations**

**What concerns or questions about wolf management do you have?**



# Themes of Written Comments (interim)

## Additional recurrent themes:

- Mexican gray wolf
- Handling of wolves injured during reintroduction
- Additional components of recovery (geographic, genetic, etc.)
- Carcass disposal
- Compensation plan amount/\$ limit; requirements to qualify
- Interaction with other species
- Pets and human/recreationist safety
- Monitoring
- K-12 education
- Wolf plan process
- Interagency and Tribal coordination, consultation

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?



# Stay Informed

[www.engagecpw.org](http://www.engagecpw.org)

- Wolf comment form
- Sign up for the Gray Wolf Reintroduction eNewsletter
- Up-to-date information
- Link to additional information & educational resources on the CPW website

The screenshot shows a website interface for public engagement on the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan. At the top, a large banner features a wolf's head and the text: "Welcome to Colorado's Wolf Restoration and Management Plan Public Engagement". Below this, a grid of eight smaller cards provides various resources and information:

- Sign up for the Gray Wolf Reintroduction eNewsletter**: Encourages signing up for updates on public engagement and wolf reintroduction.
- Comment Form Draft: Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan**: Provides a link to a draft comment form for the plan.
- Deliverly Concepts**: Offers information on the technical planning, design, and construction phases of the project.
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission**: Announces the July 2021 meeting where the Commission will review the plan.
- Engagement Process Page**: Provides a detailed overview of the public engagement process.
- Visit the CPW Website to learn more about wolves in Colorado**: Directs users to the main CPW website for more information.
- Summer 2021 Public Engagement**: Details the summer 2021 public engagement activities and dates.
- Comment Form**: Provides a link to the final comment form for the plan.