

Revised Draft Wolf Plan Review Process

Local News

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OLYMPIA —The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has revised a draft plan for state wolf recovery and management, and will conduct more public review later this year. The draft state Wolf Conservation and Management Plan was revised after scientific peer review and an earlier public input process, which concluded last year. The revised draft plan is available on the WDFW website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/. The website also contains information on the wolf plan development process, including past public input and scientific peer review. The public-comment process included 19 public meetings, three surveys and a comment period that drew nearly 65,000 responses.

The plan is intended to guide state wolf management while wolves naturally disperse and re-establish a sustainable breeding population in the state. The plan contains recovery objectives that would allow the state to eventually remove wolves from protection lists, as well as management strategies to address wolf-livestock conflicts. The revised draft plan affirms 15 successful wolf breeding pairs as the goal for statewide wolf recovery. Among the revisions are proposals regarding lethal control of wolves observed attacking livestock and dogs, and WDFW management options if wolf predation limits at-risk populations of elk, deer or other ungulates. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission—the citizen panel that guides WDFW policy—will be briefed on the draft plan and review process during its June 4 meeting at the Natural Resource Building in Olympia. The 17-member citizen Wolf Working Group, which helped draft the plan, will meet June 8-9 to review the proposed revisions. The meeting will be held at the Heritage Center of the Kittitas Valley Event Center, 512 N. Poplar St., in Ellensburg, and will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., June 8, and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., June 9. As with past meetings of the advisory group, the working group's meeting is open to the public but it is not a public-comment opportunity. WDFW will consider guidance from the working group and may release further draft plan revisions, with an updated environmental impact statement, before the Fish and Wildlife Commission takes public comments on the draft plan during its Aug. 4-6 meeting in Olympia. Two commission workshops on the draft wolf plan are scheduled in eastern and western Washington in September and October. Those workshops will be open to the public. The commission is scheduled to consider adoption of the plan during its Dec. 2-3 meeting in Olympia.