



Pack Update

Over the Victoria Day long weekend in May, we celebrated our 5th Anniversary of being open to the public. The Open House happened at our wolf centre in Panorama Mountain Village, where we hosted over 400 people who came to see and learn about wolves. Many thanks to Wildsight and Jumbo Wild, who provided valuable info and astonishing facts about why we should fight to keep the European ski hill developers away from Jumbo Valley. SAY NO TO JUMBO! A big thank you to the folk band who regaled us with their wonderful music. And thanks to Lisa Flaman for the information about the pine beetle and its impact on our forest ecosystems.

The six wolves are all healthy and doing well. This spring we said goodbye to Emma, our oldest Karelian Bear Dog, who passed away peacefully at the ripe old age of eighteen.

IF YOU LOVE ROBERT BATEMAN, then be sure to bid on a beautiful, limited edition print of a wolf, generously donated by Mr. Bateman himself. Proceeds from the silent auction will be going towards the wolves. Visit our website for viewing the print, and contact us if you wish to place your bid before July 31, 2007.

Help Us Change the Law

Our struggle to use Karelian Bear Dogs in British Columbia is full gear. The BC Wildlife Act, Section 78, states “a person commits an offence if the person causes or allows a dog to hunt or pursue wildlife or an endangered species or threatened species” except in accordance with hunting regulations (Government of British Columbia 1996). What we are looking for is an exemption to section 78, not just for hunters, but also for qualified individuals to use Karelian Bear Dogs to teach “problem” animals to stay away from human populated areas.

We have written many letters, made many

phone calls, collected over 5,000 signatures on a petition, and ... for the greater part of June 2007, we had a station set up in the gift shop at our Golden location for the public to show their support and to provide additional comments that we sent to our Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Barry Penner, encouraging him to make the appropriate amendment to section 78. This really is the year to make some noise, as this is the first time in 10 years that the government is looking at its Wildlife Act, and the first time in 25 years that any major changes will be considered.

Conservation Issues

WOLVES IN CANADA
(excerpt from wolfsongalaska.org)

Currently an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 wolves inhabit Canada, the second-largest population in the world after the former Soviet Union. Historically, wolves inhabited all regions of Canada, from the shores of the Great Lakes to the northern tip of Ellesmere Island, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, Anticosti Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Today, Canadian wolves occupy about 85% of their original range, and although wolf populations may be fluctuating in local areas, overall the number of wolves is considered stable. By comparison, there are about 10,000 wolves in the U.S. (more than half of which are in Alaska) and they occupy only a tiny fraction - about 5% - of their original range. In Canada, wolves may be legally hunted virtually everywhere except inside national/provincial park boundaries. Wolves in the U.S. have protected status as an endangered or threatened species everywhere except Alaska (BUT they are in danger of losing protected status in the US rockies... read “A Closer Look”, next column).

WOLVES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
(excerpt from northwestwildlife.com)

Between 1890 – 1955, wolf bounties were offered

by the government to lower population numbers (over 25,000 were paid). In 1966, the era of bounties ended, but the wolf was designated as a big game animal, which meant it could be legally hunted. Wolves are still considered “vermin” in many of our provinces and territories.

Today, hunting regulations in BC are fairly lax. Three wolves can be killed per person per year, but only voluntary reporting of kills is required, making enforcement virtually impossible. Wolves are the only large game animal in BC for which a species tag is not required; nothing beyond a hunting license is necessary. Wolf hunting season is usually from early fall to late spring.

In 1976, the wolf was designated a "fur-bearing animal", and approximately 100 wolves are trapped in BC every year (3000 in Canada). A wolf pelt is currently valued at approximately \$195, but may fetch much more.

Compound 1080 is a synthetic organoflourine compound used to kill "problem" wolves in BC and Alberta. This poison is banned in Mexico and the U.S. The BC government is licensed to use 1/4 ounce annually, or enough to kill 800 canines through primary poisonings. It is estimated that 15% of the baits are taken by non-target animals.

Conservation Priorities

1. A re-evaluation of hunting and poisoning regulations in BC
2. Accurate wolf population inventories
3. Buffer zone protection around the National Parks in the Yellowstone to Yukon corridor

YOUR VOICE COUNTS. If you choose to be pro-active in the conservation of wolves, please use the attached sample letter to compose a message for the Canadian government.



A Closer Look:

WOLVES IN THE NORTHERN U.S. ROCKIES (excerpt from defenders.org)

What good are wolves?

* Economy benefits: a 2006 study determined that tourists wanting to view wolves have brought \$35 million annually into the northern Rockies regional economy.

* Nature benefits: wolves prefer the old, young, weak and sick animals—not the large, healthy animals that human hunters prefer. This natural culling is good for the overall health of the herd. Also, wolves make prey like elk avoid open meadows and valley bottoms, which allows willows and aspens to grow more thickly. This makes great songbird habitat and provides trees and sticks for beaver dams, which create homes for fish.

Do wolves affect the availability of game species for hunters?

* In Idaho, the hunter harvest success rate has consistently remained above 20%, even as wolf populations have been steadily increasing, according to Idaho Department of Fish and Game. There are more than 100,000 elk in Idaho.

* According to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the state's elk numbers remain about 10% above its population objectives, proving that wolves are not affecting elk availability for hunters.

Do wolves affect ranchers' livestock?

* According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, wolves are responsible for less than 1% of all livestock losses in the northern Rockies. Weather, disease, coyotes, and even pet dogs take more livestock than wolves do.

* For example, of the 66,000 sheep and lamb losses that occurred in Montana in 2000, wolves were responsible for just 7 confirmed losses.

* For example, of the 105,000 cows and calf losses in Idaho in 2005, only 20 of these losses were wolf-related. Wolves are responsible for less than 0.2% of all cattle losses in Idaho.

Are ranchers compensated for livestock losses related to wolves?

* Defenders of Wildlife (www.defenders.org) reimburses ranchers in the Northern Rockies 100% of the market value for livestock depredations confirmed to be caused by wolves. Defenders also pays 50% of the market value for "probable" losses to wolves.

* Since 1987, Defenders has paid out more than \$700,000 to ranchers in the Northern Rockies (since the compensation program began).

URGE IDAHO, MONTANA, & IDAHO TO KEEP WOLVES PROTECTED! For more information about the pending de-listing of Idaho and Wyoming wolves, and about the plight of Alaska's wolves visit :

www.defenders.org/wildlife/new/wolves.html



Thanks to all who have emailed or mailed us their slogan ideas! We got some great ones... and this fall we will choose one to print, so keep them coming! (see below for more info)



Bumper stickers.... Travel mugs.... We need a catchy phrase that signals the need to protect wolves in Canada. You know what we are all about.... got any ideas? If your slogan is used, you will win a NLW ballcap, and know that people are listening to your message.

You Should Read...

While enjoying those long and lazy summer days, crack open "Of Wolves & Men" by Barry Lopez.

Become A Sponsor

Help us help wolves! You can adopt a wolf individual from our pack, and receive updates about your wolf... or you can become a pack member and receive general updates about the pack and the wolf centres. Your generosity helps with the huge responsibility of feeding and caring for our wolf pack, putting together our Edu-kit, as well as helping us to reach our goals at each facility to promote wolf awareness, help to educate people, and help change legislation to protect our wilderness.

Adopt A Wolf \$ 75

Pack Membership

\$250 = Wolf Pack

\$100 = Alpha Member

\$ 50 = Beta Member

\$ 20 = Puppy Member

Check out our website www.northernlightswildlife.com for pictures and info about the individual wolves.

WE ACCEPT MEAT DONATIONS!

If you bring us 10lb of meat or more, your admission to our interpretive centre is free! If you are "local" and know of any friends or neighbours with freezer burnt meat that would otherwise go to waste, collect it, call us, and we will pick up!

PELTS & SKULLS

We are looking for donations of wolf or bear pelts and skulls for putting together Edu-kits for our school programs. Pelts and skulls are wonderful hands-on tools for teaching kids about scary predators and other "untouchables". Do you know any hunters or trappers? Let us know!



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CHASING WILDLIFE WITH DOGS

SAMPLE LETTER WITH MAJOR POINTS

Dear [government official's name],

Please see reverse for names and addresses!

We understand that the Ministry of Environment is reviewing the Wildlife Act, with the intent of introducing revisions in the legislature in 2008. We strongly encourage you to allow Conservation Officers (CO) in British Columbia (BC) to use trained dogs to chase wildlife away from human areas, which entails an amendment to Section 78.

Section 78 of the BC Wildlife Act states that "a person commits an offence if the person causes or allows a dog to hunt or pursue wildlife or an endangered species or threatened species" *except in accordance with hunting regulations* (Government of British Columbia 1996).

Bear hunting with dogs is allowed in only two provinces in Canada: Ontario and BC. BC hunting regulations for 2005-2006 permit the use of dogs for hunting all game, in many cases off-leash, during hunting seasons (Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection 2005, p. 17, under Section A: "...Unleashed dogs may be used to hunt small game, lynx, bobcat, grizzly bear, black bear or cougar").

So... pursuing bears with dogs for the purposes of conservation is NOT permitted, although off-leash chases by hunters IS permitted. Since an exception has been made for hunting, we are asking for another exception to be made for conservation.

In the fall of 2006, Norm McDonald, our MLA, presented a petition on our behalf. The petition called for legalizing the use of trained Karelian Bear Dogs by COs in BC through an amendment to Section 78 of the Wildlife Act.

The use of Karelian Bear Dogs as a tool by COs may reduce the appalling destruction of close to 1,000 bears each year in this province. Some bears are translocated - a costly and unsuccessful solution. By the Ministry's own admission, "The use of translocation of animals as a response to wildlife conflicts has proven to be ineffective". Most bears are killed - the cheapest and easiest solution.

There are many examples of the success in using trained dogs to "teach" or "condition" bears and other wildlife. This method has been used to manage human/wildlife conflict for over a decade in places like: Alberta, Utah, Montana, Nevada and California.

In its Human-Wildlife Conflict Prevention Strategy, the Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection promises to "develop and facilitate implementation of innovative solutions to prevent human-wildlife conflicts," and to "change legislation as needed" to support such solutions (2003, p. 16). The Bear Shepherding program provides the government with an opportunity to uphold these promises.

Please add your support to our petition for the amendment to Section 78 of the BC Wildlife Act.

Sincerely,
Your Name

Tips from the David Suzuki Foundation about contacting your political representatives

One letter represents more than 1,000 opinions at the federal level. The more time and thought put into the communication, the greater your opinion is valued.

- Letters are better mailed than faxed
- Faxes are better than e-mail
- Writing is generally better than phoning
- Something is better than nothing!

TIPS!!!

- You do not need a long, detailed letter
- You do not have to be an expert
- Attach an article or short summary of a study that makes your point
- Request a specific action as well as expressing a concern
- Point out that the priorities the politician has expressed are not at odds with protecting the environment

BUFFER ZONES AROUND NATIONAL PARKS to protect wolves

BACKGROUND & MAJOR POINTS

Wolves are ecologically important to our wilderness as a top predator and keystone species. Their presence and numbers indicate intact wilderness and a healthy ecosystem. Where wolves have decreased in numbers, biodiversity is also greatly decreased.

Currently, wolves are protected within the boundaries of National Parks. Within the boundaries wolves suffer high mortality rates due to collisions with vehicles and trains, as well as disturbance from human activities and facilities. Outside of the Park, wolves face the extra risks of hunting, trapping, and poisoning. Only 5 % of wolves in the Central Rockies die of natural causes; and have less than 1% chance of surviving 10 years². Most Park wolves are killed by people.

Due to a limited amount of habitat suited for prey along the valley bottoms, wolves in the Rockies require vast territories. Wolves will ALWAYS be partially dependent upon adjacent provincial lands used by landowners, recreationists, etc.

Cover these major points in your correspondence:

- The wolf population in the Central Rocky Mountains is among the lowest density of wolves in the world
- Our protected areas within the Rockies are not big enough to maintain a healthy population of wolves
- The territory of every wolf pack in the National Parks extends OUTSIDE of the protected areas
- Human-caused mortality is the biggest threat to long-term health of wolf populations in the Central Rocky Mountains

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Mr. _____

As the number of grey wolves declines in the Central Rockies, a cascade effect is being observed. Small mammals, fish, insects, birds, amphibians, ungulates, tree species and vegetation all suffer¹. As a keystone species, wolves maintain the balance and diversity within our natural ecosystems.

Wolves are protected within our National Parks, but their total annual mortality exceeds their total annual gain. Over 4 years (winter 1999-spring 2004), 13 adult wolves died WITHIN the boundaries of Banff National Park, which greatly exceeds a sustainable rate of loss². A wolf pack living within Kootenay National Park requires a territory of 2800 km² because only ¼ of the valley is suitable for prey³. Wolves collared in Kootenay National Park travel as far as 250 km outside of Park boundaries³. Even with sufficient prey and habitat within a park, the number of wolves declines as they travel outside the boundaries; hunting and trapping are major contributors. A year-round ban on hunting/trapping in the areas surrounding National Parks will likely reduce the annual mortality rate of wolves, keeping their population stable.

Grey wolves are an endangered species worldwide. It is unacceptable for your government to sit by and watch these top predators disappear. **A healthy wilderness depends on wolves.** We need to take measures to save the wolves in the Central Rocky Mountain regions of Canada.

Wilderness tourism can mean long-term financial benefits for our country; as an example, the reintroduced wolves of the Greater Yellowstone area benefits the U.S. Northern Rockies' economy to the tune of **\$35-million tourist dollars** annually⁴. We can improve our conservation efforts and image, attracting millions, by protecting the long-term health of our wilderness. **It is time for action**, not further studies. I look forward to your response on creating a 50 km buffer zone around protected areas where wolves cannot be hunted.

Yours truly,
(Your Name)

1. Hebblewhite et al., "Human Activity mediates a Trophic Cascade caused by Wolves," Ecology 86 (8), August 2005
2. Banff National Park of Canada, HJD 7/30/2004
3. Kootenay National Park of Canada, Natural Wonders and Cultural Treasures, accessed June 2007
4. Defenders of Wildlife (defenders.org), 2006 statistics, accessed June 2007

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