



This research serves as part of the Center for Collaborative Conservation policy brief series *Policy and Practice for Wolf Reintroduction in Colorado*. You can find the whole series [here](#).

Collaboration for Reducing Livestock-Carnivore Conflicts

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Research Focus and Approach

To inform efforts for reducing conflict between wolves and livestock in Colorado, we conducted a study to determine how place-based collaborative groups motivate community-scale implementation of conflict prevention tools (CPT) (e.g., range riding, fencing, and carcass removal) across different social and ecological contexts.

We conducted 27 semi-structured interviews with livestock producers, collaborative group coordinators, wildlife management agency personnel and conflict reduction experts from ten place-based collaborative groups with livestock-carnivore conflict reduction programs throughout the American West.

Key Findings

Implementation and effectiveness of CPTs is contextual and based on local ecological characteristics. Participants described livestock-carnivore conflict and animal husbandry practices in relation to landscape characteristics including terrain openness, steepness, accessibility and geographical scale. Place-based collaborative groups implemented tools appropriate to their local ecological context and terrain.

Place-based collaborative groups build trust and social capital necessary to implement CPTs at community scales.

Early efforts by collaborative groups to address less controversial conservation goals such as habitat improvements or invasive weeds management build trust and social capital among landowners, nonprofits, and agencies important for coordinating and securing funding for more controversial topics such as wolf-livestock conflict reduction.

Technical assistance from wolf experts is important for forming conflict reduction programs. Early involvement of technical experts and agency representatives in advisory roles helps prioritize and implement tools best fit to the landscape. Once programs are established, CPTs are best delivered by trusted individuals with history working in the community.

An individual's decision to adopt CPT's is influenced by the perspectives of others in the community and whether the tool or practice is socially supported. Livestock producers may be socially ostracized for implementing CPTs for appearing "pro wolf" or may be hesitant to share successes of tools with neighbors, thus slowing the tools' uptake. Yet, when collaborative groups' thought leaders model acceptance and success of CPTs and coordinate with their peers, they set new norms that support coordination for conflict reduction.



Montana FWP Biologist and landowner installing turbo-fladry. Photo by Louise Johns.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Implementation of CPTs to reduce wolf-livestock conflicts should be approached at community scales rather than on an individual basis. Applying range riding, fencing, or carcass collection to individual properties may cause negative spill-over effects including increased depredation to neighbors. To achieve collective benefits of conflict reduction, tools and practices should be delivered and coordinated across private and public lands at community scales. Place-based collaborative groups provide structures to implement and adaptively manage CPTs at such scales within Colorado.

CPW District Wildlife Managers should prioritize engaging existing Colorado collaboratives to build trust and social capital necessary to address challenges with wolves. Further, CPW District Wildlife Managers should identify thought leaders and encourage peer-to-peer and neighbor-to-neighbor interaction to coordinate for conservation actions and prepare communities to coordinate for conflict reduction.

Landowners will require technical assistance from CPW, Wildlife Services (WS), and/or CSU Extension to implement CPTs. This technical assistance to reduce conflict is best delivered through place-based collaboratives that will need financial support. Funding resource coordinator positions that can coordinate community implementation of CPTs should be prioritized.

It is anticipated that funding to support turbo-fladry, range riding, and carcass collection will become available through Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm Bill funding in 2023. Yet, these contracts will only be available to individual producers. State agencies should work with Colorado NRCS field officers to support adoption of these practices into existing Farm Bill programs and share the value of contracting to provide CPTs at the community rather than individual level.

One way to build relationships with landowners would be to help fund the capacity for place-based collaboratives to coordinate with CPW and DNR. Funding for CPTs is often easier to secure than funding the capacity to implement them effectively. Colorado DNR could offer funding to subsidize hiring of resource coordinators to ensure that place-based collaboratives have the capacity to coordinate for conflict reduction.

More Information

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