

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: FWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime (406-461-0587)

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, September 25 – October 1, 2010

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 2009 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

Field crews are still out working.

Flights: Asher flew in the Paradise Valley and south of Big Timber on 9/29.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On 9/23, a producer reported a calf possibly being injured by wolves in Tom Miner Basin north of Gardiner. WS investigated on 9/24 and the calf could not be located. The calf was found on 9/30 and WS confirmed it as being injured by wolves. The calf is expected to live. No lethal control has been authorized at this time. This is in the 8 Mile pack territory.

On 9/27, an adult male from the Welcome Creek pack south of Missoula was trapped and killed. Another adult male was killed on 9/29. Control efforts are ongoing.

On 9/29, FWP met with a producer south of Wisdom for the last time to consult on a fencing project. Several on site visits occurred over the spring / summer. The producer has a feed lot situation and has had wolves approaching the feed lot / corral area in the past. Materials are now on site and the producer will be putting up the fence as an extra deterrent to keep wolves from getting into the feed lot and causing a disruption in a confined area where livestock could be injured or killed indirectly.

On 9/30, WS looked at a dead calf west of McAllister (northwest of Ennis at the south end of the Tobacco Root Mtns) and called it a probable wolf kill. Area producers have reported seeing wolves in the area recently. A calf was lost by this same owner in the same general area last year.

On 9/30 WS completed control work on the Horn Mtn pack (W. Fork of the Madison south of Ennis), removing the 5 remaining wolves.

Outreach and Education

A paper "Cadmium, Copper, Iron, and Zinc Concentrations in Kidneys of Grey Wolves, *Canis lupus*, from Alaska, Idaho, Montana (USA), and the Northwest Territories (Canada)" has been accepted for

publication in Bulletin of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology. FWP provided kidney samples from wolves that died in MT and assisted with the publication.

On 9/28, Sime gave a presentation at the FWP Region 4 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. About 80 people attended.

See below for an update on Judge Molloy's ruling which reinstated Endangered Species Act protections for the wolf throughout the northern Rocky Mountains. See <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> for the latest information regarding what the ruling means for Montana, what changes and what doesn't. FWP's most recent media releases are also available.

Research Activities

FWP will be cooperating with Flathead Valley Community College on a grant the College received from AT&T to purchase an ARGOS GPS radio collar (global positioning system / satellite) that will serve as an educational tool for students. Natural resource, political science, and engineering students will study the different elements associated with monitoring wildlife populations through the wolf program and this individual wolf that will eventually be captured and fitted with this collar. Students will learn field techniques first hand while accompanying biologists in the field and work with the various facets of data obtained.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

Nothing to report at this time.

Other Updates

On 9/15, FWP submitted an application to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain a permit to allow a conservation hunt for wolves using the FWP Commission approved final 2010 wolf hunting season framework. To date, USFWS has not responded.

On 10/7, FWP will be providing the FWP Commission with a number of updates relative wolf management in Montana, delisting litigation, a proposal for a statewide conservation hunt (10a1a permit application) and a proposal to remove wolves in the West Fork of the Bitterroot for unacceptable impacts of wolf predation on elk through the federal Experimental 10j Regulations that apply across southern Montana. If the Commission accepts the proposal, a public comment period and scientific peer review of proposal will be required prior to the Commission taking final action on the proposal. If a final removal proposal is approved by the FWP Commission, it would be submitted to the USFWS to obtain authorization to proceed with wolf removals.

Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation

On 10/1, FWP filed its appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, seeking to overturn the Missoula District Court ruling that returned the region's wolf population to the federal endangered species list. The federal government and Idaho also filed appeals.

Background: On 8/6, federal Endangered Species Act protections were reinstated through a ruling from the federal court. The court ruled that the federal Endangered Species Act does not allow the federal government to subdivide a distinct population segment so that a species is listed in part of it and delisted in the other part. The ruling stated that the wolf must either be listed or delisted as one unit within the Northern Rockies region. Further, given that the current Wyoming wolf management plan and regulatory mechanisms are not approved by the federal government and are considered inadequate, federal protections must be reinstated throughout the region.

Wolves across northern Montana are now legally reclassified as federally endangered. Wolves across southern Montana are reclassified as experimental, non-essential. Different federal regulations apply to each area. See <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> for information about the federal regulations and other updates.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

LLRMB will be holding a board meeting on October 18th in room 152 of the State Capitol. This meeting will be broadcast over the internet and TVMT. An agenda will be posted on the board's website www.llrmb.mt.gov early next week.

Coordinator Edwards provided the following information and correction to a recent media story.

From January 1 to September 28, 2009, he had paid claims for a total of 50 cattle and 225 sheep that were either a probable or confirmed wolf kill. An additional 4 other animals were also reimbursed. The total dollar amount paid for the period was \$97,957.

From January 1 to September 28, 2010, he had paid claims for 103 cattle, 16 sheep and 3 other animals that were either a probable or a confirmed wolf kill. The total dollar figure for the period was \$70,848.

For agendas and minutes of previous meetings, see the Board's website: www.llrmb.mt.gov. Look under Board and Meetings on the left navigation bar. Agendas and minutes from previous meetings are available at [Montana Department of Livestock](http://www.mt.gov/departmentoflivestock). The program coordinator can be reached at 444-5609.

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To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP online. Use the following shortcut link and be sure to update your bookmarks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/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 at the statewide office: 657-6464. Or, call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock death 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.