

Confluence 2020 Open Space Notes

Human-Carnivore Coexistence Open Spaces Discussion

Rebecca Niemiec and Kevin Crooks lead

Notes from discussion:

1. Small group – 5 in attendance in addition to Becky and Kevin.
2. Kevin and Becky provided background on CSU Center for Human-Carnivore Coexistence and social-ecological research regarding wolf recovery in Colorado
3. What is the measure of success of participatory stakeholder engagement?
 - a. More conversation needed to define measures of success
 - b. Useful to track changes in stakeholder attitudes and perceptions before, during, and after engagement process.
 - c. Useful to include stakeholders from outside of Colorado to discuss the reality of living with wolves
 - d. Key: legitimacy of individuals representing stakeholder groups during engagement process
4. CSU is strategically positioned to be a trusted, neutral authority on the wolf issue.
 - a. But, difficult to manage perceptions regarding who are (or are not) really “neutral” conveners.
5. Collaborative process can be difficult
 - a. In early stages of engagement might be premature to achieve “collaboration”
 - b. Stakeholders initially fighting different battles
 - c. Collaboration can develop only after trust-building
6. Economics of wolf restoration critical
 - a. Work ongoing at University of Wyoming with Steve Smutko
7. Language analysis would be useful
 - a. What are words that are triggering for people? Avoid if possible.
 - b. Western Landowners Association publications – lots of effort to reach compromise wording
8. Good model for wolf stakeholder group
 - a. MT Grizzly Bear Advisory Council
9. Wyoming Game and Fish
 - a. Frequently form collaborative working groups. E.g., regarding mule deer management
 - b. Wyoming: training program for Natural Resource professionals in collaboration
10. Wildlife can sometimes be unifier across political divides
 - a. E.g., in Wyoming, deer management and conservation has broad-based support