MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: MFWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, September 6 – September 12, 2008

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2007 annual report) can be found at: http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

Laudon and Wilson have been running trapping operations for two packs North of Libby, one in the East Fork Yaak drainage and one in the Seventeenmile drainage. A breeding female wolf was captured and collared on 9/8/08 on the East Fork Yaak trapline. At this time it is unclear if this is a member of the Kootenai South pack or a new pack. The pack in the Seventeenmile drainage is a newly identified pack since last year (and incorrectly assumed to be Pulpit Mountain pack). That trapline remains open.

Boyd and Whitehead have initiated a trapping operation between Troy and Libby. That pack is uncollared and believed to be the Pulpit Mountain pack.

Bradley, Ross, and Asher were all in the field this week investigating wolf reports or trapping.

Alan Whitehead has finished his season with us and was an instrumental component in our teams success so far this field season. Thanks for all the hard work, dedication, and good humor to the program this year!

Flights: Bradley flew western Montana (Bitterroot and Blackfoot areas) on 9-8 and 9-9. Lance flew in southwest Montana (Big Hole area) on the 9-8.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

Wolves injured a cattle calf on 8/28 in the Lost Prairie/Pleasant Valley area. It is believed that this may be a new pack and FWP asked WS to collar and release a wolf so that it would be monitored more closely. FWP also authorized WS to remove up to 2 wolves, as this is the third confirmed depredation event in this area. A breeding female wolf was captured and collared on 9/7/08. On 9-8, an adult female wolf was lethally removed from this pack. A second adult was killed on 9-10.

WS confirmed 2 more dead calves in the Murphy Lake pack this week. An injured calf will be investigated, too. As a result, one more adult female wolf was killed on 9-9 near Fortine. A total of 7 dead calves and 2 injured calves have been confirmed over the last month.

On the 4th, WS investigated 8 dead sheep north of Reed Point and confirmed wolf kills. Traps were set to try and collar/release a wolf. Two sets of tracks were found and one was a smaller than the other. FWP and WS were looking into rumors of hybrids in the area, but treating it as if it were a dispersing wolf (as no packs are known in the area but the area packs are within 100 miles) so WS pulled other ground equipment meant for coyotes. The landowner and the WS specialist each reported seeing a black wolf late in the week.

Outreach and Education Activities

A previously taped interview radio show about wolf delisting) aired on Yellowstone Public Radio and Montana Public Radio on Aug. 19 and Sept. 7, respectively. Sime and the Community Outreach Coordinator of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition (Barb Cestero) participated in a conversation with Brian Kahn for Home Ground Radio. The show will be archieved for a few months and available online at www.yellowstonepublicradio.org.

Research Activities

Nothing to report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

On the 5th, an outfitter in the Divide Creek area (Bitterroot Valley) reported to FWP that he found a dead wolf that was small with small teeth (likely a pup born in spring 2008). FWP consulted with USFWS law enforcement and also is working with the outfitter to retrieve the carcass from the remote area. The carcass will be transported to the FWP lab to determine cause of death.

Other

Wolf Litigation: On Friday July 18th, the U.S. Federal District Court in Missoula, Montana, issued a preliminary injunction that immediately reinstated temporary Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the Northern Rockies. Wolves across northern Montana return to the "endangered" classification and wolves across southern Montana return to the "experimental" classification – also known in Montana as "split status."

FWP decisions about wolf-livestock conflicts in the endangered area are guided by the 1999 Interim Control Plan. FWP decisions about wolf-livestock conflicts occurring in the experimental area are guided by the 2005 and 2008 nonessential experimental population 10j regulations. Those regulations also guide what private citizens can to do protect their livestock. See the FWP website for important information and updates: http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html.

To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP at: www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana / Columbus area at: 322-4303. Or call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.

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