

# Pro-Wolf Documentary Marks Latest Salvo In Battle Over Species' Status



A documentary film from a wolf advocacy group in Wisconsin marks the latest salvo in the growing fight over whether to keep Endangered Species Act protections for the gray wolf.

"Political Predator," looks at wolf hunting in Wisconsin, a practice that started a few years ago after federal officials took the gray wolf in the Western Great Lakes off the Endangered Species list, and Republican lawmakers and Gov. Scott Walker approved a wolf season. The 67-minute film from the group Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf criticizes the hunt-friendly politicians and agency administrators, and makes the case that there's broad opposition to the wolf hunt in rural and urban areas alike.

One of the people interviewed in the film is Mary Falk, a sheep, cattle and goat rancher in Burnett County. Falk uses dogs to help protect her livestock from predators like

wolves. She wants her animals to stay alive, but casts doubt on wolf hunting seasons.

"Is this really about helping livestock production, or is this about making more money for the state through selling hunter licenses? We hunt. We put food in our freezer. We just don't believe in trophy hunting," she said.

Melissa Smith of Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf said the film tries to show a visual reality.

"We really wanted to open peoples' eyes about the political process," she said.

The movie's release this month comes as

some Wisconsin members of Congress are supporting bills that would again temporarily take a large portion of the gray wolf population in the U.S. off the Endangered Species List, and potentially restart wolf hunting. Terry Quam, a livestock owner near Lodi and an active member of the Wisconsin Cattlemen's



Mary Landry, a Wisconsin rancher who was featured in the documentary, says she's skeptical of a wolf-hunting season. *Image courtesy of Duncan Drysdale (CC-BY)*



Association, supports the legislation to control wolves.

"We do not want to eradicate them from the Earth like a lot of people say we do, and we have to have the measure to get them under control in heavily populated areas where you have troublesome wolves taking a very easy shot at farm animals," said Quam.

Quam opposes a plan by animal protection groups and about 50 scientists who have signed a letter to Congress asking that gray wolves be moved to threatened status. One of the letter-signers, University of

2014 Democratic gubernatorial candidate Brett Hulseley also makes an appearance in the documentary. *Image courtesy of Duncan Drysdale (CC-BY)*

Wisconsin-Madison Environmental Studies Professor Adrian Treves, said listing the wolf as threatened would still ban hunting, but allow more help for livestock owners.

"As a threatened species, the state is allowed to apply for permits to allow for lethal controls using the systems they have for 15 years, and if farmers believe them that helps them protect their cattle, that's all the flexibility that's needed," said Treves.

Dave MacFarland of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources said for now, the gray wolf is still listed as endangered, meaning farmers can only try

non-lethal ways to discourage wolves — for example, a technique called fladgery.

"Fladgery is essentially a rope with ribbons hanging from it," said MacFarland. "And for some reasons, wolves are reluctant to cross those lines and so in small pasture situations, fladgery can be effective."

McFarland also said people who lose cattle or pets to wolves can apply for financial compensation. He said a DNR management plan for wolves is in a holding pattern, pending what happens amid all the movies, letters and legislation about gray wolves.

The entire documentary "Political

Predator" is available to watch on YouTube  
[here](#).