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When Biologists Stocked Alaska with Wolves

By Ned Rozell – “Alaska Science”

This and the “Alaska Science” column that follows it were written 22 months apart by Ned Rozell, and both were provided as a public service by the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks, where Mr. Rozell is a science writer.

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The killing of wolves to boost moose and caribou populations in Alaska has made headlines all over the country. Back in 1960, a government program to stock an Alaska island with wolves received less attention.

Alaska had been a state for one year when its Department of Fish and Game conducted a wolf-planting experiment on Coronation Island in southeast Alaska. At the time, the remote 45-square-mile island exposed to the open Pacific had a high density of blacktailed deer and no wolves. In 1960, biologists from Fish and Game released two pairs of wolves on the island.

The experiment was the only wolf-stocking effort undertaken in Alaska and probably worldwide at that time, said Dave Klein, a professor emeritus with the University of Alaska’s Institute of Arctic Biology. Klein, who had studied deer on the island for his Ph.D. thesis, helped the state make the decision to transplant wolves on Coronation Island.

“Alaska had just become a state and you had a brand new Department of Fish and Game staffed with young biologists who wanted to do things based on biology rather than a mix of politics and science. It’d be much more difficult to do it now.”

In 1960, Fish and Game biologists released two male and two female wolves at Egg Harbor on Coronation Island. Before they left, the researchers shot five deer to provide food for the wolves.

Biologist Paul Garceau visited the island in May 1961 and found tracks, deer remains, and wolf scats containing deer hair and bones, showing that the wolves had adapted to life on the island. Two months later, a commercial fisherman shot the two adult female wolves, but Garceau saw tracks of wolf pups on the island when he returned later that summer, indicating that the females had given birth before they died, and the pups had survived.

In 1964, Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologist Harry Merriam explored the island for eight days and saw 11 adult wolves and the tracks of two pups. He estimated that at least 13 wolves lived on the island and three litters of young had been born since the first wolves had arrived.

The following summer, in 1965, Merriam spent 10 days on the island, seeing wolf tracks on all the beaches. He saw no sign of deer on the north side of the island, but found deer tracks on the steep slopes of the island’s south side, where rough terrain and dense brush may have provided the best chance for deer to escape wolves.

In February 1966, Merriam saw only three wolves on the island, and their tracks suggested they were the only wolves left. He examined more than 100 wolf scats; six of those contained wolf remains only, suggesting the animals had resorted to cannibalism. Deer remains in the scats were less than one half of the previous spring; fragments of birds, seals, sea creatures and small mammals constituted the rest.

In August of 1966, Merriam and his partners collected seven wolf scats, compared to 201 one year before. They found just three sets of fresh deer tracks. By 1968, one wolf remained on the island. Biologists who inventoried the island’s animals in 1983 found no evidence of wolves, but the deer were once again plentiful.

Alaska’s only wolf-stocking experiment taught biologists the importance of habitat size (they concluded that a 45-square mile island was too small for both deer and wolves). The study also showed how many factors play into the dynamics of a wild animal population, which is a point Klein said many people miss in current arguments about wolf control.

“The relationship between wolves and their prey is very complex,” he said. “Sometimes wolves are the key predators of caribou or moose, sometimes bears. Sometimes severe weather is the main factor, sometimes food availability.

“The main problem with these kinds of controversies is people are unwilling to look at the complexity of the ecosystems involved. Things are not simple in nature.”

(See more recent “Alaska Science” article on page 2)

Newborn Moose Calves Battle Very Slim Odds

By Ned Rozell – “Alaska Science”

July 18, 2009

In late May all over Alaska, female moose find a secluded spot to birth a calf, twin calves or sometimes triplets. In the weeks that follow, many of these gangly newborns fall prey to bears and wolves. In most areas of Alaska, more moose calves die than survive.

Mark Bertram is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wildlife biologist at Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. In a study he did more than a decade ago, while a helicopter pilot distracted cow moose from the air, Bertram and others scrambled to birthing sites and attached radio collars to newborn calves. By following radio signals after the calves stopped moving, the biologists were able to find dead calves and determine what killed them.

In the study at Yukon Flats, an area larger than Maryland where Alaska's longest river reaches north of the Arctic Circle, Bertram found the remains of a majority of the 29 moose he collared. Fifty-five percent died in one month. Three-quarters of those baby moose were killed by either black bears, which are abundant in Yukon Flats, or grizzly bears.

When Bertram approaches a kill site, there's usually not much left to identify the carcass as a moose calf.

He said bears generally crush a calf's skull to first eat the brain, tongue and other soft tissue and then work their way back to consume the entire carcass. A moose calf is a major score for a bear or a wolf, as is seen in the woeful numbers of calves that reach their first birthday.

"It's real common for just 30 percent of calves to survive their first year," Bertram said.

In studies done elsewhere in Alaska and the Yukon, the numbers agree. North of Tok, 25 percent of calves collared survived their first year.

Just 19 percent survived in a study performed in southwest Yukon. Around 30 percent made it through a year in two studies done around Galena and Nelchina.

Terry Bowyer, a biologist formerly with the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Institute of Arctic Biology, collared cow moose in Denali National Park and kept track of their young for four years.

Only five calves out of 44 made it through their first summers. A vast majority of those were killed by grizzly bears.

Moose calves are often easy prey for bears and wolves until they gain some agility, Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologist Rod Boertje said.

"Caribou calves can outrun bears in 10 days," he said. "It takes moose calves about five weeks until they can outrun a bear. They're vulnerable for a lot longer."

Boertje said the moose calves that survive are probably the ones that stick close to the cow no matter how frightened by an attacking bear or wolf.

Those that let their mothers fight their battles for them are probably the moose that survive to be adults in a struggle that is lost more often than not.

The Rest of the Story

By George Dovel

On September 16, 2009 when renowned Canadian Wildlife authority Dr. Valerius Geist received an email copy of the first article describing the stocking of wolves on Coronation Island, he sent the following response, which is reprinted here with his permission:

"David Klein and I shared an office as graduate students at the University of British Columbia. We also had another colleague who was involved, hands on, in these experimental wolf releases. One has to know that black-tailed deer are found only on wolf-free islands, not on the Alaska mainland. They do get along with brown and black bears, but not wolves.

Deer were eliminated quickly by the wolf releases, and the vegetation recovered spectacularly from deer browsing. The wolves were soon starving as they were exceedingly successful eliminating deer. The wolves caught a few seals till these avoided hauling out on that island...and then the wolves starved to death.

Cheers,
Val Geist"

In his article "Vancouver Island Wolves," (see April-May 2006 *Outdoorsman*) Dr. Geist described how, when wolves entered Vancouver Island during the 1970s, the annual deer kill by hunters plummeted from about 25,000 to less than 4,000. Are we to believe that Vancouver Island's 12,076 square-mile area is, like Alaska's Coronation Island, also supposedly "too small for both deer and wolves?"

In both cases, with an abundance of deer to kill and eat, the wolves multiplied much faster than the deer and soon depleted their numbers. When the wolves on Coronation Island killed off most of the black-tailed deer and exhausted the supply of other prey they starved and the deer eventually recovered.

But, as Dr. Geist explained in "Vancouver Island Wolves," after the wolves killed off most of the black-tailed deer and smaller prey, they survived on alternate prey, including elk, livestock and domestic animals and pets. These wolves also continue to kill pockets of deer thereby preventing recovery of the deer population.

Predators Magnify Impact of Extreme Winters

Of course it is true, as retired Professor Klein pointed out, that there are multiple causes of prey deaths. But that does not alter the fact that excessive numbers of predators in relation to the number of their prey species remains the overwhelming primary cause of wild ungulate deaths where large carnivores exist.

Instead of reducing the impact of extreme winters on big game herds as many game managers have claimed, uncontrolled large carnivores kill even more animals then, thus prolonging or prohibiting recovery of the wildlife species that are sought by humans.

Wildlife Management Is Not Rocket Science

The added “disclaimer” in the first article (implying that blaming wolves for declining prey populations reflects ignorance of the complexity of ecosystems) suggests that only academic wildlife biologists have the ability to manage wildlife. If that were true one might ask how the partnership of hunter conservationists and game wardens managed to restore North American wildlife populations from near extinction to unheard of abundance during the first half of the 20th Century.

Regardless of their academic credentials or alleged experience, if your wildlife managers refuse to admit that large carnivore populations must be carefully regulated in order to maintain healthy wild ungulate populations, don't waste your time trying to reason with them. They either lack the wisdom to separate fact from fiction, or they are lying to you – and perhaps even to themselves.

Management Requires Controlling All Wildlife Numbers – Not Just Prey Species

In the first *Science* article, instead of concluding the obvious fact that uncontrolled wolves decimated the deer population and then, lacking alternate large prey, destroyed each other, the article blamed the inevitable result on the size of the island. Yet the same result (wolves driving prey into a “predator pit”) has been documented with wolves and moose for more than half a century on Isle Royale in Michigan and with wolves and deer on Vancouver Island in British Columbia since the 1970s.

In geographically “closed” ecosystems such as Coronation Island and Isle Royale, a single large carnivore species decimates its single wild ungulate prey and ultimately destroys itself, allowing the prey to repopulate over time. But in the vast majority of ecosystems such as Vancouver Island and Interior Alaska, where alternate prey species allow predators to survive after the primary prey is decimated, the primary prey may not recover without a dramatic reduction in predator numbers.

The importance of predator density and territory size varies with the abundance of prey species. Researchers in Alaska and Yukon Territory determined the minimum number of moose-per-wolf that allows sustainable populations of both species. Once the number of moose-per-wolf falls below that minimum, regardless of

the reason, the number of wolves and possibly also bears must be reduced in order for the moose to recover.

That is the situation throughout much of Alaska today and it resulted from pandering to propagandists who were allowed to promote the myth that predators and their prey will seek and maintain a “natural” balance. In his 1993 article, “Wolves in the West,” Wildlife Ecologist Dr. Charles Kay illustrated how the presence of uncontrolled wolves cut hunter harvests by as much as 90% and how a slight increase in hunter harvest with wolves present can help prevent game species recovery for decades.

Dr. Kay: “Stop Spreading Misinformation”

In that article in the August 1993 issue of *Petersen's Hunting*, Dr. Kay urged sportsmen, livestock operators and other concerned citizens to send their comments on the 1993 Wolf Environmental Impact Statement to FWS with copies to their Congressman and Senators. He emphasized that citizens should demand that the government stop spreading misinformation and begin telling the public the true impact of wolf recovery.

Yet for the next 15 years, federal, state and non-governmental wolf advocates continued to misrepresent the inevitable impact of wolves on our economy and our way of life and insist that wolf reintroduction was necessary to restore “healthy” ecosystems throughout the West. Only in the past few months have Idaho and Montana begun to admit that wolves are decimating some elk and deer herds and costing local economies millions of dollars every year in lost revenue.

The Unvarnished Truth

The second *Alaska Science* article is encouraging because it reports only facts and does not imply that lack of habitat or plant succession or some other undocumented excuse is what is really killing most newborn moose calves. The fact that only 11% of radio-collared moose calves survived their first summer in the four-year Denali National Park study illustrates the folly of protecting large carnivores from hunting and trapping and other control.

It is unfortunate that the second article was not followed with an assessment of the economic impact of allowing uncontrolled predators to destroy an annual multi-million dollar traditional source of food that was formerly available to Alaska residents. That plus the additional millions in lost income to local economies from the decimation of moose, sheep and caribou populations defies Alaska's mandate for sustained natural resource harvest.

(NOTE” In the lower 48 States, pretending to manage ecosystems rather than actively manage wildlife populations can only result in decades of starvation, disease and scarcity in between the occasional rare “balance” that may appear to exist briefly. At a time when our federal government is promoting sustainable communities and the use of renewable natural resources, promoting the wanton destruction of our renewable timber and wildlife resources is inexcusable.-ED)

The Truth about Idaho's & Montana's 2009 Wolf Harvest Quotas

By George Dovel

On March 6, 2008, in an effort to pacify Defenders of Wildlife and other wolf extremist groups, the Idaho F&G Commission ignored the 15 breeding pairs (150 wolves) goal established by the Legislature and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Interior Secretary. Instead, the Commission adopted a bastard plan that has never been submitted to the full Legislature for approval or rejection as required by Idaho law.

The 2008-2012 IDFG Plan agreed to manage for a minimum population of 518-732 wolves for five years and claimed that a death loss of 428 wolves from all causes would leave at least an estimated 520 wolves alive after the 2008 hunting season. Nobody knows how many wolves actually exist or how many die from all causes but the plan was based on the estimated *minimum* wolf population that could be documented, and on estimated wolf death losses, including hunter take, that also could be documented

70% Human Kill Needed to Reduce Wolf Population

Two months after the 2008-2012 F&G Wolf plan was adopted by the Commission, wolf preservationists petitioned Montana Judge Donald Molloy to halt the 2008 wolf hunt before it began. FWS wolf expert Dr. David Mech responded in a written statement to the court: "...28-50% of a wolf population must be killed by humans per year (on top of natural mortality) to even hold a wolf population stationery." (emphasis added)

Mech's 22-page "Declaration Under Penalty of Perjury" continued: "Indeed, the agencies outside the NRM (Northern Rocky Mountains) which are seeking to reduce wolf populations try to kill 70% per year (Fuller et al. 2003). Such extreme taking of the kind necessary to effectively reduce wolf populations is done via concerted and expensive government agency (Alaska, Yukon Territories for example) programs using helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. Normal regulated public harvest such as is contemplated in the NRM is usually unable to reduce wolf populations (Mech 2001)."

F&G Knew <20% Harvest Would Not Reduce Wolves

Idaho biologists were aware that five scientists conducting a six year study of sport hunting and trapping of wolves in Alaska's Brooks Range recorded removal of only ~29% of the wolves each year in addition to all other causes of death. They also knew that the liberal hunting and trapping seasons with multiple bag limits did not even reduce the rate of wolf population increase.

In his testimony to the Court, Mech explained: "Every year, most wolf populations almost double in the spring through the birth of pups [Mech 1970]. For example in May 2008, there will not be 1,500 wolves, but

3,000! (Wolf population estimates are usually made in winter when animals are at their nadir [lowest number]. This approach serves to provide conservative estimates and further insure that management remains conservative)."

ID F&G Biologists/Commission Ignored Science

Where wolves are running out of prey and killing each other, as is currently happening in several Idaho Wolf Zones, limited kill by hunters may actually increase the number of wolves by providing more of the declining prey for breeding pairs and their pups, which increases pup survival. Yet without any science to support their claim, Idaho F&G Commissioners said they were going to cut the *minimum* estimated end-of-year wolf population from 732 in 2007 to ~520 in 2008 using only a fall hunting season which also prohibited two methods used to harvest Idaho bears and mountain lions!

In other words, they ignored biology and science and pretended they could do what no other state or Canadian province with wolves has ever been able to do.

FWS, States Decline to Appeal Flawed Court Ruling

It is important to remember that both FWS and Judge Molloy recognized that the 2002 Idaho Wolf Plan approved by the Legislature, agreed to manage for only 150 wolves. That plan stipulated that if/when the wolf population fell below 15 breeding pairs (150 wolves) it would trigger more careful monitoring of wolf populations but would not halt hunter harvest unless it fell below 10 breeding pairs.

The 2008-2012 IDFG Plan acknowledged that the "State" Plan hunting threshold is 10 breeding pairs – yet established an IDFG hunting threshold of 20 breeding pairs requiring twice as many documented breeding pairs before hunting would be allowed (see IDFG Plan page 19). But unlike the State Plan the IDFG Plan plainly states that the minimum IDFG management goal is 518 wolves (more than four times as many as in the State Plan).

The primary excuse the Judge used to issue the injunction prohibiting hunting in 2008 was the lack of proof of potential for genetic interchange (cross breeding) between wolves in the two designated NRM wolf ecosystems. But instead of admitting the truth (that the "purebred" wild wolves being protected in the lower 48 States actually include assorted crossbred wolves and wolf-dog and wolf-coyote hybrids, FWS chose to re-do its definition of Wolf DPS (distinct population segments).

Idaho, Montana and FWS wolf biologists had ample proof that wolves were moving back and forth between several states and the two wolf ecosystems (see video at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

But instead of providing that information to the court, on November 28, 2008, Idaho Governor Butch Otter signed a letter to FWS Director Dale Hall stating that the Idaho Department of Fish and Game will maintain a minimum population of 518 wolves for five years after delisting.

Attached to Otter's letter was a 35-page document signed by Idaho Office of Species Conservation (OSC) Director Nathan Fisher and IDFG Director Cal Groen, admitting that the Idaho Fish and Game Commission had "supplemented and expanded" the State Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (see "The guidelines.." on page 3 at: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/esa/delistingComments11_24_08.pdf).

When the Senators re-wrote the unacceptable Draft #17 State Wolf Plan that was submitted for their approval in 2002, they anticipated something like this might happen from a state agency that ignored the necessity to control wolf numbers. They inserted explicit language on Page 24 of the Plan requiring IDFG to "submit *any* changes to the Idaho Legislature as if it were a new plan submitted for approval, amendment or rejection under Section 36-2405, Idaho Code."

That Code Section requires the Commission must not only find that the plan provides for the management and conservation of the species when it is delisted, but it must also find "that reasonable safeguards are included in the management plan to protect the health, safety, private property and economic well-being of the citizens of the state of Idaho," before it can approve the plan.

Then the approved plan must be forwarded to the Idaho Legislature "for approval, amendment or rejection by concurrent resolution at the regular session immediately following the commission's finding and approval of the plan." The Code Section also states, "Nothing in this act shall be interpreted as granting the department of fish and game with new or additional authority."

House Bill 294, passed in 2003, created OSC and authorized it, in conjunction with IDFG, to develop and coordinate wolf management plans with the state agencies in Wyoming and Montana. But as with any changes to the 2002 State Wolf Plan by IDFG, any plan developed jointly by OSC must also be submitted to the Legislature for approval, amendment or rejection [I.C. Sec. 67-818(3)(b)].

Yet IDFG, OSC and Governor Otter, and the lawyers representing them, chose to ignore the requirement for full legislative approval of *any* plan and pretend they had authority to substitute their plan for the State Plan. In a January 16, 2009 News Release Gov. Otter even referred to the IDFG Plan as Idaho's "State" Management Plan:

"Idaho's State Management Plan calls for managing for no fewer than 518 wolves – nearly five times the minimum number agreed upon for our state prior to reintroduction. My administration supports that commitment – and I personally support that commitment – contrary to what has been said in the past."

Misrepresentation Caused Disastrous Consequences

Unlike the aborted 2008 wolf hunting season when the 2002 State Plan still dictated a minimum of 10 breeding pairs and a management goal of 150 wolves, the misrepresentation by Gov. Otter, OSC and IDFG that the 2008-2012 IDFG Wolf Plan is now Idaho's official wolf policy had immediate disastrous consequences in 2009.

First, FWS Wolf Leader Ed Bangs rewrote the 10J Rule published in the Federal Register inserting the requirement that Idaho must now have a minimum of 20 breeding pairs of wolves (instead of 10) before it may take action to reduce wolf impact on game populations.

Because many of the breeding pairs have not been documented until after the surviving pups become yearlings or adults, the obvious difficulty in being forced to document twice as many breeding pairs could result in needless costly delays in control. The new attempt to estimate breeding pairs rather than document them simply provides another excuse for wolf activists to go to court.

The second disastrous consequence was that the Commission had basically ignored the requirement for safeguards in its Wolf Management Plan "to protect the health, safety private property and economic well-being of the citizens of the state of Idaho." The Wildlife Services (WS) FY 2007 Report for the period ending Sept. 30, 2007 clearly showed that 518-732 wolves were killing far too many big game animals and livestock yet the new Idaho commitment to manage for 4-6 times as many wolves was also promptly published in the Federal Register as part of the new delisting proposal for 2009.

During the public hearings on the IDFG Wolf Plan late in 2007, the WS data clearly showed that wolf populations at that 2005-2007 level were killing twice as many livestock as they had during the preceding three years despite the fact that WS was killing five times as many wolves! When rural outdoorsmen pointed out that elk herds were being decimated resulting in increased livestock killing, the Commission temporarily tabled its Plan and "scheduled another hearing for March 2008 after appropriate changes are made."

The "appropriate changes" were meaningless. IDFG knew the plan to protect four times as many wolves would never get Legislative approval so it bought time to generate media support so its Plan could be approved by the Commission with a show of public support.

For example, IDFG State Big Game Manger Brad Compton provided *Idaho Statesman* Environmental Reporter Rocky Barker with material indicating that cow elk survival in selected locations where wolves were present increased from 86% in 2006 to 88% in 2007. The headline for Barker's January 1, 2008 *Statesman* article resulting from this proclaimed: "**Elk, deer survival high despite prowling wolves – Idaho's increasing wolf population doesn't appear to be hurting other wildlife.**"

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2009 Wolf Harvest Quotas – *continued from page 5*

A series of endorsements of the IDFG Wolf Plan by urban newspaper editors, outdoor writers and traditional F&G support groups – all generated by IDFG using sportsman license dollars to spread misinformation – indicated there was now widespread support for the F&G Wolf Plan. Undeniable evidence of widespread big game losses was denied by F&G with the false claim that wolves were impacting elk numbers in only two locations, and the Commission insisted it was going to reduce wolves by 70% in those two areas as it approved the Plan unanimously.

Ignoring Law Cost Idaho Citizens Millions of Dollars

Sometime between Commission approval of the plan on March 6, 2008 and the Nov. 28, 2008 letter from Gov. Otter to FWS Director Hall, the decision to circumvent Idaho Law and substitute the 2008-2012 IDFG Wolf Population Plan for the 2002 Idaho State Wolf Conservation and Management Plan was made. Whoever made that decision ignored the reality that I.C. Sec. 36-715 requires OSC to implement the Idaho Wolf Conservation and Management Plan which can only be changed by approval of both Houses of the Idaho Legislature.

Just 38 days after Gov. Otter sent the letter to FWS agreeing to maintain a minimum wolf population that was already destroying Idaho's elk herds, IDFG Director Cal Groen told the Idaho Legislature's Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee that, because of wolves, Idaho's deer and elk populations are decreasing at the rate of 15% per year instead of increasing by 7%! Groen's admission that the IDFG has known this was happening constitutes an admission that it has knowingly agreed to continue to allow excessive wolf populations to destroy Idaho big game herds for at least the next five years with the plan it wrote.

Since 2008, everyone involved in NRM wolf recovery, including Judge Molloy, recognized that annual hunter removal of less than 30% of the wolves would not even reduce the rate of wolf population increase. Yet the quotas of 75 and 220 set by Montana and Idaho comprise less than 18% of the projected 2009 pre-season population.

What did Idaho Commissioners, the Governor and OSC accomplish by pandering to the wolf extremists?

1. It did not stop the anti-hunters from seeking injunction or from suing to re-list the wolves – and will not affect the Court's decision.
2. The State of Idaho is now committed to live with several times as many wolves as the limited habitat (prey) will support for at least five more years.
3. IDFG will likely gain several hundred thousand dollars from wolf tag sales and lose several million dollars in elk and deer tag sales as fewer big game animals are available.
4. Idaho will continue to lose tens of millions of dollars in annual revenue from thousands of hunters who no longer hunt in Idaho.

What State Law Authorized This?

Although I have documented instances of IDFG officials deliberately ignoring Idaho law in order to pursue their private agenda, I found it difficult to believe they could hoodwink the Governor and OSC into becoming willing accomplices. But then I discovered the following recently-added statement at the IDFG Wolf website:

“Wolves were removed from the endangered species list on May 4, 2009. Idaho Fish and Game has taken over management under 2008 state law, the 2002 wolf management plan and the 2008 Wolf Population Management Plan.” (emphasis added)

Was there a Concurrent Resolution adopted in the 2008 or 2009 session approving the IDFG Wolf Plan adopted by the Commission in March – or any other legislation passed in 2008 or 2009 either approving the IDFG Wolf Plan or authorizing IDFG to manage wolves in accordance with that plan? The answer is “no.”

When I emailed IDFG Deputy Attorney General Kathleen Trever requesting clarification of the statement, her Sept. 1, 2009 response said she was not sure where the language came from and had asked that the sentence be revised to avoid confusion. The year “2008” was deleted from the sentence on the website but that does not change the fact that the radical increase in the minimum number of wolves Idaho agrees to maintain has never been approved by the Idaho Legislature as required by law.

Montana Biologists Also Ignore Law

Although reported statewide wolf density is three times greater in Idaho than in Montana, both states share the same problem – failure of the state's wildlife management agency to correct excessive, unhealthy wolf-to-prey ratios that are costing both states millions of dollars in lost revenue every year.

In 2003 the Montana Legislature passed House Joint Resolution 32 establishing criteria for Montana to take over management of wolves. These included: (1) a more realistic definition of a wolf breeding pair; (2) the feds relinquishing wolf authority upon assumption of management by FWP; and (3) full funding being provided for state management by the feds.

In 2003 the Montana Legislature also passed and the Governor signed a bill which became Montana Code 87-1-217 – requiring Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to manage bears, mountain lions and wolves to: (a) preserve citizens' opportunities to hunt large game species; (b) protect humans, livestock, and pets; and (c) preserve and enhance the safety of the public during outdoor recreational and livelihood activities. In 2009 the law was amended slightly to establish an order of priority and allow FWP to kill problem wolves.

Agreement to Act as FWS Agent Ignored State Laws

Yet in 2005 FWP ignored those laws and signed an agreement with FWS to act as an agent of FWS and assume its wolf duties – with FWS retaining control. But

as with a similar agreement ignoring Idaho law signed by Idaho Gov. Kempthorne in January of 2006, the “carrot” offered for signing was the states’ ability to lethally remove wolves impacting elk and deer herds.

That provision was used by both states as their excuse for ignoring state law and agreeing to do the federal wolf managers’ work for them. Yet, despite their posturing and promises, neither state has removed any wolves impacting big game during the ~four years since then.

Bad-Mouthing Wyoming

Both of these state agencies have given up their ability to manage wolves effectively yet both continue to criticize Wyoming for its refusal to do the same thing. In a September 13, 2009 *Lewiston Tribune* editorial titled “Returning Wyoming’s one-finger salute,” Opinion Editor Marty Trillhasse claimed that Wyoming is getting paid back for its refusal to compromise sound management.

He wrote that Idaho and Montana get to hunt wolves while Wyoming “gets the fastest growing wolf population in the region.” In reality, Table 4B of the FWS 2008 Wolf Report shows that during the six years since 2002 when all three states met the delisting criteria, Wyoming wolf numbers have increased by only 39% (an average of <7% per year), while Montana and Idaho wolf numbers have increased by a whopping 172% and 222% respectively (an average annual increase of 29% and 37%!).

In 2006, Wyoming decided that when a wolf pack repeatedly kills livestock the entire pack will be killed – rather than kill just one or several wolves to hopefully halt the immediate depredation temporarily. The Idaho WS 2007 Annual Report explained that killing less than the full pack meant pups were trained to attack livestock and would continue killing livestock in the future. Yet IDFG refused the WS request to change the practice of removing only 1-3 wolves.

Critical Information Not Shown to Commission

The 2007 WS Report also warned that Idaho must take immediate aggressive action to kill more wolves but this was never shown to the full Commission or even discussed with them until after they passed the biologists’ wolf plan in March 2008 and also approved the biologists’ wolf quotas in May 2008. Then Director Groen briefly mentioned attending a session at WS and vaguely expressed the need to determine a balance between wolves and big game to prevent damage to the other species.

But it was after the fact and the Commission took no action until after they received the May 2008 *Outdoorsman* which published the FY 2007 WS Report and reminded them the F&G biologists had failed to present that critical information to them when it was needed. Later they approved the following resolution:

“(Direct the IDFG) *to develop and aggressively utilize all available tools and methods to control wolf-caused depredation of domestic livestock.*”

The WS FY 2008 Idaho Report says this about Wyoming’s new tactic of killing all the wolves in a pack: “In the first year of this approach (2007), confirmed wolf depredations on livestock were reduced >55% compared to the previous year (Jimenez et al. 2008), and depredations in 2008 were likewise reduced significantly from 2006.” This resulted in the total number of wolves in Wyoming in 2008 dropping below the 2006 level (see WS Table 4B) yet the Trillhasse editorial falsely claims they are “the fastest growing wolf population in the region.”

The 2008 WS Report also quotes the Commission direction for IDFG to use all available tools such as the strategy being implemented in Wyoming. But IDFG Wolf Managers display the same disdain for this Commission direction as they do for similar Idaho Laws.

In August and September 2009 when Cary, Idaho rancher John Peavey lost 45 sheep and a guard dog to wolves in three separate attacks, IDFG would only authorize the killing of three wolves out of the reported seven that the shepherd saw attacking and killing six sheep on September 4, 2009.

The herder shot at the wolves or they likely would have killed more as they had 4 days earlier when they killed 23 sheep outright and wounded seven more that also died. Peavey reportedly said the 45 sheep, and any orphaned lambs that also die were worth about \$175 each and pointed out that wolves don’t kill that many sheep at one time because they’re hungry.

Montana Biologists Ignore Spree Killing

A few days before the third wolf attack on the Peavey sheep occurred, Will Graves, author of “Wolves in Russia, was discussing surplus (“spree”) killing by wolves with biologists in Montana. The biologists reportedly expressed doubt that it really happens but the following day wolves killed 120 purebred Rambouillet breeding bucks in a private pasture south of Dillon worth \$350 each.

As with the killing of the 30 Peavey sheep in Idaho, this was the second episode of spree killing by wolves in less than a month on that Montana ranch. One of three wolves that killed at least 26 breeding rams on a private pasture in July was killed and another wounded but this did not halt the depredations.

When a WS pilot/gunner team flew over the sheep pasture where the 120 rams were killed, they found a pack of three adult wolves and five pups but were authorized by FWP to kill only one of the eight wolves. In Idaho WS agents are frustrated by IDFG’s refusal to authorize them to lethally remove wolves killing livestock in certain areas inhabited by vocal wolf advocates who dictate policy.

F&G Refuses to Kill “Phantom Hill” Wolves

According to WS reports, for the past three years the so-called “Phantom Hill” wolf pack has committed multiple predations on sheep herds in the Sawtooth National Forest near Ketchum. In 2007, in spite of repeated

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predation by that wolf pack on sheep owned by several ranchers, IDFG would not allow WS agents to remove any wolves lethally.

Instead WS was forced to spend considerable time and money providing non-lethal devices and training ranch employees to use them – which did not stop the killing. In 2008 Defenders of Wildlife (DOW) allocated \$25,000 to hire three people, including a retired IDFG C.O., to set up 3 to 5-acre portable corrals every night to put ranchers' sheep in (see June-July 2008 Outdoorsman).

This expensive activity undoubtedly reduced, but did not eliminate, predation on sheep by the Phantom Hill pack and was touted by the pro-wolf urban media as a “sensible” solution. But at the end of the season one rancher said it had created other problems, including stress and weight loss, and did not solve killing by other uncollared wolf packs or individual wolves.



Photo of unknown origin recently circulated on the internet with the claim that the wolf was shot due to his continued killing of livestock in Sun Valley, Idaho. (Note frayed snare cable - ED).

In late winter of 2009 the Phantom Hill pack began killing elk and even a mountain lion within sight of occupants of Sun Valley's Elkhorn subdivision. At an April 4, 2009 public meeting in Hailey, a reported crowd of “more than 100” citizens demanded removal of the wolves.

During the meeting with what another observer estimated as 300-350 people, IDFG Director Groen assured them that F&G would manage the wolves just like any other predator. But nearly five hours of local citizen testimony charged that uncontrolled killing of livestock and pets, and wolves confronting and threatening humans, require removal rather than management.

Sun Valley Mayor Wayne Willich testified that he and other local residents are afraid to leave the safety of their homes and are forced to carry firearms for protection. He described how wolves chase elk through the subdivision, killing them just yards from residents.

Advising that he was authorized to speak for the Sun Valley Company, Willich said visitors come to the resort to mountain bike, hike, ski and fish and said a wolf attack on a human will happen and cost an estimated \$100 million if the wolves are not removed. Wolf activists including Susanne Stone (DOW), Lynne Stone and IDFG personnel who attended the meeting were pointed out by speakers, including Mayor Willich, who blamed them for promoting excessive wolf numbers.

After unsuccessful efforts to haze the wolves away from the area, IDFG issued a statement warning residents to keep their pets and garbage indoors and advising the wolves would depart as soon as the elk left the winter range. On June 14th the carcass of the aging Alpha Male of the Phantom Hill pack was found in a roadside ditch northwest of Ketchum where it had been hit by a vehicle.

IDFG officials speculated this might change the pack's habits but of course it did not. Meanwhile DOW increased the number of field assistants hired to corral sheep at night from three to five for the 2009 season.

Spree Killing by Phantom Wolves

But that did not prevent the Phantom Hill wolves from spree killing 12 sheep belonging to Gooding rancher John Faulkner on August 9, 2009. The pack attacked and wounded a guard dog watching over the main band that was inside a portable corral and also killed 12 sheep in a smaller band one-half mile away that were not penned.

IDFG issued a kill order for only three of the estimated dozen or more wolves, including pups, in the Phantom Pack but then rescinded the order after DOW struck a deal with Faulkner to continue to pen his sheep each night as they were trailed out of the high country.

(NOTE: The failure of IDFG to kill all or even any wolves in the Phantom pack after three years of continued sheep killing is damning evidence of its intent to ignore Commission direction *to develop and aggressively utilize all available tools and methods to control wolf-caused depredation of domestic livestock.* Its failure to comply with requests from local government, business leaders and private citizens to remove the wolves indicates its wolf “management” consists of ignoring the impact on local residents and pandering to DOW and a small group of vocal extremists. – ED)

Let's Get Real

By Dr. Valerius Geist

Investigations into the death of Kenton Carnegie unearthed matters that are deeply troubling (see "Death by Wolves" in the Winter 2008 issue of *Fair Chase* published by the Boone and Crocket Club). Under the guise of scientific authority, political advocates declared that black bears, not wolves, had killed Kenton Carnegie

By reporting these claims in prestigious publications such as *National Geographic* and *National Wildlife*, they mislead the public into believing their version of the story. Never mind that the facts clearly showed otherwise, and that the official inquiry declared wolves to be the cause of Kenton Carnegie's death. Advocacy won the day, resulting in widespread belief that bears killed Kenton Carnegie and that wolves are harmless.

The North American myth of harmless wolves is deadly! This belief has killed at least three persons in North America alone in the last decade including two bright, well-educated young people. Witness the instances of children under parental care sticking fingers towards captive wolves in the innocent belief that wolves pose no threat.

I must confess that I, too, embraced the myth throughout my academic career and four years into retirement—based on years of experience with painfully shy Canadian wilderness wolves. It took a misbehaving pack on Vancouver Island and a review of historical matters to teach me differently.

Advocacy behind the "benign wolf" myth is extremely powerful. It almost seems that the better educated people are, the more likely they are to believe and fall victim to this myth. Such was the case with Kenton Carnegie, and also 24-year-old Trisha Wyman, a wildlife biologist killed on April 18, 1996, by a captive wolf pack in Ontario.

After that event, I spoke in length with Dr. Erich Klinghammer of Wolf Park. Called in as an expert witness to examine the case, he discovered that there was surprise at Wyman's death. After all, wolves were not supposed to attack people!

Wyman had visited the park previously to study wolves and was given the dream job of looking after and interpreting the animals. She lasted three days before falling victim to her charges.

A similar fate befell a lady who kept wolf hybrids as pets. On July 17, 2006, this captive pack of nine wolf hybrids killed their owner, Sandra L. Piovesan of Salem Township, Pennsylvania. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported that Piovesan treated her wolves like children, and said as much when neighbors asked about them. "They (the wolf-hybrids) give me unqualified love," Piovesan was quoted as saying.

She fed the animals road kills that sometimes caused the neighborhood to smell bad. She said that she liked the wolfdogs because they were pretty. The notion of the "harmless" wolf, while unstated, was implicit.

The view that wolves do not attack people except in cases of rabies is so strongly held today that even an exploratory attack on two camp personnel at Camp North Landing, Saskatchewan, was not recognized as a threat. Currently, reintroduced wolves in the western U.S. are showing signs of targeting people; however, their intentions continue to be misinterpreted.

The widespread view of the "harmless wolf" may have prevented North American wolf specialists from developing an understanding of the circumstances when wolves are dangerous to people and when they are not.

In North America, unlike in some European and Asiatic countries, the circumstances when wolves pose a danger to humans are rare but not absent. The examples above are but part of a greater force that advocates predator protection based on emotions and sensationalism rather than fact.

Various organizations do battle on behalf of seals, whales, wolves, mountain lions, grizzly bears, and other charismatic species. They engage the media with sensational stories, using showmanship and enlisting pop culture stars to capture the public's imagination—all predicated on claims of a science basis.

In the case of gray wolves, the political objective is to spread the species throughout its historic range including "in multi-use landscapes surrounding houses, farms, villages, and cities." Central to this goal and associated legislation is the myth of the "harmless wolf," repeated so often that it transformed long ago into a politically correct "truth."

Moreover, this myth is apparently upheld in the science community and has given rise to a popular counter-claim; namely, that all information pertaining to dangerous wolves is an outgrowth of the misleading fairy tale about Little Red Riding Hood. Further, this fairy tale is claimed to reflect ancient, primordial, and irrational fear of wolves and gross misinformation about their behavior.

The Coroner's inquest following the Kenton Carnegie tragedy in Saskatchewan did not touch on policy matters, which is unfortunate. It only answered the narrow question of which animal killed Kenton Carnegie, to which the answer clearly is wolves. Change the question slightly to what caused Kenton Carnegie's death and the answer is: the myth that wolves do not attack people.

The inquest did not address this myth, its origins, or the scholarly deficits that generated such beliefs. Neither

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did the inquest ask what circumstances caused the wolves to habituate to humans, other than the availability of camp refuse.

It did not inquire about the scarcity of natural prey and its causes, or about escalating livestock losses in the area. The inquest did not consider that in British Columbia, thanks to legislation quite different from that in Saskatchewan, the tragedy would very likely not have happened.

In British Columbia, any licensed hunter may take three wolves in a long season, and this readily removes habituating wolves. Saskatchewan, in contrast, has no general season and wolves may be taken only by trappers and by people suffering wolf depredation, provided they get prior permission.

During the inquest, I detailed these facts to the media, but my letters were ignored. However, there is more to the matter than became available to the public through the inquest. The policies that led to Kenton's death escaped critical examination as my attempts to surface these concerns were suppressed by the news media.

How can beliefs about "harmless wolves" persist in spite of centuries of recorded experience to the contrary in Russia, Finland, France, Sweden, Germany, India, Afghanistan, Korea, Japan, central Asia, Turkey, Iran, or Greenland?

Peter Freuchen, an explorer of Greenland, reported in *Arctic Adventure* that he lost a companion to wolves (p. 23, pp. 329, 332). Freuchen had his own harrowing experiences with wolves trying to break into his cabin (pp. 16-19). He shot a wolf stalking his children (pp. 347-348), and was unable to provision his outpost by dog sled because every attempt was halted by wolf attacks.

Freuchen shared an observation made by a long-time resident and hunter in Greenland: where there are wolves, there are no people and vice versa! And while details in Hazaribagh, Northern India, may be different, the causes of wolf predation on humans are much the same. The stage is set by prey scarcity, few opportunities to kill livestock, and *de facto* protection of wolves.

Next comes the systematic targeting of people as prey, mainly children. To understand the stubborn persistence of the "harmless wolf," we need to explore the myth's origins and then examine the nature of the contradicting evidence.

Tracing the Myth's Origins

The origin of the "harmless wolf" myth can be traced to a highly respected Canadian biologist, Dr. Doug Clark. He investigated the killing of people by wolves in Europe and concluded in an unpublished paper, "The Beast of Gèvaudan," that while such attacks were real, rabid wolves caused them all.

Clark's exoneration of healthy wolves was based on his experience with Canada's wilderness wolves. In

that respect, Clark's experience is much the same as my own. And yet he erred. Apparently he was unaware of the behavioral distinction between rabid and non-rabid wolf attacks. This is puzzling because others including scientists, historians, and even laypersons did differentiate between the attacks of rabid and non-rabid wolves based on examination of the same material.

Clark failed to notice that in the days before modern medicine, there were survivors of wolf attacks who could not have been bitten by rabid wolves. Rabid wolves are lethal. Consider that historically, the most frightening aspect of being bitten by a rabid wolf was the victim's "mad" state and near-certain death within about six months.

Rabid wolves attacked swiftly with great ferocity, biting multiple victims as well as livestock and non-animate objects. Their bite was aimed at the victim's face and head. Rabid wolves do not stalk, sneak, hunt, or drag the victim away for consumption.

Contrast this with the reported cases in which victims have managed to escape after being attacked, subdued, and even dragged away by wolves. From these attacks, clearly perpetrated by non-rabid wolves, a pattern of selectivity emerged in which wolves targeted primarily children.

Rabid wolves exhibited no such selectivity. As well, adult humans could escape most attacks by single wolves, but never that of a pack. Subsequent historians such as Moriceau found that in France about one-third of the attacks were by non-rabid wolves. The same proportion was reported by biologists such as Linnell et al.

Alas, the fairy tale by the brothers Grimm, *Little Red Riding Hood*, is not based on myths, ignorance, or a misunderstanding of wolves. Rather, it is based on very real and terrible experiences with wolves throughout the centuries.

Excepting historic Japan, where unarmed peasants cultivated and revered wild wolves as a defense against crop-raiding deer and wild pigs, I have not found instances where unchecked wolf packs lived peacefully alongside people. Even in Japan, tolerance ended when wolves became infected with rabies and inflicted this dreaded disease on humans. Wolves were then persecuted and exterminated by 1905.

Clark's conclusions were picked up by North American wolf biologists. Why did so few biologists bother to investigate the historical material relating to wolf attacks? Possible reasons include language and cultural barriers, premature insights based on young captive wolves, or failure to see that such investigations require a background in the scholarship of historians rather than the sciences.

Undoubtedly these biologists were influenced by the lack of human casualties attributed to wolves—unlike the numerous cases of human deaths caused by bears and

cougars in North America. An explanation for this is that wolves, like coyotes, take a long time to target humans as alternative prey.

Individuals that do so become conspicuous are quickly eliminated by arms-bearing North Americans. Bears and cougars have no such conspicuous targeting behavior.

Native people seem much less enamored of the myth of harmless wolves than are urban environmentalists. As to the claimed lack of evidence that wolves prey on people, a native hunter gave the following response: "Evidence? Wolves eat the evidence!"

Such was the case with Kenton Carnegie. Wolves had devoured not only his body, but also some of his clothing until interrupted by the search parties.

The myth of the harmless wolf gained traction globally following the publication of a very popular book by famous Canadian author, Farley Mowat, in which wolves were depicted as harmless, lovable mouse-eaters.

While Canadian biologists did not fall for this prank, the literati did—and are still falling for it. It's interesting that Mowat's book was embraced by the Soviet Union's communist party, which had a history of systematically suppressing information about man-killing wolves.

Since coming to power, the party had used "scientific" propaganda to convince that wolves were harmless, probably in order to forestall the call for arms by the public.

The Russian scientist Pavlov disclosed this matter in a book on wolves. Translated into Norwegian, his work was denounced by the Soviets and the responsible ministry was ordered to destroy the translation. It was subsequently published in Swedish. An English translation lingered unpublished because no publisher wanted to touch it; yet, it has recently been published.

The Nature of the Evidence

A second reason the "harmless wolf" myth persists is that accounts of wolf attacks are observational in nature rather than consisting of scientific data. Witness accounts are usually recorded second-hand by the police, priests, doctors, and county clerks. Second-hand records are often subjective, however.

Moreover, while church and municipal records are a good source of reported wolf attacks on people, few such records survived the frequent and destructive wars in Europe. The limitations of such records and first-hand accounts do not do justice to the subject.

There is also suspicion that some reports, especially in newspapers, may have been padded or are somehow not trustworthy. The truth of those assertions is not for scientists to decide, but for historians. The expertise of historian scholarship is required to locate, verify, clarify, and place into perspective the records of wolf predation on humans.

For instance, planner Johnny Loe and scientist Elvin Röske reported a total of 607 humans killed by wolves in 15 countries. The French rural historian Jean-Marc Moriceau documented more than 3,000 fatalities in France alone. Scientists reporting in Linnell et al. (2002) did well, but failed to match Moriceau's scholarship.

Scientists, no matter how sincere or competent in their respective fields, are not qualified to deliver historical scholarship. What scientists can do competently is to winnow historical research for patterns and trends that relate to what is known about wolf biology—while recognizing that our understanding of wolf biology, too, is changing.

North American wolf biologists have not sought the assistance of historians, in part because of language and cultural barriers. Early on, their views were shaped by working with young captive wolves and by an abiding respect for Clark's authority.

Had biologists done systematic investigation of foreign historical material, they would hardly have concluded that the fairytale of *Little Red Riding Hood* was based on ignorance, misunderstanding, malice or an exaggerated fear of wolves!

In places where prey are scarce, livestock unavailable, and people unarmed, wolves focus on humans—then as now—with frightening consequences. No sovereign would have accepted the high costs, economic losses, or meager results of wolf control in centuries past were it not for telling reasons.

Can Wolves and People Coexist?

During the inquiry into Kenton Carnegie's death, biologist Mark McNay testified that aggressive encounters with wolves in North America are on the increase with current wolf recovery. The historical and current evidence indicates that people and wolves can coexist where the wolf population remains at low levels and all habituating animals are removed.

These circumstances effectively maintain a buffer of wild prey and livestock between wolves and humans. However, the notion now enshrined in law in North America and Europe, that wolves can coexist with people *in multi-use landscapes surrounding houses, farms, villages and cities*, is not tenable.

Under such conditions, territorial wolves and people will come into contact. Once they have habituated, even well-fed wolves will test people by approaching them, nipping at their clothing, and licking exposed skin. A clumsy first attack may leave victims injured but alive, but serious attacks soon follow. While a healthy man with determination may succeed in fighting off or even choking a lone wolf, a lone person cannot defeat a pack.

And all this assumes the absence of rabies. When wolves begin to patiently observe humans, it signals that they are targeting humans as prey. Such wolves may be

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short of natural prey, or they may be well-fed on garbage and already habituated to humans.

And all this assumes the absence of rabies. When wolves begin to patiently observe humans, it signals that they are targeting humans as prey. Such wolves may be short of natural prey, or they may be well-fed on garbage and already habituated to humans.

Patient observation means that wolves have begun to familiarize themselves with humans and that an attack is likely to follow. The same pattern has been described in urban coyotes that learn to target children. In both cases, the animals need to be taken out.

In British Columbia any licensed hunter can remove habituating wolves, and this provides a safety valve. Healthy, free-living wolves are virtually non-huntable. The animals most likely to be killed by hunters are disadvantaged by age, condition, or rejection by their pack. Consequently, even liberal hunting laws need not threaten wolf abundance.

Needed :Comprehensive policies

All wildlife conservation policies should aim to sustain native, unadulterated genetic stocks in environments that support the continuation of adaptive processes. Wildlife conservation policies also need to engender tolerance, acceptance, and public support; without this, wildlife cannot thrive.

History teaches that political support accrues to species that are either used by a large segment of the population, or revered as an icon. In North America, wolves maintained at very low levels do not pose a threat to livestock, pets, or humans; moreover, they become romantic icons.

At high densities, however, wolves may severely reduce or destroy wildlife populations. This has been demonstrated by the Japanese experience and other historic accounts, by rigorous studies, and by my personal experience. Large predators in North America kill more game than do hunters by an order of magnitude. I've come to understand that unregulated predator populations threaten the very institution of public ownership of wildlife.

Wildlife in North America has a long history as a treasured resource that generates substantial wealth and employment. It has been vigorously defended by its owners, the citizens of the U.S. and Canada.

As the public's interest in wildlife diminishes, I see conditions developing for the transfer of wildlife resources and habitats to private ownership. Already in some states and provinces we're seeing the privatization of deer and other big game. In the future, the public may have no more say over private bears and wolves than it has currently over private deer.

Our goals must aim to maintain genetically pure stocks of predators in native landscapes, sustain game

abundance for public use, and provide for public safety. We need a comprehensive policy for carnivore conservation. The ideal policy will be a prescription for diverse and abundant game populations, viable populations of native predators, and high levels of hunter participation.

This approach would safeguard the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation by insuring that a large fraction of the population is actively engaged in the policies, politics, and pastimes that enable a secure future for wildlife.

In managing wildlife, one is reminded of the French proverb that says, to have a beautiful park, one needs a very sharp axe and a heart of stone! The following are what I believe to be essential elements in a comprehensive policy for carnivore conservation:

1. If predator conservation is a serious issue, then the policy of conserving wolves in multi-use landscapes surrounding houses, farms, villages and cities is untenable. It must lead to the generic extinction of wolves via interbreeding with domestic dogs, changing wolves into feral dogs. Lone wolves trying to find company and thus fraternizing with dogs produce this problem. In North America there is also fraternization with coyotes and the mixing of wolf and coyote genes—and all the conservation and legal problems this entails.

2. Predator conservation requires a well thought-out Continental Carnivore Conservation Strategy negotiated between Canada and the United States within the context of a Terrestrial Wildlife Conservation Treaty. While the primary purpose of such a treaty would be to enshrine the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation in treaty law, another objective would be to negotiate a continental Endangered Species agreement.

Continentially, or globally, wolves were never an endangered species, and the use of the current legislation as a basis of wolf reintroduction violates the very spirit of that legislation. There's nothing wrong with wolf reintroductions, but not under an endangered species act!

We need to apply our very limited resources to species truly in danger and not squander them on a common, resilient predator with a history of remarkable recoveries. This is not merely a matter of money, but also of squandering good will and credibility.

Moreover, current reintroductions need to be viewed primarily as precious experiments whose lessons we need to document and learn from. My review of matters pertaining to the Kenton Carnegie tragedy points to serious deficits in scholarship pertaining to wolves.

There has been far too little integration of available information. The bitter complaints of rural people affected by wolf reintroduction, for instance, are based on perfectly valid fears grounded in reality. Their concerns need attention – and solutions

A historical review of wolves and humans shows that nobody has yet succeeded in living in peace with packs

of wolves, unless there was a buffer of game, livestock and pets between wolves and humans, and the wolves were conditioned to shun people. Nor have we paid attention to the experiences of native people with wolves, who pointed out, correctly, that wolves eat, disperse and bury the evidence—be it wolf-killed sheep, calves or humans.

Note similar findings for livestock taken by wolves. Wolf packs attacking dogs pulling sleds were not uncommon in the north or in Greenland. The premises of the reintroductions were faulty, a matter that today clarifies vital conceptions we have about wildlife populations and predation. Above all, we urgently need to find ways to insure that scholarship is disinterested and freed of political and bureaucratic advocacy.

3. We need to take seriously the matter of zoning, determining where large predators will and won't be conserved. This is an old, but important, conception most recently realized in the Wyoming wolf management scheme. More fundamentally, we need to discuss the whole matter of so-called ecosystem rehabilitation.

During this process of re-establishing regional biodiversity there are three major steps, the return of herbivores, followed by the return of carnivores, followed by the return of parasites and diseases dependent on the preceding processes.

We have experienced the heady return of large herbivores and game as well as the biodiversity clinging to their coattails. Do we really need the diseases and parasites potentially dangerous to public health and agriculture? If not, then zoning is the answer.

We have to take seriously means and ways of coexistence where we can very fruitfully look to history. If we can agree on zoning for large predators, then we can take advantage of the lessons of history—North American history in particular: where there has been a high ratio of prey to predators, wolves are shy, avoid humans and are the very image of romantically idealized wolves.

As long as there is an abundance of prey surrounding wolves, they stick to such and avoid humans and their livestock. As long as there is a buffer of game and livestock between wolves and humans, they do not target humans as alternative prey.

4. There is a great Public Good that hunters give to society at large, which I may call here the "freedom of the woods." It is based on the fact that an armed person acts quite differently from an unarmed one when meeting predators, and we have reason to believe that the predators notice the difference via sight, sound and smell.

A confident person is quite intimidating to carnivores, while a fearful one merely encourages predators to confront people. Therefore, unarmed people in the backcountry encourage misbehavior in predators to the detriment of predators.

Secondly, and of great importance, is that inefficient hunting of predators conditions the animals

negatively so that they avoid humans. Subsequently, hikers, campers, and picnickers can go into the woods in safety as carnivores stay away from humans.

The Achilles heel of carnivores is being stalked systematically, just as they prey on smaller or weaker members of their own species. Carnivores are cannibalistic; and grizzly bears and wolves are no exception.

Consequently, being stalked is very likely a terrifying experience to bears or wolves. Hunted carnivores negatively conditioned will coexist splendidly with humans. That's the big lesson from our history where we lived together with carnivores in North America (or in Siberia). Where large carnivores are de facto protected, where they may multiply unimpeded, livestock, pets and eventually humans become their victims—let alone game animals.

5. We require large-scale carnivore conservation areas including areas where large predators may dwell unmolested by humans. This is an essential condition of any model of carnivore conservation. There must be places, large places, where they may live without interference by humans. Wherever we impose human use on lands where carnivores live, the security of humans invariably takes priority.

Ironically, the only human entry into such carnivore reserves would be by armed persons to avoid any positive conditioning that would lead to predators approaching humans. I suggest that we consider the process of making our national parks core areas of carnivore conservation and switch tourism and recreation outdoor uses on large wild areas where humans are protected by the "freedom of the woods."

Yes, that's a mighty big change from our present mentality, but it comes close to what the South Africans are doing where the national parks are for nature preservation, and tourism is controlled so as to interfere as little as possible.

We do need large wild recreation areas for wholesome outdoor activities and large carnivores can live there splendidly at low population levels while being negatively conditioned to humans. The sheer size of such recreational and multiuse areas would insure viable carnivore populations.

(NOTE: Dr. Val Geist is familiar to *Outdoorsman* readers and is recognized by wildlife scientists world-wide as the undisputed authority on North American big game species. A slightly edited version of this article appeared in the Summer 2009 issue of the Boone & Crockett Club publication *Fair Chase*, as part three of a series on wolves by Dr. Geist. As more respected scientists "tell it like it is" to combat the misinformation provided by wildlife biologists who pretend they are managing ecosystems, It is vital to get this information to those we elect. – ED)

Wolf Recovery and the Corruption of Government Science

By George Dovel

In November 2007 when Evolutionary Biologists Jennifer Leonard and Robert Wayne announced that most of the several thousand “wolves” being protected in the Great Lakes region were actually wolf-coyote crosses, Utah Wildlife Ecologist Dr. Charles Kay commented, “What a mess!” During their two-year study of the genetic make-up of Great Lakes wolves that were delisted, the study did not find any purebred Eastern Timber Wolves, and only 31% of the wolves tested had any Eastern timber wolf “genes” in their genetic make-up.

When confronted with this information by the news media in November 2007, Eastern Gray Wolf Recovery Team Leader Rolph Peterson admitted they had known all along that the wolves were crossbreeding with coyotes. He said what was new was the evidence there was no crossbreeding in historic samples and no pure wolves in the current samples.

Peterson added, “We certainly would have liked to hold on to what was here 100 years ago. But I doubt that anything would have changed.”



Although most of the more than 4,100 wolves L. David Mech and FWS claim are recovered in the Great Lakes Region look like wolves, genetic analysis found that, unlike the species that was supposed to be protected and restored, most are the product of crossbreeding with coyotes. None of the animals tested were the pure subspecies that lived there in the early 20th Century.

Mech - Whatever Their Genetics, They Are Wolves

When one of the evolutionary biologists suggested the wolves should be re-listed, FWS Wolf guru David Mech responded, “It is not clear what would be gained by keeping the Midwestern wolf population on the endangered species list.” Mech continued, “Whatever their genetic identity, there are over 4,000 wolves in the population, they are increasing rapidly, and are legally protected by the states.”

Mech, Peterson and Wayne participated in a two-year study published in 1991 which concluded that more than 50% of wolves in Minnesota, Ontario and Quebec were hybrids crossed with coyotes. This was only one of numerous studies conducted during the past 20+ years concluding that wolves in the lower 48 States, and many in Canada and other parts of the world, are crossbred with dogs, coyotes or different subspecies of wolves that may also be crossbred.

Bangs Deletes Comments on Increased Sightings of Resident Idaho Wolves from Wolf EIS

Although most of these studies were published in scientific journals, the information was not made available to the public or to their elected representatives in Congress. After all, how would these people who must approve FWS plans to restore endangered wolf subspecies react if they knew they would pay millions of dollars to replace each endangered wolf subspecies with assorted hybrids?

On August 12, 1994, five months before a different subspecies of wolf than historically existed in Idaho was released in the state, FWS Rocky Mountain Wolf Project Leader Ed Bangs sent a letter (directive) to Boise FWS Ecological Services Chief Charles Lobdell. The five-page letter directed Lobdell and his team of research biologists to halt their documentation of the wolves that already existed in Idaho.

Bangs wrote that FWS had contracted with IDFG Wolf Biologist Jon Rachael to review wolf sightings in Idaho over the past several years and prepare a report on the occurrences of wolves. An FWS biologist in Boise edited Rachael’s comments to reflect recent increases in sightings of wolves but Bangs deleted his comments and simply published Rachael’s claim in the Wolf EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) that no evidence of wolf packs had been found in Idaho.

Bangs’ letter stated he had removed the editing by Ted Koch because “sightings of lone wolves or even pairs of wolves, without emphasizing pack activity, can mislead the public into believing that this type of information equals progress toward wolf recovery.”

Facts Withheld to Promote FWS Option

Bangs was referring to the fact that, if the public and their elected officials knew the number of native wolves was increasing, they would insist on the “Natural Recovery” option in Central Idaho rather than the “Experimental Population” option promoted by FWS.

Bangs’ letter implied the wolves Idahoans were seeing were simply dispersing transients that had traveled several hundred miles before reaching Idaho. He basically ignored the 197-page report titled, “Wolves of Central Idaho,” published in 1984 by wolf researchers Kaminski and Hansen, and implied the wolf sightings they confirmed were of the same wolf subspecies FWS planned to import from Canada.

During the late 1980s, Bangs hired a graduate student from North Carolina and her young female companion to confirm or deny the presence of native wolves in the mountains of south central Idaho. With inadequate funding and transportation and an obvious lack of familiarity with the country and local wolf territories, their odds of locating packs with surviving pups were poor.

Evidence of Idaho Resident Wolf Packs with Pups

During that same period, flyers soliciting information from local trappers and other outdoorsmen concerning both wolf and wolverine sightings were circulated. The native wolf subspecies that inhabited the Northern Rocky Mountains at that time (*Canis lupus irremotus*) was reportedly a smaller* wolf than the subspecies in northern Canada. (*Kaminski/Hansen 1984)

University of Idaho Forestry graduate Tim Kemery had trapped marten in areas inhabited by these animals since he first entered the University. He recorded minimum populations and locations of both wolverines and wolves in his new marten trapping area, which included the southern portion of the Frank Church Wilderness and adjacent lands to the south and east. He also documented wolf howling in the fall and at rendezvous sites, as well as later when adults were accompanied by pups.

He made a map of three wolf pack territories, which included pups and/or yearlings, along with estimates of their minimum populations of seven, five and three wolves and a minimum total population of 18 wolves, including singles. He made a similar map of wolf territories near the northwest corner of Central Idaho and a third map of wolverine locations.

Wolf Pack Sizes, Territories Entered in CDC Database

Kemery turned the three maps and info over to Craig Groves who set up the data base for the Idaho Natural Heritage Program (later called the Conservation Data Center) for The Nature Conservancy at IDFG. Groves said the maps of wolverine locations and wolf territories would be entered in the data base and Kemery agreed to take the federal wolf biologists to the appropriate locations when the snow conditions were right so they could verify the reproductive resident packs.

Kemery continued to supply wolf pack information to IDFG in his annual trapper reports but when Bangs’ letter denying the existence of wolf packs in Idaho was written, he still had not been contacted. He was not aware of the 2004 letter until a few months ago during our first meeting when I explained that it had ordered all efforts to confirm uncollared wolves halted by Lobdell’s crew.

I also mentioned that Bangs changed the intent of Congress in that letter by declaring, “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.”

Bangs’ letter insisted, without offering any proof, that no wolf-dog hybrid or wolf raised in captivity can survive in the wild and said that once wolves were released, every wolf in the area would become part of the (protected) experimental population.

Two of the four wolf recovery programs in the lower 48 states depend on wolf-coyote or reportedly even wolf-dog hybrids that are raised in captivity and then released in the wild. Yet Defenders of Wildlife refused to pay an extensive livestock depredation claim in Montana because genetic testing of the wolf that was killed by Wildlife Services indicated it was a wolf-dog hybrid.



Molecular genetics analysis concluded that the red wolf being bred and raised in captivity and then released into the wild in the Southeastern U.S. by FWS is a wolf-coyote hybrid.

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By recognizing the existence of naturally occurring wolf pups in NW Montana and the northern tip of Idaho, yet denying the fact that native wolves also produced pups in central Idaho, Bangs paved the way for destroying, rather than preserving, the native subspecies if it still existed. Introduction of two different subspecies of wolves combined with protection of every wolf-like creature in the vast “Nonessential Experimental Areas” – regardless of genetic make-up – assured creation of a new mix of assorted hybrid wolves.

The fact that the existing resident wolves coexisted with abundant big game populations and with negligible impact on livestock and human activity was already a matter of record. Bangs admitted, both in the letter and in the Wolf EIS, that the Natural Recovery Option (doing nothing except monitor and protect existing wolves) would result in achieving recovery slower but with substantially less impact than transplanting wolves from Canada.

But from the beginning, FWS, the state game agencies and most wolf activist groups displayed no intention of pursuing any option except the Nonessential Experimental Population by importing Canadian wolves. Once that was implemented FWS could change the recovery criteria rules just as it did in Minnesota.

Confirming Wolf Packs or Pup Survival Would Have Prevented Import of Wolves From Northern Canada

The 10J Rule allowed the release of an experimental population “*only when the population is wholly separate geographically from nonexperimental populations of the same species.*” The major obstacle to implementing that option in Idaho was Kemery’s record of wolf packs with surviving pups that already existed in the Central Idaho Wolf Recovery Area.

Following my meeting with Mr. Kemery, I sent him a packet containing Bangs’ 1994 letter to Lobdell and some other pertinent information. That was the first and last contact I had with him until I began writing this article and called him to get some answers. I have his permission to print the following events he described to me:

Investigation Reveals Maps of Wolf Packs Missing

After reading Bangs’ 1994 directive to Lobdell in which FWS and IDFG employees denied any knowledge of wolf packs or pups in Central Idaho, Kemery met with a group of Idaho Legislators and told them his story. Then an investigative team was formed to determine why the information entered in the CDC data base was ignored.

Several current or former IDFG employees agreed that Kemery’s map and data on wolverines is still in the data base, but insisted both wolf maps and the wolf data that was attached no longer exist. IDFG At-Risk Species Data Manager George Stevens, who entered the material in the data base before it was turned over to FWS, reportedly said that all of the wolf information had been removed before FWS eventually returned it to Fish and Game.

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ordered them to immediately provide unlimited access to Yellow Pine residents or he would. Yellow Pine residents

Then Kemery contacted Dr. Craig Groves, now with The Nature Conservancy, who began his career with TNC when it hired him as Director and Zoologist for the Idaho Natural Heritage Center. Groves, who was later hired by IDFG as a Nongame and Endangered Species biologist for several years, reportedly said he remembered Stephens entering the maps and information in the data base at his direction.

Additional Proof of Wolf Map Confirmed

While this may be considered hearsay as presented here, other former government officials have verified the fact that Tim Kemery spent a couple of years carefully documenting the existence of the wolf packs that were depicted on the maps. For their protection* their names are not included here.

(* In 1993, University of Utah Wildlife Ecologist Dr. Charles Kay exposed FWS deception implying that Northern Rocky Mountain wolves would be delisted once the tri-state population reached 300 animals. In subsequent testimony to Congress, Kay described how Ed Bangs viciously attacked his professional integrity and tried to get him fired from the University and from a research project Kay was conducting for Parks Canada.)

Wilderness Reportedly Not Even Checked for Wolves

Kemery also told me he contacted the former graduate student hired by FWS to assess the validity of reported wolf packs in central Idaho. He said she insisted they had used hair traps* and other appropriate sampling techniques but finally admitted she and her companion had not done this in the Frank Church Wilderness where the wolf packs spent most of their time. (* hair samples can be obtained with scent posts or hair capture “corrals.”)

Other Agencies Confirmed Existence of Wolves

During the 1980s multiple government agencies documented the existence of wolves in central Idaho. On September 28, 1987, officials of the Payette and Boise National Forests decided to close the South Fork of the Salmon River Road to all human traffic during the winter, except on Tuesdays and Thursdays, to protect the wolves.

That plowed road provided the only access to the town of Yellow Pine during the winter except for ski-equipped aircraft when weather conditions were favorable. This forced local residents to endure unwarranted hardships and emergency evacuations and they asked the court for relief.

When Judge Harold Ryan heard the attorneys’ arguments late in February of 1988, the U.S. Attorney said the Forest Service feared that someone using the road might shoot a gray wolf killing elk and deer on their winter range. The Judge responded that other wolves were killing elk and deer on the South Fork of the Payette River Road between Banks and Lowman yet local residents weren’t killing them and the Forest Service did not close that road.

Judge Ryan reprimanded the FS and FWS for assuming that back country residents were lawbreakers and

were promptly given keys to the locked gate and a Feb. 26, 1988 *Idaho Statesman* article reported that man’s

Constitutional right to travel freely trumped an unconfirmed threat to endangered wolves allowing them exclusive use of the area.

Wolf Hotline Flooded With Reports of Sightings

In December of 1988 an Idaho wolf sighting hotline was established and officials announced that by February more than 120 hunters, outfitters, guides and others had called in reports of seeing wolves. Boise National Forest Wildlife Biologist John Erickson told the *Statesman* that authorities had never seen a wolf in Idaho* but hoped to organize several field trips in March to track and see a wolf.

(* In the late 1970s an IDFG research biologist working in central Idaho accompanied a Forest service official in a helicopter to locate and view a wolf pack the FS employee had heard howling.)

With all of the high-tech management tools at their disposal even 20 years ago, it may appear strange to some readers that wildlife biologists in Idaho had never seen a live wolf when so many outdoorsmen reported sighting them. That is not so strange when one considers that most biologists and other government officials almost never spent time in the field on the ground during winter in areas where wolves might be observed.

FWS Keeps Changing the Wolves' Status in an Attempt to Make the Monster It Created Disappear

The Original listing of wolves as an endangered species in 1974 was for two subspecies, with two additional subspecies added in 1976. In 1978 FWS changed the wolf listing to "endangered" in 47 states and "threatened" in Minnesota, and included all wolf subspecies. In 2000 it proposed creating Distinct Population Segments (DPS) in the Great Lakes Region where wolves were already recovered – and in the Northeast where there were sightings of wolf-like animals.

The problem was that the animals in these sightings included large coyotes and dogs and assorted wolf-coyote and wolf-dog hybrids. FWS was not even sure any Eastern Timber Wolf subspecies still existed so in 2003 it decided to solve that problem by creating three Distinct Population Segments (DPS) - the Southwestern, Western and Eastern, and then downgrading all but the Southwestern DPS wolves from Endangered to Threatened.

In 2005 a federal judge in Oregon overturned the three DPS segments, ruling that wolf recovery in the three Great Lakes states did not constitute recovery in all 21 states in the Eastern DPS, with a similar ruling on Western states recovery occurring just in the Northern Rocky Mountains. The Judge determined that FWS used DPS designation to create a framework for illegally downlisting and ultimately delisting these large geographical areas.

The monster that Congress and FWS created when it listed wolves as an endangered species in all of the lower 48 states (allegedly to prohibit interstate or international

trade in endangered species) has matured. Activist judges who are willing to ignore the massive damage inflicted on an increasing number of U.S. citizens by wolf recovery – and ignore the fact that the former wolf subspecies are being replaced with assorted mongrels – are using ESA language to halt or overturn delisting.



So-called "coywolf" hybrid reportedly found in western New York, Western Pennsylvania and elsewhere. It resembles the western coyote in appearance except for being much larger, but displays wolf traits including pursuing larger prey and hunting in packs

The "coywolf" pictured above, reportedly the product of male Canadian wolves breeding female western coyotes that moved east as wolf populations declined, is being praised by some biologists as an appropriate "naturally-occurring" answer to the absence of wolves in the northeastern U.S. But many wolf advocates insist the gray wolf must remain listed as an endangered species in the East.

Despite the Montana Judge's ruling that eastern wolves are not recovered outside of the Great Lakes area, FWS has rejected petitions to re-list the Eastern Timber Wolf as endangered. If the Eastern Timber Wolf no longer exists, as genetic sampling indicates, what subspecies or hybrid would FWS introduce to replace it?

Bangs Introduced the Largest Wolves in North America into the NRM

When Ed Bangs chose the largest subspecies of wolves in North America (*Canis.lupus occidentalis* and *C.l columbianus*) to introduce into the Northern Rocky Mountains, it created controversy among wolf researchers.

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While Brewster & Fritts claimed the original NRM wolf was already extinct, Nowak wrote, “The extirpated wolf population of the Yellowstone region is closely related to the living population of Minnesota, both regarded here as part of the subspecies *Canis lupus nubilus*.”

Wildlife scientists agree that wolf subspecies living in colder climates (e.g. *C.l. occidentalis* in northern Canada) generally have larger bodies* than the same subspecies in warmer climates and larger prey is available to them. Opponents of transplanting these oversized wolves into the U.S. argued that the habitat to support them did not exist outside of the mountains. (* “Bergman’s Rule”)

The average weight of male wolves introduced into the NRM from northern Canada was at least 30% heavier than average male wolf weights in the Great Lakes. Not only would that create a different “niche” (prey base and impact on the NRM ecosystems) by the larger wolves, but the lack of habitat caused by agricultural development and urban and rural sprawl would prohibit these wolves from existing outside of the national parks and wilderness areas.

Court Allows Transplants – Then Orders Removal

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 the agencies 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.

Court “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.

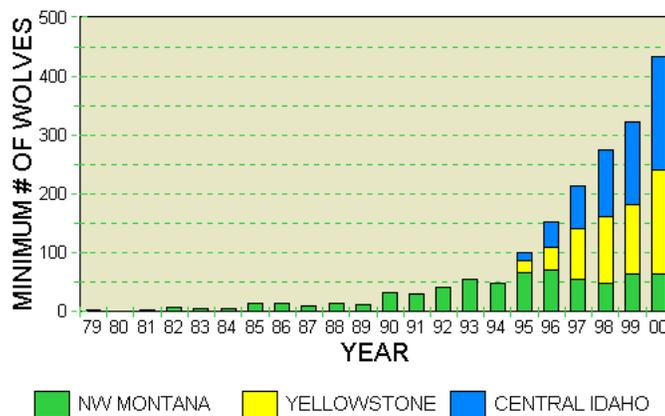
Judge Downes could have prevented this disaster from occurring by simply putting wolf introduction on hold three years earlier until his decision was reached. But the second time he did essentially the same thing by later staying execution of his removal order pending an appeals decision by the 10th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

This gave the Canadian wolves two more years of protection during which time their numbers doubled and reached recovery goals (see following chart). This also

provided the opportunity to destroy more of the naturally occurring wolves that still existed in the two areas and gave Bangs and his allies time to sell their version of the Canadian wolf introduction to the appeals court.

Figure 5: Wolf Population Trends

N. Rocky Mountain States, 1979-2000



FWS chart shows gradual increase in naturally occurring wolves in Northwest Montana since 1979 (bottom segment) versus quadrupling of introduced Canadian wolf numbers during the period courts were deciding whether or not they were legally introduced.

The 10th Circuit Court’s reversal of Judge Downes’ finding that the wolf introduction violated the law illustrates the futility of private citizens challenging an action by a self-serving government department or agency in our legal system. The appeals court admitted there was evidence in the record supporting the Plaintiffs’ claims, but ignored it with this cite: “The mere presence of contradictory evidence does not invalidate the Agencies’ actions or decisions.”

It used the FWS excuse, “Wolves travel hundreds of miles,” to pretend the 10J Rule didn’t mean what it said about not introducing experimental populations where naturally occurring wolves already exist. It claimed Congress intended that DOI/FWS should use its own discretion to determine the need for introducing wolves, and use its own information to determine when, where and what kind of wolves it would introduce.

But then it appeared to contradict itself by justifying Canadian wolf introduction based on “the lack of evidence any wolf population existed in the reintroduction areas at the time of reintroduction.” Admitting that Plaintiffs believed the *irremotus* subspecies still existed in Wyoming, the Court wrote, “The Agencies reasonably determined there is no *irremotus* population within the designated reintroduction area” and “The agency’s (special) expertise should receive substantial deference.”

Agency Special Expertise is a Myth

Unlike the game wardens and a few dedicated research biologists who traditionally spent months in the field observing wildlife, few if any current federal or state

wildlife biologists have that opportunity to develop the special skills and knowledge needed to determine the existence of wolves. Hiring inexperienced graduate students to document the existence of wolves in Idaho's wilderness areas – without even setting foot in those areas – virtually guaranteed finding no evidence of wolf packs whether they were *irremotus* or some other subspecies.

The fact that no employee in any of the state and federal natural resource management agencies in Idaho recorded sighting a wolf from 1979 until radio-collared wolves allowed electronic tracking in 1995 – yet verified abundant citizen wolf sightings – illustrates the necessity for government biologists to rely on private citizens to locate uncollared wolves for them. That is just as true today as it was when the appeals court deferred to the agencies' alleged expertise.

Appeals Court Ignores Impact of Introducing Different Wolves, Claims Little Difference in Subspecies

The appeals court dismissed the fact that FWS had gone ahead and introduced the Canadian wolves without addressing expressed concerns regarding their impact on existing wolf populations. It cited the FWS claim to Congress that introduction would not affect the ongoing monitoring and conservation of wolf subspecies (see 43 Fed. Reg. at 9610) yet Bangs permanently halted efforts to locate and monitor all "uncollared" (existing) wolves even before the Canadian wolves were transplanted (see Bangs' Aug. 14, 1994 letter to Charles Lobdell)

The Court also embraced one side of a century-old taxonomic debate,* stating, "There is very little difference between the many recognized subspecies of grey wolf," in order to excuse the fact that differences in size and habits of the resident wolves and the introduced Canadian wolves were not considered or even mentioned by FWS. (* That debate centers around the 24 wolf subspecies in North America (Mech 1974) that are still recognized by the American Society of Mammalogists).

Court Echoes Bangs' Claim Native Wolves Extinct

But even if qualified taxonomists decide there are only a few subspecies or even no subspecies of the Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*) as some suggest, FWS Taxonomist Ron Nowak said, "A big part of the conservation of a full species is to insure that its component subspecies and populations remain intact and in place."

He maintained there is a "subspecific distinction" between the original Yellowstone wolf and the reintroduced wolves and said, "If there were actually a surviving population of the original Yellowstone wolf, every effort should be made to maintain its purity and to avoid bringing in other wolves."

"Thanks" to the Wyoming District Court, the 10th Circuit Court, and the 9th Circuit Court that rendered a similar decision earlier, Dr. Nowak's advice was noted but ignored in favor of Ed Bangs' unsubstantiated claim that no wolf packs existed where wolves were introduced. Yet

one document referenced by the courts as part of the record does not support that claim.

***Irremotus* Existed in 1987 NRM Wolf Recovery Plan**

Page 2 of the 146-page FWS Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan dated August 3, 1987, contains the map below 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 the northern tip of Idaho and from B.C. or southern Alberta into the northwest corner of Montana.

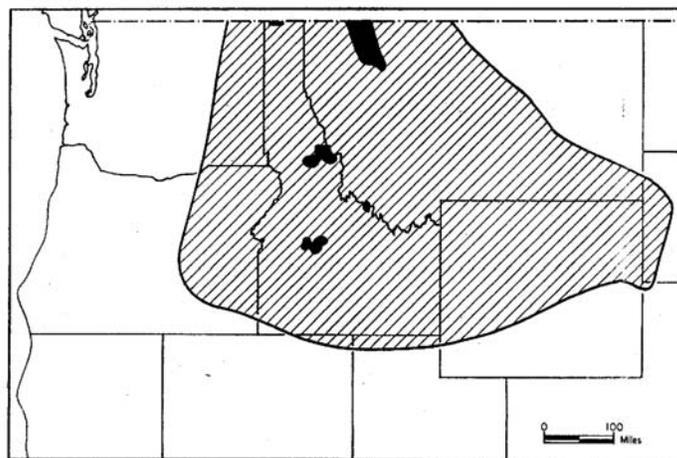


Figure 1. Historical distribution of the northern Rocky Mountain wolf (*Canis lupus irremotus*) in the United States according to Hall and Kelson (1959). The black areas represent the current approximate distribution of wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains of the contiguous 48 states.

It also shows the two current (1987) *irremotus* population areas in central Idaho which include the two wolf pack territory map areas provided by Tim Kimmery to the Idaho CDC between 1988 and 1991. These two areas included the majority of citizen reports of wolves and wolf packs but only one wolf pack in NW Montana had actually been confirmed by FWS when the Plan was completed.

The Executive Summary states that due to its isolation from areas with established wolf populations, the Yellowstone area will likely involve the reintroduction of wolves into YNP. Recovery through natural colonization will be relied upon for the northwest Montana and central Idaho recovery areas provided they produce two breeding pairs within five years after approval of the Plan.

FWS did not check for Breeding Pairs in Central Idaho

But those responsible for concealing the information on existing native Idaho wolf packs were apparently determined to ignore that Plan and instead flood central Idaho with Canadian wolves – and then use the wilderness wolf packs to provide a constant supply of surplus wolves for surrounding regions. That was finally confirmed in IDFG Director Cal Groen's January 14, 2008 News Release (see *Outdoorsman* Bulletin 26).

The problem is that Groen's theory works only until the wolves destroy most of the game in a remote area.

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Then most surviving wolves that aren't killed by other wolves move on to areas where prey is more abundant.

Instead of being up front and honest with the public and Congress, federal and state wildlife managers have used misinformation and deception to sell their wolf preservation agenda. These include grossly exaggerating the number of prey species that existed to support wolves and concealing the impact wolves and other large predators have on prey species.

The Department of Interior and its FWS Wolf Leaders changed the wolf recovery criteria about every 2-3 years. The wolf program changed from initially preserving specific subspecies in environments where they existed but were considered scarce, to ignoring subspecies and creating a series of DPS designations to take care of each new stumbling block in their plan.

The "Society For Conservation Biology"

The wolf preservationist groups worked closely with FWS and state game agencies from the beginning. But in order to sell the programs to the public and Congress, FWS enlisted help from the media, from educators at all levels and from like-minded organizations with publications that catered to the literati (those with higher education-people of "letters").

One such organization, the "Society For Conservation Biology" (SCB) was co-founded in 1985-87 by the same two radicals who also co-founded the "Wildlands Initiative" – to create a series of roadless wild areas and connecting corridors from Mexico to Alaska where protected large carnivores can roam undisturbed (see *Outdoorsman* No. 28 page 16). The SCB claims its primary publication, *Conservation Biology*, is accepted worldwide as an authority on biodiversity, ecosystem management and population ecology and genetics.

It says it "promotes the highest standards of quality and ethics in the activity of conservation research." However its editorial board has been contacted and severely criticized recently by such prominent wildlife authorities as Dr. Charles Kay and Dr. Valerius Geist for publishing misinformation designed to support the authors' opinions or agenda rather than scientific facts.

In 2001, in order to entice more of the literati to endorse their agenda, The Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund and other environmental groups added a second, more sophisticated, publication to SCB titled simply "Conservation Magazine."

Several wildlife scientists have told me this new "science" is no longer subject to peer review or healthy debate. Those who dare to publish the truth say they are often subjected to ridicule, removal of funding and even more severe threats.

What is Conservation Biology?

The latest edition of the American Heritage Dictionary says: "Conservation Biology is the branch of biology that deals with the effects of humans on the

environment and with the conservation of biological diversity." It might have added that the "effects of humans on the environment" refers only to the civilized humans that migrated to America from Europe beginning in 1492, and who have lived here ever since.

One of several wildlife research scientists I admire and respect recently stated:

"We labor under an illusion that science progresses in a rational fashion, advanced by high and open-minded, disinterested individuals, where in reality it is in the hands of *status groups* that anxiously exclude all others and jealously hold power over publication and publicity. The status group game has reached truly frightening proportions in anthropology where the systematic exclusion of others by the chief status groups has prompted some authors to write books about it!"

Respected scientists in other fields indicate this activist-generated "science" is not subject to the same standards or scrutiny as legitimate research. It is presented to the media in press releases as a crisis – and repeated often enough to convince an unsuspecting public it is true since they keep hearing about it.

The excuse for protecting gray wolves – that they were here first and humans are intruding on their habitat – has become the politically correct lie. On February 6, 2009 when a team of researchers at Stanford University Medical Center announced that black wolves are the result of cross breeding with domestic dogs, they speculated this must have happened more than 10,000 years ago when the wolves first crossed over from Asia.



According to University of Calgary wolf expert Marco Musiani, black wolves dominate packs in the forests of North America while white wolves are more numerous in the treeless tundra (photo by Marco Musiani)

As part of the research team at Stanford, Marco Musiani suggested the interbreeding between domestic dogs and wolves occurred thousands of years ago due to the fact that nearly half of the wolves in Yellowstone are now black. But these comments appear to support Dr. Val

Geist's observation that wildlife biologists are notoriously poor historians.

A search of historical records at the Smithsonian and elsewhere by interested people who questioned that statement revealed ample evidence of Indians deliberately breeding their female dogs to wild wolves from the 1600s through the 1800s. An often reported procedure was to stake out a female dog at the first sign of estrous until she was bred by male wolves, which produced a litter of hardy fighting hybrids for use in hunting or working.

From early Canadian and U.S. explorers to hunter conservationist Theodore Roosevelt, published accounts cite examples of such cross breeding. Tom Remington has done an excellent job of researching and reporting the recent history of wolves, including an article back in August of 2009 in his Black Bear Blog entitled, "Is There Really Any Such Thing As 'Pure Wolf'?"

Recent "Naturally Occurring" Wolf-Dog Matings

On September 18, 2009 *Conservation Genetics*, a journal published in The Netherlands and "devoted to conservation of genetic diversity," published an online version of a research article titled, "The genetic legacy of extirpation and re-colonization in Vancouver Island wolves." It described a recent genetic study of Vancouver Island wolves and dogs, which determined that, following 20 years of no wolves on Vancouver Island, possibly 16 wolves "swam across to the island from the mainland" and some male wolves eventually crossbred with one or more domestic female dogs.

The research paper speculated that the cross-breeding occurred because there were too few female wolves available for the number of males to breed ("Allee effects"). It claimed wolf control caused the problem and concluded: "*Management objectives and actions that seek to reduce wolf populations may be in conflict with prudent conservation policies.*"

The following day, a front page article in the *Vancouver Sun* headlined, "**Cross-bred animals found on Vancouver Island 'aren't fit as pets or wild creatures'.**" quoted one of the study's authors, Chris Darimont, who claimed Vancouver Island officials created "monsters" by reducing the number of wolves. Darimont and Paul Paquet, another of the study's authors, are in charge of the Raincoast Conservation Foundation carnivore team (RCF), a radical wild animal rights and wolf preservation project.

Darimont claims RCF discovered the existence of hybrid wolves in 2007 and says the 2009 study simply confirms what they discovered by accident. Yet in a 2003 letter to wolf researcher Dr. Eric Klinghammer, Dr. Val Geist identifies the same two wolf-dog hybrids tested again in the 2009 study promoted by RCF.

Wolf Starvation – the Main Ingredient

Dr. Geist allowed me to print that letter in the April-May 2006 *Outdoorsman* as an article titled, "Vancouver Island Wolves," which included his

description of how wolves became common in the late 1970s and swept the Island from north to south. After decimating the famous black-tailed deer population and assorted smaller prey, the starving wolves invaded farms and began killing livestock and the owners' dogs, yet occasionally also fraternized with the dogs.

Dr. Geist described how he and other wildlife researchers documented the decline in annual hunter deer harvest from 25,000 to only 3,000 and concluded that the invasion of farms, hybridization with dogs, etc. would likely not have occurred if wolf populations had been limited to match the available supply of wild game. Later he and other wildlife researchers pointed out this excessive kill by wolves cost Vancouver Island residents millions of dollars in lost annual revenue plus several million pounds of healthy protein to feed their families.

The media refused to print this information and the credibility of Dr. Geist and the other legitimate researchers was viciously attacked by academic biologists. Attacking the credibility of investigators and expert witnesses is the same tactic Paul Paquet used when he invented a set of non-existent bear tracks in a photograph to pretend that a bear instead of a wolf pack may have killed and partially eaten Kenton Carnegie in Points North Saskatchewan.

Although the 2009 study by Paquet et al includes several theoretical scenarios which appear to support its conclusion that wolf control caused the wolf-dog hybridization, it fails to mention the radical decline in deer populations and the resulting wolf starvation. When I forwarded a copy to Dr. Geist, he offered the following:

"The paper on Vancouver Island wolves finally admits (wolf-dog hybrids) – that's a step in the right direction. It also identifies correctly, that hybridization takes place when wolves are relatively scarce and in human contact. Of course there is nothing new in that one either.

"One reason for wolves to become scarce – left out by Paquet et al – is starvation. That is, wolves do eat themselves out of house and home and starve, then head for human settlements. Vancouver Island wolves are a small starvation specimen anyway. In my 15 years of observations I have seen how wolves clean out a country side, vacuuming it of wildlife. So, small, starving, lonely wolves will indeed seek out human habitation and hybridize with dogs."

(NOTE: There are many more examples of the corruption of government science by its own biologists and by the misguided practitioners of the pseudo science erroneously referred to as "conservation biology." It does not conserve anything – especially the abundant diversity of species that it professes to preserve.

Instead of restoring wildlife species that were endangered, state and federal bureaucrats have used corrupt science and the power of the ESA to saturate those areas with a Duke's mixture of assorted uncontrolled hybrid wolves that are destroying our native species. – ED)

It's Time for a Change

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Idaho game populations were at record lows and state Fish and Game agencies were caught up in the environmental hysteria of protecting all predators and letting them “restore” the mythical “balance of nature.” With a tremendous effort in time and money we began publishing facts in *The Outdoorsman* and, four years after a new Idaho F&G Director was hired, the agency was back on track restoring the game populations it had depleted.

It took his successor a dozen years and two severe winters to destroy near record game populations and, working within the system for the next 10 years achieved only minor improvements that were offset by the Department’s non-hunting agenda. Resurrection of *The Outdoorsman* in March of 2004 has informed the proper officials with documented facts, but unlike the former *Outdoorsman* with up to 30,000 paid subscribers, most Idahoans never get to read those facts and don’t have enough information to suggest how their elected representatives can restore sound management.

Beginning with this issue, the President of the sportsman group, Idaho for Wildlife, has agreed to make *The Outdoorsman* available to thousands of online readers and to donate part of the cost of printing and mailing each issue to appropriate Idaho officials in return for *The Outdoorsman* donating a page for a newsletter for their organization. The remainder of this page and all of the next page will constitute the IFW Newsletter for this issue.

The Outdoorsman is not a member of or affiliated with IFW and this arrangement, if it remains satisfactory to both parties, will not impact our continuing publication of facts as we always have. Beginning with the next issue the number of pages and number and length of articles will be reduced in order to make the content more interesting to the average reader.

I sincerely appreciate the donations that have helped support publication of facts for the past five or more years and I urge you to continue to help support the publication with your donations. Please see page 24 for suggestions on what else you can do to help restore sound game management.

Regards,
George Dovel

IDAHO FOR WILDLIFE News Bulletin No. 1

MISSION STATEMENT

“To protect Idaho’s hunting and fishing heritage. To fight against all legal and legislative attempts by the animal rights and anti-gun organizations that are attempting to take away our rights and freedoms under the constitution of the United States of America. To hold all Government and State Agencies who are stewards of our wildlife accountable and ensure that true science is used as the primary role for our wildlife management.”

Dear Fellow Sportsmen,

In the spring of 2009, Idaho for Wildlife, (IFW), was formed. This new organization was developed out of necessity to provide a strong voice for all Idaho Sportsmen and to be a true watch dog for good wildlife management practices in our wonderful state. Many of the founders of Idaho for Wildlife came from another Idaho organization that many felt had lost its “true grit” to stand up and fight against some of our state and federal bureaucrats whose agendas were not in harmony with preserving and protecting Idaho’s wildlife. Some of these sportsmen’s groups were unwilling to cross the “politically correct” path to pursue the strong and bold course of action which we recognized as imperative to save Idaho’s big game herds. IFW is a grass roots organization that refuses to be another “rubber stamp” group for State or Federal agencies to project their agendas.

IFW is a non-profit 501(c7) Corporation in Idaho. Unlike some groups we have no salaried members on our Board of Directors yet these dedicated enthused members devote many hours to the cause we all endorse.

IFW has become a "Watchdog" for Idaho sportsman as many of our original members fought in the spring of 2009 to oppose the IDFG fee increase until this department can prove they merit this substantial raise. We have been in the fight against wolves and have spent countless hours providing a library of knowledge and data on our website (see www.idahoforwildlife.com). We did this in hopes of educating the public about the real costs and other facts regarding wolves and the damage they are causing to our ungulates, businesses, sportsmen and citizens of Idaho.

Many IFW chapters have recently been formed across the state along with planning and carrying out productive wildlife projects that will benefit Idaho's wildlife resources. As an example, Snake River Chapter President Bryan Sprague recently provided a pheasant hunt for youth in the "Wishing Star Foundation". Thanks to Joseph Peterson and the Flying B Outfitters who donated three wonderful dogs for these types of events and Steve Fuchs who is the capable handler, we can have the dogs that are stationed in Boise to anywhere in Idaho for a 1, 2, or 3-day youth bird hunt

A letter relayed to us from a grateful mother to the Wishing Star Foundation described how her son enjoyed shooting clay birds, watching seven hardworking dogs make the hunt look easy, killing his first two rooster pheasants and learning to clean what he killed, and then eating barbeque like a pig. Driving away from American Falls that night her son looked at her and said, "Those guys are amazing!"

Our Snake River Chapter has been busy raising pheasants, and this year to date they have 14 surrogates that have produced over 6,200 pheasants and 300 chuckars! Mini-Cassia Chapter President George Warrell reports they have already completed several projects this year and plan on using some of the funds raised at this year's banquet to expand their pheasant and chukar release program that has been going on for several years. Our Bonners Ferry Chapter has been working hand in hand with IDFG in building new goose nesting boxes for the Boundary creek Wildlife management area.

The approach of IFW is to organize and develop chapters throughout the state, and to allow each chapter to determine its own priorities and particular concerns. Each chapter will have autonomy to address and act on its own issues. Monthly, a statewide priority list will be developed, and then an action plan developed on this level to address these larger issues.

IFW wildlife conservation banquets are designed to attract Sportsmen who are enthused to support Idaho's wildlife, and they always look forward to the possibility of winning prizes such as guns, hunting and fishing trips and many other wonderful prizes. Each Idaho chapter will attempt to hold at least one banquet per year. The majority of these donations will stay on the ground at the chapter level to fund further wildlife projects.

IFW wishes to attract new members with strong convictions who are willing to fight for their hunting and fishing rights, heritage, and their 2nd amendment rights that are in jeopardy.

Welcome to Idaho for Wildlife!

Steve Alder, Pres.

What You Can Do to Restore Responsible Management

By George Dovel

Enemies of sound natural resource management know that the dumbing down of America can only happen after the dumbing down of the media. That is why they spend a big chunk of their efforts cultivating the media and then providing them with canned news releases promoting their agendas.

The greatest weapon we have is truth and we owe it to ourselves to learn the facts and then use them to halt the flow of misinformation. For example when a reporter says that wolves aren't impacting Idaho deer and elk populations, send them an email or letter to the editor advising that IDFG Director Groen told the Legislature wolves are causing Idaho deer and elk populations to decline 15% per year.

The idea is, instead of just telling it to your buddies, get the message out to thousands of readers, listeners or TV viewers who have no opportunity to learn the truth unless you provide it. And encourage your friends to do the same thing rather than let George do it.

You may not like looking down at a "cow pie" when you bend down to drink out of a high water creek in the spring but remember you are in the same boat as the rancher whose future is also being destroyed by bureaucratic mismanagement and ever increasing retrictions. The time has come for all of us to pull together to defeat our common enemy.

If you can't afford even a small donation to send *The Outdoorsman* as a gift to someone who needs to learn facts, make a photocopy and get it to them. It may be the best small investment you'll ever make if that person passes it on to others.

won't seem like you're making any headway but I promise you no reporter or politician wants the public to learn they're putting out erroneous information.

I communicate on a daily basis with people around the U.S. and Canada who are making a difference in what others believe by telling it 'like' it is. Just read the facts carefully to be sure you've got them straight and then make yourself use them so others will learn the truth.

Don't expect to convert your enemies – in most cases that will be a wasted effort. But there are a lot of misinformed people out there who will change their minds if they are regularly exposed to a different version of the truth than they are hearing from the media.

The second thing you must do is learn who your two State Representatives are and who your Senator is. If you don't know what legislative district you live in an easy way to find out is call your County Clerk's office and give them your residence address.

Once you learn who is representing you at the statehouse and are well informed on the issue you feel is important, contact them and discuss your views and concerns. Most people don't realize that if they just follow the steps I've suggested, they can regain control of their government – at least at the state level.

If you are a hunter, fisherman or trapper, the next *Outdoorsman* will include a revealing glimpse at how your license money is being spent by your state F&G agency. Don't miss it. Our cost of printing and mailing *The Outdoorsman* for one year averages about \$25.

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If you still have old copies of *The Outdoorsman* you can probably find information on an issue that's very important to you and that's a good place to start. At first it