|  |
| --- |
| FNR 22300 |
| Wolf Population Reintroduction: Recovery Program or Danger to Human Interests? |
| Draft Policy Brief |

|  |
| --- |
| Group 10: Kathryn Atherton, Amber Cripps, Sean Fox, Saufina Kemp, and Ken Thompson  3-7-2019 |

Table of Contents

[Executive Summary 2](#_Toc2635351)

[Importance of Environmental Issue 3](#_Toc2635352)

[How do wolves impact society and environment? 3](#_Toc2635353)

[Wolf impact on local/domestic wildlife populations (yellowstone.com source) 3](#_Toc2635354)

[Impact on ranches out west (Montana, Colorado) 3](#_Toc2635355)

[Economic Value? (Ex. Tourism) 4](#_Toc2635356)

[Ecotourism has increased since wolves were reintroduced Yellowstone 4](#_Toc2635357)

[Cost of introducing wolves into an ecosystem ($, natural resources) 4](#_Toc2635358)

[Cost to ranches (livestock) 4](#_Toc2635359)

[Promotion and establishment of environmental issues through public educational programs? Inform public about wildlife and environment 4](#_Toc2635360)

[Wolf education project 4](#_Toc2635361)

[Education offered to improve the management of wolf populations 4](#_Toc2635362)

[Description and Critiques of pre-existing policies or programs 4](#_Toc2635363)

[Livestock compensation programs: 5](#_Toc2635364)

[CRITIQUES 5](#_Toc2635365)

[Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan 5](#_Toc2635366)

[CRITIQUES 5](#_Toc2635367)

[Endangered Species Act 1973 6](#_Toc2635368)

[CRITIQUES 6](#_Toc2635369)

[Wolf Bounty Programs 6](#_Toc2635370)

[CRITIQUES 6](#_Toc2635371)

[West Coast Population Re-introduction 7](#_Toc2635372)

[Policy Recommendations 7](#_Toc2635373)

[Bibliography 9](#_Toc2635374)

# Executive Summary

**Audience:**

-Senate committee on Environment and Public Works

Legislative jurisdiction on matters related to environmental protection, resources utilization and conservation, and public infrastructure

# Importance of Environmental Issue

Wolves and humans are naturally afraid of each other and they have historically had sufficient space between their populations. However, as farms got bigger and bled into wolf habitats, wolves turned to livestock for prey. Humans lashed out and hatred for wolves spread. Starting in the late 19th Century, government-sanctioned wolf eradication programs were put in place to secure pasturage. By the mid-20th century, wolves were nearly extinct in the continental 48 states. Since then, researchers have begun to understand the importance that gray wolves have for their respective ecosystems and in 1973, gray wolves were placed on the Endangered Species List. Wolf reintroduction policies have become a subject of controversy and have been implemented to varying degrees of success and a split in public opinion. **Because of this, we believe that future wolf reintroduction policies should focus on how to manage and regulate wolf populations after reintroduction to support a healthy, stable population and limit negative impacts on the ecosystem and human interests while educating the public on the benefits of wolf population management.**

## How do wolves impact society and environment?

### Wolf impact on local/domestic wildlife populations (yellowstone.com source)

* Wolf prey (game wildlife?)
* Hunting?
* Impact on local predator populations
* Native American cultural value

### Impact on ranches out west (Montana, Colorado)

* Public opinion is very strong (Active public rural vs. urban)
* Financial Implications for rural communities

## Economic Value? (Ex. Tourism)

### Ecotourism has increased since wolves were reintroduced Yellowstone

* 3 million average visitor count, 5% increase related to wolf presence
* Programs in yellowstone related to wolf education brought in an extra $200,000 in 2005

### Cost of introducing wolves into an ecosystem ($, natural resources)

* Scientific research, public or privately funded
* Financial implications of management ( re-visiting wolves, tracking etc.)
* See Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery plan for 25-35 year budget!

### Cost to ranches (livestock)

* Livestock insurance
* Loss of livestock/loss of income -- proof that wolves are at fault?
* Cost of security ( Fences )
* Government regulations

## Promotion and establishment of environmental issues through public educational programs? Inform public about wildlife and environment

### Wolf education project

* Special interest group dedicated to changing public opinion of wolves and share their environmental impacts

### Education offered to improve the management of wolf populations

* Educating farmers/ranchers on how to prevent livestock loss

Description and Critiques of pre-existing policies or programs

## Livestock compensation programs:

* Sheep cattle and horses are eligible for state compensation for deaths caused by wolves. Other livestock animals will be dependent on availability of state funds.
  + Most prominent on West Coast
  + Managed by State Department of Fish and Wildlife
  + Must notify within 24 hours of wolf attack to open a case

### CRITIQUES

* Allocation of funding is not sufficient
* Proof needed for reimbursement is difficult to provide
* Timeline of receiving funds is prolonged
* In Oregon’s Wallowa and Baker counties, local oversight of loss claims has proven unbalanced or thin in key cases, leading to approval of suspicious compensation requests. Confirmed wolf kills may not have skyrocketed, but missing cattle claims have

## Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan

* The NRMWRP outlines steps for the recovery of the gray wolf populations in portions of their former range in the Northern Rocky Mountains of the United States.
  + Implicated by US Department of Fish and Wildlife
  + Implicated in late 1980’s in hopes of removing Northern Rocky Mountain Wolves off of the Endangered Species list

### CRITIQUES

* Outdated, needs revision to meet today's technologies and new populations
* Difficult to experiment on populations of endangered species
* Maintenance and upkeep of wolf habitats is necessary and a prolonged piece of this policy

## Endangered Species Act 1973

* The purposes of the Endangered Species Act are to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered and threatened species as well as a means whereby the ecosystems upon which such species depend may be conserved.

### CRITIQUES

* Some states have voted to remove wolves from the Endangered Species list, allowing the relatively small populations there to be hunted:
* “Delisting has been based on carefully made, evidence-based decisions. Not so for the wolf. In spring of 2011, Congress removed Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections for wolves in Idaho and Montana with an 11th hour Congressional rider attached to the federal budget bill”

## Wolf Bounty Programs

* In 1906, the U.S. Forest Service acquiesced to the stockowners and enlisted the help of the Bureau of Biological Survey to clear cattle ranges of gray wolves.
  + Hunters compensated for elimination of wolves
  + Intended to protect public and livestock species

### CRITIQUES

* BBS Revoking anti wolf propaganda by 1940
* Wolves Nearly Eradicated
* ESA contradicts this policy when protecting endangered species

## West Coast Population Re-introduction

* Policies operate under ESA, policies differ by state
  + “Today, wolves in Idaho, Montana, eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, and north-central Utah are no longer listed under the ESA and are being successfully managed by the states. Both Idaho and Montana manage wolves in accordance with state management plans, under which their wolf populations have remained secure and well above recovery objectives.” <https://www.doi.gov/ocl/management-wolves>
  + These policies have been mostly successful
  + “As of December 31, 2015, there were at least 1,704 wolves in 282 packs in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. An additional 200 wolves in 34 packs were estimated in Oregon and Washington. “

# Policy Recommendations

1. Pro-reintroduction
2. However, we need to come up with a plan for managing and studying the population post-reintroduction to ensure successful reintroduction
   1. Education about the benefits and management of wolf populations -- combating anti-wolf sentiments
      1. Tourism -- why are we reintroducing wolves? How can the general public help? (i.e. not bothering them in the wild)
      2. Ranches -- why are we reintroducing wolves? How can ranchers prevent livestock losses due to wolves?
3. Policy alternatives
   1. Controlled reintroduction of wolves only in national parks and protected lands. Impose management practices to ensure wolf populations do not impose threat to livestock populations.

# Bibliography

Bull, J. W., Ejrnaes, R., Macdonald, D. W., Svenning, J.-C., & Sandom, C. J. (2019, January). Fences can support restoration in human-dominated ecosystems when rewilding with large predators. *Restoration Ecology, 27*(1), 198-209.

* Fences = more effective reintroduction

Dickie, G. (2018, July 23). When cattle go missing in wolf territory, who should pay the price? *High Country News*.

* Oregon Cattle Reimbursement

International Wolf Center. (2011). *Are Wolves Endangered?* Retrieved from International Wolf Center: https://www.wolf.org/wow/united-states/are-wolves-endangered/

* (Endangered/Threatened?)

Johnson, K. (2017, November 28). *These Montana Ranchers are Helping Grizzlies, Wolves, and Cattle Coexist*. Retrieved from Ensia: https://ensia.com/features/predators/

* Montana Ranchers helping wolves, grizzlies, and cattle coexist

Living with Wolves. (n.d.). *A New Understanding*. Retrieved from Living with Wolves: https://www.livingwithwolves.org/wolf-issues/ranching-solution/

* Ranching solutions being implemented

Living With Wolves. (n.d.). *The Political Debate: Extreme Measures and Malicious Misinformation*. Retrieved from Living with Wolves: https://www.livingwithwolves.org/wolf-issues/the-political-debate/

* Political issues/debates on wolf endangered listings and reintroduction policies

My Yellowstone Park Staff. (2011, June 21). *Gray Wolves Increase Tourism in Yellowstone National Park*. Retrieved from My Yellowstone Park: https://www.yellowstonepark.com/news/gray-wolves-increase-tourism-in-yellowstone-national-park

* Tourism increased by $5 million/year after the introduction of wolves in Yellowstone

My Yellowstone Park Staff. (2019, January 15). *Wolf Reintroduction Changes Ecosystem in Yellowstone*. Retrieved from My Yellowstone Park: https://www.yellowstonepark.com/things-to-do/wolf-reintroduction-changes-ecosystem

* How does the introduction of wolves affect beavers, willow, elk, water ecosystems, etc.?

Pate, J., Manfredo, M. J., Bright, A. D., & Tischbein, G. (1996). Coloradans' Attitudes toward Reintroducing the Gray Wolf into Colorado. *Wildlife Society Bulletin, 24*(3), 421-428.

* (local opinions about reintroducing gray wolves in Colorado, Good and bad feedback, livestock, losses to ranchers, impact on elk and deer populations, threat to resident safety)

PBS. (2008, September 14). *Wolf Wars: America's Campaign to Eradicate the Wolf*. Retrieved from PBS Nature: The Wolf That Changed America: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/the-wolf-that-changed-america-wolf-wars-americas-campaign-to-eradicate-the-wolf/4312/

* History of wolves and humans conflict (background)

U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs. (2016, September 21). *Status of the Federal Government's Management of Wolves*. Retrieved from Management of Wolves: https://www.doi.gov/ocl/management-wolves

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. (2017). *Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan: First Revision.* Albuquerque, New Mexico.

* Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/14317528?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo>

* Reintroducing gray wolves into Yellowstone
* Local feedback from supporters and opposers