Form 1100-001
(R 2/07)

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item No. 8.B.1

SUBJECT: Annual Update on Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan

FOR: JUNE 2007 **BOARD MEETING**

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Adrian Wydeven

SUMMARY:

The Natural Resources Board approved the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan in October 1999. The plan includes the provision to review and update it periodically. In 2006, the Department identified several areas that needed changing to better manage wolf depredations. At its June 2006 meeting, the Natural Resources Board approved the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan Update and directed the Department to review the plan annually.

DNR Wolf Biologist Adrian Wydeven will update the Board on the annual review of the plan including the biological status of wolves, the legal status of wolves, management plan implementation and depredation management, the review of secondary effects on livestock, and future needs for research and management plan changes.

RECOMMENDATION: Information item

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

No	☑	Fiscal Estimate Required	Yes	☐	Attached
No	☑	Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required	Yes	☐	Attached
No	☐	Background Memo	Yes	☑	Attached

APPROVED:

Signe L. Holtz — 5/15/07
Bureau Director, Endangered Resources, Signe Holtz — Date

Laurie Osterndorf — 5/15/07
Administrator, Land Division, Laurie Osterndorf — Date

Scott Hassett — 6/20/07
Secretary, Scott Hassett — Date

cc: Laurie J. Ross - AD/5
Signe Holtz - ER/6
Rebecca Schroeder - ER/6
Randle Jurewicz - ER/6
Adrian Wydeven - Park Falls

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

State of Wisconsin

DATE: May 14, 2007

TO: Natural Resources Board

FROM: Scott Hassett

SUBJECT: Annual Update on Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan

The Natural Resources Board approved the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan in October 1999. The plan includes the provision to review and update it periodically. In 2006, the Department identified several areas that needed changing to better manage wolf depredations. At its June 2006 meeting, the Natural Resources Board approved the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan Update and directed the Department to review the plan annually and proposed changes as needed. In September, the Board also asked the staff to review the secondary effects on livestock more thoroughly for this year's plan review. The staff has followed up and will update the Board on the annual review of the plan including the biological status of wolves, the legal status of wolves, management plan implementation and depredation management, the review of secondary effects on livestock, and future needs for research and management plan changes.

Biological status update. The results of the annual survey of the Wisconsin wolf population (2006-2007 winter count) will be presented including the population growth and the geographic spread of the population.

Legal status update. On March 12, 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delisted the wolf in a population segment that includes Wisconsin. The Humane Society of the United States, Help Our Wolves Live, and the Animal Protection Institute have filed a suit in the U.S. District Court in Washington D.C. challenging this action.

Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan Implementation Update. Following federal delisting, the Department's guidelines for dealing with wolf depredation were revised by the Wolf Science Committee and Department administration. These new guidelines took effect March 12, 2007. A copy is attached. In addition, U.S.D.A. Wildlife Services is completing a new Environmental Assessment for the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan to include damage management approved in the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan that is allowed under federal delisting. When approved, this new Environmental Assessment (EA), which documents the potential impacts to the human environment of alternatives for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and U.S.D.A. Wildlife Services involvement in wolf conflict management in Wisconsin, will be referenced in the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan Update. A link to the EA on the U.S.D.A. web site and an electronic copy of the EA will also be on the Department's web site.

Review of Secondary Effects on Livestock Update. Jeff Lehmkuhler, Ph.D., Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, Department of Animal Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, chaired a subcommittee of the Wolf Science Committee in the development of a white paper that reviews the literature and anecdotal information on the secondary effects of wolves and predators presence on farms. The most recent draft of this document, " Effects of Wolves and Other Predators on Farms in Wisconsin: Beyond Verified Losses," is attached. When completed, the paper will be posted on the Department's web site. The Department and its partners will consider the review in weighing decisions on research to measure the effects of wolf presence on farms and how such data should be used in managing wolf populations and livestock.

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Future Needs for Research and Management Plan Changes. The success of wolf recovery in Wisconsin and the longer-than-expected time frame for delisting have created new needs for information and management. The Department is exploring the need for additional research including habitat modeling, population modeling, and public attitude surveys. The Department will also review the guidelines for reactive management on public lands.

Attachments

"Guidelines for conducting depredation control on wolves in Wisconsin following federal delisting, May 24, 2007"

"Effects of Wolves and Other Predators on Farms in Wisconsin: Beyond Verified Losses"

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING DEPREDATION CONTROL ON WOLVES IN WISCONSIN FOLLOWING FEDERAL DELISTING

By the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Guidelines for 2007-2008

May 24, 2007

The gray wolf (*Canis lupus)* was listed as Endangered by the federal government in 1974, and listed as Endangered by the State of Wisconsin in 1975. The State of Wisconsin reclassified wolves to threatened status in 1999, and August 1, 2004 the gray wolf was removed from the threatened species list, and classified as a protected wild animal. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service federally reclassified wolves in Wisconsin as Threatened on April 1, 2003, but a district court decision on wolf reclassification in Oregon on January 31, 2005, caused wolves to be relisted as endangered. Wolves were removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened species on March 12, 2007.

The 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan prescribes wolf management in the state following federal and state delisting. The goal of wolf management will be to maintain a healthy and viable population in the state, while responding quickly to wolf attacks on domestic animals, allow landowners flexible tools to deal with wolf problems, and reduce losses of domestic animals The following guidelines were developed by the Wisconsin Wolf Science Committee to determine appropriate depredation control actions that are consistent with the 1999 Wolf Plan, and 2006 Wolf Plan Update. These guidelines are intended for dealing with wolf depredation to domestic animals. **Wolves that show any demonstrable threat to human safety would be dispatched by DNR, WS, other government agents, or local law enforcement officers**.

This document is intended solely as guidance and does not constitute any mandatory requirements except where requirements are referenced in statute or administrative rule. This guidance does not establish or affect legal rights or obligations, and is not finally determinative of any of the issues addressed. This guidance cannot be relied upon and does not create any rights enforceable by any party in litigation with the State of Wisconsin or the Department of Natural Resources. These guidelines will be reviewed annually with scientists and stakeholders, and will be revised as necessary.

Authority—Authority to control and manage problem wolves in Wisconsin will be held by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Wisconsin DNR authorizes USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (WS) to act as agents of the DNR, and consult with Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), tribal agents on Indian reservations, and other federal, state and tribal agents.

Definitions

Abatement—Techniques for reducing risk of depredation, e.g., creating exclusions, establishing barriers, or using scare devices.

Aversive Conditioning—Conditioning of animals to eliminate undesired behavior by associating such behavior with a disagreeable stimulus.

Chronic Farm—Farm with verified wolf depredation in 2 or more years in the past 5 year-period.

Control—Attempt to capture or shoot problem wolves, and may include translocating, placing in captivity for study or research, euthanizing, or dispatching.

Depredation—Refers to predation on domestic animals resulting in death or injury.

Depredation Site----Location where depredation has occurred. On private land this includes contiguous property under the same ownership or lease of the affected landowner or lessee.

Dispatch—Actions that humanely kill an animal in field situations.

Domestic Animal— (ATCP 10.02) The following animals are considered domestic animals under s. 169.01 (7), Stats., and are not considered wild animals:

(1) Livestock.
(2) Poultry.
(3) Farm-raised game birds, except farm-raised game birds that have been released to the wild.
(4) Ratites.
(5) Farm-raised fish, except fish that have been released to waters of the state
(6) Foxes, fitch, nutria, marten, fisher, mink, chinchilla, rabbit or caracul that are born, bred and raised in captivity and are not endangered or threatened species.
(7) Pet birds.
(8) Animals of any species that has been domesticated by humans.

Euthanize—Humane killing of an animal.

Guard Animal----Use of one species of domestic animal to provide predator protection for another species of domestic animal, and may include Guarding dogs, llamas, donkeys, and other animals. Guarding dogs are dogs specifically bred for the protection of livestock, and have historically been used for this purpose; specific breeds include Maremma, Shar Planinetz, Anatolian shepherd, Komondor, Great Pyrenees, Akbash, and various crosses of these breeds.

Livestock--- (ATCP 10.0162) Bovine animals, equine animals, goats, poultry, sheep, swine other than wild hogs, farm-raised deer, farm-raised game birds, camelids, ratites and fish.

Maximum Take for Proactive Controls—The maximum number of wolves that could be removed by proactive control activities by government trappers and land owner permits.

Proactive Depredation Controls—Depredation controls intended to reduce abundance of wolves in pack areas with historical or previous verified depredations on livestock or pets near homes on private land. Proactive controls would include control actions conducted a year or two after verified depredations on a farm when the depredating pack continues to occur nearby, and control actions in response to imminent threats of depredation to domestic animals.

Proactive Control Area—Area of land where proactive control on wolves would occur and would generally represent the area occupied by a wolf pack or group that has caused depredations on two or more farms or residential areas or one or more chronic farms.

Reactive Depredation Controls—Depredation controls intended to remove specific individual wolves that have depredated on domestic animals on private land shortly after depredations have occurred.

Significant Loss—The verified killing or maiming of one or more domestic animals by wolves where the imminent threat of attacks on additional domestic animals is probable. For poultry or other small animals, loss of $250 or likely to exceed $250 would be considered a significant loss.

Verified Depredation—Depredation verified by USDA-WS or DNR, and defined either as **Confirmed,** clear evidence that one or more wolves were responsible, or **Probable**, sign strongly suggesting that one or more wolves were responsible.

I. REACTIVE DEPREDATION CONTROL GUIDELINES

A. Government Reactive Wolf Depredation Management

The goal of reactive wolf depredation controls by government agents is to quickly respond to wolf depredations soon after they occur and attempt to target specific individual wolves that have injured or killed domestic animals on farms or near people's homes. Lethal controls can occur anywhere in the state as long as the wolf population remains above 250 wolves outside of Indian reservations.

1) Use of Aversive Conditioning or Other Non-Lethal Methods----

a) Where appropriate, WS will offer suitable non-lethal alternatives.

b) Upon the first verification of depredation by wolves, a depredation management plan will be made for the farm, which will include recommended suitable non-lethal methods and other practices that may reduce depredation on the farm. A signed plan will be required before any control actions can proceed on the farm.

c) If cost effective abatement is feasible, cost-shared abatements will be offered by DNR if funds are available; DNR and WS will jointly determine suitable practices. Funds for abatement practices may also be available from private organizations as well.
d) A depredation management plan would be developed on farms before cost-share abatements are offered; DNR and USDA-WS will develop the plan in consultation with county and state agriculture specialists.
e) Experimental non-lethal abatement measures, such as the use of shock collars, will be done by either the DNR or WS after consultation; control trapping will normally not be conducted in areas where experimental abatement measures are being conducted.

2) Verifications Necessary to Begin Wolf Control —

a) Control may begin in any zone after one significant loss during the current year (except as provided below under 9b).

3) Determination to Begin Wolf Control —

a) On private land outside of Indian reservations or negotiated buffer zones around reservations, WS determines when trapping will begin, and will notify the local DNR wildlife biologist or other DNR representative.
b) On public lands, WS, the local DNR wildlife biologist, and the manager of the public land, will determine if trapping will occur on such land. In the ceded Chippewa Territory, consultation will occur with GLIFWC before conducting control work on public land.
c) On private lands in Indian Reservations, and any area surrounding the reservation negotiated between tribes and State, WS and DNR will consult with the tribe before trapping and dispatching of wolves. WS will attempt to co-investigate wolf complaints with designated tribal representatives.
d) On tribal lands, wolves will only be trapped by WS if requested by the tribe.

4) Maximum Distance Trapping Will Occur From Livestock and Pet Depredation Site:

a) Trap up to 1.0 mile from a depredation site within Wolf Management Zones 1 & 2 or a designated greater distance through consultation with DNR (see proactive controls below).
b) Trap up to 5.0 miles from a depredation site within Wolf Management Zone 3
c) Trap anywhere that depredating wolves occur in Wolf Management Zone 4

5) Duration of Trapping at a Depredation Site---

a) WS will use its discretion to determine trapping effort needed to effectively resolve depredation problems and will generally trap up to 10 to 15 days for first time depredation, and up to 21 days for chronic farms. Trapping efforts may be extended if additional verified depredations occur.

6) Treatment of Special Sex/Age Group---

a) No special age and sex consideration will be made except on a case by case basis based on consultation with WS and DNR.

7) Treatment of Radio-Collared or Tagged Wolves---

a) Radio-collared or tagged wolves will be treated as any other depredating wolf (dispatch or translocate as appropriate), except as noted in 7b.
b) Consultations on radio-collared or tagged depredating wolves will be made with tribal officials when such wolves are clearly from an Indian reservation or negotiated buffer zones when trapping within 6 miles of any reservation.

8) Capture of Dogs or Wolf-Dog Hybrids---

a) Dogs caught at depredation sites will be turned over to town chairman, dog owner, animal shelter, or released on site.
b) Wolf-dog hybrids that appear to be living in the wild and caught at depredation sites will be dispatched by WS or DNR if no collar or other identifying mark occurs on the animal.
c) Wolf-dog hybrids that are marked will be held in captivity until the owner can be contacted, or dispatched after 14 days if no owner is found. The owner of a dog is liable for the full amount of damages caused by a dog injuring or causing injury to a person, domestic animal or property (WI Statue 174.02).

9) Wolf Control for Depredation to Dogs----

a) Control could be conducted on wolves killing dogs that are leashed, confined, or under the owner's control on the owner's land if there is likeliness of additional depredation.
b) No reactive control trapping would be conducted on wolves killing dogs that are free-roaming, roaming at large, hunting, or training on public lands, and all other lands open to public hunting except land owned or leased by the dog owner.
c) Other abatement or aversive conditioning will be considered on public lands where depredation occurs on dogs or other domestic animals.
d) Guard animals would be treated as other domestic animals for verification and control purposes.

10) Wolf Control on Deer Farms, Wild Fur Farms, Bird Hunting Preserves and permitted Hound Dog Training Enclosures.

a) Wolf control may be conducted within a registered deer farm enclosure using the guidelines listed above if the fence is in compliance with s. 90.20 or 90.21, Stats., minimum standards. If the enclosure contains farm-raised white-tailed deer, the owner shall also hold a valid DNR fence inspection certificate for the fence. Wolf control may be conducted within a hound dog training enclosure which meets the minimum requirements of NR 17.045, Wis. Adm. Code and the owner holds a valid permit for the enclosure.
   Note: ATCP 10.01(62) defines "Livestock" to include farm-raised deer and farm-raised game birds (domestic animals)
b) Normally, trapping would only be allowed within the fenced area of the deer farm or hound dog training enclosure, unless unusual circumstances make it necessary to trap up to 100 yards beyond the fence. Trapping outside fence areas would only be considered following additional consultation among WS, DNR, and adjacent landowners.
c) Wolf control would not normally be conducted for depredation on free roaming game on a licensed bird hunting preserve or wild fur farm. A wild fur farm license is not

issued for enclosed lands, and all fur-bearing animals on a licensed wild fur farm are considered free-roaming wild animals until they have been trapped by the licensee.

d) Wolf control for depredation on other captive wild animals which are all required to be maintained within enclosures to prevent the animals escape, and other animals from entering, should be handled in the same manner as a depredation which occurs on livestock or other domestic animals.

11) Information Sharing-----

a) DNR will share radio locations of wolves with USDA-WS
b) DNR will notify landowners and publish information of wolf depredation problems through local news releases when appropriate.
c) DNR will share information with tribes on wolves that travel onto Indian reservation lands.
d) USDA-WS will turn all wolves euthanized at depredation sites over to the Wisconsin DNR or Tribes for final designation. Wolf carcasses will be used for research, education, and cultural purposes.
e) DNR will develop publications and educational materials on wolf depredation focused toward specific organizations or groups most affected by wolf depredation.
f) DNR will provide press releases to explain lethal and non-lethal forms of control.
g) DNR will provide timely response to depredations with news releases.
h) DNR will cooperate with USDA-WS and other organizations to test and research nonlethal methods of control, including methods of exclusion and aversive conditioning; results of such research will be published in scientific reports and in popular media.
i) DNR will cooperate with USDA-WS and others to conduct cooperative research on wolf/livestock relationships and will attempt to determine means of preventing wolf depredation on pets and livestock and share this information with affected landowners and the public.
j) DNR will provide GLIFWC and Tribes, when appropriate, information pertaining to verified wolf complaints and wolf complaint project reports.

B. Landowner Reactive Controls

The goal of landowner reactive controls is to allow people to defend their domestic animals on their land at the time of a wolf attack.

1) Wolves in the act of attacking domestic animals

NR 10.02(1)(b)

On private land, the landowner, lessee or occupant of the land may shoot and kill any gray wolf in the act of killing, wounding or biting a domestic animal. Shootings shall be reported within 24 hours to a department conservation warden. The carcass of the wolf shall be turned over to the department.

II. PROACTIVE DEPREDATION CONTROLS

A. Government Proactive Depredation Controls

The goal of proactive control by government agents would be to reduce the risk of depredation to domestic animals in areas where previous depredations have been verified by lowering the abundance of wolf packs or wolf groups that have been involved in these depredations.

1) **Use of Aversive Conditioning or Other Non-Lethal Methods----**Where appropriate, WS will offer suitable non-lethal alternatives (See I,A,1 above

2) **Wolf population levels that would allow proactive controls.**

a.) In Zone 4 proactive controls can be considered if the statewide wolf population exceeds 250 outside of Indian reservations.

b.) In Zones 1-3, proactive controls can be considered if the statewide wolf population exceeds 350 outside of Indian reservations.

3) **Determination of maximum take for proactive controls.**

a.) In Zone 4 no maximum take will be set as long as the state wolf population exceeds 250 wolves outside of Indian reservations.

b.) In Zones 1-3, maximum take would be the amount of wolves above the population goal of 350 wolves outside of Indian reservations. For example in winter 2006-2007, a minimum of 540 wolves were counted statewide in Wisconsin, and 12 wolves lived on reservations, thus the minimum outside reservations was 528 wolves. Thus the wolf population above the management goal of 350 wolves outside reservations was a minimum of 178 wolves, and this would be the **maximum take for proactive controls** by government controls and landowner permits from 2007 through spring 2008. In spring 2008, a new survey would completed and a new maximum take would be set for the next 12 month period. If other mortality factors become more important to wolves in the future, these may be incorporated into designation of maximum take by the wolf science committee.

4) **Designation of Proactive Control areas**

a.) Control areas will be designated by USDA-WS district supervisors, DNR wolf program coordinator, local DNR wildlife biologist, GLIFWC biologist (if in Chippewa ceded territory), and tribal biologists if within 6 miles or other negotiated buffer area around recognized Indian reservations.

b.) Control areas would have at least one chronic farm, or two or more farms that had wolf depredations within the last 2 years within the same pack area.

c.) Boundaries of proactive control areas would be determined, using roads, waterways, natural landscape features, and state boundary to designate the control area where a problem pack is assumed to roam based on radio tracking, track surveys, and/or local reports of wolf observations.

d.) Control areas could consist of a mixture of public and private lands, although generally large blocks of public lands would be avoided as would state parks, state forests, national parks, and wildlife refuges. Permission would be obtained

on all lands for controlling wolves.

e.) Control areas could be established within any incorporated village or city, if wolves establish in these areas regardless of depredation history.

5) Control Methods for Proactive Controls

a.) Government agents with USDA-WS and WDNR would control wolves through shooting, trapping, and cable restraints.

b.) Landowners, their agents or persons designated by the landowner as provided under s. NR 12.10(3)(a), Wis. Adm. Code, in designated control areas could be issued permits to shoot or trap wolves regardless of depredation history, if they have domestic animals at risk of wolf attacks, following guidelines listed above under B.

6) Duration of Proactive Controls

a.) Proactive control actions may continue until a problem wolf pack appears to be eliminated or the maximum take for the state has been achieved.

b.) All proactive control areas will be established and re-examined annually after new population counts have been completed.

B. Landowner Proactive Controls.

The goal of proactive control by landowner permits would be to reduce the risk of depredation to domestic animals in areas where previous depredations have been verified.

1) **Landowner wolf control by permit.**

a.) DNR wildlife biologist can issue permits for up to 90 days using form 2300-109 (s. NR12.10, Wis. Adm. Code and s. 29.885, Stats.) if one of the following exists:

i.) at least one verified depredation has occurred within the last 2 years on owned or leased land.

ii.) a verified depredation has occurred within 1 mile of the applicant's property with vulnerable animals within the current calendar year.

iii.) a landowner's property exists within a Proactive Control Area created by DNR (II, A, 4 above).

b.) The permit may allow the taking of up to as many wolves as are known to exist in the local wolf pack.

c.) Wolves can be shot with firearms that are lawful for hunting big game in Wisconsin.

d.) Trapping may be allowed by the landowner if it does not interfere with government trapping.

e.) Wolves can only be shot or trapped on land under the control of the landowner occupant or lessee of the land.

f.) In areas where it is not possible to discharge firearms, landowners may be issued non-lethal tools to scare off wolves.

g.) All wolves trapped, shot, or injured must be reported to the local WDNR

conservation warden, wildlife biologist or Mammalian Ecologist within 24 hours of shooting or capture.

h.) No wolves may be transported dead or alive to other locations.

i.) All wolves killed under the permit shall be turned over to the WDNR as required in the permit.

j.) Permits can be renewed for additional periods, and additional take can be increased if wolf problems persist.

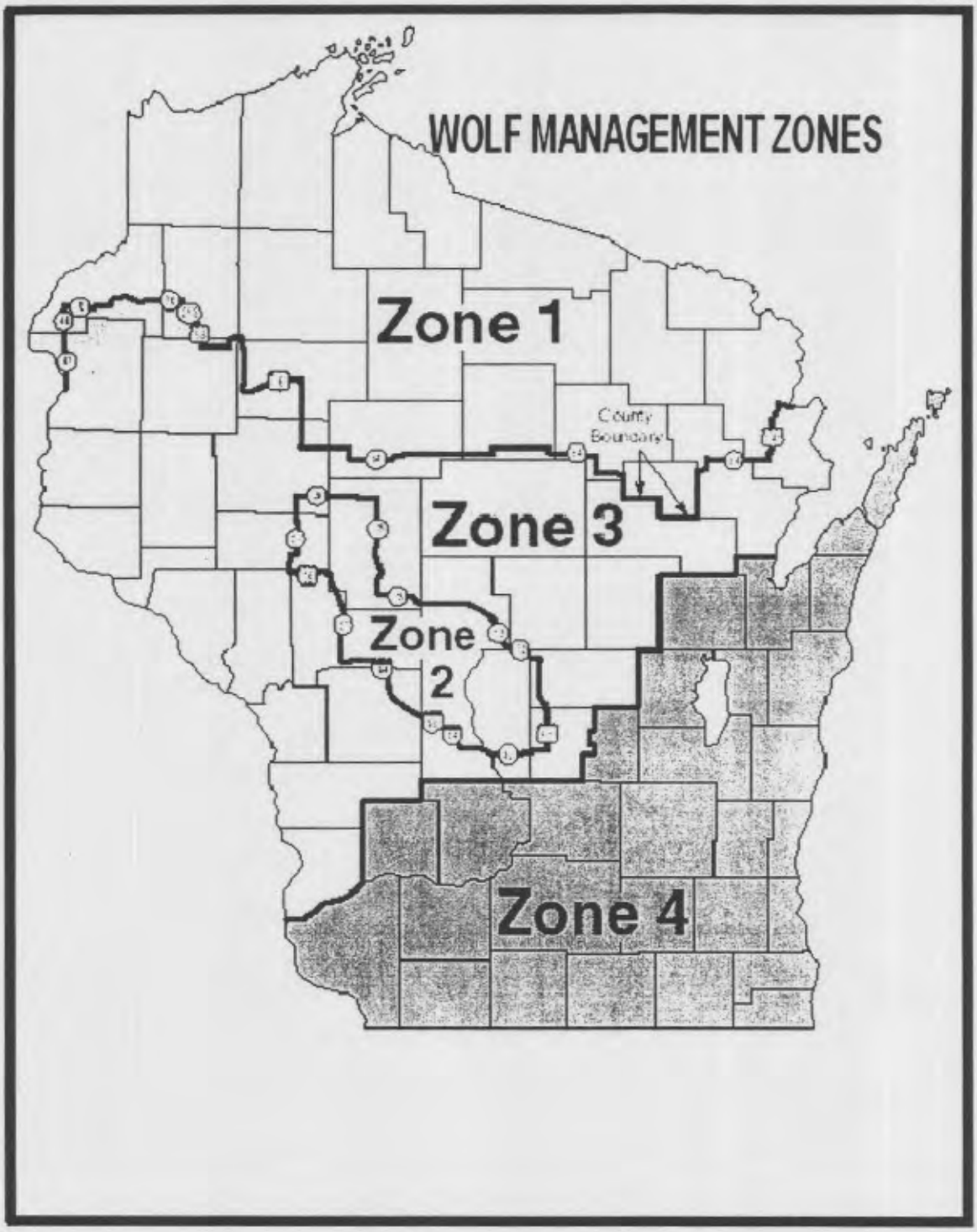
k.) DNR reserves the right to rescind permits at any time.

l.) If the maximum take is reached in the state, all permits will be rescinded.

m.) WDNR may add additional conditions as necessary.

n.) Copies of all permits will be sent to the DNR wolf program coordinator and USDA-WS

o.) All other Wisconsin hunting and trapping regulations must be followed.


WOLF MANAGEMENT ZONES
Zone 1
County Boundary
Zone 3
Zone 2
Zone 4