

# NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

**SUBJECT:** Annual Update on Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan

**FOR:** JUNE 2009 BOARD MEETING

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Adrian Wydeven

**SUMMARY:**

The Natural Resources Board approved the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan in October 1999, and approved an addendum/update to the plan in 2006 and 2007. The Board has asked for annual updates.

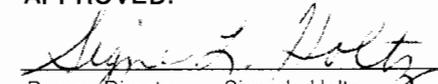
Adrian Wydeven, Endangered Resources Mammal Ecologist, will present a goal and outline for a new wolf management plan and provide updates on population growth, management plan implementation, development of a framework for a public harvest in the event that a wolf harvest is eventually authorized, depredation management, and the federal status of the wolf.

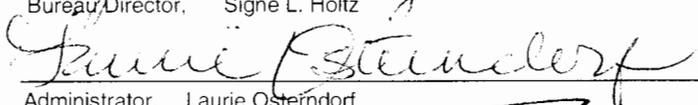
**RECOMMENDATION:** This item is informational; no action needed.

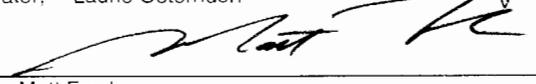
**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:**

- |    |                                     |   |     |                                     |          |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|-----|-------------------------------------|----------|
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required                              | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Attached |
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Attached |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Background Memo                                       | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

**APPROVED:**

  
 Bureau Director, Signe L. Holtz

  
 Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf

  
 Secretary, Matt Frank

6/8/09  
Date

6/8/09  
Date

6-8-09  
Date

cc: Laurie J. Ross - AD/8  
 Adrian Wydeven - Park Falls

S. Holtz - ER/6  
 R. Jurewicz - ER/6

DATE: May 14, 2009

FILE REF: 1700

TO: Natural Resource Board

FROM: Matt Frank 

SUBJECT: Annual Update on Wisconsin Wolf Plan

The Natural Resources Board initially approved the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan in October 1999, and approved an addendum/update to the plan in both 2006 and 2007. At the Board's 2008 update on Wolf Management in Wisconsin, the Department indicated that we were beginning the preliminary work on a new 10 year Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan. We will present a goal and outline for a new wolf management plan and provide updates on population growth, management plan implementation, development of a framework for a public harvest in the event that a wolf harvest is eventually authorized, depredation management, and the federal status of the wolf.

**Develop a goal and outline for a new wolf plan. (See attachment 1.)** The proposed outline of the new Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan is attached along with a goal statement for the plan.

**2008-09 winter wolf count.** Results of the annual survey of the Wisconsin wolf population will be presented. Both the numerical growth and the geographic spread of the population will be discussed.

**Federal delisting.** On March 12, 2007 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services delisted the wolf in a population segment that includes Wisconsin. A coalition of conservation and animal welfare organizations filed a suit in the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., challenging this action. The plaintiffs, The Humane Society of the United States, Help Our Wolves Live and the Animal Protection Institute, won the suit, and on September 29, 2008 wolves were once again listed as an endangered species in Michigan and Wisconsin and as a threatened species in Minnesota. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service addressed the concerns of the Federal court in a re-publication of the proposed rule in the Federal Register and de-listed wolves in the Upper Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment effective May 4, 2009. The groups that filed the original suit have filed notice of intent to sue on this delisting rule.

**WI Wolf Management Plan Implementation.** Following Federal Delisting, the Department's guidelines for dealing with wolf depredation were in effect during the periods when wolves were federally de-listed: March 12, 2007 to September 29, 2008 and from May 4, 2009 to the present. Information on how these guidelines are being implemented will be presented.

**Framework for a potential public wolf harvest.** As requested by the Conservation Congress and directed by the board at the 2008 wolf update, the management plan under development will include a framework for the administration of a public wolf harvest as well as the criteria and circumstances that would guide future decision-making about a public hunt. To begin the dialogue, the Wolf Science Committee, including Department staff from a variety of disciplines as well as partners in other government agencies, identified the potential elements of a framework for a public wolf harvest. The framework will include legal considerations as well as social and biological criteria. There are two major legal steps necessary to implement a public harvest. The first step is that a state law must be passed and signed to give the Department the authority to promulgate rules regarding the regulated harvest of wolves. The second step is the development of administrative rules by the Department that would ensure sound management of any public wolf harvest.



## **ATTACHMENT 1.**

### **Wisconsin Wolf Plan 2010, General Outline**

Goal: To maintain a viable gray wolf population that provides ecological benefits to forest ecosystems, while minimizing conflicts with humans and their domestic animals.

- I. Executive Summary
- II. General Introduction
- III. Wolf biology background and ecological, sociological, agricultural and cultural benefits and costs.
- IV. History of wolf management.
- V. Management Strategies
  1. Population management & zone system (includes description of possible public harvest)
  2. Wolf population monitoring & health management
  3. Depredation management
  4. Habitat management
  5. Public education and outreach, and volunteer programs
  6. Law enforcement and regulations
  7. Captive wolves and wolf-dog hybrids
  8. Wolf specimen management
  9. Research needs
  10. Interagency cooperation and program guidance.

VI. Wolf Management Budget

VII Regional Wolf Management and Comparisons among Wisconsin, Michigan & Minnesota.

VIII Literature Cited

IX Appendices

1. Wolf Impact on Livestock & Depredation history 1976-2008, Willging et al.
2. Population viability analysis and affects of different levels of exploitations, Van Deelen et al.
3. GIS Analysis of wolf habitat, Wydeven et al.
4. Wolf health monitoring and mortality factors, Langenberg et al.
5. Wolf impact on deer and ecosystems, Van Deelen et al.
6. Public attitude surveys, Naughton et al.
7. Wolf –dog hybrid incident cases
8. Citizen involvement in plan development and alternatives considered,