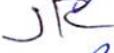


COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL

KANENWISHER

FOSS 

CHILCOTT 

IMAN 

STOLTZ 

Members Present.....Commissioner Matt Kanenwisher, Commissioner Suzy Foss,
Commissioner J.R. Iman and Commissioner Ron Stoltz

Date.....March 5, 2012

► Minutes: Glenda Wiles

► Commissioner Greg Chilcott was in Washington D.C. for the 2012 NACo Legislative Conference.

► The Board met at 9:05 a.m. for review and to make an approval of a Contract for Services with Mountain West Dynamark for a fire alarm system replacement at the road shop due to the fire in January 2011. **Commissioner Iman made a motion to approve of this contract. Commissioner Foss seconded the motion and all voted "aye". (4-0)**

► The Board met at 9:30 a.m. to discuss and make a decision on the Final Draft of the Wolf Policy. Commissioner Kanenwisher stated this final draft is the result of several meetings of which one change from the previous meeting was due to Commissioner Chilcott's concern under V. (C); other changes were under VIII which removed the numbers within the Wolves, Lions and Bears; as well as a change in the impact section.

Board comment:

Commissioner Iman requested an additional change under: VIII, Wolves (4) FWP in order to consider providing livestock producers with equipment and information necessary to detect the presence of radio collared wolves near their operation.

Public comment:

Gene Williams presented comments (see attached).

Tony Jones asked to include the use of snares under Wolves (2) (Trapping) and under (1) add bull to cow ratio and (3) use of electronic calls. Under Bears the law will require hunter orange. He also asked if the Commissioners submitted their public comments.

Marc Cooke of the National Wolf Watchers Association felt by killing wolves there is an increase in coyotes and in killing coyotes there is an increase in another predator. He felt when

that happens the disease the goes to a lesser predator. More deaths of cows and sheep occur due to chemicals which in turn force abortions. He fees the special interest is trumping the best available science, and that this policy is a witch hunt.

Keith Kabista of the Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife is in support of this policy (see attachment). Idaho has harvested twice the number of wolves that Montana has and it is bringing their hunting industry back.

Paul Rosingnal lives outside of Ravalli County but supports this working plan and feels it is supported by facts.

Bill LaCroix is a hunter and would like to see a discussion on the hunt of antlerless elk. He lives up Sweathouse Creek and is not plagued with wolves. People dump their sheep carcass in the area and it brings in the lions. He asked what the Commissioners will do if Fish Wildlife and Parks do not take any of the Commissioners recommendation. He asked how much of the Ravalli County tax dollars are dedicated to this.

Public comment was then closed.

Commissioner Kanenwisher stated every agency has the responsibility to take public comment which is addressed under II (6). The County represents the citizens under the election process, and as such have the ability for consultation and coordination with state and federal agencies.

Commissioner Stoltz made a motion to adopt this Large Predator Policy as written. Commissioner Foss seconded the motion and all voted "aye". (4-0)

Commissioner Stoltz made a motion to send Commissioner Kanenwisher to the Fish and Game meeting in Helena on Wednesday, March 7th. Commissioner Foss seconded the motion and all voted "aye". (4-0)

► The Board met at 10:12 a.m. to discuss and make a decision on the Fairgrounds parking plan and application to the City of Hamilton. **Commissioner Stoltz made a motion to adopt the parking plan as presented by Fair staff last week. Commissioner Foss seconded the motion.** Discussion: Commissioner Iman stated this plan should include some of the parking across the street (by the ball fields) of which the county owns. He felt this plan should be postponed until research is garnered and the Commissioners meet with City officials. Commissioner Stoltz stated in order to start a dialog with the City, the Commissioners have to present a plan and he felt parking across the street is an additional costs.

Public comment:

William Menager felt this was a good plan.

Commissioner Foss, Kanenwisher and Stoltz voted "aye". Commissioner Iman voted "nay". (3-1 motion carried.)

Commissioner Stoltz made a motion to have Fair Commission Member Ran Pigman bring this application to the City for this parking plan and then bring that conversation back to the Commissioners. Commissioner Iman seconded the motion and all voted "aye". (4-0)

▶ The Board met at 11:02 a.m. for a discussion and possible decision concerning organizational decisions relative to the budget process which includes items such as housing grants, supervisory structures etc. Present at this meeting was Chief Financial Officer Klarryse Murphy and Human Resource Director Robert Jenni. It was concurred Robert will research the job description and salaries of a Facilities Supervisor and the Board will consider grant employees for supervision.

▶ The Board met at 3:00 p.m. for an Airport Board interview with Robert Dewante.

▶ The Board met at 3:30 p.m. for a Planning Board interview with Rick Nelson.

SIGN IN SHEET - COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME LEGIBLY

THANK YOU!

DATE: 3/5/2012

MEETING: 9:30 AM

Marc Cate ~~Natasha Winters~~

Steve Cloutier

Paul Rossignol

Dale Bennett

Ben Galt

Tom Coyne

~~Steve Lee~~



Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 2243, Missoula, Montana 59806
www.mt-sfw.org

BCC PREDATOR POLICY MEETING 3-5-2012

EXCESSIVE WOLF AND OTHER PREDATOR POPULATIONS POSE A MORTAL THREAT TO OUR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, LONG HELD CUSTOMS, CULTURE, AND THE HISTORIC USE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY.

RECENT EVENTS, SUCH AS THE FWP'S COMMISSIONERS DENIAL OF EXTENTION TO THE WOLF SEASON IN HD 250 JUSTIFIES WHY RAVALLI COUNTY NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT A LOCAL GOVERNMENT PREDATOR CONTROL ACTION.

WE CAN NOT RELY ON FWP TO TREAT PREDATORS AS AGRESSIVELY AS THEY SHOULD TO COMPLY WITH MCA 87-1-217, WHICH REQUIRES MANAGEMENT OF LARGE PREDATORS TO PRESERVE CITIZENS OPPORTUNITIES TO HUNT LARGE GAME.

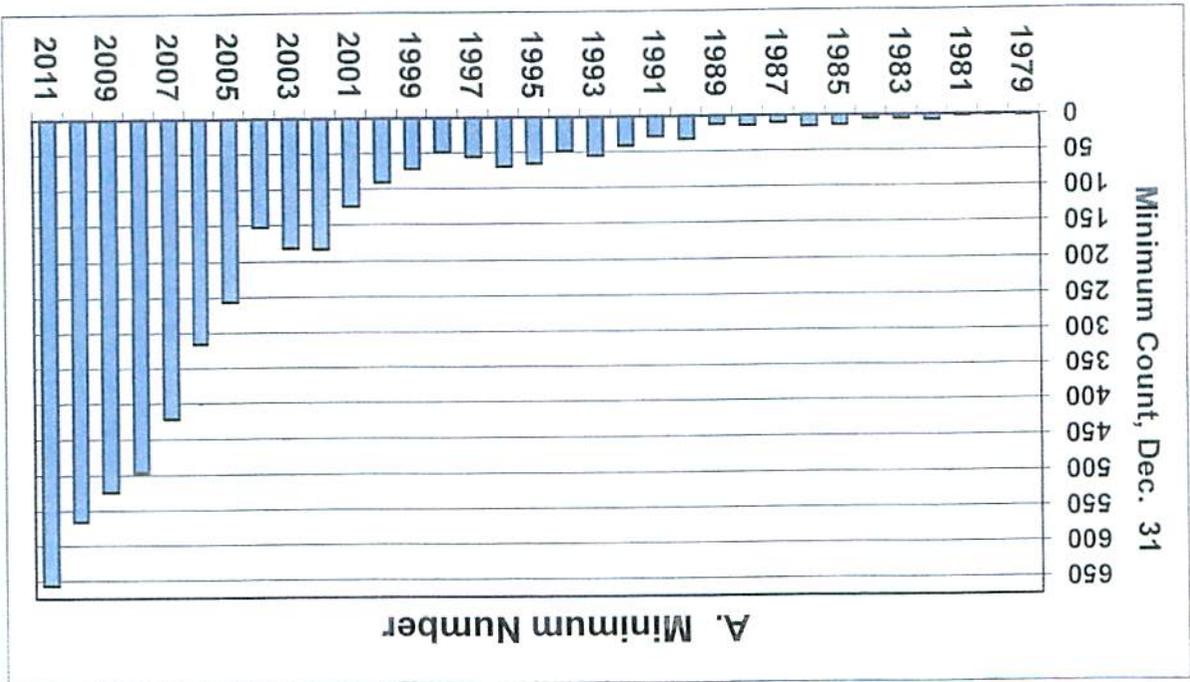
WE ALSO CAN NOT CONTINUE USING RESTRICTIVE PREDATOR HUNTING, WHICH IS NOTHING MORE THAN A TEMPORARY SOLUTION TO A PERMANENT PROBLEM.

THE TIME HAS COME TO STOP THE PASSIVE APPROACH TO CONTROLLING EXPANDING POPULATIONS OF AGGRESSIVE PREDATORS.

IT IS TIME TO PASS THIS POLICY AND BEGIN TO RECOVER WILDLIFE AND PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE OF BIG GAME HUNTING AND THE BUSINESSES RELIANT ON HUNTING.

Keith Kubista
President
Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife

Figure 2: Estimated minimum number of wolves in Montana (1979-2011).



- An estimated minimum of 653 wolves with 39 breeding pairs are counted in Montana. Distribution continues to be primarily in the western one-third of Montana.

2011 Montana Wolf Pack Locations

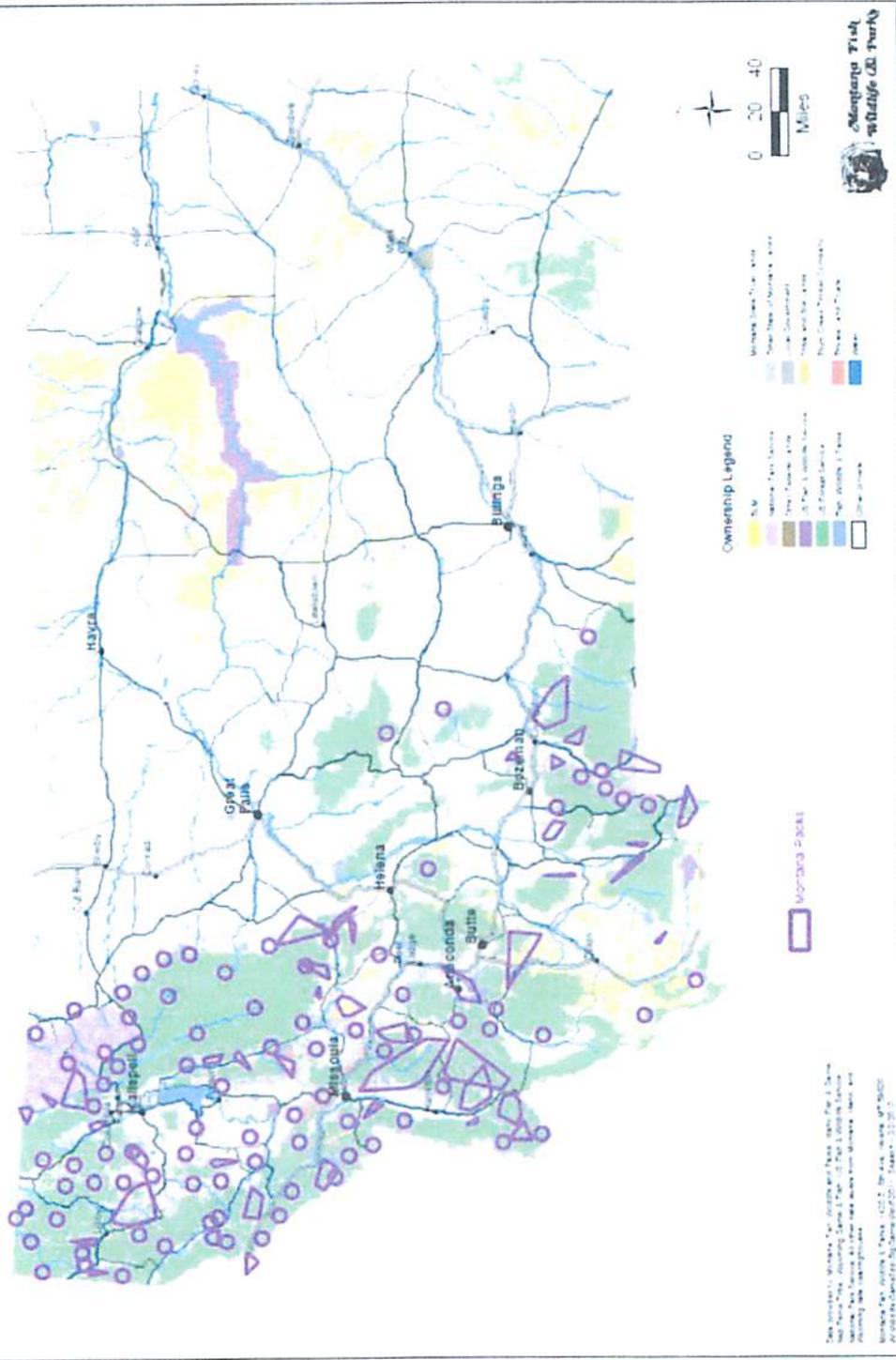
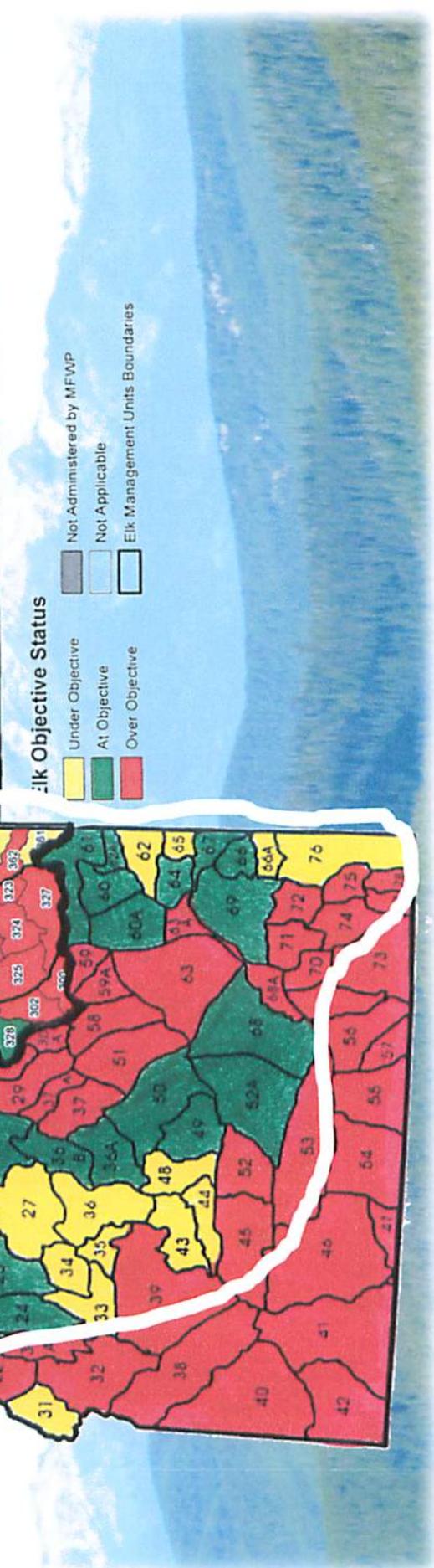
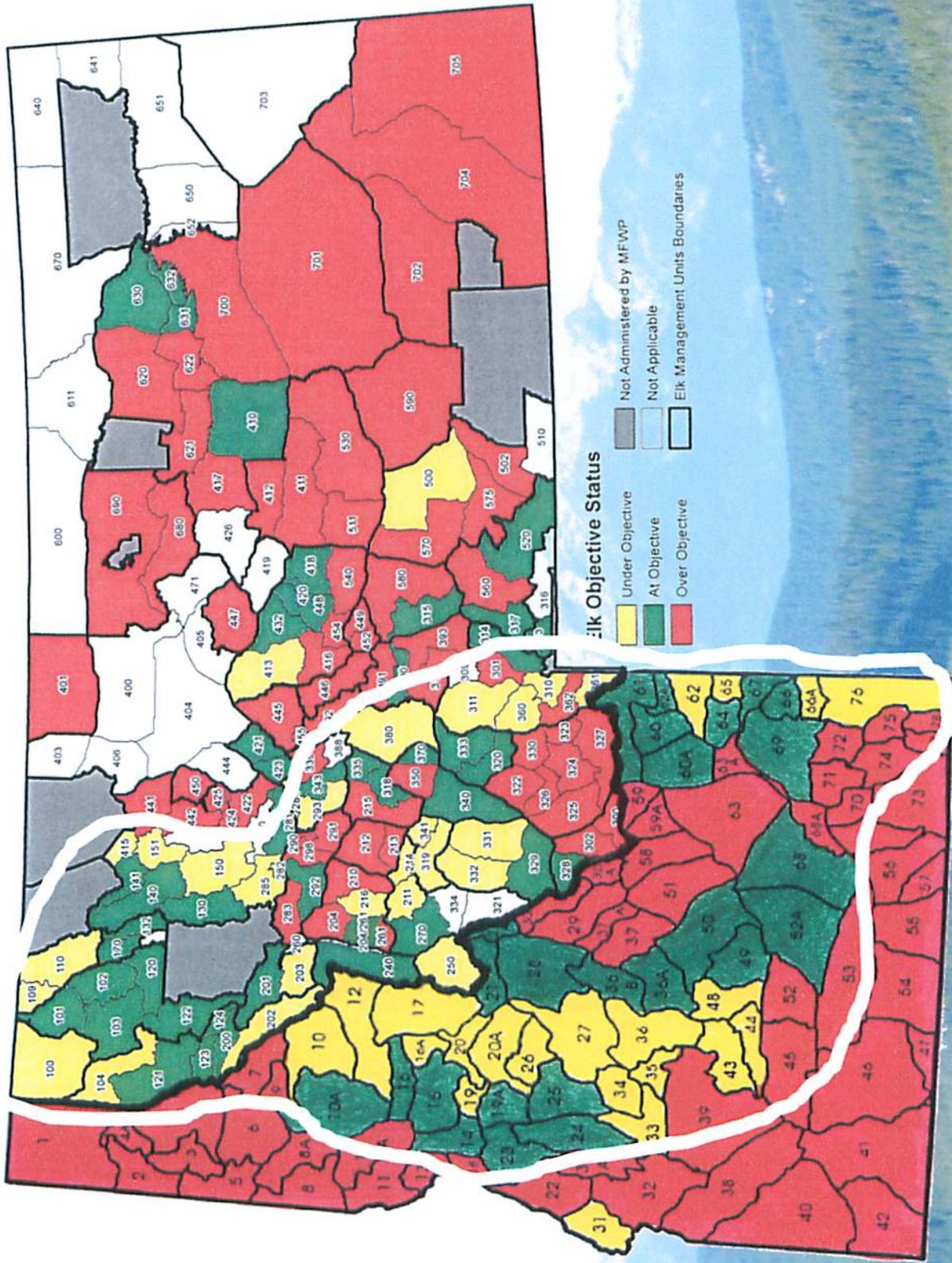
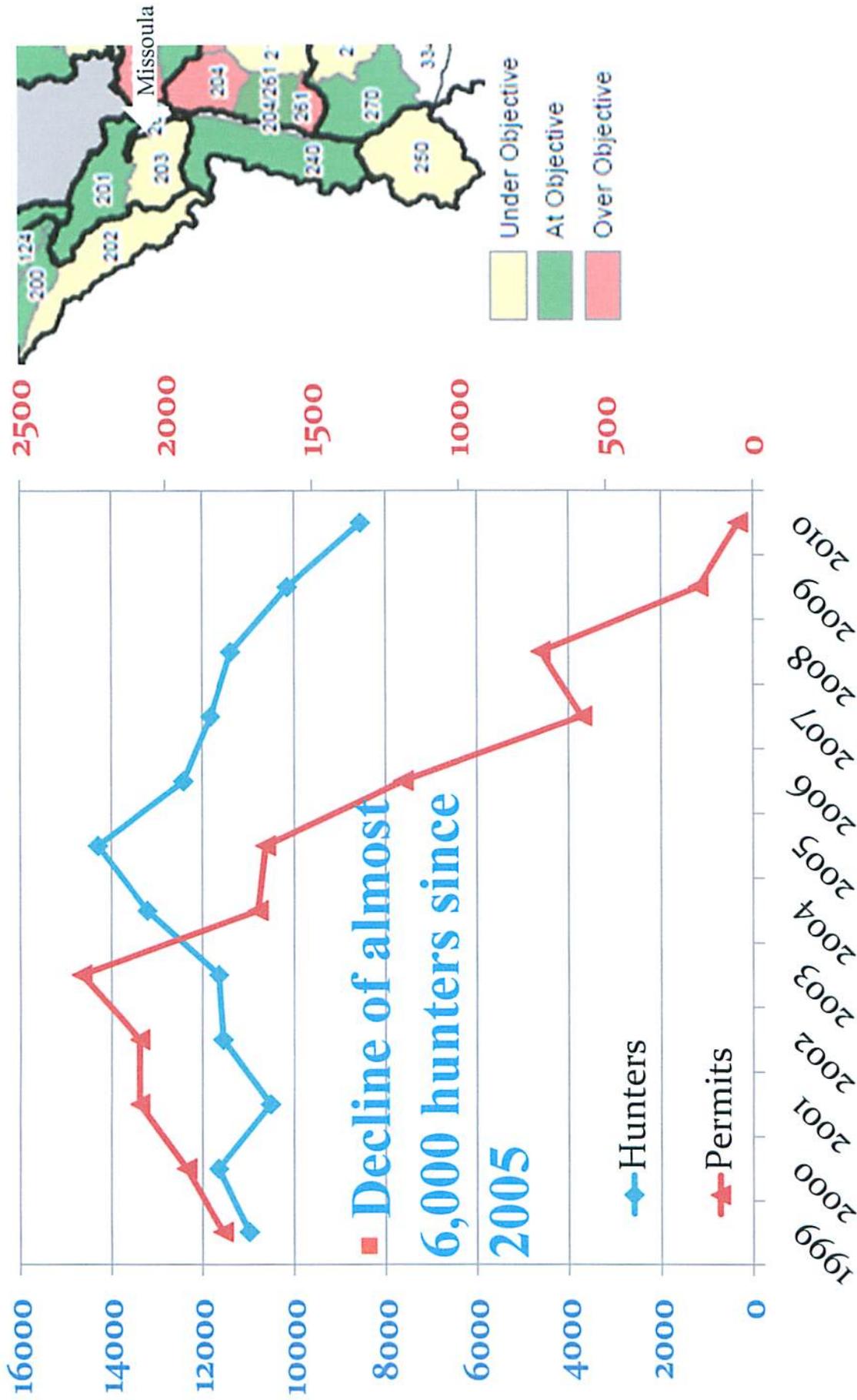


Figure 3. Verified wolf pack distribution in the State of Montana, as of December 31, 2010.

Elk Under Objective in the Northern Rockies



Elk Hunting Opportunity in Southwest Region Two



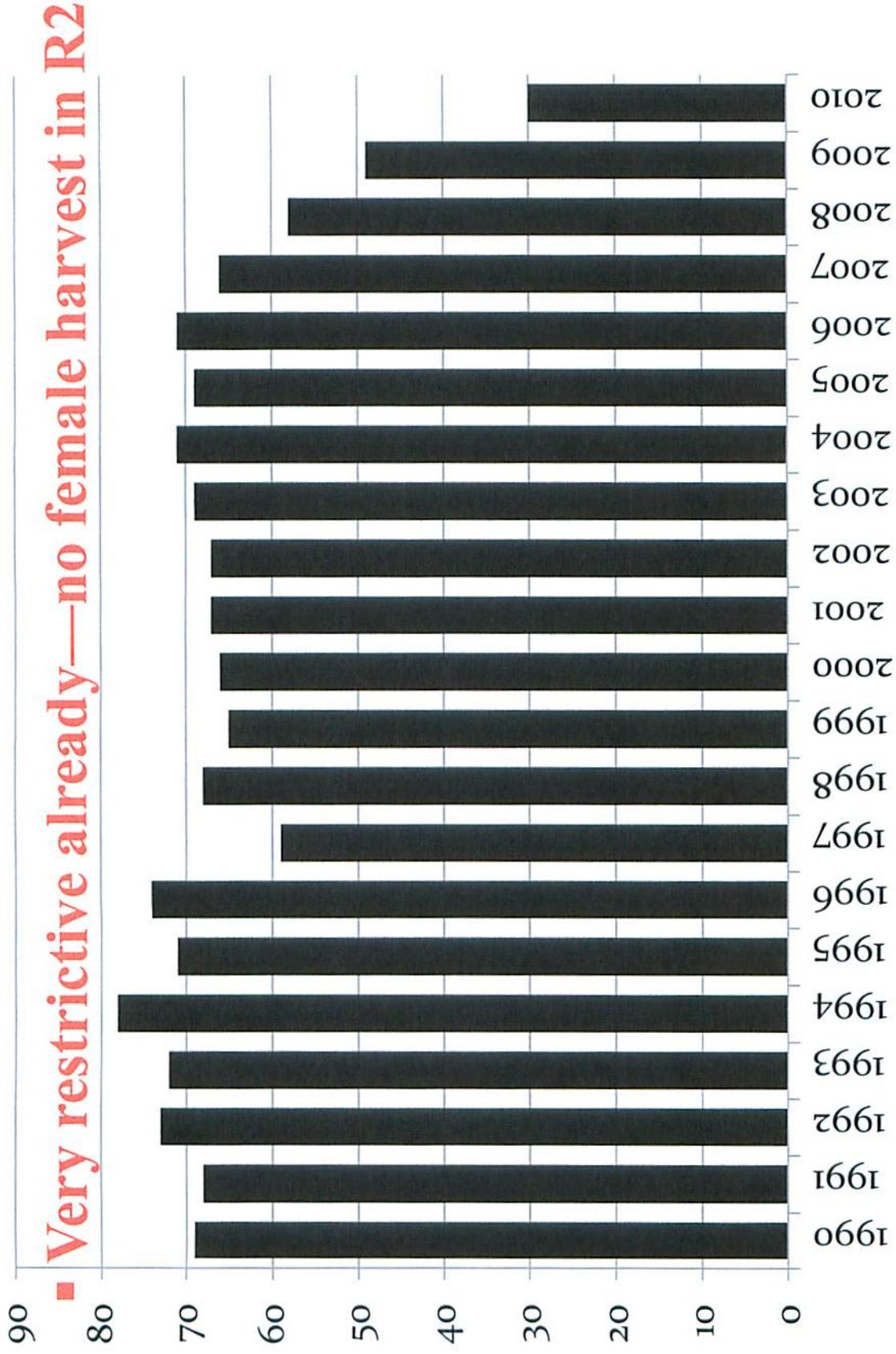
Includes Hunting Districts 202, 203, 240 250, 270, 261 & 204, covering 3,927 square miles (37% of Region Two). "Permits" means antlerless permits or licenses.

Population Indicators—Elk

■ But Calf: Cow Ratios in the Bitterroot are Severely Low



Moose Harvest



Marc Cooke, a Stevensville resident and a member of the advocacy group the National Wolfwatcher Coalition, said he is concerned the result of predator control efforts could be a big policy shift on how wolves are hunted.

In an A.P. story Cook remarked;

“We are encouraged the numbers are up but it scares the daylight out of us,” Cook said. “What they’re politely saying is that ‘We’re going to start looking into baiting, we’re going to start looking into trapping.’ How is that ethical?”

Cook is obviously out of touch with reality. Most people in the Bitterroot and in other mountain states plagued with wolves know that their numbers need to be decreased. And yet here is Marc Cook whining about how unethical it is to consider additional ways to reduce the numbers of these predators.

Apparently he thinks it is ethical to have wolves kill the hunting industry, sacrificing millions of dollars in this economically depressed state. I guess Cook thinks it is ethical to have ranchers lose livestock to wolves and residents to lose their pets.

Cook is a member of a small minority in the Bitterroot that would be comfortable with the continued depredation on ungulates and an increase in wolf numbers. They are vocal and they have money. They are also affiliated with like minded people in other states. This suggests that out of state resources are available to them. Cook and his associates are pushing an agenda that is foreign to most people. I find it to be extremely sinister.

Gene Williams

We are very disappointed in the Commissioners decision. However, we fully expected this out come.

Once again hysteria and special interest trump best available science.

Please keep in mind it is near impossible to derail or reverse a group of individuals that are hell-bent on disregarding the facts with their tainted and biased laced facts.

We all have our own opinion but we cant have our own facts

National Wolfwatcher Coalition will step up its organizing and educational efforts in the Ravalli County and Montana.

**Marc Cooke
National Wolfwatcher Coalition
marc@wolfwatcher.org
Cell: 1.406.493.5945
Wolfwatcher.org**

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Glenda Wiles

From: Matt Kanenwisher
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2012 10:41 AM
To: Commissioners Department
Subject: wolf policy
Attachments: Ravalli County Predator Policy.docx

So here is a revised wolf policy draft. Please make changes today and tomorrow. We want to come up with a final draft this week. Please "reply all" with attachment or comments, this email string will be entered in to public correspondence.

Matt Kanenwisher
Ravalli County Commissioner
Hamilton District
406-375-6503

Only got
Greg's
Comments

3/5/2012
Final draft
w/ changes.

Wolf Draft 2/27/2012
Now BCC will add
their changes

I. **Policy Statement –**

It shall be the policy of Ravalli County to coordinate with state and local agencies to establish policies and practices for management of large predators within the county for the purposes of ensuring public health and safety for human populations, protecting the tax base of the county, and providing for the health of and production from livestock and ungulate populations.

II. **Title and Authority –**

(A) Article IX, section 7 of the Montana Constitution states that, “The opportunity to harvest wild fish and wild game animals is an heritage that shall forever be preserved to the individual citizen...” and;

(B) Article XI, section 4 defines the general powers of local governments which have not established “self-government powers” status. Ravalli County is categorized as a “general powers” county.

(C) Section 7 of article XI further defines general powers stating that “Unless prohibited by law or charter, a local government may cooperate in the exercise of any function, power, or responsibility with ... the state or United States.”

(D) **87-1-217. Policy for management of large predators - legislative intent.**

(1) In managing large predators, the primary goals of the department, in the order of listed priority, are to:

(a) protect humans, livestock, and pets;

(b) preserve and enhance the safety of the public during outdoor recreational and livelihood activities; and

(c) preserve citizens' opportunities to hunt large game species.

(2) As used in this section:

(a) "large game species" means deer, elk, mountain sheep, moose, antelope, and mountain goats; and

(b) "large predators" means bears, mountain lions, and wolves.

(3) With regard to large predators, it is the intent of the legislature that the specific provisions of this section concerning the management of large predators will control the general supervisory authority of the department regarding the management of all wildlife.

(4) For the management of wolves in accordance with the priorities established in subsection (1), the department may use lethal action to take problem wolves that attack livestock if the state objective for breeding pairs has been met. For the purposes of this subsection, "problem wolves" means any individual wolf or pack of wolves with a history of livestock predation.

(5) The department shall work with the livestock loss board and the United States department of agriculture wildlife services to establish the conditions under which wolf carcasses or parts of wolf carcasses are retrieved during wolf management activities and when those carcasses or parts of carcasses are made available to the livestock loss board for sale or auction pursuant to 2-15-3113.

(6) The department shall ensure that county commissioners and tribal governments in areas that have identifiable populations of large predators have the opportunity for consultation and coordination with state and federal agencies prior to state and federal policy decisions involving large predators and large game species

Therefore, the Ravalli County Board of County Commissioners asserts that the process of coordinating with state or federal wildlife management agencies to protect public health and safety, protect the tax base of the county, and protect the right to harvest game as guaranteed by the state constitution is not only authorized, but is a duty of the office of County Commissioner.

III. Public Health and Safety –

(A) Concerns have been raised by members of the public that the ever increasing numbers of wolves and, potentially, grizzly bears may present a real danger to persons while on private or public lands. While the BCC is not aware of an instance of a wolf attack on a person within Montana, the concern is that increased numbers of individuals, numbers of packs, and increasing range due to declining prey animal levels may result in more numerous interactions with these large predators.

Additionally the county has received reports of injury or predation upon pets, hunting hounds, and horses. The total number is not the primary concern rather, that an individual may exercise poor judgment while witnessing an attack on an animal family friend and attempt to intervene resulting in harm or death to that pet or livestock owner.

(B) As mentioned, the potential for predation upon pets and working livestock is well documented and should be given appropriate weight when considering management policies.

(C) Large predators, particularly wolves, may act as a vector for parasites responsible for hydatid cyst diseases. This process has been established in other parts of the world but we are unaware of definitive science concerning a local increased risk of transmission to humans by an infection cycle which includes large predators. Given the lack of data and that the potential for increased infection can't reasonably be ruled out, allowing ever increasing

populations and range of wolves seems unwise and should be given due consideration.

IV. Custom and Culture/ Historic Use –

- (A) Hunting is an avocation, a life-skill, and a tool for self-sufficiency. Hunting has been a part of the Bitterroot's history for as long as people have inhabited this area. Indeed, Native American tribes are known to have used this area specifically for hunting. Thousands of Ravalli County residents have grown up hunting in the Bitterroot and thousands more moved to the Bitterroot expressly for that purpose. Many current residents have hunted these "home" ranges for a lifetime. That right is guaranteed by the state constitution and shall be protected as a policy of the county.
- (B) One of the Bitterroot's greatest resources is its physical beauty. While many citizens welcome the sightings of large predators, many have changed habits or practices while enjoying outdoor activities. Whether carrying a sidearm or ceasing to bring along pets, a modification of previous activities has been required to accommodate large predators. Many hunters who are able to afford a limited number of days off of work per year are forced to hunt in other areas losing the use of local public lands. Others, who may not be able to afford to travel, lose the use of these lands altogether. For Ravalli County citizens, without large ungulate herds and the use of public and private lands, they lose their home as they know it.
- (C) The fact that hunting is a way of life in the Bitterroot for thousands of people is undeniable. Most often children are taught this skill, avocation, and way of life by their parents or grandparents. Most hunters report this time with family to be of the highest quality and value. The inability to hunt elk or mule deer deprives this group of some of the most valuable experiences of their lives which was previously enjoyed in the Bitterroot for over a century. Policy and management decisions should reflect the weight which county residents give these experiences. While others may not share these values, the practice of these activities does not deprive anyone else of their enjoyment of public and private lands. And while some citizens within Ravalli County highly prize the existence of the Wolf, there is no acceptable argument that this admiration of the wolf which simply values the sighting of this species supersedes or trumps the long heritage of hunting and family based activity within the Bitterroot.

- (D) Organic food sources are an ever increasing value to people within Ravalli County. A large ungulate can provide a small family with enough organic meat for a year.

V. **The local economy and tax base –**

- (A) Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks established that in 2007 Ravalli County enjoyed over \$11.3 million in direct revenue based on 123,000 hunter days. In 2010 the number of hunters through the south valley check station fell a total of 36% off of the five year average. The hunters pursuing elk fell 38% and the hunters pursuing mule deer suffered a 61% decline. Whereas the MT FWP report of 2007 states that deer and elk account for 90% of all hunter days, this is an estimated of \$2.5M to \$3M in lost revenue in 2010 alone (this is based on the CPI number used in the 2007 estimate).
- (B) The guided hunting industry has suffered greater losses. The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) of the University of Montana reported that the guided hunting client spends an average of \$10,695.33 while in the area. The USFS data reports that in 2004 guided hunters spent a total of 5409 days on the forest hunting and the ITRR reports that the average guided hunter spends five days on the forest per trip. In 2010 this accounts for a \$4,695,249 reduction in direct revenues from guided hunters on the forest. This equals a loss of \$15,360,912 from 2004 to 2010. There may be a small overlap between the two scenarios mentioned above because the MFWP numbers are based on random surveys, some of which may have gone to out-of-state guided hunters. Data shows the total labor revenue per resident in Ravalli County is about \$13,750 and the south valley area which is most affected has a population of about 6500 people.
- (C) Livestock producer losses result not only from predation. Harassment and stress due to wolves may increase the number of open cows coming in off of summer range due to abortions from stress. Additionally, weight loss of both cows and market calves (ranchers report 40 to 60 pounds lighter calves) may prove detrimental to the livestock producer. *Elk*
- (D) Other industries have suffered which are not easily quantified. Meat packers and taxidermists have reported 20 to 30% decrease in business over the previous three years.
- (E) Many Bitterrooters are subsistence hunters. The inability to provide hundreds of pounds of lean, organic meat for a family results in either an increased cost to replace it or simply doing without.

VI. Involvement of Predators in large ungulate mortality –

(A) While the wolf is certainly not the only cause of the precipitous drop in Ravalli County elk numbers, it is certainly a component as evidenced by the following:

- (1) In FWP's 2010 summary of the 10j rule proposal to the US Fish and Wildlife, the agency states "Wolf Predation is a major cause of mortality preventing the elk population from reaching management objectives in HD 250". Additionally the summary states " Elk numbers and particularly calf recruitment have declined as wolf numbers increased"
- (2) Wolves became well established in 2005 and the elk population graph is (approx.) the inverse of the wolf population graph from 2005 to 2010
- (3) Other components of elk mortality include lions and bears, habitat concerns, human hunting, and disease. The large predators are included in Ravalli County's policy to (fix) reduce the total predator load on the herd.

VII. Local Priorities –

- (A) Protect health and safety of humans
- (B) Protect safety of pets
- (C) Protect safety and production of livestock
- (D) Preserve ability to hunt large game and recreate outdoors safely
- (E) Maintain a viable and connected predator population
- (F) Preserve and protect the economic wellbeing of the county and its citizens

VIII. Proposed mitigation measures, actions, and processes

(A) Request opinion and position of Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to answer the following questions: ✓

1. Minimum levels of predator population to be established; What are the criteria for determining the minimum levels of wolves, lions, bears, and grizzly bears?
2. Please describe the criteria for determining the maximum levels of predators or levels which would trigger changes in management goals and policies? If it is not possible to establish a maximum number or target, please describe the criteria which guide the department in managing wolf, lion, and bear hunting quotas.
3. Please state the necessity and purpose for managing to higher levels of population and/or increased range than currently exist within Ravalli County.
4. Please provide position or policy concerning risk, if any, of the spread of hydatid cyst disease via a process which includes the wolf as a vector.

(B) When minimum elk population levels, as established within each district, aren't maintained by reducing antlerless harvest, and/or when the calf to cow ratio falls below the statewide elk management plan standard (25 to 100 currently), and/or the bull to cow ratio falls below the elk management standard (10:100) it shall be the policy of Ravalli County advocates for measures be taken by FWP concerning predators in order to recover the elk herds as quickly as possible. Ravalli County advocates for changes to regulation, administrative rule, and statute to enable FWP to do the following:

Wolves –

1. Increase wolf quotas to achieve state elk management calf to cow ratio, that quota to remain consistent with minimum wolf levels and goals established by state management plan.
2. Trapping
3. Structure fees, seasons, and regulations to promote and encourage successful wolf hunts in order to fill quotas which FWP has set. These include electronic calling, less expensive wolf tags, extended seasons, over the counter tag purchase, and multiple tags per individual.

CI add(4)

Lions –

1. Over the counter tags bought with no waiting period
2. Harvest based on a quota
3. No kill fees
4. Reduced fees and extended season to be more competitive with neighboring jurisdictions.

Bears –

1. No hunter orange required
2. Over the counter tags with no waiting period
3. Reduced fees and extended seasons to be more competitive with neighboring jurisdictions.

The rationale behind many of these measures is that wolf hunting in particular is often an "opportunity hunt". That is that many hunters may come across wolves or wolf sign incidentally while hunting other species. In order to reach FWP's large predator quotas and given the nature and process of wolf hunting, Ravalli County advocates for offering every opportunity for hunters to assist in that goal which can be done in a manner consistent with FWP management practices.

approved
3/5/2012

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IV. Custom and Culture/ Historic Use –

- (A) Hunting is an avocation, a life-skill, and a tool for self-sufficiency. Hunting has been a part of the Bitterroot's history for as long as people have inhabited this area. Indeed, Native American tribes are known to have used this area specifically for hunting. Thousands of Ravalli County residents have grown up hunting in the Bitterroot and thousands more moved to the Bitterroot expressly for that purpose. Many current residents have hunted these "home" ranges for a lifetime. That right is guaranteed by the state constitution and shall be protected as a policy of the county.
- (B) One of the Bitterroot's greatest resources is its physical beauty. While many citizens welcome the sightings of large predators, many have changed habits or practices while enjoying outdoor activities. Whether carrying a sidearm or ceasing to bring along pets, a modification of previous activities has been required to accommodate large predators. Many hunters who are able to afford a limited number of days off of work per year are forced to hunt in other areas losing the use of local public lands. Others, who may not be able to afford to travel, lose the use of these lands altogether. For Ravalli County citizens, without large ungulate herds and the use of public and private lands, they lose their home as they know it.
- (C) The fact that hunting is a way of life in the Bitterroot for thousands of people is undeniable. Most often children are taught this skill, avocation, and way of life by their parents or grandparents. Most hunters report this time with family to be of the highest quality and value. The inability to hunt elk or mule deer deprives this group of some of the most valuable experiences of their lives which was previously enjoyed in the Bitterroot for over a century. Policy and management decisions should reflect the weight which county residents give these experiences. While others may not share these values, the practice of these activities does not deprive anyone else of their enjoyment of public and private lands. And while some citizens within Ravalli County highly prize the existence of the Wolf, there is no acceptable argument that this admiration of the wolf which simply values the sighting of this species supersedes or trumps the long heritage of hunting and family based activity within the Bitterroot.

- (D) Organic food sources are an ever increasing value to people within Ravalli County. A large ungulate can provide a small family with enough organic meat for a year.

V. **The local economy and tax base –**

- (A) Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks established that in 2007 Ravalli County enjoyed over \$11.3 million in direct revenue based on 123,000 hunter days. In 2010 the number of hunters through the south valley check station fell a total of 36% off of the five year average. The hunters pursuing elk fell 38% and the hunters pursuing mule deer suffered a 61% decline. Whereas the MT FWP report of 2007 states that deer and elk account for 90% of all hunter days, this is an estimated of \$2.5M to \$3M in lost revenue in 2010 alone (this is based on the CPI number used in the 2007 estimate).
- (B) The guided hunting industry has suffered greater losses. The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) of the University of Montana reported that the guided hunting client spends an average of \$10,695.33 while in the area. The USFS data reports that in 2004 guided hunters spent a total of 5409 days on the forest hunting and the ITRR reports that the average guided hunter spends five days on the forest per trip. In 2010 this accounts for a \$4,695,249 reduction in direct revenues from guided hunters on the forest. This equals a loss of \$15,360,912 from 2004 to 2010. There may be a small overlap between the two scenarios mentioned above because the MFWP numbers are based on random surveys, some of which may have gone to out-of-state guided hunters. Data shows the total labor revenue per resident in Ravalli County is about \$13,750 and the south valley area which is most affected has a population of about 6500 people.
- (C) Livestock producer losses result not only from predation. Harassment and stress due to wolves may increase the number of open cows coming in off of summer range due to abortions from stress. Additionally, weight loss of both cows and market calves (ranchers report 40 to 60 pounds lighter calves) may prove detrimental to the livestock producer.
- (D) Other industries have suffered which are not easily quantified. Meat packers and taxidermists have reported 20 to 30% decrease in business over the previous three years.
- (E) Many Ravalli County residents are subsistence hunters. The inability to provide hundreds of pounds of lean, organic meat for a family results in either an increased cost to replace it or simply doing without.

VI. Involvement of Predators in large ungulate mortality –

(A) While the wolf is certainly not the only cause of the precipitous drop in Ravalli County elk numbers, it is certainly a component as evidenced by the following:

- (1) In FWP's 2010 summary of the 10j rule proposal to the US Fish and Wildlife, the agency states "Wolf Predation is a major cause of mortality preventing the elk population from reaching management objectives in HD 250". Additionally the summary states " Elk numbers and particularly calf recruitment have declined as wolf numbers increased"
- (2) Wolves became well established in 2005 and the elk population graph is (approx.) the inverse of the wolf population graph from 2005 to 2010
- (3) Other components of elk mortality include lions and bears, habitat concerns, human hunting, and disease. The large predators are included in Ravalli County's policy to (fix) reduce the total predator load on the herd.

VII. Local Priorities –

- (A) Protect health and safety of humans
- (B) Protect safety of pets
- (C) Protect safety and production of livestock
- (D) Preserve ability to hunt large game and recreate outdoors safely
- (E) Maintain a viable and connected predator population
- (F) Preserve and protect the economic wellbeing of the county and its citizens including protection from damage to fences, crops, grazing, and stack yard damage due to predatory pressure on ungulate populations.

VIII. Proposed mitigation measures, actions, and processes

(A) Request opinion and position of Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to answer the following questions:

1. Minimum levels of predator population to be established; What are the criteria for determining the minimum levels of wolves, lions, bears, and grizzly bears?
2. Please describe the criteria for determining the maximum levels of predators or levels which would trigger changes in management goals and policies? If it is not possible to establish a maximum number or target, please describe the criteria which guide the department in managing wolf, lion, and bear hunting quotas.
3. Please state the necessity and purpose for managing to higher levels of population and/or increased range than currently exist within Ravalli County.

4. Please provide position or policy concerning risk, if any, of the spread of hydatid cyst disease via a process which includes the wolf as a vector.

(B) When minimum elk population levels, as established within each district, aren't maintained by reducing antlerless harvest, and/or when the calf to cow ratio falls below the statewide elk management plan standard (25 to 100 currently), and/or the bull to cow ratio falls below the elk management standard (10:100) it shall be the policy of Ravalli County advocates for measures be taken by FWP concerning predators in order to recover the elk herds as quickly as possible. Ravalli County advocates for changes to regulation, administrative rule, and statute to enable FWP to do the following:

Wolves –

1. Increase wolf quotas to achieve state elk management calf to cow and bull to cow ratios, that quota to remain consistent with minimum wolf levels and goals established by state management plan.
2. Trapping and snaring
3. Structure fees, seasons, and regulations to promote and encourage successful wolf hunts in order to fill quotas which FWP has set. These include use of electronic calls, less expensive wolf tags, extended seasons, over the counter tag purchase, and multiple tags per individual.
4. FWP to consider providing livestock producers with equipment and information necessary to detect presence of radio collared wolves proximate to their operations.

Lions –

1. Over the counter tags bought with no waiting period
2. Harvest based on a quota
3. No kill fees
4. Reduced fees and extended season to be more competitive with neighboring jurisdictions.

Bears –

1. No hunter orange required
2. Over the counter tags with no waiting period
3. Reduced fees and extended seasons to be more competitive with neighboring jurisdictions.

The rationale behind many of these measures is that wolf hunting in particular is often an “opportunity hunt”. That is that many hunters may come across wolves or wolf sign incidentally while hunting other species. In order to reach FWP’s large predator quotas and given the nature and process of wolf hunting, Ravalli County advocates for offering every opportunity for

hunters to assist in that goal which can be done in a manner consistent with FWP management practices.



LIVING WITH WOLVES: a guide to living and recreating in wolf country

Gray wolves primarily live in habitat that supports deer and elk. As a result, wolves sometimes use areas that are in close proximity to humans, particularly in and around deer and elk habitat in rural areas. Wolves can be legally killed if seen attacking dogs, chasing or attacking livestock, or to protect human life. For those living and recreating in wolf country, here are some tips on how to decrease the potential for conflicts.

HUMAN SAFETY

Wolf attacks on people are very rare. Most wolves fear people and will run when encountered. However, wolves are visual learners and some may stop and stare. All wildlife can be dangerous and should be given distance and treated with caution. There have been a small number of documented wolf attacks on people in North America and contributing factors were most often related to habituation to people and/or conditioning to human foods. In areas where people live near wolf habitat it is especially important to follow these steps to discourage habituation:

AT HOME

- Do not feed wolves or leave food outdoors, including pet food.
- Do not feed deer, turkeys, or other wildlife that may attract wolves or other predators like lions and bears.
- If wolves are seen close to people or human-inhabited areas, scare them away by making loud noises.
- Report wolves that seem comfortable around people, seek human food, or frequent human-inhabited areas to FWP (see contact info on back of handout).

Hikers, campers, and hunters are more likely to come upon areas of wolf activity such as a kill site, denning area, or resting site. After detecting a person's presence, some wolves may lope off quietly, others may bark or howl, or some may cautiously approach to get a better look. Hearing wolves barking and howling all around can be loud and startling. However, encountering wolves at close range is seldom a reason for alarm (unless you have a dog; see dog section on back) especially if you know what to expect. Once wolves have identified the disturbance, they generally leave the area. Vocalizing could go on for awhile as wolves regroup out of sight and pull back from the situation. If a wolf is killed, other wolves generally move off but may return to the site later. Here are some tips on what to do and how to avoid close encounters.

IN THE FIELD

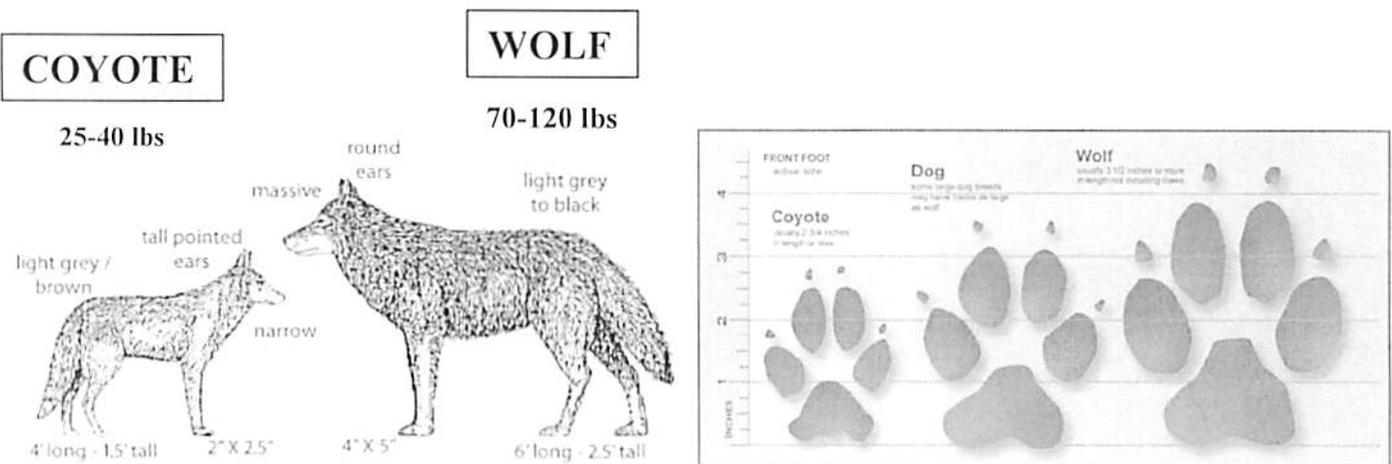
- Avoid areas of wolf activity including fresh wolf kills and denning areas. Do not approach wolves.
- In the event of a close encounter, be calm and slowly leave the area. If approached, stand tall and make noise.
- Hunters: hang game meat out of reach. Wolves may feed on gut piles and carcasses left out overnight but will usually move off upon your return.
- Always carry pepper spray for any potential close encounter with wildlife.

DOGS

Wolves are very territorial and see dogs as competition. As a result, wolves are attracted to and will often try to kill domestic dogs. Traveling with a dog may therefore increase your chances of encountering a wolf. Dogs may even draw wolves into areas of human activity. Keep dogs inside or in protected areas, especially overnight and at dawn and dusk when wolves are most active. Keep dogs on leash or under voice command when walking in areas where wolves may be present. If an encounter occurs, bring your dog to heel at your side as soon as possible. Standing between your dog and the wolf usually ends an encounter. To avoid any risk of injury to yourself, do not try to break up a physical fight between a wolf and your dog.

LIVESTOCK

Wolves sometimes kill livestock. Livestock owners are encouraged to contact FWP to report wolf presence and for assistance. Fencing options or other deterrents may be helpful in certain situations. In the event of dead or injured livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services (WS) for an investigation. If a wolf depredation is confirmed, WS is often authorized to remove offending wolves immediately on site. FWP will work closely with the livestock owner and WS to find the best solution to prevent further losses.



WHO DO I CONTACT?

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

To get information about wolves and wolf management & to report wolf sightings

- Kent Laudon—Wolf Management Specialist, Kalispell, 406-250-5047 klaudon@mt.gov
- Liz Bradley—Wolf Management Specialist, Missoula, 406-865-0017 lbradley@mt.gov
- Nathan Lance—Wolf Management Specialist, Butte, 406-425-3355 nlance@mt.gov
- Mike Ross—Wolf Management Specialist, Bozeman, 406-581-3664 mikeross@mt.gov
- Abby Nelson—Wolf Management Specialist, Livingston, 406-600-5150 abnelson@mt.gov

To report a dead wolf or possible illegal activity

- 1-800-TIP-MONT or contact your nearest game warden

USDA Wildlife Services:

To request investigations of dead or injured livestock

- Kraig Glazier—Western District Supervisor, Helena, 406-458-0106
Kraig.L.Glazier@aphis.usda.gov
- Mike Foster—Eastern District Supervisor, Billings, 406-657-6464
Mike.Foster@aphis.usda.gov
- John Steuber—State Director, Billings, 406-657-6464
John.E.Steuber@aphis.usda.gov

<http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>

- Annual, weekly, and flight reports
- Report wolves and wolf sign
- Learn more about wolf management