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UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Michigan Wolf Hearings

Held Monday, September 13, 2004

Northern Michigan University

Explorer Room - Don Bottum Conference Center

Marquette, Michigan

HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Michael Twohey

Head Table: Ms. Laura Ragan

Mr. Ron Refsnider

Mr. Craig Czarnecki

REPORTED BY: Sandra A. Larson, CSR-2916, RMR
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Marquette, Michigan

Monday, September 13, 2004 - 7:40 p.m.

MR. CZARNECKI: Okay. Before I turn it over to the hearing officer -- and at that point, we will begin formally -- just in case we have some new folks here, let me just reintroduce myself.

My name is Craig Czarnecki. I am with the Fish and Wildlife Service for the Michigan field office, and I am joined by several colleagues from the Fish and Wildlife Service. Laura Ragan and Ron Refsnider, to my right, are from our regional office in Minneapolis. In the back we have Mike Decapita, who is the endangered species coordinator for the Fish and Wildlife Service here in Michigan. To his left is Christie Deloria, who is in our Marquette office here. And we also have Georgia Parham over to the door, who is also assisting us today. And we are also joined by several folks from Michigan DNR. Of particular note is Brian in the back. We have already introduced him.

And what I am thinking we will do here is we will go through the formal part, and then afterwards, I would imagine we will have some time to interact some more, depending on how long we go. We are scheduled to go to nine-thirty. But I would imagine even if we get to that point, everybody will stick around if we want to

1 continue to interact.

2 So with that, I am going to turn it over to
3 our hearing officer and we will get going.

4 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thanks, Craig.

5 Good evening. On behalf of the U.S. Fish and
6 Wildlife Service, welcome you to this hearing. The
7 purpose of the hearing is to receive comments from the
8 public on the Fish and Wildlife Service proposal to
9 delist the eastern district population segment of the
10 gray wolf.

11 Can everybody hear me okay? Is this working?

12 Okay. Thank you. My name is Michael Twohey.
13 I am a fishery biologist here at the Marquette
14 biological station, with the sea lamprey control
15 program. I will serve as the presiding official for
16 this hearing. Sandra Larson is our trans- -- doing the
17 transcripts, our court reporter -- recorder -- court
18 reporter, okay, who will prepare the written record of
19 all statements made during this hearing.

20 The transcript of the hearing will be posted
21 on the web site of the midwest region of the U.S. Fish
22 and Wildlife Service in a few weeks. You can find the
23 address for that on some of the written material that's
24 out at the informational table in the hallway.

25 I will have no further involvement with this

1 proposal after tonight. So I am an impartial
2 participant in this hearing. However, there are some
3 other Fish and Wildlife Service representatives with us
4 this evening and they are assisting with the hearing and
5 many of them will also be involved in reviewing the
6 comments and helping the Service come to its final
7 decision on the proposal, and those are the folks here
8 at this table, which I think Craig has already
9 introduced all of them.

10 This is a public hearing under Section 4 of
11 the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973. Notice of
12 the proposal to remove the gray wolf in the Eastern
13 United States from the list of endangered and threatened
14 wildlife and the 120-day public comment period was
15 published in the Federal Register on July 21st, 2004,
16 beginning on Page 43664. A notice of the nine public
17 hearings being held in the midwest was published in the
18 Federal Register on August 13th, 2004, on page 50147.

19 There may be additional hearings scheduled in
20 the northeastern United States. If so, the dates and
21 locations will be announced in the Federal Register and
22 will be posted on the Service's web site at the address,
23 as I mentioned, which you can get out in the hallway.

24 Convening public hearings is one of the
25 methods the Fish and Wildlife Service is using to

1 solicit data and comments from the public on this
2 proposal. No final decision has yet been made regarding
3 this proposal, nor will any decision be made at this
4 hearing. Public comments on this proposal will be
5 accepted through November 18th, 2004.

6 After review and consideration of the existing
7 administrative record, your comments, your
8 interpretations of existing data and all other
9 information gathered during the comment period, the Fish
10 and Wildlife Service will make a final decision on the
11 proposal. Information that you provide in your comments
12 this evening, and other comments received during the
13 public comment period will become part of the
14 administrative record, and will be considered by the
15 Fish and Wildlife Service in the decision making
16 process. If we have covered all of those who wish to
17 speak before nine p.m., we will recess the hearing and
18 go off the record until either additional persons
19 indicate they would like to speak or until -- I have got
20 nine p.m. I think you mentioned nine-thirty?

21 MR. CZARNECKI: We will go with him.

22 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Nine p.m. At that
23 time we will reconvene the hearing or go back on the
24 record to receive additional comments or to officially
25 close the record. I wanted to direct your attention to

1 two tables that we have. One table is the registration
2 table where you will need to take a numbered note card
3 if you wish to present oral comments tonight. That's
4 out in the hallway. After I -- So then I will begin
5 calling you by number, if you have filled out one of
6 those cards, okay. You will have to come on up and give
7 your -- make your comments at the microphone.

8 At several points during tonight's hearing, I
9 will again invite anyone who didn't hear that -- maybe
10 if they came in late or whatever -- that they can get a
11 numbered card out in the hallway. If you do not wish to
12 speak tonight but would like to get on the mailing list
13 to receive future information on this proposal, please
14 add your name and mailing address or your E-mail address
15 to the mailing list sign up sheet, which is also at the
16 registration table out in the hall.

17 The second table, which is also out in the
18 hall, has a variety of written information about this
19 proposal, about wolves and about the Endangered Species
20 Act. Please take a copy of anything that interests you.
21 I especially want to point out the green sheet, which
22 provides details on several ways you can get more
23 information on the proposal and also explains several
24 methods you can use to submit written comments other
25 than at tonight's hearing. The green sheet also lists

1 the dates and locations of other public hearings.

2 There is also a light blue comment form, which
3 you can use to turn in written comments tonight or by
4 mail, no later than November 15 -- or 18th.

5 When I call your number to present your
6 comments, please come to the microphone here in the
7 center, as I mentioned. When you begin your comments,
8 state your full name, spell it. If you are representing
9 an organization, please tell us what that organization
10 is and tell us -- list your state of residence, please.

11 If you have a written copy of your comments,
12 you may give it to the court reporter, or to me, for
13 entry into the record as a written comment. We are
14 going to limit oral comments to five minutes to start
15 with. If we have time left over at the -- if you need a
16 longer time, we will cut you off at five minutes but if
17 we have additional time at the end, we will give you
18 another opportunity to finish up, okay?

19 If I feel you are becoming repetitious,
20 straying from the issue, using too much time, engaging
21 in personal insults or making other inappropriate
22 remarks, I will ask you to promptly wrap up your
23 comments.

24 At the end of the evening, there may be time
25 to provide another opportunity for speakers to finish

1 their comments. I think I already mentioned that.
2 Okay.

3 To maximize the opportunities of others to
4 express their comments, I ask that you refrain from
5 commenting on issues beyond the scope of the Fish and
6 Wildlife Service's proposal to delist. This is an
7 informal hearing and, therefore, you will not be
8 questioned or cross examined in connection with your
9 comments. This hearing is solely intended to obtain
10 your comments so the Fish and Wildlife Service can
11 consider them when making their final decision on the
12 proposal. Therefore, Fish and Wildlife Service
13 officials will not respond to questions nor engage in
14 any discussion of the proposal during the hearing. The
15 previous presentations and question and answer session
16 were intended for questions and discussions. So we will
17 be devoting nearly the entire duration of this hearing
18 to receiving your comments.

19 If you have any questions about the proposal
20 or about the Endangered Species Act, I encourage you to
21 take advantage of the materials at the informational
22 table out in the hall or on the web site. You may want
23 to read them and then submit written comments later, but
24 again, no later than November 18th.

25 There may be opportunities to ask questions of

1 individual Fish and Wildlife Service staff outside of
2 the hearing, possibly after the hearing closes or during
3 a recess, if we take one. But I emphasize that this
4 hearing is intended to receive public input, not to
5 respond to it. The Fish and Wildlife Services responses
6 to the issues and questions raised during the comment
7 period, including those that come up that -- in this
8 hearing, will be published as part of the final rule as
9 part of a re-proposal or in a withdrawal notice of this
10 proposal. That publication will probably occur in mid
11 or late 2005.

12 Again, your comments are being recorded by the
13 court reporter to assist the Fish and Wildlife Service
14 in reviewing them and to preserve them for the record.
15 Please keep in mind, however, that the reporter will
16 only be recording statements made into the microphones.
17 Comments from the audience, and other statements made
18 away from the mikes or made to the audience will not
19 become part of the record and will not be considered by
20 the Fish and Wildlife Service when making the final
21 decision on this proposal.

22 All oral comments must be made into the
23 microphone and directed to the front of the room. In
24 addition to -- or instead of providing oral comments
25 tonight, you may submit comments in writing or by E-mail

1 or by fax. Written comments may be submitted tonight to
2 me, to the staff at the registration table, or sent in a
3 letter. As I have mentioned before, written E-mail or
4 faxed comments will be accepted through November 18th,
5 2004, and will be given the same serious consideration
6 as oral comments presented here this evening.

7 Okay. We will now open the floor for your
8 comments. After I call your number, please come to the
9 microphone, state your name, and, as I said, please
10 spell it for us, identify who you represent if you are
11 representing an organization, and give your state of
12 residence, and you can begin your comments.

13 Please remember, we will limit those comments
14 to five minutes until everybody has had an opportunity
15 to speak who wishes to. Please speak clearly so the
16 court reporter can record your comments accurately.

17 I remind you that tonight's hearing is not
18 intended to be adversarial or confrontational. It is
19 designed to gather public comments, and especially,
20 additional data and information regarding the proposal
21 in order to help the Fish and Wildlife Service make the
22 best possible decision on the Endangered Species Act.
23 To better serve that purpose, I ask that you all remain
24 respectful to speakers, other members of the audience,
25 and of the governmental officials here tonight.

1 We will begin with the first speaker. Would
2 number one please come to the microphone? You can keep
3 it.

4 MS. NANCY WARREN: I can keep it. Thanks.

5 The only reason I am number one is because
6 number two through 11 was taken. But my name is Nancy
7 Warren, W-A-R-R-E-N, and I am speaking for myself and I
8 am a resident of Ewen, Michigan.

9 I believe that delisting of the eastern gray
10 wolf population is a premature action and that the wolf
11 must remain designated as a threatened species under
12 protection of the Endangered Species Act. I have
13 submitted my full statement, but will only summarize my
14 comments tonight.

15 First, wolf populations. U.S. Fish and
16 Wildlife Service contends population goals have been
17 attained. These targets are far below the biological
18 carrying capacity and were determined by negotiations,
19 not based on sound science. Simply counting individual
20 animals does not account for the fact that only a small
21 proportion of adults reproduce successfully. An
22 adequate plan is not in place that will ensure
23 protection of the wolf population in the event of
24 drastic reduction due to disease.

25 Education. The state plans all acknowledge

1 that education is the key to survival of the wolf.
2 Long-standing myths continue to persist, creating strong
3 anti-wolf attitudes. Plan implementation is always
4 contingent on fiscal and personnel resources and,
5 unfortunately, Michigan has not been able to implement
6 all aspects of its plan. Hopefully, with the selection
7 of a new DNR director and wolf coordinator, there will
8 be an effort made to make education the priority
9 promised in the 1997 wolf management plan.

10 Depredation. Under federal threatened status,
11 wildlife managers have the authority to euthanize wolves
12 that cause verified livestock depredation and other
13 problem wolves. I believe these measures are adequate
14 to address problems when they occur. I do not support
15 proactive lethal control by states or the issuance of
16 permits to private citizens, authorizing them to use
17 lethal measures. Both practices would be allowed if
18 delisting was to take place.

19 Funding. Federal delisting criteria does not
20 require adequate funding to state and tribal agencies
21 for the monitoring and management of their wolf
22 populations, nor is there adequate funding to support
23 educational efforts or research for non-lethal methods
24 to prevent depredation.

25 Distinct population segments. I do not

1 support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposal to
2 include the midwest with the northeast portion of the
3 U.S. There are states in the northeast that do provide
4 suitable wolf habitat and where wolves could naturally
5 return. At a minimum, these regions should be divided
6 into two separate, distinct population segments, with
7 the midwest region federally protected as threatened and
8 the northeast granted endangered status protection.
9 There is documentation of wolves dispersing into the
10 Dakotas and other states, yet these states are not
11 required to develop regulations that will ensure
12 protection for the wolf. The Michigan plan does not
13 address wolves that will eventually disperse into Lower
14 Michigan.

15 Sport hunting and trapping. There are some
16 groups and organizations already calling for a sport
17 hunting and trapping season. Decades of wolf
18 persecution have only reinforced the belief by some that
19 our ancestors got rid of the wolf for a good reason and
20 has not increased human tolerance. If delisting was to
21 occur, I believe the states will ignore sound science
22 and instead succumb to the political pressure of
23 powerful organizations demanding sport hunting and
24 trapping seasons.

25 Wolves have expanded their range, in part, due

1 to protections afforded them through the Endangered
2 Species Act. While much progress has been made, there
3 is still more to be accomplished, especially in the area
4 of education, before delisting should occur.

5 Thank you.

6 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Number
7 two.

8 MR. HENRY PETERS: My name is Henry Peters,
9 H-E-N-R-Y P-E-T-E-R-S. And I live north of Ewen, Ewen,
10 Michigan. And I just happened to be blessed at one time
11 in the '90's, 1996 approximately, a pack formed around
12 me in my residence. I live next to the Ottawa National
13 Forest. And I have some developing awareness through
14 the past 12 years on public lands issues. So I have
15 kind of paid attention to the wolf and its progress.

16 I was amazed when I saw my first sign of wolf.
17 I was amazed when I talked to a wolf. I was amazed when
18 I heard the wolves around me and all of the
19 manifestations that they bring, and including a change
20 in my life, basically. And several years ago, we went
21 from a pack of ten animals, in a matter of months, to no
22 animals. And directly or indirectly, as far as I am
23 concerned, it was due to human causes.

24 Now, the time frame, it kind of disturbs me
25 when I see many other government actions upon landscape

1 -- at landscape level. The time frame is basically a
2 little bit troubling to me, to say the least.

3 And I feel that one of the major deficiencies
4 in this delisting process, and I -- I feel the down
5 listing process was, it is just basically a
6 continuation, was that there seems like a ceiling which
7 only includes commercial interests. And I think that
8 indeed commercial interests need to be a serious
9 consideration in the process. However, the biological
10 factor, basically, the wolf was here before human beings
11 were here.

12 And where -- how -- how we are basing our
13 viability numbers is just kind of puzzling to me for
14 many other issues besides the wolf, but in particular,
15 now, the wolf. And given the fact that we have debate
16 -- seriously debatable global scale changes that may be
17 affecting all beings on earth, not just human beings; we
18 may be talking about drastically different environmental
19 conditions and they may not come and they may come
20 incrementally. Some may come incrementally and some may
21 come when they reach -- when problems reach critical
22 levels. So it is kind of like, yes, we have a store
23 house in Minnesota of wolf population but I have watched
24 the national forest behind my residence, my land, mine
25 and my family's land, basically disappear in a time

1 frame of ten and 15 years.

2 And the velocity of which are -- the
3 fragmentation of the land can happen, and what that
4 implies for the wolf and other animals and plants, I
5 think is very difficult to say. So the idea of having
6 this store house of numbers is -- from that perspective
7 is very troubling to me.

8 The other thing is, is that when you -- if you
9 address on the public lands issue, say a timber sale,
10 that the -- the public agency will basically tell you
11 that the wolf isn't really that much of a concern,
12 because there is so many wolves in the State of
13 Michigan, and that's fine. So, in other words, the
14 level of which we do land actions, landscape modifying
15 actions, is small enough so that you can -- you can
16 discount the numbers of wolves for either purposes, for
17 survival or not survival. It doesn't -- basically gets
18 not included in the equation. The other --

19 So that's basically what I have to say here.
20 And I -- I will submit written comments that will detail
21 some other concerns that I have as well.

22 And, oh, I guess I should say, in summary, one
23 other thing is that the fear factor which has been
24 generated by -- historically by human beings and seems
25 to be propounded and escalated by the media and their

1 inability to grasp anything but sound bites, in the
2 main, you know, it is -- I think the process of
3 education needs to be considered a little bit more
4 seriously before we start -- even before we start down
5 listing, much less delisting.

6 So I would like to thank you very much.

7 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Speaker
8 number three.

9 MR. TODD HOGREFE: Hi. I am Todd
10 H-O-G-R-E-F-E. I am the threatened and endangered
11 species coordinator for the Michigan DNR wildlife
12 division. My comments will be short and sweet. First,
13 I would like to formally indicate that the DNR supports
14 the proposal to delist; and second, that the DNR is
15 absolutely committed to managing for the long term
16 persistence of a viable wolf population in the State of
17 Michigan.

18 That stated, the DNR -- and noting that the
19 wolf population continues to increase, the DNR
20 recognizes that there is undoubtedly a social carrying
21 capacity, and for that reason we will continue to do our
22 best to try to balance the needs of the wolf and also of
23 individual stakeholders in local communities.

24 Thank you.

25 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Speaker

1 number four.

2 MR. JOHN HONGISTO: Good evening, ladies and
3 gentlemen. My name is John Hongisto, J-O-H-N
4 H-O-N-G-I-S-T-O. I live in Deerton, Michigan. I am
5 here representing myself, but I am also representing the
6 Upper Peninsula Trappers Association. We have a
7 membership of around 400 people in the Upper Peninsula.

8 First of all, I would like to state our
9 official position on wolf recovery and delisting, that
10 we support delisting. We believe that the state should
11 be given management of the wolf, and it should be
12 designated as a game animal. We believe that wolves
13 need to be controlled through regulated hunting and
14 trapping on a sustainable use basis. And we support
15 management by science and not by emotion. That is our
16 official position.

17 I have some additional comments that I would
18 like to make, personally. I am concerned about the
19 proposed land use restrictions that have been written
20 on, in your wolf management plan. When you restrict
21 private land, that constitutes a taking if it affects
22 the economic value and use of the land. And it is a
23 violation of the takings clause in the 5th Amendment of
24 the U.S. Constitution. And if you are going to restrict
25 private land owners in the use of their land and affect

1 their economic value, they are entitled to compensation.

2 Wolves are more tolerant of human activities
3 and the population is more resilient than many people
4 give them credit for. This is a good example of that,
5 is that despite some people that don't approve of
6 wolves, despite the population we have up here, the
7 wolves have expanded to every county in the Upper
8 Peninsula and some areas are considered overpopulated.

9 So I don't believe that they need this
10 protection -- this level of protection that is current.
11 The present U.S. -- or the U.P. population is proof of
12 this.

13 Compensation. There have been numerous
14 reports of pets and hunting dogs, as well as livestock
15 losses. Pets and hunting dogs are not compensated for.
16 Some of these dogs can be worth up to \$5,000. And these
17 people have no recourse. I think that you set the bar
18 too high for proof before compensation would be paid for
19 livestock losses. And I know for a fact that this has
20 caused a considerable amount of resentment, particularly
21 among people in rural areas, especially livestock
22 producers. The government created these problems. It
23 is only fair that they be required to pay for these
24 economic losses.

25 And I think fair economic -- fair compensation

1 for economic losses will make this program more
2 acceptable to the public in general.

3 I also believe that the wolf should never have
4 been designated as endangered or threatened in the first
5 place because the species has never been biologically
6 threatened with extinction. They were politically
7 classified as such, and that is where the problem lies.
8 I believe that this is a misuse of the Endangered
9 Species Act and its original intent, to protect and
10 recover species that are truly endangered and
11 threatened.

12 The real problem here is political. You
13 people are caught in the middle. You are pawns in this
14 game. That's basically a political game here.

15 Another thing is the restrictions on private
16 land, if implemented, and failure to compensate for all
17 losses, what it does is that it forces citizens who are
18 affected by these policies to subsidize these policies.

19 Another thing is that with regulated hunting
20 and trapping, this will increase the economic value of
21 the species. Whenever a species has economic value,
22 there will be more people looking out for its welfare.
23 And it is in their self-interests to do so. So
24 delisting the wolf will actually help to increase the
25 level of protection, because I know, as a trapper

1 myself, if I want to go out and trap wolves, I would
2 like to have animals to trap, so I am going to do what I
3 can to protect that resource. It is called sustainable
4 use. We believe in sustainable use.

5 Another thing is that I feel the wolf
6 population has far exceeded the cultural carrying
7 capacity that is defined as the number of animals the
8 public is willing to tolerate, and I think it is time
9 for delisting. I think you are on the right track here.

10 Thank you for allowing me to speak.

11 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Speaker
12 number five.

13 MS. ROBERTA MURRAY: My name is Roberta Kay
14 Murray, M-U-R-R-A-Y. I am from west of Paulding,
15 Michigan, in the Ottawa National Forest in an area of
16 increased wolf sightings and decreased deer population.
17 I am in favor of the delisting and eventual designation
18 of wolves as a game animal. I have six questions for
19 the committee to consider, as far as my comments.

20 Number one, with no local natural predators
21 other than humans, what will control the increasing wolf
22 population?

23 Number two, how does a wolf distinguish
24 between a deer, calf, a dog, a cat, or a child?

25 Number three, what responsibility does the

1 government have to protect my family and my domestic
2 animals from the unlimited increase of threats from
3 wolves around my home?

4 Number four, if wolves currently have
5 established, quote, den rendezvous sites, why is there
6 any need to place more restrictions on private and
7 public land use?

8 Number five, how does the government propose
9 to replace the two billion dollars annually obtained
10 from hunters when the deer population is used as wolf
11 food?

12 Finally, number six, why do locally observed
13 wolves behave differently than those wild wolves in
14 unpopulated areas of western Canada?

15 I will submit written comments. And I thank
16 you for letting me speak.

17 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Speaker
18 number six.

19 MR. DAVE BAHRMAN: Good evening. Dave
20 Bahrman, Brimley, Michigan, speaking for Michigan Farm
21 Bureau, B-A-H-R-M-A-N.

22 We support delisting of the gray wolf. You
23 have shown in your presentation the reasons why they
24 should be delisted. And we hope you stick to it. I was
25 going to keep very brief on the comments because I think

1 there is quite a few people who want to talk behind me.
2 So we applaud you for attempting to delist them.

3 Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Speaker
5 number seven.

6 MR. BILL WATSON: My name is Bill Watson, from
7 -- W-A-T-S-O-N -- from Bruce Crossing, Michigan. I
8 speak on my own behalf but also on behalf of the
9 membership of Copper Country Farm Bureau. And we, too,
10 support the delisting proposal as presented tonight. We
11 hope you go ahead with it as proposed.

12 And this comment is on my own behalf. I would
13 hope that we can institute a regulated hunting season
14 for wolves when they get beyond a certain point, just to
15 minimize the danger to livestock and also the potential
16 danger to people, especially children.

17 Thank you very much.

18 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Speaker
19 number eight.

20 MR. WILLIAM KRAKER: My name is William
21 Kraker, K-R-A-K-E-R. I am from Alston, Michigan. I am
22 a dairy farmer. I have had some close encounters with
23 wolves recently. Got to see my first wolf this year,
24 and I was hoping to be able to see one.

25 I was working with the DNR this summer, with

1 my wolf problem. The wolf came as close as my neighbor
2 and killed a calf there, and -- but he didn't kill any
3 of my livestock. I, on the advice of the extension
4 service, had been composting any cow remains that I
5 might have, or a dead cow, to minimize luring the wolves
6 to my farm, to minimize the problems that I may have.
7 And I was quite surprised and shocked that the wolves
8 actually dug up my compost pile, actually dug it up to
9 feed on the remains of the animals that were in it.

10 I -- At first, I thought it was a bear, until
11 I had someone that actually saw the wolf on the pile. I
12 don't -- I don't want you to think that I am in any way
13 against wolves. I think they are a very important part
14 of God's creation and I was, like I said, thrilled to be
15 able to see one this year, but I am all for the
16 delisting, and I am all for the DNR taking over the
17 management of them. And I -- and I hope that goes
18 through and I wish them well.

19 Thank you.

20 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Speaker
21 number nine.

22 MR. LESTER LIVERMORE: Good evening. I am
23 Lester Livermore, L-E-S-T-E-R L-I-V-E-R-M-O-R-E. I am
24 the manager of the Hiawatha Sportsman's Club, 35,000
25 acre, 1,200 member hunting and fishing club, founded in

1 1927, located in Western Mackinac County. Over the last
2 four years, we have cooperated with the Department of
3 Natural Resources extensively to help verify population
4 numbers of the gray wolf in our area. Through trapping,
5 we have collared a total of 11 wolves on the Hiawatha
6 Sportsman's Club and have had up to 12 wolves on the
7 property at one time.

8 The cooperation and tolerance of the Hiawatha
9 Sportsman's Club and its members was based on the
10 understanding that we were part of a process that would
11 conclude with the complete delisting of the gray wolf
12 and that prudent management would follow. Countless
13 times I have urged restraint to an upset member that has
14 had his hunting disrupted by a pack of wolves that
15 roamed our property, and explained to him that we needed
16 to be patient and keep our focus on the light at the end
17 of the tunnel. You should try explaining to a member
18 that has five wolves lay down in front of his blind that
19 the wolf is an endangered species and that his dues are
20 being spent to cooperate with the recovery.

21 Fortunately, I still believe that HSC is part
22 of a process and that the end of this process is close
23 at hand. If this process was derailed and the wolf was
24 retained on the endangered species list, we as a club
25 will be forced to reevaluate our position concerning the

1 entire wolf recovery effort.

2 Typically, endangered species are held in such
3 high regard that when a recovery is made, some people
4 cannot adjust to the idea that this species is no more
5 valuable than the others that are already present. The
6 gray wolf is little more than the larger cousin of the
7 coyote and management is just as necessary and prudent
8 with one as it is with the other. Any species that --
9 sorry. Any species that is protected inappropriately or
10 excessively will become a problem. The wolf has no
11 predator but man, and with a recruitment rate nearing 15
12 percent, it is only a matter of time before serious
13 problems arise. The DNR has stated that the biggest
14 obstacle for the reestablishment of wolves in Michigan
15 was overcoming public opinion. For the wolf to continue
16 to thrive in northern Michigan, public opinion must
17 remain tolerant. Let's not let the wolf become the next
18 double crested cormorant.

19 To summarize our position, we believe that the
20 population information gathered by the DNR clearly shows
21 that the gray wolf is in full recovery and a sustainable
22 population is currently present in the entire recovery
23 area. And thus, we fully support the delisting of the
24 gray wolf as proposed and strongly encourage the DNR to
25 adopt management goals and regulations that maintain

1 population levels that are within the social limits
2 of sustainability.

3 I would also like to strongly suggest that
4 traditional methods of population management be used.
5 Hunting and trapping have been proven to be very
6 effective and also provide a revenue stream to offset
7 the management costs.

8 Also, a hunting season would help convert the
9 public opinion and establish the gray wolf as a prized
10 asset rather than a liability.

11 I would also like to commend the DNR in their
12 efforts to reach this point in the gray wolf recovery
13 saga.

14 Thank you.

15 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Speaker
16 number 10.

17 MS. SUE WAKKURI: Hello. My name is Sue
18 Wakkuri. I live in Gwinn, Michigan, and I speak for
19 myself, and these are my opinions.

20 My main reason for coming tonight -- My main
21 concern tonight is that the wolf continue to be
22 protected, as the packs continue to reestablish
23 themselves in the Upper Peninsula and the rest of the
24 United States.

25 I agree with everything Ms. Warren from Ewen

1 said earlier. I wish I could say it as eloquently. I
2 hope we can continue to allow these intelligent and
3 beautiful animals to recover without being persecuted by
4 hunters and trappers.

5 And to repeat what a man said earlier,
6 although I agree with nothing else that he said, wolves
7 are tolerant of people and they do have a way of living
8 with people, but people have a way of not living with
9 wolves. And people have shown that they are not
10 tolerant of wolves, and that's why they had to be
11 reintroduced in the Upper Peninsula.

12 And to also address what he said about the
13 loss of hunting dogs, last year, we -- my family adopted
14 a hunting dog that was abandoned in the woods. It was a
15 valuable dog. It was a pure bred beagle, abandoned in
16 the woods by a hunter who -- who obviously didn't
17 appreciate the value of this animal.

18 I also have two children, and am I worried
19 about them being attacked by a wolf? Maybe a little
20 bit. But I am more worried about them being attacked by
21 somebody else's pet dog who is running loose on the
22 street. I love dogs. I love animals, but my kids are
23 more in danger of dogs that are running loose or
24 irresponsible pet owners than they are from these wolves
25 in the U.P.

1 Some hunters and trappers only consider their
2 trophies, and the resale value of the hides of these
3 animals, without the welfare of these animals. And I
4 don't believe that they should be hunted or trapped,
5 under any circumstances.

6 Thank you.

7 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Speaker
8 number eleven. Do we have a 12 or -- Well, first, is 11
9 here? Okay, let's skip to number 12. Do we have a
10 13? No, that's it.

11 Okay. At this point, I know I set a time
12 limit of five minutes. If anybody that I encouraged to
13 make their comments a little too brief, if you wanted
14 the opportunity to come back up, please do so. Why
15 don't you just hold up your card if you would like to
16 speak again?

17 Okay. If there is anybody who doesn't have --
18 who did not register and would like to speak, there
19 again, you would go out to the hallway and register to
20 speak. You will have some time to think that over. In
21 the meantime, we will recess until such time as somebody
22 would like to speak, or until nine o'clock comes along.

23 In the meantime, you can talk to some of the
24 resource people who are here.

25 (Off the record at about 8:20 p.m. Back on

1 the record at about 8:32 p.m.)

2 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Okay. We have one
3 more commenter. So we will call the meeting back to
4 order. And commenter number -- what was it -- 13?

5 MR. BRIAN HERIOUX: 13.

6 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Okay, thank you.

7 Oh, yeah, just remind you that you should
8 state your name, spell it for the recorder. If you are
9 representing an organization, state that affiliation,
10 and then your state of residence, please.

11 MR. BRIAN HERIOUX: My name is Brian Herioux,
12 last name is spelled H-E-R-I-O-U-X. I am a Michigan
13 resident. I would like to start off by applauding Fish
14 and Wildlife Service for implementing the Endangered
15 Species Act, getting wolves back in the Upper Peninsula,
16 and for the growth they have done. I support delisting,
17 with the hopes that the state can take over and manage
18 our wolf population, both, as much as I hate to say it,
19 to try to keep the public happy, because it gets kind of
20 difficult, however I hope they use sound science to keep
21 -- keep track of our wolf population and manage them,
22 keeping in mind that as a member of the agricultural
23 community in the southern Upper Peninsula, who has tried
24 to raise crops here, to have them devastated by the
25 white tail deer, understand that we need a predator for

1 the white tail deer here and I would hope that the
2 Michigan DNR would use the wolves as a tool for the deer
3 and vice versa because, you know, I hear a lot of
4 complaints down in Delta County from white tail hunters,
5 that, oh, the wolves are eating all of our deer. You
6 know, guys, the truth is the wolves are here because
7 there is too many deer here. And I -- I guess I would
8 just like to applaud everybody for doing a good job and
9 hope they use this in the management of the population.

10 Thank you.

11 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Thank you. Again, if
12 there is anybody who would wish to make additional
13 comments, if you haven't registered, you can get a card
14 out in the hallway at the table, and feel free to do
15 that. In the meantime, unless there is -- I see any
16 indication right now, we will be here until nine
17 o'clock. I will go back into recess now.

18 Thank you.

19 (Off the record again at about 8:37 p.m.)

20 HEARING OFFICER TWOHEY: Okay. Back on. I
21 reconvene this meeting. This meeting is now closed.

22 * * * * *

23 (The hearing was adjourned at about 9:03 p.m.)

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25

1 STATE OF MICHIGAN)
)
2 COUNTY OF MARQUETTE)

3

4 I, Sandra A. Larson, CSR-2916, Certified Shorthand
5 Reporter, in and for the County of Marquette, State of
6 Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a
7 true and complete transcript of the hearing attended by
8 me, held in the above-case on September 13, 2004.

9

10 Date _____
11 Sandra A. Larson, CSR-2916
12 Certified Shorthand Reporter

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