



WOLF CONSERVATION CENTER

ADVOCACY GUIDE (2ND-5TH)



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Preface

About The WCC:

The Wolf Conservation Center is a 501 c (3) not-for-profit wolf conservation organization founded by Hélène Grimaud in 1999. Our organization's mission is to advance the survival of wolves by inspiring a global community through education, advocacy, research, and recovery. We are driven by our values of respect, community, and passion. The Wolf Conservation Center participates in federal recovery and release programs for two critically endangered wolf species - the Mexican gray wolf and the red wolf.

The Wolf Conservation Center also houses two ambassador gray wolves on exhibit who help to educate the public about wolves and further our mission to provide top-tier education about the vital role wolves play in the environment and the human role in protecting their future. Through wolves, the WCC teaches the broader message of conservation, ecological balance, and personal responsibility for improved human stewardship of our World.

In order to best prepare the endangered red and Mexican gray wolves residing at the center—all of whom are candidates for wild-release—they reside off exhibit within the WCC's Endangered Species Facility.

About the Wolf Conservation Center Advocacy Guide:

This guide has been prepared as a way to introduce, explore, and help individuals, groups, and communities navigate wolf conservation advocacy. In the guide you will find sections on several topics such as wolf history, current status as an endangered species, tips for achieving impact, and action steps for wolf advocacy. We hope that this guide will help increase your knowledge of wolves and their ecological importance, develop compassion for their species, and provide practical action steps to become engaged in helping the wolves of North America thrive. **Please note that this guide was last updated on 9/8/2024, so population numbers may have shifted, though this guide aims to be updated annually.**

I. Introduction

Perhaps some of us can remember the very first time we saw a wolf. For the lucky few, it could've been on a vast field of land in a recovery site. For countless others, it may have been in a book, a magazine article, a movie, a stuffed animal, or even nowadays—on social media. Whatever way you came to know the wolf's existence, it's likely the emotion that arose in you was a strong one. It could have been a striking moment of awe and admiration. It may have been a gut clenching moment of fear or worry. It may have been a minute of pure curiosity.

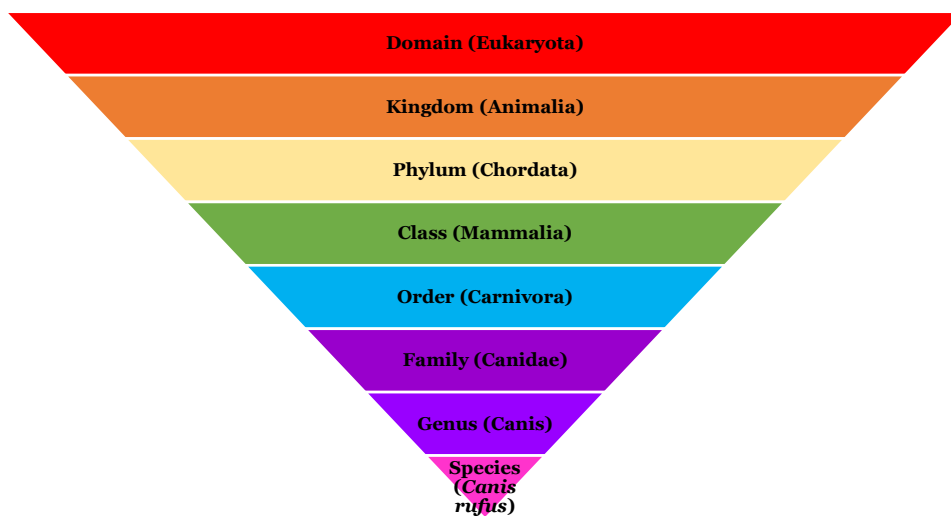
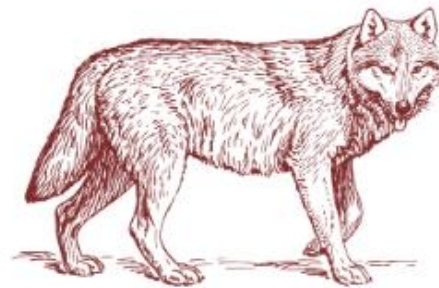
It likely could have been a mix of all those emotions. Of the potential reactions, one is quite certain—the wolf demands your attention.

While opinions on wolves can vary, they are an incredibly important part of what makes this planet so special. At best, their presence helps keep balance and maintain healthy ecosystems, ensuring they thrive and promote biodiversity. At worst, their absence can signal long-term troubles to come, especially related to our delicately interwoven food web and environment.

Regardless of whether wolves are physically near you or just a YouTube click away, one truth is abundantly clear: the world needs wolves...and they need our help.

A. Back to basics: What is a wolf?

If you're reading this, you probably already have a general idea about what a wolf looks like. They have powerful long legs, alert and pointy ears, a long snout, and emotive amber eyes. You most likely also realize that they're a mammal, meaning they give birth to live young and provide their offspring with milk. They also have hair and breathe air through the lungs. What you might be curious to know, however, is that a wolf belongs to a very specific classification in taxonomical science called "Canidae". This is where they fall on the taxonomic rank, a system science uses to group organisms based on ancestral or hereditary hierarchy. If you've ever heard the mnemonic phrase, "Dear King Phillip came over for good spaghetti" then congratulations: you might already have some basic knowledge about taxonomical ranking! This mnemonic phrase summarizes the simplest form of the rankings which are: Domain, Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, and Species. For visual representation, see the diagram below which reflects red wolf taxonomy. In the taxonomical ranking, "Canidae" is a family. This family consists of members like wolves, coyotes, dogs, and foxes, to name a few. They are also referred to as simply "Canids".



Canis, which is a genus including these animals, first appeared on the landscape in North America around 6 million years ago during the Miocene era. Eventually, these animals migrated

to Eurasia via a land bridge. This led to the evolution of gray wolves. Gray wolves then made their way to North America about 1 million years ago. However, they were mostly only found in the arctic region until around 30,000 years ago. Currently, wolves are found in North America, Europe, and Asia.

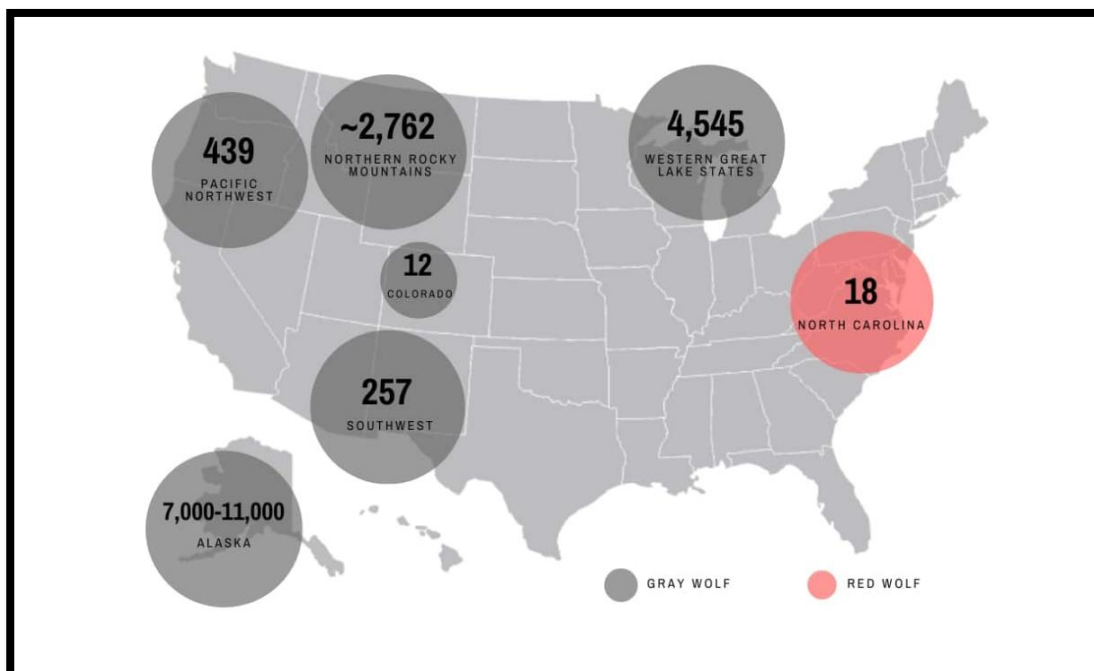
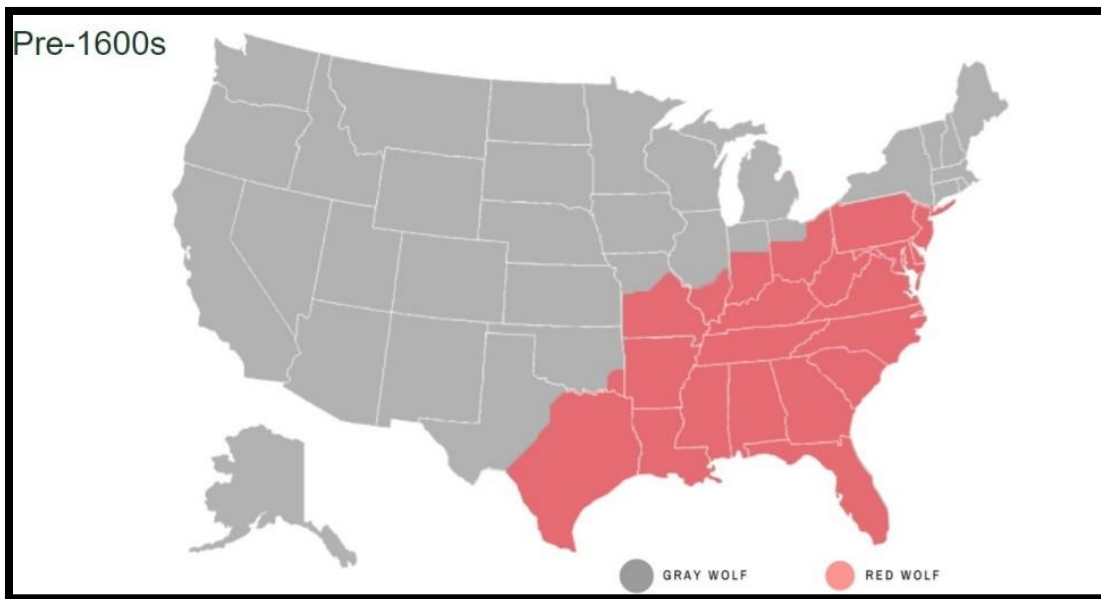
There are only two species of wolves in the world, though there is debate in the scientific community currently over the potential of a third species. As of now, these two species consist of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) and red wolves (*Canis rufus*). While there are several subspecies of gray wolves, there are no surviving subspecies of red wolves. Some subspecies of gray wolves include the following: arctic gray wolves, plains wolves, Alexander archipelago wolves, Canadian rocky mountain wolves, coastal wolves, Mexican gray wolves, Eurasian wolves, and eastern/Algonquin wolves. The taxonomy of the Eastern/Algonquin wolf is currently being debated within the scientific community.

Canis lupus' range in North America used to be vast. Specifically, in the United States, gray wolves were found all over the country with the exception of Hawaii. There was an estimated population of about 2 million wolves, but as settlers migrated from Europe to the United States, their populations decimated due to hunting and habitat loss. Currently, the population of wolves in the lower 48 is around 7,000-8,000. In North America, the highest concentrations of wolves are in Alaska and Canada. Canada has around 60,000 wolves, while Alaska has around 7,000-11,000 wolves. These numbers, however, are all far cries from their original estimates of 2 million!

The second species of wolf is called the red wolf (*Canis rufus*). Unlike gray wolves who are found in Europe, Asia, and North America, red wolves are only found in North America, historically and currently. They have been in the southeastern United States since the late Pleistocene time period. Although red wolves today are so named for their red pelage, the historical record of red wolves indicates that it was common for them to have a black pelage, as well. This is called melanism. Unfortunately, due to the small founding genetic population all red wolves stem from today, this color does not exist in the current red wolf population.

a. Map (pre 1600s-current)

Below represents a map of the historical range of wolves pre-1600s as well as their current ranges within the landscape of the United States.



B. “All in the family”: Pack dynamics & Communication

Wolf packs generally follow a typical structure. Although the definition and what constitutes a pack varies from state-to-state, the general understanding of a pack consists of a male and female “dominant breeding pair” & their pups and older children. The term “alpha” has been used in the past to describe how a pack’s structure works, but through years of additional research, scientists realized this was not an accurate way of describing pack dynamics. The

original term “alpha” came from a paper by Rudolph Schenkel, in which he was responding on dynamics he observed in unrelated, captive wolves. He has since revoked his statement, which he published in his book, explaining that it does not represent the structure of wild wolf packs. In reality, there is not a competition to be an “alpha” wolf, because the male and female naturally ascend to leadership status, as they begin the pack by having pups. They’re the leaders simply because they are the parents in charge of them. We see this type of structure in plenty of human families as well, with two parents in charge of their “pups” aka kids!

Communication between packs consists of nonverbal and verbal communication. Nonverbal communication can be body language and scent marking. Verbal communication can include howling, growling, whimpering, whining, and barking.

C. Canids around the globe: species & subspecies

Canids are comprised of several species. They include: short eared dogs, raccoon dogs, African wild dogs, bush dogs, crab eating foxes, pampas foxes, hoary Foxes, Sechuran foxes, gray foxes, island foxes, kit foxes, swift foxes, Arctic foxes, tibetan foxes, bat-eared foxes, cape foxes, Blanford’s foxes, pale foxes, Ruppell’s foxes, fennec foxes, bengal foxes, Darwin’s foxes, red foxes, maned wolves, culpeos, chillas, corsacs, dholes, side-striped jackals, golden jackals, black-backed jackals, Ethiopian wolves, coyotes, red wolves, and gray wolves.

II. Historical significance and Timeline in North America

A. Negative myths: Perceptions vs. realities

Wolves appear in various cultural and historical texts throughout the world. There are various cultural references to wolves in Norse and Sami Mythology, Greek and Roman mythology, Hindu Mythology, Egyptian Mythology, Inuit and Mongol’s cultures, Turkish culture, and Native American Culture. Some of the wolves portrayed in these cultures and myths are painted in a positive light but some are painted in a negative light. Unfortunately, as Europeans migrated to lands like North America, they brought negative myths and folklore about wolves with them. One damaging myth was the belief in werewolves, which was so intense that many religious groups persecuted people in their false belief someone was a werewolf or was fraternizing with wolves. These dangerous misconceptions permeated society and introduced stories that many of us are still familiar with today including children’s stories like “Little Red Riding Hood”, “The Three Little Pigs”, and “Stone Soup”. Even to this day literature tends to portray wolves as being shift, cunning, dangerous, and calculating.

Portrayals of wolves as vicious, dangerous predators led to their severe population decline in North America as more and more people moved into spaces and habitats that wolves occupied. During colonial times, settlers in the U.S. began baiting and trapping wolves. Even further west, hunting for wolves in places like Yellowstone became a problem as early as the 1870s. In areas of the southwest, wolves were also hunted. Unfortunately, throughout the 19th century, the government implemented funded eradication campaigns and bounty programs which offered sums for bringing in killed wolves between \$20-\$50 per wolf. Political aspects also played into

their decline. Private landowners became more engaged in expanding their grazing lands and thus began the move to **lobby** politically for their interests to policymakers. One example of this was the work done by the newly formed U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey in 1885. The U.S. Forest Service, having been lobbied by stockowners, recruited these groups to help clear cattle ranges of gray wolves in 1906. So expansive and efficient were these government-funded programs that by the middle of the 20th century, these extermination programs had eradicated almost all gray wolves that had resided in the lower 48 states. In fact, by the 1970's, scientist estimated that a mere 700 wolves existed in northern Minnesota and a National Park off the coast of Michigan called Isle Royale national park.

Insert Federal agency chart from Regan

However, as time progressed, the period of the 1960s proved a fertile breeding ground of pro-environmental sentiment, as people began to understand how biodiversity—and the presence of varieties of species—was crucial in keeping natural ecosystems healthy and in balance. This shift in attitude helped to pave the way for more legal protections of wildlife, and in 1973, Congress officially placed gray wolves under protection through the newly formed Endangered Species Act (“ESA”).

B. Wolves in the vernacular: popular phrases, idioms, & song lyrics

Some phrases and terms are still used to describe wolves today, even after being debunked in science or proven false, such as the earlier example of the term “alpha”.

Wolves show up in our phrases, too. Popular examples include: “*You threw me to the wolves*”, “*He was such a lone wolf!*” or “*Don't cry wolf*” and these still persist in our language. We even have wolves referenced in popular culture through song lyrics which feature them as being dangerous. An example of this is the 80's hit “Hungry like a wolf”. This song includes a lyric: “*I'm on the hunt, I'm after you...I'm hungry like the wolf*” Unfortunately, when wolves are discussed in our vernacular, more often than not the literature or language promotes negative stereotypes of wolves as being dangerous or untrustworthy to be around, thus perpetuating false myths.

C. Reality of Wolves

Although wolves are associated with many negative stereotypes, the reality of wolves being dangerous or scary couldn't be further from the truth. Wolves are naturally cautious animals and have a fear of humans. It is rare for humans to even *see* wolves in the wild, much less encounter them in person. Wolves attacking humans is **extremely** rare. In the past 100 years, two wolf attacks were recorded due to habituation through food—where a human gives food to a wild animal and it gets used to them. It should be noted that feeding **any** wild animal is not advised and can lead to habituation and complications for both the human and animal. If you are ever in an area where wolves live, first—congratulations! What a unique opportunity that so few people have. If you are traveling through wolf areas, there's not much you need to do. If the wolves are near you, keep your distance—wild animals of all sorts should not be approached, because it can make them feel threatened.

III. Conservation & challenges

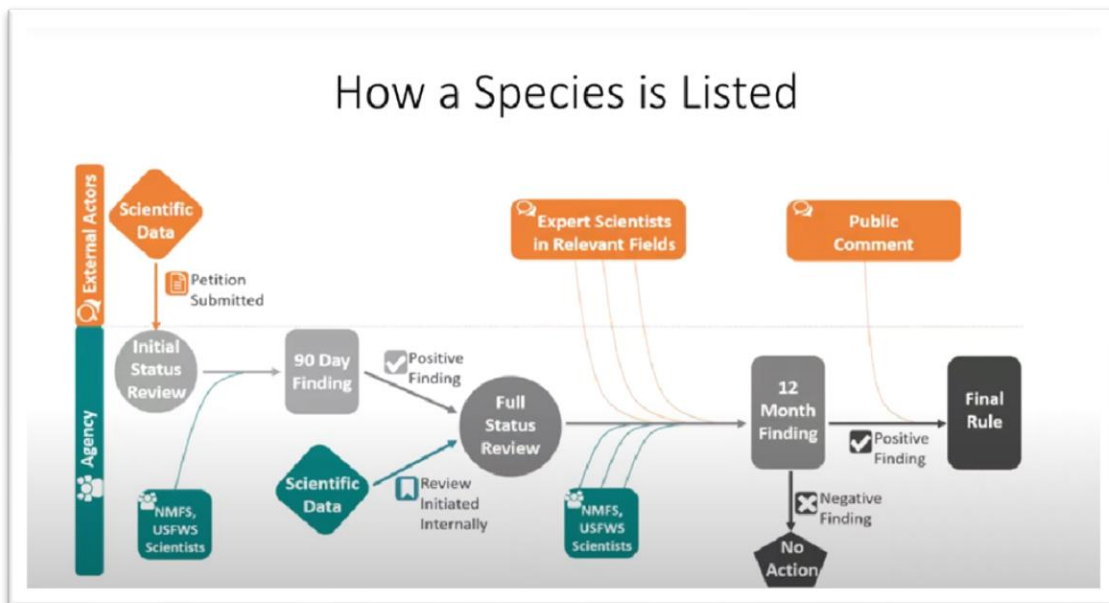
We're going to begin by taking a look at the status of wolves as a listed endangered species. We'll also discuss wolf management and how those management plans are created. We'll focus on the states where wolves currently occupy territories, as well as their population in those states. Next, we'll look at the role of federal vs. state protection of wolves. From there, we'll delve deeper into the conservation challenges they face, beginning with a timeline of legal challenges centered around wolves and following with a focus on five main factors that influence the success or limitations of their conservation.

a. Listing a species as Endangered

This process is used for listing a species as endangered, but is also used for listing a species as threatened. First, based on scientific data, a petition is submitted to list a species endangered. There is then an initial status review. Here is where USFWS and other wildlife agencies will review and create a finding within 90 days which indicates whether they are deciding to accept the submitted petition or reject it.

If they accept the petition, it will lead to a full status review. At this time, top-level scientists in the relevant field are consulted, as well as USFWS scientists and other relevant agency scientists. This type of work involves collecting and analyzing the best available data on the species. The focus in this review will be on specific information including the species' biology, ecology, abundance (population amount), population trends, and threats that would help to evaluate the species' current status and risk for extinction.

This review will result in a 12 month (year) finding within one year that the petition was received. These findings can result in either a negative finding: meaning they don't believe the species is at risk, or a positive finding: meaning they do believe the species is at risk. If there is a positive finding (signaling the species is indeed at risk), this will lead to a final ruling, which is subject to a mandatory public comment period. For a visual chart of this process, please see the graphic below.



(Source: Nadya Hall, “Understanding policy: how we protect our most at-risk species”, 2019)

If there is a listing of a species as endangered, the appropriate agency (ex. USFWS) will have to assign a critical habitat for the species, which is space for it to live and recover. When USFWS is deciding on the critical habitat, they will begin by looking at areas where that species currently lives. They will also consider what biological and physical features it will require for life processes and successful reproduction. The features included are as follows:

- Cover or shelter
- Nutritional or physiological needs such as food, water, light, minerals, and air
- Sites for breeding as well as rearing their offspring, for germination, or seed dispersal
- Habitats that are protected from possible disturbances or are historical regions that species’ population used to occupy
- Space for individual as well as overall population growth and space for normal behavior

b. Wolf Plans 101

So, how does it all work? Wolf plans can be a little confusing, so we’re going to do our best to simplify it for you!

It’s first important to address the term “management” when it comes to wolves. While “wildlife management” is a popular term, it doesn’t quite represent the best way of thinking about helping wildlife. Management also oftentimes involves setting limits and can also mean hunting of animals. Additionally, using “management” to describe wildlife makes it seem as though without human presence and action, wildlife will cause problems and therefore must be managed. It also fails to recognize that wild plants and animals are wild and the natural environment does just fine in keeping everything balanced on its own.

This is a great example of how important it is that we reflect on the way we use language and words when we’re talking about the environment and wildlife in order to represent them appropriately.

First, as of this first publication (2024) wolves are protected federally, which means that all the states must legally protect wolves (with the exception of 3 states we will discuss later).

State agencies manage the wolves in their areas, even though they have federal protections through the USFWS. You can think of these state agencies as the folks that are “on the ground” in these wolf areas. Ultimately, these state agencies must report to US Fish & Wildlife Service. These state agencies include Fish & Wildlife, Fish & Game, and Department of Natural Resources, etc. The names these state agencies operate under can vary from state to state. For example: Colorado’s wolves are managed by *Colorado Parks & Wildlife* & Montana’s wolves are managed by *Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks*.

All states which are home to wolves must have management plans. For example, Mexican gray wolves have these plans and are managed by an interagency field team which work together to help Mexican gray wolves. When state management plans for wolves get updated, there is a mandatory public comment period, usually consisting of 30 days, but may be pushed even further, such as 60 days. Here, the public can comment on the details of the plan to voice their concerns or support.

It's very important to note that even if a state doesn't currently have wolves, they are still able to create a wolf management plan for future possibilities. For example, a wolf may disperse (leave their birth pack) and settle in a new place. Therefore, even if you don't live where wolves are, you can still speak up for their protection in your own state.

Wolves are also federally protected in national parks. For example, even though wolves can be legally hunted in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, they are protected in Yellowstone National Park.

While all states with wolves have management plans, that does not mean **all** wolves have a full **recovery** plan. Rather, subspecies of wolves have recovery plans. The USFWS' current recovery plan for the general gray wolf was developed in 1992. Its last update was over a decade ago, in 2012. This plan is separate from the delisted gray wolf population in the Northern Rocky Mountains, the Mexican gray wolf in the Southwest, and the eastern timber wolf in Minnesota.

c. How are management plans created?

Management plans are created together in partnership with stakeholder advisory committees, professional scientists, federal (USFWS), and state agencies. They are supposed to be reviewed and updated every couple of years.

i. Sound Science: The Importance of peer-reviewed research

Plans are supposed to use the best available science at the time. This means that plans should include peer-reviewed scientific studies (which are published in well-respected **academic journals**). What does peer reviewed mean? Peer review is an intense, long process that a scientific study has to go through. It involves a very professional, well-studied panel of scientists that review the study and work together to make sure it is accurate, significant, and relevant before it moves on to be published as **scientific literature** in **academic journals**.

Unfortunately, while management plans *should* include the best available science, those scientific findings aren't always fully supported in the plans. This can make conservation challenging. This lack of support is usually due to outside special interests. A **special interest group** is a group of people or an organization seeking or receiving special advantages, typically through political lobbying. To **lobby** is seeking to influence a politician or public official about a specific issue, and lobbying can be done by an individual, group, or organization.

An example of special interest groups that may not be in favor of supporting wolves are the livestock/ranching and agriculture industry. These group's voices may be given priority over what the best science says. Public opinion and cultural values of voters can also impact an elected official's (such as a senator) willingness to consider the best scientific approach. For example: many hunters are in Montana, so an elected official may care more about the hunter's priorities over the priority of protecting wolves.

We will look further into what factors can impact conservation in later sections.

d. States where wolves live, populations & state wolf plans

i. Alaska

Currently, this is the only state where wolves that are not listed on the Endangered Species list, as their population ranges between 7,000-11,000 wolves. However, this doesn't mean there aren't any challenges for wolves in the state. Unfortunately, Alaska considers wolves to be a big game animal and furbearer, which means they can be hunted and trapped. Hunters and trappers kill about 1,300 wolves in the state every year. Additionally, up to around 200 animals or so can be killed annually through intensive management programs (predator control). So, wolves do still face challenges in Alaska despite their population size.

Specifically, the Alexander Archipelago wolf is facing threats in the Tongass National Forest, which represents 80% of their historic range. This is primarily due to old-forest logging, trapping, and hunting in the area. Unfortunately, when conservation groups asked to list the AA wolves under the Endangered Species Act, the US Fish & Wildlife service deemed the listing "not warranted", so they remain at risk.

Wolves managed by: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: N/A (not endangered in Alaska)

ii. Arizona

Arizona is home to Mexican gray wolves. There are around 113 in Arizona the following national forests: Apache Sitgraves National Forest, Coconino National Forest, Tonto National Forest, and Prescott National Forest. Mexican gray wolves are managed under the Interagency Field Team, which reports to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. There are around 257 Mexican gray wolves between Arizona and New Mexico. They are listed as a 10(j) species. 10(j) will be explained in further detail in later sections, but in simple terms, the 10(j) status allows USFWS to treat the population of that species or subspecies as "threatened" instead of "endangered". This lets USFWS have more flexibility in their management and devise special regulations for that population. However, this flexibility can also result in challenges in their conservation, which we will discuss in later sections.

The interagency field team is in charge of Mexican gray wolves. This team is responsible for distributing quarterly summaries to the public on the activities of the recovery program. This includes updates on wolf activities, monitoring the wolves, management activities, communication and coordination, outreach activities, Mexican gray wolf releases, personnel and law enforcement news.

Wolves managed by: Interagency field team: consisting of New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, field team positions which include field team leaders (one per state and tribal lead agency), wildlife biologists and specialists, depredation specialists, conservation education and outreach specialists, field assistants, and other staff as the lead agencies and cooperators deem necessary and appropriate.

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: September 2022

iii. California

California had a history of wolves on the landscape, although by the 1920s they had been extirpated from the state due to hunting and habitat encroachment from humans settling in the state. Eventually, wolves from other states such as Oregon dispersed to California. The first wolf to enter since the 1920s was the famous male wolf called “OR7”. Wolves continued to naturally venture into the state around 2011, while the first pack was recorded in 2015 (the Shasta pack which is no longer present). Currently, California has seven confirmed wolf packs in northern California. They are: The Whaleback pack, the Lassen pack, the Beyem Seyo pack, the Beckwourth pack, the Harvey pack, the Yowlumni pack, and a currently unnamed pack. Wolves in California are federally protected under the Endangered Species Act, as well as state protected under the California Endangered Species Act. As of 2024, California is home to between about 45-50 wolves.

Wolves managed by: California Department of Fish & Wildlife

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: December 2016

iv. Colorado

Colorado used to have wolves but they had been extirpated by around the 1940s. However, wolves currently are both state and federally listed as an endangered species in Colorado. Occasionally, a wolf will disperse and make its way through the state. In June 2021, the first breeding pair with pups was documented in the state, which hadn’t happened for several decades. Most recently, a ballot initiative called Proposition 114 was introduced and put to a vote for citizens in November of 2020 which called for wolves to be reintroduced into the western slope (regions of Gunnison, Aspen, Vail, Montrose).

It passed—though by a *very* narrow margin: 1.8% with 50.91% in favor and 49.09% against. Once it passed, gray wolves were then set to be reintroduced into the western slope of Colorado by December 31st of 2023. Unfortunately, the reintroduction status of the gray wolves in the western slope, however, resulted in their population being subjected to the 10(j) rule, which means the wolves are considered a non-essential, experimental population. This, along with its drawbacks, is explained in later sections below.

As of February 17th, 2024, there are 12 wolves (obtained from Oregon) which were released into Colorado as part of the reintroduction. The plan is to release 10-15 wolves by December of 2024 and continue releases until March 2025. Their goal is to have 30-50 wolves in the state in the next 3-5 years.

When creating the management plan, Colorado recruited a technical working group (mainly consisting of biologists) and a stakeholder advisory group (consisting primarily of ranchers, hunters, outfitters, and wildlife advocates).

Unfortunately, Colorado’s current (11/2023) wolf plan does not require livestock owners and ranchers to partake in preventative, non-lethal measures for coexistence with wolves. Additionally, the state will pay them for predation from wolves on their livestock (an already extremely rare occurrence) without requiring those coexistence measures.

Wolves managed by: Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: May 2023

v. Florida

Florida currently houses red wolves on an island off the coast called St. Vincent. This is usually just a stopping point before they reach their ultimate destination in the recovery and release program. There are no other wolves or red wolves in Florida and there are no state protections of wolves in Florida.

Wolves managed by: US Fish & Wildlife Service

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: N/A for Florida, Red wolves in Florida are under the federal red wolf conservation management plan

vi. Idaho

Idaho is one of four states that legally allow for hunting of wolves. This is due to a budget appropriations bill passed by congress which included a rider directing the USFWS to reissue a delisting rule from 2009. It was signed into law by the president in 2011. Unfortunately, the rider also contained a section that stated that the rule “shall not be subject to judicial review”. This was the first time (and so far, only) time an act of congress had ever delisted an animal on the Endangered Species Act, as it is typically done only by USFWS.

There are additional challenges for wolves in Idaho that are even more current. In 2021, Senate Bill 1211 was passed which authorizes the killing of more than 1,300 of the state’s wolves, out of the population of around 1,500. This bill also liberalizes killing methods, including allowing tag holders (individuals with a permit to hunt specific animals) to trap and snare wolves on private property all year long, use bait to lure wolves in, hunt them at night, and kill them from all-terrain vehicles. Another part of the bill allows for the hiring of private contractors to kill wolves as well as increases funding provided to the Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board in order to kill wolves.

Idaho also has year-long hunting seasons, which involve hunting on both public and private land. In 2022 and 2023, Idaho hunters and trappers killed more than 560 wolves.

The latest population numbers provided in 2022 was around 1,543 wolves.

Wolves managed by: Idaho Department of Fish & Game

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: May 2023

vii. Maine

Although there are no established populations of wolves in Maine, due to their close proximity to Ontario, Canada, northern Maine occasionally sees Eastern/Algonquin wolves moving through the state. This is due to a process called “dispersal” which is when an adult wolf leaves their natal pack to find a mate and establish their own territory.

Wolves managed by: N/A: recognized

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: N/A: recognized

viii. Michigan

The current population of wolves, found in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is around 631. There are also wolves on Isle Royale National Park. In 2019 there were only two left on the island. The island used to be home to 50 wolves, but warming climates and increasing temperatures of Lake Superior resulted in fewer ice bridges being formed, which connect the island to the mainland of the U.S. and Canada. This was the primary way wolves were able to get to and from the island. Eventually, this led to inbreeding and reduced genetic diversity coming from the mainland onto the island. Additionally, the wolves faced challenges with disease outbreak on the island. All of these factors prompted USFWS to step in and transport new wolves there every few years. This is also critical in order to help balance the moose population there. The dynamics between moose and wolves here has resulted in the longest running predator-prey study in the world. As of 2023, there are around 31 wolves in Isle Royale. Wolves in Michigan are federally protected.

Wolves managed by: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: September 2022

ix. Minnesota

Minnesota was once home to the last remaining wolves in the wild in the lower 48 states. Thanks to federal protections, these wolves were eventually able to repopulate Michigan's Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin.

As of February 10th, 2022, Minnesota's gray wolf population was federally listed as and protected as a threatened species. This delisting means that wolves can only be killed in an act of self-defense. The state's most recent wolf management plan calls for maintaining a statewide population between 2,200-3,00 wolves.

Should wolves lose federal protections, the latest plan does not take a position on whether a wolf hunt must be held.

Wolves managed by: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: December 2022

x. Montana

Montana is one of four states that legally allow for hunting of wolves. This is due to a budget appropriations bill passed by congress which included a rider at the end of the bill, directing the USFWS to reissue a delisting rule from 2009. It was signed into law by the president in 2011. Unfortunately, the rider also contained a section which stated that the rule "shall not be subject to judicial review". This was the first time (and so far only) time an act of congress had ever delisted an animal on the endangered species act, as it is typically done only by USFWS.

Wolf protections have not improved in Montana. In fact, Montana's legislature passed bills in the past few years that expanded the trapping season by four weeks, enabled night hunting, allowed use of bait, allowed for permit snaring, and offering bounties for cost incurred in hunting or trapping wolves.

In 2021, 450 wolves were killed which represents approximately 40% of their population. Additionally, there was an increase to bag limit (number of wolves able to be killed) to 20 wolves per individual.

The population current numbers as of 2022 are around 1,087 wolves.

Recent developments are not showing promising signs for wolves in this state. Montana's last updated wolf management plan was from 2003—20 years ago. It was updated in fall of 2023, and the draft plan was weak at best, tenuous at worst. For example, the plan's baseline for wolf populations in the state is 450 wolves, which wasn't a target number, but will likely be treated as one. In addition, the new plan does not include development of a stakeholder advisory group, which would include a citizen advisory council and public meetings.

Wolves managed by: Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: May 2004 (addendum was added) - As of 11/26/23, the latest plan (since 20 years) is being drafted, public comment period will be in December, final draft expected in January 2024

xi. New Mexico

New Mexico at present has Mexican gray wolves. There are around 144 primarily found in the following national forests: Apache Sitgraves National Forest, Coconino National Forest, Tonto National Forest, and Prescott National Forest. in include the Gila National Forest and Cibolo National Forest. They are listed as endangered under state law in addition to the federal laws. There are around 242 Mexican gray wolves between New Mexico and Arizona.

Mexican gray wolves are managed by the Interagency Field Team. This team is responsible for distributing quarterly summaries to the public on the activities of the recovery program. This includes updates on wolf activities, monitoring the wolves, management activities, communication and coordination, outreach activities, Mexican gray wolf releases, personnel and law enforcement news.

Wolves in New Mexico managed by: Interagency field team: consisting of New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, field team positions which include field team leaders (one per state and tribal lead agency), wildlife biologists and specialists, depredation specialists, conservation education and outreach specialists, field assistants, and other staff as the lead agencies and cooperators deem necessary and appropriate.

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: September 2022

xii. North Carolina

Currently, North Carolina is home to red wolves in Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina. The population of red wolves currently (3/2024) consists of 16 known, collared red wolves in the wild.

Wolves managed by: Wolves in North Carolina are protected under the federal Red wolf conservation management plan, however, they are under the 10(j) species rule. This will be discussed in later sections, but it means red wolf management is more flexible, which is not positive for their conservation.

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: September 2023: Wolves in North Carolina are under the federal Red Wolf Recovery plan.

xiii. Oregon

The first plan created by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife was drafted in 2005 and established protocol for when to manage wolves when they began to repopulate Oregon. Oregon's wolf populations reestablished themselves around 2009, with the first pack documented. As of the latest wolf count at the end of 2022, the population was around 178, with around 24 packs. Wolves used to be listed as state protected in Oregon, but that designation was removed in 2015. However, they do retain some protection through their special game mammal status, which means they are protected by statute throughout Oregon. Additionally, they are currently federally protected in Oregon.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recently had a meeting to go over the 5-year review of the state wolf plan, but they determined that revising the plan was not needed at this time. The last review to the state wolf plan was initiated in 2016, while an updated state wolf plan was adopted in 2019. This updated plan was put into effect following an extensive public process.

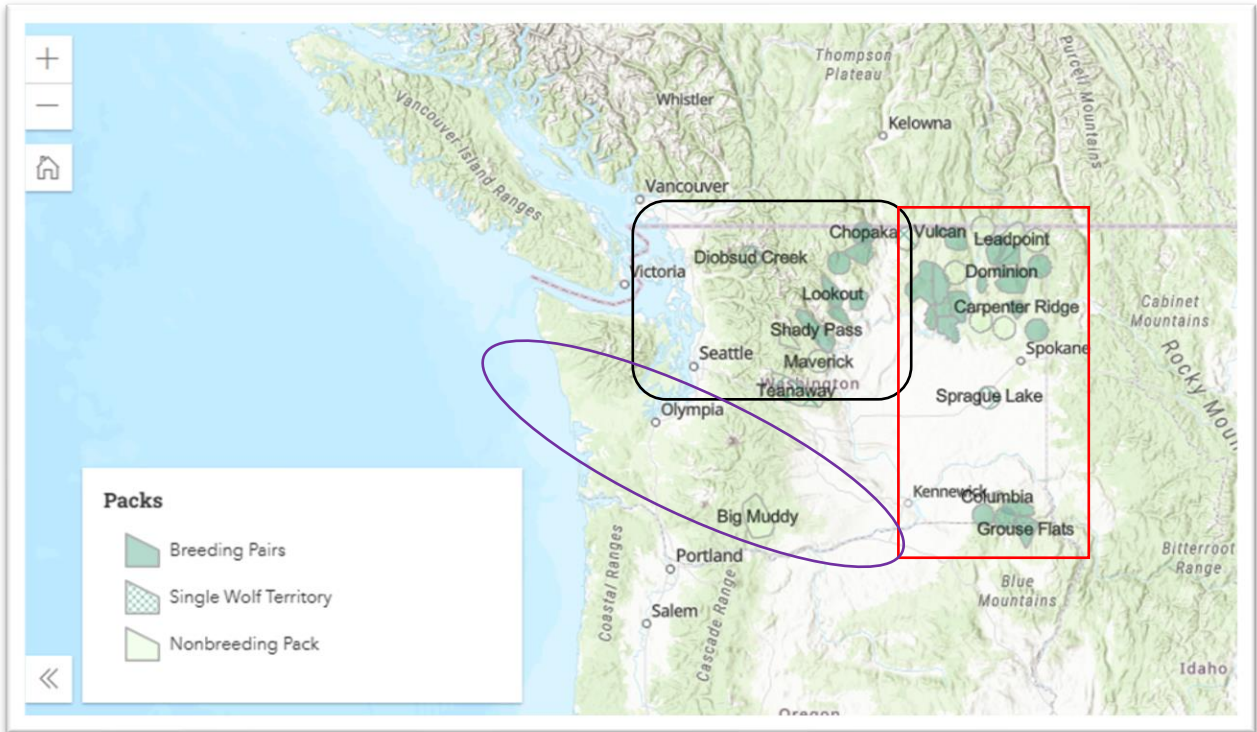
Wolves managed by: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission, a 7-member board appointed by the Oregon governor which represents the different districts in the state.

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: July 2013 (addendum added)

xiv. Washington

Wolves were found in Washington state until the 1930s. Wolves began returning to Washington through dispersal from neighboring states such as Oregon, Montana, Idaho, as well as British Columbia (Canada). In 2008, the first pack to officially take up residence in the state since being extirpated was in 2008.

Wolves were listed as endangered by the state in 1980 (WAC 220-610-010). In addition, they receive protection under state law RCW 77.15.120 from possession, hunting, malicious harassment, and killing. Wolves were listed on the state level because of their historical occurrence in the state, near elimination from Washington, and existing status as endangered under the federal ESA. However, wolves are **not** federally protected in the eastern portion of Washington.



Red = Eastern Washington / Black = Northern Cascades / Purple: Southern Cascades & Northwest Coast

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is the management authority for the species in the eastern third of Washington (this includes east of Highway 97 from the British Columbia border south to Monse, Highway 17 from Monse south to Mesa, and Highway 395 from Mesa south to the Oregon border). The exception to this is in tribal and National Park Service lands. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the management authority for wolves west of those highways (the western two-thirds of the state). There are currently around 206 wolves in Washington.

Wolves managed by: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: December 2011

xv. Wisconsin:

Wolves in Wisconsin are managed by the Department of Natural Resources under a plan that was initially drafted in 1999. Wolves in Wisconsin are an endangered species, but if/when wolves are taken off the list, management returns to the state. In 2012, legislators passed a state law requiring the Department of Natural Resources to hold annual wolf hunting when wolves are not protected under the Endangered Species Act (ex. they become delisted federally). There have been four recent wolf hunting seasons: 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2021. In 2021, Wisconsin reported the number of pack-associated wolves as estimated between 812 and 1,193 within the pack-occupied range, with the most likely estimate being 972 wolves.

As of 2023, development for Wisconsin wolves has been in the works. Their latest conservation management plan does not set a numerical limit for the population of wolves in the state. They

instead will look at recommendations based on best available science. They consider a population of under 799 as low and should grow, around 800-999 could grow or be considered stable, and around 1,000-1,199 is stable or could be reduced, while 1,200 could be reduced. This plan replaced a plan the DNR had adopted in 1999 that set a hard population cap of 350 for wolves. As of 11/24/23, lawmakers were trying to advance a bill that would set a specific wolf population cap number in the most updated plan. It passed with no debate, and as of January 2024, the bill was sent to Governor Tony Evers for him to sign or veto.

Wolves managed by: the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: October 2023 (Still working on final draft as of 11/26/23)

xvi. Wyoming

Although wolves in Idaho and Montana were delisted in 2011, Wyoming was not eligible at the time of the appropriations bill, because Wyoming hadn't set up "adequate regulatory mechanisms" to be able to preserve the populations. However, by 2017 Wisconsin had created regulations, thus allowing them to regain authority over managing wolves in their state.

Wolves in Wyoming have no state protection or federal protections as an endangered species. Their department of fish and game manages wolves under the classification of both "predatory animals" and "trophy game". State managers allow for unrestricted killing (also called "*take*") of wolves, meaning there is no limit on the number of wolves killed, no specificity as to the methods used for killing them, and no requirement for individuals to obtain a hunting license in order to kill them. In 80% of the state wolves are classified as "predatory" animals. Additionally, an 11-year-old state law conceals the identity of those who legally kill Wyoming wolves.

As of the end of 2022, there are around 338 wolves in around 41 packs including around 23 breeding pairs.

Wolves managed by: Wyoming Game & Fish Department

Wolf Conservation Management Plan last updated: March 2012

in a recent study published by Canadian scientists. Still, killings of these wolves continues to happen. In 2020 and 2021, 824 wolves were killed under this policy.

i. Protections outside the U.S.: Mexico & tribal territories

There is one subspecies of gray wolf in northern Mexico: the Mexican gray wolf. There are national protections in place through their General Wildlife Law. Mexico's wolf recovery plan was developed by the Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) and the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP). However, legal enforcement of their protections in Mexico are unreliable.

If any Mexican gray wolf travels from Mexico to the U.S. they receive full, federal protection until they reach the area known as the Mexican wolf experimental population area, which classifies the wolves as being part of a "nonessential, experimental." population. As of August 2023, only 4 collared wolves are in Mexico.

Indigenous tribes and reservations in the U.S. have their own ability to manage wolves on their land and have their own management plans. They are sovereign entities, meaning they operate independently from U.S. governance and can make their own laws. So, for example: while a state minimum population may be 500, in the same state on a tribe's reservation, the number may be more or less.

IV. Role of ESA in wolf protection & subsequent challenges

The Endangered Species Act (also referred to as ESA) is what grants wolves federal protections. It was passed in **1973** by the Nixon administration and mandates protection for species (both animals and plants) that are endangered or threatened. It requires preparing plans and implementing them in order to ensure recovery. It is responsible for ensuring there is no “take” (killing) of that species, unless a permit is legally issued. The ESA also provides financial assistance to the program initiatives for that species' recovery.

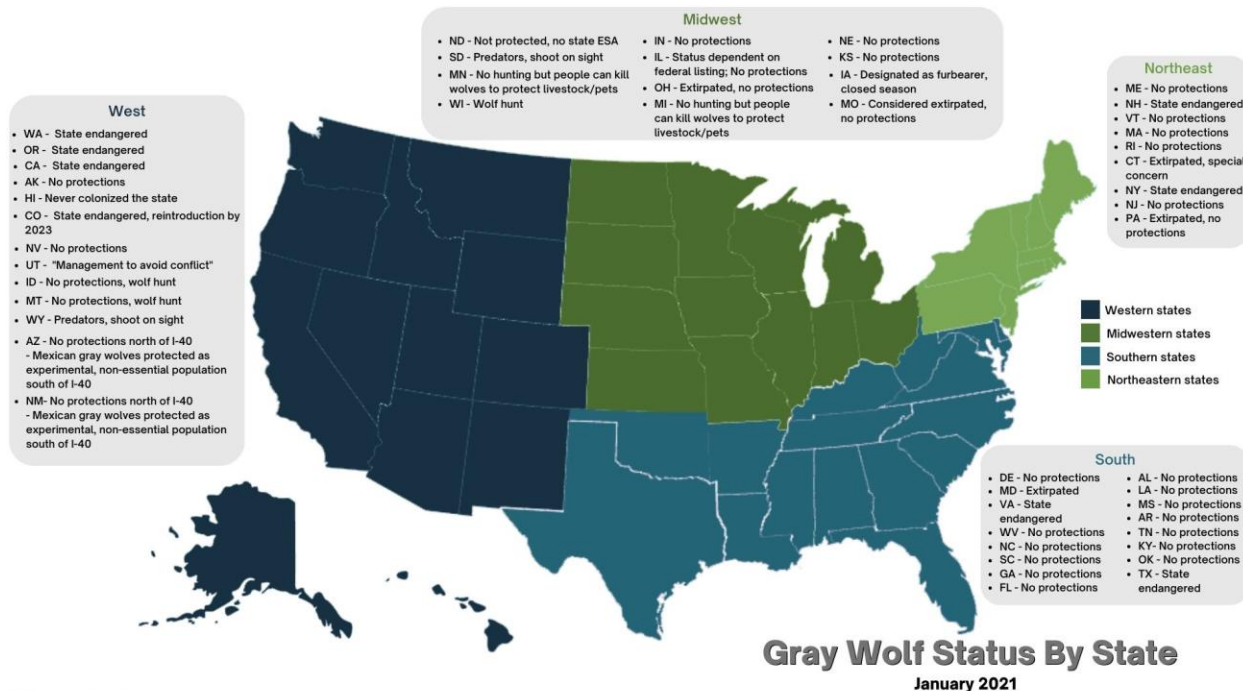
It is worth noting that the ESA continues to face threats in Congress. Some of these threats are attempts to weaken ESA legislation. For example, lobbying groups that represent landowners and industries claim the ESA gets in the way of property rights and economic growth.

In the future if wolves are ever delisted federally again (as in 2020), their management will return to the responsibility of individual states.

Currently all wolves are **federally** protected under the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”), with the exception of Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, part of Utah, and Alaska.

V. Lack of state protection of wolves

Unfortunately, very few states classify wolves as an endangered species at the state level. Currently only certain regions in Oregon, California, New York, and some regions of Washington afford some level of state protections for wolves regardless of federal protection status. Below is a map representing state level protection of wolves as of January 2021.



State protection of wolves is very important because it means that if wolves ever get delisted federally, they are still protected in an individual state. This is helpful because wolves sometimes move outside of the states they were born in. So, the more states that protect wolves, the safer wolves will be. Additionally, wolves being able to move will enhance the health of their species. This is important so that wolf populations as a whole are able to remain stable.

VI. States that do not have to follow ESA rule

As mentioned, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, parts of Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington, part of Utah, and Alaska do not have to follow the endangered species act for wolves in their state. As stated in earlier sections, lack of protection for wolves in Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana is due to a 2011 budget bill. However, wolves *are* federally protected in Yellowstone National Park, Glacier National Park, and Grand Teton National Park.

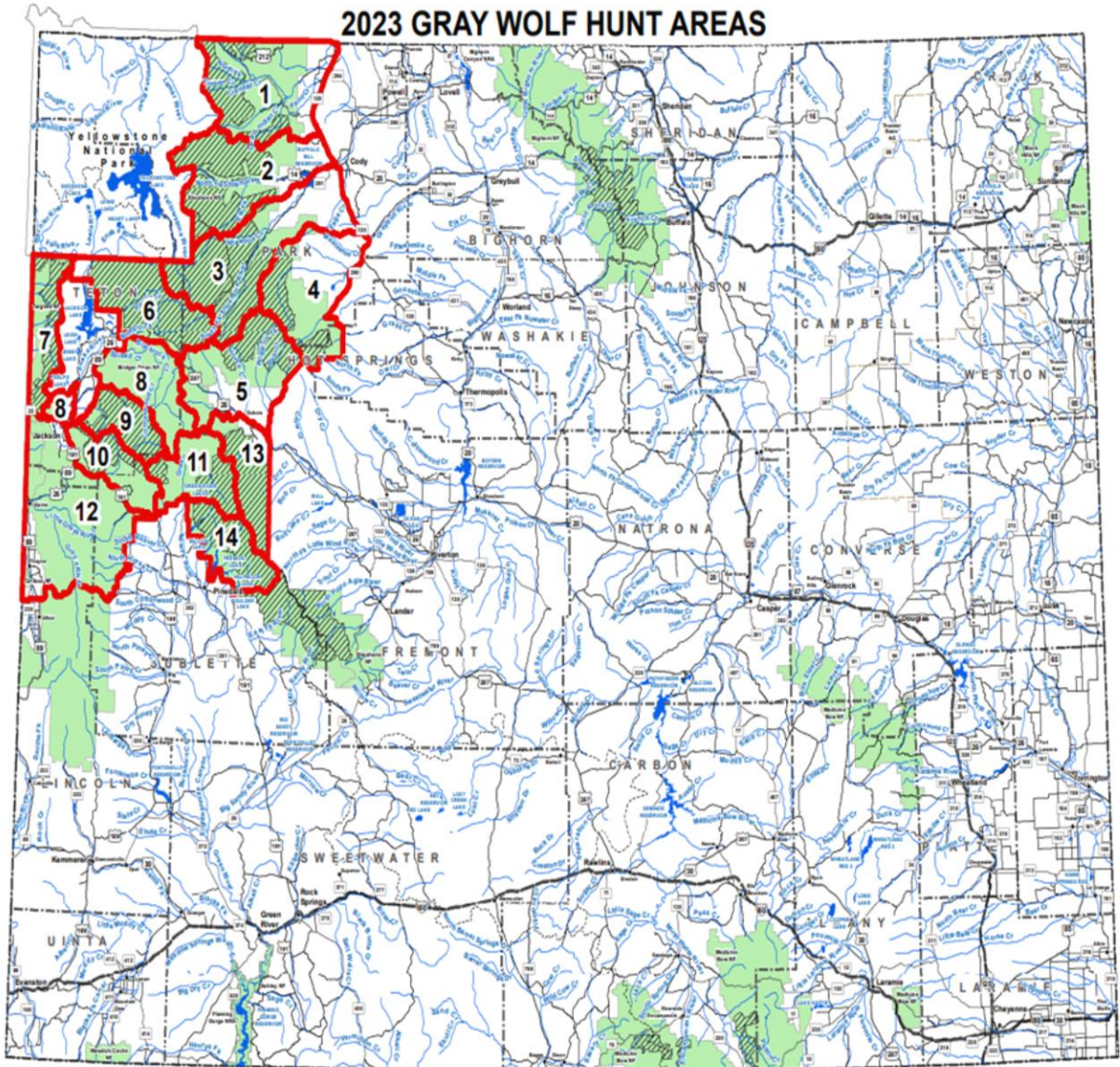
i. Hunting Zones / Regions

In Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho where wolves can be legally hunted, there are zones which are where the wolves can be killed.


In most areas of Wyoming—around 85% of the state—wolves can be killed on sight, with the exception being on the northwest corner of the state which is home to Yellowstone (federally protected land). Areas where wolves can be killed are known as trophy zones. Trophy hunting is when a person kills wild animals for sport, often keeping and/or displaying them as “trophies”.

Below are maps with the hunting regions in the three states:

2023 GRAY WOLF HUNT AREAS



THIS MAP IS FOR GENERAL REFERENCE ONLY. Please use the written boundary descriptions in this regulation for detailed boundary information.

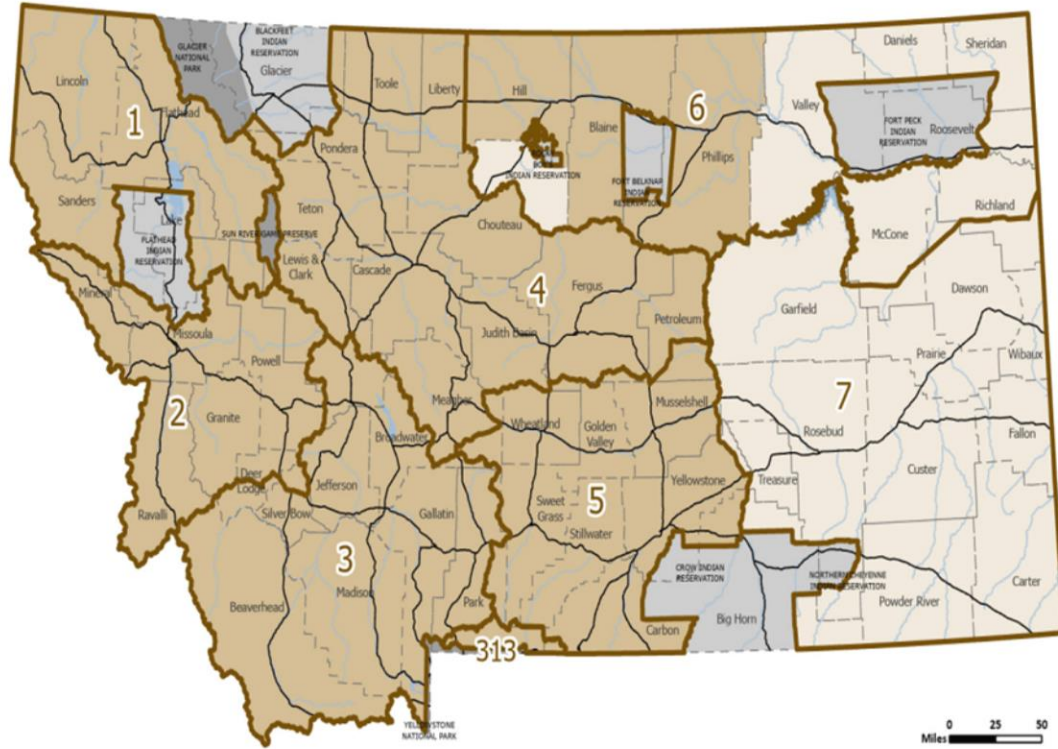
Note:  Wilderness area, nonresidents must have guides

Wyoming

Wolf Trapping Season Status

MONTANA FWP

Status as of January 2, 2024



- Wolf Region/Management Unit
- Wolf Trapping Season: November 27, 2023 - February 15, 2024
- Wolf Trapping Season: January 1, 2024 - February 15, 2024
- Closed to Hunting
- Closed to Hunting for Game Animals

Wolf trapping and snaring in Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks administrative regions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and in Hill, Blaine, and Phillips counties will start Jan. 1 and run through Feb. 15, according to a federal court injunction issued November 21, 2023. In areas in eastern Montana outside FWP administrative regions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and Hill, Blaine, and Phillips counties the order does not apply, and the wolf trapping and snaring season will start November 27 and run through March 15 as described in the 2023 wolf regulations.

Valid for the 2023 Hunting Season. Administrative boundaries data from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Helena, MT.

Map Produced: 1/2/2024 Geographic Data Services

Montana

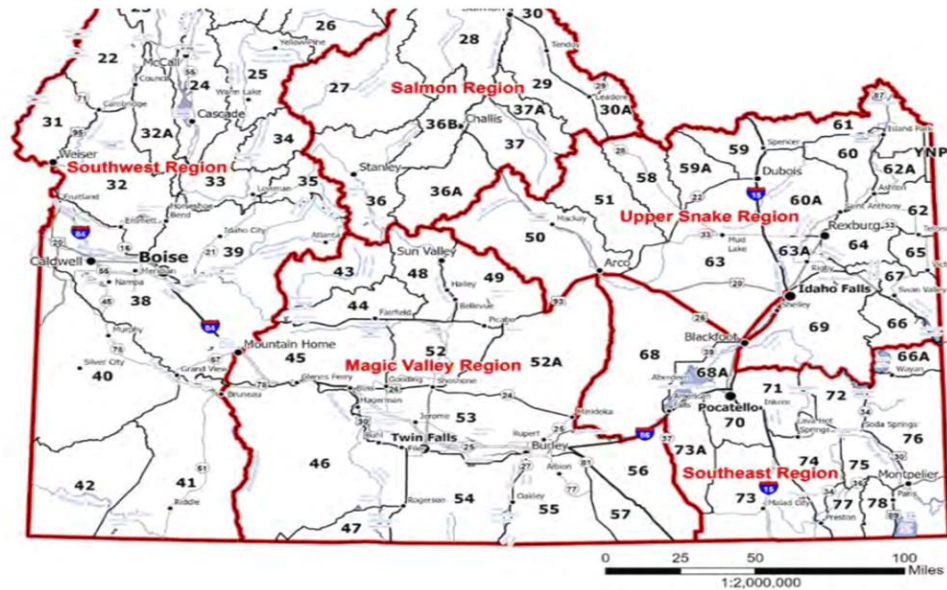
Big Game Hunting Units

Fish and Game Regions



Region	Phone	Game Management Units
Panhandle	(208) 769-1414	Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 9
Clearwater	(208) 799-5010	Units 8, 8A, 10, 10A, 11, 11A, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16A, 17, 18, 19, 20
Southwest	(208) 465-8465	Units 19A, 20A, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32, 32A, 33, 34, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42
Magic Valley	(208) 324-4359	Units 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 52A, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57
Southeast	(208) 232-4703	Units 66A, 68, 68A, 70, 71, 72, 73, 73A, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78
Upper Snake	(208) 525-7290	Units 50, 51, 58, 59, 59A, 60, 60A, 61, 62, 62A, 63, 63A, 64, 65, 66, 66A, 67, 69
Salmon	(208) 756-2271	Units 21, 21A, 27, 28, 29, 30, 30A, 36, 36A, 36B, 37, 37A

NOTE: Map is for general reference only. Official legal descriptions of Game Management Units may be found in the current published regulations booklet available at Fish and Game offices, license vendor locations, or online at <http://dfg.idaho.gov>.



VII. Experimental non-essential species & the 10(j) rule

Red wolves, Mexican gray wolves, and gray wolves recently reintroduced to Colorado are designated under the ESA 10(j) rule as “*experimental, non-essential*”. USFWS designates a population as “essential” if the loss of the wild population significantly reduces the likelihood of the species’ recovery. However, while red & Mexican gray wolves in captivity could keep their species and subspecies alive, the term of being “non-essential” is misleading, as wolves’ presence in ecosystems is absolutely crucial. All of these wolves provide essential ecosystem balance in the environments in which they live, such as through keeping rodent populations down, keeping prey (ex. ungulates) populations healthy, providing food for scavengers, and helping keep vegetation healthy through shifting their prey which reduces overgrazing.

Unfortunately, being an “experimental” population means that legally the population of these animals is treated with the “threatened” designation and not “endangered” which gives USFWS more flexibility in the management of these wolves. Sadly, this often complicates the ability to protect them as securely as possible, since they do not have the strictest protection as they would with the “endangered” status.

The population of red wolves currently (2024) consists of 16 known, collared red wolves in the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina. There are a small number of red wolves on St. Vincent island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida, as well. In captivity, there are around 267 red wolves. Expanding recovery sites to include other states where they’ve lived historically would be beneficial for red wolf recovery. An example would be Florida or Alabama. Some lethal threats to red wolves include illegal shooting, vehicle strikes, and illegal poisonings.

The population of Mexican gray wolves currently (2024) rests at about 257, which saw an increase from the previous year of 241. In captivity, the population sits at around 366 wolves. These Mexican gray wolves in the wild also have recovery sites, which are “management zones” in the states of Arizona and New Mexico. There are about 4 wild, collared Mexican gray wolves in Northern Mexico. In the U.S., expanding their habitat range outside of the management zones in Arizona and New Mexico would be most beneficial for them. Currently if these wolves wander outside of these management zones, USFWS will bring them back to those designated zones.

The best available science indicates that there should be a population of about 750 Mexican gray wolves in three interconnected populations. After conducting research, the best potential areas for habitat recovery site expansion should include the Southern Rockies and the Grand Canyon ecoregion of Northern Arizona & Southern Utah. Some lethal threats to Mexican gray wolves include poaching and poisoning.

Colorado’s population of wolves is currently at about 12 wolves as of February 2024.

VIII. Main factors influencing challenges

i. Politics

There can be a political push against wolves from several lobbying and special interest groups, especially including those interests in livestock, ranching, and hunting.

In addition, since the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a federal act, as new presidents and their federal administrations take charge, they can choose to keep wolves on the endangered species list, strip them of their protections by removing them off the endangered species list, or keep them on the endangered species list.

For example, wolves were stripped of federal protections during the Trump administration in October of 2020. The Biden administration then relisted wolves in February of 2022.

Historically, both political parties in the U.S. haven't always been supportive of wolves. The Endangered Species Act has seen threats in the past few years against its protective qualities through bills—pieces of suggested law(s)—introduced against it. We will discuss this further in later sections.

ii. Culture

Culture plays a pivotal role in our societies across the globe, and has an impact on what we choose to preserve and protect. Culture can be defined as “*the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.*” Wolves have been made to seem dangerous in cultural contexts, especially with regards to stories and customs from the past. This led to people fearing and hunting them, which we discussed earlier in this guide. Additionally, as Europeans settled in North America, a new ideology began to take hold called “manifest destiny”. An **ideology** is “*a system of ideas and ideals*”. Many settlers in the U.S. believed that the U.S. was destined by God to expand and spread the concepts of democracy and capitalism across North America. This belief was used to justify forced removal of any beings in the way of that path: including native people and native wildlife predators. In addition to ideological challenges, agriculture became a big support to the ever-growing communities, resulting in the destruction of native wolf habitats and their use of the land. Using the land became some family's way of making money to survive, so there is a culture of using the land that still persists today, even if the ways in which we use the land aren't always a good way anymore. In fact, how we use land now is often at odds with wolf reintroduction and coexistence with wildlife. The main part of this conflict centers around wolves and livestock living in the same spaces, as some livestock owners are concerned wolves will go after their livestock. A recent study shows, however, that this happens less than 1% of the time. When it does happen and a livestock animal is killed by a wolf, that owner must be reimbursed (given back money) by the state for the animal's price on the market.

A majority of ranching occurs on public lands. Around 229 million acres of federal public lands in the western United States are used for the purpose of livestock grazing for cattle and sheep. This accounts for around 85% of public lands. The United States Forest Service (USFS) and The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are the two federal agencies with the largest grazing programs existing among the federal agencies. These programs are mostly held on national forests, grasslands, sagebrush steppe, and desert and also often involve subsidies (money given by the government) to the livestock owners.

Even though many ranching companies are based on public lands, one could argue that wolves have just as much right to exist and seek survival on public land in their historic ranges.

iii. Economy:

There are various economic factors that influence wolf conservation. **Economics** is defined as “the branch of knowledge concerned with the production, consumption, and transfer of wealth”, such as money.

Specifically, what gets prioritized in conservation can be heavily influenced by economic costs and benefits, as well as what economic systems have been upheld through our history in the U.S. For example, at their present condition, state wildlife agencies in charge of conserving and protecting our wildlife are funded almost exclusively by hunter license fees and a tax on the sale of hunting equipment (the “Pittman-Robertson Act”). This began around the 1930s and the structure has remained virtually unchanged since.

There are different options that can be explored to secure funding in other revenue streams, however. For example, nearly 149 million people (57.2% of the nation’s population) engage in wildlife-watching activities nationwide. Non-resident tourism and wildlife watching have become one of the largest growing industries which can contribute to funding state wildlife conservation. In fact, the Northern Rockies region supports hundreds of thousands of jobs regionally and year-round. Wildlife watchers/tourists, photographers, outdoor enthusiasts, etc. can provide states with much more reliable funding. They also make up a broader amount of resident and nonresidents who are eager and willing to assist in the funding of state wildlife agencies.

iv. Hunting & Poaching:

Unfortunately, hunting of wolves still occurs in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho, as reviewed earlier. There are a variety of ways wolves can be killed depending on the state: aerial hunting, using dogs to locate and hunt wolves, traps, and more.

One significant challenge is that certain states have favored big game populations (ex. moose, elk, deer) over prioritizing wolf populations. However, evidence does NOT suggest that the presence of wolves in big game areas has any negative impact on big game populations.

A study conducted in 2015 “Yellowstone wolf (*Canis lupus*) density predicted by elk (*Cervus elaphus*) biomass” published in *Canadian Journal of Zoology*, found that where prey numbers are low, wolf numbers are also low and where prey numbers are high, wolf numbers are also high. This suggests that wolves balance their own populations.

v. Education: Knowledge & Awareness of Wolves:

The phrase “knowledge is power” was coined for a reason. The more you are aware of a situation, the more you are able to address it properly and, when needed, fix any issues that arise. It is impossible to protect an animal you do not know exists or efficiently protect an animal you know very little about. This is one reason why lack of education about current threats to wolves can hinder their conservation. An inadequate depth and breadth of understanding also makes misinformation much easier to spread.

While the WCC works to educate about conservation of wolves, an ongoing challenge especially for red and Mexican gray wolves, is a general lack of education about their conservation needs and importance.

j. S.A.F.E Recovery & Release Program

All red wolves and Mexican gray wolves are part of a federal recovery and release program which was created to help their conservation and reintroduction. This program involves a partnership between specific conservation organizations (including conservation centers, certain zoos, and aquariums) and U.S. Fish & Wildlife service, as well as state agencies (specifically North Carolina, Arizona, and New Mexico). Facilities which house red wolves and Mexican gray wolves are part of the AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) S.A.F.E program. “Saving Animals From Extinction” is a breeding and management program designed to ensure the long-term sustainability of captive-based animal populations, and prioritize the release of captive animals to the wild.

Program participants are able to 1) house red wolves and/or Mexican gray wolves on their properties, 2) are allowed to breed the wolves under their care, and 3) participate in releases when prompted by the agency. This is what we at the Wolf Conservation Center participate in.

Each wolf born is given an alphanumeric name called a “studbook number” (and usually a real name!) that identifies the individual wolf and follows that wolf throughout their life. The studbook number is important, because it identifies their sex, what position of birth they occupy in the program, and their genetic history. It is used to document important information about them (such as illness, transfers to other facilities, and death), as well as in deciding which mate would be most beneficial to pair them with.

Let’s take the WCC’s wolf Ginger, for example. Her studbook number is **F2401**. The letter corresponds to the sex of the wolf: ‘F’ for female, ‘M’ for male. 2401 means she is the 2,401st red wolf born throughout the whole length of this red wolf SAFE recovery program. Her mate, Mac Tíre, is **M2274**. They were paired together because based on their genetic histories, they have genetics that are least related. This means any offspring (pups) they have will be more likely to be healthy and survive better. As a reminder: genetics are the building blocks of each living organism (such as a tree, wolf, or human). The more different the genes of that organisms are, the healthier that organism will be. Diversity—or difference—is a key part of nature that makes it survive and thrive so well!

As of this time, the primary process for wild releases are through cross-fostering pups for Mexican gray wolves (placing captive born pups into wild pup dens), and through releasing red wolf adult pairs and families. Criteria for release include 1) overall relatedness to wild wolves in the population 2) behavior around humans (being fearful), and 3) age and history of disease.

IX. Legal Acts and Treaties: Important Wildlife Conservation Acts

Wolves have federal protections in the U.S. through the previously discussed Endangered Species Act.

A. Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act is a U.S. law that was created to protect species that are threatened or endangered:

“The Endangered Species Act establishes protections for fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered; provides for adding species to and removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species, and for preparing and implementing plans for their recovery; provides for interagency cooperation to avoid take of listed species and for issuing permits for otherwise prohibited activities; provides for cooperation with States, including authorization of financial assistance; and implements the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).”

The “ESA” was passed in 1973 by the Nixon administration. When wolves were given protections under the ESA, there were only about 1,000 wolves left in Minnesota and on Isle Royale (Michigan).

X. How to become a wolf advocate

What does it mean to be a wolf advocate? Let’s first discuss what advocacy is and how you do it!

Advocacy is defined as, “the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal: the act or process of advocating something”. We often tend to think of advocacy as a big thing. We might think of lobbying or lobbyists (people whose job it is to collect support and influence political decision making on behalf of specific people and organizations). We may think of gathering in the streets for protests, such as protesting for human rights. An image might come to mind of folks rallying with signs or of big organizations suing other organizations. You might even picture a person called a canvasser going around to houses to try and gain support for their political representative in the latest election. All of this is certainly considered advocacy, but it is by no means the only way to advocate! Advocating can take on many shapes and forms. All are beneficial, because they involve an individual or group speaking up for the cause they believe in.

A. First of all: why wolves?

So: you’ve learned all about the history, challenges, management, and impacts society has on wolves. You may be asking yourself: why protect them? What is the point of advocacy? Why, specifically, wolves? In this section, we’re going to take a deep dive into the important role wolves play in ecosystems. We’ll discover what makes them so special in their role as a keystone species, and how they help keep our environment healthy, even in the face of climate change.

Wolves are essential players in this beautiful and intricate web of life. While wolves have value in their own right, it’s important to recognize the impact they have in ecosystems. Balance in nature is key to ensure that all the moving parts are working together seamlessly. Wolves are what is known as a **keystone species**; a keystone is the part of an archway that holds the structure in place, ensuring weight is distributed evenly. It is the final piece placed at the end of construction that locks all the stones into place. So, this name in relation to animals and plants shows high importance. These keystone animal and plant species are responsible for keeping

ecosystems working and surviving. Some other keystone species include: Sea otters, beavers, mangrove trees, *Pisaster ochraceus* sea star, white oak, bees, and yellow birch. Oftentimes, keystone species are apex predators—though this is not always the case. There are three major types of keystone species that scientists overall recognize: Predators, mutualists, and ecosystem engineers.

As a keystone species, wolves help ecosystems by maintaining healthy vegetation through hunting prey, keeping their prey populations healthy, and providing food for scavengers. What does this look like, specifically? A good example is what scientists observed with the reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone national park in the mid-1990's. Elk there had overeaten many of the vegetation such as shrubs, grasses, and saplings. Once wolves were reintroduced, they began hunting Elk which led to a more balanced elk population. That helped contribute to the overall health of the vegetation. That's especially important, considering other animals need vegetation like shrubs and trees for food and shelter. Wolves also act as keystone species because when they leave leftovers from a meal, called "carion", other animals can scavenge off of it. Additionally, wolves help to keep their prey (called "Ungulates") healthier, because they usually hunt older, sicker, and weaker prey. They can even help reduce the spread of a disease called chronic wasting disease. It is highly contagious for prey like elk and deer, but wolves can eat one that has the disease and the wolf doesn't get sick.

For these reasons, it is essential that we are putting our best efforts into ensuring wolf conservation is a priority.

As it stands, the Endangered Species Act considers the goal of recovering a species "*the point at which the measures provided pursuant to this Act are no longer required.*" However, the precise concept of "recovery" is murky at best. In addition, the ESA's current structure of recovery places more emphasis on stopping extinction of a species and less on the important roles these species play in ecosystems. In other words, while it's important to make sure population numbers increase to reduce extinction chances, preventative measures should also be taken. For example: the best available science informs us that expanding Mexican gray wolf habitat would enable these animals to do better in the wild. A more holistic approach to conservation is essential to ensuring we secure biodiversity, ecosystem resiliency, and healthy habitats as we head into the future.

B. Useful Steps to consider

These are a few steps to review as you move forward on your advocacy journey for wolves!

- i. Back to the basics:** the first step to making change is having the basic knowledge of your issue so you can take appropriate steps towards working to solve it

Let's take wolves: this is where it helps to get familiar with the current issues they are facing. You can already pat yourself on the back because you're taking the time to read this guide which means you are already working on becoming familiar with the challenges wolves face.

- ii. Target group(s):** who is your audience? Which groups are you trying to target your message to about wolf conservation?

It's important to ask: to whom are you trying to get your message across? Knowing your audience will help you get more specific about how to convey your message. For example, your approach may be different when speaking with a group of friends vs. speaking to livestock owners, vs. speaking to a politician.

For example, if speaking with concerned community members who may be frightened about wolves, you would want to focus on wolf behavior (ex. wolves are not dangerous and they're afraid of people). In addition, knowing your target group will help deliver your message. For example, speaking to a group of adults is very different than speaking to a group of preschool students. How you explain concepts and phrasing will need to be adjusted.

Remember: when you target a group to advocate for wolves, it is helpful if you develop and give out a targeted "ask" of the person or group to whom you are talking. For example: you are giving a presentation to members of your community about supporting wolves. At the completion of your presentation, ask them to go to their legislator's webpage online and create a message in their "send a message" box asking how their legislator is supporting the Endangered Species Act in congress.

- iii. Skills:** Focus on the skills you or your group possess. Use these to determine what set of actions/options to take may be best for you or your group.

Are you a strong writer? Perhaps drafting a letter and sending it to your state representative would work best. Maybe you're an excellent speaker. Speaking at a public comment period panel in your state may work best! Are you a student? Consider creating a presentation for your class about wolves. There are many skills sets that can be utilized to help wolves.

- iv. Practice joyful advocacy:** Don't let burnout win!

Take time to celebrate the wins and gains. Also allow yourself some time to rest before you resume your efforts. Remember: we can't give our best to the causes we love if we can't give our best to ourselves first.

- v. Thoughtful and ethical wolf advocacy:** Remember that while advocacy is about speaking up for wolves, it's important to take time to do research and assure that the initiative you're participating in has wolves' best interest at heart.

Delving into the details of plans and conversations or actions about initiatives that will impact wolves is crucial to ensuring you are appropriately informed and can take the best action for wolves.

Let's look at an example: Colorado's wolf reintroduction, while it may have sounded like a positive development for wolves, actually has a few issues. One: if voting to bring back wolves into a state by ballot initiative (letting citizens of the state vote on it) can be done, it **also** means that a ballot initiative **against** wolves can be introduced and voted on. Two: the language that described proposition 114 was vague in describing what restore and manage meant.

Let's take a look at the language for prop 114 here:

"Shall there be a change to the Colorado Revised Statutes concerning the restoration of gray wolves through their reintroduction on designated lands in Colorado located west

*of the continental divide, and, in connection therewith, requiring the Colorado parks and wildlife commission, after holding statewide hearings and using scientific data, to implement a plan to **restore** and **manage** gray wolves; prohibiting the commission from imposing any land, water, or resource use restrictions on private landowners to further the plan; and requiring the commission to fairly compensate owners for losses of livestock caused by gray wolves?”*

Here we need to question: what does **restore** and **manage** wolves actually look like? What is involved? If wolves are reintroduced and then once they have a certain population number they are then turned into a game species (meaning they lose some protections and can be killed by hunters), then we have a problem for wolves. The ultimate priority isn't to leave them alone to thrive in one of their historical ranges. The priority is to have them be present...but still manage them for the benefit of people through allowing them to be hunted. That's not very fair.

Wolves in Colorado are also now listed under the 10(j) rule, which we've discussed in earlier sections as being a problematic classification for endangered wildlife.

Therefore, when participating in advocacy efforts it is critical to delve into the details to make certain that we are engaging in **thoughtful, fair** advocacy for wolves.

To close, while it can be a very challenging political climate these days, it's important to take moments of pause to really let your wins simmer! Recognizing your contributions and successes are just as important as working towards progress. This world is a tough one sometimes, so rejoicing in your accomplishments is a necessity so you can see and relish in the good you are doing and the joy it gives you. It's crucial to give yourself time to rest, too, so that burnout can be avoided. The length of time and period of rest will vary from person to person, but taking that time is key.

XI. Types of Advocacy initiatives

We're going to take a look at the different types of advocacy one can participate in centered around the different levels of government.

A. Federal Government

Let's first highlight the branches of the federal government before we delve further into correspondence. Correspondence is communication by exchanging emails, letters, or other messages.

i. Branches

The federal government is comprised of **three** branches: **Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.**

For the purposes of wolf conservation advocacy, we will be focusing on correspondence with the Executive and Legislative branches.

The Executive branch consists of: the President, the Vice President, the cabinet (advisors to the president), and executive departments, independent agencies, and other boards, commissions, and committees. Their job is to carry out and execute the country's laws. For example, the president can sign a bill that was passed by congress into law or choose to veto it. They can also issue executive orders.

An example of an executive department head would be Secretary of the Department of the Interior, Deb Haaland. In this position, she is in charge of being responsible for the management and conservation of most federal lands and natural resources.

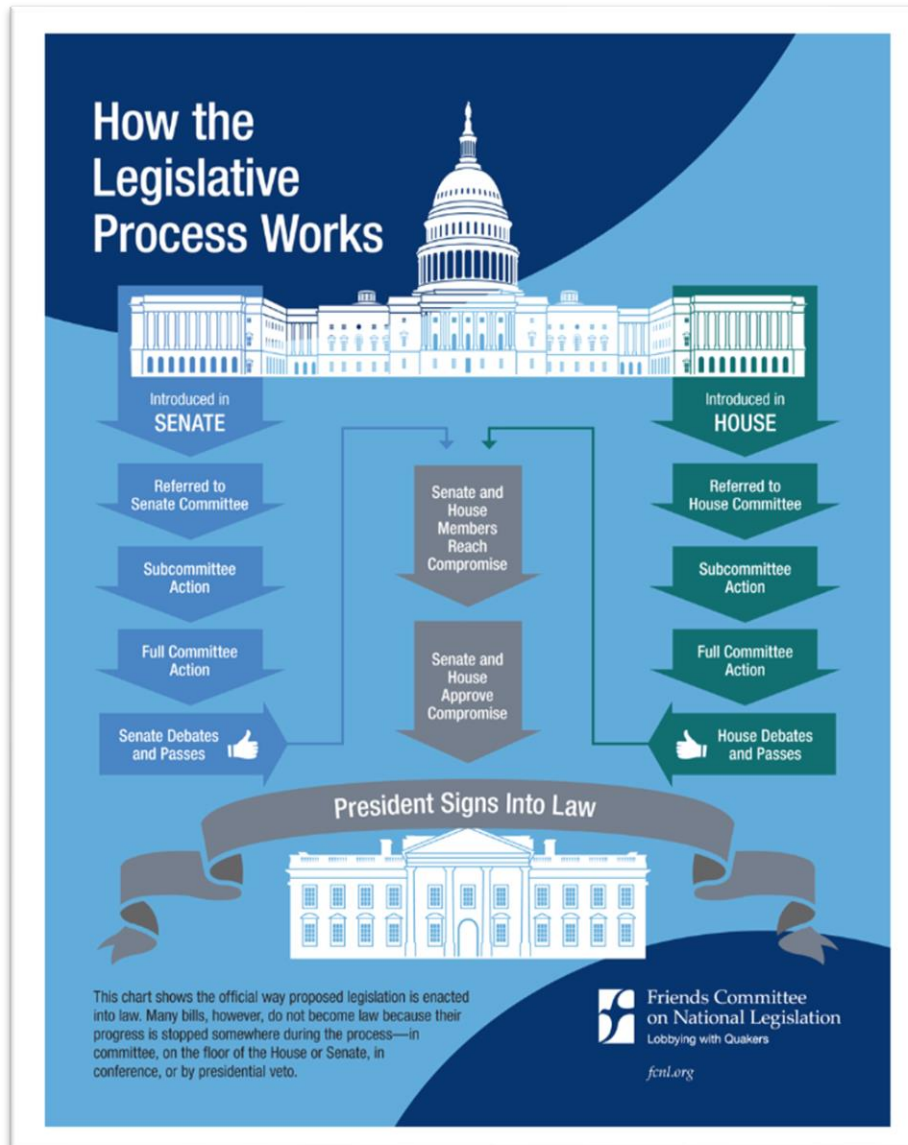
The Legislative branch consists of: Congress. **Congress** is made up of the **House of Representatives** and the **Senate**. Their roles include: drafting (making) proposed laws, confirming or rejecting presidential nominations for heads of federal agencies, federal judges, and the Supreme Court, and having the authority to declare war.

One other important aspect of their job is to represent their respective states in the U.S. While each state always gets the same number of senators (2), the number of representatives in the House of Representatives varies from state to state based on that state's population. So, although there are 100 senators, there are 435 elected members of the House, plus an additional six non-voting delegates. These delegates represent the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and various other U.S. territories.

In the house of representatives, terms (length of holding office) are for 2 years. In the senate, terms are for 6 years.

A quick note about passing bills: in order to pass an act of legislation, both houses must pass the same version of a bill by majority vote. Once that happens, the bill goes to the president, who can either sign it into law or reject it using the veto power assigned in the Constitution. Congress can veto a president's veto with a 2/3 vote of both houses.

Understanding how a bill becomes a law is important for advocacy work, because it helps you know where in the legislative process you can have the most impact. To understand how the house of representatives and senate work together to accomplish the legislative process, check out the graphic below:



The Judicial branch consists of: The Supreme Court, which is the highest court in the land. Those on the supreme court are known as supreme court justices. They interpret laws and apply them to court cases they rule on. All Justices are nominated by the President, confirmed by the Senate, and are meant to hold their offices for life. They serve until their death, retirement, or conviction by the Senate. Currently, there are 9 supreme court justices.

ii. Crafting correspondence to federal officials

When it comes to communicating, there are several methods one can take to contact federal officials. While each method is helpful, different methods can be more effective than others. For

federal representatives, emailing is one of the best options, and calling on the phone is also beneficial. Writing letters or postcards can be a bit trickier for some federal offices, such as the president, as all letters have to be scanned and checked rigorously.

We're going to review a couple of those methods in the following sections and how to craft different types of correspondence to be the most effective and get your message across crystal clear.

First, let's discuss written correspondence, which includes emailing (done in message box form) letter writing, and postcards to federal representatives. We're going to walk through some tips to consider when crafting these messages.

Remember: if you choose to handwrite a letter or postcard, make sure your handwriting is legible and you include a return address on the envelope!

- **Introduce yourself:**

Your federal representative will want to know your name and contact information should they need to get back to you. It's also important they know you are a constituent if you are writing to a federal representative.

- **Be short & succinct:**

Your representatives are busy! Many different causes and responsibilities are pulling them in a million different directions. Keeping your email or message clear and concise is very important. State the points that you are trying to encourage them to consider and your position on this bill or plan. Ask for their support.

***Caution:** A big **NO** when communicating is being rude. Examples include: using profanity, threatening language, or being aggressive. While one may feel very spirited about wolf conservation, it is crucial to maintain a firm but calm demeanor.

- **List accurate sources to back up your points:**

Using sound science is important when supporting the message that you are trying to convey. The whole message doesn't have to include studies for every point, but it does help to show your information has science to back it up!

For example: *According to the study, "Rediscovery of Red wolf Ghost Alleles in a canid population along the American Gulf coast" published in the academic journal Genes, (state your point here).*

- **Personalize it:**

Your message doesn't need to sound like it came straight out of ChatGPT! Write the letter how you feel best represents you and your voice while you're writing the points you want to make.

- **Include any additional information:**

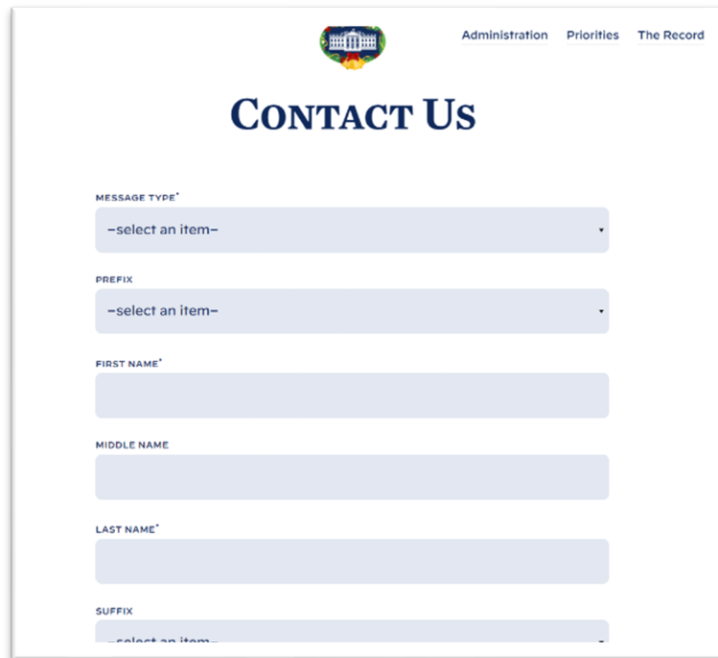
If there is a bill you're trying to reference, include the letter of that bill (example: bill A.29175/S.4099). If there's a plan you're voicing your support or opposition over, name the plan.

- **Sum it up:**

End your email or message by restating what action you hope your representative will take in support of wolves.

For example: In closing, I hope you will vote to support bill xyz which will make using night vision scopes for hunting of wolves in Montana illegal.

-Below are sample pictures of what writing an email message under the “contact” section of your federal representative’s webpage will likely look similar to.



The image shows a screenshot of a "CONTACT US" form on a website. At the top center is a small logo of a building. To the right of the logo are the links "Administration", "Priorities", and "The Record". Below the logo is the heading "CONTACT US" in a large, bold, blue font. The form consists of several input fields:

- MESSAGE TYPE***: A dropdown menu with the text "-select an item-" and a downward arrow.
- PREFIX**: A dropdown menu with the text "-select an item-" and a downward arrow.
- FIRST NAME***: A text input field.
- MIDDLE NAME**: A text input field.
- LAST NAME***: A text input field.
- SUFFIX**: A dropdown menu with the text "-select an item-" and a downward arrow.

PRONOUNS
-select an item-

EMAIL*
email@example.com

PHONE*
(123) 456-7890

COUNTRY/STATE/REGION*
United States

STREET*

CITY*

STATE*

ZIP/POSTAL CODE*

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY?*

KEEP ME POSTED WITH REGULAR UPDATES FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

Send

*A quick note: when writing postcards, the formatting is much simpler than an email or letter. You'll want to state your name and your position. Remember- the space on a postcard is much smaller, so your ask will need to be short and sweet!

Below is a sample written postcard to a federal official:



(Please note this is not a real postcard sent: just an example)

Below is a sample letter written to a federal official:

Nathalia Johnson
7 Deer Street
Manteo, NC 27954

July 6th, 2021

Dear Secretary Haaland,

My name is Nathalia Johnson. As a concerned citizen, I am writing to you today to ask that you commit to your promises to better support wolves in the United States.

You have previously expressed your support for wolves and your goal to ensure they have conservation which will allow for them not only to survive, but to thrive. However, in your tenure as secretary of the department of the interior, you have done little to support your stance.

The department of the interior failed to issue an emergency delisting for wolves in the northern Rockies. This led to over 2,600 wolves being killed while the status review outcome was pending. The department of the interior has also failed miserably at fighting back against barbaric wolf hunting tactics encoded into state law in states such as Montana. Some of these heinous, unethical hunting methods include aerial hunting, using dogs to locate and chase wolves, baiting wolves outside of protected areas such as Yellowstone National Park, using ATV vehicles for hunting wolves, using choke-hold snares, utilizing night hunting, and using explosives.

Additionally, the department sat idly back as precious well-known Yellowstone wolves were lured by hunters outside of those protected zones, only to meet the most untimely and gruesome fate.

As I'm sure you are probably already aware, wolves provide tremendous benefit to ecosystems as well as tourism in the United States. Wolves are a keystone species, and as such, keep the balance in the areas in which they live. Examples include helping maintain healthy ungulate populations, helping to prevent disease spread in prey, providing food for scavengers, and helping vegetation thrive through keeping prey from overgrazing. Additionally, there are estimates that wolves in Yellowstone bring in over 30 million annually, of which most is spent in Montana counties.

As a concerned constituent, I urge you to prioritize wolf conservation and act in ways which support your previous stance on the need for increased wolf protections.

Sincerely,

Nathalia Johnson

(Please note this is not a real letter sent: just an example)

-You will find the federal representatives addresses below:

White house:

- To write an email message to the white house (which hosts the current presidential administration) you can go here: [Contact Us | The White House](#)
- To send a letter of postcard to the President, you can use this address:

President Biden (or Vice President Kamala Harris)
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Department of the Interior (as of 2024: head Secretary Deb Haaland):

- To write an email message to the Department of the Interior you can go here: [Contact Interior | U.S. Department of the Interior \(doi.gov\)](#)
- To send a letter of postcard to the Department of the Interior, you can use this address:

Secretary Deb Haaland
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

iii. Calling Federal Representatives

White house:

- Main phone number: (202) 456-1111

Department of the Interior (as of 2023: head Secretary Deb Haaland):

- Main Phone Number: (202)-208-3100

If you are hard of hearing or have a speech disability, you can dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

iv. Emails blasts to federal officials

Signing on to email blasts can be a method of helping protect wolves. Typically, this is done by a larger organization sending out emails to their subscribers about certain bills or management plans and asking their supporters to “sign on” to urge the official to support their issue.

Below is an example of what an email blast to a federal official looks like:

Call On Biden Admin To Enact an Emergency Listing of Wolves in the Northern Rockies

As we progress through the Spring of 2023, the gray wolves of the Northern Rockies find themselves in the crosshairs of politically driven management policies. Despite a victory in early 2022 that restored Endangered Species Act protections to thousands of wolves across 44 states, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming remain battlegrounds in the war against wolves.

This week's Idaho ruling, allowing a controversial wolf management plan to cut the state's wolf population by nearly two-thirds, marks another distressing turn in this saga. This plan, deeply flawed in its methodology and dismissive of the ecological balance, aims to reduce the estimated population of 1,337 wolves to a mere 500 – a 62 percent cut.

These states have forged a path of destruction with controversial laws and regulations, extending hunting seasons, increasing limits, allowing year-round trapping seasons, and even legalizing hunting methods that show a flagrant disregard for ethical wildlife management. In Montana alone, the 2021-2022 season saw the killing of 273 wolves, including Yellowstone wolves, cherished as the "most-viewed" wolves worldwide.

In addition to all of this, **Lauren Boebert's "Trust the Science Act"**, which threatens ESA protections for wolves across the entire country, and threatens Colorado's 2023 wolf reintroduction plan, is making it's way through congress with disturbing ease.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acknowledged the dire situation in 2021 and initiated a 12-month status review, yet no substantial action has been taken. The silence from USFWS speaks volumes, but we refuse to stand idle.

Join us in urging the Biden administration to enact an emergency listing of wolves in the Northern Rockies. The recent Idaho ruling underscores the urgency of this call to action. We must challenge the states that continue to flout science and engage in the unwarranted killing of wolves.

Wolf recovery hinges on fostering a healthy relationship with these crucial predators, acknowledging their ecological importance, promoting non-lethal coexistence measures, and denouncing unjustified persecution.

Urge the Biden administration to immediately issue emergency relisting protections for wolves in the western United States.



Recipients

- President Joseph 'Joe' R. Biden
- Secretary Deb Haaland
- Director Martha Williams

Contact

◦ Required fields

◦ Title:

◦ First Name:

◦ Last Name:

◦ Your Email:

◦ Address 1:

◦ City:

◦ State / Province:

◦ ZIP / Postal Code:

◦ Phone Number:

Yes, I would like to receive periodic updates and advocacy

Message

Please immediately enact an emergency listing of wolves in the western U.S.

Dear [Decision Maker],

As a committed advocate of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and a staunch defender of our nation's wildlife, I urge the Department of the Interior to enact an immediate emergency listing of wolves in the western United States, particularly in the light of recent developments in Idaho.

Wolves are an indispensable keystone species, and their elimination from significant portions of the landscape represents a global ecological crisis. An expanding body of scientific literature underscores the pivotal roles top predators play in sustaining a diverse array of other wildlife species, thereby promoting the overall health, functionality, and resilience of ecosystems.

Nevertheless, wolves in the Northern Rockies have been subjected to increasingly severe and controversial hunting legislation in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. Idaho's recent politically motivated wolf management plan, seeking to slash the state's wolf population from an estimated 1,337 to a mere 500, is a glaring example of this trend.

Wyoming permits a virtually unrestricted hunt. Montana has authorized the slaughter of up to 85% of its wolves, allowing baiting, trapping, and hunting on the border of Yellowstone National Park. Idaho, offering a bounty of up to \$2,500 for each wolf killed, permits the massacre of up to 90% of the state's wolf population using ethically questionable hunting practices such as snaring and the use of snowmobiles and ATVs to

These extreme hunts have been highly controversial and particularly detrimental to wolves residing in Yellowstone National Park. The 2021 decision to eliminate quotas in areas surrounding Yellowstone has seen a significant surge in the death toll of the park's wolves. Hunters killed at least 25 park wolves during the 2021-2022 season, including several members of the "most-viewed" wolf pack in the world.

The former Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under President Obama has called on the Biden administration for an emergency listing. He stated in an Op-Ed that "what is happening in Idaho and Montana is not hunting. It is pure, unbridled cruelty," and labeled their extreme wolf management policies as "ecocide."

It's high time we bring our wildlife policies into the 21st century.

Wolf recovery requires us to develop a healthy relationship with wolves and each other. We must recognize the ecological importance of wolves, advance non-lethal measures to help foster coexistence with them, and refrain from unwarranted persecution.

The Department of the Interior has the authority to enact an emergency relisting. I urge you to immediately issue an emergency regulation to restore federal protections through the Endangered Species Act to the Northern Rocky Mountain DPS of the gray wolf.

In a world where we increasingly understand the importance of predators and our ability to coexist, it is imperative that you confront the reality of what is happening in states bent on delegitimizing science and killing wolves.

I implore you to enact an emergency relisting without delay.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, State ZIP]
[Your Email]

[SEND MESSAGE](#)

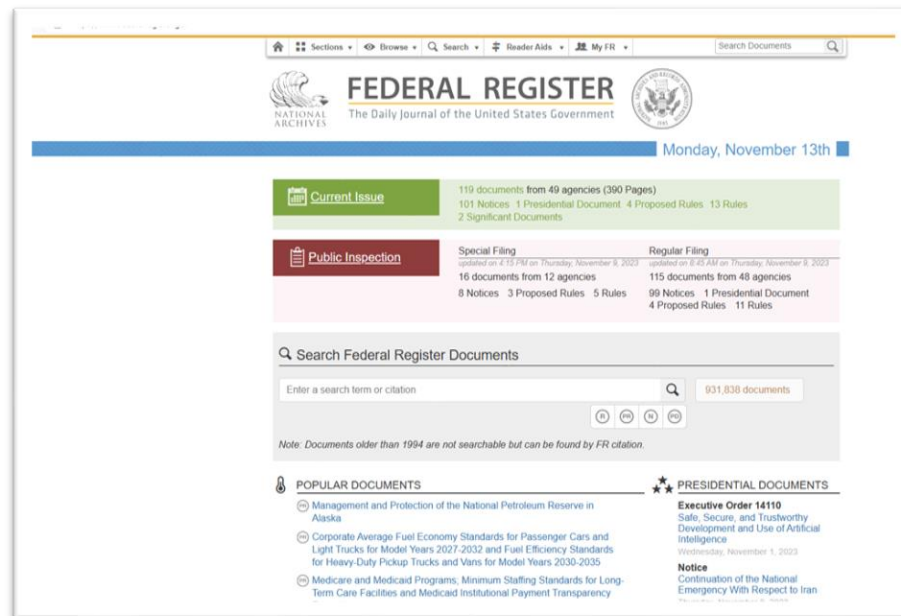
These email blasts are certainly helpful, but combining signing on to these email blasts **and** directly communicating with your elected officials is the most effective way of getting your advocacy message across.

B. State Government:

i. Wolf Conservation Management Plan Comment Periods

Comment periods are incredibly important when voicing support for wolf conservation. Each time there is a new wolf conservation management plan in a state with wolf populations, there is a mandatory 30-day public comment period. Sometimes, that comment period may get extended to 60 days. Below we will walk you through how to submit a comment, what to consider when submitting comments, and sample graphics from Colorado's recent plan and Montana's last draft plan in order to demonstrate what that process looks like.

- **First**, you can find plans posted on the respective state's wildlife department website or the Federal Register, which can be found here: [Federal Register :: Home - Thursday, December 14th](#). Below, you will find a picture of what the Federal Register looks like:



- **Next**, when searching for the wolf plan you want to comment on, you'll see under search bar labeled "find" you can select "R", "PR", "N", or "PD". These letters mean: "Rules", "Proposed Rules", "Notices", or "Presidential Documents", respectively. Alternatively, if you know the plan you're searching for you can just enter it in the search bar, or enter the topic or key word you're looking for: example- "wolf"

Let's take a look at how folks were able to comment on Colorado's draft edits to their wolf plan prior to becoming the final plan

The edit was to establish the newly arriving wolves as a "non-essential, experimental" population status (unfortunately).

wolf 3,683 documents [Subscribe](#)
 Other Formats: CSV/Excel, JSON [Learn More](#)
[Show Advanced Search](#)

There is 1 document on Public Inspection scheduled for publication that matches your search.

PUBLICATION DATE
 Past 30 days 12
 Past 90 days 35
 Past 365 days 116

DOCUMENTS FOUND **3,683** **RELEVANT** NEWEST OLDEST

TYPE
 Notice 2,068
 Rule 780
 Proposed Rule 677
 Presidential Document 3

AGENCY
 Interior Department 1,056
 Fish and Wildlife Service 729
 Commerce Department 499
 Nuclear Regulatory Commission 384
 Homeland Security Department 320
[view more agencies](#)

TOPIC
 Reporting and recordkeeping requirements 861

← Previous 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ... 49 50 Next →

(N) Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation; Wolf Creek Generating Station, Unit 1
 by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on 10/26/2023.
 Facility Operating License No. NPP-42, issued to Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation, for operation of the Wolf Creek Generating Station, Unit 1. The proposed ... Facility Operating License No. NPP-42, issued to Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation, for...

(R) Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of the Gray Wolf in Colorado
 by the Fish and Wildlife Service on 11/08/2023.
 distribution; cause-specific wolf mortalities; and a summary of wolf conflicts and associated management activities to minimize wolf conflict risk. For additional ... distribution; • cause-specific wolf mortalities; and • a summary of

(R) Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Reinstatement of Endangered Species Act Protections for the Gray Wolf (Canis Lupus) in Compliance With Court Order
 by the Fish and Wildlife Service on 11/03/2023.
 officially reinstating threatened status for gray wolf in Minnesota; endangered status for gray wolf in all or portions of the remaining 44 U.S. States ... critical habitat for gray wolf in Minnesota and Michigan; and the rule promulgated under section 4(d) of the

- When you click on the document, it will give you additional information such as a summary, the agency that is involved, options for public comment, etc.

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of the Gray Wolf in Colorado

A Rule by the Fish and Wildlife Service on 11/08/2023



PUBLISHED DOCUMENT

AGENCY:
Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION:
Final rule.

SUMMARY:
We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), establish a nonessential experimental population (NEP) of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) in the State of Colorado, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The State of Colorado (Colorado Parks and Wildlife or CPW) requested that the Service establish an NEP in conjunction with their State-led gray wolf reintroduction effort. Establishment of this NEP provides for allowable, legal, purposeful, and incidental taking of the gray wolf within a defined NEP area while concurrently providing for the conservation of the species. The geographic boundary of the NEP is the entire State of Colorado. The best available data indicate that reintroduction of the gray wolf into Colorado is biologically feasible and will promote the conservation of the species.

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Printed version:
PDF

Publication Date:
11/08/2023

Agencies:
Fish and Wildlife Service

Dates:
This rule is effective December 8, 2023.

Effective Date:
12/08/2023

Document Type:
Rule

Document Citation:
88 FR 77014

Page:
77014-77039 (26 pages)

CFR:
50 CFR 17

Agency/Docket Numbers:
Docket No. FWS-R6-ES-2022-0100

- Notice the comments to the left: first highlighted speech bubble is to make a comment, while the two speech bubbles are to read the submitted comments. Note that this is not available for this document as it is a final rule.
- Next, this bottom graphic shows what “submit a formal comment” looks like:

A Notice by the Fish and Wildlife Service on 11/13/2023

This document has a comment period that ends in 32 days. (12/13/2023)

SUBMIT A FORMAL COMMENT

PUBLISHED DOCUMENT

AGENCY:
Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION:
Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY:

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Printed version:
PDF

Publication Date:
11/13/2023

Agencies:
Fish and Wildlife Service

Dates:
We must receive your written

- Here is what the comment form looks like once “submit a formal comment” is clicked:

The image shows a screenshot of the Regulations.gov comment submission form. At the top, it states "You are submitting an official comment to Regulations.gov. Comments are due 12/11/2023 at 11:59 pm EST." and includes the "regulations.gov" logo and a "close comment form" link. Below this, a message says "Thank you for taking the time to create a comment. Your input is important." and provides instructions: "Once you have filled in the required fields below you can preview and/or submit your comment to the Agriculture Department for review. All comments are considered public and will be posted online once the Agriculture Department has reviewed them." It also offers "alternative ways to comment" and a URL: "https://www.regulations.gov/commenton/APHIS-2023-0079-0001". The main form area includes a "Comment" text area, an "Upload File(s)" section with a "+ Add a file" button and a note: "Note: You can attach your comment as a file and/or attach supporting documents to your comment. Attachment Requirements.", an "Email" input field with the note "this will NOT be posted on regulations.gov", and a checkbox for "Opt to receive email confirmation of submission and tracking number?". At the bottom, there is a "Tell us about yourself! I am..." field.

Some concepts to remember when submitting comments:

- **Use the science to back up your claim:**
While emotional bids are helpful, using science-backed data, studies, and principles are really what helps comments stand out.

We'll take a look next at how a comment was made for the most recent Montana wolf conservation management plan

Below we'll explore what points were useful to include. Keep in mind that when submitting comments on draft plans, you'll want to make sure you have key points to make in your comment that will accurately and scientifically reflect your position on this plan.

Example from public comment made on Montana's 2023 Draft Wolf Management Plan:

For this draft management plan, the educator had four points they wanted to make in their comment:

1. Science-based Population Estimates: The Integrated Patch Occupancy Model (IPOM), currently used for estimating wolf populations in Montana, lacks broad scientific support and relies primarily on data from hunting communities and models to predict the overall number of packs and pack size. We urge Montana to adopt more scientifically sound methods for population estimation.

2. Inhumane Nature of Trapping: Traps and snares cause indiscriminate harm, often injuring or killing non-target species, including endangered ones like wolverines and grizzly bears. Trapping disrupts wolf family structures, leading to increased livestock predation.

3. Impact on Wolf Social Structure and Ecology: Montana's wolf management plan should consider the ecological and social impacts of hunting on wolf packs. Excessive hunting disrupts natural wolf dynamics, as evidenced by the significant increase in wolf deaths around Yellowstone National Park and the subsequent breakdown of pack structures.

4. Violation of Fair Chase Hunting Practices: Practices such as night hunting and baiting give hunters an unfair advantage and go against ethical hunting principles. These methods should not be a part of responsible wildlife management.

Below is their actual submitted comment: make note of how they worked in those points:

Hello,

I am commenting today to highlight a few key points that need to be addressed in this draft wolf conservation management plan.

First, I want to touch on science-based population estimates. The current way of estimating (using the IPOM) is problematic. It lacks broad scientific support and it primarily relies on data from hunting communities and models in order to predict overall number of packs and pack size. There should be more scientifically sound methods for gathering population estimation for Montana's wolves.

Second, trapping at its current state in Montana is incredibly inhumane. In addition, these methods of trapping (ex. snares) oftentimes impact other animals not intended to be trapped, including endangered animals such as wolverines and bears. Trapping also disrupts wolf family structures, which results in increased livestock predation, something Montana wants to avoid.

Third, Montana's plan should consider the social and ecological impacts of hunting on wolf packs. Hunting disrupts natural wolf dynamics. Evidence of this can be seen in the significant increase in wolf deaths around Yellowstone National Park and the subsequent breakdown of pack structures.

Finally, Montana needs to address the violation of fair chase hunting practices. Night hunting and baiting give hunters an unfair advantage and violate ethical hunting principles. These methods should not be a part of responsible management.

Thank you for taking the time to read this comment. I hope Montana will consider these scientifically sound points when editing the draft plan.

This is one example of how to comment on a wolf management plan.

1. Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some common questions individuals usually have about submitting comments to plans and some terms that may appear on the plans.

- **Does USFWS have to read and respond to everybody's comment?**

Yes and no. Yes, they do have to respond but due to volume of comment and similar points made in the comments, they will categorize their responses.

- **Can non-US residents submit comments?**

Non-US residents cannot submit comments. This is because constituency is important for representatives and non-US residents are not affiliated with state or federal representatives. Also, while you can submit comments on wolf plans even if you don't live in that state, it is especially helpful to comment if you live and/or are from that state. However, we do encourage all U.S. residents to submit comments on all wolf management plans, regardless of state. This is because wildlife management is a general public issue, so the right to weigh in belongs to all the U.S. public, not just people in one state.

- **What is the difference between animals like wolves listed as non-essential vs. essential?**

The service says the following about essential vs. non-essential populations: *Section 10(j) provides for the designation of specific reintroduced populations of listed species as "experimental populations." On the basis of the best available information, the Service determines whether an experimental population is "essential" or "nonessential" to the continued existence of the species. A "nonessential" designation for a 10(j) experimental population means that, on the basis of the best available information, the experimental population is not essential for the continued existence of the species. Regulatory restrictions are considerably reduced under a Nonessential Experimental Population (NEP) designation.*

ii. Crafting correspondence to state officials

To find your state representative, you can access that information on our advocacy web page or the link here: [Find Your Representative | house.gov](#)

When it comes to communicating, there are several methods. While each is helpful, different methods can be more effective than others. Emailing is good, writing personal correspondence

is even better, and calling is usually the most direct and an effective way to get your voice heard! You can even meet your representative in person.

Please note: while writing from a state to a representative in another state can be done, it is most helpful to write to your own state's representative when voting stances on state matters. Why? Simple! You are their constituent, so they want you to feel heard!

We're going to review a couple of those methods in the following sections and how to craft different types of correspondence that will be the most effective and get your message across.

Remember: if you choose to handwrite a letter or postcard, make sure your handwriting is legible and you include a return address on the envelope!

Let's discuss some tips to consider when crafting letter writing, postcards, and emails.

- **Introduce yourself:**

Your representative will want to know your name and contact information should they need to get back to you. It's also important that they know you are a constituent if you are writing to a state representative.

- **Be Short & Succinct:**

Your representatives have a lot going on! Many different causes and responsibilities are pulling you in a million different directions. Keeping your email or message clear and concise is very important. State the points that you are trying to encourage them to consider and your position on this bill or plan. Ask for their support.

***Caution:** A big **NO** when communicating is being rude, aggressive, or mean in your correspondence. Examples include: using profanity, threatening language, or being aggressive. While one may feel very spirited about wolf conservation, it is imperative to maintain a firm but calm demeanor.

- **List Accurate Sources to back up your points:**

Using sound science is important when supporting the message that you are trying to convey. The whole message doesn't have to include studies for every point, but it does help to show your information has science to back it up!

For example: *According to the study, "Rediscovery of Red wolf Ghost Alleles in a canid population along the American Gulf coast" published in the academic journal Genes, _____ (state your point here).*

- **Personalize it:**

Your message doesn't need to sound like a robot generated it! Write the letter how you feel best represents you and your voice while you're writing the points you want to make.

- **Include any additional information:**

If there is a bill you're trying to reference, include the letter of that bill (example: bill A.29175/S.4099). If there's a plan you're voicing your support or opposition over, name the plan.

Below is a sample picture of what writing an email message under the "contact" section of your representative's webpage will likely look similar to.

The image shows three sequential screenshots of a contact form on a representative's website. Each screenshot has a dark blue header with the word "MENU" and a hamburger menu icon.

- First Screenshot:** The page title is "Write Your Representative". Below it, it says "Required fields are followed by *." The main section is titled "Your Information" and contains five text input fields: "Prefix" (with a dropdown menu showing "Mr."), "First Name", "Last Name", "Street Address", and "City".
- Second Screenshot:** This section contains three more input fields: "State" (dropdown menu showing "NY"), "Zip", and "Phone". Below these is a section titled "Email and Twitter Information" with two input fields: "Email" and "Twitter" (with an "@" symbol in the first position). Underneath is a checkbox labeled "Yes, I would like to subscribe to your email newsletter." At the bottom of this section is another "Your Message" section with two radio buttons: "Yes, I would like a response." (selected) and "No, I just want you to know my thoughts." (unselected).
- Third Screenshot:** This section is titled "Your Message" and contains a dropdown menu for "Select the issue your email relates to:" (showing "None"), a "Subject" input field, and a large "Comment" text area.

A quick note: when writing postcards, the formatting is much simpler than an email or letter. You'll want to state your name and your position. Remember- the space on a postcard is much smaller, so your ask will need to be short and sweet!

Below is a sample postcard to a state representative.



(Please note this is not a real senator, constituent, or bill: just an example)

Below is a sample letter to a state representative:

Nathalia Johnson
7 Deer Street
Manteo, NC 27954

January 17th, 2024

Dear Senator Smith,

My name is Nathalia Johnson and I am a resident of Manteo county, North Carolina. I am writing to you today to ask that you vote yes on bill S.4767/A2827 which supports state protection of red wolves in North Carolina. Your support of this bill is so crucial, as there are only 13 known, collared red wolves living in the wild today.

This figure is heartbreaking, as I believe everyone should get the chance to see red wolves in person, thriving on our landscape. I once visited the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and had the unique and rare opportunity to spot one of these magnificent red wolves near a riverbed drinking water. We locked eyes for a moment before it ran the other way, but that short glimpse inspired me. Here we both were, sharing this moment of exploring the vast and tranquil great outdoors together, if only for a brief time. It reminded me that we—both humans and wildlife—are all an important part of nature’s fascinating and intricate tapestry.

As you are probably aware, this bill will support red wolves in North Carolina in 3 key ways: a) through installing protections at the state level for red wolves b) through securing additional funding for red wolf education organizations in North Carolina, and c) through increasing public outreach about red wolves in the counties they inhabit.

This bill also recognizes what the science has told us all along: red wolves provide amazing benefits to the North Carolina ecosystem! One example of this is their ability to keep pest populations down. Red wolves are known to hunt Nutria, which is an invasive species that feed on agricultural crops and marsh plants. Red wolves also help scavengers by providing leftover carrion for them to eat. Additionally, any carrion is not eaten can also help enhance the nutrient levels in soil. These are just some examples of the ways in which red wolves are crucial to maintaining the health and balance in the areas they live.

In closing, as a constituent, I hope that you will consider my suggestion in supporting bill S.4767/A2827 by voting yes.

Sincerely,

Nathalia Johnson

(Please note this is not a real senator, constituent, or bill: just an example)

iii. Setting up 1:1 meetings with state representatives or senators

Setting up meetings with city, county, state, or federal officials is a great way to draw attention to wolf conservation and the ways you think an official could or should be helping.

Keep in mind, though, if you're just asking for their support (ex. vote yes on bill xyz) or to express your general support for an issue, making a phone call is usually more constructive. Meetings are typically reserved for when you want to delve into the value of supporting specific legislation.

Start by asking yourself who you want to meet. Are they someone that holds power over your issue? How will these officials be influenced? What do they care about?

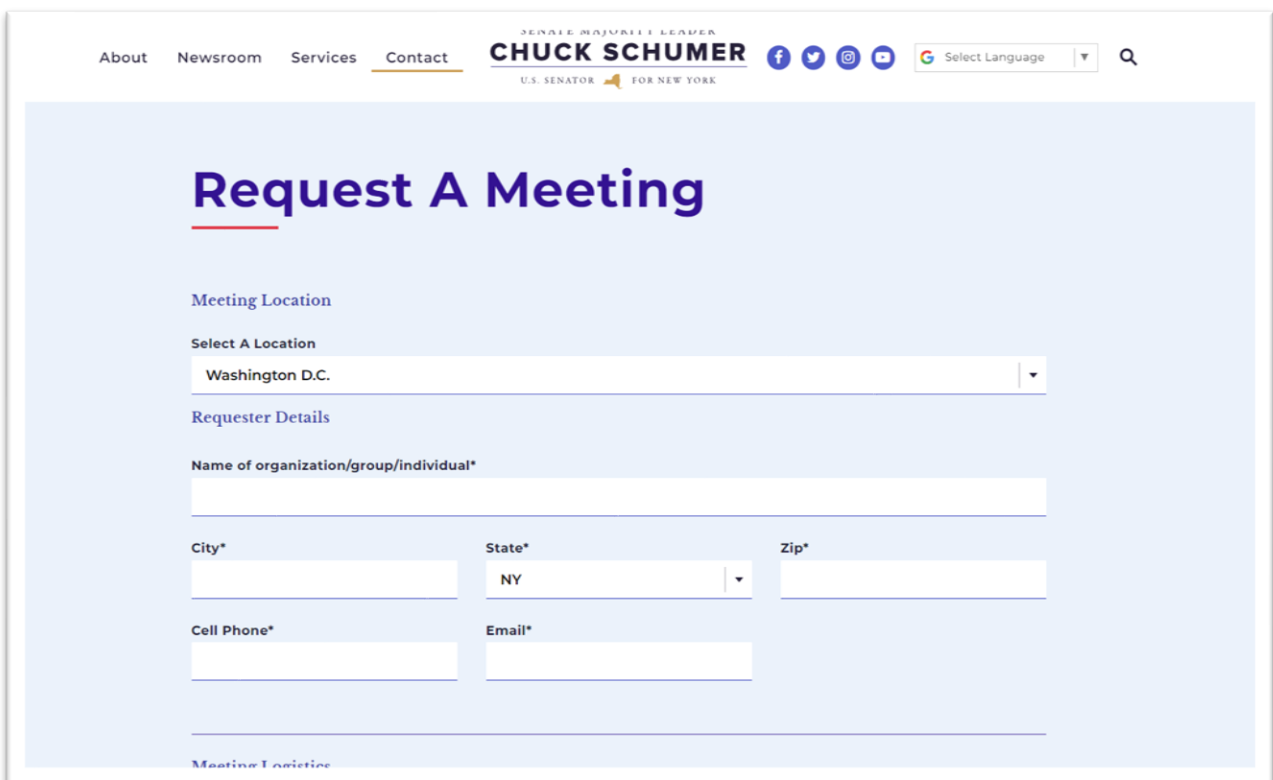
You can find your senators and representative here: [U.S. Senate: Contacting U.S. Senators & Representatives | house.gov](#)

You can also find them on our WCC Advocacy webpage.

In order to set up a meeting with a member of Congress, you'll need to contact the member's office. You can find information on how to contact their offices in Washington, D.C., as well as their home state districts, which can be found in aforementioned links.

You can also access these links on our WCC Advocacy webpage.

Another option is to go directly to the official's website and use their "meeting" request form to get in touch with them. That form will look something like this:



The image shows a screenshot of a web browser displaying the "Request A Meeting" form on the website of U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer. The page header includes navigation links for "About", "Newsroom", "Services", and "Contact", along with the senator's name "CHUCK SCHUMER" and "U.S. SENATOR FOR NEW YORK". There are also social media icons and a language selection dropdown. The main heading is "Request A Meeting". The form is divided into sections: "Meeting Location" with a dropdown menu currently set to "Washington D.C."; "Requester Details" which includes a text field for "Name of organization/group/individual*", and three text fields for "City*", "State*" (set to "NY"), and "Zip*"; and two more text fields for "Cell Phone*" and "Email*". A "Meeting Logistics" section is partially visible at the bottom.

Crafting the initial meeting message

When you reach out to contact a Member's office, you'll want to let them know that you are a constituent if you are living in an area that the member represents. You'll also want to let them know about the topic you want to discuss. While meeting with other members that aren't involved in your state is possible, this is usually done when someone in that group is a member of that state. Otherwise, it can be difficult to get a meeting if you are not their direct constituent.

When trying to set up a meeting, not only is it important to briefly mention the key issue(s) you'd like to discuss, it's also crucial if you're discussing a recent bill to include the bill number.

You can also request a meeting by calling the official's phone line and asking for the elected official's scheduler in order to arrange a meeting with that elected official.

If your Representative or Senator(s) is unavailable, it's still helpful to request a meeting with a member of their staff. This is because staffers are responsible for communicating regularly with their Members. They also typically have a deeper understanding of the specific issues that are under consideration in Congress. For these reasons, it's still a worthwhile endeavor to meet with their staff. If you do end up meeting with a staffer instead of the elected official, there can be added positives to this as sometimes the staffers can be more knowledgeable about your specific issue.

Town halls are another important way of reaching senators and representatives. You can check your member's website to see if there are any town halls or office hours you can attend. These opportunities are great ways for constituents to have time to ask any questions and get answers from their elected official(s).



Pre-Meeting

You'll want to think about the key issues you're trying to raise with your members. You'll also want to consider if there are any resources (ex. a fact sheet) that you'd need to look over for review in order to ensure you're up to date on the key issue(s) you're discussing with them. Are there any data points, facts, or figures you would need to back up your stance on an issue? Compile these resources for yourself ahead of the meeting so that all the information you need will be fresh in your mind before you meet with them. You'll also want to print out any materials (ex. factsheets) you may want to leave behind with your officials so that they may reference them.



Do your research ahead of time. You'll want to find out what issues they support, any committees they're on, their background, and how much context they may need to understand the topic you are discussing with them. You'll also want to delve into this official's voting record and their public stances on wolves and wolf conservation. You can access that type of information here: [Vote Smart - Facts For All](#). This website lists elected official's bios, voting record, position on various issues, ratings, speeches, and where they secure funding.

You can also access these links on our WCC Advocacy webpage.

Here is an example below of New York Senator Chuck Schumer's position on various energy & environmental topics (taken from the above Vote Smart website):

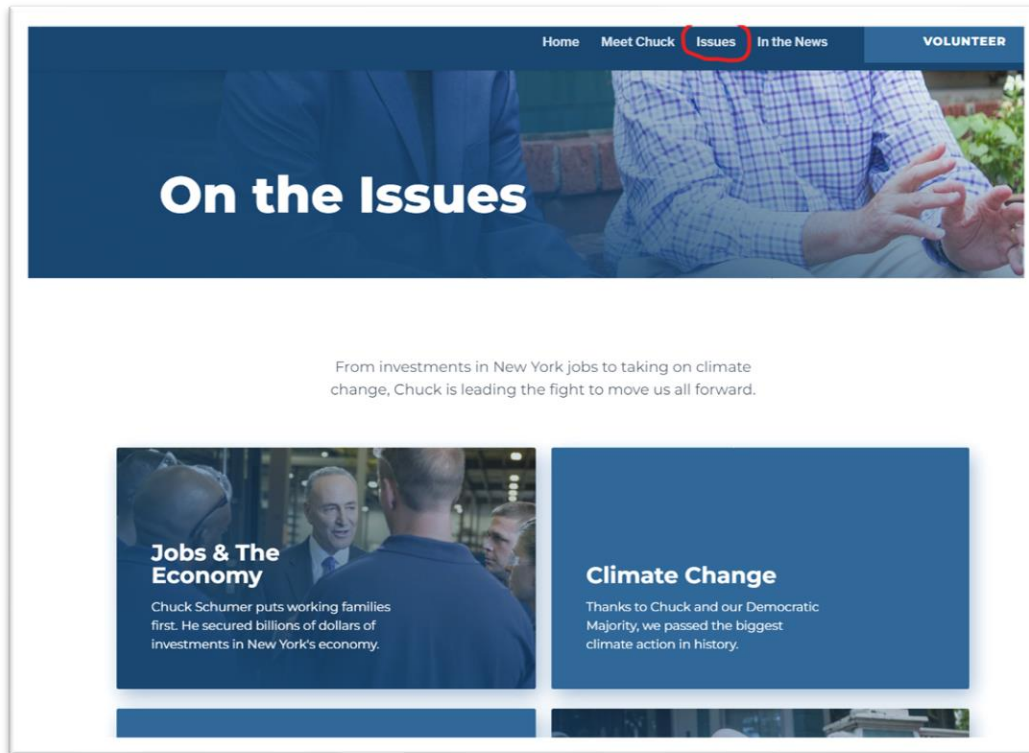
Yes  **Energy and Environment** Do you support government funding for the development of renewable energy (e.g. solar, wind, geo-thermal)? 

- "I've long pushed for expanded US investment in electric vehicle manufacturing. Today GM is making it happen in Lockport, NY with our world-class UAW workers. They're investing \$154M & creating 200+ jobs while fighting climate change—accelerating our transition to cleaner vehicles." (twitter.com)
- "Plug Power heeded my call to make Monroe County the home of its new Hydrogen Fuel Cell Innovation Center. That means nearly 380 new clean energy jobs for Rochester. And the \$9.5 billion in the infrastructure bill can help grow these clean energy jobs even more!" (twitter.com)
- "The best way to achieve President Biden's ambitious goal of cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in half by the end of the decade: Bold action by this Congress to reduce carbon pollution and create millions of jobs in the new clean energy economy." (twitter.com)
- Rated 93% by League of Conservation Voters (justfacts.votesmart.org)

Yes  **Energy and Environment** Do you support the federal regulation of greenhouse gas emissions? 

- "As Majority Leader, I will not pass an infrastructure package that does not reduce carbon pollution at a scale commensurate with the urgent climate crisis we face. And that's exactly what Democrats will do." (twitter.com)
- "Build Back Better will help America fight the climate threat with transformational investments in clean manufacturing, transportation, electricity, and building—so we can cut emissions, make our communities healthier, & lead the world by our example. We won't stop until it's done." (twitter.com)
- "The best way to achieve President Biden's ambitious goal of cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in half by the end of the decade: Bold action by this Congress to reduce carbon pollution and create millions of jobs in the new clean energy economy." (twitter.com)
- "We can't reduce greenhouse gas emissions without dealing with carbon pollution from cars we drive @POTUS's executive order and my Clean Cars plan are the kind of bold action we need Dems promised bold climate action—and we're making it a vital part of infrastructure legislation." (twitter.com)

You can also find out what issues they support on their websites. Here is an example below of New York Senator Chuck Schumer's "issues" page, which highlights the issues he supports.



Helpful tip! If you are conducting this meeting as a group, be sure to decide who will be taking what role during the meeting ahead of the scheduled event. For example- will one person be sharing a personal story? Will a different person be discussing the data to back up your points? Establish those roles before you go.

Crafting a one-pager

When meeting with officials, a one pager is a crucial tool you can utilize to help explain your issue to a them. Essentially, it's a condensed memo of a topic and what you're planning on discussing during a meeting, but is not meant to contain every little thing you'll discuss. Think of it as a summary of your issue! It's also going to be centered around your asks (what you want your official to do) as well as figures that will support the points you're making in the meeting.

For example- governor Kathy Hochul recently signed an anti-trophy hunting bill (S.4099/A.2917) in New York. If we were to rewind to the point where we were meeting with her to try to convince her to sign that bill, we would craft a one-pager on why trophy hunting is unethical, the facts that help back that up, and then how we'd like her to help (by her signing the bill into law).

You can find a resource on how to craft a one-pager on our advocacy page here:

The Meeting

When you actually attend your meeting, there are several individuals you may come into contact with. They include legislators, chief of staff, legislative aides, legislative correspondents, or

interns. Many times, at both the state and federal level, you will be meeting with the legislative aide or correspondent.

To briefly summarize: the legislator is an elected official that writes laws, introduces laws, and votes on laws. The Chief of Staff is the head staff member in charge of the overall functions of the senator's office. Aides provide various support to legislators by providing administrative, communication, and research support to them. For example, they may review bills introduced in the legislature to make sure they are procedurally accurate and can draft amendments when needed. Legislative correspondents' complete tasks such as working on policy and reading letters from constituents. Interns typically engage in tasks such as providing support through answering phone calls to the legislator.

Be sure to bring your one-pager with you to the meeting. If it's virtual, go ahead and send it about an hour before your virtual meeting. It's helpful when talking with officials to prepare 3-5 key points you want to get across so you can make clear and articulate statements from the get-go. You'll also want to get very specific about the different aspects of your topic you'll be discussing. Be sure to introduce yourself and/or your group when you first meet with the elected official or member of their staff. While you're making your presentation, try to have a discussion that is engaging. Don't inundate them with data, but be sure to present your case with solid examples for support. Personal stories about how this topic impacts you can also help you be most effective. Additionally, it's helpful to focus on specific examples of how this issue will end up impacting the constituents of this elected official and their state or district. For example, if you were expressing an anti-hunting wolf stance for wolves in Wyoming, you may use facts and figures about how much money wolf ecotourism brings into the state of Wyoming.

It's also useful to keep in mind that although you're technically "presenting" to them, it's best if it ends up turning into more of a dialogue. Ask how familiar they are with the issue you're presenting (though you'll likely know a little on their knowledge of the topic beforehand). That will help you tailor the conversation. Remember that you will have limited time (likely around 15 minutes), so you'll want to get your points across fairly quickly.

Helpful tip! Whether you're meeting your elected official at their Washington, DC office or their state office, be sure to consider the logistics of getting there. You want to give yourself plenty of time to navigate any crowded commutes or busy security checkpoints. Arriving to your meeting in a timely manner is a way of showing you respect that elected official's time!

Follow-up after meeting

Whoever reached out initially to the elected official (whether that was you or your group) should be sure to send a follow up message. In this email, you can personally thank the official for taking time out of their day to speak with you and/or your group. Now's a good time to answer any questions that you may not have been able to answer at the meeting, reiterate the certain action(s) you would like that official to take for your cause, attach any additional resources you may not have given that you would like to, and close out by offering to be available if they'd like to speak with you again in the future. Meeting and speaking with officials for the first time is important, but establishing a professional relationship with them over time through numerous meetings can make all the difference! Advocacy is a continual process.

Helpful tip! It's useful to know what factors influence your elected officials. When your senators and representatives are considering how to vote, they'll typically vote a certain way based on...

- Their party's position (ex. Democrat or Republican)**
- Their own personal views**
- Political and financial feasibility (how much money can be used in the budget)**
- What issues their constituents' value**

iv. Calling state officials

Phone calls can be a great way to speak up for an issue you're passionate about, such as wolves! Keep in mind that these calls are usually fielded by interns or state representative staff members, so you will likely not be speaking to the representative themselves. However, this representative's team is set up so that your message will be recorded and noted.

Representatives have phone lines where you can select to speak to a person or you can select to leave a message for the representative. Regardless of which option you choose, you'll want to keep your message brief and succinct. Try to create a short list of points you'd like to make. If you are limited on time, it can even be as simple as, *"Hello, my name is ___ and I am calling to support bill ___."*

Let's look at a recent example:

In winter of 2023, a bill was put on Governor Hochul of New York's desk which proposed to ban wildlife killing contests in New York.

A Wolf Conservation Center educator called her office (518-474-8390) and left this message:

"Hello. My name is ___ and I work in wildlife conservation in New York. I am calling to voice my support for Governor Hochul to sign the bill S.4099/A.2917 banning wildlife killing contests in New York."

The staff member thanked the educator for their message, asked for confirmation of their zipcode, and let them know that they would pass along that message to Governor Hochul.

V. Email blasts to state officials

Signing on to email blasts can be a method of helping with conservation of wolves. Typically, this is done by a larger organization sending out emails to their subscribers about certain bills or management plans and asking their subscribers to "sign on" to urge the official to support their issue.

Below is an example of what an email blast to a state official looks like:

Urge Your Senators to Protect Wolves and Other Endangered Wildlife

Over the next few weeks, Congress will consider various spending bills, including the House FY 2024 Interior appropriations bill. H.R. 4821 contains many harmful riders that would weaken and undermine the Endangered Species Act (ESA). One rider, Sec. 452, would remove protections for gray wolves:

Sec. 452 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to reinstate the flawed Trump administration rule delisting the gray wolf in 44 states which was hastily issued by the FWS at the end of the last administration. Gray wolf populations in the United States were decimated by decades of predator control programs, as well as loss of habitat and prey. Since receiving protection under the ESA in 1974, the gray wolf has begun a comeback, but remains far from recovered.

Take Action Today!

The ESA is our nation's most effective law for preventing extinction and protecting imperiled wildlife. As a science-based law, the future of the ESA should not be decided at the hands of Congress. To take action, fill in the action alert below.

Please email your senators today and ask them to protect endangered species, including wolves, by ensuring that these anti-ESA riders are not included in the final appropriations bills. **Feel free to adjust the message to reflect your own research and passion about the issue.**

Let's join together and work towards a safer future for all wildlife. Every voice matters, and together we can make a difference!



Recipients

- Your Senators

Contact

- Required fields
- *

Message

Vote "No" on H.R. 4821 Until Riders that Weaken the ESA Are Removed

1. TITLE:

* First Name:

* Last Name:

* Your Email:

* Address 1:

* City:

* State / Province:

* ZIP / Postal Code:

* Phone Number:

Yes, I would like to receive periodic updates and advocacy action alerts from Wolf Conservation Center.

Remember me. [What's this?](#)

Dear [Decision Maker],

As we step into the 51st year of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), I urge you to oppose any riders attached to funding bills that would weaken and undermine the ESA. The ESA is a landmark piece of legislation that institutionalized our national commitment to conservation and the protection of imperiled fish, plants and wildlife and the places they call home.

* Personalize your message

I'm especially concerned about H.R. 4821, which contains many harmful riders that would strip or limit protections for some of America's most charismatic wildlife like Yellowstone grizzly bears, North Atlantic right whales, and gray wolves. Sec. 452 would reinstate the flawed 2020 administration rule that delisted the gray wolf in 44 states.

Losing federal ESA protections would have deadly implications for gray wolves: in just the last few years, thousands of wolves have been shot or trapped in states where protections were temporarily or permanently lifted. In 2021, Wisconsin held a wolf hunt for the first time since 2014 and 218 wolves were killed in less than three days a blatant disregard of nature's balance.

As a strong supporter of healthy ecosystems and a proponent of biodiversity, I ask you to consider my values and ensure these riders are not included in any final appropriations

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, State ZIP]
[Your Email]

SEND MESSAGE

These email blasts are certainly helpful, but combining signing on to these email blasts **and** direct communication with your elected officials is the most effective way of getting your message across.

C. Other Types of Written Correspondence

If you have participated in writing to federal and/or state representatives and/ or wish to write more about wolf conservation, there are other steps you can take! Some are local, state, or national initiatives, and these are a great way of highlighting why protecting wolves is so important. In the section below, we'll discuss Letter to the Editors and Op-Eds.

i. Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor are typically written as a direct response to either an editorial, op-ed, column, or article that the target paper has printed. Sometimes they are also reactions to a notification of a particularly newsworthy event. Since they are printed on the editorial page of the paper, they broadcast the message more effectively and to a larger audience; this is because that section tends to be one of the most-read. Additionally, they are more likely to get published than an op-ed and can be published more quickly. However, if you are new to writing LTEs, you'll want to focus on a smaller newspaper when you get started, as you're more likely to have your piece published.

Legislative staff are known to track the different issues being discussed in their districts, so LTEs can possibly get your issue to a legislator and ensure they know you are a thoughtful constituent.

Some LTEs are in response to a previously published piece. However, in smaller papers, there is also the opportunity to compose letters that are not in response to another letter. These are relevant as long as they raise an issue that you believe should be addressed.

If you were going to write an LTE about wolves, it would likely be in response to a specific act that was already taken for or against them, or in response to latest news or research that had come out about wolves.

When crafting a piece, keep these points in mind:

- **Start with a strong leading sentence:** Boredom is a surefire way to ensure someone skips your piece. Start off strong! If you're writing in response to a different piece, be sure to reference the title and date it was published in the beginning of your LTE. After, explain why you agree or disagree.
- **Be upfront with your intention:** Use the first paragraph to expand on the premise and explain why you're writing. Remember that the best letters are typically to-the point, succinct, short, and present material in a way that's easy for the average reader to understand and connect that issue back to their community.
- **Show urgency:** Address the importance of the issue you're writing about.
- **Focus on facts:** Back up your claims with evidence and data...but don't overwhelm the reader with too many figures, either.
- **Speak with your voice:** Facts are important, but how you deliver them matters just as much. Use your own voice when you're crafting your piece. Local anecdotes can also be a great way of engaging readers.
- **Finish strong:** When closing the letter, restate your opinion on the matter and provide any recommendations you may have. End with a call to action for the reader.
- **Check the guidelines:** Many outlets post guidelines about what they expect for submissions of letters to the editor and op-eds. If your news outlet (ex. Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, New York Times, etc.) doesn't have guidelines, reach out and ask. You'll also want to get a feel for the style of writing they publish, the content, and the general length of the pieces.

Below is part of a sample letter to the editor article featured on the Bozeman Daily Chronicle:

Letter to the editor: The best solution for elk management is wolves

Norman Bishop Jan 17, 2024

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f x e p q

"FWP gets boost to continue elk hazing in Paradise Valley" (Jan. 12) is an admirable attempt to solve a problem that cattle brought with them to the area. Brucellosis is now endemic to elk and bison.

Hazing, or herding of elk is just one more step toward farming wildlife, and, as the Jan. 12 article noted, not demonstrably effective. A better solution may be to stop killing our best ally in disease reduction among deer, elk, moose, and bison — wolves — and let them do what they've been doing for 200,000 years in North America. Lewis and Clark called them shepherds of the buffalo.

Recent studies have revealed that wolves have 10,000 to 100,000 times the olfactory capacity of humans, and can detect, select, and remove sick animals, be they suffering from brucellosis, chronic wasting disease, lungworm, brain worm, jaw necrosis, osteoarthritis, tuberculosis, injury, undernutrition, or old age. Human hazers or hunters don't have that ability to detect and select afflicted prey.

It's time to give our best allies a break, and let them carry out their evolved role as sanitarians. Our wildlife and our livestock will

TRENDING NOW

- Over a dozen detained in south Bozeman in attempted homicide investigation
- Citing an 'insurmountable' lack of snow, Montana ski area closes for the season
- Commissioners ask city manager to resign after leaked video
- Deadline for Bozeman city manager resignation passes, mayor mum on answer

ii. Op-eds

Op-eds (standing for “opposite the editorial page” or “opinions and editorials page”) are short opinion pieces designed to be published in newspaper columns. They typically focus on an informed, strong, specific opinion from the person on a matter they’re knowledgeable about. Generally, the author is not affiliated with that publication’s editorial board. The goal of an op-ed is to inform the reader about a specific stance and is usually to persuade them.

If you were going to write an op-ed about wolves, you might decide to write about their role as a keystone species. You would likely try to persuade the reader(s) to decide wolf protection and conservation is important. One way you may do this by showing how, as a keystone species, wolves can help slow or stop the spread of wildlife disease and provide food for scavengers.

Below is a part of a sample op-ed article featured on the New York Times:



When crafting a piece, keep these points in mind:

- **Reel ‘em in:** Start with a strong hook that captures the readers attention. The theme of your op-ed should be compelling, easy to understand, and relatable. You should also be able to state your key point(s) in a sentence or two. Start with this and then subsequent paragraphs can contain key arguments that will help you defend your point.
- **Remember your goal:** Sharing your opinion is only part of why you’re writing. Persuading the reader to understand and/or come to support your view is the end goal.

- **Have a call to action:** What, specifically, do you want the reader to do after reading your piece? How do you want them to feel or think while reading it?
- **Be concise:** Your article should be thorough enough to get the point across but not too dense that it takes forever to read. Try to keep sentences and paragraphs short, sweet, and to the point.
- **Mind your examples:** Focus on showing rather than telling the issue you're writing about. Using examples that bring the article to life are just as important as outlining the facts. You want the reader to be engaged in the article. Remember: you're trying to hold their attention just as much as you are trying to persuade them.
- **Watch out for jargon:** Jargon (special words or phrases used by specific professions or groups) is difficult for others to understand, because they may not have the same knowledge or background. For example, instead of using the phrase "the two wolves had a low mean kinship level" you could say "the wolves weren't closely related to each other" It's tempting to use jargon to sound sophisticated and knowledgeable, but using simple language ensures everyone can understand the points you are making.
- **Check the guidelines:** Many outlets post guidelines about what they expect for submissions of letters to the editor and op-eds. If your news outlet (ex. Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, New York Times, etc.) doesn't have guidelines, be sure to reach out and ask. One example of a guideline is a word-count restriction. It can also be helpful to monitor the paper's section on op-eds so you have an idea of the types of op-eds they typically publish. You'll also want to pay attention to the paper's articles. For example, if there is a piece published recently that you think you could respond to or want to reinforce, it could be more likely that your op-ed would be published.
- **Review:** Before you submit the op-ed, make sure to proofread it. Read it out loud and, if possible, to someone you trust. This will help you simplify and sharpen the argument you're trying to make.

D. Online Engagement

Blogging is also a way to reach a wide array of people and unlike some platforms, you are not limited to a certain amount of characters. Blogging also allows you to provide details about more complex advocacy topics. Typically blog posts are longer and you'll need to draw someone in with a clever heading. You may also need to create subheadings, paragraphs, and/or bullet points.

YouTube can also be a good option for presenting your stance on wolves or providing educational content. A good time to use this would be for a school project or presentation.

i. Know your audience

When crafting online media, it's important to consider the overall audience that will be following along and ensure your content caters to that demographic. For example, just as you wouldn't speak to your 85-year-old grandmother the same way you would speak to your 5-year-old cousin, you want to be mindful of your voice when you are crafting this content. Knowing your why and goals of the post will help you create it to be most effective.

ii. How to write engaging content

We discussed the importance of knowing your audience. However, there are many aspects to consider when crafting a meaningful and engaging content!

You'll also want to identify your "why". Why are you creating this content? What goal do you want to accomplish? Are you trying to get out a general message? For example: wolves are a keystone species so we need to protect them. Or, are you trying to get someone to take an action for wolves? For example, convincing people to submit a comment on the Mexican gray wolf updated conservation management plan.

You'll want to personalize the content so that it reflects your stance in a way that sounds like your own unique voice. Other aspects you'll want to consider are any added elements that may enhance your content. For example, what title will draw folks in? Which picture is most visually appealing or will best draw someone in? Making sure your content is emotionally driven can help, as well.

E. Wolf advocacy: social capital & the power of the people

Change happens when people mobilize and rally together towards a greater cause. It's in this collective unity that epic things can be achieved. The same can be said about progress for wolves. Whether you are in the community in person, or part of a worldwide virtual network of folks who care about wolves, there is much we can accomplish together.

There are varying levels of collective involvement, which can happen on the local, state, national, and/or international level. Collective behavior combined with social movements are two main forces that drive social change.

There have been several environmental movements that occurred due to the commitment of individuals and groups looking to advocate for brighter, healthier futures for people and planet. One of the most well-known movements occurred during the 1960s and 1970s.

There had been several disasters involving air and water pollution. An offshore oil rig in California had a huge oil spill which resulted in beaches being covered with millions of gallons of spilled oil. The Cuyahoga River in Ohio, so contaminated with chemicals, had spontaneously burst into flames. Astronauts had also begun to photograph the Earth from space, which brought increased awareness that the Earth's resources are finite.

So, access to clean air, clean water, and rejecting harmful pesticides were big issues that individuals and groups were fighting for. A book called "Silent Spring" written by Rachel Carson, called attention to the devastating impact that pesticide use (specifically a chemical called "DDT": Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) had on wildlife, the environment, and human health.

So strong were the many American people's voices in standing up for environmental health and protection that President Nixon established an agency specifically for this topic: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Throughout the following decade, the government passed many different pieces of legislation centered around cleaning up the country's water, air, and other natural resources.

These efforts even culminated in a day we still celebrate: Earth day, which has been held every April 22nd since 1970.

This environmental movement serves as a classic example of people mobilizing around an integral cause. Wolves are a cause we know is worth advocating for and protecting. Will you join us on this journey?

i. Youth Initiatives: WCC Wolf Warrior program

Be a part of something special! The WCC is proud to present our youth-based advocacy program, “Wolf Warriors”. Young advocates can download our pre-made material resources that pair with the advocacy guide.

There are 3 separate kits:

- Youth advocacy kit
- Educator advocacy kit (for youth educators)
- Group/Org advocacy kit (for youth-based organizations)

You can find the advocacy kits and additional related resources on our website.

XII. Glossary of Terms

This glossary provides general terms, such as abbreviations of full organizations as well as political terms. Words matter—even in how we define words used to discuss the environment—because the words we choose and how we talk about something can either minimize, neutralize, or maximize our perception of the action behind the word. For example, “take” or “harvest” paints a much less damaging perspective than “kill” or “killed”.

Academic Journals: periodical publication in which studies relating to a particular academic discipline is published

Advocacy: the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal

Advisory Council (Stakeholder Advisory Council): A group that is formed during the drafting process of wolf management plans that includes conservationists, hunters, ranchers, and community members that weigh in on the plan in order for each stakeholder to feel represented

Amendments: Minor change or addition designed to improve a text, piece of legislation, etc.

Bag Limit: Number of wolves legally able to be killed in the state

Bill: A draft of a proposed law presented to a governing body which has the potential to be passed into law

Congress: A national legislative body, especially that of the US. The US Congress, which meets at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., was established by the Constitution of 1787 and is composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives

Distinct Population Segment (DPS): According to the Endangered Species Act, a DPS is a vertebrate (animals with backbones) population or group of populations that is discrete from other populations of the species and significant in relation to the entire species

DNR: Department of Natural Resources

Economics: the branch of knowledge concerned with the production, consumption, and transfer of wealth

EIS: “Environmental Impact Statement” – a mandatory document (report) in the U.S. which is required by law as per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for certain actions that can affect the quality of the environment for animals, plants, and people

Keystone species: An organism that helps to hold ecosystems together and in balance

Harvest: the quantity of wolves allowed to be killed in a hunting season.

House of Representatives: the lower house of the US Congress and other legislatures, including most US state governments

Ideology: a system of ideas and ideals

Lobby: seek to influence a politician or public official about a specific issue, lobbying can be done by an individual, group, or organization

Proposed ruling is an official document done that announces and explains the agency’s plan to address a problem or accomplish a goal

Rider: A rider is an additional provision added to a bill or other measure under consideration by a legislature which may or may not have much, if any, connection with the subject matter of the bill (ex. Senate appropriations budget bill contained the rider delisting Northern Rocky Mountain gray wolves)

Rule: A principle, standard, or norm that guides conduct or procedure. They are created, enforced, and regulated by legal authorities

Ruling: an official document done by an agency that announces and explains the agency’s plan to address a problem or accomplish a goal

Senate: The smaller, upper assembly in the US Congress, most US states, and other countries

Scientific Literature: A type of scholarly writing that reports original empirical and theoretical work in the natural and social sciences. Empirical work is verified through observation and experience, whereas theoretical work is research that examines a set of beliefs and assumptions.

Special interest group: a group of people or an organization seeking or receiving special advantages, typically through political lobbying.

Thinktank organization: an organization that performs research and advocacy on various topics. They also sponsor research, encourage solutions, and facilitate interactions among experts. They may focus on topics such as social policy, political strategy, economics, military, technology, or culture. They may also have different political orientations or perspectives.

Take: The term “take” is used in the Endangered Species Act, includes: “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.”

USFWS: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, an agency within the Department of the Interior

XIII. Further Reading – Management Plans

Included in this section of the guide are direct links to the most updated wolf management plans for states with wolves.

Arizona

[Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, Second Revision \(fws.gov\)](#)

California

[FileHandler.ashx \(ca.gov\)](#) – Part I

[FileHandler.ashx \(ca.gov\)](#) – Part II

Colorado

cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Wolves/2023-Final-CO-Wolf-Plan.pdf

Idaho

[idaho-gray-wolf-management-plan-2023-2028.pdf](#)

Michigan

[Michigan Wolf Management Plan - Updated 2022](#)

Minnesota

[Minnesota Wolf Management Plan \(state.mn.us\)](#)

Montana

[MONTANA WOLF CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING DOCUMENT \(mt.gov\)](#)

-*Note:* This plan says draft but it is the final version

[PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS \(who, what, where, how, when, why\) \(mt.gov\)](#)

North Carolina

[Revised Recovery Plan for Red Wolf \(fws.gov\)](#)

New Mexico

[Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, Second Revision \(fws.gov\)](#)

Oregon

[Invoice | Wolf Conservation Center \(nywolf.org\)](#)

Washington

[Wolf Conservation and Management Plan | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

Wyoming

[DRAFT \(wyo.gov\)](#)

[WYWOLF_PLANADDENDUM_FINAL032212.pdf \(wyo.gov\)](#)

Advocacy Guide references can be found here:

