

Appendix L

Bighorn Public Process Recommendations (Betty Fear and Carol Kruse)

8/18/00

Step 1 - Clearly define the project or action (reintroducing Bighorn sheep into Boxelder Canyon, permitting 80 gas wells on The Mesa, etc.), and clearly identify the goal or objective of that project or action.

Step 2 - Identify all likely stakeholders through a modified Delphi process. That is, brainstorm internally about who might be stakeholders (err on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion). Make personal contact with each of those stakeholders, explain your agency/group's idea (never refer to it as a proposal, only as an idea) and that there will be a public process to ask everyone's input on how the project might best be implemented, and ask each of them who else they think should be involved and who they'd rather not have involved - add all those people/organizations to the stakeholder list (this will make stakeholders of those interests with the desire and/or ability to kill the project - it is critical they be included throughout as equal partners in the planning process, or they'll for sure "shoot" at the decision later). Then contact those new additions to the list and ask them the same questions. When no new names are being brought up, the vast majority of stakeholders have probably been identified. Include the media in the stakeholder list, and cultivate and sustain a positive, informed working relationship with them. (New stakeholders can be identified as projects evolve through the planning process - invite and welcome newly-identified stakeholders at any time during the process.)

Step 3 - Line up "political" support by making the first stakeholder "Delphi" contacts with affected landowners, municipal and county officials (including commissioners, weed & pest boards, and conservation district boards), State and federal agency directors, and advocacy group leaders.

Step 4 - Hold a stakeholder/public meeting within two weeks of finishing the Delphi contacts. Widely advertise the public meeting to discuss the agency/group's idea. Send letters to everyone on your stakeholder list, advertise through civic organizations and special interest group meetings, newspaper articles, radio news items and public service announcements (PSAs), put flyers in store windows or at recreation sites likely to be visited by potential stakeholders, etc.

Step 5 - Hold meetings (if they may be contentious, hire an experienced, professional facilitator) to ask the stakeholders/public "We're thinking about doing _____; how do you think we should go about doing that?" [Again, do NOT refer to the idea as even a tentative proposal.] If anyone asks for information you don't have, promise to get back to them with the information, and then do it - in another meeting, via letter or email, whatever.

Step 6 - Based on their input and the resource science needed to support the action, develop a TENTATIVE proposal, create visual aids illustrating/explaining that tentative proposal (posters, brochures, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc) and go back to the public with that tentative proposal - decide whether an open house format with informal discussions or a presentation/Q-A format would work best with the audience. Ask, "Based on your input, here's what we're
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considering at this point. Did we hear you correctly, what do you think we should do differently, what could we do better?" (Hire a professional, experienced facilitator if this meeting could still be contentious.)

Step 7 - Based on that meeting's input, revise to a draft-final proposal. Either mail it out to interested parties (if you were close with the tentative proposal) or have another public meeting.

Step 8 - Based on that input, finalize your proposal. (What's important is to keep checking with the public until you have a proposal or procedure everyone can live with, no matter how many iterations it may take to get to that point.)

Step 9 - Implement your proposal.

Step 10 - Have public meetings during implementation to keep people accurately informed about what has been done. Sponsor tours, if feasible. If everyone is comfortable with what's been done so far, continue; if disagreements crop up, call a public meeting to iron out the difficulty before proceeding with implementation. The process so far has given them ownership -keep that feeling alive throughout implementation!

Step 11- Follow-up - - have tours of the completed project (be sure to include school groups), or have an "open house day," whatever works for that specific project. If that's not feasible, do outreach to the schools and community through meetings and presentations to show the incremental steps and completed implementation of their efforts. Enlist volunteers to help with monitoring, if applicable. Have annual community update meetings, if the project may change over time (we now have - sheep and the reproductive and survival rates are ~. If you hear complaints or unexpected complications voiced during those outreach efforts, address them immediately - even if it means re-instituting public input meetings.

Underlying assumptions:

Even before identifying and contacting stakeholders, your agency/group has discussed the idea with people who've tried to do something similar and failed, and with people who've tried to do something similar and succeeded.

There is at least "informed consent" within your full agency/group that this is a worthwhile and feasible project. If everyone in the agency/group, whether directly involved or not, is not informed and supportive of the idea, it probably will fail.

Enough time before a decision is due has been allotted for this public/stakeholder process to work. Every step must be taken, and carefully. These processes are not speedy - they take time, sometimes years. No project should be such an emergency that time can't be committed to doing it well. Extend your planning horizon. (Note: a common phenomenon of these processes is that the second and subsequent time the same group of public/stakeholders are confronted with this process, it moves much more quickly.)

All meetings are open to the public.

Bighorn Sheep Supplemental Transplant Proposals in Existing Herd Units 10/22/03

Step 1. Internal Review (within Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

1. A need or desire to supplement an existing herd and potential transplant site is identified/suggested, either internally by WGFD or from an external source (e.g., Wyoming Chapter Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, sportsperson's groups, private landowner(s), federal agency personnel, or interested publics).
2. The need for a supplemental release of bighorn sheep, as well as suspected or known reasons for failure of the existing bighorn sheep population to thrive, should be described. Additionally, the feasibility, suitability, and habitat evaluation for a potential transplant site is analyzed by WGFD, including Regional Wildlife/Habitat, Bighorn Sheep Working Group (BSWG), and Veterinary Services personnel, with input and tentative commitment of funding support, if needed, from WY-FNAWS et al. A source of sheep for the supplemental transplant should be identified, and the herd health history of that source population should be reviewed, to identify potential disease transmission concerns, if any. A map depicting the anticipated range and likely distribution of transplanted bighorn sheep, based on known seasonal ranges of existing bighorn sheep within the herd unit, should be prepared. If the release is merely to supplement an existing herd and not expand currently or traditionally used habitats, then a map is not necessary. If produced, this map should be based on the expected movement of translocated sheep; the mapped area should be as complete as necessary to include anticipated year-round habitat, but should not include areas bighorn sheep are unlikely to utilize. All domestic sheep occurring within the anticipated range/distribution of existing and transplanted wild sheep should be identified, and a Risk Assessment to determine likelihood of contact between domestic and wild sheep should be completed.

A recommendation to pursue the supplemental transplant is forwarded by Regional personnel and the BSWG to Wildlife Division Administration. From there, Wildlife Division Administration should make a recommendation to the Director's Office to proceed with, abandon, or modify the proposal. If the Director's Office agrees to proceed, contact should then be made with the WGF Commissioner in whose District the herd unit occurs. If the affected WGF Commissioner(s) agree to proceed, external contacts should continue.

Step 2. External Review (outside Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

1. If the supplemental transplant site (and anticipated wild sheep distribution resulting from the transplant) involves public lands managed by a federal or state land management agency (e.g., USFS, BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, State Parks, etc.), discussions with appropriate resource personnel in those agencies should occur. Summaries of these discussions should be prepared, as part of the official record.

If the supplemental transplant site (and anticipated wild sheep distribution resulting from the transplant) involves private lands, individual discussions with potentially involved landowners/lessees should occur. Contact with sportsperson/conservation organizations should also be made. Summaries of these discussions should be prepared, as part of the official record.

2. A complete summary of all public comment should be forwarded by the Region(s) to Wildlife Division Administration, then to the Director's Office, then to the WGF Commission. If needed, Region(s) can meet with WGFD Staff and/or the WGF Commission to discuss the supplemental transplant proposal.
3. If approval to proceed with a supplemental transplant is obtained from the WGF Commission, Region(s) should firm up schedules, secure funding, and proceed with the supplemental transplant. Media coverage of the WGF Commission decision to move forward with the proposed transplant should occur at the appropriate time.

Step 3. Additional Protocol for Supplemental Bighorn Sheep Transplants

1. If the decision is made to go forward with a supplemental transplant, and if contact between domestic and wild sheep is subsequently suspected/documented, and/or if the supplemental transplant falters or fails, there shall be an *a priori* "hold harmless" agreement in place. If there is known, suspected, or highly probable contact between domestic and wild sheep, wandering bighorns should be live captured and transferred to Sybille; if live capture can not be accomplished, bighorn(s) should be killed and transferred to the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory as soon as possible. There should be immediate, mutual, two-way notification of interaction between domestic and wild sheep.
2. Utilize capture protocol to minimize stress and ensure adequate disease sampling on captured sheep.
3. Radiocollar as many transplanted adult bighorns as possible (preferably all), to facilitate post-release monitoring; satellite/GPS collars would be ideal for monitoring movements and habitat selection.

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