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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service
50 CFR Part 17
RIN 1018-AJ03

In re: Removing the Eastern Distinct Population Segment
of the Gray Wolf From the List of Endangered and
Threatened Wildlife

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

on September 1, 2004

7:30 p.m.

Mesabi Community College,
Virginia, Minnesota 55792

1 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Good evening. It is 7:33,
2 and it is time for us to begin the formal hearing. On
3 behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I'd like
4 to welcome you to this public hearing. The purpose of
5 this hearing is to receive comments from the public on
6 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to delist
7 the eastern distinct population segment of the gray
8 wolf.

9 My name is Chuck Traxler. I'm a public affairs
10 specialist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from
11 the regional office in Minneapolis. I will be serving
12 as the presiding official here this evening. Kate
13 Undeland is the court reporter who is sitting up front.
14 She will prepare the written record of all statements
15 made during this hearing. There will also be an audio
16 recording of statements made during this hearing.

17 A transcript of this hearing will be posted on
18 the web site, the midwest region of the Fish and
19 Wildlife Service in a few weeks. The address for that
20 web site is midwest.fws.gov/wolf. It's also on some of
21 the documentation available outside.

22 While I am an employee of the U.S. Fish and
23 Wildlife Service, I have absolutely no involvement in
24 the development of this proposal. I am not involved in
25 any decision-making as far as this proposal goes. I

1 have no authority over any of the individuals in this
2 room this evening or any individuals who will be
3 responsible for making decisions as far as this proposal
4 goes.

5 However, there are some Fish and Wildlife
6 Service employees in this meeting tonight who will be
7 involved in the decision-making of the Service's
8 proposal for the eastern distinct population of the gray
9 wolf. You've already met those individuals, but I'd
10 like to mention them again. They are Ron Refsnider, an
11 endangered species biologist; Kim Mitchell, also an
12 endangered species biologist, who is out in front; Mr.
13 Dan Stinnett, who is a field supervisor for the State of
14 Minnesota in the endangered species program; Phil
15 Delphey, who is an endangered species biologist for
16 Minnesota; and also Sandy Jackson, who is an endangered
17 species biologist also from the regional office in
18 Minnesota.

19 My job here is to make sure you have an
20 opportunity to provide your public comments, and that is
21 what the majority of this evening is going to be about.
22 However, this is an official hearing, so before we begin
23 I'm going to have to read a couple minutes of statements
24 that must be included as part of the record, so bear
25 with me for about a minute, and then we'll jump right in

1 here on your public comments.

2 This is a public hearing under Section 4 of the
3 Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973. Notice of the
4 proposal to remove the gray wolf from the Eastern United
5 States from the list of the endangered and threatened
6 wildlife and a 120 public day comment period was
7 published in the Federal Register on July 17th, 2004,
8 beginning on Page 43,664.

9 A notice of the nine public hearings being held
10 in the midwest was published in the Federal Register on
11 August 13th, 2004. That was on Page 50,147. There may
12 be additional hearings scheduled in the Northeast United
13 States; if so, the dates and locations of those meetings
14 will be announced in the Federal Register and will also
15 be posted on the Service web site that I mentioned
16 earlier.

17 Convening public hearings is one method that
18 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has to solicit data
19 and comments from the public on this proposal. No final
20 decision has been made regarding this proposal, nor will
21 any decision be made at this hearing. Public comments
22 on this proposal will be accepted through November 18th,
23 2004.

24 After review and consideration of the existing
25 administrative record, your comments, your

1 interpretations of existing data and all other
2 information gathered during this comment period, the
3 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will make a final
4 decision on this proposal. Information that you provide
5 in your comments this evening or other comments received
6 during the public comment period will become part of the
7 administrative record and will be considered by the U.S.
8 Fish and Wildlife Service in the decision-making
9 process.

10 This public hearing is scheduled to go until
11 9:00 p.m. If we have covered all the people who wish to
12 speak before 9:00 p.m., we will recess until other
13 people come in who wish to speak. But we will be
14 available until 9:00 p.m.

15 I would like to direct your attention there to
16 the two tables you noticed on the outside of this
17 auditorium before you came in. One is a registration
18 table. This is where you will need to sign in and pick
19 up a numbered note card if you want to present verbal
20 comments this evening. If you do not wish to speak
21 tonight, but would still like to get on our mailing list
22 to receive future information on this proposal, please
23 add your name and/or e-mail address to the mailing list
24 sign-in sheet, which is also on the registration table.

25 The second table out there has a variety of

1 written information about this proposal, about wolves
2 and about the Endangered Species Act. Please take
3 copies of anything that interests you. In particular,
4 I'd like to point out there's a green sheet up there, it
5 looks like this. That sheet provides details on several
6 ways that you can get more information on this proposal
7 and also explains methods that you can use to submit
8 written comments, other than at tonight's hearing. This
9 sheet also lists dates and locations of other public
10 hearings. If you wish to provide a written comment
11 tonight, there's a pale blue sheet out front; you can
12 turn those written comments in up front, you can give
13 them to me as well, or any other Service employee here
14 this evening.

15 How this will work tonight is when I call the
16 number that you were given at the front table, you'll
17 come up to one of the microphones that is right up in
18 front here. When you begin your comments, you'll need
19 to state your full name and spell it, identify any
20 organization that you represent, and give your state of
21 residence. If you have a written copy of your comments,
22 I would ask that you please provide it to the court
23 reporter or to myself, so that we can include that as an
24 entry in the administrative record.

25 It doesn't seem we have as many people who wish

1 to speak tonight as there were last night; however, to
2 ensure that everyone who does want to speak has a
3 chance, I'm going to limit everyone's comments to no
4 more than five minutes. I will notify you when you are
5 getting close to your five minute limit. After everyone
6 has spoken this evening, if we do still have time, those
7 who wish to continue with comments, I will allow time
8 for that.

9 However, regardless of how much time you're
10 using, if I feel that you've become repetitious, if
11 you're straying from the issue, if you're using too much
12 time, if you're engaging in personal insults or making
13 other inappropriate remarks, I will ask you to end your
14 comments.

15 In order to maximize the opportunities of
16 others to express their comments, I ask that you refrain
17 from commenting on issues beyond the scope of the Fish
18 and Wildlife Service's proposal to delist the wolf.

19 This is an informal hearing, and therefore, you
20 will not be questioned or cross examined in connection
21 with your comments. This hearing is solely intended to
22 obtain your comments so that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
23 Service can consider them before making a final decision
24 on this proposal; therefore, Fish and Wildlife Service
25 officials will not respond to any questions, nor engage

1 in any discussion of the proposal during this hearing.
2 The previous open house and question and answer session
3 were intended for your questions and discussion. We
4 will be devoting the entire time of this public hearing
5 to hearing your comments.

6 If you do have questions about the proposal or
7 about the Endangered Species Act, I encourage you to
8 take advantage of the materials on the information table
9 outside and on our web site. After you read them, I
10 would like to remind you that can submit written
11 comments at any time up to November 18th. If we do take
12 a recess, or after this public hearing, there may be a
13 chance for you to speak with some of the U.S. Fish and
14 Wildlife Service staff if you do have additional
15 questions that weren't answered during the question and
16 comment period.

17 This hearing is intended to receive public
18 input, not to respond to it. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife
19 Service's responses to the issues and questions raised
20 during the comment period, including those that come
21 from this hearing, will be published as part of the
22 final rule, as part of a re-proposal or in a withdrawal
23 notice of this proposal. We are expecting that
24 publication to occur sometime in mid to late 2005.

25 Again, your comments are being recorded by the

1 court reporter and an audio tape to assist the U.S. Fish
2 and Wildlife Service in reviewing them and to preserve
3 them for the record. Please keep in mind, however, that
4 the reporter will only be recording statements made into
5 one of these two microphones. Comments from the
6 audience or other statements made away from the
7 microphones or made to the audience will not become part
8 of the record, and will not be considered by the Fish
9 and Wildlife Service when making the final decision on
10 this proposal. All oral comments must be made into the
11 microphone and directed to the front of the room.

12 In addition to or instead of providing oral
13 comments tonight, as I said, you may submit written
14 comments, you may submit it by e-mail or by fax.
15 Written comments may be submitted to me or the staff at
16 the registration table. As I mentioned, written e-mail
17 or fax comments will be accepted through November 18th,
18 2004.

19 Does anyone have any questions on the procedure
20 tonight before I begin? If not, I'd like to remind you
21 that tonight's hearing is not intended to be adversarial
22 or confrontational; it is designed to gather public
23 comments, and especially additional data and information
24 regarding this proposal, in order to help the U.S. Fish
25 and Wildlife Service make the best possible decision

1 under the Endangered Species Act. To better serve that
2 purpose, I ask that you remain respectful of the
3 speakers and the other members of the audience and the
4 government officials who are here tonight.

5 With that, I would like to invite Speaker
6 Number 1 to step up to one of the microphones up here.
7 Please state and spell your full name, your state of
8 residence and any organization that you represent.

9 MS. ELANNE PALCICH: My name is Elanne Palcich,
10 E-l-a-n-n-e, P-a-l-c-i-c-h. I'm here on behalf of
11 myself, and I live in Chisholm, Minnesota.

12 I would like to go on record today in support
13 of keeping the wolf on the federal endangered species
14 list. These are my thoughts and feelings. The wolf has
15 been a part of the ecology of this area for, as far as
16 we know, the past 10,000 years, after the receding of
17 the last glacier. The predator-prey relationship is one
18 of balance.

19 The wolf-caribou balance was maintained by the
20 Native Americans who first inhabited this area. It was
21 a spiritual connection. The first peoples relied on the
22 animals around them and gave thanks for the food,
23 shelter and clothing that they received from their
24 animal brothers. And then the Europeans enter via the
25 fur trade, and when the fur trade ended, the beaver had

1 been all but wiped out, along with the Native American
2 culture.

3 The white culture continues to change the
4 balance of nature. Our mining, our logging practices,
5 power plants, gravel pits and our highways have changed
6 the very lay of the land. Our little mining towns are
7 spreading out along the highways in an ever-haphazard
8 pattern of shopping areas to satisfy our every want and
9 need. Our snowmobiles and four-wheelers travel deep
10 into animal territory. Our housing demands have
11 increased into more and more square footage to house all
12 of our electronic equipment and boats and pickup trucks
13 and SUVs.

14 Our insatiable appetite for goods is affecting
15 not only our local environment, but the entire global
16 climate. And while our changing patterns of demand upon
17 the environment and the changes in climate have created
18 suitable habitat for deer, we are encroaching on the
19 territory of the wolf, the very wolf that we need to
20 help balance the multiplying deer population.

21 People have said to me, "But the wolf is such a
22 ferocious killer." And I think about our factory farms
23 where animals live in such filthy conditions that they
24 must be raised on antibiotics, on downer cattle being a
25 part of the food supply and the subsequent threat of mad

1 cow disease, about stories I've read of live chickens
2 being sent through chopping machines. I think about the
3 destruction of the Twin Towers, followed by the shock
4 and awe bombing of innocent civilians in Baghdad; and I
5 wonder who the ferocious killers really are.

6 People have said, "But wolves kill pets." And
7 being a pet owner myself, I know the deep attachment
8 between animal companion and human. Yet how many dogs
9 are left abandoned at animal shelters each year? How
10 many dogs spend their lives at the end of a rope,
11 sometimes without adequate food or water? How many dogs
12 are mistreated? How many die of cancer caused by toxins
13 in our environment and food. Wolves have established a
14 territory and pack structure that has helped them
15 survive these thousands of years. How do we justify our
16 own behavior, and how are we trying to solve these more
17 immediate problems?

18 I remember back to high school when my brother
19 ran a trap line for two or three years. After a time I
20 noticed that he no longer had his traps, and he told me
21 that he had buried them so that no one else could ever
22 use those traps to inflict suffering on animals. That
23 was back in the 1960's. Today we live in an era of
24 polar fleece and nylon supplex. I say that it's time to
25 not only bury our traps, but our outmoded prejudices

1 toward the wolf.

2 Just last week I decided to mow a section of
3 lawn at the lake that hadn't been mowed since July. As
4 I mowed I noticed grasshoppers, moths and bees that I
5 tried to shoo out of the way alongside the mower; and
6 when I finished that section, I realized that I had
7 destroyed a microsystem. I had done so out of
8 ignorance, but also because I had bought into a cultural
9 standard that said my lawn needed to be the same height
10 as my neighbor's.

11 And so today I am asking that we lay aside our
12 prejudice and our ignorance, and that we suspend our set
13 of cultural beliefs for the moment. Let us instead try
14 to grasp the full historical landscape of this area
15 known as Northern Minnesota. Let us span the geological
16 scope of the mountain building eras that left us Giants
17 Ridge and Lookout Mountain, the early seas that left the
18 deposits of iron ore, and the melting of the last
19 glaciers. Let us hear the howling of the wolves in the
20 early dawn of those days when the first peoples sat
21 around their campfires.

22 Let us find our place in relationship to the
23 wolves, for we cannot take stock of the wolves without
24 taking stock of ourselves. I believe that the time of
25 protection is not yet over. Thank you.

1 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you, ma'am, for
2 providing those comments. I would also like to ask that
3 if you have a copy of your written comments, please
4 provide them to the court reporter. I would like to
5 call on Speaker Number 2 at this time.

6 MS. FERN ARPI: My name is Fern Arpi, I live in
7 Virginia, Minnesota. I have one concern about the
8 proposed delisting, that some persons will see this as
9 an open season on the wolf. There has been also an
10 increase in the deer population. I've lived here since
11 1953. Just this past May my car was hit by a deer on
12 the way from Two Harbors. If we don't keep a balance
13 between predators and prey, we will have things like an
14 increase in Lyme Disease.

15 Back in 1973 I made a statement here in
16 Hibbing. Incidentally, the room was crowded at that
17 hearing. I reminded the audience that the white tail
18 deer were not native to this area, that they moved in as
19 logging removed the pine forest, and that perhaps they
20 were not made to survive our severe winters and heavy
21 snows.

22 I'm trying to understand people who dislike
23 wolves. Some of this comes from expressions such as
24 wolves in sheep clothing and man shall have dominion
25 over the earth. But it perhaps goes further back, to

1 the beginnings of agriculture, when human populations
2 moved into what had formerly been wolf territory.
3 People of the so-called Western World have a different
4 attitude toward wolves than people from the Far East.
5 This is pointed out in the collection of folk tales from
6 all parts of the world that is part of the wolf exhibit
7 in Ely.

8 I have an interest in Buddhism where there are
9 tales for children called Jakata Tales. These are
10 written to encourage children to feel a kinship toward
11 other living creatures. We need stories for our
12 children so that they will learn the life history of
13 animals such as the wolf, that are intelligent, that
14 have strong family ties, that care for their young, and
15 that do not kill others of their own kind except in
16 unusual circumstances.

17 We can learn from the wolf and from people of
18 the Far East, who instead of trying to conquer nature,
19 try to live in harmony with nature. Thank you.

20 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you, ma'am. Could I
21 get get you to spell your first and last name before you
22 leave.

23 MS. FERN ARPI: It's Fern, F-e-r-n, and the
24 last name is A-r-p-i.

25 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you for providing

1 those comments, ma'am. I'd like to invite Speaker
2 Number 3 to come up to the microphone.

3 MR. JIM HOFSSOMMER: My name is Jim Hofssommer,
4 I'm from Markham, Minnesota. I've been an outdoorsman
5 all my life, a hunter and a trapper. I grew up on one
6 of the largest cattle ranches in the county. We raised
7 saddle horses, beef cattle and sheep. And I've been
8 around the outdoors and all the wildlife that Northern
9 Minnesota has for many years.

10 I would like to thank the gentlemen here
11 tonight from the Fish and Wildlife Service for the work
12 that they've done on these various plans, also from the
13 DNR. Obviously a lot of thought and work has gone into
14 this, and I applaud your efforts in that.

15 There seems to be quite a bit of misinformation
16 about wolves circulating for many years now. We've
17 heard from time to time we're encroaching on the wolf,
18 there is no habitat left and everything else. Well,
19 these are a rather adaptable critter. And it's
20 interesting the wolves around Fort Ripley, where they're
21 running around with jeeps and tanks and soldiers and
22 everything else, and that one of the biggest dangers
23 down there is to keep from running them over with a tank
24 or something. So wolves adapt quite well.

25 In many of the northern towns here, Babbitt,

1 Embarrass, Tower, Ely and so forth and so on, for many
2 years there isn't a real large overpopulation of pets
3 because they all get ate. Wolves come in town and get
4 everything they can catch.

5 As far as livestock, I did bring the question
6 up here earlier about compensation. There is an ongoing
7 problem that probably should be getting more thought and
8 more work to come up with an equitable way of
9 compensating owners of livestock and pets, in that
10 oftentimes the evidence is gone, and how can they prove
11 that the wolf is the culprit. Well, most people can
12 figure it out, but not according to official criteria.

13 Another bit of misinformation, we've heard it
14 over and over again that there's no record of a wolf
15 attack on a human being in North America. I've heard
16 that many times. Perhaps you folks have, too. Check
17 the Louis and Clark Expedition report sometime. The
18 first wolf attack occurred then. That was quite awhile
19 ago. There was also a wolf researcher, approximately
20 six years ago, if I remember correctly, in Canada, a
21 young lady, not only was attacked, was eaten. Very
22 dead.

23 I don't think there's anyone in this room here
24 that would like to see wolves exterminated. They're a
25 beautiful critter, they're part of the heritage of

1 certainly Minnesota and many other areas. And even
2 farmers that have suffered losses from the wolves, I
3 don't know of anybody that would like to get rid of all
4 the wolves.

5 We should have a reasonable management plan for
6 them. I'm a little puzzled why it has taken as long as
7 it has to come to this point. If the numbers are
8 basically twice what was required under the law, we
9 should have been here several years ago. That would be
10 only fair, I think.

11 So I hope this plan proceeds, and I hope that
12 it could be implemented. I'm also curious, with the two
13 zones in Minnesota, northern zone where there's more
14 restrictions on regulating wolves as far as killing
15 them, et cetera. Where there's more wolves, there's
16 going to be more problems. You would think where
17 there's fewer wolves down in Southern Minnesota, there
18 should be tighter restrictions down there. I haven't
19 quite figured this one out yet. So perhaps the folks
20 from the DNR and the Minnesota legislature will kick
21 that one around and see if it makes sense to them or
22 not, because it doesn't too much to me.

23 I hope that this plan can proceed. I haven't
24 heard one point made tonight yet. If there is not a
25 plan implemented, that would be the worst possible

1 choice, even for the wolf advocates that want to protect
2 the wolves, it's even a worse choice for them. There's
3 no way you're going to haul the wolves out to Wyoming
4 and Montana, at a cost, by the way, of \$235,000 apiece
5 here a few years back. It didn't take too long for the
6 ranchers out there to figure out what to do with them.
7 They come up with, I guess they call it the SSS plan;
8 shoot, shovel and shut up.

9 Now, this is not a very scientific management
10 plan. There's nothing. There's no management at all.
11 So a reasonable management plan certainly would be far
12 better than that, where there is scientific data, where
13 there is some thoughtful consideration put into it.
14 That would be far preferable than if we have already
15 approximately twice the number of animals that are
16 required. I mean, when they start bothering too much,
17 people have a way of taking care of problems. And from
18 most any standpoint, that would not be a good scenario.

19 So I hope this plan can proceed, and will be
20 implemented shortly. Thank you.

21 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you, sir. Can I get
22 you to spell your first and last name.

23 MR. JIM HOF SOMMER: Jim Hofsommer,
24 H-o-f-s-o-m-m-e-r.

25 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you for providing

1 your comments, sir. I would like to invite Speaker
2 Number 4 to come up to one of the microphones, and ask
3 if you can say and spell your first and last name, your
4 state of residence and any organization that you
5 represent.

6 MS. MARY EMMERT: Mary, M-a-r-y, Emmert,
7 E-m-m-e-r-t. My state of residence is Minnesota,
8 Littlefork, to be exact. In your own words and in the
9 words of the Act that the species can be delisted if it
10 meets the best scientific criteria, that it's not
11 endangered or threatened, and our gray wolf in Minnesota
12 meets that and should be delisted.

13 Based on science, it would be extremely hard to
14 argue that it should not be delisted. I mean, if all
15 the evidence is there, there is no other way to go.
16 However, being a pragmatist, I realize that what the Act
17 says and maybe how biologists feel, bless their hearts,
18 that that's not always true. And I think that's the
19 problem with the listing process and the delisting
20 process, that science is not followed. Certainly in the
21 listing process there is abundant evidence that science
22 is not the basis for listing.

23 I came across some documents on what has been
24 delisted by Fish and Wildlife in the last 31 years, and
25 it seems that about 37 species have been delisted and

1 moved from the threatened or endangered species list, 7
2 of those because they became extinct; not exactly a
3 success story; 13 because they should never have been
4 listed in the first place, they were not endangered;
5 their numbers from the get-go were put in wrong.

6 Probably the most notable one of that is one of
7 the mice that was put in based on 50-year-old data, and
8 was later found that that mouse was very, very common,
9 was not endangered. That's going to be considered,
10 incidentally, for delisting apparently sometime later
11 this year.

12 Okay. Of the 14 species that were listed and
13 now are considered recovered, 3 of those were Australian
14 kangaroo species. I could hardly believe that when I
15 read that. I'm not sure how kangaroos got on our
16 endangered species list, but that is in the Federal
17 Register of March 9th, 1995, Page 12,877. And they were
18 delisted by Fish and Wildlife because the Australian
19 government had changed their management practices.

20 Six more cases were data error, and probably
21 even the gray whale and the American alligator were data
22 errors. The pelican, both the Arctic and the peregrine,
23 could be considered success stories, but we have to
24 remember that DDT was banned in 1972, and that was
25 probably what was solely responsible for the recovery of

1 the falcon and the bald eagle, not so much that the
2 Endangered Species act listed them.

3 So now we are looking at the wolf, and I hope
4 this whole process doesn't go the way of the bald eagle.
5 There were hearings in 1999 on should the bald eagle be
6 delisted. Same thing. There was no reason why it
7 shouldn't. The numbers had been met, all the criteria
8 had been met, it was recovered, recovered, recovered.
9 That was 1999, and it is not delisted today.

10 I guess I've gotten really pessimistic about
11 the Endangered Species Act and the whole structure of
12 that system. I would say a year from now we're not
13 going to see the wolf delisted. I don't know what the
14 reason will be, but it's not going to be a logical one,
15 it's not going to be a scientific one. And I'll give
16 you my name and address, and you can write me and tell
17 me I was wrong. I really hope I get that letter.

18 A couple of other things. The previous speaker
19 mentioned something about the adaptability of the wolf.
20 I would like to emphasize that point, too. The early
21 documents that were written in the original recovery
22 plans really emphasized that the wolf would only live in
23 roadless areas. I remember reading this, thinking, da,
24 they apparently don't live where I live. That, you
25 know, wolves would not live close to human habitation,

1 they would only live in roadless areas. Well, sometime,
2 I don't know, 15, 20 years later, when they were
3 crossing the bridges around the Twin Cities, they
4 decided, well, maybe they do, maybe they will live in a
5 road area.

6 Wolves have adapted very, very well to the
7 human population and to the changing environment that
8 they live in. They're a successful species, and I think
9 under any circumstance they will be successful. Their
10 habitat in Zone 8 for the most part, especially the
11 northeastern part of the state, is really not in
12 terrible danger of changing a great deal. We have a
13 huge Boundary Waters Area up here, that's all federally
14 protected. We have Voyageurs National Park, which is
15 all federally protected. None of that is going to be
16 developed. We have a couple national forests, which
17 there are some activities in, but they certainly do not
18 adversely affect the wolves. So I don't see that this
19 area is ever going to become another Twin Cities, you
20 know, concrete all over the place. I think we're safe.

21 Another argument I would like to address is
22 that so often people tend to think if you delist, the
23 State of Minnesota is not going to be able to take care
24 of the wolf. Well, if I had one criticism of our DNR,
25 it is that they tend to achieve way above target levels

1 on populations. Deer is an example, probably for
2 numerous reasons. The bear population a couple years
3 ago in this state was very, very high, and I think it
4 was even problematic. It was so high and now they've
5 got those numbers somewhat reasonable.

6 So I don't think there's any evidence that our
7 State Department of Natural Resources looks to going to,
8 you know, bottom levels. They set good targets, and
9 they tend to stay above their targets.

10 The fish is another example. That population
11 dropped a couple decades ago, and they took measures to,
12 you know, not dramatic measures, but very practical
13 measures, to try to bring that population up, and that
14 population now is excellent. The fish is flourishing,
15 and, you know, that's great. But I think any criticism
16 of the state not being able to do things or manage
17 correctly is certainly invalid in the sense that there's
18 no evidence of that.

19 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Ma'am, you've hit your five
20 minutes. I'll give you a minute to wrap it up and then
21 remind you that after the registered speakers have all
22 commented, you can come up and continue your comments.

23 MS. MARY EMMERT: I would like to close by
24 thanking the Fish and Wildlife for the work they've done
25 on preparing for delisting. Thank you.

1 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you for providing
2 those comments, ma'am. I would like to invite Speaker
3 Number 5 to come up at this time.

4 DR. WILL SANDSTOM: My name is Dr. Will
5 Sandstrom. I'm a Ph.D., pile it high and dry, degree
6 chemist, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. I
7 was born in a one room log cabin, Orr, Minnesota.
8 Grandfather was an engineer in Finland. Then he was
9 sent to the Crimea by the czar. He didn't want to go
10 down there. He came to America, was an engineer with
11 Teddy Roosevelt, Cuban war. Then he wanted to live in
12 the wilderness. Homesteaded up here in Virginia, Ely
13 Lake, Sparta. They found iron ore on his land. Many of
14 the farmers were murdered. He went up the Embarrass
15 River and became the first farmer to homestead in Orr.
16 The road that went east from Orr to Crane Lake used to
17 be called the Sandstrom Road. Wiley, Billy Lore, others
18 were on that town board when they organized it.

19 I grew up there, and I grew up in Duluth, and I
20 went to St. Olaf College and on and on. But my
21 university, my wildlife university was in the
22 wilderness. What I learned was not from biologists.
23 Other Ph.D., pile it high and dryers, would say that in
24 the wintertime wolves survive by digging through snow
25 and digging up frozen grasshoppers, which is what one

1 wolf biologist tried to claim.

2 There are over a hundred thousand wolves in the
3 world. They are nowhere near endangered or threatened.
4 What is really endangered and threatened are we, the
5 people.

6 My relatives were in Karelia, in Pelowa
7 (phonetic spelling). The Russians made sure no people
8 had guns. Wolves came to that tiny village and killed
9 eight, half the people in that village, before the
10 Russians would send some militia army to save the
11 remaining population. There were two children in 1896
12 killed by wolves in Bemidji, Minnesota on the way to
13 school. That's in the Minnesota papers if you bothered
14 to go look at the Historical Society.

15 It's we, the people, that are endangered. If
16 there's nothing left to hunt, there's no reason to have
17 guns at home. Take the guns away from the people. It's
18 much more easier to control them. How do you take guns
19 away from people? Have a lot of wolves. They will
20 reduce your deer population.

21 I talked to my friends, some of the old-timers.
22 "You buy a deer license in Minnesota?" "Aw, well, no
23 need to buy a deer license, there are no deer left to
24 hunt here." Some of them go to Wisconsin and hunt.
25 Yeah, one hunter is successful in getting a deer every

1 10 years in Minnesota. In Wisconsin, 70, 80 percent
2 success rate every year. They've got some wolves, but
3 not like we do.

4 One thing I want to straighten up. Wolves kill
5 far more than they eat. The Fernberg Road deer yard,
6 when there was a bounty on wolves, had over 20,000 deer
7 in there. In a few years' time after the bounty went
8 off, the population of deer there were down to a
9 thousand or less. My dad and I one time went to a deer
10 yard in May, all the meat rotting on the bones. It had
11 been a deep snow winter, and wolves had gone in there,
12 killed far more deer than they ever needed to eat. Yes,
13 wolves don't count. They just kill to have that meat
14 for the females to have meat for the pups when she's
15 nursing them. They kill far more than they eat.

16 I do hope that we will allow the use of the
17 steel jaw trap, not by federal trappers, but by we, the
18 people; like the trappers used them when I was in my
19 middle age, in the '50s and '60s. I was born in the
20 '30s.

21 Now, in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area,
22 Superior National Forest, where there wasn't supposed to
23 be any habitat for deer; the last forest fires in some
24 of those areas were in the 1600s. When there was a
25 bounty on wolves, the deer population was 36 deer per

1 square mile, 2.2 deer per 40 acres. It was such a
2 pleasure to canoe down the Little Indian Sioux or any of
3 those rivers, and you'd see 30, 40, 50 deer in just a
4 couple hours of canoeing in the summertime. Now what do
5 you see? You're lucky if you see one or two. The
6 wolves, you might hear a few howls in the nighttime, but
7 you're not going to see them in the daytime.

8 Now they're always talking about, oh, we got a
9 fantastic deer population in Minnesota. Oh, you should
10 have seen what the population was like in the '60s. You
11 older people, you probably remember. You probably
12 remember. There were farmers' fields where you could
13 see herds of deer, 20, 30, feeding. Now you don't see
14 that.

15 Then I want to bring this up. It's very
16 important. I mentioned control the people. How? Take
17 the guns away. How do you take the guns away? Have
18 nothing left to hunt. No reason to have guns because
19 you got nothing left to hunt.

20 I'm going to close with this. It's tangential.
21 People control, that's what this is about. You nice
22 people, if you don't try to understand what is going on
23 in there. People control. Check it out. Did you know
24 that our paper dollars are being printed in Texas right
25 now? Yes. And there's no auditing of that printing of

1 the paper dollars. Yes. Germany, Germany, made in
2 America. Slowly coming to be alive and well, and we're
3 going to see it in our lifetime, unless we hold --

4 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Sir, you've hit your five
5 minutes. You've got one more minute to wrap it up.

6 DR. WILL SANDSTROM: Get it off the endangered
7 and threatened list fast. And reduce your salaries, of
8 course.

9 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you for providing
10 your comments, sir. I would like to invite Speaker
11 Number 6 to come up to the microphone. Please state and
12 spell your first and last name, your state of residence
13 and any organization that you represent.

14 MS. KARLYN BERG: My name is Karlyn,
15 K-a-r-l-y-n, and the last name Berg, B-e-r-g, and I'm
16 the wolf predator consultant for the Human Society of
17 the United States. We're going to be submitting written
18 comments before the deadline with the scientific
19 citations. So tonight I'm only going to list or review
20 some of those comments.

21 We assert that the delisting of the eastern
22 wolf population is a premature action and that the wolf
23 needs to remain designated as a threatened species under
24 the protection of the Endangered Species Act. We
25 believe that there are several critical factors demanded

1 by law and sound science that must be considered and
2 resolved before the wolf can be delisted.

3 The Service contends that the wolf does not
4 have to be recovered throughout all of its historical
5 range before it can be delisted. However, an essential
6 delisting criteria of the Act is that the survival of
7 wolf must be assured. The Act states that before
8 delisting can occur, the wolf must no longer be in
9 danger of extinction or likely to become endangered in
10 the foreseeable future.

11 Existing state wolf plans supply direct
12 evidence that this danger does indeed still exist. They
13 propose unwarranted escalation of the lethal actions and
14 show liberal killing still the management of choice.

15 The assorted and antiquated arsenal described
16 in these plans are dressed up as modern science wildlife
17 management. Plans include the freedom to kill wolves on
18 sight, or by permit, trophy hunting, shooting, trapping,
19 and a \$150 predator payment; lethal actions far beyond
20 what is necessary to solve verified wolf-human
21 conflicts. They are advocating the very tools that
22 eliminated wolves in the first place, and amazingly
23 these plans are acceptable to the Service.

24 There was never a lack of trying to eradicate
25 wolves, and it is evident that hostile attitudes towards

1 the wolf have not dissipated. Statistics throughout
2 wolf range confirm that humans are the number one cause
3 of wolf mortality in the United States. Even while
4 protected, kills of wolves were held illegally.

5 Some suggest that if we allow people to kill
6 wolves, they will develop more tolerance towards wolves.
7 I find this notion intriguing because after centuries of
8 not just allowing, but governments endorsing the killing
9 of thousands of wolves, then certainly by 1919 there
10 should have been a lot of humans that really loved
11 wolves.

12 Population estimates alone are not the full
13 measure of a species recovery and should not be used as
14 a sole determinant for delisting and management goals.
15 The goal to have 1600 wolves in Minnesota was not
16 determined by science, but was achieved through
17 bartering at the Wolf Roundtable.

18 This proposal ignores significant mortality
19 data for which even the Service acknowledges in their
20 own federal proposal is unavailable. Mortality data is
21 critical to assure the population does not sink below
22 the break-point level. Furthermore, the State of
23 Minnesota does not intend to carry out an annual count
24 that would be needed to supply adequate information
25 about wolf numbers.

1 Population management goals are set
2 substantially below the biological carrying capacity,
3 and instead are based upon the non-scientific
4 assumptions of the cultural carrying capacity; that is,
5 the lack of tolerance towards wolves.

6 The Service defines ecological strength of
7 maintaining a second isolated population, but dismisses
8 this criteria based upon sound science and instead
9 lowers the standards. On one hand the Service claims to
10 have established a second population, while
11 simultaneously describing that Great Lakes population as
12 a single meta-population. Wolf movements between the
13 states not only permits wolf dispersal, but also permits
14 risks such as disease to these closely connected
15 populations. A second population should be established
16 in the northeast part of this DPS.

17 It is evident that Minnesota's legislated
18 policy to legitimize the slaughter of wolves will affect
19 the movements of wolves recolonizing Wisconsin, and thus
20 important wolf corridors are threatened.

21 Wolf advocates are not anti-rancher and
22 understand that the wolf conflicts need to be resolved.
23 We understand that lethal control may be necessary to
24 remove problem wolves, but lethal control actions should
25 be reserved as the last resort, should be in response to

1 verified losses and in proportion to those actual
2 losses. We have supported the Wildlife Service's
3 targeted approach to verified depredation problems. We
4 believe a genuine effort to utilize sufficient
5 non-lethal methods should be mandated. We oppose the
6 use of proactive lethal methods, and we have supported
7 compensation for losses.

8 Depredation control would not be enhanced by
9 delisting. If killing wolves ever benefits those
10 livestock owners experiencing depredations, this benefit
11 is achieved by targeting those wolves causing the
12 damage, not by generally reducing the wolf population.

13 The court condemned with strong words that
14 killing numbers of wolves rather than targeting verified
15 depredating wolves, a random attack on wolves, did not
16 comply with the law.

17 If thousands of wolves were becoming offenders,
18 then the situation might be different, but a very small
19 percent of wolves cause depredations even in Minnesota
20 where the largest number of wolves live. No matter how
21 many wolves are found in the population, when does it
22 become prudent to kill at random, any more than shooting
23 into a crowd of people might, with luck, capture a
24 single criminal, or perhaps eliminate Waldo.

25 Perpetual taking results in new wolves likely

1 to re-inhabit the site where other wolves were removed
2 as long as suitable habitat exists. Therefore,
3 preventative good husbandry coupled with non-lethal
4 control is, not only a realistic option, but would
5 sustain a longer benefit than the repetitive killing of
6 wolves.

7 In conclusion, plans and population estimates
8 seem more anxious to evaluate how many wolves can we
9 kill and get away with, rather than how few wolves are
10 problems and might need to be removed.

11 We must make sure that the wolf does not remain
12 a symbol of the failure of humans to co-exist. And
13 we've learned tonight how adaptable wolves are, but
14 humans, unfortunately, have not shown the equal attempt
15 to adapt. We cannot allow a return to the sanctioned
16 destruction of America's carnivores. The wolf cannot be
17 delisted until those protections can be assured and the
18 wolf survives in safe hands for the citizens of the
19 United States and for future generations. Thank you.

20 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you for providing
21 those comments, ma'am. I would ask that if you have a
22 copy of that --

23 MS. KARLYN BERG: We will be submitting a full
24 document.

25 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Okay. Thank you, ma'am.

1 I'd like to invite Speaker Number 7. There is no Number
2 7. I have called all of the people who have indicated
3 that they would like to provide verbal comments. At
4 this point I will offer it again to any individuals in
5 here who would like to provide any additional comments
6 or if you were cut off early.

7 Sir, I am going to again limit it to five
8 minutes for each additional person. Please again state
9 and spell your name.

10 DR. WILL SANDSTROM: My name is Dr. Will
11 Sandstrom. I just wanted to mention to these nice
12 people here that, believe it or not, I coined the term
13 Fish and Wildlife for the Federal Fish and Wildlife
14 Service. Okay? I've been active in a few other things,
15 too. Went down and ran against Wilbur Mills, got social
16 security raised from \$37.50 a month to \$160 a month in
17 the '60s. Played a role in getting the RICCO Act. I
18 got involved in America. And we better get involved now
19 because we're going to lose our country because of nice
20 ladies, like this lady here, who likes to save the wolf.

21 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Sir, this is a public
22 hearing on the proposal to delist the gray wolf in the
23 eastern distinct segment.

24 DR. WILL SANDSTROM: I'm trying to say that
25 there is an effort to control we, the people, and trying

1 to save these predators and raptors is one of the ways
2 by which we remove guns from people. There's nothing
3 left to hunt and no reason to have guns at home.

4 I seen what happened in Russia. We know what
5 happened in Germany. We don't want it to happen here in
6 America. So let's get the wolf off the endangered and
7 threatened list fast, allow trapping. That way you'll
8 save this great country, partly save it. There's other
9 things we've got to do, too; for example, audit the
10 amount of money that's being printed by the printing
11 presses.

12 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you for providing
13 those comments, sir. If there are additional people --
14 I'll go to you, first, sir, and then we'll come to you.
15 Please again state your first and last name and spell
16 it.

17 MR. JIM HOFSSOMMER: Jim Hofssommer. Once again,
18 just a couple of additional comments that I have here.
19 I am speaking tonight for myself. I am, however,
20 vice-president of the Northern Minnesota conservation
21 group, Conservationists with Common Sense, and we follow
22 issues such as this. And I'm not speaking for that
23 group tonight, but we do try to use common sense in
24 management of natural resources. We promote access to
25 public lands and waters for all of the outdoor

1 activities there are.

2 Some of my experiences with wolves. We've
3 heard over and over that these are very secretive
4 animals, and we can't infringe on their territory, we
5 can't encroach on them. Well, in my farming operation I
6 almost ran one over with my tractor, sleeping in the hay
7 one day. I missed him by about eight feet. So he
8 didn't seem to be too terrified of me.

9 I worked at Minntac for 30 years, too, a local
10 taconite mining operation, and they've got cats and
11 trucks and rotary drills and big shovels. It's like
12 Disneyland, you never heard so much racket in all your
13 life. And in that atmosphere there's wolves running
14 across the road. And some years back when I was working
15 there, there was one that didn't run fast enough, and he
16 got run over with a 200 ton truck.

17 Now, this certainly disputes a lot that we've
18 been hearing from the protectionists, that we can't even
19 have a snowmobile in the neighborhood; it'll scare the
20 wolf and everything like that. That does not seem to be
21 the case at all. One of my neighbors just a few miles
22 down the road in the middle of the day had their dog
23 half eaten right in the front yard, in the middle of
24 summer, a black lab.

25 So we certainly do need more scientific

1 information injected into managing wolves, rather than
2 hyperbole and some of the things that you're hearing.

3 I'm curious if anyone has put together a number
4 of the cost since the beginning of the protection of the
5 wolf, how much money we've spent trying to protect
6 wolves. I haven't heard that number. But I am curious
7 if anyone would care to tackle that. That would be a
8 very interesting number.

9 With all of the economic difficulties of the
10 state and the nation, from the local level all the way
11 up along the line, it would seem to make a whole lot
12 more sense if we spent money on people instead of this
13 horrendous amount of money on wolves. One way to
14 alleviate some of this would certainly be to implement
15 this plan, the sooner the better. Thank you.

16 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you, sir, for
17 providing those comments. I would like to call on the
18 gentleman over here to please come forward and spell
19 your first and last name.

20 MR. TODD OLSON: My name is Todd Olson,
21 T-o-d-d, O-l-s-o-n. I don't have a pre-prepared
22 eloquent speech full of rhetoric, but I do have a lot of
23 personal experience that I would like to share. I raise
24 Arabian horses less than 40 miles away from here, and
25 the wolf travel on my property is daily. The federal

1 trappers have been out at my place for a year straight.
2 They've taken several wolves. It has not reduced our
3 sightings of the wolves. I lost a foal last spring, a
4 purebred Arabian foal that was dragged away. All we had
5 left was the ear.

6 My wife and I see them on a regular basis. One
7 of us will see them every week on our way to work. My
8 wife has called me at times when I was teaching classes
9 in town and said, I was out in the yard with our four-
10 year-old -- well, it was last fall -- our three-year-old
11 son at that time, and one-and-a-half-year-old daughter,
12 and a wolf walked right into our front yard, which is
13 smaller than this area that we're sitting in right now,
14 and she grabbed the kids and went in the house.

15 Our neighbor lady, who walks on a regular
16 basis, recently came upon probably the same one. There
17 is one that's considerably dark, almost black in our
18 area. And he would not leave the trail, her walking
19 trails on her property. He stood there broadside and
20 waited for her to walk away and leave.

21 They are way too bold in our area. We see them
22 on a regular basis. I can count probably on one hand
23 the times I saw wolves growing up in this area, my first
24 20 years here. I've seen more in the last month and a
25 half than I saw in the first 20 years of my life. And

1 the population is just outrageous.

2 I think they're a beautiful animal also, and
3 I'm not for the extinction of it. I'm glad the program
4 has been in place. It's brought them back to
5 comfortable levels. But when they're in my yard and
6 they're taking pets, and again, it's very hard to verify
7 the pets, but we've lost probably 10 house cats in the
8 last three years, and so have neighbors around the area.

9 Last year, last fall, we had a stretch of about
10 seven weeks straight where I got phone calls or people
11 stopping at my house saying, are your horses up by the
12 house, you've got wolves in your pasture again; because
13 we live on Highway 115, and people going by know I raise
14 Arabian horses, and they stop to let me know there's
15 wolves in there.

16 The wolves have come though -- my son last
17 summer -- last fall actually, as we were eating
18 breakfast, looking right out the window, right into our
19 pasture, he says, dad, look at that, what's that. We
20 saw seven deer take off in one direction and a
21 two-year-old colt take off in the other direction as
22 fast as he could with a gray wolf trotting right
23 through. And I could have thrown a rock out as far away
24 from the house as he was.

25 As I'm training horses and riding down our

1 gravel road near our home, there is wolf crap on the
2 road, on the gravel road on a regular basis. If anyone
3 doesn't believe me, you can check with the Grand Rapids
4 office of the federal trappers over there. They've
5 taken -- I don't know the exact count, I'm thinking it's
6 -- I believe it's over a dozen from June to June off of
7 my property, and it still has not slowed down the
8 sighting at our place. We see them on a weekly basis,
9 constantly see them, my wife and I, and, like I said,
10 other people stopping and letting us know.

11 And I'm not a Ph.D. or a biologist or anything
12 like that, but I know that the count is so much higher
13 in our area. I'm between Cook and Tower, Minnesota, and
14 we see them all the time. And when they're coming into
15 my yard when I've got small children, in broad daylight,
16 and when they're taking neighbors' pets and my own pets,
17 and when they're taking Arabian foals the morning
18 they're born, it's becoming a problem. And I at least
19 would like to see ranchers or farmers at least have the
20 ability to protect their family and their herd if
21 they're coming and encroaching on our property like
22 that. I really do believe it's time to delist the wolf,
23 at least to give us the ability to protect our families
24 and our animals. Thank you.

25 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you for providing

1 your comments, sir. Are there any additional people who
2 would like to provide comments this evening? Sir,
3 please step forward to the microphone, state and spell
4 your first and last name, state of residence and any
5 organization that you represent.

6 MR. BYRON LEANDER: Byron, B-y-r-o-n, Leander,
7 L-e-a-n-d-e-r, Cook, Minnesota, farmer. I am for
8 delisting of the wolves. I don't think it's a problem;
9 delisting would not diminish the herd immediately, if it
10 ever would. I think it would probably just help us take
11 care of a few of the problem wolves.

12 30 years ago we had an occupation of logging
13 way up in the woods, and you'd see a pack of wolves
14 maybe once in a winter, and you'd come home and say,
15 hey, I saw some wolves today. But nowadays they're
16 right in our backyard. The cattle, just last week,
17 5 o'clock in the morning, the cows would be belling,
18 they'll come running home; no doubt being not really
19 chased by wolves, but just the appearance puts the fear
20 into these cattle. Some of these cattle can be
21 pregnant, it has an effect on their delivery a little
22 later. And also these cattle are hesitant to go back to
23 these back pastures where they've been grazing.

24 And the wolves do have a circuit. You can
25 almost count on it. They'll hit our place, they'll hit

1 the neighbors, and like you said earlier, they'll come
2 out on the roads and stake their territory. It's like
3 they're making fun of you. They leave, whatever you
4 want to call it, and you'd like to take a look and
5 dissect it and see what's in their diet.

6 So I'm for delisting them, and give the local
7 people the power to control them. It's not like they're
8 an easy target. They don't come out like a deer and
9 stand, here I am, you know, take it. I think if they
10 were delisted, very few would be taken. But the problem
11 wolves have to be dealt with. Thank you.

12 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: Thank you, sir, for
13 providing those comments. I would like to offer again
14 if there's anyone else who would like to provide any
15 comments at this time? All registered speakers have
16 provided their comments; however, we will be here until
17 9:00 p.m., which is the published closing time of this
18 hearing, in case anyone additionally would like to
19 provide comments. In just a moment I'm going to call a
20 recess. However, before I do that, just in case anyone
21 leaves, I would like to thank everyone for coming to
22 this public hearing and presenting your comments.

23 I would also like to mention that all comments
24 will be considered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
25 before coming to a final decision. At this time if no

1 one else has any comments to provide, I will call a
2 recess until approximately 8:50, and we will see if
3 there is anyone else who wishes to provide comments. So
4 at this time we are at recess, and we will go off the
5 record.

6 (Recess.)

7 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: It is 8:50, and I would
8 like to ask if there is anyone else who would like to
9 provide any additional comments at this time? If not,
10 we'll stay in recess until 9:00 p.m., at which time we
11 will officially close this public hearing. Thank you.

12 (Recess.)

13 MR. CHUCK TRAXLER: It's now 9 o'clock, which
14 is the published closing time for this hearing. Are
15 there any other individuals who wish to provide comment?
16 If not, I'd like to thank everyone again for taking the
17 time and effort to come out here and provide their
18 comments at this hearing. All comments will be
19 considered when the Fish and Wildlife Service does come
20 to its final decision. Thank you. This hearing is now
21 closed, and we are off the record.

22 (Hearing concluded at 9 o'clock p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Kathleen M. Undeland, do hereby certify
that the foregoing pages of typewritten matter to be a
true and correct transcript of my stenotype notes taken
on the date indicated.
