

CPoW drops out of wolf advisory group, wants it abolished

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

ELLENSBURG, Wash. — The Cattle Producers of Washington has withdrawn from the state's wolf advisory group, calling it "inept and pointless" and saying it has prevented any action by the state Department of Fish and Wildlife in dealing with wolves that kill livestock.

The department should abolish the advisory group — known by the acronym WAG — courageously take on wolf management that's fair to communities impacted by wolves and should not "stand idle as livestock operations that are vital to rural communities perish under inadequate public policy," said Monte McPeak, CPoW president, in a letter dated Sept. 10 that was sent to the Fish and Wildlife Commission and department director Jim Unsworth.

"WAG has consistently prevented any real action by WDFW, creating dire circumstances for the ranch families and communities that have been negatively impacted" by wolves, McPeak wrote. Continuing to participate in WAG would work in opposition to CPoW's mission of sustaining, improving and protecting the state's cattle industry, he wrote.

WAG meetings often consist of theoretical discussions while ignoring data and wolf management tools in other states, he said in the letter. WDFW uses WAG to delay action as it waits for "some kind of unattainable consensus from WAG," and WAG refuses to seriously discuss lethal removal, he wrote.

A majority of WAG members always want one more depredation before removing wolves and CPoW has no desire to work with a facilitator who closes WAG meetings to the public, creating "a secret and obscure environment to discuss an issue of high public importance," McPeak wrote.

WDFW spent \$76,000 to remove the Wedge wolf pack in 2012 but is spending \$850,000 on the WAG facilitator for two years, the letter says.

In two days of WAG meetings in Ellensburg, Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, there was no direct public mention of CPoW's withdrawal. WAG facilitator, Francine Madden, said she alluded to it but not by name.

"I want us to be respectful of that (CPoW's) decision but remain open to engagement," she said later. "If there is any way we can be supportive of their community, then I would do that. The door is open to re-engagement at any time and in any form."

She said the \$850,000 for two years goes to her nonprofit organization, Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration in Washington, D.C., and not directly to her. She said she had seen CPoW's letter but had no comment on it.

Donny Martorello, WDFW wolf policy coordinator, said it's unfortunate CPoW dropped out, that he valued the organization as a stakeholder and appreciates its reasons.

"We're not delaying any management action based on WAG," Martorello said. "WAG is looking for cohesion on controversial parts of our protocol but that doesn't pause any management of wolves."

Jack Field, executive vice president of Washington Cattlemen's Association who is on WAG and has expressed frustration with its slowness, said he respects CPoW's decision but that his board decided to stay at the table.

"I'm glad we did because yesterday afternoon (Oct. 1), we finally "quit writing conceptual thoughts on butcher paper and went line-by-line through a checklist of non-lethal actions. That was huge. If we come into the next meeting with the same focus we will do a lot of good things," Field said.



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Francine Madden, conflict resolution consultant, and state Rep. Shelly Short, R-Colville, talk at Washington wolf advisory group meeting in Ellensburg, Sept. 30.

Wolf panel discusses 'wolf-friendly beef'

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

ELLENSBURG, Wash. — The state's wolf advisory group continued discussing how to help one of its rancher members who lost more than 300 sheep to wolves last year.

The group also talked, during a Sept. 30 meeting at Central Washington University, about a "wolf-friendly beef" label for meat from cattle raised following wolf protection measures.

In its Sept. 3 meeting in Tumwater, the group reached a tentative agreement to help rancher member, Dave Dashiell of Hunter, who estimates he lost more than 300 sheep in July 2014 to the Huckleberry wolf pack in northeastern Washington.

Dashiell was not at the Sept. 30 meeting in Ellensburg, but his brother, Stevens County Commissioner Don Dashiell, was. He also is a rancher. Don Dashiell said the sheep were worth about \$200 apiece, more than \$60,000 total.

Unable to find suitable grazing land this year, Dave Dashiell moved his flock to a pasture north of Pasco where he's spent \$10,000 per month on hay. Don Dashiell called it an emergency short-term option that will put his brother out of business in the long term.

The state Department of Fish and Wildlife killed the pack's breeding female but dropped plans to kill three more wolves in the pack after Dave Dashiell removed the sheep. WDFW also compensated Dashiell for 30 to 40 sheep it confirmed as killed by wolves.

Hancock Timber Resource Group offered Dave Dashiell land unsuitable for grazing but didn't want his sheep back on the land it leased to Dashiell where the slaughter occurred because it was a "public relations nightmare for Hancock," Don Dashiell told Capital Press prior to the meeting.

During the meeting, the group discussed trying to help Dave Dashiell find suitable grazing land, hazing methods on wolves and what should be on a checklist of actions prior to killing wolves.

Paula Swedeen, carnivore policy lead in Olympia for Conservation Northwest, suggested helping ranchers by having a label for "wolf-friendly beef" from cattle raised with WDFW wolf protection measures. Dan Paul, state director of The Humane Society of the United States, said as with cage-free eggs, some consumers would be willing to pay more for beef raised with wolf protection measures.

Hemp grower encouraged by cross-pollination experiment

Cross-pollination with marijuana poses controversy for new crop

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

For Oregon hemp grower Jerry Norton, the recent harvest season has been successful in more than one way.

Apart from producing a healthy stand of the crop in a Marion County field, Norton is pleased with an experiment on cross-pollination between hemp and its psychoactive relative: marijuana.

The potential for cross-pollination between hemp and marijuana was a major point of contention between growers of the two crops in 2015, which marked the first time in decades that hemp was legally grown in the state.

"There's a phobia with the cross-pollination," Norton said.

Marijuana growers fear hemp pollen because they want to avoid the formation of seeds in their crop, which decreases the quality and volume of psychoactive flowers.

As part of his experiment, Norton grew numerous hemp plants in a greenhouse that also contained several marijuana plants. In Oregon, recreational use of the psychoactive crop became legal this year and its medical cultivation has been legal since the late 1990s.

Despite their close proximity to male hemp plants, Norton's female marijuana plants developed a minimal number of seeds.

"We've been successful with them not cross-pollinating," said Norton.

The dearth of seeds found in the marijuana makes him optimistic that hemp and marijuana growers will find a way to coexist in Oregon, similarly to specialty seed producers who use a mapping system to avoid cross-pollination.

"We want it to be like to-



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Hemp is harvested from a field in Marion County, Oregon. The crop attracted scrutiny from lawmakers this year due to its potential for cross-pollination with marijuana, since seeds degrade the quality and volume of the psychoactive flowers.

matoes or any other commodity," he said.

Pollen from marijuana and hemp has been known to travel more than 7 miles, and the plants can be pollinated by honeybees that fly about 2.5 miles from their hives, according to legislative testimony submitted by Russ Karow, an Oregon State University crop and soil science professor.

However, some crops that can technically cross-pollinate — such as goatgrass and wheat — will actually produce few seeds, said Carol Mallory-Smith, an OSU weed scientist who has studied gene flow.

While Mallory-Smith has not studied hemp and marijuana specifically, she said it's possible that genetic variations and differences in flowering times may be responsible for the low seed numbers seen by Norton.

"There are a lot of biological and physical reasons that plants may not hybridize and produce seed," she said.

Figuring out which varieties of marijuana and hemp are unlikely to cross-pollinate

will require more research to be useful for growers, said Norton.

"We don't know which can coexist with other ones," he said.

The issue generated controversy during Oregon's 2015 legislative session, with a bill that would restrict hemp production passing the House but failing in the Senate.

Hemp production in Oregon has turned out much differently this year than what legislators envisioned when they legalized the crop in 2009, said Lindsay Eng, director of market access and certification programs for the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The crop was legalized several years ago but ODA only began issuing permits this year after finalizing production rules.

While lawmakers expected the crop to be grown on an industrial scale for fiber and seed, Oregon growers are more inclined to produce it on a small scale for cannabidiol, or CBD, a compound that's thought to have medical uses.

The law requires hemp growers to produce fields of the crop that are 2.5 acres, but it does not set a mandated seeding rate, Eng said. "It doesn't speak specifically to density, so you could conceivably spread five plants over 2.5 acres."

The ODA is revising its hemp rules and the legislature may revisit the hemp statute in 2016, she said.

Growers have focused on CBD because it's more economically viable than competing with large hemp farmers in Canada, Eastern Europe and China, Eng said. "On those industrial-type commodities, you tend to see pretty big acreage."

Norton said he's growing hemp for CBD but he also expects that the crop stems to be processed and sold as livestock bedding. The stalks can also be chopped up and mixed with lime to make "hempcrete," a type of lightweight insulation.

"I think it's going to be the next thing in building materials," he said.

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