

The Outdoorsman

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Sept-Dec 2010

It's Time for Elected Officials to Take the Blinders Off and Admit Their State F & G's Real Agenda

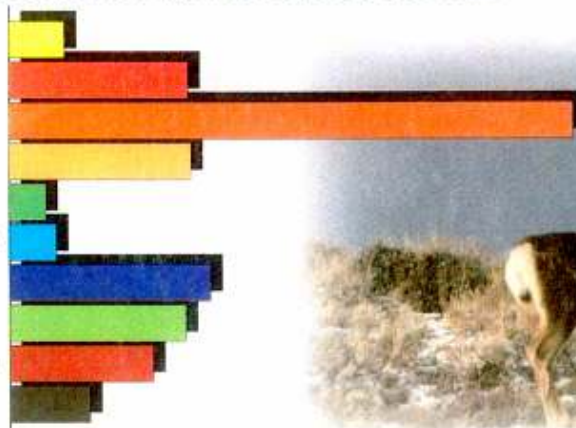
By George Dovel



In your opinion, which Western state does the worst job of managing its big game populations when considering that state's potential?

As voted on at
eastmans.com

- A. Arizona 3.28%
- B. Colorado 10.67%
- C. Idaho 33.83%
- D. Montana 10.84%
- E. Nevada 2.79%
- F. New Mexico 2.79%
- G. Oregon 11.99%
- H. Utah 10.51%
- I. Washington 8.54%
- J. Wyoming 4.76%



In a question with many possible answers, Idaho was the runaway winner in a poll it didn't want to win. Idaho has been mired in Issues with quality game management long before the wolf became an issue (although that hasn't helped). In a far-distant race for second, Oregon, Montana, Colorado and Utah were neck and neck in the eyes of our respondents.

Courtesy of Eastmans' Hunting Journal

In his explanation of these online poll responses, Guy Eastman wrote that although Idaho is down at number eight on their list of total subscribers by state, almost 34% of the nearly 1,000 who responded indicated Idaho is a wildlife management disaster. He also wrote that Oregon, the highest of the four second place runner ups, does not control predators.

When hunters began pointing out the results of the poll to the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game or to individual commissioners, they dismissed the poll with the comment that the Eastman magazines, TV, and online presentations are directed at trophy hunters in the western states.

The reality is that both nonresidents and some resident* hunters pay about \$4,000-\$5,000 apiece to Idaho wilderness outfitters for guided elk hunts, depending on the number of hunters per guide. The chance of anyone getting any bull elk on these hunts – much less a “trophy” – is reported to be “poor” by every outfitter or guide I’ve talked to, yet IDFG continues to limit the number of hunters instead of obeying Idaho Law and taking the necessary actions to restore healthy elk herds. (*see “The Wolves” on pg 13 by a resident describing his guided September 2010 Idaho wilderness elk hunt)

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The Real State F&G Agenda – cont. from page 1

A major complaint of resident hunters in the various western states is the proliferation of high priced hunts and limited special draw hunts. These allow a better chance to harvest an animal for the few who can afford to pay the price or are lucky enough to draw a scarce permit.

But these practices also mean many western game agencies ignore state law and the highly touted “North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.” They receive a lot more money while offering the opportunity for only a few hunters to harvest the wild game that is supposedly being managed for every resident who chooses to hunt.

Utah’s declining deer herds and limited measures proposed by biologists to restore them are also discussed by a longtime Utah hunter elsewhere in this issue.

The following is a comparison of the reported 2009 big game animal harvest (excluding predators and trophy species) in Wyoming, and in Idaho as reported by hunters and also after “adjustment” by an IDFG “biometrician”. It shows why there was such a dramatic difference in the Eastman Poll ratings for the two state agencies:

Comparison of 2009 Big Game Harvests, ID a) - Reported by Hunters in Idaho and ID b) - “Adjusted” by IDFG, with the Published 2009 Big Game Harvests in Wyoming

	Antelope	Mule Deer	WT Deer	Elk	Total
ID a)	1127 40%	18079 25%	13437 25%	12728 16%	45371
ID b)	1275 46%	23900 34%	17762 34%	15463 20%	58406
WY	56482 97%	37854 60%	15413 57%	23173 44%	132922

Hunters in Wyoming reported harvesting three times as many big game animals as hunters in Idaho! And Wyoming hunters reported success rates (published in **bold type**) more than double that reported by hunters in Idaho!

Both states put a limit on nonresident hunters of all four species and many nonresident applicants in Wyoming failed to draw a tag. When elk and deer were still abundant in Idaho, those limited nonresident tags used to sell out before the hunting seasons were even set in March.

But now those tags are later made available over the counter to residents as an “extra” deer or elk tag allowing them to kill an extra deer or elk by paying the nonresident tag fee. Yet deer and elk hunting is so poor in most of Idaho that 9,946 (42%) of the 23,930 total nonresident deer and elk tag quotas remained unsold by December when most big game seasons have ended.

WY Admitted Big Game Losses – ID Did Not

When the record snow depths of the extended 1992-93 winter killed several hundred thousand big game animals from central Utah to interior Alaska, Wyoming admitted its losses. But Idaho claimed its massive losses did not exist and even added several thousand bonus deer and elk permits to its 1993 hunting season.

In their 1996 legislative sessions, both Wyoming Game and Fish and Idaho Fish and Game asked for and received a significant hunting and fishing license fee increase. WYGF feeds elk at several locations but said its decimated deer and antelope populations, which still accounted for 43% of its total license income in 1996, remained far too low to offset the \$4.5 million fee increase.

IDFG Lied About Both Big Game Survival and Projected Income from License, Tag Sales

But in 1994, IDFG Director Jerry Conley told the Resource Committees Idaho’s deer herd would “bounce back” in two years and in Feb. of 1996, his Administrative Chief Steve Barton continued the lie by telling the Finance, Appropriation Committee IDFG would have a two million dollar surplus at the end of the fiscal year in June 1996.

This happened when F&G requested approval to hire six so-called “nongame” biologists, and Sen. Dean Cameron warned that dipping deeper into the revenues generated by sportsmen’s licenses would only result in another license increase. But Barton claimed the IDFG license fund would remain solvent until at least 2000 and said it would probably be even later before hunting and fishing license fee increases would be needed.

Yet three months later, instead of the fictitious two million dollar surplus he dreamed up to convince JFAC to approve hiring the nongame staff, Barton projected a FY 1996 deficit of \$530,900 and a FY 1997 deficit of \$1,462,000! And instead of waiting until 2000 or later to seek a license fee increase as he promised, Barton sought a whopping \$8.9 million increase in 1999 to make licensed sportsmen pay the cost of F&G’s non-hunting agenda – rather than find a legal source of funding as Wyoming did.

States’ F&G Lobbyist, IAFWA, Abandons Hunters

State F&G Directors in both Wyoming and Idaho insisted “the public” wanted them to provide opportunities to enjoy watching species that were not harvested by hunters and fishermen – but that was not the truth. The truth is, in 1990 the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) in Washington, D.C. hired bird watcher Naomi Edelson to run nongame programs in the 50 States and changed its #1 priority from providing wild game and fish for hunters and fishermen to harvest, to promoting non-consumptive wildlife recreation.

Twenty or even 10 years ago, anyone who dared to tell the truth about this was branded a “conspiracy theorist” or an “alarmist” by our state wildlife managers. Nearly two years ago, after I had carefully documented the step-by-step process in several *Outdoorsman* issues, Idaho F&G Commissioner Tony McDermott admitted they did what AFWA (formerly IAFWA) told them to but said even if my claims were true I couldn’t do anything about it.

My Challenge to Elected Officials

If you are one of several hundred elected officials in several states who receive this publication, you have internet access. I challenge you to take five minutes and

“get it straight from the horse’s mouth” at this link: http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr191/psw_gtr191_0030-0031_edelson.pdf.

This paper titled, “Finding Our Wings: The Payoff of a Decade of Determination” was written by Edelson and presented to a national convention of bird watchers in 2003. It is also Forest Service General Technical Report PSW-GTR-191 dated 2005, and spells out how the IAFWA priority was changed and how millions of dollars have been diverted by Congress from perpetuating game and fish harvests to promoting the nongame agenda beginning in 2001 with what is called “State Wildlife Grants”.

Nongame Costs, Other Issues Exposed by New Director

In 1996, three ID F&G Commissioners appointed by Governor Batt reportedly forced IDFG Director Conley to resign and Steve Mealey was hired in December. Mealey quickly ordered an end to the IDFG practice of attacking the credibility of anyone who publicly questioned wildlife management and invited all citizen groups – rather than a carefully selected few – to participate in the process.

During his first Commission meeting in 1997, he emphasized Idaho would not be having its problems with Canadian wolves if the ex-Director had not violated Idaho law by approving the FWS 10J Plan and issuing a permit granting FWS permission to capture and transplant them. Mealey restored scientific wildlife management tools that had been slowly abandoned over two decades and restored transparency in the Department’s dealings with Idahoans and their elected officials.

In a report he ordered prepared for the citizens of Idaho, Mealey exposed the fact that IDFG was already spending nearly three million dollars per year on programs which do nothing to preserve traditional game or fish species. He also facilitated an outstanding Predator-Prey Seminar in Boise on January 8, 1999, featuring assorted professional viewpoints on wolf introduction.

The featured speaker, North America’s undisputed big game authority Dr. Valerius Geist, described his extensive personal experiences with introduced wolves on Vancouver Island, and emphasized the need to strictly limit wolf numbers. Instead, the three Commissioners appointed by Gov. Andrus and the majority of Department employees who supported wolf introduction stepped up their two-year effort to get rid of Mealey (see *Outdoorsman* Bulletin No 3 at <http://www.idahoforwildlife.com/Outdoorsman.html>)

Mealey’s Firing Allows Hiding Radical Agenda

When Mealey was fired by a 4-3 vote after trying to appease those who were determined to destroy him, it shocked Idahoans and their elected officials. During breakfast just before the firing took place, Commissioner John Burns told us what was going to happen and said this would signal the end of responsible game management.

It also signaled the end of Mealey’s effort to restore trust in the agency. Deceiving the resource owners to advance its alien agenda has become standard procedure.

The next step in the state F&G Agencies’ alien agenda, dictated by the IAFWA and the powerful Nature Conservancy (TNC), was to use sportsmen’s license money to help “Teaming With Wildlife” lobby for passage of CARA (the Conservation and Reinvestment Act). Passage of this Act would have provided a billion dollars from offshore oil drilling fees to support the non-consumptive agenda, and would have given wildlife managers authority to implement the radical UN Convention on Biodiversity (“Wildlands”) that was never ratified by Congress.

It would also have bypassed the legislative and judicial branches of both our state and federal governments and allowed both state and federal wildlife bureaucrats to condemn and acquire \$450 million worth of private property each every year. With its massive federal “pork” money for every state, the 2000 version of CARA easily passed the House and was approved by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources 13-7.

But thanks to private property rights advocates and Western senators who continued to oppose CARA, it was never sent to the floor for a vote by the full Senate. President Clinton strongly supported the UN Wildlands Agenda, so the Teaming With Wildlife (TWW) activists were desperate to get something passed implementing that agenda while Clinton was still in office.

Radical Wildlife Agenda Added to Funding Resolution

They attached it to a multi-agenda funding bill (HR 5548) which passed Congress with no debate and nothing but a voice vote – yet it enabled state and federal wildlife agencies to implement the provisions of the 1992 UN Biodiversity (Wildlands) agreement without it ever being ratified by Congress. Although it had the same authority as CARA to allow agencies of the executive branch to condemn private property, it lacked sufficient long-term funding so it was often referred to as “Light CARA”.

Like “CARA”, the term “State Wildlife Grants” does not appear anywhere in the bill or in its amendment to the Pittman-Robertson Act – which existed for more than 60 years to restore and preserve continued supplies of wild game and fish. That historical Act was the cornerstone of America’s bountiful wildlife populations and harvests during most of the 20th Century but it was changed by the radical extremists without even a public hearing.

Constitution Ignored – Legislative Oversight Removed

The changes gave state wildlife agencies, using information from non-governmental organizations*, full authority to determine what species shall qualify for special protection and what lands shall be set aside to achieve that alleged protection. It also gave these agency bureaucrats the authority to condemn and purchase private lands that are “suitable or capable of being made suitable...as feeding, resting or breeding places for wildlife.”

(*Yellowstone to Yukon, Spine of the Continent, Wildlife Conservation Society, TNC and American Wildlands)

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The Real State F&G Agenda – cont. from page 3

Since 1990, when state wildlife agencies followed IAFWA direction to de-emphasize harvesting game and make non-consumptive wildlife recreation their top priority, they relied on obtaining CARA or other nongame funding from Congress to offset lost income from declining license sales. Because so-called nongame “management” is really about restricting human use of land, the agencies whose duties were still limited to providing harvest of wild game and fish were instructed to assume management of plant species as well.

F&G Continues to Lie About Illegal Use of License Fees

In Feb. of 2003, when then IDFG Director Steve Huffaker asked the House Resources Committee to transfer management of wildflowers and plants from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to IDFG, several Committee members expressed concern that sportsmen’s fees would be used to provide the match for the increased federal dollars. Huffaker replied, “During (the past) 15 years sportsmen money has never been used for anything that would not benefit sportsmen.”

That brazen lie by Huffaker has been repeated frequently by IDFG officials to naïve F&G Commissioners and Legislators to hide the illegal use of sport license fees or even matching P-R federal excise taxes as a “state match” for the federal portion of State Wildlife Grants. For example, during IDFG Biodiversity Program Leader Rita Dixon’s March 2004 presentation to the Commission, she was asked by Commissioner Burns if any sportsman license dollars were used as a match.

Instead of answering his question, she told him matching funding had already been secured but failed to mention amounts or sources. She also failed to tell the Commission that, the states were now forced to come up with three times the original percentage of match!

Elected Officials Must Halt Theft of Fees and Taxes

I have spent many hours over many months documenting, and then reporting in *The Outdoorsman*, individual examples of up to several hundred thousand dollars that IDFG is robbing from sportsmen in order to support its so-called nongame agenda. In the preceding *Outdoorsman*, Bulletin No. 40, I photocopied evidence of the theft of nearly half a million dollars in dedicated Federal Excise Taxes paid by sportsmen that were illegally used for the IDFG nongame agenda in FY 2008.

If you purchase a hunting or fishing license in Idaho and do nothing about this brazen theft of federal excise tax dollars you paid out of your own pocket, what will it take to get you to ask your elected officials to stop this illegal activity?

Congress “Let Rabbits Guard the Cabbage Patch”

A 1999 GAO (General Accounting Office) audit turned up widespread misuse of both hunting and fishing excise tax dollars but no criminal charges were filed. In 2000, to address a complaint that FWS gave dedicated

Sportsman Excise Tax funds to an anti-hunting group, Congress passed the “Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act.”

This Act amended the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act and the P-R Wildlife Restoration Act to allow up to \$6 million of the dedicated tax money paid by fishermen and hunters to be given to agencies or groups each year. Called “Multistate Conservation Grants” (MCGs), non-governmental groups receiving a grant must now declare they will not use the grant to advocate against regulated hunting, fishing or trapping.

Congress allowed the States’ Wildlife Agency Lobbyist (AFWA) to administer both MCGs and SWGs (State Wildlife Grants) and to work closely with FWS to “address” the widespread misuse of sportsmen excise taxes. In other words it put the rabbits in charge of guarding the cabbage patch and virtually guaranteed the ongoing misuse of both license income and excise tax dollars at the state level as well as the federal.

MCG Funded Biased Survey of Nonhunters

The next step of the AFWA/FWS agenda was for IDFG to prepare a 15-year plan called, “The Compass”, which made this agency the accepted authority on all flora and fauna in Idaho. Selected supporters were given the opportunity to provide input into the Plan but once a draft version was available, it was soundly rejected by legitimate sportsman groups.

So the WAFWA (Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) then legally used sportsman excise tax funds as an MCG to hire a survey which asked urban housewives loaded questions to produce predictable answers supporting the nongame agenda. Then more than 400 wildlife communications specialists from 49 states attended a seminar at the FWS/TNC facility in West Virginia where they were told the following:

“Instead of being the decision maker on trivial decisions like deer seasons, our primary responsibility must be to be the trusted source to the people, media and political decision-makers on incredibly important decisions like land use, water quality, biodiversity and global climate change.” (emphasis added)

In workshops funded by the Doris Duke Foundation, these 400+ wildlife communicators were told to enlist thousands of like-minded professionals, NGOs and media sources to use the following pleasant-sounding phrases to describe their SWG “State Action Plans”:

- **Clean air and water**
- **Healthy wildlife and people**
- **The conservation of wildlife and vital natural areas for future generations**

State game agencies were also told to emphasize to Congressmen, state Governors and others in a position to influence funding, that the Plans would prevent wildlife species from being listed under the ESA and save the states millions of dollars in expense associated with listing.

None of these claims were true but they were made at the time in order to secure additional funding so state wildlife agencies could continue to advance the Wildlands agenda that has replaced science-based natural resource management. The massive propaganda program originating in the TNC/FWS facility in West Virginia was designed to change the public image of state wildlife biologists from desk-bound game managers who rely on theory and computer models rather than field observation, to experts at mitigating human impacts on re-created “native” ecosystems.

“Conservation Biology” is Activism – Not Science

Back in 1985 a handful of ecosystem-worshipping radicals who could not find true science to support their extreme beliefs formed the “Society for Conservation Biology” (SCB). These included disciples of Paul Ehrlich, author of the 1968 book, “Population Bomb,” predicting massive worldwide starvation during the 1970s and 1980s.

And along with Ehrlich, these prophets of gloom and doom made and continue to make dire predictions of irreversible damage to the earth’s ecosystems and diverse populations unless we follow their scheme to limit any human use of our land in about half of North America. According to their original plan promoted by Earth First! founder Dave Foreman, with help from SCB co-founders Michael Soule and Reed Noss, we must restore native vegetation and large carnivores to mythical “Wildlands” they pretend existed before Columbus arrived.

Noss’s Wildlands Project model was identified as the design for biodiversity protection in the United Nations Global Biodiversity Assessment in the 1992 U. N. Treaty that was eventually signed by President Clinton but never ratified by Congress. See map presented to the U.S. Senate on Sept. 30, 1994 in *Outdoorsman* No 24 and read how ratification was halted (or for more detail go to: <http://sovereignty.net/p/land/biotreatystop.htm>)

Their Own Private Fanatical Religion

In 1992, environmental historian David Takacs interviewed 23 leading figures in Conservation Biology, including Soule, Noss and Ehrlich. After also researching the significant impact of native people on ecosystems hundreds of years before Europeans set foot on this continent, Takacs published a book in 1996 titled, *The Idea of Biodiversity: Philosophies of Paradise*.

In the book he quotes the SCB members saying that maintaining biodiversity in ecosystems has a broad appeal like motherhood, but none of them were willing to define exactly what biodiversity means. Although all described an intense feeling of awareness of nature that Takacs likened to born-again Christianity, most of them vigorously denounced any belief in western religions or worship of nature.

According to Takacs, they used “biodiversity” as a scientific term to separate themselves from being described as “nature worshippers”. Their goal was not recovery of

individual species but rather to use the vast system of Core Wildlands Areas connected by Wildlife Corridors to prevent humans from “interfering with nature’s diversity.”

Instead of saving the states millions of dollars by preventing listing of assorted nongame species as they had falsely claimed when they were seeking funding, the updated database maintained by state F&G agencies made it much easier for the environmental groups to pick species to submit for additional listings. After Director Mealey was fired, IDFG biologists stepped up their implementation of the Wildlands agenda.

F&G No Longer Provides Sustained Harvest

When Butch Otter became Governor in 2007, he made IDFG Director Cal Groen a member of his Cabinet. Without the knowledge of Idaho citizens, including the hunters and fishermen who pay their wages, Groen and his biologists ignored biological tools to restore declining game populations and secretly implemented the radical Wildlands Initiative which ultimately drives big game species into a predator pit.

An extensive study by Kaminski and Hansen during the 1980s established a *maximum* Central Idaho wolf population of 219 to prevent decimation of the deer and elk prey base. So in 2007, with a far fewer elk than existed in 1985, IDFG biologists designed a wolf plan with a *minimum* wolf population more than twice that high which guaranteed destruction of Idaho elk and deer herds.

Rachael Admits Allowing Big Game Decline

In a *Boise Weekly* interview in April, 2010, IDFG Big Game Manager Jon Rachael let the cat out of the bag when he said, “Eventually, yes, we would like to reach some sort of balance over time, but it's not likely to be the balance acceptable or desirable for those folks that, for the last 100 years, looked at deer and elk as a food source. We could manage for a much larger number of deer and elk, but that would be a larger number of wolves to go with it – we’re so far removed from a *natural human-unaffected landscape* that's it's just not realistic.”

Rachael is very aware of the 10 year study of wolf-ungulate relationships by Mark Hebblewhite in the Banff ecosystem, and the fact that when wolves migrated down from northern Alberta they: 1) destroyed 56% of the moose and virtually eliminated moose calf recruitment; 2) decimated woodland caribou, driving several herds to extinction; 3) destroyed 90% of the elk population; and 4) increasing quality habitat for elk in 77.22 square miles caused more – not fewer – elk to be killed by wolves.

Hebblewhite presented this material at the 72nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March 2007 as a preview of what U.S. wildlife managers can expect as introduced wolves continue to populate the lower 48. Idaho biologists accepted his views and hired him to analyze collared mule deer fawn survival in 2008.

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The Real State F&G Agenda – cont. from page 5

States Have Adopted Hebblewhite Solution

As a wolf advocate, Hebblewhite wrongly implies it is a waste of money to control at least 70% of a wolf population for five years to rebuild a healthy prey population because it is not a “fix-all-forever solution”. He also argues that producing more big game animals for hunters to harvest by killing wolves violates the principles of so-called “ecosystem management”.

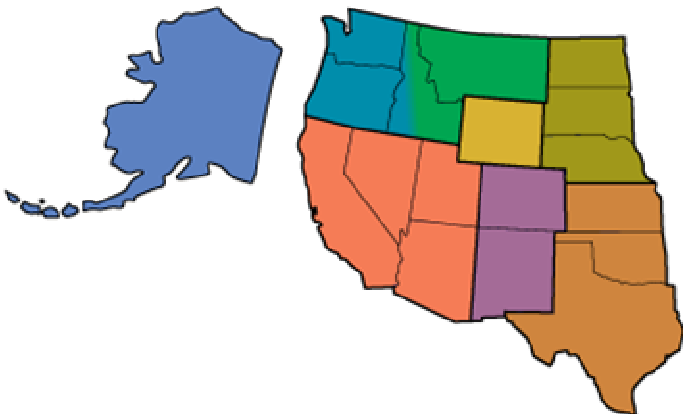
Hebblewhite insists the logical solution for state wildlife managers is to allow wolves and other predators to drive their prey species into a predator pit (permanent low density population) as happened near Banff. That is exactly what state game managers are doing – and have been doing for some time in several of the western states.

Governors Deceived About Corridors

In February 2007, The Western Governors Assn. (WGA) unanimously approved Policy Resolution 07-01 “**Protecting Wildlife Migration Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West.**” It did this after being assured in writing that the system would protect the states’ annual income from hunters, fishermen campers and wildlife watchers and the “corridors” it referred to were migration corridors between summer and winter range – not the Wildlife Corridors free of humans promoted by the Wildlands Initiative.

The fact that Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal strongly endorsed the resolution at the same time he was suing FWS for trying to force Wyoming to manage for excessive wolf numbers indicates he had no idea where this Policy Resolution was leading. Although TNC (The Nature Conservancy) provided warnings about types of human activity that could harm wildlife in most of the eight 2008 Pilot Projects involving 18 of the 19 WGA states, only one project along the Idaho-Montana border included participation by the major Wildlands extremists.

Western Governors' Wildlife Council Pilot Projects



F&G Biologists in Idaho and Montana were told to continue working with TNC and American Wildlands, and

to also seek help from the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, Spine of the Continent Initiative and Wildlife Conservation Society to blend their individual Wildlife Corridors into a single system. Like these two state agencies, each of these five NGOs strongly supports the elimination of human activity in a network of Core Wildlands habitat connected by Corridors where wolves, grizzlies, mountain lions and even jaguars will be free to roam without human interference.

The Truth about “Spine of the Continent”

Those with net access can view the Spine of the Continent, <http://www.twp.org/wildways/western-wildway>, and also see it described as “a coordinated international conservation action that will protect, connect, and restore a contiguous network of private and public lands along the spine of the Rocky Mountains and associated ranges, basins, plateaus, and deserts from Alaska’s Brooks Range to the Mexican Sierra Madre Occidental.” It is 5,000 miles long, includes tens of thousands of square miles, and is meant to exclude most human activity.

That is exactly what IDFG Big Game Manager Jon Rachael was describing when he referred to “a natural human-unaffected landscape.” Yet during the past several decades, legitimate scientists have discovered that, contrary to destroying the fragile soils by clearing the rainforests as we have been told by countless biologists, ancient civilizations cleared land and built up the soils providing immense benefits to humans and flora and fauna.

TNC Chief Scientist: “No Conservation Organization Can Honestly Claim it is Halting Extinction.”

Though Wildlands Chair Michael Soule continues to preach the necessity for more “Connectivity” (removing even more land from human use and energy development in the “Spine” to protect wolves and halt species extinction), TNC’s Chief Scientist Peter Kareiva is being somewhat more truthful. In a series of articles and interviews, he admits that publishing lists of threatened species is a good fund raising mechanism (in other words – a scam) but continues to state: “No conservation organization can honestly claim it is halting extinction.”



Nature Conservancy Chief Scientist Peter Kareiva (TNC Photo)

“We have to stop defining conservation success exclusively in terms of species loss,” Kareiva continued. “That we can find grizzly bears and wolves and higher predators in the wild landscapes of the Yellowstone to the Yukon is every bit as special as any long list of species.”

Creating “Wildlands” with Protected Wolves Destroys Healthy Wildlife Populations

TNC is now minimizing the impact of so-called “species hotspots” found in the tropics and claiming it has locked up millions of acres worldwide to benefit humans as well as large predators. Its new theme, “protecting nature, preserving life” is intended to make us forget that it has forced millions of native people off the land and into crowded unhealthy refugee camps in places like Africa, despite hard evidence they were the true conservationists.

There is zero scientific evidence that removing humans’ influence from the land and replacing them with large carnivores creates healthy wildlife populations. There is overwhelming evidence to the contrary in national and provincial parks where large prey species either become extinct or remain in a permanent predator pit, and the average life span of wolves is less than five years.

TNC and SCB Use Class Warfare to Gain Support

The Society for Conservation Biology directly ties the affluence of a small number of Capitalist countries to the abuse of native ecosystems. There are 195 countries in the world, of which 192 are members of the United Nations. According to the World Bank, 180 of those are “developing countries” based on per capita income.

In 2006, as a partner to SCB, TNC began funding the cost of providing SCB’s expensive publications free of charge and provided many other benefits at reduced rates to SCB members in any of the 180 developing countries. The message in the publications is that the United States is destroying natural biodiversity and should be forced to share its wealth and use of the earth’s resources with “less fortunate” countries such as China, Iran and Mexico.

There is little doubt this propaganda program is a major factor in recent opinion polls reflecting the widespread belief that the U.S. should contribute more and have far less control of the nations it is helping. Coupled with our disadvantage in the various carbon trading schemes, this will destroy our free enterprise system and our status as free citizens in a world dominated by dictators who rule the masses.

Why Are We Headed For \$5.00 Gasoline?

According to USGS and the oil experts who are already removing oil there, the Bakken Shale Formation in N. Dakota, NE Montana and Saskatchewan has more oil than the entire Middle East – enough to fully fuel the American economy for the next 2,000 years! The cost of extraction is a fraction of the amount we are presently paying the “developing countries” for crude and allowing state wildlife agencies, with their fanatical bias against energy development, to impact this in any way defies logic.

IDFG refuses to provide emergency big game feed as required by law (IDAPA Rule) and blatantly ignores Idaho Wildlife Policy to preserve protect and perpetuate (Title 36 Chapter 1). Instead of protecting both breeding females and replacement fawns in its “Mule Deer Initiative”, it keeps killing them off which violates the most basic rule of big game management.

F&G gives total allegiance to TNC and the Wildlands, ecosystem-management, biodiversity agenda and continues to find creative ways to unlawfully divert license fees and excise taxes paid to restore sport fish and wildlife. Yet it still has the following lie on its website:

“It is important to note that the nongame program does not directly use any dollars from sportsmen and women (unless they voluntarily contribute). All funds from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and tags and the associated federal Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds go to the management of sport fish and wildlife.”

(NOTE: In my opinion, IDFG treats hunters and fishermen who pay their wages and elected officials who approve their budget as if they have the word ‘SUCKER’ printed on their forehead and the back of their jacket. – ED)

Top Wildlife Scientist Denounces “Ecosystem Management”

The conception of a *“utopian philosophy of ecosystem perfection absent of all human activity”* is such intellectual rubbish, that it raises the hackles on my neck. I am glad to say, however, that Charles Elton, the father of modern ecology, had a similar view to mine, namely that ecosystems are expressions of positive feed back loops and thus “ungoverned” and stochastic in their expressions and consequently ever changing. “Ecosystems” even raise the question if they are systems, because there is nothing systematic in positive feed back. If you can understand why individuals are individuals, it is because they are controlled by negative feed back - **negative!** By contrast populations of organisms coming together in an ecosystem are never controlled - NEVER! - and are always subject to the whims and randomness of positive feed back. Know the difference between positive and negative feed back, and you are on the way of understanding both homeostasis in individuals and stochastic non-determinism in ecosystems. The “leave it alone” philosophy - if one can call it such - is a baseless faith, believing in a mythical “balance of nature”. It is worthless intellectually, ethically or morally - whatever the relation of ethics and morality. It is an expression of intellectual laziness, me-too-ism, and a destructive force if expressed in policy. Like it or not we are the makers of our future today, and intellectually lazy, incompetent minds are no help for us in our crisis.

Valerius Geist

Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science.

Utah's Response to a Declining Deer Population

By George Dovel

In a widely circulated February 11, 2010 email, Utah Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife founder Don Peay boasted that 250,000 hunters are paying \$45 apiece (license and application fee) for a chance to draw a limited number of Utah big game hunting permits. He offered to show a legislator "how we have spent 20 years rebuilding what is now considered the Serengeti of America - the most abundant and diverse herds of wildlife found in the Western US (when) 30 years ago Utah was the worst, now we are the best."

It's true that Utah elk harvests have increased dramatically and harvests of several trophy species have doubled or tripled from 1980-2009, but it was not without a price. During that same period, the number of big game animals harvested in Utah declined by 42% and deer harvests have declined by an alarming 63 percent!

Spending >\$100 Million Did Not Halt Deer Decline

On Nov. 29, 2010, Utah DWR Director Jim Karpowitz published an Open Letter to Utah Deer Hunters saying he shares their frustrations that deer hunting is not better in Utah. Then he discusses their Deer Plan, which well over \$100 million has been spent on during the past five years, and outlines the habitat improvement, fencing, research, etc. that has cost most of that money.

He points out they paid Wildlife Services to kill more than 1,700 coyotes last year and added, "the Division would like to expand our predator control efforts if we can obtain new funding."

Karpowitz failed to tell the hunters that his big game biologist announced nearly five years ago that they were no longer going to allow hunters to kill more mountain lions to increase deer survival. This pleased some lion hunters who wanted more old male lions with trophy-size pelts – and who didn't consider the need to restore a healthy balance between lions and mule deer.

It also pleased Division "ecosystem management" advocates who want all large predators protected to let nature achieve its own "balance", and who did not care that when the deer continued their decline, younger lions that are incapable of killing elk would starve. But it should have raised a red flag with the Wildlife Board Members and RAC (Regional Advisory Committee) Members, or at least with experienced outdoorsmen who watched this same thing occur during the 1960s and early 70s.

With cougars killing 3-4 times as many deer as hunters, a biologist suggesting that killing 1,700 coyotes in a state the size of Utah will help restore deer defies logic.

Average Deer Hunting Family Ignored

I received a letter for publication, dated Nov. 1, 2010, and sent to the writer's RAC, and to a list of Utah deer hunters urging them to attend the RAC meeting and

provide their input. Because the meetings are already over and the 2011 and 2012 seasons are already decided, I have notified him that I am editing and shortening the letter, to address his concerns as a long time deer hunter in Utah.

November 1, 2020

To RAC Board Members

To all sportsmen who value their sport

The calls of the returning hunters are rolling in now about the lack of deer and the proposed changes which are on the table. I have received several emails and calls from friends who asked for my thoughts and here they are.

I am encouraged that the board is aware that the deer herds are in perilous condition and changes need to be made. I am concerned, though, that the proposed changes are not even close to where we need to be going. These proposals are putting a Band-Aid on a severed artery!

We are only addressing changes to hunters, and hunters are the least of the deer's worries. True, you allow harvest for up to eight months but the losses to hunters are minimal.

I have lived in Utah over 50 years and I have seen the decline in the deer herds that cause some of the younger generation to think we're telling "fairy tales" when we tell of the time we saw hundreds of bucks in one herd. They wonder if we're sane when we mention that we used to go out on the morning of a regular 10-14 day hunt and take our pick of anywhere from 15 to 40 bucks in one day.

They get a kick out of the stories we tell of how we all used to have our family camp that we went to year after year; and how, at the end of the first day and each day thereafter, we went to each of the other camps to chat and to see what was hanging on their meat-pole. In fact, that was one of the first things constructed if the camp had to be moved or a new campsite was chosen.

I remember only 20-25 years ago, you could take the kids out on a Sunday afternoon drive up almost any canyon and see around 50 deer without even getting out the binoculars or spotting scope. Now you take a Sunday afternoon drive and you can't even find a single deer!

I know things have changed and I know there is talk about "re-establishing" the deer habitat; but you know what? I go out in the mountains and see grass up to the belly of a horse, trails grown in because grazing of sheep and cattle has been cut dramatically, weeds that are taking over the mountainside and abundant bitterbrush, and you tell me that we need to close roads and trails, remove camping spots (that have been well established for a hundred years) and make more laws, and excessive rules and regulations.

Cutting out the grazing permits so some tree-hugger doesn't step in a pile of cow poop is ludicrous! Cows and sheep keep the forest in good condition! They keep the grass mowed, fertilize the ground, and keep the trails open so that we hunters and hikers have better ability to move around in the woods.

They keep the "kindling" down so we don't have so many out-of-control fires and they eat thistle and some other weeds. In some of my favorite haunts the weeds are not controlled yet you blame it on horses in spite of the requirement to use weed-free hay. We need grazers!

When the grazing permits are cut it affects the deer herds because both private and federal trapping is curtailed. When the sheep and cattle are on the range, if one of them comes up dead the trappers are right on it and that control also benefits the deer herd.

My friends and associates and I see predators as the main problem but it's a hard issue to deal with because it requires guts. Guts enough to stand up to the various coalitions and say, in effect, "if you want wolves or more cougars you feed them."

Predators are beautiful, graceful, amazing animals but there's a reason our forefathers wanted them gone rather than running uncontrolled, free to kill at random. Let the so-called "environmentalists" be responsible for the damage they cause to the cash crop of deer, elk, antelope and moose that are yours and mine, or tell that noisy minority to stop imposing their ideas on the rest of us.

The wolves have decimated the elk and moose herds in Idaho and parts of Wyoming and Montana; we can't let that happen here! We're already on the tipping point and it's time we step up and face the facts.

The deer, elk and moose and other wildlife that they kill are yours and mine! They are what the DNR is supposed to be managing and if we let the predators kill and eat everything they want, what will be left to manage?

The DNR needs to loosen up some of the regulations that prevent people like me and my fellow hunters from even carrying a gun while on one of your so-called "Temporary Game Preserves"! We used to hunt coyotes all year long and shoot 30-40 per year – all on our dime!

You don't have to spend a penny to get some of the best predator control possible. We love the outdoors and we love the game animals and are some of your best "eyes and ears" for their protection – yet you treat us as if we are all poachers and act as if giving us a little freedom means we're going to kill all the animals.

We owe these changes to ourselves and, most of all, to our children and their children who are gravitating away from the sport of hunting because there is too little game and too many laws, rules and regulations. We've got to make it fun again, cut out some of the red tape so we don't wonder what we're going to get a ticket for whenever we see an officer in the field.

Make it an enjoyable sport for the youngsters. Help them appreciate nature and all of the beauty that God has created for us to enjoy. It's not all about killing a deer, but if we're going to have a deer hunt, let's at least have enough deer for the kids to see some on their outing.

I and some of my very close friends have kids that just don't want to put up with all of the hassle to get out and go hunting any more - and we're avid hunters! When I told my son about the three options that DWR offered supposedly to create more bucks, he asked, "What are they trying to do, make us stop hunting?"

Kim Hansen

The Three Unlikely Options

In Utah, unlike many states where the appointed citizen F&G Commission or Board supposedly tells the Department biologists how to manage, UDWR biologists give the Board three options and the Board members select the option they prefer by a majority vote. Unfortunately that practice has become common in other states, including Idaho, as biologists ignore the law in order to pursue the farce of "ecosystem management".

The three options provided by UDWR biologists to the Board to allegedly increase the number of mule deer bucks were schemes to reduce the total number of hunters by an additional 3,000, 7,000 or 13,000. Two of those schemes required the hunter to hunt in only one of 29 units rather than one of five larger Regions in the state.

Because it was too late to seek an increase in deer permit fees to cover losses from selling fewer permits, no changes were made to the 2011 deer season except to increase the adult rifle deer season from five to nine days. The biologist's rationale for this was that the shorter season in 2010 made hunters hurry up and shoot more young bucks rather than wait for deer with a bigger set of antlers in a longer season.

Ample research in other western states, including Idaho, concluded that, when there are at least several hundred hunters in a regular season, a reduction of less than 45%-50% in total hunter numbers does not reduce the total number of animals killed by hunters. In fact it may slightly increase the total kill by offering less disturbance to the game.

When Utah wildlife ecologist Dr. Charles Kay provided us the three options that were offered to the Wildlife Board his only comment was, "Please note that DWR did not even mention elk-deer competition, or predator mediated competition fueled by elk."

To fully realize how absurd the process I have described in Utah is, I suggest you read "Nevada's Response to a Declining Deer Population" that follows this article. If Utah hunters are willing to unite with other natural resource and states' rights advocates and demand changes from the people they elect to represent them, it can end the insanity we have been forced to live with.

Nevada's Response to a Declining Deer Population

Findings of the Mule Deer Restoration Committee of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners
Passed unanimously on 18 November 2010

Nevada's Failing Mule Deer Population

Preface:

Nevada statutes mandate that the Board of Wildlife Commissioners establish policies and adopt regulations necessary to the preservation, protection, management, and restoration of deer in Nevada.

The Mule Deer Restoration Committee has reviewed at length the relevant scientific documentation on mule deer populations in Nevada and the west, including all publications it could find produced by the Nevada Department of Wildlife. The committee has reviewed at length all input on mule deer management provided by CABMWs to the Wildlife Commission and this committee, and has included the input in these findings where appropriate. After much consideration this Committee is presenting the following recommendations based on the best science available. If followed, these recommendations will go far in restoring the deer population and the range to prime conditions throughout the State of Nevada.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The mule deer population in Nevada is at or near its lowest point in the past century and is far below the stable population level that the habitat is clearly capable of maintaining. This dramatic decline in mule deer population is largely due to factors that can to a large degree be controlled by proper game and land management practices. Mule deer is a species that is dependent on disturbance for maintenance of its habitat and food sources. In areas where landscape-scale disturbance and extensive predation management has occurred in the preceding decades, mule deer are found in abundance. In areas where disturbance and predation control have been absent for extended periods, mule deer populations are suffering.

While the game managers at the Nevada Department of Wildlife cannot directly control many of the factors affecting mule deer populations, there are many factors they can directly control, and there is much that can be done to mitigate the effects of many of the factors they can not directly control.

Problems within NDOW Structure

Observational Biology vs. Biology of Game

Production

FINDINGS OF FACT:

NDOW is not currently in the business of wide-scale game production and has not been for decades.

Current NDOW organization focuses on observational biology and research. Current bureaucratic practices within NDOW make it increasingly difficult to get any production-oriented project into practice. The same unnecessary bureaucratic quagmire creates an environment in which it is far easier for personnel to study a situation than it is for them to act to correct a biological problem. Political incentives exist to study, and not act upon the results of those studies. Federal monetary incentives reinforce this situation.

While many may expect government agencies such as Nevada Department of Wildlife to produce big game herds in the state of Nevada, those expectations are likely unrealistic due to the current bureaucratic quagmire and the fact that governmental agencies are generally not designed to produce.

Recommendations:

SOLUTIONS:

The entire NDOW organizational structure, operational priorities, budget, and internal guidelines need to be restructured to re-focus all NDOW personnel and funding on the biology of game production.

1. Set game production goals.
2. Create a Commission committee to study NDOW structure and completely overhaul the NDOW organizational chart with the goal of meeting game production goals.
3. Eliminate positions funded by game dollars that are not focused on game production goals.
4. Rewrite job descriptions within NDOW to focus those jobs on enhancing game populations and reaching game production goals.
5. Retrain NDOW personnel to meet new job requirements.
6. If biologists cannot improve game numbers and maintain them at 'high' remove biologists from their positions.
7. Existence of positions must be governed by what those positions do to sustain and enhance the population of animals that is their funding source.
8. More focus should be given to game production and studies involved in areas where predation projects are ongoing.

If maximum efficiency in production of large sustainable big game herds is desired we must develop a comprehensive system whereby private enterprise is tasked with production of big game in the State of Nevada.

(NOTE: Because the 14-page document addresses 20 additional issues – most in at least similar detail – there is obviously not enough space in this *Outdoorsman* for all. We have selected two additional issues, “Predation” and “Doe Hunting” to provide you with additional insight into how realistic and effective this new policy by the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners can be. – ED)

Predation

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Mule deer population in Nevada has been found to be very vulnerable to predation throughout its range. Mule deer are a primary prey species for mountain lions and coyotes, as well as a secondary prey species for eagles and bobcat. There is no evidence to show that predation is not a population-limiting factor.

Predation control is the one primary influence on mule deer populations that is the most easily implemented, and is the most effective in the short term.

Recommendations:

- Practice intensive predation control in areas where deer populations are low
- A large portion of tag and license fees should be utilized to decrease predation on mule deer
- NDOW should apply for heritage funding to implement predation management on a yearly basis
- Increase use of helicopter hunting in high-altitude mountains where coyotes are found to be preying upon mule deer during February and March
- Continue predation control while growing deer population
- Consider reductions in government-paid predation control in units when deer population has 5 years continual growth and a decreasing predator harvest.
- Additional lion tags for problem units
- NDOW notify sportsman lion hunters of problem units / specific areas on a timely basis (internet).
- Utilize the best objective science available when determining lion quotas
- A proactive approach to predation management should be practiced.
- NDOW biologists should work with Wildlife Services in making decisions as to where predation is a factor in mule deer population growth.

Doe Hunting

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Doe hunting can be devastating to a deer population, particularly when the population is low. Doe removal is a primary tool to be utilized in populations considered to be too high.

Recommendations:

Doe hunts may be considered in any area where the recruitment threshold of 40 fawns per hundred doe is exceeded at both the fall and spring counts for a minimum of 3 consecutive years providing that the overall population is either growing rapidly, or growing and within 20% of historical high numbers for that unit/area.

- In areas within 5% of historical high numbers doe hunts should likely be considered utilizing recruitment as a basis for quotas.
- In Areas where deer numbers are not within 20% of historically high numbers and below recruitment threshold of 30 fawns per hundred doe at either fall or spring count, doe hunts should not be considered except in areas where the deer population is considered to be sufficiently high to warrant a doe hunt, and where clear evidence exists that deer are causing substantial damage to habitat, and where clear evidence exists showing that the population is not sustainable, and where a strong public perception from residents within unit boundaries as measured by local and CABMW input is that deer population is too large.
- Where damage exists on private lands, doe tags should be issued in tightly controlled areas designed to reduce only the specific local deer population causing the damage with the goal of mitigating the effects of damage done by that specific local population.

(NOTE: There is little doubt that this complete overhaul of the Nevada Division of Wildlife by the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners has been and will continue to be met with resistance from biologists in the agency and elsewhere. This document has truthfully stated the problems as well as the solutions that are necessary to restore responsible mule deer management in Nevada and other western states.

In my opinion, it required courage to pursue, and merits widespread support from hunters, legitimate hunter and conservation organizations and natural resource professionals throughout the United States and Canada. The complete document can be found at: http://www.ndow.org/learn/com/mtg/2010/120310_support/Mule%20Deer%20Restoration%20Committee%20plan.pdf I suggest you check it out. – ED)

Predation and the Ecology of Fear

By Dr. Charles E. Kay

(NOTE: One of America's truly knowledgeable wildlife experts, Dr. Kay is well known for his highly accurate predictions, foretelling back in 1993 exactly what would happen after wolf introduction by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In Outdoorsman Bulletin No. 40, Dr. Kay's article "Predator Mediated Competition: What happens when there is a second alternative prey in a system?" recorded the radical decline of a mule deer population in San Juan County in southeastern Utah following the introduction of elk and protection of mountain lions. The elk, which are far more difficult for female lions to kill, prospered while the annual deer harvest dropped from an average of 2,500 to only 40.

The following article was published in the Sept/Oct 2010 issue of "Muley Crazy" and is reprinted here with permission from Dr. Kay. – ED)

As we all know, predators can have a significant impact on ungulate numbers by killing individual members of the prey population. This is termed lethal or direct mortality. What is generally not recognized by biologists, sportsmen, and the general public, however, is that predators also have major non-lethal, or indirect, effects on prey species. This is called the ecology of fear or the landscape of fear and is an emerging topic in predator-prey studies, with an outpouring of scientific publications in recent years. Fear of predation has been shown to greatly reduce the effectiveness of habitat. You can have the best wildlife habitat in the world, but if animals are afraid to use it due to the fear of being killed, or of their young being killed, then that habitat is of little practical value.

To one degree or another, we all live in landscapes of fear. There are places we all fear to go due to heightened criminal activity, or if you will, predation. This is especially true at night, in large cities, or along the U.S.-Mexico border. We fear being robbed, mugged, car-jacked, or even killed. Well, all prey species, including mule deer and elk, react the same way when faced with wolves, mountain lions, or other predators. Moreover, prey animals do not have a second amendment, concealed carry permits, or a police force to protect them from criminals; i.e., predators.

Prey species react to predator-induced fear in two main ways - by changing their behavior and through physiological or psychic stress. Studies have shown that deer and elk increase the time they spend scanning for danger when those animals are subject to predation. This is known as vigilance and the more time deer or elk spend looking for predators, the less time those ungulates have to feed, thus lowering energy and nutrient intake. In addition, it has been shown that elk and other prey species will

abandon high-quality habitats, like meadows, when they are subjected to wolf predation. The ungulates move into lower-quality, timbered areas where they have less chance of being killed. Again, this forces the animals onto a reduced nutritional plane and suppresses both growth and reproduction. The physiological and psychic stress of being hunted 24/7/365 only makes the situation worse. Even if individual animals do not flee, their heart rates increase dramatically, as adrenaline and other stress-related hormones flood their systems. In humans, a constant state of fear can cause traumatic stress disorder.

This is all bad enough, but there is an even bigger problem in that most biologists do not realize what is happening and, more importantly, they invariably fail to recognize what it means. If you just look at the declining nutritional condition of the deer or elk, combined with low pregnancy rates and low fawn/calf birth weights, as agency biologists commonly do, you are drawn to the conclusion that poor habitat is the cause, when nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, the real problem is that deer and elk are being forced to use low-quality, but somewhat safer habitats if the animals want to stay alive. In other words, a landscape of fear can, on the surface, manifest itself as a habitat problem, when the real issue is predation. Counter intuitive, but nonetheless true. Or to quote Montana State University professors Dr. Scott Creel and Dr. David Christianson, "when risk effects reduce reproduction [in prey species]...they are easily mistaken for limitation by food supply."

Unfortunately, little research on the ecology of fear specific to mule deer has been conducted, but there have been a number of studies on how elk respond to a landscape of fear created by introduced or colonizing wolves. In southern Canada, elk winter on the Ya Ha Tinda just outside Banff National Park. The Ya Ha Tinda is owned by Parks Canada but is not part of the national park. Hence, the elk on the Ya Ha Tinda are subjected to sport hunting regulated by the providence of Alberta and unregulated, year-round hunting by First Nations, the politically correct Canadian term for native peoples, and Métis, individuals with some aboriginal blood.

When elk on the Ya Ha Tinda were first studied, the animals wintered on the area's grasslands and then, for the most part, migrated to higher elevations in Banff National Park where the elk summered. Since that original research, however, wolves have naturally recolonized the southern Canadian Rockies. This has greatly increased predation in the park but when the wolves leave the confines of Banff, they can be, and are, legally shot. So the national park is full of predators, including grizzlies, black bears, and mountain lions, in addition to wolves, while

there is much less carnivore predation on the Ya Ha Tinda. How have the elk responded? Today, the majority of elk no longer migrate into the national park, but live year-long on the Ya Ha Tinda, despite being hunted by humans on the Ya Ha Tinda, but not in the park. The high-quality summer habitat is still there, after all it is in a national park, but the elk no longer are, opting instead for the Ya Ha Tinda, which is poorer summer range but where the cows and their newborn calves are much safer from predators.

Elk in Banff National Park's Bow Valley also stopped migrating to predator-filled, high-elevation summer ranges and instead chose to remain in the town of Banff where the animals were generally safe from wolves, bears, and mountain lions. In Canada's Jasper National Park, elk now give birth in developed areas near humans to protect their newborn calves. Similarly, mule deer have moved into towns and cities throughout the West to reduce the risk of mountain lion predation. Mule deer are now living near people year-round to avoid predators - such is the landscape of fear the ungulates face. Unfortunately, some mountain lions have followed the deer into town, which has led to increasing lion attacks on humans, usually small children and women, often with fatal results.

People who make a living promoting predators, including many state and federal biologists, like to claim that predators only kill the weak, the sick, or the otherwise naturally infirm. But are the elk and deer in poor condition because there is little food or because the ungulates are being constantly harassed by predators? Similarly, did that mule deer killed by wolves come by its limp on its own, or because it constantly had to flee from predators? In Canada's Wood Buffalo National Park, bison confronted by wolves have moved as much as 100 miles within 24 hours to avoid further attack. In addition to all the energy the bison spend moving, the fleeing animals are forced to forgo foraging. Moreover, fleeing into poor-quality timbered areas to avoid wolves, as deer and elk do, subjects those ungulates to increased attack by mountain lions and bears, which need stalking cover to ambush their prey. In short, if humans harassed wildlife the way predators do, the people would be in jail.

Dick Dekker, who ran Canadian Wolf Defenders for many years, has described deer and elk as being terrified, his word, by wolves. According to Dr. Dekker, who is the only rational wolf-advocate I have ever met, he can tell the last time wolves ran a herd of elk in Jasper National Park by the behavior of the elk. If the elk spend more time alert than the animals do foraging and if the elk appear flighty and nervous, wolves have recently attacked the herd. Moreover, just the scent of wolves will send the elk into panicked flight.

Dr. Val Geist reported a similar situation in Canada's Waterton National Park where he studied mule deer behavior for many years. The mule deer in Waterton are habituated to humans and generally occupy the valley

floor, which is the best habitat, especially during winter. But when coyotes formed packs and began hunting like wolves, the mule deer abandoned their preferred habitat and attempted to save themselves by climbing through deep snow to treeline and hiding under the low branches of subalpine fir. After a few days of not feeding, though, the deer were forced to leave their safe sites. The mule deer, however, did not return to their former home ranges but instead moved to parts of the park where there were few coyotes. In short, prime winter habitat was abandoned "as soon as coyotes were effective in hunting by forming packs." At the time of Dr. Geist's studies, there were no wolves in Waterton.

Which brings me to the wildest mule deer I have ever seen. As part of my ecological research for Parks Canada, I was on a horseback trip into the northern part of Jasper National Park. We were 56 miles from the trailhead with the Wilmore Wilderness on our north when we jumped a mule deer doe in a large alpine basin. The deer was lying down in a dense growth of stunted conifers and fled our approach at over 300 yards, a highly unusual flight distance for an unharmed mule deer. If the deer had remained bedded, we never would have seen her, as she was not near our line of off-trail travel. But once up, the deer ran and ran, and ran - never stopping to look back even once over a distance of three miles. During the entire time, I and the two park wardens, whom I was with, remained stationary, as did our horses. Because of our location, this mule deer most likely had never seen a human before, but she apparently had seen more than her fair share of wolves and grizzlies, and knew that her survival depended on her ability to out-distance any would-be attacker.

Normally, mule deer will stop and look back after a certain distance to see if the predator is still in pursuit. After all, there is no reason to expend energy if you are not being chased. Just think of all the energy that doe in Jasper wasted fleeing something that was not even chasing her. This is why experimental "research has shown that the risk effects on prey dynamics can be as large as direct [mortality] effects, or even larger." While most empirical work has been done on non-ungulates, there is little question that the ecology of fear is a heretofore unrecognized threat to mule deer and other game animals throughout western North America.

The Wolves

By Jason Alexander

(NOTE: In early October I received a call from the father of a hunter who said his son and his guide had been attacked by wolves during an elk hunt in the Selway Wilderness Area in north central Idaho. His son Jason had
continued on page 14

written an account of the experience and forwarded it to me as well as emailing it to several popular hunting blogs. I also received a report from two Montana residents who had shot and killed at least one member of a wolf pack that pursued them as they attempted to pack out an elk one of them killed [see next issue with Dr. Geist's comments]

On Nov. 8th I received a call from Jason advising that the outfitter had complained he had not received any calls from prospective clients since the story hit the internet, and threatened to sue him if he identified the outfitting service or the guide in a published article.

Based on a request from Mr. Alexander, the outfitter is not mentioned and the guide's name has been changed to "Sam". – ED)

It was September 27, 2010, the third day of our hunting trip with an Idaho outfitter. Terry Robinson, Josh Collins and I were in Idaho's Selway wilderness with our hunting guide, I'll call him "Dan", hunting bull elk. We walked from our camp down the spur trail heading for some meadows and "The Rock".

We left Terry at the first set of clearings and meadows to watch for elk, deer and bear. Our hunt was a combination hunt, allowing us to get any one of these animals.

Dan, Josh and I continued down the canyon to the next open slide and meadows. Josh stayed there to hunt this area, while Dan and I continued on to the rock.

About 200 yards further down the trail, Dan and I came on some bear tracks that appeared to be heading to the rock. Two days before we hunted this area, other hunters in our group had killed a black bear on the rock and we assumed the bear was heading for the remains of that kill.

We moved very slowly down the trail looking for movement and listening very carefully. We crossed several small streams and at one point saw a small brown animal.

The bear was a secondary objective. We were hunting bull elk and had uttered several cow elk calls along the trail. We continued down the trail to the "Lower Rock" about 200-300 feet below the main lookout.

We looked around this clearing for about 10 min. and then moved into the trees. To get up on the rock we climbed the hill toward the back side. There is a small meadow back there, then a group of thick trees and bushes to pass through on the way out to the lookout/cliff edge of the rock. As we stepped out to the edge and began scoping the area for elk, we tried a few more cow calls, hoping to entice a bull into the open.

After seeing no movement, we started to relax and get settled for a few hours of waiting and watching. We set down our packs and found a nice spot along the cliff edge to get comfortable and view the area. I set a way point on my GPS for the 3rd day of hunting at about this time – 10:45 A.M.

About 15-20 minutes after settling down, Dan let out another cow call. Nothing was moving. He took off his boots to relax his feet a bit and to set up his GPS. I went up to a log near some bushes about 15 feet away where I had left my pack, and returned to the cliff edge with a sandwich to continue to look for movement.

This next part happened very quickly, within 5 minutes. Dan was watching the hillside to the right of the rock and suddenly sat up and pointed out a wolf.

This wolf was about 50 yards away. He was big, real big. I was amazed at how big he was. I always thought of wolves being just slightly larger than a German shepherd but this wolf was more like a Great Pyrenees – probably 3-1/2 feet tall at the shoulders. He was black with some brown stripes on his side.

He was sneaking into the tree line when we noticed him and then he was gone. Dan and I were on high alert trying to locate where he went.

A couple of minutes later we heard a wolf "whooping" and "yiping". At first I was not sure what it was, I had never heard wolves in the wild like that. Then we saw a new wolf, slightly smaller, but still bigger than I thought they were.

This wolf was much closer, about 50 feet from us. We were shocked, how did we not see it? It moved in so quiet and it was way too close for comfort.

The wind was blowing up over the cliff from behind us and to the wolves. At that point they knew we were people and not a cow elk.

Dan was on his feet, with his pistol out and I was up and had my rifle in ready mode and looking through the scope to find the wolf. Dan said we had to get out of there.

We heard something big in the bushes behind us, then several sounds in different locations in those same bushes. They were cutting off our escape route! We had nowhere to go but off the cliff - about 100-200 feet straight down.

Dan turned and aimed high and left of the wolf and in rapid fire, shot 12-15 rounds from his 9mm. During the first 2 or 3 shots, 3 other wolves stood up! We had not even seen them. They were all within that same distance of about 40-50 feet but the shots did not scare them. They just headed into the trees, curving toward us as they came. I was scared and decided to let loose a round from my gun, thinking it was much louder; a bigger caliber gun would make them run.

I shot about 2 feet behind the last wolf (BOOM). And he did not even flinch... He walked up to a rock and stood with his front legs on it, staring at me. An image I can't get out of my head. He was all black with his pink tongue hanging out, just staring at me like I was his target. I jacked in another round and pulled up on him again.

The cross hairs of my scope were on his head and not much else in the viewing area (I thought, "wow, he is way too close"). "Dan, I can take him out! Can I shoot

F&G Rescinds Its Wolf Plan

During a Dec. 8, 2010 Idaho F&G Commission telephone conference call, Gov. Butch Otter's legal Council, David Hensley, told the Commissioners that Gov. Otter's position was to go back to the 2002 Idaho Wolf Plan approved by the Idaho Legislature. That plan, which was subsequently approved by FWS, said Idaho would Manage for a minimum of 15 breeding pairs (150 wolves) and would not allow wolf hunting if the number of breeding pairs fell below 10 (~100 wolves).

Commissioner Fred Trevey made a motion, seconded by Tony McDermott and unanimously approved, to suspend immediately the 2008-2012 Wolf Plan approved by the Commission on March 6, 2008. That plan, agreed to manage for at least 518 wolves but was never submitted to the Idaho Legislature for approval rejection or amendment as required by Idaho Law.

Trevey's motion also stated that no day-to-day plans would exist until after delisting at which time the Commission would direct IDFG to prepare a plan based on the (approved) 2002 Plan.

Idaho County Sheriff Rifle Raffle

In a county that is heavily impacted from the introduction and maintenance of far too many Canadian wolves, Sheriff Doug Giddings is holding an SSS Wolf Rifle Raffle. Tickets cost one for \$1 or 11 for \$10 and the drawing will be held at Noon on March 8, 2011 at Heritage Square in Grangeville. Tickets are on sale at selected merchants from Lewiston to Riggins and from Cottonwood to Elk City or they can be ordered from or purchased at the Sheriff's Office in Grangeville.

The lucky winner will receive a Winchester Model 70 in .308 caliber with a Leopold Scope, gun case, sling and special SSS Wolf Pack engraving. The prize also

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includes a short-handled shovel, a parchment scroll of the County Commissions' request for declaration of an emergency and a custom made metal art rifle rack.

The Idaho Freedom Foundation, Idaho for Wildlife and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation are sponsoring:

History of Wolf Introduction in the U.S.A.

Guest Speakers

Retired USFWS Special Agent Jim Beers
Idaho Governor Butch Otter

Boise State University – Jordan Ballroom Student Union
 :Saturday February 16, 2011 from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.
 Admission Free (donation accepted)

NOTICE

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