

**Summary of Oct. 25 Public Wolf Forum, Kalispell, MT**  
**By Fred Hodgeboom, President MFMU**

Montanans For Multiple Use sponsored a public forum on the wolf issue in Montana to raise public awareness, identify and prioritize solutions, and promote networking of folks who want to be informed and help implement solutions. Nearly two hundred people were in attendance.

First, the meeting was opened by MFMU President Fred Hodgeboom welcoming people to MFMU's annual meeting and conducted audience participation in the Pledge of Allegiance. MFMU members were asked for nominations for MFMU Board of Directors and then drawings were held for winners of the annual MFMU raffle. Larry Anderson, from Representative Denny Rehberg's staff drew the winning names for MFMU Treasurer, Roleen Anderson. Two prize winners were in attendance.

The evening program started with a panel of experts who have been involved in the wolf issue a long time presented their views on the current situation and what should be done about it.

Kirk Murphy, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) Director of Western Operations summarized the RMEF position.

“The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation strongly supports state management of wolves. We fully embrace the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which holds that fish and wildlife belong to all citizens and are to be scientifically managed through hunting and other means so thriving populations can be sustained forever. For more than a century, this model has engaged the power and wisdom of America's hunters to provide the financial backbone and spirited manpower that fuels our science-based system of wildlife management. Along the way, it has maintained an unrivaled democracy of hunting and other recreational opportunities across an incredible expanse of public land. And it has restored dozens of species from near-extinction to abundance.

The wolf hunts that took place last year in Idaho and Montana were a landmark and long overdue step. They proved that the North American Model—allowing hunters to actively engage in stewardship and population management—can and will work with wolves just as it does with scores of other species.

The RMEF fiercely opposes environmental and animal rights groups that once advocated for 300 wolves in the northern Rockies and have now moved the goal line to 3,000 wolves. It's not honest. It's not balanced. And it's not fair to the many other species that share the region's limited wild country, or the ranchers, hunters and state wildlife agencies who are directly impacted by wolves.

Our bottom line: by every standard, wolves are recovered. More than recovered. The pendulum has swung too far. The North American Model works for mountain lions, black bears and every other species of big game. Let it work for wolves. Now!”

RMEF also issued an alert that while it seems that MT Fish Wildlife and Parks is working in the interest of their clients by appealing Judge Malloy's edict to continue

Federal listing of wolves as “endangered”, FWP is secretly “negotiating a settlement with the 13 environmental and animal rights groups who sued”. REMF warned of the dangerous precedent for other states and the weakening of the state’s authority to manage wildlife populations if FWP agrees to a “settlement” with such special interests groups behind closed doors where other stakeholders such as sportsmen, farmers, ranchers are excluded.

“We feel that a Congressional solution is the best way to ensure management of wolves by the State of Montana and all other states across the country and puts an end to the one-sided litigation. We support the bi-partisan efforts in the US House of Representatives, H.R. 6028 co-sponsored by Congressman Chet Edwards (D-Texas) and Congressman Denny Rehberg (R-Mont.), which provides a common-sense approach to this issue. We also support a version of the House bill that has been introduced in the U.S. Senate, S.B. 3919.”

“It is time that the real science and true state management process determine how all wildlife is managed in this country.”

Larry Anderson, US Representative Denny Rehberg’s Field Representative summarized Denny’s efforts to restore control of wolves to States.

“It’s clear that the current regulatory framework just isn’t getting the job done. U.S. District Court Judge Donald Molloy’s early August, 2010, decision effectively put the gray wolf back on the Endangered Species List – despite the fact that, by all measures, it is no longer endangered. That’s why it was originally removed from the Endangered Species List based on hard science in the waning days of the Bush Administration, a decision which was also backed by the Obama Administration. We had made progress, but Judge Molloy’s decision put us back where we started. Montanans are paying the price for ongoing federal bungling. That’s why Denny has begun the process of drafting a legislative solution to be written with public input.”

Larry asked the audience to submit ideas and comments along with his notes on ideas at this meeting that he would convey to Congressman Rehberg.

MT Senator Greg Hinkle provided the audience an overview of his extensive study and involvement with the wolf issue. He has followed the wolf listing and how the environmental groups have litigated to increase the number of wolves needed to be a “recovered population” over that original specified in the USFWS Recovery Plan. Senator Hinkle emphasized that the FWP wolf numbers are minimums taken in the winter. He read from the court record a 2008 report of Dr. David Mech, one of the nation’s foremost wolf biologist, “In any case the number of wolves projected to be killed under state management should not jeopardize the viability of the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population. Every year most wolf populations almost double in the spring through the birth of pups. For example in May of 2008 there will not be 1500 wolves but 3000.” So in 2010 Judge Malloy had in front of him expert testimony that wolf numbers will far exceed even the new minimum numbers demanded by Defenders of Wildlife and co-plaintiffs when he ruled to keep wolf listed as “endangered”. Due to the reproductive capability of wolves at least 28% to 50% of a wolf population must be

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killed by humans per year, on top of natural mortality to even hold a population stationary. Senator Hinkle believes Judge Malloy ignored the best science available.

Time did not permit Senator Hinkle to review his special expertise in the diseases and significant human health risks known to be carried by the wolves now in Montana, and he believes that issue is being minimized and suppressed by MT Fish Wildlife and Parks along with the USFWS.

What really concerned Senator Hinkle was how his research turned up the fact that MT Fish Wildlife and Parks is apparently a partner in the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) wilderness scheme aimed at moving private landowners off the landscape into cities . He displayed an FWP bookmark he picked up at the library that displayed the Y2Y logo. As he researched Y2Y he discovered that Y2Y, “neither endorses, nor condones the hunting of carnivore species such a grizzly bears, black bears, wolves, and cougars.” So we have FWP using sportsman’s money to promote anti-hunting Y2Y along with groups such as Defenders of Wildlife, and Friends of Scotsman’s peak, to name only a few. Y2Y is a project under the Wildlands Network. The Wildlands network is the organization that targeted the gray wolf as a key animal to bring their plan about. The Wildlands Network funneled big money into implementing the transplant of Canadian wolves (a larger sub-species of wolf than the native gray wolf). Senator Hinkle believes the Canadian variety of wolves should be classified as an “invasive species” in violation of Montana law.

Senator Hinkle believes the best solution is passing Senator Joe Balyeat’s bill, SB183, drafted for the 2009 Legislature, but was killed in committee with the help of some Republicans. It is titled, “An Act Revising the State Wolf Policy, Creating the Montana Wolf Recovery Act, Providing Legislative Findings, Asserting States Rights and Challenging Federal Authority, Voiding the Montana Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, Voiding the Interagency Wolf Mgt. Agreement, Establishing Conditions for Future Management Plans and Agreements, Allowing Lethal Action Against Wolves, Defining Additional Duties for the Legislative Auditor and Attorney General, Establishing Liability and Penalties for Injury or Death of a Human Because of a Wolf Attack.”

Hinkle recommends people read “Wolves of Russia” by Will Graves, former NSA Agent who lived in the Soviet Union if there is any doubt about probability of wolves attacking humans in the US.

Senator Hinkle recommends everyone who wants something done about wolf control to come to Helena and lobby for Sen. Balyeat’s bill passage when it comes up (the Bill will likely have a new number in 2011).

Senator Bruce Tutvedt has a long history of involvement with the wolf issue beginning with the first discussions with federal Biologist Ed Bangs regarding grey wolf “re-introduction”. Senator Tutvedt helped write the first Montana Wolf Management Plan and worked to put sideboards on it. He pointed out how Defenders of Wildlife ignore Montana sentiment because they have a National Lobby that wants wolves regardless of local adverse effects. He told how livestock and other interest negotiated in good faith to come to an agreement on the original wolf plan that called for 10 pair minimum and 15 average breeding pair for recovery target. Tutvedt predicted that Defenders would

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renege on the agreement and renege on their depredation compensation program as they have already done.

Senator Tutvedt agrees with Congressman Rehberg who said, “It will be a political decision”. Their science says one thing. Our science says another, so it is going to be political and politics is the top game to settle the issue.

Senator Tutvedt believes a Federal solution such a Congressman Rehberg’s Wolf Delisting Bill is best, but he knows it is a big hill to climb.

After the panel presentations, the charts on the wall were explained to the audience. One chart was a list of organizations involved in the wolf issue that had websites people could go to for information, sign petitions, and post their information. Any organization had a website that wasn’t already listed was invited to add their website address. MFMU urges everyone to support these organizations and actively participate in their membership and wolf solution projects. Following are the websites including those that were added to the list:

wolfclash.com  
biggameforever.com  
saveelk.com  
mt-sfw.org  
lobowatch.net  
fotnyeh.org  
idahoforwildlife.com  
mtmultipleuse.org  
fwp.mt.gov  
mtunited.org

Other wall charts had lists of actions that were already in the news organized by Executive, Legislative, and Judicial (Court Action) solutions. Jerry O’Neil, MFMU Vice President and candidate for House District 3 was introduced. He is the recorder of solutions to be added to the lists from public comments.

Elected officials and candidates for elected office were asked to introduce themselves and make a statement or ask questions from the panel. Six candidates for MT House of Representatives, one candidate for County Commissioner, and one MT Senate candidate commented.

General participation from the audience was spirited with many questions to panelists and passionate statements about wolf problems and government officials. When the meeting was closed at 9pm there were still folks who wanted to make a statement. Each attendee who registered was given 6 sticker dots for use to distribute their priority for most effective solutions any way they wanted, ranging from all six stickers on the most favored solution to one sticker on six of the top priority.

Following is the final list of wolf problem solutions with the vote ranking noted:

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LEGISLATIVE:

Representative Denny Rehberg’s Bill (Ranked 4<sup>th</sup>)  
Nullify unconstitutional Federal laws at State level (Ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>)  
Pass Senator Joe Balyeat’s bill (SB183 in 2009 legislature (Ranked 5<sup>th</sup>))

Repeal Equal Access to Justice Act  
Require Bonds equal to cost/value of project to be posted when suits are filed on natural resource projects

JUDICIAL (Court Action)

Reclaim Federal land (Eminent Domain condemnation Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>)  
Support MT FWP Appeal of Judge Malloy Edict to keep wolves listed (Ranked 7<sup>th</sup>)

EXECUTIVE

Demand Coordination with Federal Agencies (Ranked 6<sup>th</sup>)  
MT Governor to revoke agreement to act as Federal agent to enforce wolf edicts as Idaho has done (Ranked 8<sup>th</sup>)

CITIZEN ACTION (from public comment)

Shoot On Sight (SOS Ranked 1<sup>st</sup> priority with more than twice the votes of 2<sup>nd</sup> favored Solution)

MFMU comment. Comments from folks attending the Forum indicated a lot of new and beneficial information was shared. The RMEF information on what MT FWP is doing in the lawsuit with no public input doesn't meet MFMU's idea of what that agency should be doing to represent the interest of sportsmen and the future of science based wildlife management at the State level. There were comments from several folks at the meeting that FWP involvement in the lawsuit may have been the underlying reason why FWP would not provide a representative to participate in this forum (they cancelled a week before the meeting and did not provide a replacement for Jim Williams despite many phone calls to Helena office)

Perhaps the most important information came from Senator Hinkle along with several public comments and MFMU displays, is the recognition that, the wolf "recovery" program is just one tentacle of the UN Agenda 21 agenda that all executive agencies of the Federal Government are actively implementing. Wyoming, Montana and Idaho are the center of the Yellowstone to Yukon ([www.y2y.org](http://www.y2y.org)) portion of the Wildlands Project. If all the Federal actions (especially BLM and USFS) over the last 20 years are added together, we see that the Y2Y scheme is being implemented incrementally without Congress' approval on Federal land and by private land takeovers with outright purchase and encumbering "conservation leases." Federal actions include closing roads and trails to motorized public use, more wilderness and "special area" designations, cancellation of grazing

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and mineral leases, lack of any significant timber management, and increased use of wildland fire use (let it burn).

The straw poll on priority solutions was very revealing about the depth of public dissatisfaction with the wolf recovery program. People are so fed up that direct action by citizens was considered the best solution (SOS), followed by strong support to get rid of Federal controls completely (Take back Federal Land and Nullifying

Federal regulations ). These first three priorities garnered 80 % of the vote indicating citizens have little faith that executive and judicial actions effectively protect their quality of life. It is a sad commentary that more than 20 years of “Wolf Recovery” under the US Fish and Wildlife implementation of Endangered Species act inspires so much ill-will among citizen taxpayers.

On October 24, the day before our meeting, the *Missoulian* had a report on a genetic study published in Molecular Ecology, June, 2010 on MT-WY-ID wolf data through 2004 that proves genetic flow is more than adequate and likely has been for five years or more. A key question is why this publicly funded research result was not before Judge Malloy before is August, 2010 “keep the wolves on the endangered species list ruling”? USFWS biologist, Ed Bangs, was part of the study team. If this basic research was available to Judge Malloy, why was it ignored?? More information will be coming out on this turn of events. Given that this information is out in the public domain now, the right thing for Judge Malloy to do is reconsider his August, 2010 ruling, withdraw it, and issue a new decision declaring the wolves recovered.

MFMU will certainly help spread the word when Senator Joe Balyeat’s bill revising Montana Wolf Policy comes up for legislative hearing. The draft of this bill can be seen on internet at <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/2009/billhtml/SB0183.htm>. The draft of this bill will soon be available on the wolf network websites.