

June 14, 2021

To: Members of the Wisconsin Wolf Harvest Committee

c/o Wisconsin DNR

101 S Webster St, Madison, WI 53703

Dear Committee Member,

We, the undersigned, were all either members of the Wolf Advisory Committee that directed development of the 1999 WDNR Wolf Management Plan, or were recognized contributors to that plan.

All of us share a deep concern regarding the management of Wisconsin's wolf population. We are writing to express our concerns regarding quotas and other regulatory factors associated with the November 2021 wolf hunting and trapping season. We believe quotas for the fall season should be established in a highly conservative manner, recognizing the significant imprecision in existing wolf population and harvest models, errors that have occurred in previous application of those models, the lack of understanding of the impact of the February season, and the significant overharvest which occurred during that season.

Some factors in support of our position include:

- The biological impacts of the February 2021 state wolf season, held during the wolves' breeding season, will never be fully understood due to a failure to collect important biological data;
- Most of the population data that will be available to inform the fall 2021 quota setting process will have been gathered prior to the February season, and will have been altered by the effects of the hunt in ways that we cannot fully assess or correct for;
- Wolf harvest during the February season was 83% over the established harvest quota and harvests in specific harvest zones were exceeded by up to 265%;
- The current Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan is over two decades old and fails to represent the best current science and understanding of wolves and wolf conservation in Wisconsin;
- The wolf population goal of 350 as used in the current plan has been frequently misrepresented as a population cap rather than a threshold level above which certain management activities could be considered, as intended and described in the current plan;
- The Wisconsin wolf population goal was intended to be reviewed every 5 years, with future population goals based on an assessment of potential suitable wolf habitat;
- Wolves fulfill valuable ecological functions on the landscape, contributing to the health and diversity of ecosystems where they occur;
- Maintaining a healthy and ecologically functional wolf population is a goal with broad support from Wisconsin citizens.

We fully support the intent expressed by WDNR Wildlife program staff both prior to and after the February hunt, that until a new Wolf Management Plan has been completed, wolf season frameworks should be designed so that they do not reduce the wolf population. Quotas for the fall season should be consistent with maintaining the wolf population at the level which existed prior to the February season. In addition, the new wolf conservation plan must be based upon the best available science, and be completed using a transparent process that includes broad public representation and full Tribal consultation.

As career professionals, we all stand ready to work with the WDNR Wildlife Management program and all other interested stakeholders in continuing our tradition of conservative wildlife management and assuring a sustainable future for wolves and wolf management in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(In the order listed in the 1999 Wolf Management Plan)

*Adrian Wydeven*

*Randle Jurewicz*

*Kerry Beheler*

*Ken Jonas*

*Ron Schultz*

*John Olson*

*Sheri Buller*

*Richard Thiel*

*Laine Stowell*

*Bruce Kohn*

*Eric Anderson*

*Tony Rinaldi*

*Peter David*

*Sarah Boles*

*Keith McCaffery*

Robert Rolley

Patricia McConnell

Fred Strand

Ron Eckstein

Dave Evenson

cc WI Natural Resources Board

Todd Ambs, WI Department of Natural Resources

Keith Warnke, WI Department of Natural Resources

Randy Johnson, WI Department of Natural Resources