

DNA Studies – Smaller Native Wolves Existed in Northern Rockies before Canadian Wolf Transplant

By George Dovel

In the Jan-Mar 2008 *Outdoorsman* Bulletin No. 26, the lead article titled, “What They Didn’t Tell You about Wolf Recovery,” described the ongoing deception by federal and state biologists in their scheme to fill rural areas in the lower 48 states with wolves.

The article referred to 20 years of Dept. of Interior Solicitors (lawyers) changing the number of N. American wolf subspecies covered in the Endangered Species Act from 24, finally to two and back to four – and then to any or all wolves called “gray wolves” or “*Canis lupus*”. Then it told how FWS reclassified ESA-listed wolves as members of two “Distinct Population Segments”, which it later changed to three until a federal judge denounced the obvious attempt to circumvent the ESA.

The ongoing debate between wildlife scientists who classify species, concerns whether *subspecies* of elk (red deer), North American bison, grey wolves, etc., exist. Bona fide expert taxonomists include Dr. Valerius Geist who points out that changes in location, habitat, size and appearance alone do not necessarily change the genetic make-up to qualify an animal as a separate sub-specie.

However the Northern Rocky Mountains wolf subspecies – *C. l. Irremotus* – was documented by physical comparisons of skulls, etc., from larger wolves in 1959:

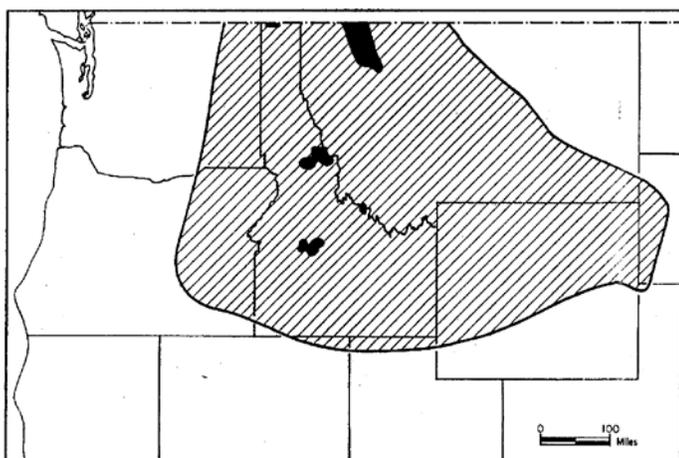


Figure 1. Historical distribution of the northern Rocky Mountain wolf (*Canis lupus irremotus*) in the United States according to Hall and Kelson (1959). The black areas represent the current approximate distribution of wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains of the contiguous 48 states.

Page 2 of the 146-page FWS Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan dated August 3, 1987, contains the map showing the historical distribution of *Canis lupus Irremotus* in the lower 48 states, plus the 1987 distribution in black. It depicts immigration of *Irremotus* from southern British Columbia into Idaho and from B.C. or southern Alberta into the northwest corner of Montana.

It also shows the two 1987 *Irremotus* population areas in central Idaho, one of which included the three wolf pack territories mapped by Tim Kimmery between 1988 and 1991 (see *Outdoorsman* Bulletin No. 35).

Historical Impact on Wolf Subspecies

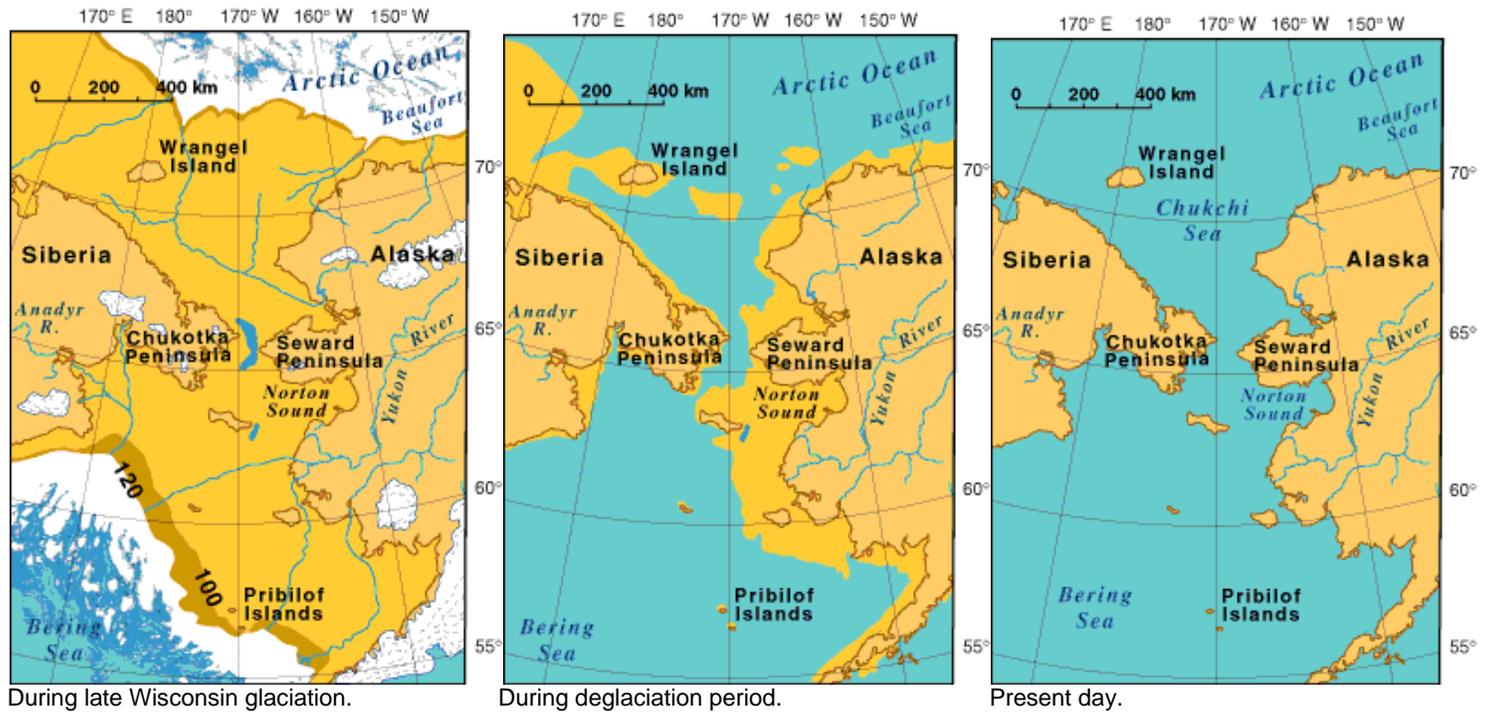
During the most recent (Pleistocene) ice age, water evaporating from the oceans became part of the glacial ice covering the land. Ocean levels dropped 300 feet or more and the Bering Strait between Siberia and Alaska dried up.

The exposed land bridge with little snow, later named Beringia, became a refuge for hardy Siberian animals and plants for several thousand years (see below).



continued on page 2

Smaller Native Wolves Existed – cont. from page 1
Changing Shapes of Beringia Illustrated



Many scientists believe Beringia included a small human population from Siberia that was prevented from continuing into North America for 5,000 years by the North American ice sheets. Geologists report these continental ice sheets were 5,000-10,000 feet in depth and extended south in some places to the 40th Parallel below what is now the U.S.-Canadian border.

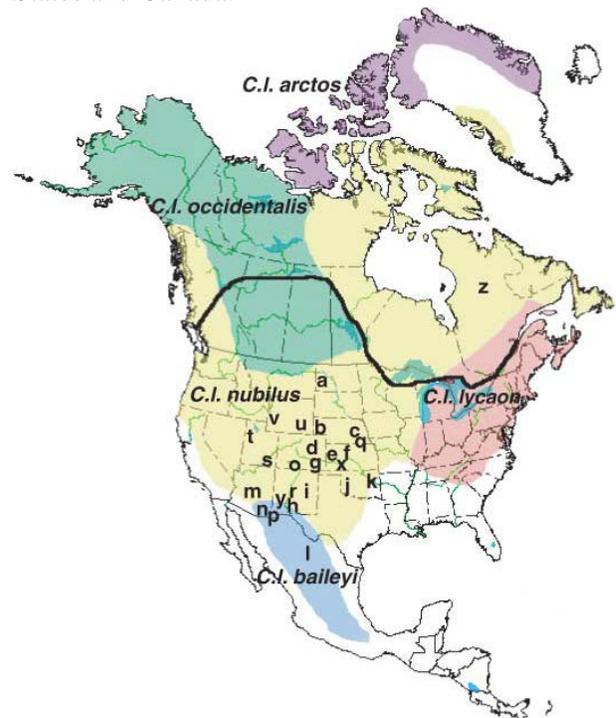
The artists' three views of Beringia published by "Wikipedia" illustrate the changes that have occurred in the "Bering Land Bridge" during the last 18,000 years. But there is still disagreement among biologists about when, where and how several current mammal species first arrived on the North American Continent.

Subspecies Had Limited Opportunity to Crossbreed

Since 1995 a number of wildlife biologists have accepted the determination by Nowak that five subspecies of gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) inhabited North America during the early 20th Century. There is also agreement that *Canis lupus occidentalis* (the large gray wolf transplanted to Yellowstone and Central Idaho by FWS in 1995) had virtually no opportunity to influence the genetic make-up of coastal wolves in SE Alaska and Yukon and portions of five other Canadian Provinces where it existed.

For thousands of years the ice between interior Alaska, Yukon and British Columbia and the coastal area prevented the *occidentalis* wolves from mixing with the smaller wolves defined as *C. lupus ligoni* by Goldman in 1944. And the intensive efforts to kill all wolves in the early 1900s also left few of the large wolves alive in most areas where they might have mixed with the native wolves.

The map below in the study titled, "Legacy Lost: genetic variability and population size of extirpated U.S. gray wolves (*Canis lupus*)," published by Leonard et al in the 2005 Vol. 14 issue of Molecular Ecology, shows the five primary subspecies that existed in the early 1900s. The bold black line indicates the northern limit of gray wolf eradication that occurred in the 48 contiguous United States and Canada.



In 1995, *C.I. nubilus*, the primary subspecies common in the U.S. and Canada mainland included *ligoni* from the west coast of Canada, *irremotus* from the Northern Rocky Mountains and *labradorius* from Labrador. The “a” to “z” letters scattered on the map represent original locations of the various museum specimens whose DNA were recorded in the study.

A similar study titled, “**Phylogeography of wolves (*Canis lupus*) in the Pacific Northwest**”, by Weckworth et al (published in the 2010 (2) issue of the Journal of Mammology) used basically the same map, along with an expanded inset to illustrate locations of testing for the genetic difference between the smaller coastal wolves and the 30% larger *occidentalis* wolves from the Alaska and Yukon interiors.

Both of these DNA studies emphasize that the *nubilus* wolves migrated **northward** to populate Canada as the ice sheets and glaciers melted. They point out that the smaller wolves existed in the south **before** the larger wolves migrated into northern Canada, and the Weckworth study suggests the coastal wolves should be listed as a separate individual subspecies.

Court Allows Transplants – Then Orders Removal

Readers who actively opposed the FWS option to import Canadian wolves may recall the following events:

In 1994 the Farm Bureau, Audubon Society and other plaintiffs asked the Wyoming Federal District Court to halt wolf introduction because it could not legally occur where naturally occurring wolves already existed per the 10J Rule. But instead of issuing an injunction to halt the process while the arguments were presented, Judge Downes allowed FWS to go ahead and transplant Canadian wolves into Central Idaho and Yellowstone Park for three years until he issued his ruling in December of 1997.

Then after setting aside the final wolf introduction rules as unlawful, Judge Downes ordered FWS to remove all Canadian wolves and their progeny from both experimental population areas. This ruling was met with loud criticism by the wolf activists, including the state and federal wildlife agencies who apparently believed they could get by with ignoring both state and federal laws when it suited their agenda.

Judge “Passes the Buck” to Appeals Court

They quickly pointed out that it would not be possible to even locate most of the wolves – much less capture them. But even if that were possible, both Canadian Provinces refused to allow the wolves to return and there were not enough zoos willing to accept several hundred wild wolves so killing most was the only option.

Judge Downes could have prevented this disaster from occurring by simply putting wolf introduction on hold three years earlier until his decision was reached. But the second time he did essentially the same thing by later staying execution of his removal order pending an appeals decision by the 10th Circuit Court.

On January 13, 2000, five years after the first large Canadian wolves were introduced, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the December 1998 Wyoming District Court ruling that the reintroduction program was unlawful and should be revoked. The appeals court admitted that the evidence showed native *irremotus* wolves already existed when the larger Canadian wolves were introduced, but said FWS had the authority to determine what constituted a population.

The fact that the resident wolves coexisted with abundant big game populations and with negligible impact on livestock and human activity was already a matter of record in 1994. But on August 12, 1994, FWS Wolf Leader Ed Bangs sent a letter to Charles Lobdell telling him to stop issuing statements to the public advising that the number of reported resident wolves was increasing.

Bangs’ letter advised that FWS planned to introduce wolves from Canada and said: “From this day forward...confirmed wolf activity (will only include) individual wolves or members of packs that have been examined, radio-collared and monitored in the wild.” He also said he had transferred \$9,000 to the FWS Boise Field Office to search for wolves and organize flights to locate any radio-collared wolves that might be in Idaho or the Yellowstone area during the summer and fall.

Bangs also included key issues to be presented to the public consistently by FWS:

“1. (I)t is likely that wolf populations would ultimately recover without reintroduction and breeding pairs of wolves would likely occur in Idaho before they would occur (in) Yellowstone.

4. Experimental populations will not knowingly contain a significant portion of the territory of any naturally occurring breeding pair that has successfully raised young. However once wolves are released all wolves in the area will be treated as experimental animals.”

Despite reported wolf sightings by more than 120 outfitters, trappers and others in less than two months, most in the same location where Kemery mapped three wolf pack areas from 1988-1991, and despite the USFS road closure to protect existing wolves (see Bulletin 35), Bangs dumped Canadian wolves halfway between the two known native wolf locations guaranteeing their extermination.

In February of 2012, I forwarded the Weckworth DNA study, without comment, to Dr. Valerius Geist. The following was his reply:

“Thank you, George, I have seen this study. To me it suggests that there was indeed a remnant of native wolves in Idaho that were finally done away with by introduced wolves from Canada. The native wolves would have been of the same clad as the coastal wolves. Anyway, that's testable since some museum specimens of native Idaho wolves are still available for genetic analysis. However, somebody competent and trustworthy needs to do it. Cheers, Val Geist.”

Tell the Media the Truth about Wolves

Combat Media Misinformation with Facts

By George Dovel

An Editorial in the July 21, 2010 *New York Times* titled "License to Kill", was highly critical of Montana Judge Donald Molloy allowing the 2009 wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana. It said the approved minimum of 100 wolves per state was "far below what's necessary to guarantee genetically healthy populations" and said the States' wolf plans were crafted to satisfy ranchers and hunters rather than protect the wolves or the ecosystem in which they play an essential role."

The unnamed editorial writer continued, "There is no scientific or legal basis for splitting the management of contiguous wolf populations among the states. The wolves should be restored to the endangered species list and returned to federal management."

Two weeks later, on August 5, 2010, Molloy rendered his decision, which sounded as if it had been written by the N.Y. Times editorial writer. He canceled the hunts, re-listed the wolves and returned management to the feds, ignoring the following responses to the NYT editorial:

Letter to the editor, New York Times

RE: Editorial, License to Kill, July 21, 2010

Let's take the logic of this writer and apply it to another animal. The Woolly Mammoth once roamed this hemisphere. Like the writer of this editorial claims, the Woolly Mammoth no doubt played a very important part in the ecosystem.

Under the same 10J rule that allowed the Canadian Gray Wolf — of which there are over 100,000 on the North American Continent, by no means endangered — to be brought in and turned loose in the contiguous United States, we propose that the closest relative of the Woolly Mammoth be returned to roam the land it once did. That would be the elephant.

And because the elephant would be on the endangered list, if elephants stampeded through New York City, causing death and destruction, you couldn't shoot them. If they trampled your children, stomped your houses and cars into the ground, destroyed the landscape, destroyed stores, restaurants, gas stations, etc, too bad, you couldn't shoot them.

And if you don't like that, tough. They were, after all, here first. Like the wolf, they have every right to be here!

But...but...but...you can't do that! Why not? This is exactly the situation with wolves in Wyoming, Idaho, Montana and now Washington and Oregon, with

one added offense: wolves carry diseases fatal to humans; they are spreading deadly *Echinococcus granulosus* tapeworm eggs that cause hydatid disease, across the Pacific Northwest landscape. Anyone, living in rural areas and enjoying the outdoors and wilderness areas in the Pacific Northwest is at risk of contracting this deadly disease.

And wolves are decimating the ungulate herds, the management of which is paid for by sportsmen.

And having decimated the ungulate herds, they have now turned to killing livestock.

Picture this — you walk out of your home some night to hear your prize mare, ready to foal, raising a fuss. You rush to where she is just in time to see wolves rip her womb from her body, leaving her to bleed to death as they drag the foal off. You get to watch your mare bleed to death as there is not one thing you can do to save her.

How about watching wolves rip your family pet to shreds, leaving your beloved pet disemboweled and in pieces, lying in your front yard for your children to see?

How about having wolves prey-test your children? Don't you think that's just something you would get a thrill out of watching?

You live in New York City. You have no more conception of what it is like to live with these apex predators than rural folk have of what it is like to live with gangs and street thugs. Yet the two are not dissimilar and for the same reasons — they enjoy killing and don't discriminate in what they kill.

The editorial you published is so far afield from reality and fact that it has to have been written by someone suffering diminished mental capacity.

Lynn M Stuter

Letter to the editor, New York Times

RE: Editorial, License to Kill, July 21, 2010

Dear Sir,

The author of this editorial has fallen victim to clever advocacy that is void of science, let alone scholarship. The presentation to the public by a leading newspaper of a complex issue so hopelessly compromised by inaccuracies and lack of understanding, is hardly a public service.

Humanity has a very long and tragic history with wolves, as this predator is widespread and often abundant across Asia, Europe and North America. The introduction of wolves in the U.S. West is evolving in a predictable

pattern, as one is bound to re-live the history one ignores. And that, methinks, might be the real story.

Sincerely,

Valerius Geist

Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science
The University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Neither Ms Stuter's nor Dr. Geist's responses were repeated by media across the United States or Canada. Although the Judge reversed his ruling a year later and allowed the 2011-12 wolf hunting and trapping seasons to take place, the sportsman wolf kill and the token 14 wolves ordered killed by IDFG in the Lolo Zone were insufficient to halt the decline in elk populations ("Idaho and Montana Continue to Refuse to Kill Enough Wolves..." on page 8).

What Is It?

On March 16, 2012, *The Oregonian* published an article by Richard Cockle titled, "Body of what may be gray wolf found in northeastern Oregon."

Cockle's article said Oregon State Police had learned about discovery of the 97-pound animal on private property about six miles north of Cove on that same day, and had taken the animal to a veterinarian for X-Rays to determine the cause of death. It said the cause of death was not determined but further examination would determine if a criminal act had been committed.

The article said state biologists had documented a single set of wolf tracks in the same general area twice in October and once in January. It pointed out that wolves are protected by the Oregon Endangered Species Act and killing a wolf is punishable by up to a year in jail and a fine of \$6,250, except in defense of human life or with a special permit.

Letter to The Oregonian Newspaper dated March 18:

It was with wry amusement that I (a retired federal wildlife biologist living in Minnesota) read in your paper about that 97 lb. "animal" found dead in the Grande Ronde Valley. To think that after decades of hoopla about how "important" wolves are; this "animal" in the custody of the august "professionals" of both the Oregon State Police and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife must be examined for DNA "analysis" (questionable at best) to determine if it is A. a dog, or B. a coyote, or C. a wolf, or D. a dog/coyote cross, or E. a dog/wolf cross, or F. a wolf/coyote cross, or G. a (this gets too confusing).

But wait, if all those Eastern and Midwestern cougar sightings of the past 30 years are any indication perhaps the "experts" in government will explain that dingoes or jackals (each of which enjoy "fertile unions" with dogs, coyotes, wolves and any of the infinite crosses therefrom) either A. escaped from a zoo, or B. were "pets"

released by un-(federally)regulated pet owners to consummate an affair with some poor "Native" wolf or coyote or even some unsuspecting "Invasive" dog one evening. I wait with baited breath for their "findings"!

Truth be known, the classic understanding of animal "Species" is a group of animals that successfully interbreed and produce fertile offspring with characteristics of each parent. The difference between wolves, coyotes, jackals, dingoes, and (all) dogs is therefore the same as the difference between chows, Chihuahuas, Dobermans, and wolfhounds. That one (the wolf) is so "important" that killing one carries government sanction and that its destruction (humans, cattle, dogs, big game, etc.) must be endured by powerless rural folk is bad enough (actually monumentally bad): that this sacred wild and destructive animal can "only" be identified by "DNA analysis" completes the fairy-tale nature of the entire wolf "science" treated like some "Law of Physics".

Wolf "biologists", government bureaucrats, University professors (bought and paid for by government grants), and the "DNA Analysts" can set those chromosome definitions and limits ANYWHERE convenient. Want 5 "species"? No problem. Want 50 "species"? Just a minute, we can do that. It is "science" truly worthy of the "noble animal" tripe and hidden agendas of the entire wolf debacle.

I am reminded of the Queen of Hearts in Alice in Wonderland. If the "experts" find that some poor bumpkin is responsible for the demise of the "97 lb. animal" that only some secret laboratory can declare what it is; he will wind up like Alice in "Wonderland". When the Queen cries "off with her head" and poor Alice mentions that she hasn't been found guilty, the Queen (i.e. government) simply says, "first the sentence and then the verdict."

Did Lewis Carroll write The Endangered Species Act?

Jim Beers

18 March 2012

Six weeks later, on May 3, 2012, newspapers from Maine to Oregon carried versions of the same story. A reported necropsy (autopsy) of the carcass at Idaho's Wildlife Health Lab in Caldwell determined the death was caused by a "person" committing "a criminal act."

According to an AP report of the same date, the carcass was sent to the University of Idaho for genetic testing to determine whether it was a wolf, a pet, or a wolf-dog cross. *La Grande Observer* reporter Katy Nesbitt said it might not be a "Criminal Act" if the animal is a dog/wolf hybrid because shooting a dog that is threatening a human or chasing livestock on private property is legal in Oregon.

As this issue goes to the printer, officials still have not released either the alleged cause of death or the DNA analysis of the wolf-like animal.

Bow To Your Betters

By Jim Beers

The following editorial from an urban Montana paper nicely encapsulates the arrogance of power being enjoyed by those that revel in subjugating others to their will, no matter the harm they create. The distortions it fosters are criminal and indicate that reason and appeals to civil discourse or to Constitutional guidance to such (per Lenin) useful idiots are futile.

Editorial: Montana counties should stay out of wolf management

Those affected by wolf predation are frustrated. And they are taking their frustrations out in county commission meetings around the state.

In a clearly orchestrated move, ranchers and outfitters have been pressuring commissioners in multiple counties to pressure state wildlife officials into more aggressive wolf management strategies. Some 70 people showed up at a Gallatin County Commission meeting earlier this month to voice their concerns about wolves. Madison County is offering a bounty for any legally killed wolf.

These demonstrations at the county government level may help vent steam, but they are unlikely to have any measurable impact on future wolf management strategy.

And that's the way it should be. State game managers are the most knowledgeable and best positioned to manage the wolves effectively.

Since wolves were reintroduced to the Yellowstone region in the mid-1990s, their numbers and range have grown steadily and their status as federally protected wildlife has been an on-and-off affair. In the middle of it all, state wildlife managers have been doing their best to keep wolf numbers under control with public hunting.

Let's face facts: Wolves are going to be part of the Montana landscape from here on out. There will never be the national stomach to extinguish the species from the region for a second time. And learning how to live with the wolves is just that – a learning process.

State wildlife managers, who took over wolf policy when federal protections were lifted from the species, have been upping the number of animals harvested with each season. And still the overall wolf numbers are increasing. A no-quota hunting season has been proposed for later this year in an effort to stabilize wolf numbers.

On the good news front, state Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks officials report that predation on domesticated animals went down last year over the previous year. That may be the result of government biologists and wolf advocates working with stockgrowers on how to protect livestock from the predators. Those efforts should continue, and they should continue to get results.

Gallatin County commissioners may feel the need to act on pressure from constituents and call for a meeting with state wolf biologists. If so, the commissioners should listen politely, voice their concerns and then let the wildlife managers go about their work.

Reintroducing a major predator to an ecosystem is no small matter. In time, ranchers, hunters and the rest of us will learn to live with the wolves. But it will take patience.

Here is my answer to this editor:

1. So, "Let's face facts: Wolves are going to be part of the Montana landscape from here on out. There will never be the national stomach to extinguish the species from the region for a second time."

Then, when "the national stomach" wants authority over all Montana "waters", Montanans should go into their homes and listen to the radio about what they are to be allowed to do henceforth? When the UN (the "international stomach") says Montanans should not possess guns, Montanans and other Americans should quietly turn in their guns and carry cellphones with 911 on quick dial (does FWP respond to 911?).

Then, when the state "stomach" leaves the state and crawls into the sack with the "national stomach" and "international stomachs" we should all plan a "shower" for any issue therefrom?

Local communities bear the brunt of the wolf debacle. Local citizens are being harmed and in the absence of either protection from their state government or federal acknowledgement of their #1 Constitutional charge, i.e. "insure domestic Tranquility" and "promote the general Welfare": then by God Local citizens working with their Local government will return "domestic Tranquility" and general Welfare" to THEIR Local community. Let the "national stomach" take a gelusil or ex lax.

2. So, "State game managers are the most knowledgeable and best positioned to manage the wolves effectively." Really?

The presence, distribution, and "management" of wolves, or any other high-impact wild animal is first and foremost a decision to be made and supported by those citizens and communities AFFECTED by such decisions. "State game managers" are charged to advise and implement the parameters of Local decisions from elimination of wolves to densities not seen since Russians were denied weapons by their dictators or Czars (and everything in between).

Saying that "State game managers" should make such decisions is putting the cart before the horse. G.K. Chesterton said it best 103 years ago, "Science must not impose any philosophy, any more than the telephone man must tell us what to say".

3. So, "Gallatin County commissioners may feel the need to act on pressure from constituents and call for a meeting with state wolf biologists. If so, the commissioners should listen politely, voice their concerns and then let the wildlife managers go about their work.

Are we "free" men or slaves? Listen politely? Who works for whom?

Whoever believes such pernicious tripe would clearly be more comfortable in Stalin's Russia where slaves (to the state) listened "politely" or were shipped off to a Gulag or worse. It has honestly gotten to the point where any opposition to federal or state wolf impositions begets not only law enforcement threats from those that ostensibly "protect" us, but also this sort of dripping disdain from arrogant elites.

4. So, "State wildlife managers, who took over wolf policy when federal protections were lifted from the species, have been upping the number of animals harvested with each season. And still the overall wolf numbers are increasing."

Let's see; state and federal "wildlife managers" release wolves despite overwhelming opposition from those on whom the wolves were imposed. Then the feds do a double arabesque and pirouette off the stage and the state "managers" oversee "increasing" wolf numbers (i.e. elk/moose disappearance, livestock losses, dog losses, stress and fear of rural residents as wolves habituate all around, etc.) and those rural bumpkins are told to buck-up, keep your kids inside, eat more vegetables, and take government job training for the next available job in LA or Chicago. My advice to those chirping this line is "stuff it".

5. So, "On the good news front, state Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks officials report that predation on domesticated animals went down last year over the previous year. That may be the result of government biologists and wolf advocates working with stockgrowers on how to protect livestock from the predators. Those efforts should continue, and they should continue to get results."

Earth to elites: neither the state nor federal government should be spending billions ad infinitum THAT WE DON'T HAVE on such harmful and senseless twaddle. Additionally, wolves NEVER HAVE and NEVER WILL be harmlessly blended into settled landscapes as found in the Lower 48 states. They ADAPT; they HABITUATE; they DEplete GAME ANIMALS; they KILL LIVESTOCK; they KILL DOGS; they SPREAD DISEASE; and last but certainly not least THEY ATTACK AND THEY KILL CHILDREN, WOMEN, THE AGED, and even MEN RUNNING A CHAINSAW! Read Will Graves' excellent book WOLVES IN RUSSIA. "Good News" my patoot!

Finally we come to the piece de resistance of our arrogant author: "In time, ranchers, hunters and the rest of us will learn to live with wolves. But it will take patience."

"In time"? Tell that to Russians, Kazaks, Siberians and others where humans are killed and maimed annually, livestock husbandry is a matter of small flocks tended 24/7 by women and kids, game hunting is a matter of dreams (not reality), and dogs are not allowed in homes (much less "kissed" and slept with) because of the diseases they contracted from wolves FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS! Patience, like Dirty Harry's boss's breath mints "ain't cutting it".

What it will take is local wrath expressed Constitutionally by Local governments in the teeth of rogue government bureaucracies and their elite enablers like the editor of the paper.

Two final newspaper quotes from G.K. Chesterton 100 years ago in London shows us that such media distortions as this wolf propaganda piece are nothing new.

"There never was a power so great as the power of the Press. There never was a belief so superstitious as the universal belief in the Press. It may be that future centuries will call these the Dark Ages, and see a vast mystical delusion spreading its black bat's wings over all our cities."

"We do not need a censorship of the press. We have a censorship by the press. It is not we who silence the press. It is the press that silences us. It is not a case of the Commonwealth settling how much the editors shall say; it is a case of the editors settling how much the Commonwealth shall know. If we attack the Press we shall be rebelling, not repressing."

Jim Beers

19 May 2012

Jim Beers is a retired US Fish & Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist, Special Agent, Refuge Manager, Wetlands Biologist, and Congressional Fellow. He was stationed in North Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York City, and Washington DC. He also served as a US Navy Line Officer in the western Pacific and on Adak, Alaska in the Aleutian Islands. He has worked for the Utah Fish & Game, Minneapolis Police Department, and as a Security Supervisor in Washington, DC. He testified three times before Congress; twice regarding the theft by the US Fish & Wildlife Service of \$45 to 60 Million from State fish and wildlife funds and once in opposition to expanding Federal Invasive Species authority. He resides in Eagan, Minnesota with his wife of many decades.

(NOTE: This response by Jim Beers reflects the same frustration I have experienced after spending years carefully documenting the destruction of our renewable natural resources and rural lifestyle. The fanatics who are accomplishing this could not succeed without the blind support of the "news" media, educators, numerous state and federal bureaucrats, and many of those we elect to represent our interests at all levels. – ED)

Idaho and Montana F&G Continue to Refuse to Kill Enough Wolves to Restore Healthy Elk and Deer

By George Dovel

For the past five years, Idaho F&G biologists have offered proof that excessive wolf numbers in the Lolo Zone are the primary cause of the continuing decline in elk populations. On Nov. 6, 2008, the Idaho F&G Commission directed these biologists to “aggressively utilize all tools and methods available to control wolves in critical areas that are impacting ungulates, starting with the Lolo zone and progressing to other critical areas, **in the event delisting does not occur.**” (emphasis added)

On Feb. 2, 2009, Director Groen’s presentation to the Legislative Joint Finance and Appropriation Committee emphasized IDFG Biologist George Pauley’s research finding that wolves were causing a 15% decline in elk each year compared to a projected 7% increase without wolves. A Feb. 18, 2009 report from Deputy Director Kiefer estimated an annual loss to Idaho in revenue from elk hunters of \$15-\$24 million.

A widely circulated Feb. 27, 2009 *Ravelli Republic* article told how Idaho Biologist George Pauley met with 60 Montana hunters in Hamilton and said IDFG’s estimated wolf population in the Lolo Zone was at least 130-150 wolves. He said the Department planned to hire Wildlife Services to kill 80% of the Lolo Zone wolves under the new 10J Rule, leaving 25 wolves each year for five years in an effort to begin restoring healthy elk herds.

Hunters in both states knew this would save 2,000 Lolo elk from being killed by wolves the first year and, if continued for five years, would allow that elk herd to start rebuilding. But what they didn’t know was this was simply an IDFG scheme designed to let them have a wolf hunting season by sacrificing the once famous Lolo elk herd.

Seven months earlier, during a July 2007 USFWS hearing in Boise concerning the new 10J Rule, three Idaho officials promised FWS that IDFG would not use its wolf control plan if the wolves were delisted and Idaho was allowed to manage them. These Idaho officials were: Jim Caswell, Administrator, Office of Species Conservation; “Bert” Stevenson, Chairman, House Resources Committee; and Steve Nadeau, IDFG Large Carnivore Coordinator.

Lolo Wolf Density Four Times Worse Than Alaska

Before you read proof that IDFG refused to allow enough wolves to be killed to stop them from destroying the Lolo elk herd, you should compare the wolf density in the Lolo Zone then with the average wolf density in the five areas in Alaska where wolf extremists could not get the courts to halt control programs that killed an average of two-thirds of the existing wolves.

The five Alaska control areas; Units 13, 16, 19A, 19D and Units 12, 20 and 25, total 63,839 square miles,

with a total estimated wolf population (before the control began) of 786-1,028 wolves. Dividing the total area by both, the minimum and the maximum number of estimated wolves, results in an average pre-control wolf density of one wolf for each 62-81 square miles.

The total area of Idaho’s Lolo Zone (consisting of Units 10 and 12) is 2,355 square miles. By dividing that area by the 130 (low) and the 150 (high) wolf estimate, the Lolo Zone wolf density was one wolf for each 16-18 square miles!

That was an astounding FOUR TIMES the average pre-control wolf density in the five Alaska areas where moose, caribou and, in some cases, Dall sheep populations were being decimated by wolves and bears! But instead of hiring Wildlife Services to kill >100 wolves in the Lolo Zone during the 2008-09 winter and spring, Director Groen and Commissioner Power told the 2008 Legislature they were going to protect the wolves in the back country so they could produce more wolves for areas that were not yet saturated.

WS Experts Tell IDFG How To Kill Enough Wolves

Through the 2008 fall and winter and mid-spring of 2009, wolves were still not delisted, yet not one wolf had been reported killed in the Lolo Zone. Ten days after delisting was announced in early May 2009, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services provided IDFG with a May 14, 2009 document, stating its recommendations to reduce the number of wolves in the Lolo Zone with delisting.

It warned that, even with adoption of a liberal wolf hunting season and no quota limit, removing a sufficient number of wolves to reduce predation on elk would not be possible without WS helicopter control. It urged IDFG to radio-collar one wolf in more packs, using blaze orange on the collar to prevent shooters from killing these “Judas wolves” (read last two paragraphs in the document below):

“In addition to use of radio-collared ‘Judas wolves’ to help locate uncollared wolves, effectiveness of aerial hunting efforts could be increased through the judicious placement of draw stations in the form of road-killed deer and elk carcasses...in open areas...particularly in areas where vegetative cover might otherwise make aerial hunting efforts ineffective. Draw stations could also be used to facilitate snaring operations on the ground during the winter months.”

“Based on our experience and knowledge in working with both wolves and coyotes, Wildlife Services believes there is little likelihood of being able to achieve IDFG’s desired level of wolf removal in the Lolo Zone if wolf removal efforts are curtailed in April every year. If the

desired level of wolf removal has not been achieved by April 30th, removal efforts should continue with trapping, snaring, calling and shooting in the vicinity of den and rendezvous sites and other locations, facilitated through the use of radio-telemetry location of collared wolves. These efforts should continue on through the spring and summer months, if necessary, until the desired level of wolf removal has been accomplished. Curtailment of removal efforts in April would not be logical as this is when the wolf population would be at its lowest seasonal point and wolf removal would have the maximum additive effect.”

Experts' Recommendations Ignored

Instead of adopting at least some recommendations from the experts who had been capturing and radio collaring or lethally removing specific wolves that killed livestock for 14 years, IDFG officials did exactly the opposite of every recommendation. For example, instead of using blaze orange on the radio collars (which can cost up to several thousand dollars for each one installed) and then warning hunters not to purposely shoot them, IDFG approved killing the collared wolves.

Despite press releases and claims in sportsman meetings in Idaho and Montana that IDFG intended to reduce the Lolo wolf population by more than 100, the overwhelming evidence proves that was never its intention. Before wolves were delisted it could have taken the final step in the 10J lethal removal of 104-120 Lolo Zone wolves, instead of continuing to insist that was its intention but doing nothing to halt the elk slaughter.

When the wolves were delisted, the fact they were killing each other in territorial disputes provided biological proof their prey base was depleted. IDFG had full authority to set extended seasons, and contract with WS to kill every wolf they could locate in the Lolo Zone during the following winter and spring.

IDFG Ignored Duty to Control Wolves Destroying Elk

Instead it issued a 3,200 word document dated May 2009 and titled “Wolves Delisted: Idaho Perspective,” that omits all mention of managing wolves to restore a healthy predator-prey ratio. In fact it implies in two places that killing wolves to benefit either big game or starving wolves is a violation of Idaho law as follows:

“The wolf are reclassified under Idaho law and managed as a big game species statewide.

Idaho laws protect wolves. Wolves can be legally killed only:

- During a legal hunting season set by the Idaho Fish and Game Commission.
- If the wolf is seen molesting or attacking livestock or domestic animals.
- To protect human life.
- As authorized by Idaho Fish and Game to resolve wolf-livestock conflicts.”

Instead of the 100 wolves IDFG biologists told the media and the public they were going to kill in the Lolo Zone, the Commission waited until August and set the 2009 Lolo Zone maximum kill quota at 27! That wolf season in the Lolo and Selway Zones ended on March 31, 2010 with only 13 Lolo wolves killed by hunters, despite the Wildlife Services recommendation to shoot and trap them in April when populations are at their lowest number.

Meanwhile the February 2010 helicopter count of elk in the Lolo Zone showed a 57% decline, from 5110 in 2006 to only 2178. The number of cows had declined 58%; calves declined 79%; and the number of spikes that provide future mature bulls declined 94% to only 23 in the Zone!

Commission Ignored Its Promise to Use WS Experts

Several months earlier when the Commissioners set the wolf quotas in each zone, they said if the quotas weren't being met by December they would bring Wildlife Services experts in to kill the wolves. For several decades I have listened to this type of political posturing by a F&G Commission – to excuse an action they are being pressured to take when they know it is wrong – yet they always seem to forget their promise to the public when it's time to deliver.

In his announcement of the Lolo elk disaster in the Feb. 25, 2010 *Lewiston Tribune*, Clearwater Region Wildlife Manager Jay Crenshaw admitted that reducing the number of limited Lolo Zone Elk Tags further probably wouldn't help the elk since many limited tags that were available to resident hunters and outfitters were never sold. In fact sport hunters and Tribal members were already killing so few Lolo elk they didn't even show up as a cause of death in the expensive radio-collared elk study.

Conditions were ideal for a WS helicopter team to remove enough wolves to temporarily halt the destruction of the Lolo elk herd. But Crenshaw did not even mention Wildlife Services and said, “The question now is what would be the appropriate response.”

In a March 8, 2010 Op-Ed news release published by Director Groen to counter angry hunters asking why IDFG allowed known massive elk losses to continue, Groen did not say why. But he admitted, “With the latest Lolo elk numbers it is clear more aggressive wolf management is needed to restore the herd.”

IDFG Made Sure New Litters Were Not Disturbed

He added, “These management tools could include increased harvest limits, multiple tags, trapping, and asking outfitters to help reduce wolf numbers.” But he ignored using Wildlife Services and he prohibited all wolf control for almost three months to protect a new crop of pups.

Finally on May 15, 2010, Wildlife Bureau Chief Jeff Gould told the media that four outfitter volunteers and their guides were being selected to kill a maximum of 20 additional wolves in the Lolo Zone by the end of spring bear season on June 30th. They killed only two wolves

continued on page 10

ID, MT Refuse to Kill Enough Wolves – *cont. from pg 9*

Consider the decision by IDFG officials not to immediately hire Wildlife Services in February 2010 to kill enough Lolo Zone wolves to save elk breeding stock. Except for the two wolves killed by outfitters, this allowed Lolo Zone wolves to increase for almost 15 months, including during the April whelping seasons in both 2010 and 2011, without any interference from humans!

Leaving Lolo Elk Seasons Unchanged Violated ID Law

And despite the massive elk losses revealed in the Feb. 2010 aerial census, which prohibited allowing *any* Lolo elk harvests to prevent further losses (see I.C. Sec. 36-104[b] 1., 2. and 3.), IDFG did not recommend, and the Commission did not make, any changes in the Lolo Zone elk season structure for 2010, 2011 or 2012.

Although there were only 594 total bulls counted and/or estimated in the Feb. 2010 Lolo Zone elk census, in 2010 hunters harvested 124 bull elk in the Lolo Zone – including 16 spikes – and in 2011 they killed 83 total bulls. With only 23 replacements (spikes) in 2009 and an unknown small number of surviving bull calves in each subsequent year, IDFG chose to continue to sell hunting opportunity instead of preserving, protecting and perpetuating the few elk that remained.

Economic Impact of Wolves on Elk Hunting in Idaho

To give this some perspective, simply check the comparison chart of IDFG's published figures below:

	1988	2011	% Decline	Revenue Lost
Bull Elk Harvest	2184	83	96%	-\$12.6 million*
Elk Hunter Days	65472	5023	92%	-\$ 9.6 million**

* Recent F-G survey reports \$6,000 spent for each elk harvested.

** 2002 survey reports \$159.11 spent per elk hunter day (corrected for inflation since 2002).

If we add the Selway Zone harvest statistics for the same years to these figures, the loss of elk harvested annually from 1988 to 2011 is 2,801 (X \$6,000 = **\$16.8 million**). Or the loss in elk hunter days is 92,530 (X \$159.11 = **\$14.7 million**).

Then if we add the Middle Fork Zone, the Sawtooth Zone and all of the other zones where selling extra elk hunting opportunity and then protecting wolves has destroyed our ability to harvest our wildlife resource, the direct annual cost of this deliberate mismanagement of elk and wolves is staggering.

Excessive Harvests Depleted Clearwater Elk

The fact that protected wolves are destroying elk herds now, that were already severely depleted before there were enough wolves to impact them, *must not be ignored*. The Lolo elk herd achieved national prominence thanks to decades of research – much of it done by Mike Schlegel – and to the implementation of Schlegel's recommendations during the 1970s by former Director Joe Greenley.

But after Greenley retired, his replacement, Jerry Conley, implemented the IAFWA* agenda – slowly changing IDFG's Number 1 priority from hunting to non-consumptive wildlife viewing. Although much of his funding violated federal and state laws, most of the costs of these programs were paid using hunting license revenue.

(* International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies)

Selling Special Privilege Hunting Opportunity

Conley and his staff began to sell special privilege hunting opportunity in the form of limited bonus controlled hunts – where there was already a general season for that species and sex. These early and late deer and elk hunts created the longest Idaho big game hunting seasons since the late 1800s, after the 1864 territorial legislature closed the big game hunting season from February-July.

The six-month seasons were still far too long to protect big game back then, even for the few hunters with their short range weapons and primitive transportation, and they decimated the big game herds. Idaho established its fish and game management agency in 1899, and the *five-week* seasons adopted during the next 10 years existed for decades until biologists stopped managing wildlife and began exploiting it by selling “extra hunting opportunity”.

In 1990, Conley offered 15,700 special privilege deer permits and 16,430 special privilege elk permits to gullible hunters who didn't realize both species were being seriously overharvested. In 1992 most of Idaho was in its eighth year of drought and many animals needed feeding to supplement their lack of body fat to survive the winter.

The deep-snow winter that followed was the second most severe in 50 years. But instead of feeding the malnourished animals using the dedicated fund set aside for exactly this type of natural disaster, F&G allowed more than half of Idaho's mule deer and several thousand elk to starve to death.

Angry Citizens Demand Conley Resignation

Despite the massive deer and elk losses, IDFG added 2,150 more antlerless deer permits and 3,710 more antlerless elk permits for the 1993 season! These included increasing the antlerless permits in the Lolo Zone from 1,500 to 1,800.

In 1994 IDFG decreased the number of Idaho deer permits to 6,330 because thousands of hunters had signed petitions demanding Conley's resignation for destroying the mule deer. He admitted what he claimed were “minor” deer losses but assured them the deer population would “bounce back” in two years – while he secretly authorized FWS to transplant Canadian wolves into Idaho.

Conley's biologists continued to increase the special privilege deer and elk permits until he was reportedly forced to resign or be fired by several of the new F&G Commissioners two years later in 1996. That year there were 9,110 deer permits and 28,360 elk permits plus an unlimited number of archery and muzzleloader permits for both species.

But getting rid of Conley did nothing to change his staff, the bureau chiefs, and the regional supervisors and wildlife managers who had been implementing the national agenda. They listened respectfully to newly hired Director Steve Mealey, but used their environmental “bed fellows” to undercut his leadership at every turn.

Virgil Moore: “It’s The Commission’s Duty to Offer Increased Hunting Opportunity”

At one of Mealey’s first Commission meetings, Information Bureau Chief Virgil Moore conducted a class telling Mealey and the four newest Commissioners that IDFG is forced to compete with other Western States for nonresident license dollars. He explained that the other states offered bigger and better trophies than Idaho has but said they do this by restricting both season lengths and the number of hunters.

Moore told his bosses it was their duty to advertise that Idaho is the only Western state that allows nonresident hunters to purchase deer and elk tags over the counter on a first come, first served basis – rather than compete in a lottery drawing for a slim chance to purchase a permit/tag.

Salmon Commissioner John Burns was the only member to even comment when he offered his opinion that it would not sound good to hunters that the Commission is spending their money advertising for more hunters rather than restoring depleted game herds. But a motion to advertise passed unanimously, signaling an end to obeying the law to “Preserve, Protect, Perpetuate and Manage.”

Virgil Moore Still Selling Special Privilege Hunts

Shortly after Virgil Moore was hired to replace retiring IDFG Director Cal Groen in March of 2011, he provided a document to the F&G Commissioners that proves his willingness to continue exploiting Idaho big game animals for temporary income to F&G – rather than restore healthy herds.

His 5-17-11 *2011 Business Plan* spelled out his intention to work with sportsmen groups to convince them to support “legislation to increase the number of auction tags to enhance Department revenues.” Moore also wrote that IDFG is already working on a new license fee structure with a marketing firm, and said he would study over-the-counter license sales with other states to determine whether the decline in nonresident license sales can be reversed in the next few years.

Changing Minimum Criteria – A Wasted Effort

Although the 3-page Plan said F&G would initiate wolf control in other zones in 2012 “where wolf predation is known to be preventing achievement of ungulate goals,” it did not suggest the “control” would be sufficient to halt declining deer or elk numbers. Although Lolo Zone elk minimum population criteria were set well below carrying capacity, at the last Commission meeting biologists said it was time to re-do the plan and set them even lower.

But if they set the already low minimums even lower to try to hide the extent of their mismanagement

from the public, it does not erase the warnings published in Researcher George Pauley’s memo 16 years ago (i.e. that continuing to overharvest the elk would ultimately destroy the herd). The Lolo Zone has failed to meet from one to all five of its elk objectives for the past **15 years!**

Inaccurate Statistics Hide Destruction

Moore’s Business Plan includes addressing habitat initiatives, reducing mortality in “wildlife corridors”, and changing the methods used to report harvests and monitor populations. That same agenda was followed by former Director Dick Woodworth and his “statisticians” who provided absurdly exaggerated population and harvest figures to hide overharvesting the wildlife resource.

Now, more than 40 years later, the IDFG 2011 harvest report failed to use the late reporting requirement, and its “Biometrician” instead increased the number of deer reported killed by hunters by 51.3%! His misleading claim that this reflects a survey of meat processors, etc. is the same excuse that was used in the late 1960s and early 1970s to inflate big game harvest numbers.

But when a 1972 Legislative audit reported that biologists were knowingly inflating deer and elk harvests, Director Greenley discarded 10 years of exaggerated harvest figures – replacing them with the totals actually reported by hunters. But that was then and this is now.

Killing 14 Wolves Insured Continued Elk Decline

During the Feb. 3, 2012 winter feeding hearing by the Senate Resource Committee, Senator Siddoway kept asking Wildlife Bureau Chief Jeff Gould if F&G planned to have Wildlife Services kill any wolves. When Sen. Siddoway emphasized his question by tone and demeanor, Gould finally said they would kill “some” wolves in the Lolo Zone.

Later when I asked the Wildlife Services Director in Idaho why they stopped with killing just 14 wolves in the Lolo Zone, he referred me to IDFG Deputy Director Jim Unsworth who he said was running the operation. In a Feb. 22 news release, Unsworth said the reason they shut down the control at just 14 wolves was that their minimum resident Lolo Zone wolf estimate was 76 wolves and they decided with 22 killed by hunters and trappers and six killed nearly a year earlier, removing a total of 42 wolves was appropriate.

The six wolves taken by WS nearly one year earlier did not affect the Dec. 16 2011 *minimum* estimate of 76-100 wolves in the Lolo Zone – which did not include the border packs roaming back and forth between Idaho and Montana. Killing only 36 total wolves assured wolves will continue to increase and destroy Lolo elk.

Montana has refused to allow trapping in its 2012-2013 wolf “control” effort and, despite the frank admission by MTFWP that wolves have already caused some elk herds to become extinct, it obviously has no intention of reducing wolf numbers. Read the shocking supplement to this article in the July 2012 Outdoorsman.

Correction to Error Regarding Senate Bill 1321

Although errors in the information published in The Outdoorsman are extremely rare, I caught one in the last issue and take this opportunity to correct it. I provided the following sentence in the original bill:

“Moneys shall be used solely for the purchase of blocks, pellets and hay for such winter feeding purposes.”

But did not include the amendment underlined below:

Moneys shall be used solely for the purchase of blocks, pellets and hay for such winter feeding purposes and/or for the purchase of seed or other material that can be shown to directly provide feed or forage for the winter feeding of antelope, elk and deer.

In almost every case, emergency big game feeding is initiated when normally available natural forage is not available because of drought or wildfire – or the forage on winter range is covered by 18 or more inches of snow or crusts that make it inaccessible. It is difficult to envision any of these conditions being alleviated by “seed or other material” used to “directly provide forage” that is not affected exactly the same as so-called “natural” forage.

This amendment was apparently added to satisfy legislators who fail to understand the extreme conditions that create the need for emergency big game feeding.

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In The Next Outdoorsman Issue

When Idaho Fish and Game Commissioner Tony McDermott wrote a letter criticizing me for publishing facts about fish and game mismanagement, he said that even if the facts I printed were true, I could never change things. His statement was correct.

One person does not have the power to change the situation we’re experiencing. But when a lot of people see that our heritage is being destroyed and they are given the facts about how it is being destroyed and who is doing it, they can cause the changes to be made.

Those who take the time to read this issue and possibly make a few quick notes, including significant names and dates, can pass the information on until enough people are informed. When that happens, the change in attitudes becomes apparent.

The next Outdoorsman will print brief comments and criticisms from several state and federal elected officials who appear unwilling to rock the boat by “telling it like it is”. They have access to the media and could spread the truth like wildfire if they can be convinced to do it.

In addition to more news briefs from other states that share our problems, the next issue will include a frank discussion of the impact of the proposed Idaho Wildlife Summit on our wildlife and its traditional supporters.

Thank you for caring enough to become involved while there is still time to preserve our heritage.

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