

June 8, 2010

MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Wildlife Bureau
Attn: Public Comment
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Mt 59620-0701

Re: Proposed 2010 Wolf Hunting Season Regulations

The Laurel Rod and Gun Club, representing 450 family memberships, is comprised of sportsmen and women in south central Montana having a common interest in hunting and related outdoor recreation activities and in the continuation of our valued hunting heritage for residents of Montana. The manner in which the Fish, Wildlife, and parks Commission and Department manages the growing wolf population in our state is of vital concern to our membership.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed wolf seasons and quota alternatives. Our comments are a result of review of the Department's proposal document dated May 14, 2010, the "Hunting Season/Quota Change Supporting Information", the Wolf Harvest Model Simulation report and the presentation given at the public meeting in Billings on June 2nd.

We are in full support of implementation of a 2010 wolf hunting season with the season dates and season closure provisions described in the proposal. We also support the addition of an archery only season.

We are concerned with citizen reports and Department observations of heavy mortality among the ungulate populations (primarily moose, elk and deer) in some areas of the state that are attributable to wolf predation. We are also concerned with the increasing level of domestic livestock predation by wolves, affection our neighbors, friends and hunting hosts. A hunter harvest of wolves is absolutely necessary to bring the predator-prey relationship into balance to ensure sustainable opportunities for big game hunting, statewide. The objective of achieving that balance will not be accomplished in one season. However, setting the 2010 harvest quota at the higher level of 216 wolves will be a start and that is the quota alternative that we support.

We note that the Department model simulations for the 216 quota level predicts an after season wolf population of 448, well above the 300 wolf population target level of the wolf recovery Plan, and it predicts 24 breeding pairs remaining which is well above the 15 called for in the Montana Wolf management plan and the 10 minimum specified as the USFWS recovery goal.

The assignment of sub quotas within individual wolf management units must reflect the goal of focusing wolf harvest in areas where ungulate populations and livestock have been impacted most by the wolf predation.

In summary, we particularly support the wolf hunting season objectives sated in the Department's supporting information as follows.

- 1 Reduce wolf impacts on livestock
- 2 Reduce wolf impacts on big game populations.
- 3 Maintain sustainable hunter opportunity for wolves

4 Maintain sustainable hunter opportunity for ungulates (big game animals).

If at all possible we ask that the harvest level for wolves be higher as to reduce the problems they have created for ranchers and sportsman.

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of our comments.

Respectfully Submitted,

Curtis Lord
Secretary/Treasurer LRG

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