

Honorable Idaho State Senate members,

Until today, I have only shared the following story with close family and very few others through the years as this experience has been so harrowing to me regarding a near fateful experience with my 12 year old son and a pack of wolves.

On Christmas break of December 2006, I took my 12 year old son on his first coyote hunt about 20 miles SE of Lewiston, ID.

That morning we climbed into a wonderful tree-stand that was partially enclosed and very comfortable. Soon we started calling for coyotes and within 15 minutes my son spotted a large coyote above and to the left of us standing on a narrow ridge top covered with brush on both sides. My son fired and missed.

After 30 minutes we decided to leave the tree stand as we assumed the rifle shot had spooked the coyote. I made one last rabbit call prior to climbing down the tree stand. As a safety precaution, we removed our ammo from our rifle chambers and I had my son climb down first. Once my son hit the ground he began walking to the west of me across the open meadow to the edge of some very thick brush approximately 50 yards away. I began picking up some empty 7MM STW rifle casings directly under the tree house where the snow hadn't covered them that hunters had left on the ground from the previous fall deer season. As I was picking up the rifle cases I heard the most terrifying and horrible scream come from the direction of my son that sounded like "Help me dad"! I immediately looked up across the small clearing at him and he was completely surrounded by 4 huge wolves! The wolves had encircled him and were within approximately 5 yards of him and they were growling and appeared ready to attack!

I ran at the wolves with all the speed I had and at the same time began screaming for my son chamber his rifle and shoot to scare off the wolves. He appeared to be too terrified to respond coherently to my plea and continued to scream for help. Neither one of us had a round of ammo in the chamber and the wolves were too close to my son for me to shoot and so I shot to the side while running and fortunately this forced the wolves to leave my son and run off at an incredible speed.

Later I pieced together what happened with the fresh wolf tracks in the snow. The wolves weren't afraid of my son's rifle shot as they had crept through some heavy brush that bordered the clearing and had waited in very heavy brush below and to the left of the tree stand where we couldn't see them. The last rabbit call must have brought them right up to us. Then when my son was alone and walking through the clearing, they followed him through the thick brush that paralleled the

clearing and once he approached the end of the clearing the wolves left the thick brush to circle him.

I called F&G and they reported there were no wolves in this area and that they have received over a dozen calls from the locals and that the animals must be wild dogs or hybrids.

Even after 5 years I don't like talking about this experience but due to the urgency of this wolf disaster I felt it was time to share this with our Idaho lawmakers.

My son appears to have completely recovered mentally as he loves to hunt alone now when we are in the woods.

I recognize this experience changed my life and the following quote regarding the negative of this experience has benefited me through the years.

There is a positive that lies in the negative of the traumatic experience. When we are triggered and re-experience the trauma; we are given the change to let light into that room and see the experience emotionally and spiritually. As we embrace our trauma, it becomes our medicine---a positive force. 'Making light of the dark' is the binding force that can help empower us."

Please give H.343 your strongest consideration and recognize the seriousness of the wolf disaster.

Sincerely,

Steve Alder
Lewiston, ID