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From: Toby Bridges <lobowatch@yahoo.com>

To: Governor Brian Schweitzer <governorSchweitzer@mt.gov>

Cc: Congressman Denny Rehberg <denny@dennyrehberg.com>; Senator Jon Tester <senator@tester.senate.gov>; Senator Max Baucus <max@baucus.senate.gov>

Sent: Thu, February 17, 2011 1:38:33 PM

Subject: In Support of Your New Wolf Management Plan

Dear Governor Schweitzer;

I am sure that you have received plenty of congratulations and thanks for taking the stand you took yesterday to save Montana's wildlife resources and ranching economy from the devastation being dealt by wolves.

I want to add my sincere thankfulness for this bold move. This could go down as one of the most significant defining moments in this state's history.

What really must be done now is to get a far more accurate assessment of the wolf numbers in this state. We know it is far more than the **at least 524** number that MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks has continually thrown out. To get any real control on wolf numbers, our state wildlife agency needs to come up with a more realistic "**maximum**" number of the wolves likely in Montana. Is it more like the 1,400+ indicated by the proposed 2010 quota of 186 wolves, which supposedly represented a 13-percent reduction of the state's wolf population?

Now that you've thrown down the gauntlet, it's time for all Montanans who are concerned about this problem to come together, and work toward a solution. And that will call for MT FWP becoming far more honest and open with the people for whom they work.

It became very clear to Montana sportsmen a decade ago that we truly did not have any "**wolf experts**" within FWP, or working with the Northern Rockies Wolf Recovery Project, or at the University of Montana. That was evidenced by how the wolves proved every one of their claims and predictions wrong. The damages they have brought to this state far exceed anything stated in either the Northern Rockies Wolf Recovery Plan or in the 1994 Environmental Impact Statement filed by USFWS.

Following is an e-mail that I have circulated to the media and to several hundred Montana residents this morning. And it will be sent out to the outdoor media and the shooting & hunting industry this evening. It can also be read at <http://wolfhuntupdate.blogspot.com> and this evening it will be published on www.lobowatch.com.

Again, thanks for standing tall for Montana.

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----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Toby Bridges <lobowatch@yahoo.com>

To:

Cc: Sent: Thu, February 17, 2011 10:43:10 AM

Subject: MT Governor Says It's Time To Control Wolves

For those of you who have not seen the letter Governor Brian Schweitzer sent to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar yesterday, I've included it here.

In essence, what Montana's governor has told the federal government is...we've had enough, and now we're going to take care of the wolf problem. His comments on yesterday's evening news (Missoula television stations) were that the **"endangered"** status of wolves north in Interstate 90 no longer holds water, and that livestock producers can shoot and kill wolves that are threatening or harassing livestock...and that Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks game enforcement officers will not arrest them, nor investigate them for killing wolves.

Schweitzer also commented that entire packs of wolves will now be removed from where they are causing excessive losses to elk and other big game herds - namely the Bitterroot Valley.

Sportsmen and ranchers have already voiced strong support of Schweitzer's defiance of federal protection for the wolves of the Northern Rockies. That protection under the Endangered Species Act, has

prevented much needed wolf population control, resulting in a far greater wolf population in this region than originally outlined as a **"recovered population"** in both the Northern Rockies Wolf Recovery Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement filed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1994, the year before the first Canadian gray wolves were released into the Greater Yellowstone Area ecosystem. Those **"official"** documents established the goal as 100 wolves with 10 breeding pairs in each state (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming). The USFWS acknowledges at least 1,700 wolves in the recovery area today. However, all science based on typical wolf reproduction indicates that there are more like 4,000+ in the region - likewise, the high degree of big game losses and escalating livestock depredation also support that the wolf population is far greater than acknowledged by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Pro-wolf advocates are already screaming that Schweitzer's actions are illegal. And they certainly do go against the rulings of U.S. District Court judge Donald Molloy, who has repeatedly decided in favor of environmental groups that have kept the wolf issue tied up in court. And it has been that legal foot dragging that has resulted in serious wildlife and livestock losses. Montana residents have been letting their Governor know exactly how displeased they are about how little has been done to resolve this problem. Those ever growing complaints have pressured Governor Brian Schweitzer to take a stand and claim the state's rights to protect its people, its resources and its economy.

Where this all goes from here is sure to get very interesting. Back in Washington D.C., much is being done at the Congressional level to have the gray wolf removed from the protection of the Endangered Species Act. Don Peay, founder of Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, and Ryan Benson, national director of Big Game Forever, reported to LOBO WATCH this morning (2-17-11) that tremendous progress has been made. The passage of a House Resolution (H.R. 509) and a Senate Bill (S. 249), which would remove federal protection of wolves and return that management back to the individual states, would certainly support Governor Schweitzer's **"new wolf management plan"** to eliminate a large number of wolves in Montana. But, what if that Congressional legislation doesn't pass...will his new plan still be carried out?

Those who are being negatively impacted by wolves, which they claim are neither native or endangered, are more than ready for that plan to go into

action, before another spring calving and fawning season is lost to the wolves.

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February 16, 2011

*The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240*

Dear Secretary Salazar:

I write to you today regarding wolf management in Montana.

While almost everyone acknowledges that the Northern Rocky Mountain gray wolf population is fully recovered, as the Governor of Montana I am profoundly frustrated by the lack of any actual results that recognize Montana's rights and responsibilities to manage its wildlife. Montana has for years done everything that has been asked: adopting a model wolf management plan; enacting enabling legislation; and adopting the necessary implementing rules. Our exemplary efforts have been ignored. I cannot continue to ignore the crying need for workable wolf management while Montana waits, and waits, and waits. Therefore, I am now going to take additional necessary steps to protect the interests of Montana's livestock producers and hunters to the extent that I can within my authorities as governor.

First, for Montana's northwest endangered wolves (north of Interstate 90),

any livestock producers who kill or harass a wolf attacking their livestock will not be prosecuted by Montana game wardens. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) wardens will be directed to exercise their prosecutorial discretion by not investigating or citing anyone protecting their livestock.

Further, I am directing FWP to respond to any livestock depredation by removing whole packs that kill livestock, wherever this may occur.

Still further, to protect the elk herds in Montana's Bitterroot Valley that have been most adversely affected by wolf predation, I am directing FWP, to the extent allowed by the Endangered Species Act, to cull these wolves by whole-pack removal to enable elk herds to recover.

At this point, I can do nothing less and still maintain my commitment as Governor to uphold the rights of our citizens to protect their property and to continue to enjoy Montana's cherished wildlife heritage and traditions.

Sincerely,

*Brian Schweitzer
Governor*