Role Ambiguity and Perceived Organizational Politics in Wolf Recovery:

Washington State Wildlife Agency Personnel Perspectives

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Abstract

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Wolf recovery in Washington (WA) State provokes contentions amongst stakeholders: livestock owners, environmental groups, government organizations, and the public. Wolf recovery in WA also incites internal disputes and strains working relationships within state government entities charged with wolf management. These divisions undoubtedly undermine wolf recovery and conservation efforts. WA State is in the early stages of wolf recovery. Consequently, it is important to understand, in order to preemptively manage, emerging issues among disputing parties in the recovery process. To this end, we conducted 60 in-depth, semi-structured key informant interviews and two focus group interviews from October 2013 through March 2015 with primary stakeholders in the wolf recovery efforts: livestock owners, conservation organization officials, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) employees. The purpose was to ascertain salient perspectives regarding wolf recovery in WA, with an original focus on economic programs to aid ranchers affected by wolves. Non-directive moderation techniques were used for all interviews. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim before analysis. Data analysis followed the grounded theory approach, a predominantly inductive process, which allows for salient perspectives to emerge from the data rather than as predetermined by the researcher. Preliminary coding suggested that a major issue of conflict about wolf recovery in WA State is distrust among relevant stakeholders. During second cycle coding, role ambiguity and perceived organizational politics emerged as factors that are relevant to goal alignment and trust within the WDFW and subsequent interactions with other stakeholders. Hence, these matters of occupational and organizational psychology constitute the focus for this thesis. Occupational and organizational factors are pertinent to interactions that rely on trust to ensure cooperation, such as signing contracts for cost-share measures to prevent

livestock depredation by wolves. Our findings suggest that role ambiguity and perceived organizational politics are intricately tied to effective and trustworthy interactions with livestock owners, environmental groups, and the general public as well as the occupational performance of WDFW employees. If the WDFW focuses on reducing role ambiguity and changing the nature of organizational politics, there should be an increase in goal alignment and trust within the organization. Improvement in both of these areas will increase the effectiveness of the Agency by promoting organizational ambidexterity and a variety of positive occupational outcomes. The interviews exposed a great need to further explore the internal workings of the WDFW.

The following thesis is organized into three main parts: an introductory section including a literature review of pertinent wolf centered research and information about the larger project my work emerged from, a draft manuscript detailing some of the occupational and organizational elements I discerned from interviews with wildlife professionals, and a conclusion section for the entire thesis. The thesis is structured in this way in order to provide a broader contextual understanding of the issue without losing focus on agency personnel's perceived occupational and organizational aspects of wolf recovery in Washington State.

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Acknowledgements

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Wolf Management Literature Review

Wolves occupy a symbolic place in the human conscience, both in positive and negative capacities. The presence of wolves, from the United States to Canada to Europe, sparks social controversy and polarization. Environmentalists, hunters, and livestock owners tell remarkably similar stories about wolves whether they live in Sweden or Idaho (Ericsson and Haberlein, 2003; Jukka et al., 2007; Pate et al., 1996). Due, perhaps, to the strong emotions wolves evoke there has been extensive research on the historical, biological, political, and social effects of wolf recolonizations across the world.

Studies concerning the biological nature of wolves and their effect on habitats and prey are numerous. Beginning in the 1960s wolf studies and organizations devoted to wolf protection propagated, prompted by the environmentalist community adopting wolves as a symbol of wilderness (Mech, 1995). Scientists believe that wolves fulfill an important niche in ecosystems, especially regarding the health of riparian areas (Beschta & Ripple, 2008). The concept of trophic cascades counters the long held belief that ecosystems function from the bottom-up. In other words, that the quality and quantity of plants to feed herbivores control the health of the system and predators respond to those pressures. In contrast, the theory of trophic cascades posits that, apex predators, predators with no natural predators of their own, like wolves, actually have a myriad of positive effects on ecosystems (Kowalewski, 2012). Additionally, the presence of large carnivores affects the abundance of a variety of other bird, mammal, and invertebrate species, alters disease dynamics, impacts carbon sequestration, and modifies streams (Ripple et al., 2014). Researchers have made great strides in understanding the effects of breeder loss on wolf packs (Brainerd et al., 2008; Borg et al., 2015), the dynamics of pack structure (MacNulty et al., 2012; Mech, 1999), wolf ranges and habitats (Fuller et al., 1992), and the wolf's impacts on prey and livestock (Ripple et al., 2014; Latombe et al., 2014; White and Garrot, 2005; Breck et al., 2012; Wielgus and Peebles, 2014).

The history of the wolf in the United States is an interesting illustration of how changing paradigms can have uneven effects in different segments of society. Since the 1800s, Americans, the government and the public, have expended a great deal of effort to exterminate and

subsequently bring back the wolf (Morell, 2008; Houston et al., 2010; Kellert et al., 1996). Wolves were targeted for eradication early on in the settlement process and poisoning or otherwise killing wolves was "seen as a civic duty, done proudly" (Schullery and Whittlesey, 1992). The efforts of private citizens were augmented by the U.S Biological Survey, the government agency that would later become the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and wolves were mostly gone from much of the United States by the 1930s, including in the National Parks (Bangs and Fritts 1996; Klein, 2002). There were prominent wolf advocates such as Aldo Leopold speaking out for wolf conservation shortly after wolves had been extirpated. However, wolves did not gain significant legal protection until 1973 when the federal Endangered Species Act was enacted (Bangs and Fritts 1996; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1994). Support for wolves has, however, been uneven and not all are convinced of the value of having wolves return to the historically occupied areas. Subsequent efforts to repopulate wolves in their traditional range have been met with intense criticism, primarily, but not exclusively, by rural, resource dependent communities, regardless of scientific justification (Weisiger, 2004; Naughton-Treves et al., 2003; Scarce, 1998).

The first wolf reintroductions in the US, the release of wolves into the Northern Rocky Mountains of Yellowstone and Central Idaho in 1995 and 96, are considered by some as an environmental triumph, signaling a shift away from utilization values and toward a more balanced management style (Nie, 2003). Others view the reintroductions as a mistake that will remove rural dwellers from their lands and destroy wild game populations (Schullery, 1995; McNamee, 1997). A recovery plan was developed for the Northern Rocky Mountains in 1974 which called for natural recovery in northwestern Montana and reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone as an experimental population. The side bar was that wolves would be reintroduced in central Idaho if a breeding pair was not present by 1992 (Bangs and Fritts, 1996). In the 1980s, wolves began moving down from Canada to Montana, resulting in livestock depredations and thus, more intensive management. By this time, public support for wolf recovery and heated political debates over the issue involved local, state, and national elected officials in wolf management policies. Congress debated the protocol for creating subsequent recovery plans starting in 1987 and a final EIS was completed in 1994 (Bangs and Fritts, 1996). Between 1995 and 1996, 31 wolves captured from Canada were released into Yellowstone (Smith et al., 2003),

and 35 were released into Central Idaho. The state legislature of Idaho refused to participate in wolf management due to opposition to the reintroduction and consequently, the Nez Perce Tribe provided critical assistance in wolf recovery in Idaho (Nie, 2003). Since the reintroductions, wolves have flourished in both areas, with the Yellowstone National Park release providing much studied effects on the flora and fauna in the park and economic benefits through tourism (Dobson, 2014). The highly controversial nature of the reintroductions, especially reintroductions outside Yellowstone, had rippling negative effects as well, however. The reintroductions widened political divides and caused the "losing" side, the anti-wolf livestock producers and farmers, to take a harder line on future conservation issues (Klein, 2002).

The Northern Rocky Mountain reintroductions were followed by efforts to reintroduce the Mexican Grey Wolf into wilderness areas in Arizona and New Mexico. This took place in 1997 despite strong and vocal opposition from local ranchers in the area, including legal action from the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau (Nie, 2003). Another critically endangered wolf species, the Red Wolf, was reintroduced into North Carolina starting in 1987 (Bohling and Waits, 2011). The North Carolina reintroduction was strongly biologically focused, however unsound predictions were made about the amount of habitat necessary for the red wolf population. Originally, the US Fish and Wildlife Service estimated that the National Wildlife Refuges in the recovery zone would be adequate. This has not been the case and private landowners were inadequately informed of the program, leading to distrust and lack of public support (Wildlife Management Institute, 2014). Wolf populations of varying sizes have remained present in Minnesota, dispersing to Michigan and Wisconsin after Endangered Species Act protections were enacted and populations expanded (US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2015). Wolf recolonization in Washington and Oregon occurred through natural dispersal from the Northern Rocky Mountain and Canadian populations of wolves. However, conflict surrounds wolf recovery regardless of the nature of the wolf's return. This is no different for the state of Washington. In other states where wolf populations have recovered without reintroductions, such as the Lake States of Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin, conflicts over wolf protection, compensation, and wolf management remain (Podsiadly, 2004; Naughton-Treves et al., 2003; Lute et al., 2014).

The controversies surrounding wolf recovery, whether through reintroductions or natural recolonization have prompted social scientists to examine the social factors and attitudes surrounding wolf conflict. Generally, it's been found that conflicts between humans and wolves are intensified by human values, perceptions, and attitudes towards wolves, often more so than by economic losses stemming from wolf depredations (Treves and Bruskotter, 2014; Dickman, 2010). Consequently, many studies have focused on the public's relationship with wolves. Kellert et al. (1996) pointed to the shifting psychological reaction to wolves in North America from almost pathological hatred to reverence. The negative stigma of the wolf, however, remains in communities that live in close proximity to wolf packs. Interestingly, the emotional reaction to wolves is not related to knowledge of wolves, implying that additional knowledge learned about wolves may simply be used to reinforce previously held beliefs (Kellert et al., 1996). They also found that attitudes towards wolves serve as a useful indicator of overall views of the natural world (Kellert et al., 1996). Others have found that attitudes towards wolves are ambivalent; there is both fear and attraction in people's views of wolves (Knight, 2008).

Some researchers have taken the study of attitudes a step farther and examined what might lie beneath positive or negative emotions towards wolves. Slagle et al. (2012) conducted a survey about perceived risks and benefits of wolves, and affective responses to wolves. They found that positive feelings towards wolves strongly affect the belief in perceived benefits, such as healthy riparian areas, and subsequent tolerance for wolves. However, negative emotional responses lead directly to intolerance towards wolves, rather than simply an increase in perceived risks like increase danger to livestock (Treves and Bruskotter, 2014). Understanding the emotional response to wolves is important because emotions often predict reactions to wolf management actions, especially lethal removal of wolves (Roemer et al., 2013). Others have focused on the impacts of specific management policies on attitudes, such as lethal removal of wolves and hunting seasons for wolves (Naughton-Treves et al., 2003; Treves et al., 2009; Lute et al., 2014). Unexpectedly, lethal removal of wolves, either government sponsored or through public hunting seasons, did not increase positive attitudes towards wolves (Treves et al., 2013; Hogberg et al., 2013).

It is possible that attitudes towards wolves are determined by group identity and membership. For instance, Bruskotter (2014) posits that in the North Rocky Mountains residents can be split into two camps whose membership predicts beliefs about wolves; the "new west" is composed of animal rights and wildlife advocates, environmentalists, and conservationists and the "old west" is made up of hunters, gun and property rights advocates, and farmers and ranchers. Other authors have applied social identity theory (SIT), a theory designed to elucidate how individuals view themselves through their group memberships, and the value and meaning that membership holds, to better understand conflict over wolf hunting seasons in Michigan (Lute et al., 2014). Using SIT allows for a more nuanced view of stakeholders and the potential for greater understanding of stakeholder positions (Lute et al., 2014). They suggest that social identities surrounding wolves are polarized between people who care for and people who fear wolves and these social identities are more critical in shaping public perceptions than geographic region (Lute et al., 2014).

One of the reasons for closely examining stakeholder attitudes is to enhance the success of efforts to reduce conflicts through stakeholder engagement or a participatory-based decision-making processes. Without clear understanding of the stakeholders, these participatory processes may fail to reduce inter-group conflict or may even fail to understand the original cause of problems (Lute et al., 2014; Madden and McQuinn 2014). It is important to understand the social, psychological, and cultural components of conflict in wolf debates because traditional methods for reducing conflict, such as compensation programs and focusing on technical solutions such as increased collaring of wolves, have not been successful in reducing tensions between pro- and anti-wolf factions (Madden and McQuinn, 2014).

Several scholars have studied the relationships between wolves and specific stakeholder groups such as livestock operators or hunters. Attitudes towards compensation, in particular, have been the focus of several studies. Montag et al. (2003) conducted an in-depth study of livestock owners and the general public in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The results were a complicated picture, with compensation being an important program, but lacking the capacity to solve the problem of wolf-livestock conflict. Ranchers expressed the desire for more control over their situations in the place of compensation. The interviews captured issues far beyond the economic

scope of compensation; issues of social justice, the social, cultural, and environmental value of the ranching industry, and social responsibility emerged from the interviews (Montag et al., 2003). Naughton-Treves et al. (2003) found that compensation did not promote increased tolerance toward wolves; social identity was more predictive of tolerance than interactions with wolves. Other researchers have reevaluated the idea that damage-mitigation, the mainstay of most predator management programs, results in a proportional decrease in hostility towards wildlife. Dickman (2010) found that hostility towards wildlife was often unrelated to actual damage and that other factors, such as social influences, had far more impact on attitudes towards wildlife. This applied in situations where both technical (fladry or range-riding in the case of wolves) and economic (compensation) solutions were used to reduce damage (Dickman, 2010). Several factors exacerbated reactions to wildlife damage. Power differences between an urban majority and a rural minority, perceptions that wildlife damage was done by state "owned" animals, social vulnerability, fear of animals, and religious values can all play a role in aggravating human-wildlife conflict (Dickman, 2010).

The research on attitudes and emotions towards wolves indicate that it is necessary to be more comprehensive about the wolf debate by moving it beyond the "purely scientific and technical" (Nie, 2002). It is critical that we examine the social and cultural context of wolf management, and that examination must include a focus on state wildlife agencies. Wolf management does not happen in a vacuum, but rather in a complex and history-laden arena in which wildlife management agencies play a pivotal role. Researchers claim that state wildlife agencies are not responsive to the public, especially the public which represents non-consumptive wildlife use (Jacobson and Decker, 2006; Nie, 2004). The perception that the agencies are "captured" or controlled by hunting and ranching interests has pushed other stakeholder groups to call for ballot initiatives on controversial management decisions, such as hound hunting or bear baiting (Nie, 2004). Some researchers are examining this issue on a broad, institutional level in the context of the Public Trust Doctrine which states that natural resources like wildlife or public lands are held in trust by the government for the public (Jacobson and Decker, 2006; Smith, 2011). Jacobson and Decker (2006) cite the "iron triangle", or the close relationships between resource management agencies, extractive natural resource users, and policy makers, as an obstacle to effective resource management. They suggest that the governance structures of state

wildlife agencies, usually an appointed Commission or Board, be reformed and that wildlife professionals must become agents of change rather than cling to the old systems (Jacobson and Decker 2006). Many researchers also find the funding mechanisms for state wildlife management inadequate and exclusionary. In most states, wildlife management is primarily funded through hunting and fishing licenses and equipment sales; it is suggested that the critical financial importance of extractive users groups has made state wildlife agencies resistant to change and more responsive to a narrow groups of stakeholders (Jacobson et al., 2010; Nie, 2005). It is, therefore, not trivial that we pay empirical attention to the occupational and organizational antecedents of management in natural resource management agencies.

Although many state wildlife agencies are incorporating human dimensions thinking into their operations, natural resource management is still technocratic and focused on the nuts and bolts of biology and ecology. This one-sided approach which is applied in a "supposedly neutral, disinterested way" (Raik et al., 2008), can result in decisions that exclude considerations of justice or fairness and marginalization of some groups and/or interests (Raik et al., 2008). The traditional emphasis on the biological and ecological aspects of natural resource management is a cultural mainstay in the agencies. Kennedy (1985) discusses the "unique professional culture" of state wildlife agencies, outlining some of the core features: often strict delineations between wildlife biologists, technicians, and enforcement officers, the prominence of and belief in scientific knowledge, and the assumption that wildlife should be managed. Gill (1996) posits that these agencies are primarily utilitarian in their approach to wildlife issues and fearful of public involvement because such involvement may politicize their decisions. Thus, the politics of public involvement is replaced with that of public aversion—another justification for empirical attention to the occupational and organizational workings of state wildlife agencies.

Wolf management is particularly responsive to the power dynamics, culture, and representativeness of state wildlife agencies because the wolf and its history hold such symbolism. Ultimately, wolf management, like many other environmental conflicts, is value-based; the technocratic, biophysical science-based wildlife agencies are expected to handle value-based conflict without the necessary expertise (Gill, 2000; Lute and Gore, 2014). Despite well over a decade of research exploring the social and political context of wolf recovery, little

progress has been made in mitigating conflict over wolf recovery. The way in which natural resource managers, conservation NGOs, livestock owners, and the public tackle wolf recovery takes the same essential shape now as it did when wolves were reintroduced to the Northern Rocky Mountains in 1995-96. It could be that stagnation in the conflict status quo is partially explained by inadequate attention to the inner workings of state wildlife agencies.

Although Washington State is still in the beginning stages of wolf recovery, it is clear from the experiences in other states with wolf populations that there are no easy answers to foster coexistence between livestock owners and wolves, even after delisting. Livestock depredation is only part of the problem. Public attitudes, emotions, and influences also do not capture the entire conflict. An important and less understood part of the problem has to do with the organizational and occupational attributes and functions of state wildlife agencies. In my thesis, I turn my attention to some of these attributes and functions, especially in Washington, with respect to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. First, however, I present a background of the project to which this thesis is a side project. The section following will contain my draft manuscript.

Introduction

The Wolf Economy Project

My thesis work emerged from a larger project assessing the social and economic feasibility of a variety of potential economic programs designed to assist livestock operators coping with the recolonization of wolves in Washington State. Wolves are state-listed as endangered throughout Washington (Washington Administrative Code 232-12-014), and are federally listed as endangered in the western two-thirds of the state. Ultimately, the purpose of the larger wolf economy project is to determine workable economic incentive structures to facilitate human coexistence with wolves, both during and after recovery objectives are met. In order to do this, we interviewed at length members of all the stakeholder groups associated with wolf recolonization in Washington. This included: livestock operators, WDFW employees at all levels, conservation officials, beef processors, hunters and hunting outfitters, agricultural students, and politicians at the local and state level.

We conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews for this project, since close-ended questions would assume a substantial a-priori knowledge of interviewee perceptions that we did not possess (Charmaz, 2014). I took a grounded theory approach, which means that I did not enter the analytic stage with a strict hypothesis, allowing the scope of the project to expand as I learned more about interviewees' perspectives (Charmaz, 2014). This approach gives the interviewees' foremost perspectives about wolf recovery prominence, thus ensuring that the findings are accurately representative of the perceived realities of their situations. This was particularly important for the WDFW interviews, because "the climate perceived by employees is an accurate gauge of an organization's effective climate" (Daley & Vasu, 1998). I believe that the chosen methods were the best suited for bringing the perceptions of the stakeholders forward.

We began by conducting in-depth key informant interviews and focus groups with livestock operators in Central, Northeast, and Southeast Washington in 2013. We did this because ranchers are the intended recipients of economic incentives due to the potential for wolf-livestock conflicts with a recovering wolf population. Thus, we interviewed livestock operators first to

gain perspective of the conditions surrounding economic programs aimed at the livestock industry before we interviewed those beyond the ranching community. It was important to determine issues salient to the rancher first so we could adapt the interview guides as we proceeded to new stakeholders and to ensure that the realities of ranchers were considered in other stakeholders' perspectives. The wolf economy project is a feasibility study attempting to elucidate what may or may not work for the relevant stakeholders. These interviews covered livestock operators' concerns about wolves, wolf management, and the future of their ranching operations. In addition, we asked for their thoughts on range-riding, compensation, cost-sharing with the WDFW and conservation organizations, wolf-based agritourism and hunting, tax options for primarily urban counties, an annual check for wolf-related costs directly to the livestock operators, premiums for cattle raised in wolf territories, and wildlife-friendly certified products. Interviews typically lasted 1 to 3 hours. We used non-directive moderation techniques, which allowed the participants to partially control the flow of the interview (Charmaz, 2014). Consequently, interviews covered a wide range of topics that appear to be beyond the pre-defined scope of the project (feasibility of economic programs). Interestingly, these apparently "beyond scope" topics about the occupational and organizational aspects of the state wildlife agency were salient in several interviews. Additionally, they were perceived to have significant ramifications on the success of the wildlife agency's efforts to implement economic incentive programs for wolf recolonization. In particular, the basis for my focus on the WDFW originated in the livestock operator's perspectives about the Agency.

Livestock operators had some concerns about how programs like premiums for cattle raised in wolf areas and predator-friendly meat would function within the context of the larger beef industry. Thus, we traced the production line of livestock from ranchers to processors in order to assess the feasibility of such programs. Additionally, we interviewed the other stakeholder groups listed previously to obtain a comprehensive view of current and projected wolf management as it pertained to economic incentives from all relevant perspectives as it stood in 2013-2015.

I moderated or co-moderated most of the interviews for the larger economic project. I was the primary or sole moderator for all of the WDFW interviews. I also modified the original interview

guide for the WDFW employees to ensure that it reflected core issues discussed during interviews with livestock operators and conservation officials, such as trust between stakeholders and organizational capacity of WDFW. I helped transcribe and analyze interviews from all the stakeholder groups for the economic research questions. I was responsible for all data analysis for my thesis research that focuses on some aspects of the occupational and organizational psychology of wolf recovery in Washington.

Occupational and Organizational Psychology of Wolf Recovery in Washington State

The following quotes introduce some of the livestock operator perspectives that influenced the focus of my thesis:

> "They [WDFW] learned their lesson well. The first meeting they had all their biologists there, the second meeting they sent no biologists. Because they learned that the people here knew a little bit more than they thought. I think it opened their eyes, so the second time they sent no biologists, because then we couldn't question them…Of course, you can't get an answer from the government anyway because they really don't know what they're doing."

> "...You call the Game Department [WDFW] and they come out with their guns and monies, and it's kind of intimating to have these guys come out. They do their little thing, no warrants, no nothing right? But they do their little research and half the time, I feel they're looking at me like I'm trying to get money out of them for nothing."

> "They [WDFW] don't have any experience, no knowledge- where are they going to start? And they won't talk to anybody. They will set something up and as far I'm concerned it'll go haywire. They won't come to talk to any farmers."

Many of the ranchers we interviewed expressed some level of distrust in the WDFW or some unfavorable perceptions of the competence of the WDFW. As can be seen in the previous quotes, there was evidence of problematic interactions with the public hampering effective management of human-wolf conflict. Some ranchers communicated that they were insulted by the attitudes of

WDFW employees; others thought the organization was staffed by "educated dummies" without any real experience in the field. Still others expressed trust and respect in individual officers and biologists while saying the overarching organization was the real problem. Regardless of the validity of these claims, the negative perceptions of the public indicated perceived organizational ineffectiveness. Ranchers and conservation officials, generally conveyed concerns about the WDFW without prompting from the interviewers.

The WDFW fulfills critical roles in wolf management in Washington State and shares management authority for wolves with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. WDFW co-manages wolves with the FWS in the western two-thirds and has lead authority in the eastern third of the state. They are currently the lynchpin in most collaborative efforts between stakeholders on wolf issues. Consequently, I viewed the expressions of distrust from multiple stakeholders as an important challenge facing coexistence between wolves and people, particularly ranchers. Often, the recommendations for solving trust issues involve participatory, collaborative efforts and, in the case of state wildlife agencies, broadening of the funding mechanisms to include a wider variety of stakeholders. However, the occupational and organizational capacity of wildlife agencies to affect these changes is rarely addressed. The position of this project as a feasibility study provided an excellent opportunity for employees to express their perspectives about their organization's shortcomings and strengths in the context of wolf recolonization. Occupational and organizational psychology provided the foundation for understanding and interpreting the internal mechanisms of the WDFW and how those mechanisms are perceived to relate to organizational effectiveness.

Occupational and organizational psychology is a form of applied psychology designed to understand and improve the well-being and performance of workers and their organizations (Millward, 2005). There are, as implied by the name, occupational and organizational components to the field. Occupational psychology tends to focus more on improving individual workers' job satisfaction, reconciliation of individual and organizational interests, engagement and motivation, and other person-level issues. Organizational psychology is applied to organization wide aspects, such as organizational structure and design and decision-making processes. However, both occupational and organizational psychology are interdisciplinary and often go hand-in-hand. By using concepts from occupational and organizational psychology to

analyze the data from WDFW employees, I speculate on prescriptive solutions to a management problem. The purpose for my thesis was to determine what practical efforts could be made to improve the possibility of future coexistence with wolves. In order for the economic or technical support options assessed by the larger project to function effectively, it is important that the WDFW have a strong working relationship with the public. This can either be aided or hampered by the organization and how people perceive and act on their personal occupational functions within the much broader process of facilitating wolf-human coexistence. More growth is needed on the essence of understanding these two separate but highly intertwined concepts. Thus, I sought to uncover potential problems and suggest implementable options for addressing those problems. Many of the difficulties in solving contentious environmental problems are exacerbated by incomplete identification of the underlying problems and subsequently missing the real substance of the issue (Balint et al., 2011; Madden and McQuinn, 2014).

My thesis is presented in the following section in the form of a journal article. Due to the applied nature of this work, my preference is to publish in a journal read by wildlife managers. Writing my thesis as a journal article ensured that the narrative I created was concise and focused.

Role Ambiguity and Perceived Organizational Politics in Wolf Recovery: Washington State Wildlife Agency Personnel Perspectives

Introduction

Developing human coexistence with recolonizing wolves is a contentious process. It polarizes internal conflicts and strains working relationships among livestock owners, environmental groups, government organizations, and the public. State wildlife agencies have struggled with the human dimensions of wolf recolonization, as well as other high profile human-wildlife conflicts (Sexton et al., 2013; Madden and McQuin, 2014; Leong et al., 2011). Many agencies respond to this challenge with increased efforts to understand and/or influence how the general public and relevant stakeholders feel about wolves (Dietsch et al., 2011; Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2010).

Natural resource management agencies play critical roles in natural resource management, but there is rare empirical evidence of the effectiveness and efficiency of such organizations and their inherent occupational functions (for exceptions see Asah, 2014, Gill, 1996, and Mangun, 1992). It is therefore important to understand how state wildlife agency employees perceive their respective and related occupations, and how the agencies are situated to ensure effectiveness of those occupations. The occupational and organizational psychological underpinnings of wildlife management agencies warrant more empirical attention if we are to successfully navigate contentious natural resource management issues like wolf recovery.

Humans have a long, convoluted history with wolves; they are a symbolically important species and have been both reviled and revered in turn (Musiani et al., 2009). Their presence produces strong emotions in people and these emotions can complicate management efforts by polarizing groups and individuals (Nie, 2003; Musiani et al., 2009; Morell, 2008). Since the 1800s, Americans, both the government and the public, have expended a great deal of effort to exterminate and subsequently bring back the wolf (Morell, 2008; Houston et al., 2010; McIntyre, 1995). Attitudes towards wolves on the part of the general public or specific stakeholders like conservation groups or livestock operators frequently have a strong impact on recovery efforts (Houston et al., 2010; Ericsson and Heberlein, 2003).

Although the public is the primary subject of many wolf-centric research studies, state wildlife agencies play critical, and often unexamined, roles in wolf management. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW or the Agency) co-manages wolves in the western two-thirds of Washington with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and has lead authority in the eastern third of the state, where wolves are federally delisted. Wolves are state-listed as endangered throughout Washington (Washington Administrative Code 232-12-014) and WDFW developed a Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Wiles et al., 2011), which serves as the state recovery plan for the species. The Agency has authority for all but lethal wolf management statewide, and can exercise lethal removal of wolves in the federally delisted eastern portion of the State. The compensation and cost-share programs for aiding ranchers with livestock losses due to wolves are overseen and implemented by the WDFW. The monitoring of wolf packs, including the placement of tracking collars on individual wolves, is under the purview of the Agency. Perhaps most importantly, the WDFW is in charge of hiring, training, directing, and supporting the wildlife professionals who implement the wolf recovery plan. State wildlife agencies can create atmospheres that are either conducive or adverse for these professionals to accomplish their occupational goals. Factors detrimental to organizational effectiveness, such as distrust or role ambiguity, may adversely impact an agency's ability to implement wolf management programs. In this article, I present results of interviews in 2014-2015 with a segment of WDFW wildlife professionals, with respect to their agency and wolf management at that time in Washington. I discuss interviewees' perceptions of role ambiguity—uncertainty concerning an employees' job—and perceived organizational politics—behaviors seen as benefiting one part of the organization in the short term at the expense of long-term goals. I suggest how these factors may be related to goal alignment—coordination and integration among parts of the organization—and trust—the belief that others will behave in a predictable manner not entirely devoted to self-interest—within the WDFW.

I used an exploratory, non-directive interview approach, an appropriate method in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). By using non-directive interview techniques and allowing the interviewee to partially control the flow of the interview, we were able to explore the issues most salient to the interviewees (Charmaz, 2014). The process originally began in 2013 by

interviewing ranchers about various potential economic programs to ease coexistence with wolves. However, the strained relationship between livestock producers and the WDFW was a pervasive theme requiring more in-depth exploration. This, in turn, lead to an examination of the organizational effectiveness of the WDFW. Our non-directive approach allowed interviewees to construct their own perceptions of the Agency, rather than respond to any preconceived notions of what those perceptions might be. Consequently, the conceptual foundation of this study emerged from the interviews. I have used a framework of occupational and organizational psychology concepts, specifically role ambiguity, perceived organizational politics, goal alignment, and trust to interpret employee perceptions of their work environment and consequent outcomes. Occupational and organizational psychology, a form of applied psychology designed to understand and improve the well-being and performance of workers and their organizations, has been used extensively to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of private and public organizations. But, it has not been rigorously applied to natural resource management agencies.

Much of the human dimensions work revolving around wolf recolonization focuses on the divide between the pro- and anti- wolf sectors of the public. This is exemplified by a survey of over 4,000 WA State residents concerning their attitudes towards wolves and compensation in 2009 (Dietsch, et al., 2011). Similar surveys have been conducted in Wisconsin and Montana (Naughton-Treves et al., 2009, Montag et al. 2003). Others have argued for moving beyond a discussion of economics and examining the political and social context of wolves, citing compensation schemes as insufficient for reducing conflict (Dickman, 2010). It is necessary to be more comprehensive about the wolf debate by moving it beyond the "purely scientific and technical" (Nie, 2002 and 2004). Others have discussed how expert-driven natural resource management can result in decisions that exclude discussions of justice or fairness (Raik et al., 2008). There is a growing perception that state wildlife agencies are non-responsive and controlled by hunting and ranching interests, causing stakeholder groups representing non-consumptive wildlife interests to push for ballot initiatives on important wildlife management decisions (Nie, 2004). Since state wildlife agencies are the primary institutions managing wolves, it is important to understand the context that surrounds them. The growing distrust in state wildlife agencies impacts how they function and manage natural resources.

Relatively little research has been done concerning the structure and effectiveness of organizations like the WDFW. Scholars have examined state wildlife agencies at an institutional level, delineating organizational roles under the Public Trust Doctrine which postulates that certain natural resources, like wildlife, are held in trust by the government for the public (Decker & Jacobson, 2006; Smith, 2011). They also express concern that agencies are too easily influenced by powerful special interests and differentiate the role of the wildlife professionals and the commissioners who set policy. In order to differentiate those roles, however, we need an understanding of how these organizations work— how do managers and field biologists communicate? What types of constraints are perceived by policy makers and managers within the Agency? Others have explored some of what makes state wildlife agencies a "unique professional culture" (Kennedy, 1985). Kennedy (1985) mentions the often strict delineations between wildlife biologists, technicians, and enforcement officers, the prominence of and belief in scientific knowledge, and the assumption that wildlife should be managed as core features of many state wildlife agencies. These factors can sometimes lead to divisions between long term employees and the newer generation of wildlife managers and a distancing of staff from the public attitudes towards wildlife (Kennedy, 1985). When faced with change and challenges (like wolf recolonization), "a profession may succumb to a defensive, bastille-mentality that views itself and dissenting publics as a contest of right and wrong, the informed vs. uninformed, the rational vs. the emotional" (Kennedy, 1985). There are several aspects of the wildlife professional culture, such as the stronghold of ecological science-based decision making that could exacerbate this tendency. It is therefore important that we study the organizational and occupational aspects of natural resource management agencies.

Conceptual Framework

There are, as implied by the name, occupational and organizational components to occupational and organizational psychology. Occupational psychology tends to focus more on improving individual workers' performance and well-being. This often includes research on job satisfaction, reconciliation of individual and organizational interests, engagement and motivation, and other person-level related issues (Millward 2005). Organizational psychology is applied to organization-wide aspects, such as organizational structure and design and decision-making

processes. However, both occupational and organizational psychology are interdisciplinary and often go hand-in-hand. Although most occupational and organizational psychology research is done in the private sector, there are many concepts that effectively translate to public natural resource management agencies. Here, I present the framework for four concepts—goal alignment, perceived organizational politics, role ambiguity, and trust—that emerged from interviews with wildlife professionals in the WDFW. These concepts have both organizational and occupational aspects.

The structure and culture of an organization impact the goals and subsequent goal alignment of various sub-components of the organization. Goal alignment is "the extent to which organizational subunits are meeting the needs of and striving toward the same core organizational goals as other subunits" (Beehr, 2009). It is related to a number of positive work outcomes such as increased job performance and satisfaction, higher organizational commitment, and a general improvement in organizational effectiveness (Beehr, 2009). It is also a component of organizational ambidexterity, which is the ability to "simultaneously demonstrate alignment and adaptability across an entire business unit" (Gibson and Birkinshaw, 2004). Wolf management requires flexible, yet consistent, responses from the managing Agency when conflicts occur. Goal alignment and ambidexterity are of paramount importance for accomplishing this successfully.

Recent research concerning power and knowledge relationships within natural resource management, specifically wolf management, has touched on the tension between "science-based decision making" and political realities in state wildlife agencies (Lute and Gore, 2014). This is a common issue in boundary organizations, or organizations beholden to more than one principal--in this case, the general/political public and the scientific community (Guston, 2001). The intertwining of science and politics is an unavoidable aspect of modern natural resource management, yet it is considered anathema by many Agency staff. This could indicate a particular form of perceived organizational politics. Mintzberg (1983) defined organizational politics as "individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all in a technical sense, illegitimate—sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise". In more general terms, organizational politics are "a social

influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interest" (Ferris et al., 1989). Politicking in organizations can lead to an unclear relationship between reward and performance, perceived unfairness in decision making, and perceived lack of support from management (Hochwarter, 2003). One of the reasons organizational politics may be a negative force in an organization is that employees cannot feel confident that their contribution to the organization will be valued justly. In biophysical science-based organizations staffed primarily by biologists, accounting for political realities in the upper levels of management may be viewed as discrediting or ignoring their expertise. More common forms of organizational politics, such as playing favorites or taking undue credit, are present in almost all organizations (Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2008). The additional pressure of staying "neutral" or "following the science" creates another layer of politics in wildlife agencies. In this context, perceived organizational politics could also represent a form of goal misalignment. On the ground employees view following the best possible science as the overarching goal of the Agency, whereas upper and middle management are focused on combining political and scientific goals.

Role ambiguity is the lack of information about any aspect of an employees' job (Rizzo et al., 1970; Breaugh and Colihan, 1994). This also contributes to goal misalignment, as well as a variety of other obstacles to organizational effectiveness such as increased employee anxiety and tension, lessoned self-confidence, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased productivity (Kahn et al., 1964; Cohen, 1959). Ambiguity surrounding roles and expectations can also lead to increased perceptions of organizational politics (Miller et al., 2008). In the context of wolf management, role ambiguity may lead to conflicting information disseminating to the public and differing approaches to job responsibilities.

Goal misalignment, role ambiguity, and perceived organizational politics all have a relationship with trust; these organizational and occupational factors impact trust within the organization and the trust relationships with stakeholders outside of the organization. Trust is defined here broadly as the belief that others will "behave in a predictable manner not entirely devoted to self-interest" (Thomas, 1998). This definition can apply on an individual and organizational level (i.e. ranchers trusting individual wildlife biologists to give them accurate information or conservation groups

believing the WDFW will fulfill its mandate to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage wildlife). Trust is often cited as an important component of natural resource management, especially collaborative projects, across the globe (Stern and Coleman, 2014). In particular, there are four forms of trust that are relevant in natural resource management: dispositional, rational, affinitive, and procedural trust. Dispositional trust is the tendency of individuals to trust others in a certain context. I would argue that wolf management, based on its long history of contention and polarization, is a context weak in dispositional trust both within wildlife agencies and between relevant stakeholders. Rational trust is based on the perceived outcomes of placing ones' trust in someone or something else, such as when livestock producers calculate the benefits of entering a cost-share agreement with the WDFW. Procedural trust is trust in the mechanisms of an organization or entity. Affinitive trust is based on emotional judgements (Stern and Coleman, 2014). Trust and distrust of all types can strongly affect natural resource management projects and procedures.

Trust within an organization is also critical for several reasons. It is a necessary component of a functional organizational context (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1994), improved job performance (Brown and Peterson, 1993), and organizational citizenship behavior (Bolino and Turnley, 2003). In public sector organizations, like the WDFW, trust is associated with lower turnover rates and higher affective commitment, increased efficiency and effectiveness, and increased employee motivation (Park, 2012). Previous researchers suggest that trust has a positive effect on client-business relationships (Singh & Siredeshmukh, 2000), and government organizations' relationships with the public (Thomas, 1998). Employer and employee relationships are also affected by trust (Daley & Vasu, 1998; Casadesus-Masanell, 2004).

Similarly, the betrayal of trust, or the violation of trust expectations, may undermine organizational effectiveness (Elangovan and Shapiro, 1998). Perceived organizational politics, for instance, can lead to feelings of betrayal in organizations (Hochwarter et al., 2003). If employees do not feel the organization is forthright or honest, it may lead to organizational cynicism which is "distrust in the organization, its motives, and leaders, and firm belief that the employer will look for ways to exploit employees" (Kanter and Mirvis, 1989). This, in turn, may impact how employees interact with the general public. Psychological contract breach, where

employees feel that their organization has not honored its obligations, could be considered a type of betrayal of trust. Psychological contract breach can have a negative impact on organizational effectiveness by promoting negative emotional reactions and job behaviors in employees, as well as deviant behavior (Chiu and Peng, 2008). It is critical to keep these forms of trust and distrust in mind when evaluating organizational effectiveness.

It is logical to propose that trust and distrust relationships within the organization play an important role in shaping the effectiveness with which WDFW executes its mandate to protect and restore endangered species, especially when interacting with people who perceive those same species as a threat. It is also logical to think that trust is an important element of the effectiveness with which the WDFW accomplishes its goals of collaborating with other stakeholders to facilitate wolf recovery. In order to develop the trust relationships necessary for wolf recovery, the WDFW must cultivate an organizational climate with high levels of trust. It is also reasonable to suggest that antecedents of goal misalignment and distrust, such as role ambiguity and perceived organizational politics, will affect organizational effectiveness.

Methods

Study Area Context

Environmental groups such as Conservation Northwest began advocating for wolves to be reintroduced in Washington State in the early 1990s (GEA, 1991). These original efforts assumed that wolves would not naturally recolonize Washington State and would need to be reintroduced by people. However, wolves from Canada, Idaho, and Oregon were able to disperse into Washington and the first breeding pair was located in 2008 in the North Cascades (GEA, 1991; Wiles, Allen, & Hayes, 2011). In preparation for increasing wolf populations and the eventual federal delisting of wolves in the state, the WDFW began the process of drafting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a wolf conservation and management plan for the state. The WDFW Director appointed a 17 member citizen advisory group (the Wolf Working Group or WWG) to advise the development of the state wolf plan starting in 2007. The citizens serving on the WWG represented a variety of different groups from all geographic regions of the

state, including livestock owners, hunters, conservation groups, recreationists, and general public. The Draft EIS/plan went through a scientific peer review process, blind peer review, and extensive public review involving numerous public meetings and workshops throughout the state (Wiles, Allen, and Hayes, 2011) . The WDFW received almost 65,000 comments on the Draft EIS/plan. The WDFW Commission unanimously approved the Final EIS/Plan in 2011. This plan is now in effect across the State and serves as the state recovery plan for the species, and guides management during recovery. The WDFW subsequently established lethal removal protocols in Eastern Washington, where wolves are federally delisted (Wiles, Allen, and Hayes, 2011). Thus far there have been two lethal removals of livestock-depredating wolf packs; the Wedge pack was lethally removed in 2012 for depredating cattle and part of the Huckleberry Pack was lethally removed in 2014 for killing sheep. Both instances of lethal removal were highly controversial. It is worth mentioning that knowledge of these depredations influences the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of ranchers, conservationists, and WDFW employees in regards to wolf recolonization and associated efforts.

The WDFW implements on the ground management through six geographic regions. The conflict specialist program is one of the mechanisms used by WDFW to address human-wildlife conflicts in the state. For the most part it addresses conflicts with deer and elk and provides assistance to resolve conflicts with predators. In recent years, the program has incorporated wolf conflict under its purview as wolves re-establish in the state. As of 2015, there were 11 conflict specialists working with livestock owners and the general public in regions with the highest level of wildlife conflict. Conflict specialists provide technical expertise on preventative measures and act as a liaison between the WDFW and the public on wildlife conflict issues. The conflict specialists are also available to help livestock operators enter Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements with the WDFW. With respect to preventing wolf-livestock conflicts, these agreements include access to radio-collared wolf information and cost sharing for non-lethal preventative measures like hazing equipment, range riders, fencing, and carcass removal. Compensation is available to livestock owners for livestock kills or injuries determined by WDFW staff to be the result of confirmed or probable wolf depredation.

Data Collection

We used a qualitative research design, focusing on conducting key informant interviews and focus group interviews (Charmaz, 2014). We identified the relevant stakeholder groups (ranchers, conservation officials, WDFW employees) and developed interview guides for each group. The interview guides contained open-ended questions about general feelings towards wolf recolonization (i.e. what do you think about wolf recovery in Washington State?) as well as some specific questions about wolf management and the economic and social impacts of wolf recovery. This article contains only results from the interviews conducted with WDFW employees, however it is important to note that the impetus for examining the Agency emerged from interviews with other stakeholder groups. As we conducted interviews with ranchers, we found an emerging theme of distrust in the WDFW and concerns about wolf management. Subsequent interview guides for ranchers and conservation officials included probing questions about their relationship with the WDFW in order to explore outsiders' perceptions of the Agency. The WDFW interview guide included questions about employee perceptions of the Agency (i.e. are there any intra- or inter-agency interactions that prevent the WDFW from effectively managing wolves or the human conflict associated with wolves?). We focused our efforts on interviewing employees from the regions with wolf packs and employees working in the headquarters office in Olympia. The Institutional Review Board of the University of Washington reviewed and approved the interview guides and protocol (IRB approval #45684).

We used a combination of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to garner contacts in the WDFW involved in wolf recovery in the state (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). We began with purposeful sampling because we needed employees in particular positions and wanted to get relevant contacts. We may have missed important individuals in the community if we had used random sampling. We interviewed 20 WDFW employees from all levels of the Agency in an effort to get a wide variety of perspectives of wolf management within the Agency. This included eight upper level management, three middle management, and nine on the ground field staff. We interviewed conflict specialists, wolf biologists, regional program managers, WDFW commission members, regional directors, enforcement officers, and several employees working out of the main office in Olympia. Generally, I describe the data in my results section in non-numerical terms (i.e. "some" indicating that more than one, but less than half of the interviewees

revealed an issue). There are several reasons for this, the foremost being to protect the identities of the interviewees. Additionally, this was a relatively small (under 60) convenience sample, meaning the sample was made up of the employees we were able to easily contact, and consequently has certain limitations (Weiss, 1994). However, the goal for this research was not to obtain a complete representation of the issues within the WDFW, but rather to demonstrate that these issues exist from the perspective of employees interviewed and to discuss the implications on organizational effectiveness within the context of wolf recovery. It is important to keep in mind that the most pressing issues within an organization may not be those that are frequently expressed, as there can be a perceived risk in voicing criticisms (Burris, 2012; Ashford et al., 2009).

We chose semi-structured, open-ended interviews for this project, since close-ended questions would assume a substantial knowledge of interviewee perceptions that we did not possess. We used non-directive moderation techniques, allowing interviewees to partially control the flow of the interview and discuss what was most salient to them (Charmaz, 2014). Social context of wolf recovery requires in-depth knowledge of positions held by all relevant stakeholders and how they interact with each other. As discussed earlier, many surveys have been employed to assess the attitude of the public towards wolves and management decisions. However, surveys may not sufficiently illustrate the nuances of social relationships or determine the reasons behind positions not previously thought of by the researcher. Key informant interviews allow us to gather complex and multifaceted data (Charmaz, 2014). Interviews were conducted until we reached saturation, which is when no new knowledge is acquired from subsequent interviews.

Data Analysis

After conducting interviews with the relevant stakeholders, we transcribed the data using Express Scribe software (Express Scribe Pro v. 5.63), preserving the original language. All personal identifying information was removed from the transcripts before analyzing the data. After reading and re-reading the transcriptions, I used NVivo, version 10, software (OSR International, 2012) to code the interviews. Coding is a process by which a researcher creates constructs that symbolize various attributes in the data and then sorts the data into those

constructs in order to analyze for patterns (Saldaña, 2013). There were two stages of the coding. The first cycle was a combination of open coding and structural coding. Open coding distilled the data into discrete parts that could be closely examined and compared for similarities and differences. Structural coding is useful for labeling portions of the data that are relevant to particular questions (Saldaña, 2013). For example, the code "criticisms of WDFW" is answering, in part, the question of what WDFW is doing that prevents effective management of wolves. The second cycle of coding was both inductive and deductive in nature. I used a framework of occupational psychology concepts, such as role ambiguity and goal alignment, to guide my coding, while still allowing for alternative explanations.

Results and Discussion

Interviews with WDFW employees lasted an average of 2 hours. Interviewees revealed important insights into how the WDFW functioned in their experience, prior to March 2015, implementing wolf conservation and management. Their answers were nuanced, extensive, and covered a wide range of occupational and organizational factors they perceived to be affecting wolf management. Wildlife professionals working at different levels of the Agency (i.e. field biologist or upper level administration) expressed, at times, diverging concerns about the particular difficulties facing the WDFW. Interviewees reported varying levels of concern about goal alignment, especially between the headquarters and regional offices. Field staff interviewees on the ground in the regional offices reported high levels of role ambiguity as part of the reason for the lack of goal alignment. Interviewees expressed frustration with organizational politics at all levels of the Agency and its subsequent effects on goal alignment and trust. Interviewees also discussed a perceived lack of trust between employees operating in different occupational functions. It is important to note the limitations of this research; these results are not meant to be comprehensive and representative, but rather illustrate that these issues do exist within the Agency for the interviewees.

Role Ambiguity

WDFW wildlife professionals, particularly in the field positions, reported difficulties due to regional differences in job interpretations and a lack of adequate job descriptions and clear job delineations. This was an area of concern to interviewees on the ground and may have led to increased job frustration, inter-regional conflict, and inconsistent proactive job behaviors. It also seemed to lead to incongruity between what interviewees expected their job to be when they were first hired and what their actual position entailed. At upper management and middle management levels, there were again regional differences in job performance and interpretation as well as a lack of clear job scope.

> "My job was just forge ahead before they [conflict specialists] got there, go make contact with the ranchers which I have no problem doing. And now my job is more 'let's work together'. And we're still figuring it out."

The conflict specialist program was the most susceptible to role ambiguity issues, which is unsurprising given that it is the newest WDFW program. At the most basic level, the conflict specialists I interviewed are simply unsure what their technical roles are. Part of the issue stems from the organizational structure of the WDFW. The regions are highly independent and there is weak state level coordination in regards to the conflict specialist program, leading to extensive regional differences in the program. Role theory claims that when employee expectations are inconsistent (i.e. when they are getting different information from headquarters and the regional offices) employee performance will decrease (Rizzo et al., 1970). Conflict management specialists explained the regional system's role in this process:

> "All the regional program managers have a say, because our positions are new, so they're trying to still figure out our technical roles as far as responsibilities. All six program managers get together and are trying to decide what our jobs should be, and all the regional program managers want it their way"

> "I do sense a feeling of maybe not clear lines of who supervises who, who's in charge. I know how that can work, [because] I worked out of an area office and your boss is this person, but your real boss is over here."

Another field staff interviewee implicated the headquarters office in the lack of job descriptions and the impact that has had in hampering wolf management:

> "It's because Olympia [headquarters] hasn't told us what our job description is. Everybody's just out running around on their tangent, which is then creating this mass confusion."

Additionally, the WDFW has decided to separate wolf monitoring activities and conflict management activities, but interviewees' said the distinction between wolf monitoring and conflict management has not been adequately communicated (or enforced). This is partially determined by the regional management or the employees themselves. The differences in how employees determine this division of labor is leading to the perception of disruptive proactive or extra-job behavior on the part of my interviewees. Early in the program some field staff interviewees felt that certain types of job behaviors (possibly more proactive efforts) were rewarded by upper management, but as the program became larger and more structured the precedent that was set was no longer acceptable.

> "I was working really closely with one wolf biologist and we were similar in communicating-- we got on the same page a lot. But anyway, it's just a small group and so we're figuring stuff out together and then I was working with enforcement a lot. It was real, it was just different."

The distinction between wolf monitoring activities and conflict management activities is still convoluted to field staff interviewees. Some conflict specialists, for instance, may be in charge of putting out trail cameras or evaluating citizen sightings of wolves and some biologists are in contact with livestock producers. The spillover from one position to another appears to be happening across all levels of the organization. Interviewees also expressed confusion over what cases should be handled by enforcement and what cases should be handled by conflict specialists. Interviewees from all segments of the Agency (upper management, middle management, and field staff) are also concerned about the sustainability of current levels of conflict management activities; staff may be making unsustainable efforts for livestock operators. The role ambiguity in the conflict specialist program may compound the difficulty of

transitioning to a more manageable workload after wolves are delisted by allowing regions and individual employees to set differing precedents with their communities. Here, two conflict specialists discuss their perspectives on role ambiguity:

> "In each region, you've got the district bio, the assistant district the bio, you've got [the conflict specialist], and you've got the state biologist involved. It leads to huge communication problems, and who does what job duty"

> "I would seriously rethink a lot of individuals who are directly involved with wolves, and create clear boundaries on, 'this is what you're going to do with wolves, this is not what you're going to do with wolves'."

Upper level management interviewees pointed out the importance of communication to decreasing role ambiguity and overall had a much more positive outlook on the extent to which people knew their roles and responsibilities. However, upper management was also quick to highlight the uncertainties in wolf management and suggest that improvements could be made in training programs for employees on the ground. Also, one upper management interviewee conveyed ambiguity about the role of the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) which is a citizen group composed of relevant stakeholders.

> "Are you [the WAG] a consensus-driven group, or are you just advising? Is it just five different organizations advising [the WDFW], or [is the WDFW] looking for consensus? What are your [the WAG's] rules?"

All regional field staff discussed headquarters' lack of experience and knowledge with wolves and/or the perceived unwillingness to listen to field staff.

> "I don't think they know how to train us or what they exactly want us to do. I think they're just trying to dig themselves out of holes at times. And instead of contacting a couple of us in the department who had experience with that, they

> contact [outside organizations] and [ask], what do we do? I could have told you what to do."

Natural resource management has inherent uncertainties; the best available science cannot always predict animal behavior or human reactions (and it not always consistent or clear cut on suggestions). A certain level of tolerance of ambiguity is a necessary requirement for working in wolf management. However, organizations can compound difficulties by having unclear job expectations. Classic role theory claims that role ambiguity will "increase the probability that a person will be dissatisfied with their role, will experience anxiety, will distort reality, and will thus perform less effectively" (Rizzo et al., 1970). Others have found that multiple chains of authority, as evidenced by the regional system on state-wide issues like wolf management, often lead to role conflict and decreased organizational effectiveness as well (Rizzo et al., 1970). It is evident from interviews with employees from all levels of the Agency that uncertainty in the conflict management program may be affecting performance. In the case of modern state wildlife agencies, role ambiguity may also stem from the culture shift towards increased human dimension considerations in wildlife management (Decker, et al., 1992). Just as goal alignment, discussed later in this article, is impacted by the current reevaluation of natural resource management, so is the ability of wildlife agencies to clearly direct their employees.

> "[In another organization], when you do [well], you know it. When you screw up you know it. It's a whole other world with WDFW."

Perceived Organizational Politics

In the WDFW, field staff interviewees discussed frustration with perceived organizational politics, primarily at upper management levels, but also amongst the regions. On an organizational level—organizational in that it concerns the Agency as a whole rather than particular individuals—perceived politics primarily involved the ability of the Agency to remain neutral and "follow the science." In particular, wolf management was perceived as highly politicized and directed by special interest groups. Field staff accused headquarters of "lacking a spine" or "feeding into the hysteria."

> "And the other part of it is just the political pressures from both camps...it hampered being able to just go in there and do whatever needed to be done. Even to the point of agreeing what it was that was even happening here in the first place. All the arguments and all the politics really muddied those waters to the point you couldn't see the problem."

> "We're a scientific organization. But politics plays 99% of it. And decisions are made in direct contradiction to what the science is saying, just because of politics."

> "[Name] puts together an advisory group and like many of the advisory groups [Name] put together, it had an odd number of people and there was one more pro-wolf person than anti-wolf person."

Upper and middle management interviewees voiced concerns about politically unpopular decisions affecting funding opportunities. As financial support has become less reliable and diversification from hunting and fishing license funds has become necessary, budgeting has become increasingly complicated and administrators must be more flexible (Hamilton, 1992). However, upper and middle management communicated about the political aspects of wolf management with more tolerance. Interviewees with extensive tenure in the Agency also expressed greater tolerance for bending with political pressure, although still said they were frustrated by what they perceived as deviations from science-based decisions. One middle management interviewee described it thusly:

> "I think that the Agency has had a unified front. I think the unified front moves a little bit with pressure. I think the target is fixated for a period of time and then due to political pressure, it moves a little bit. Like an earthquake moves a building- maybe it doesn't completely knock it over, but cracks it or moves it off its foundation a little bit. [The] next earthquake comes along might move it a few inches more. [Or] maybe it shakes back the other way."

> "…the Agency is concerned about budgets potentially being impacted, essentially what I would call the Agency being in quotes "punished" for some whatever! We get this often."

Interviewees also described the traditional, occupational forms of perceived organizational politics, namely individual unauthorized efforts. Interviewees discussed individuals letting personal opinions cloud judgment on management decisions, seizing recognition for being involved with such a high profile species, and being unwilling to relinquish control of wolf management efforts. Field staff I interviewed who had more recently joined the WDFW expressed the thought that certain expertise was ignored due to differing opinions on how wolves should be managed.

> "It's just the entire thing needs to be restructured. And it's not happening, because there are a lot of big personalities in the air."

> "You have the one person here that has so much experience, has been dealing with this for ever and ever and ever, and because [they're] not willing to play the political game, that's just not [their] personality, they're [headquarters] not willing to listen to [them]."

> "There are so many people in this state that love the fact that wolves are around and there's so many people that want to be that single wolf person, the wolf contact in the state or their region."

More than half of field staff interviewees said they felt that headquarters was out-of-touch on conditions in their regions and that headquarters was unwilling to listen to field staff. Interviewees said they felt restricted and unable to speak out about management issues. It was considered politically hazardous to argue or criticize decisions.

> "You would probably hear from the biologists on the ground, they're making certain recommendations about hunting seasons-- those get totally blown off by the Olympia decision makers. In fact, they go counter to them. If Olympia

> [headquarters] makes a decision to do something, the regions are saying no, no no don't do that, they do it anyway. That creates a lot of grief for [the regions], because then they have to implement it."

> "Because they're [headquarters staff] way up here they think they know how to do everything and they sometimes don't make the best decisions. And they have people here who have quite a bit of experience, but because we're down here, they don't want to ask us."

> "I was trying to tell the Department what was going on and I just got a bunch of [expletive] for not knowing what I was talking about."

Perceived organizational politics can have extensive negative effects. In the WDFW, perceived politics seem to be widening divisions between headquarters and regions and administrative and field staff positions. It appears to be creating distrust among wildlife professionals; the interviewees did not trust that others are not using personal (or public) opinion to guide decision-making. Importantly, it is not significant whether or not political maneuvering is taking place—what matters is that employees perceive that it is occurring (Miller et al., 2008). The perception that headquarters is allowing politics to impact wolf management is most likely affecting the way interviewees are interacting within the program and creating a context of distrust at multiple levels.

Goal Alignment

Insufficient goal alignment is discernible in the WDFW. Many critical goal alignment concerns employees' discussed may stem from the previously discussed role ambiguity and perceived organizational politics issues within the Agency.

> "There's no mandate. When I asked what is my mission? What is the overarching goal of my position? No one could tell me. They can't even tell me."

The most common report of goal misalignment comes from descriptions of the oppositional management styles in the regions and insufficient statewide direction. In other words, role ambiguity at the regional and state level is potentially causing goal misalignment. Interviewees said that certain regions are more closely controlled by headquarters than others and some conflict specialists are more strictly controlled by their management than others. The conflict specialists I interviewed expressed concern that they could perceive no overarching state plan for the conflict management program. Additionally, they reported that their communication with headquarters must go through the regional management, further enhancing regional differences. Although interviewees discussed the importance of recognizing and working with the differences in various communities, interviewees expressed frustration at the lack of consistent approaches on a broader scale. The structural and hierarchical nature of the conflict program in particular was perceived as causing some goal alignment issues. The proliferation of potential supervisors for conflict management led to some interviewees' expressing confusion. However, the structural misalignment in the organization could potentially be overcome with decreased role ambiguity. The difficulties evidenced by the chain of command may have more to do with misunderstanding the roles and responsibilities of each branch of the Agency or distrust of the motives of others due to politicking than an inherent flaw in the organization design.

> "Normally, you have a program like conflict management that is a statewide thing…nothing can get done, because no one's willing to talk to each other. And then [headquarters] won't say 'this is how things are going get done', because that gets the RPMs [Regional Program Managers] [expletive] off and all hell breaks loose."

> "We have two contrasting management styles that really, they're complete opposites of each other, and one seems to be working fairly well and one doesn't."

Some middle and upper level managers said they take it upon themselves to ensure better goal alignment and consequently present a more consistent program to the public. One wildlife professional in headquarters, for instance, took care to visit all the regional offices in order to understand, and consequently more effectively manage the various projects taking place across

the state. This interviewee said that integration between the headquarters office and the regions was critical and often underdeveloped. Here a middle management employee is describing their perception of their role in the organization:

> "… It's also to make sure we are in fact doing what we say we're going to do. So, if I see that the conflict specialists or enforcement are not delivering the service in a way that we've represented the Agency is going to or perhaps they're going too far! Doing something too aggressively with regard to the resource, it's my job to help stop that, check it, and put it back on the right path. So, again a difficult task. You can't possibly know every little nuance and every little conversation that occurs, but you need to make sure that the messaging is correct through the various layers."

These efforts, however, are proactive and not prescribed by the technical description of the positions. Consequently, not every employee is taking the same approach, once again suggesting an issue of role ambiguity. In the same vein, interviewees reported the importance of individual leaders in job direction.

> "He could get a new boss in six months or I could get a new boss in five years, and things completely change after that. If you put someone else in that position who's got a different opinion on wolves or how things should be changed, they could really throw our jobs into the loop."

Headquarters is certainly involved in ensuring that the Agency and individuals are not acting in completely disparate ways. It is unsurprising that headquarters' control, while seen as necessary from their perspective, can cause conflict in the regions and is sometimes insufficient for goal alignment. The top-down nature of the Agency can stifle creativity and innovation and frustrate field staff. As mentioned about role ambiguity, the increasing control of employees within the conflict program was seen as a reversal of job descriptions and subsequent goals to some interviewees. It may also prevent the necessary flexibility to solve problems on the ground (Hamilton, 1992). However, given the concerns about regional differences in wolf management,

certain kinds of state direction are viewed as necessary. Here is an interviewee working from headquarters' view:

> "I can't have somewhere in the state where there is a single depredation, we move to lethal removal and another part of the state where we wait until there's four and we do this laundry list of preventative measures before…That will kill us in terms of inconsistency. We need to have some standards."

> "Someone reads something in journal of wildlife management and says 'hey, why don't we try this with mule deer?' It's like okay well that's interesting, what's your objective, route it through our science division, work with the game division to see if it's something that's funded…But I can't have staff necessarily just off doing a pet research project. So, we've got to figure out how this new idea fits in with our business needs, whether or not we have the funding for it, and what's that priority relative to all the other things we have going on."

Possibly as a result of goal misalignment, the general public can contact multiple point people within the organization and receive different answers to wolf related questions, despite upper management efforts to improve consistency. According to middle management and field staff interviewees, the bureaucracy and sensitivity surrounding wolf management efforts also creates time disconnects between policy decisions and diffusion of information to employees (and the public) on the ground. This can cause sub-units to operate with mismatched information. This, as well as the regional differences, are a signs of structural misalignment, or the lack of consistency among subunits (Beehr et al., 2009). Some of the information mismatch may be structural as well. While the conflict management program is almost entirely based in the regions, this is not the case for wolf monitoring activities, which are routed directly to headquarters. There are reported communication obstacles between the wolf monitoring program and the conflict program that may be partially due to this structural difference. Two interviewees, one upper management and one field staff personnel, reported finding the wolf monitoring program to be secretive and uninformative and, as a result, little team cohesiveness has been engendered across regions. Inadequate communication between subunits leads to the perception of one component

of the organization failing to meet the needs of another thereby causing incongruence between units (Nadler and Tushman, 1988). Again, decreased role ambiguity and perceived organizational politics may increase the amount of productive communication between units and lessen these structural difficulties. Here, interviewees from upper and middle management and field staff discuss communication within WDFW:

> "But, the wolf specialists, who are out doing trapping and that sort of thing, are supervised out of Olympia. And they're very secretive. They don't share information, they come into areas not sharing, not even letting the bios know that they're there, whether it's conflict specialists or the district bio, and that's just bad policy."

> "I know that there have been needs for specific information to be out to the public so that we can utilize it. And those timelines, we get delays, so many folks needing to touch this issue right now, so much concern and sensitivity about what's being said and by whom and how were saying it and to whom were saying it and whom we're saying it with. All those things can really slow down the information and messaging. And there have been times where we've needed to get something into the community quicker than what we were able to do cause of all those things that I just mentioned. And that disconnect, that can be frustrating."

> "We've really kind of beat them [wolf biologists] into submission to sharing information…[the wolf biologists] come in here and just kind of work and we don't even know they're here and we don't know what they're finding or seeing."

As previously mentioned in regards to perceived organizational politics, the differing weight of politics and science at different levels of the organization seems to be causing organizational conflict. The perceived mutual exclusiveness of political maneuvering and scientific integrity could represent a form of goal misalignment in natural resource management agencies. Upper

management interviewees conveyed frustration about field staff taking a narrow view of the organization and field staff interviewees said they were frustrated by what they perceive as giving in to political pressure or just "giving people what they want". The disparate views of employees on this issue is particularly troublesome in that current natural resource management is by necessity a combination of science and politics and the "scientization" of inherently value-oriented issues can cause more difficulties rather than less (Lute and Gore, 2014; Sarewitz, 2004).

> "There's an unwillingness to look at scientific information, whether it be from the general public or even our own scientists, which makes things difficult. And with no common direction, everybody's saying what they want, when they want, and how they feel and that leads to increased confusion across the board for ranchers."

> "I know what's on their [field staff] minds and what they're thinking- 'why can't I get a new truck, why can't I get this'. Well, here's the real world that the administrators are working on."

There is also goal misalignment in regards to how individuals view the mandate of the organization and the process necessary to fulfill that mandate. Often these represent core values of the employees and what may have been core values of the Agency. Agency cultures and values are an integral part of organizational life and may be internalized by employees over time (Harvey, 1992); a change in cultural norms is likely to lead to goal incongruence. For instance, here one long-term field staff employee is explaining the perceived difference between the way they do their jobs and the way newer employees do their jobs:

> "Oh no, that's beneath me, I didn't go to college for seven years for that, and I don't want to hear it- I'm not going to go out and listen to some hunter. I'll tell you, the people that I'm seeing, 100% that we've hired, are all non-hunters. They don't want anything to do with hunting, they're here for preservation not conservation, and that comes out."

Additionally, interviewees expressed frustrations about the difference in the way wolves are

managed and the way other predators are managed. This is, again, heightened by role ambiguity. Some interviewees say they are managing livestock producer interactions aggressively and treating potential wolf depredations as unique and important events. Others say they are taking a more laid-back approach to wolves and treating them as they would other predators. Some regions are incorporating conflict specialists into other established programs and other regions are keeping them separated.

> "…Conflict people [are] part of the private lands program. We have a huge history of successful interactions with private landowners in this region through our private lands program….I think we have more opportunity to be able to create a relationship with these people [livestock operators]. That's one thing we think we're doing a little bit differently here."

The organizational structure, as well as the goals themselves, can present goal alignment challenges for natural resource management agencies (Harvey, 1992). Part of the goal misalignment within the WDFW may be the result of the nature of professional organizations where authority is determined not only by the hierarchy of the organization, but also by the expertise and training of the employees (Blau and Scott, 1962). In particular, the perceived conflict between science and politics may be influenced by wildlife professionals valuing the authority of their education and experience over the dictates of authorities within the Agency. On an organizational level, goal misalignment seems to be heavily influenced by the perceived lack of state-wide direction. Perceived organizational politics in upper and middle management may have widened the gap between headquarters and the regions. When combined with role ambiguity in the conflict management program, both appear to contribute extensively to goal misalignment.

Trust

All field staff interviewees, conflict specialist or biologist, expressed that upper management (primarily headquarters) does not adequately trust the field personnel.

> "Ask them [headquarters]. You've got people on staff with all this wolf experience, why don't you ask them when there's a pregnant female [wolf] what to do? To me it's just a lack of respect, or they just don't know me, or they don't have any faith in what I do."

> "The region always grouses about Olympia [headquarters] and Olympia always grouses about the regions. That's been going on for--since the beginning of time and it'll probably never change!"

Possibly in reaction to perceived distrust of the field staff from headquarters, the field staff interviewees in turn do not express much trust in the headquarters office. One field staff interviewee said that headquarters pushed field staff to make decisions and then revoked support for those decisions if the outcomes were negative. Others described feeling unsupported by the organization. This has led to extensive organizational cynicism in the field staff.

> "As we make decisions here on the ground and then if they [headquarters] don't like it or they have some political motivation, they turn around and overstep us, and basically throw us under the bus."

> "From Olympia, the big over lording, from their perspective, they don't trust their field employees for [expletive]. We have all of the responsibility and none of the authority."

> "[Describing a recent idea proposal process] Yes, we [upper management] think this is a great idea. No, I don't have any money to do it. You need to try it out, but you can't try it out here because we don't want you to do it there. Can't try it there because the feds won't let you. Can't try it with the tribes because we don't want to cooperate with them. Can't try it with other states because we don't want to do that either. So, they just fiddled me down to a box where I had no support….I feel like my agency doesn't support its own people."

The distrust among various levels of the organization may be due to the general instability and changing role expectations of the wolf management program (i.e. various forms of role

ambiguity). The first switch in management gave control of wolf management to the Game Division rather than the Endangered Species Program after the wolf plan was approved by the WDFW Commission in 2011. Further, the conflict program has taken over various jobs traditionally covered by Enforcement. Two managers stated their perspectives on the changes within the wolf management program:

> "I think a lot of challenges with the implementation of the plan and why so many conservation groups are involved at this point…they thought everything was taken care of by having a good plan and that the Department would implement it under the Endangered Species program, but they didn't. So it's causing a lot of extra concern and concern about staying on top of what's going on and what decisions and choices are being made."

> "We're putting a transition within our agency--the people that are dealing with these conflicts…It used to have a stronger presence from the enforcement program. Now there's the wildlife program, so you've got a bunch of new people, a new program and we're having to transition from one program to another, so a lot of the discontent you see, I wouldn't say that it's really specific to wolves."

Two conflict specialists expressed the desire for protocol that they can use to support their decisions during interactions with livestock producers, indicating the environment of distrust in which they are operating. Most interviewees conveyed some level of distrust in outside organizations and individuals. The threat of legal action on the part of conservation groups was a constant pressure. Several conflict specialists felt that some livestock producers would "fleece the Department" for money if cost-share programs were not carefully managed. There was also some concern of wolf location data being used inappropriately (either as a guide to kill wolves or as a false sense of security) by livestock producers, as well as individuals within the Agency.

> "For the Agency as a whole, it [wolf recovery] would be easily described as just a warzone."

> "They [conflict specialists] can go, well according to the policy, we're going to do this'. Then they can hide behind that policy when they make that decision and if somebody tries to attack them with political whatever…That's what really needs to be done, where we have something to back us up. Everybody's running around scared because there's no policy that we're able to fall back on."

> "Other states said that you will be sued, whether it is going to be Defenders of Wildlife, or the cattlemen, or somebody. And that's why I have tried to be as fair and as honest as I can with these cattlemen, so if I'm sued---that's on your conscience, not mine. I know I can sit on the stand, and say, here is why I did this."

> "The Agency traditionally has been guarded. Because a reporter, an interest group, a political lobby, a politician, primarily, can really impact management individuals trying to do their job."

There is also appears to be distrust between various individuals in the Agency. Interviewees felt that they were left out of communication loops on purpose. There were some reports of employees not receiving wolf information because they were called "anti-wolf" by others in the Agency; the perceived organizational politics surrounding wolves is hampering effective communication within the Agency.

> "That's just what happens when you've got a lot of people involved and poor communication and people don't trust each other or respect each other enough, it's just ego-driven."

> One biologist, who's not my chain of command higher up, has said don't send [GPS locations] to [Name], he hunts wolves, he'll kill them. So, I'm getting smeared in-house.

> "They [headquarters] sit there and talk about how they want to be transparent, but they're not even transparent with their own Agency."

Others have studied the tensions between local and scientific knowledge and the ways in which that can decrease trust in wolf management (Lute and Gore, 2014). A similar tension between long-term employees and newer employees may be occurring within the Agency where long-term employees feel that their local knowledge is not respected by newer employees who have taken different educational paths and vice versa. These schisms within the organization reflect role ambiguity in the sense that as wildlife management changes, employees are no longer sure of their place and mandate. They also reflect perceived organizational politics in the sense that employees often felt that they were being looked over or punished for their attitudes towards their work. In general, wolf management is a context lacking in trust between all stakeholders. It has been divisive within the WDFW; eroding dispositional, affinitive, and procedural trust (Stern and Coleman, 2014).

Trust is a critical component of effective collaboration. Social trust, defined in respect to state wildlife agencies as "the willingness to rely on those who have formal responsibility to develop policies and take appropriate actions" has been in decline for several decades (Sponarski et al., 2014). It can be developed, however, through positive interactions between the agency and the public, effective management of wildlife issues, and a perceived willingness to accept public input (Sponarski, 2014). The WDFW is counting on conflict specialists to develop close, trusting relationships with livestock producers in order to improve coordination in preventing and compensating for wolf depredation. They are meant to integrate into local communities and be responsive to individual livestock producers' needs. This requires trust within the organization and with stakeholder groups. There is a clear distrust in both situations as well a lack of understanding of how fragile trust can be, especially on a polarized issue like wolf recovery.

Management Implications

Role ambiguity and perceived organizational politics heavily influence goal alignment and trust. Improvements in role ambiguity, for instance, has the potential to greatly improve goal alignment, and subsequently affect trust and perceived organizational politics in the Agency. Although there are structural components of the Agency that seem to contribute to goal misalignment, such as entrenched regional differences, improvements in role clarity could decrease those effects. Decreasing role ambiguity can be approached in two ways. Organizations can focus on decreasing uncertainty in the work place (i.e. providing clear job descriptions and protocol) and they can focus on improving employees' tolerance to ambiguity through increased training and organizational self-esteem (Panaccio and Vandenberghe, 2011).

The difficulties with perceived organizational politics may stem not only from role ambiguity, but also from the heavily negative connotation the WDFW culture has attached to the idea of politics. This is not uncommon, and as evidenced by the interviews, the further down in the organization, the more likely employees are to view the organization as political in a negative light, possibly due to lack of control over their own work situations (Kurchner-Hawkins and Miller, 2006). However, political maneuvering in an organization can also be positive. For instance, organizational citizenship behavior, employee efforts above and beyond normal work duties (Bolino and Turnley, 2003), could be considered a form of positive political action (Kurchner-Hawkins and Miller, 2006). Reframing the discussion of organizational politics from something exclusively negative to something which has positive (and neutral) components by creating a positive political strategy has the potential to improve organizational effectiveness (Kurchner-Hawkins and Miller, 2006).

Improving role clarity and reframing organizational politics could improve goal alignment by increasing the cohesiveness of the conflict management program statewide and decreasing the differences in how upper/middle management and field staff view political decision making. However, goal misalignment can also be decreased through a number of different tactics. For instance, communication to all subunits the official goals and objectives of the organization will improve alignment and role clarity. Organizations can also focus on employee enhancement to

ensure that employees are able to meet those goals and objectives. This would include a focus on improving skills, providing more feedback, and providing opportunities to participate meaningfully in discussions of progress (Beehr, 2009). Increased managerial effectiveness, or the extent to which managers are capable of communicating and supporting the goals of the organization to their subordinates, can be a possible solution (Beehr, 2009). Improved goal alignment may help organizations achieve organizational ambidexterity, in this case allowing the Agency to more effectively handle the demands of wolf management (Gibson and Birkinshaw, 2004).

Trust, like role clarity and goal alignment, is fostered in work environments that provide the necessary perceived organizational support (Chen et al., 2005). Trust can be produced by effective planning and management on the part of supervisors; the higher the perceived competence of the supervisor, the more trust produced in subordinates (Daley and Vasu, 1998). Maintaining clear connections between rewards and performance and ensuring that employees have the resources that they need will also increase trust within organizations (Daley and Vasu, 1998). Trust can also be increased by managers throughout organizations by focusing on increasing participation, empowering employees, and providing feedback (Park 2010). Again, as with role clarity and goal alignment, the effectiveness of managers and the climate they establish for their subordinates can heavily influence levels of trust within an organization (Park, 2010). Reducing uncertainty, however, is an important first step in increasing trust, both within the Agency and with external stakeholders (Stern and Coleman, 2014).

Organizations are open social systems, which are interrelated elements that interact with their environment (Nadler and Moore, 1988). Consequently, changes in organizations, such as the creation of the conflict management program in the WDFW, have wide-ranging effects. Evaluating and improving organizational characteristics like role ambiguity or perceived organizational politics during times of change is particularly important for maintaining organizational effectiveness. Currently, wolf management seems to be hampered by various relationships within the Agency and the subsequent lack of trust, both from its own employees and outside stakeholders. Increased use of occupational and organizational psychology concepts

can be beneficial in assessing obstacles limiting effectiveness and potential solutions in natural resource management.

Conclusion

The first step to solving a problem is correctly identifying it. Questions concerning the organizational capacity of our state wildlife agencies have been neglected for too long. My research identifies intra-agency issues that can be influenced. A clear understanding of the constraints on employee performance and organizational effectiveness can suggest certain kinds of interventions. There are limitations to this research in that it reflects only perceptions of the wildlife professionals I was able to contact in one organization. Additionally, no conclusions can be made about the extensiveness of the issues within the Agency. Although it seemed that saturation was reached, it is always possible that the employees I interviewed are qualitatively different from other employees in the organization. However, the purpose, in part, of this research was to display the differences in perspectives at different levels of the Agency and to examine specific issues in order to aid development of potential solutions. The collection of in-depth interview data from key members of the Agency is well suited to examining these types of problems because the individuals can provide the most accurate representations of their work realities. The exploratory results from this research can be used to inform future research aimed at a more representative understanding of obstacles to organizational effectiveness in WDFW.

Natural resource management is increasingly becoming about managing people. Consequently, now is the time to evaluate the organizational effectiveness of our state wildlife agencies, not only on their ability to survey animal species, but how equipped they are to interact with stakeholders - both internal and external. The findings evident in interviews with WDFW wildlife professionals suggest certain organizational obstacles to effectiveness that influence how the Agency communicates with the public and with its employees. This, in turn, affects how the public views the Agency (Decker et al., 2001). Internal organizational issues like role ambiguity, perceived organizational politics, goal misalignment, and distrust among employees may affect the way stakeholders view the Agency. In programs like wolf management, or any other divisive

natural resource management problem, it is important to assess the internal effectiveness of the organization in charge (Asah, 2014).

Appendix

Interview Guide for WDFW Management

Thanks for taking the time to talk to me about wolf management in Washington State. I want to know how you feel about WDFW, what you think is working and what could be improved about current wolf management.

Questions:

1. Please, tell me about your background in the organization and what you like about working for WDFW.
2. What are some of the challenges you face working for a natural resource management agency?
3. What is your current role in wolf management within the organization?
4. What are the primary goals of the game department in regards to wolves?
    - How do they fit with the over-arching mandate of WDFW?
5. How do you currently manage conflict?
    - What do you think the ranchers are saying about the organization?
6. How do you feel the levels of management work together in respect to wolves?
7. How well do you feel the different levels of management are handling the wolf issue?
8. Is there anything that WDFW does that makes wolf management more difficult?
9. How would you characterize the relationship between ranchers and WDFW?
10. A lot of the ranchers expressed distrust in the game department, especially in regards to confirming wolf kills and ungulate numbers, what do you think about that?
11. If the game department were to give more control over wolves to the ranchers, what do you think would happen?
12. How would you describe the relationship between headquarters and the regions?
    - What is your management style?
    - How do Olympia's directives filter down to the general public in the regions?
13. Please tell me about the conflict specialist program and how it fits with the rest of WDFW wolf management efforts.
14. What kind of training does WDFW provide for staff working with people? How is the scope of their job determined?

Interview Guide for Field Techs of WDFW

Guiding Research Question: Determining the feelings of Game Department employees towards wolf recovery and their relationship with their organization and the public (primarily ranchers).

First Question: What do you feel about the recent return of wolves to Washington State?

Themes:

Ranchers

Can you please tell us about some of your experiences with ranchers and wolves?

How does the Game Department currently manage conflict with ranchers?

-How do you feel about the public/private land debate?

A lot of the ranchers expressed distrust in the game department, especially in regards to confirming wolf kills and ungulate numbers, what do you think about that?

Economics: How do Game Department field techs feel about economic programs and their feasibility?

What do you think about economic programs to help ranchers pay for increased costs from wolves?

We have been talking with ranchers about several economic options like agrotourism, range riding, and predator friendly beef and most ranchers have found glaring problems with each. How do you feel about these programs?

-agrotourism
-Levies from Western Washington States such as King, Pierce and Snohomish counties
-premium beef
-range riding
-community options

What do you think can be done to strengthen economic programs?

Organizational issues: How do the field techs view the Game Department as a whole (in regards to wolf management)? Are they satisfied and feel supported?

What does your organization suggest about protecting the livelihoods of ranchers?

-What would you do?

Do you feel like the different levels of management have a consistent approach with how they deal with wolf management?

-Do you think that approach is consistent with the reality on the ground?

Some organizations are supportive (of proactive employees?) and others less so, how do you feel about working at the Game Department?

-How long have you been working in the Game Department? In this area? Do you feel connected to the area?

Public Relations

What do you think is meaningful public participation?

-How do you feel about public meetings?
-What are the goals for public meetings?

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Conclusion

Human-wolf coexistence will not be developed with economic programs exclusively. Evidence from around the world persistently shows that wolf recovery is a process fraught with social and cultural divides that cannot be paid to go away (Dickman, 2010; Nie, 2003; Madden and McQuinn, 2014). Our interviews with stakeholders across the state indicate a similar situation. This is not to say that economic programs have no place. They can strengthen relationships with individuals through cost-share programs and provide new options for certain kinds of operations. However, most economic solutions will by necessity be small-scale, either due to the nature of the beef industry, the give and take of government funding, or the attitudes and distrust of stakeholder groups. Washington State, for instance, passed legislation that allows for compensation of livestock depredations from predators other than wolves, but failed to provide an adequate funding mechanism; economic programs are only as effective as the context in which they are taking place.

The in-depth interviews conducted for the larger project unearthed rich data that highlights some of the foundational issues driving the wolf recovery debate. The lack of trust, perceived respect, and effective communication amongst stakeholders are critical obstacles to coexistence with wolves, potentially far more than the economic impacts. To date, the ranchers hit hardest by wolves in Washington have refused compensation for ideological and cultural reasons. Money speaks, but only so far. The larger project has been illustrative in showing the complexity of implementing economic programs. In some ways, a functioning program to help ranchers deal with the increased cost of wolves would be the result of creating an environment of coexistence, rather than a solution leading to coexistence. The acceptance of financial and technical support requires a level of trust and understanding between partners and develops from a functional relationship. For instance, the most successful range-riding cost-share program in the state was only possible because the ranchers already had a positive working relationship with the other stakeholders from collaborating on another project.

My research is a small potential step toward creating a climate of trust that will allow economic programs function as intended—as a way to improve attitudes towards living with wolves. In order to use economic programs as an effective tool, wildlife agencies must be able to support

and nurture positive social relationships. As one of my interviewees mentioned, “wolf recovery--that’s pretty straightforward from a biologist perspective, the human dimensions side is killing us”. Economic programs to help ranchers seem like a simple and effective way to deal with wolf conflict, but they do not necessarily solve broader problems or promote long-term acceptance. Improving the organizational capacity of our wildlife agencies to handle complex social conflict may be the best option for supporting coexistence.

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