

From: msmith@endangered.org
Subject: [ESC Wolves] Advocacy Press Release supporting rebuttal.
Date: 24 November 2015 at 1:19 PM
To: 6014+_nationalwolves-121435@org2-lists.salsalabs.com

M

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 24th, 2015

“ UPDATE: SCIENTISTS PRO-DELISTING LETTER NOT INCLUSIVE OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS OR WOLVES LONG TERM RECOVERY”

(Madison, WI) - For the 2nd time in nine months, scientists and researchers have called upon the US Congress to continue protections for wolves in the Great Lakes Region. The latest letter strongly criticizes Mech et al. for their letter issued last week stating it is, 'based on a misunderstanding of three points of law and scientific evidence'. Melissa Smith of Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf & Wildlife (FOTWW) said, "We are disappointed that experts on the Wydeven/Mech letter chose to only present one side of this issue." FOTWW supports the use of the best available science so Congress and USFWS must consider the ramifications of delisting, including the threats facing wolves due to irresponsible legislation and the requirements for delisting under the Endangered Species Act.

The authors of the Wydeven/Mech letter present a concern for the integrity of the Act if wolves remain listed, however we question the integrity in advocating for an approach that clearly wolves continues to be aggressive towards wolves, by states that are highly influenced by industries and special interests that are extremely hostile to wolves. We feel the statement that people's decreased tolerance of wolves due to federal protection to not be supported by facts.

Blaming federal protection for poaching does not consider that the State of Wisconsin's rabid wolf hunting laws and continued vilification of the species. The lack of law enforcement efforts and the lack of respect for wildlife in general has empowered those who do not respect the wolf or the law for that matter. There have been very extremely low conviction rates for poaching of wolves by both federal and state agencies. The same can be said for both Michigan and Minnesota. For example, If you have a speeding problem, you add more enforcement, you don't remove the speed limits. If we were losing as many deer or bear to illegal kill, hunters would be outraged. Human intolerance has been the greatest threat to wolves and continues to express itself through politics and the extremely aggressive wolf killing management plans that seem to presumptively be part of delisting. Basing wolf recovery on plans that set benchmarks for the lowest viable numbers is dated and irresponsible. Managing social intelligent beings as numbers with all that is known about them is incomprehensible", stated Melissa Smith, director of FOTWW.

Heather Orlovsky serves on the Scientific Advisory Board for FOTWW and is also signer to the Treves/Vucetich science letter that came out today. She stated that "With Act 169 in Wisconsin, many stakeholders, including the tribes and environmental advocacy voices were removed from any sort of decision making process. The science committee was disbanded, and tribal and university biologists were replaced with hunting lobby groups. The law makes any sort of compromise impossible because it restricts discussion of protection of the wolf. A few key tenets are missing such as core habitat protection areas, refuges and buffer zones, which are critical for long term sustainability of wolves in the Great Lakes. While we may agree that the population trajectory of wolves in the Great Lakes has been going in a positive direction over the last few decades under ESA protection, and I respect many of the biologists who were the authors of the original letter, it may be premature to delist the wolf from the ESA at this time, where meaningful discussion between stakeholders has been disallowed and scientific discussion has been replaced by anti-wolf agendas. It is irresponsible not to consider the social issues that drove wolves to the brink of extinction in the past."

Primary Contact: Melissa Smith, Executive Director, Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf, wiforwolves@gmail.com, 608-234-8860, www.fofww.org

#####

--

Melissa Smith

Great Lakes Wolf Coordinator
Endangered Species Coalition
608-234-8860 Mobile
www.endangered.org