

1                   BEFORE THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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6                                   PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING

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8       PROPOSAL TO DELIST THE GRAY WOLF

          EASTERN DISTINCT POPULATION SEGMENT

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14                                   Minnesota Valley National  
                                  Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center  
15                                   3815 American Boulevard East  
                                  Bloomington, Minnesota

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17

                                  October 6, 2004

18

                                  7:30 p.m.

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1 APPEARANCES :

2 TIM YAGER

3 LAURA RAGAN

4 DAN STINNETT

5 RON REFSNIDER

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1                   MR. YAGER: Okay. Now we're ready. Can  
2 everybody hear me? Again, I want to welcome you  
3 to tonight's hearing. The Fish and Wildlife  
4 Service welcomes you.

5                   The purpose of the hearing tonight is to  
6 gather comments from the public. That's the  
7 purpose of the hearing, to hear what you have to  
8 say to us about our proposal to delist the Eastern  
9 Distinct Population Segment of the Gray Wolf.

10                  My name is Tim Yager. I am a Fish and  
11 Wildlife biologist with the Fish and Wildlife  
12 Service's National Wildlife Refuge Program. I'm  
13 stationed in the regional office just down the  
14 road from here at Fort Snelling. And I will serve  
15 as the presiding official for the hearing  
16 tonight.

17                  We have a court reporter with us. Her  
18 name is Julie. She's from Shaddix & Associates.  
19 She'll be preparing a written record of all the  
20 statements that are made during this hearing.  
21 Transcripts of this hearing and other hearings  
22 will be posted on the Web site of the Midwest  
23 Region of the Fish and Wildlife Service in a few  
24 weeks. The address for the Web site is available  
25 in the materials that are out front.

1                   While I'm interested in the conservation  
2 of gray wolves, I'll have no further involvement  
3 with this proposal after tonight. I'm an  
4 impartial participant in this hearing. However,  
5 there are a number of other Fish and Wildlife  
6 Service people here, you met most of them, who  
7 will be involved further with this proposal. And  
8 I would encourage you that you make contact with  
9 them if you have comments following this hearing.  
10 You can provide it in written form, and I  
11 encourage you to do that.

12                   Again, the folks are Ron Refsnider.  
13 He's not here, but you met him. Dan Stinnett,  
14 who's with our Ecological Services Field Office  
15 just across the street here. And Laura Ragan.  
16 There are a number of other folks in the crowd who  
17 are willing to help you if you should any  
18 questions about how you can submit your comments  
19 and provide your comments orally here tonight.

20                   Now, what I'd appreciate is your  
21 undivided attention for the next few minutes. I'm  
22 going to apologize for the mechanical nature of  
23 what I'm about to present, but I'm going to be  
24 reading from a prepared script because I want to  
25 make sure I don't leave anything out. So thanks

1 for your patience with that.

2 This is a public hearing under Section 7  
3 of the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973.  
4 Notice of the proposal to remove the gray wolf in  
5 the Eastern United States from the list of  
6 Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and the 120-day  
7 public comment period was published in the Federal  
8 Register on July 21, 2004, beginning on  
9 page 43,664. A notice of the nine public hearings  
10 being held in the Midwest was published in the  
11 Federal Register on August 13, 2004, on page  
12 50,147. One additional public hearing has been  
13 scheduled in Orono, Maine on October 20th.

14 Convening public hearings is one of the  
15 methods the Fish and Wildlife Service is using to  
16 solicit data and comments from the public on this  
17 proposal. No final decision has yet been made  
18 regarding this proposal, nor will any decision be  
19 made at this hearing. Public comments on this  
20 proposal will be accepted through November 18,  
21 2004. After review and consideration of the  
22 existing administrative record, your comments,  
23 your interpretations of existing data, and all  
24 other information gathered during the comment  
25 period, the Fish and Wildlife Service will make a

1 final decision on the proposal. Information that  
2 you provide in your comments this evening will  
3 become part of the administrative record and will  
4 be considered by the Fish and Wildlife Service in  
5 the decision-making process.

6 Now, I want to direct your attention to  
7 the two tables that are outside. One table is the  
8 registration table, where you will need to take a  
9 numbered note card if you wish to present oral  
10 comments tonight. After I give elected officials,  
11 if we have any here, a chance to provide their  
12 comments, I'll begin calling your numbers to  
13 present your comments at the microphone, and this  
14 is the microphone we use.

15 If you do not wish to speak tonight, but  
16 would like to get on our mailing list to receive  
17 future information on this proposal, please add  
18 your name and mailing address or your e-mail  
19 address to the mailing list sign-up sheet, which  
20 is also at the registration table.

21 The second table, which is located  
22 outside this door and straight back, has a variety  
23 of written information about this proposal, about  
24 wolves, and about the Endangered Species Act.  
25 Please take a copy of anything that interests

1           you. I especially want to point out the green  
2           sheet, which provides details on several ways you  
3           can get more information on the proposal and also  
4           explains several methods you can use to submit  
5           written comments other than at tonight's hearing.  
6           The green sheet also lists the dates and locations  
7           of the other public hearings. There's also a  
8           light-blue comment form, which you can use to turn  
9           in written comments tonight or by mail.

10                        When I call your number to present your  
11           comments, please come to the front microphone.  
12           When you begin your comments, state your full  
13           name, spell it, identify any organization you  
14           represent, and give your state of residence. If  
15           you have a copy of written comments with you, you  
16           may give it to the court reporter or give it to me  
17           and I'll enter it into the record as a written  
18           comment. Oral comments will be limited to five  
19           minutes to start. If we have additional time at  
20           the end of the meeting, we'll go ahead and extend  
21           it if you'd like to provide more comment at the  
22           end of the meeting. And since we're a little bit  
23           late, I know the scheduled start -- stop time was  
24           nine o'clock. We'll extend that to 9:20. If we  
25           need to go beyond that, we'll continue on until

1 all oral comments have been received.

2 I guess to maximize the opportunities of  
3 others to express their comments, I guess I'd ask  
4 you to refrain from commenting on any issues  
5 beyond the scope of the Fish and Wildlife Services  
6 wolf delisting proposal.

7 This is an informal hearing and,  
8 therefore, you will not be questioned or  
9 cross-examined in connection with your comments.  
10 This hearing is solely intended to obtain your  
11 comments so the Fish and Wildlife Service can  
12 consider them when making their final decision on  
13 the proposal. Therefore, Fish and Wildlife  
14 Service officials will not respond to questions  
15 nor engage in any discussion of the proposal  
16 during the hearing. The previous presentations  
17 and question-and-answer session were intended for  
18 questions and discussions, so we will be devoting  
19 this portion of the evening to receiving your  
20 comments. If you have questions about the  
21 proposal or about the Endangered Species Act, I  
22 encourage you to take advantage of the materials  
23 at the information table and on our Web site. You  
24 may want to read them and then submit written  
25 comments later.

1                   There may be opportunities to ask  
2                   questions of individual Fish and Wildlife Service  
3                   staff outside of the hearing, possibly after the  
4                   hearing closes, or during a recess if we take  
5                   one. But I emphasize that this hearing is  
6                   intended to receive public input, not to respond  
7                   to it. The Fish and Wildlife Service's responses  
8                   to the issues and questions raised during the  
9                   comment period, including those that come up at  
10                  this hearing, will be published as part of the  
11                  final rule, as part of a re-proposal, or in a  
12                  withdrawal notice for this proposal. That  
13                  publication will probably occur in mid- or late  
14                  2005.

15                  Again, your comments are being recorded  
16                  by the court reporter to assist us in reviewing  
17                  them and to preserve them for the record. Please  
18                  keep in mind that the reporter will only be  
19                  recording statements made into the microphone.  
20                  Comments from the audience and other statements  
21                  made away from the mike or made to the audience  
22                  will not become part of the record and will not be  
23                  considered by the Fish and Wildlife Service when  
24                  making the final decision on this proposal. All  
25                  oral comments must be made into the microphone and

1 directed to the front of the room.

2 In addition to, or instead of, providing  
3 oral comments tonight, you may submit comments in  
4 writing, by e-mail, or by fax. Oral comments will  
5 not be accepted outside of the public hearing  
6 setting. And as I mentioned, written, e-mailed,  
7 or faxed comments will be accepted through  
8 November 18, 2004, and will be given the same  
9 consideration as oral comments presented during  
10 this evening.

11 So I guess now I'd like to open up the  
12 floor to public comments. After I call your  
13 number, please come to the microphone, state your  
14 name, spell it, identify who you represent, give  
15 your state of residence, and begin your comments.  
16 Remember, we're going to limit you to five minutes  
17 to start. If we have additional time at the end,  
18 you can come back and revisit what you'd like to  
19 say.

20 Do we have any federal elected  
21 officials, state officials that would like to  
22 comment first?

23 Seeing no hands, I will call Speaker 1.  
24 Whoever has Card 1, please come forward.

25 MR. BUMP: Hi. My name is Robert G.

1 Bump, Sr., R-O-B-E-R-T, G., B-U-M-P. I represent  
2 myself. I'm from Bloomington, Minnesota.

3 First off, I've listened to a very good  
4 presentation. It has left me with some questions  
5 and some statements I'd like to make. You showed  
6 that the -- or we want to delist gray wolf in  
7 Minnesota. And you showed a very nice graph of  
8 the United States where the wolf used to habitat.  
9 Well, how about if we're moving some of our wolves  
10 into these other areas. That's going to deplete  
11 our supply. What's going to be done in, like,  
12 Oregon, Washington, other states where the wolves  
13 are not and they used to be. Where are these  
14 wolves going to be supplied from.

15 We still need to study the Minnesota  
16 wolf. We need to find out what he's doing. Where  
17 does this leave the wolf for those who want him  
18 destroyed. I heard a comment tonight already  
19 about the Indian tribes and the State's going to  
20 be left to deciding what to do with the wolf. I  
21 already know that packs of dogs -- or packs of  
22 wolves have been blamed when dogs have been the  
23 killers of deer, sheep and other animals up in  
24 Northern Minnesota. But you've got a city like  
25 Cloquet, Ironton, other cities like that up there,

1 and all of a sudden they have a slash of  
2 killings. What makes you think that they won't  
3 just automatically accuse the wolf. He doesn't --  
4 He's got a bad reputation, which he shouldn't, but  
5 what makes you think for one minute that city is  
6 not going to turn around and shoot every wolf in  
7 sight when they could have gone out and found out  
8 that it was a pack of dogs that killed that  
9 wolf -- or killed that deer.

10 As for the Indian tribes, I have a  
11 friend named Jim Dutcher out in Idaho. He brought  
12 up a pack of wolves. He had it on forest land.  
13 The Forest Department said he could not renew his  
14 permit to have the wolves there. He found an  
15 Indian tribe to take care of them. They moved  
16 them up to the Indian tribe's land. That pack of  
17 wolves is gone. They were not managed the way  
18 they should have been.

19 So we have to kind of watch what we're  
20 doing when we've got this cross between the  
21 American Indian taking care of the wolf, managing  
22 them, and the state managing them. I really don't  
23 have a good feeling about that. It takes some  
24 real perseverance to keep those animals in peace  
25 in the mind.

1                   That's about all I have to say on the  
2                   wolf. I don't want them taken off the endangered  
3                   species list. He still needs our protection. I  
4                   know too many hunters out there with the  
5                   philosophy of find 'em, shoot 'em, shovel 'em and  
6                   shut up about 'em. I had one even threaten my  
7                   life one day when I was defending a wolf.

8                   As long as we've got hunters like that  
9                   that don't care, we're going to lose wolves. And  
10                  if you take it to the state and there's any chance  
11                  that that animal could be hunted or somebody open  
12                  fire on them, he's gone. He doesn't have a rifle  
13                  to shoot back. He doesn't have a bow and arrow to  
14                  shoot back. He can't make weapons to take care of  
15                  the people that are out to get him. He takes care  
16                  of his family. We've got a lot to learn from that  
17                  wolf. I don't see him harming people.

18                  As I read in the last statistic, two  
19                  million wolves have died. No men have died, no  
20                  children have died, no women have died. Two  
21                  million wolves have, though. That's a real good  
22                  picture. Thank you.

23                  MR. YAGER: Thank you, sir. No. 2.

24                  MR. GOLDMAN: Good evening. My name is  
25                  Howard Goldman, G-O-L-D-M-A-N. And I'm

1 representing the Minnesota Humane Society, Friends  
2 of Animals and their Environment, and the  
3 Coalition for Animal Rights Education. We have  
4 about 6,600 members in the state of Minnesota.  
5 That you for the opportunity to offer comments  
6 this evening.

7 And we're speaking against delisting.  
8 We believe we're not ready to delist. Maybe in 50  
9 years, maybe in 100, but certainly not now.

10 On the one hand we have the irrational  
11 hatred of wolves. On the other hand we have  
12 those, the consumptive users who intend to manage,  
13 dominate and harvest this species for fur or for  
14 sport. These are the attitudes that almost caused  
15 the wolf to become extinct and currently occupies  
16 about 1 percent of its former range. And those  
17 attitudes are still prevalent today.

18 I was also a member of the wolf  
19 round-table team working to develop the management  
20 plan in Minnesota. The gentleman that preceded me  
21 said, we heard over and over again from  
22 consumptive users on that round-table, shoot,  
23 shovel and shut up. What that means, in effect,  
24 as you all know is you shoot the wolves, you bury  
25 them, and you don't tell anybody. We heard over

1           and over again that between 250 and 400 wolves are  
2           being killed illegally in this state, and we have  
3           no reason to think that those numbers are any  
4           lower today. As far as I know, and we can argue  
5           about the numbers, there hasn't been a single  
6           prosecution, as far as I know, in the state in all  
7           of this time, since they've been classified as  
8           endangered.

9                         We also read periodically about wolves  
10           being run down by snowmobilers in Minnesota, in  
11           Northern Minnesota. Now, that's being done for  
12           fun or for sport. It certainly shows no respect  
13           at all for this species. We have a previous DNR  
14           chief of Wildlife who used to say that the wolf  
15           would be a magnificent game animal. And let me  
16           point out that the DNR, and this is the agency  
17           that's responsible for managing the wolf, took the  
18           position in 1974, shortly after the wolf was  
19           declassified, they argued that the wolf should be  
20           turned over to the state, that it was not  
21           endangered, and there should be seasons on the  
22           wolf. This happened again in '77, it happened  
23           again in '84.

24                         The simple truth is if we delist the  
25           wolf, we'll be discussing its reclassification

1           again, as clearly as we are here today. The  
2           numbers will decline precipitously, we believe.  
3           And how do we explain that to future generations.

4                       The Eastern Population is a very large  
5           area. Most states in the northeast have no wolf  
6           population or no officially-recognized wolf  
7           population. Delisting wolves in these states we  
8           believe is contrary to the intent of the  
9           Endangered Species Act, which is the conservation  
10          of the species. It would preclude any possibility  
11          of wolf recovery in these areas. And, if  
12          anything, we should be working on ways to protect  
13          the wolves in these states, not proposing  
14          delisting.

15                      Currently we believe the wolf management  
16          plans are misguided, both the plans in Wisconsin  
17          and Michigan and Minnesota. In Minnesota, in the  
18          lower two-thirds of the state, farmers can shoot  
19          wolves on sight if they believe, there's to be no  
20          basis in fact, simply if they believe they'd  
21          attack on livestock. In Wisconsin they call that  
22          killing them proactively, same concept is in  
23          place. None of the plans require livestock owners  
24          to implement any sound livestock husbandry  
25          practices to prevent or reduce livestock losses.

1           The wolf management plans for Minnesota  
2           and Wisconsin both allow for hunting seasons and  
3           recreation after the delisting. And as I learned  
4           tonight during the question-and-answer period,  
5           that could happen immediately after delisting,  
6           depending on what the states elect to do. Many  
7           Minnesotans believe, and I agree with them, that  
8           if there's legal killing, illegal killing will  
9           increase exponentially.

10           We have to also keep in mind the  
11           following: Wolves are territorial. The numbers  
12           of the population depend on natural factors,  
13           disease, habitat and prey. They don't need  
14           hunting and trapping to manage the population;  
15           they can manage themselves.

16           We all have seen what's happened with  
17           mange, the outbreaks in Minnesota and Wisconsin.  
18           And as was noted earlier, the population in  
19           Minnesota has not increased since 1998. In fact,  
20           it may have declined. Moreover, there is no  
21           statewide census in Minnesota, at least, of the  
22           wolf population. There's no aerial survey.  
23           There's no hard science on the numbers.

24           And what if we're wrong. What if the  
25           number has been overestimated. What happens

1           then.  If anything, we have to be very  
2           conservative in this process.

3                         In conclusion, wolves are a national  
4           treasure.  They're a symbol of the wilderness.  If  
5           we're to err, it must be on the side of  
6           conservation.  We owe it to the wolves and to the  
7           wilderness.  We urge you not to delist this  
8           species.  Thank you.

9                         MR. YAGER:  Thank you.  No. 3.  I'd also  
10          like to encourage you if you decide you'd like to  
11          give comments, to go out and collect a card from  
12          outside.  We'll just continue on with this process  
13          throughout the night.

14                        MR. BERRY:  Good evening.  My name is  
15          Eli Berry, E-L-I, B-E-R-R-Y.  I'm from Mora,  
16          Minnesota, Kanabec County.  I'm a cattleman and  
17          I'm representing the Kanabec-Isanti County Farm  
18          Bureau tonight.  We are -- Or I'm speaking in  
19          support of delisting the wolves.  They have met  
20          and exceeded the population goals, so it's time to  
21          take them off of the list.

22                        We're not against wolves.  The DNR does  
23          have a management plan in place.  And we do want  
24          to be able to protect our livelihood from  
25          depredation.  So I'll be brief, and we are in

1 support of delisting the wolves. Thank you.

2 MR. YAGER: Thank you, sir.

3 Commenter 4?

4 MR. TUCKER: My name is Michael Tucker,  
5 T-U-C-K-E-R. I'm from Bloomington, Minnesota, and  
6 I'm here this evening to speak on behalf of the  
7 Minnesota Trappers Association. The Minnesota  
8 Trappers Association supports delisting of the  
9 gray wolf and a return to state management of this  
10 species. Our Minnesota DNR has demonstrated  
11 expertise in managing sensitive predator species  
12 such as fisher, martin and bobcat. Current  
13 population levels and ranges in Minnesota of the  
14 gray wolf have far exceeded federal goals and  
15 continue to grow. Under state management, we feel  
16 that a legal public harvest of wolves through a  
17 regulated trapping and/or hunting season is  
18 justifiable, sustainable and would prove to be a  
19 valuable component to our state's wolf management  
20 plan.

21 Trappers have always been in close  
22 contact with wildlife and being in the field each  
23 day witness firsthand the ravages of wildlife  
24 diseases, such as mange, distemper and parvovirus  
25 that frequently occur when population levels

1 exceed carrying capacity. Regulated harvest as  
2 part of our state wolf management plan will assist  
3 in maintaining healthy populations, reduce  
4 depredation complaints, and help to assure  
5 continued focus of work for the gray wolf in  
6 Minnesota.

7 In summary, the Minnesota Trappers  
8 Association supports delisting and the return of  
9 wolf management to our Minnesota DNR. Thank you.

10 MR. YAGER: Thank you. Commenter 5.

11 MS. HATFIELD: Hello. My name is Linda  
12 Hatfield, H-A-T-F-I-E-L-D. I'm representing HOWL,  
13 How Our Wolves Live. And I will also be  
14 submitting written comments, but not tonight, but  
15 later. HOWL believes it's far too early to  
16 consider delisting the wolf. Minnesota and other  
17 states in the proposed delisting rule still hold  
18 fierce anti-wolf sentiments. Not much has really  
19 changed in attitudes from those earlier days when  
20 the wolf was almost extricated. Wolves were  
21 basically thought of as nothing more than a mere  
22 varmint. Minnesota's own history has been poor,  
23 as Howard mentioned in his comments. The State  
24 failed the wolf. Minnesota will continue to fail  
25 the wolf. The Minnesota state plan, written by

1 the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources,  
2 panders to anti-wolf attitudes. As Howard  
3 mentioned, two-thirds of the state will allow  
4 liberal killing of wolves, shoot on sight without  
5 any justification. If they think that wolf is  
6 going to kill something, they are going to kill  
7 that wolf. The other one-third of the state will  
8 open the state up to a bounty, yes, I'm calling it  
9 a bounty. It is guised as a predator-control  
10 payment program. It's \$150 bounty on wolves. I  
11 think we're really going back in time bringing  
12 back the bounty in the state of Minnesota.

13 It's also been understood, or I always  
14 understood it, that after delisting, the states  
15 would be able to open a hunting and trapping  
16 season on wolves. But as we learned here this  
17 evening, that's speculative. We don't know when  
18 that's going to happen. And we can pretty much  
19 bet that the Minnesota DNR is going to be the  
20 first to institute -- to establish those seasons.  
21 But there is no justification for sport hunting  
22 and trapping of wolves. Data indicates that  
23 arbitrarily killing wolves for sport is not an  
24 effective or reasonable method of depredation  
25 control, mainly because trapping is a winter

1 activity. Pelts are prime. Summer-trapped  
2 wolves, usually that's the time of year when  
3 wolves do depredate, have low-quality pelts.

4 I feel -- HOWL feels that the states are  
5 not providing good, ecological sound management  
6 for the wolf based on biodiversity and responsible  
7 stewardship, nor has there been in Minnesota a  
8 scientific population census done. It's basically  
9 bias and trend surveys. Minnesota has depended  
10 heavily on extrapolations and opinions from  
11 individuals doing non-wolf related fieldwork.

12 Population alone should not be  
13 considered the sole proof of the long-term  
14 viability of the species. The ecosystem on which  
15 the wolf depends must also be viable. Wolves are  
16 social, complicated animals. Their pack structure  
17 must be considered in any management plan to  
18 maintain their stability.

19 The states also must complete a  
20 comprehensive and scientific assessment on  
21 important subjects as measurable habitat, prey  
22 base, mortality, grow density. These are all  
23 success for long -- These are all needed for  
24 success for long-term wolf recovery to be  
25 maintained. I feel these state plans have failed

1 in that.

2 I'm going to get into farmers and  
3 ranchers here. HOWL believes that they must be --  
4 they must be required to engage in better  
5 management practices, BMPs, to minimize their wolf  
6 losses. The use of a gun or a bounty hunter is  
7 not good BMPs. Wolves in Minnesota have  
8 rebounded, yes, but it's not entirely because they  
9 were placed on the endangered species list.  
10 Success was due to constant vigilance, litigation  
11 by wolf groups to enforce the Act.

12 I will come back to the word "attitude."

13 This proposed delisting fails the wolf. It  
14 fails the wolf because after delisting, the wolf's  
15 future will be put in the hands of the states like  
16 Minnesota, which has always viewed it as nothing  
17 more than a varmint. The Service must reject  
18 state plans that do nothing for the wolf, plans  
19 that continue to pander to these anti-wolf  
20 attitudes. HOWL believes that it is important to  
21 rid these attitudes once and for all before  
22 delisting can even be considered. It is important  
23 to promote ecological balance, biodiversity, and  
24 the importance that roles play in keeping the  
25 natural world healthy. The wolf is part of our

1 culture and our wilderness heritage. Federal and  
2 state agencies must be held accountable for the  
3 preservation of this majestic animal. Again, I  
4 urge you to not delist the wolf. Thank you.

5 MR. YAGER: Thank you.

6 No. 6.

7 MS. ADKINS GIESE: My name is Collette  
8 Adkins Giese, C-O-L-L-E-T-T-E, A-D-K-I-N-S, space,  
9 G-I-E-S-E. And I live in Minnesota. I'm offering  
10 these comments on behalf of the North Star Chapter  
11 of the Sierra Club, of which I've been a member  
12 and volunteer for the last few years. The club is  
13 preparing formal written comments and we'll submit  
14 those before the November 18th deadline.

15 The North Star Chapter of the Sierra  
16 Club is a non-profit organization dedicated to the  
17 preservation and restoration of natural  
18 environments, and we believe the gray wolf needs  
19 to be restored to all significant portions of its  
20 historical range. The chapter has 21,000 members  
21 in the state, with over half outside the  
22 metropolitan area.

23 I want to start by thanking the Fish and  
24 Wildlife Service for having these public hearings  
25 and soliciting public comments.

1                   I would like to share three concerns  
2                   that we have at this public hearing today: First,  
3                   the Fish and Wildlife Service's failure to recover  
4                   the wolf across all significant portions of its  
5                   range; second, the ongoing significant threat that  
6                   disease poses to the wolf; and, third, inadequacy  
7                   of the Minnesota wolf plan.

8                   So to begin, the Fish and Wildlife  
9                   Service has not recovered the wolf across all  
10                  significant portions of its historical range. And  
11                  before I start with that, I want to note that we  
12                  remain opposed to the creation of this massively  
13                  large Eastern DPS. It forecloses recovery efforts  
14                  in the northeastern United States, where suitable  
15                  unoccupied wolf habitat remains, and it  
16                  contradicts the recommendations of the Eastern  
17                  Timber Wolf Recovery Team, which recommended  
18                  reclassification only in the Western Great Lakes  
19                  states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and other  
20                  states within a reasonable dispersal distance of  
21                  wolves.

22                  But setting aside the issue of whether  
23                  the Eastern DPS should have been created in the  
24                  first place, we believe delisting is not warranted  
25                  within this current Eastern DPS. The ESA required

1 the Fish and Wildlife Service to retain threatened  
2 status for the wolf, as long as it meets the  
3 definition of a threatened species, which the ESA  
4 defines as "any species which is likely to become  
5 an endangered species within the foreseeable  
6 future throughout all or a significant portion of  
7 its range."

8           Within the Eastern DPS, there are  
9 several significant portions of its range that  
10 contain no viable wolf population. The Fish and  
11 Wildlife Service previously admitted that failure  
12 to cover wolves in the Northeastern United States  
13 would result in, quote, a significant gap in the  
14 range of the wolf. This is in the proposed rule  
15 for the wolf reclassification.

16           And biologists agree that the  
17 Northeastern United States contains large expanses  
18 of suitable wolf habitat, with abundant prey and  
19 dispersal corridors, while many sparse, connecting  
20 to a large wolf population in Canada.

21           Because the Northeastern United States  
22 is just one example of a significant portion of  
23 the wolf's range that does not contain viable wolf  
24 populations, the Fish and Wildlife Service cannot  
25 delist the Eastern DPS.

1                   Second, the wolf faces an ongoing,  
2                   significant threat from disease. The Fish and  
3                   Wildlife Service cannot delist the wolf until all  
4                   threats to its existence have been abated. But  
5                   wolf biologists agree that the threat from disease  
6                   is increasing, not decreasing. The Fish and  
7                   Wildlife Service admits in the proposed rule for  
8                   this delisting that disease may, quote,  
9                   significantly threaten gray wolf populations in  
10                  the future. Canine parvovirus, sarcoptic mange  
11                  and Lyme disease continue to have impacts on wolf  
12                  survival recovery. In fact, researchers reported  
13                  earlier this year in Minnesota that wolf  
14                  populations may have declined slightly and it's  
15                  possibly due to mange.

16                  A couple of reasons why impacts to  
17                  disease might be increasing. Even in large  
18                  recovering populations like Minnesota, No. 1,  
19                  increasing both density will put wolves in closer  
20                  wolf-to-wolf contact, spreading disease that way;  
21                  and, secondly, expanding wolf range will put dogs  
22                  and wolves into contact, putting the disease of  
23                  dogs and possibly spreading them to wolves.

24                  Finally, we believe the Minnesota plan  
25                  inadequately protects the wolves. It divides the

1 state into two zones, A and B, and the rules  
2 applicable to Zone B will ensure that large  
3 numbers of wolves will be killed. And while we  
4 believe that it inadequately protects the wolf  
5 here in Minnesota, even more importantly it will  
6 decrease the ability of Minnesota to meet a source  
7 population of wolves in other states.

8 So to conclude, the Sierra Club North  
9 Star Chapter does not believe that delisting the  
10 gray wolf is warranted at this time. We sincerely  
11 the Fish and Wildlife Service for all its  
12 important recovery efforts that it has done to  
13 recover the wolf in the past, and we encourage the  
14 Fish and Wildlife Service to continue filling its  
15 legal duty to recover the wolf in all significant  
16 portions of its range.

17 The wolf still meets the definition of  
18 an endangered or threatened species because  
19 threats to the wolf remain, threats to disease and  
20 threats from inadequate regulatory mechanisms, and  
21 as such, it cannot be delisted. Thank you for  
22 providing me this opportunity to comment.

23 MR. YAGER: Thank you. And I encourage  
24 anyone that would like to provide comments to go  
25 out and grab a card at the table.

1                   Let's continue on. No. 7.

2                   MS. N. CERRA: My name is Nicole Cerra,  
3 N-I-C-O-L-E, C-E-R-R-A. I'm a resident of  
4 Minnesota, but I live in Denver, Colorado.

5                   I wanted to thank the Fish and Wildlife  
6 Service for the opportunity to give comments.  
7 Many countries do not have this and we do. I feel  
8 quite honored to live in a country that does.

9                   I'm really scared for the wolf. I'm  
10 quite scared. I've been on Web sites. I went on  
11 the Internet. If you just type in "wolf" plus  
12 "delisting" on Google, you can find a whole range  
13 of observations: Some are from the Sierra Club;  
14 some are from people who are excited to kill the  
15 wolf.

16                   And the reason I asked that question  
17 today at the question-and-answer session about if  
18 wolves can be killed is because they can. They  
19 can be killed. And trapping will be legal, as  
20 other people have said. Bounty will be given,  
21 \$150 per wolf.

22                   I hope I have these numbers right.  
23 There are 2,450 wolves in the state of Minnesota  
24 today, yes? 1,600 wolves is the Minnesota legal  
25 level. That means that potentially 850 wolves

1           could be killed if the wolf is delisted. Is this  
2           really in the Fish and Wildlife Service's  
3           interest? Can you, as a person who is a potential  
4           guardian of wildlife, feel okay that 850 wolves  
5           may peril from delisting.

6                         I understand that the Endangered Species  
7           Act is not a long-term solution to the wolf  
8           problem, but is delisting the wolf a long-term  
9           solution? In my opinion it's not. I oppose the  
10          delisting immensely.

11                        MR. YAGER: Thank you.

12                        MR. YAGER: Speaker 8.

13                        MS. YEE-LITZENBERG: Better not touch  
14          that thing. Hello. My name is Lisa  
15          Yee-Litzenberg. Fun one to spell. L-I-S-A. Last  
16          name Y-E-E, hyphen, Litzenberg,  
17          L-I-T-Z-E-N-B-E-R-G. I'll provide you with a  
18          written copy. And I do have additional copies if  
19          anyone in the audience is interested.

20                        I'm the Great Lakes wolf project manager  
21          for the National Wildlife Federation, and I'll be  
22          providing comments on behalf of the National  
23          Wildlife Federation at this hearing. But we will  
24          also be providing more detailed written comments  
25          by the November 18th deadline.

1           The National Wildlife Federation has  
2 long played a role in wolf restoration efforts  
3 nationwide, both in helping to tailor common sense  
4 management plans to secure wolf recovery and in  
5 educating the public concerning facts and myths  
6 surrounding the animals. In keeping with NWF's  
7 past and present involvement in wolf conservation  
8 and recovery, and on behalf of National Wildlife  
9 Federation's four million members and supporters  
10 nationwide, including in all 21 states in the  
11 Eastern Distinct Population Segment, I'm providing  
12 comments on behalf of all of these folks.

13           The gray wolf is truly a success story  
14 for the Endangered Species Act in the three Great  
15 Lakes States of Michigan, Wisconsin and  
16 Minnesota. Wolves were nearly wiped out by humans  
17 in this region. Often under great political  
18 pressure, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the  
19 three state agencies and the tribes stayed the  
20 course for wolf recovery and nurtured wolves back  
21 to health in the Great Lakes region. Today,  
22 wolves in this region are thriving.

23           Successful wolf recovery in the Great  
24 Lakes region is a direct result of the Endangered  
25 Species Act's protection of wolves from humans and



1 Fish and Wildlife Service abandoned its proposal  
2 for a Northeast Distinct Population Segment, yet  
3 at the same time the Fish and Wildlife Service did  
4 not retreat from any of its original statements  
5 concerning the significance of the northeast  
6 region. Instead, the Fish and Wildlife Service  
7 abandoned further wolf recovery efforts in the  
8 northeast on the grounds that "the area in the  
9 Western Great Lakes states where wolf currently  
10 exists represents the entire range of the species  
11 within the Eastern DPS." This justification lacks  
12 scientific support. The Northeast currently  
13 shares a separate wolf population with  
14 southeastern Canada. The Fish and Wildlife  
15 Service has an obligation under the Endangered  
16 Species Act to promote recovery of this  
17 population, a population that is integral to the  
18 overall health of the gray wolf in the lower 48  
19 states.

20 This proposed delisting rule will remove  
21 protection for wolves far beyond the states where  
22 wolf recovery has actually taken place. It is  
23 unfortunate, for if the Fish and Wildlife Service  
24 had finalized the 2000 proposed rule, the Great  
25 Lakes wolf population, in all likelihood would be

1 on its way to being delisted. As a result of the  
2 Fish and Wildlife Service changing its original  
3 proposal so that the Western Great Lakes and  
4 Northeast Wolf Distinct Population Segments were  
5 now combined into one broad larger Eastern DPS,  
6 the Great Lakes population will be unnecessarily  
7 swept into litigation concerning the Fish and  
8 Wildlife Service's failure to pursue recovery  
9 outside of the Great Lakes.

10 There are already two lawsuits pending  
11 that challenge the legality of the Eastern  
12 Distinct Population Segment as established in the  
13 2003 reclassification rule. The National wildlife  
14 Federation recommends that the Fish and Wildlife  
15 Service work to resolve the legitimate concerns  
16 raised in those lawsuits, rather than pressing  
17 forward with delisting based on unsound science.

18 Under the Endangered Species Act, a  
19 species remains threatened so long as it is at  
20 risk in a significant portion of its range. The  
21 wolf remains extirpated in roughly 95 percent of  
22 its range, and yet the Fish and Wildlife Service  
23 has never addressed whether this is a significant  
24 portion. Until it prepares a national wolf  
25 recovery plan addressing what is the significant

1           portion of the range that must be restored, the  
2           Fish and Wildlife Service cannot legitimately  
3           conclude that the Northeast is not needed to  
4           achieve recovery and delisting.

5                       The Fish and Wildlife Service itself  
6           acknowledged in its proposed rule-making that the  
7           historic range of the wolf would have "extensive  
8           and significant gaps" without wolf recovery in the  
9           Northeast; that a Northeast population is  
10          "significant and will contribute to the overall  
11          restoration of the species;" and that the wolf  
12          that historically occupied the Northeastern United  
13          States and adjacent Canada is likely a "separate  
14          form" of the gray wolf. It is the consensus view  
15          of scientific peer reviewers that establishing a  
16          separate Northeast DPS would be an important step  
17          toward gray wolf recovery. All of this strongly  
18          suggests that the gray wolf will remain at risk in  
19          a significant portion of its range so long as the  
20          Northeast wolf restoration remains incomplete.

21                      The Fish and Wildlife Service's approach  
22          is inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the  
23          Endangered Species Act. The mere fact that the  
24          Fish and Wildlife Service may have demonstrated  
25          the survivability of a gray wolf population in

1 three states in the Great Lakes does not relieve  
2 it from responsibility to analyze the significance  
3 of the Northeast region to overall gray wolf  
4 recovery. The Fish and Wildlife Service has a  
5 duty to address the endangerment of a species  
6 throughout "major geographical areas" of its  
7 historic range, even where those areas are no  
8 longer occupied with viable populations. It also  
9 has a duty to consider all relevant listing and  
10 delisting factors, such as the vulnerability of a  
11 species to disease outbreaks when there is an  
12 insufficient distribution of populations.

13 Finally, the Fish and Wildlife Service  
14 has a duty to apply its Vertebrate Population  
15 Policy in a fair and consistent fashion. This  
16 policy calls for establishment of Distinct  
17 Population Segments only for a "discrete"  
18 population. By lumping Western Great Lakes wolves  
19 and Northeastern wolves together into a single  
20 Eastern DPS, the Fish and Wildlife Service failed  
21 to satisfy the requirement that a discrete  
22 population be the subject of a DPS.

23 The Fish and Wildlife Service's decision  
24 to create an Eastern DPS was done for the wrong  
25 reasons. Rather than promoting conservation, the

1 Fish and Wildlife Service has taken this step for  
2 the clear purpose of terminating recovery efforts  
3 in the Northeast. The Fish and Wildlife Service's  
4 own Vertebrate Population Policy makes clear that  
5 the DPS tool is designed to prevent the need for  
6 listing an entire species when some populations  
7 are healthy; it is improper, however, to use it to  
8 avoid recovery efforts in important habitat areas  
9 where populations are not yet viable.

10 The Fish and Wildlife Service has an  
11 historic opportunity to build upon its successes  
12 in the Western Great Lakes by moving forward with  
13 restoration of the wolf in the Northeastern United  
14 States. We hope to be able to work with the  
15 agency on this important endeavor. Thank you very  
16 much for this opportunity to testify today.

17 MR. YAGER: Thank you.

18 Speaker 9.

19 MR. CHUTE: Hello. I'm John Chute,  
20 C-H-U-T-E. I'm from central Minnesota, the town  
21 of Aitkin. Tonight I'm representing myself as a  
22 beef producer and a member of various farm  
23 organizations in that area.

24 As a beef producer, I have cattle. I  
25 deal with wolves. I live in wolf country. I am

1           also a lover of the great outdoors. The  
2           woodlands, the lakes, the wildlife and a balance  
3           of it all. And I think balance is a lot of what  
4           we are here tonight discussing.

5                         We have been working in a recovery  
6           program. I've done my part to make the wolves  
7           recover and grow, and I still believe that the  
8           recovery program has been a very good success.  
9           It's obvious by the numbers we've seen tonight  
10          and, thus, in turn, since it is a good success, I  
11          believe it's now, likewise, time to implement a  
12          delisting and a management plan.

13                        Hearing other testimony tonight, I added  
14          here that many of the people in this room have  
15          little at stake other than some emotional  
16          concerns. We can continue to argue and play a  
17          numbers game, you against me, him against her, or  
18          we can move ahead. And I encourage that we let  
19          good, sound science, as has been done by the DNR,  
20          Fish and Wildlife Service and others, make this  
21          decision and delist and manage our wolf  
22          population.

23                        In closing, I'd like to recap just a  
24          little bit. I like wildlife. We've met the  
25          goals. It's now time to change the listing and

1           implement a management plan. Let's use it. Thank  
2           you.

3                         MR. YAGER: Thank you.

4                         No. 10.

5                         MR. STROUD: Hi. Charley, that's  
6           C-H-A-R-L-E-Y, Stroud, S-T-R-O-U-D. If you ask me  
7           what my worst nightmare is, it's public speaking,  
8           so bear with me.

9                         First of all, I'm humbled by the people  
10          who have so many of their facts straight from both  
11          ends. And you guys impress me immensely. You  
12          might even know -- might recognize me with my two  
13          white dogs. I come down here and walk every day  
14          in the park.

15                        When I was a kid, I was shuffled off at  
16          Grandpa's farm in Wisconsin during the summers,  
17          and so I have a little experience there too. And  
18          I remember we kept about 13, 15 dogs on the farm  
19          back when I was a kid. And I used to remember --  
20          And that's just amazing, because not long ago the  
21          lineage of these where the actual varmints that  
22          we're trying to keep off of our land.

23                        And I've got my two German Shepherds  
24          now, too, and I just want to share this little  
25          story with you. My little puppy, when she was

1 three months old, taught me that she could mimic  
2 my speech. And I began saying, you can actually  
3 speak, can't you.

4           And over a period of time -- She was  
5 three months old. Imagine a human child learning  
6 to speak at three months. Over a period of time I  
7 haven't been voracious about it, but I've taught  
8 her about ten words or something like that, and  
9 she understands the words. If I don't pay enough  
10 attention to her late at night, she goes, I love  
11 you, in very clear, understandable language  
12 because she knows that will get her some  
13 attention.

14           So I think one of the things that we're  
15 on the threshold of here is we're all evolving.  
16 This is evolution. I mean, we many generations  
17 ago might have just been at each other's throats  
18 rather than this very sound environment where we  
19 have diverse views but we can actually appreciate  
20 each other's views. And everything on God's earth  
21 is evolving, including -- It's astounding to me  
22 that I have a talking dog. One day the lineage of  
23 this wolf itself may actually come to us and tell  
24 us what it is that they need or how we can keep  
25 them off our land.

1                   One thing for sure, the gentleman who  
2                   was just before me has -- and having been on a  
3                   farm myself, many studies need to go into some  
4                   humane ways, perhaps, to keeping these animals  
5                   from killing someone's livelihood because that's  
6                   very important.

7                   But, again, I didn't come here with a  
8                   bunch of notes or anything. I just wanted to  
9                   share that little story with you. The lineage,  
10                  which isn't that long ago, it might be as little  
11                  as 100 years or a thousand years or so ago, the  
12                  lineage of these creatures that we're speaking  
13                  about today are the first to go in after  
14                  criminals, they keep blind people comfort in the  
15                  subways of New York. They're the ones who go into  
16                  fires when the firemen can't get in to save  
17                  people. And it's something to consider.

18                  What we're doing here is we're talking  
19                  about the future and how we impact the future.  
20                  And 100 years from now, it might be a very  
21                  different world that we're in. That's about all I  
22                  had to say, but thank you for taking the time to  
23                  listen. It is really a privilege.

24                  MR. YAGER: Thank you.

25                  Once again, I'll encourage anyone who

1 wants to provide comments to go out and get a  
2 card.

3 Let's move on. We've got No. 11 up  
4 next.

5 MS. C. CERRA: Hi. My name is Christa  
6 Cerra. Christa is C-H-R-I-S-T-A; last name is  
7 Cerra, C-E-R-R-A. I'm a resident of Minnesota.

8 And I'd like to piggyback on what was  
9 just said and just make the general comment that I  
10 really feel that it's the responsibility -- the  
11 partial responsibility of the group that you work  
12 for to continually check in with the mission  
13 statement that you are founded on. And I  
14 understand the mission statement ends with --  
15 Well, I put a little -- I mean, it generally says  
16 conserve, protect, enhance wildlife and habitat  
17 for the continuing benefit of American people.  
18 And I just encourage you and really hope that all  
19 of you are checking in all the time with what it  
20 means to benefit the American people.

21 I understand that you have a lot of --  
22 you know, you're looking at a lot of different  
23 perspectives. You have a lot of pressure from a  
24 lot of different places to make decisions. And  
25 it's not an easy role that you're in, but I do

1 think that one thing that you can do no matter  
2 what decision you make at any time throughout this  
3 particular time that you're in, and in the future  
4 when you're making decisions for the American  
5 people and really for the world, the longevity of  
6 the globe on a long-term basis, is that you ask  
7 yourself what is that -- how do you benefit  
8 people.

9           And I think that one component, one of  
10 the many, many components is a biologic  
11 component. How does the wolf benefit. How does  
12 the wolf remain viable. It's the rancher's  
13 perspective, it's the trapper's perspective, it's  
14 the perspectives of the people that just simply  
15 love the wolf. All that needs to be taken into  
16 account.

17           But I think that what the bottom line is  
18 for you guys is to be as thorough as possible with  
19 whatever decision that you make. And what I mean  
20 by "as thorough as possible," as it relates to  
21 this particular point, is you have to relay an  
22 attitude of respect for every single person that  
23 you talk to and every animal and every ecological  
24 unit that you address. You have to have respect  
25 in your own mind for that so that that carries

1           into whatever decision you make. Because whatever  
2           decision you make carries into every attitude that  
3           every person is going to have that interacts with  
4           other people and with the environment, and  
5           specifically in this case with the wolf. So I  
6           just encourage you to bear that in mind. For the  
7           record, in light of what I just said, I'm not for  
8           the delisting.

9                       MR. YAGER: Thank you.

10                      No. 12.

11                      MS. HARKINS: Good evening. My name is  
12           Kay Harkins, H-A-R-K-I-N-S, and I live in  
13           Bloomington. I wish to express my opinion on the  
14           delisting of wolves. I feel this would send their  
15           populations plummeting once again. It will end  
16           the wolf's recovery. I feel we should preserve  
17           the wolf's endangered status. This delisting  
18           action demonstrates an irresponsible approach to  
19           protect the wolf. The wolf should not be killed  
20           for recreation that sacrifices the life of  
21           innocent wolves. Some 250 wolves are already  
22           killed illegally every year. No wolf has ever  
23           killed a person. We are responsible for precious  
24           wildlife, and I suggest that we don't deprive them  
25           of life.

1                   If the reason is livestock they kill, it  
2                   is a small number. It will not take too long for  
3                   the humans to kill them to near extermination  
4                   again. Love the wolf. They provide many of us  
5                   with so much beauty and joy. They have importance  
6                   in themselves and no one owns them.

7                   I have come to speak for the wolves.  
8                   I'm not convinced the few problems they cause  
9                   justify killing them. The trapping is torture and  
10                  is unconscionable. I have trouble with this sport  
11                  particularly.

12                  We must have a new vision of  
13                  enlightened, compassionate wildlife management  
14                  style. There's a human ethic to be considered.  
15                  We are responsible for all the wildlife. And for  
16                  the sake of all these creatures, we must protect  
17                  them. Please abolish the killing now. We can  
18                  learn to live with them.

19                  To conclude, a quote from Albert  
20                  Schweitzer: "Hear our humble prayer, oh, God, for  
21                  our friends the animals, especially for animals  
22                  who are suffering, for any that are hunted or  
23                  trapped or frightened, for all that must be put to  
24                  death. We entreat for them all their mercy and  
25                  pity. For those who deal with them, we ask a

1 heart of compassion and gentle hands and kindly  
2 words. Make us ourselves to be true friends to  
3 animals and so to share the blessings of the  
4 merciful." Thank you.

5 MR. YAGER: Thank you.

6 Do we have a No. 13?

7 Is there anyone else that would like to  
8 make an oral comment? 14? Okay. 14, come on  
9 up.

10 MS. KRIEGER CERRA: My name is Kathie,  
11 K-A-T-H-I-E; Krieger, K-R-I-E-G-E-R; Cerra,  
12 C-E-R-R-A, Ph.D. I'm a resident of Minnesota and  
13 I represent myself.

14 First of all, I'm curious about that  
15 missing No. 13. I didn't neglect to take it.  
16 Fourteen was the next one.

17 I'm here to support the statements -- I  
18 do represent myself, but I really agree with the  
19 statements of the people from the Sierra Club, the  
20 people from HOWL, and particularly the Humane  
21 Society. I really do feel that -- and do think,  
22 based on your presentation, in fact, that the wolf  
23 should not be delisted.

24 And, also, I want to encourage you to  
25 look more carefully and be more stringent in the

1 requirements for state plans when the delisting --  
2 when you come to the delisting. The State plan,  
3 as I understand it having read it, a statement by  
4 a representative of the White Earth Band speaking  
5 against it, is that there would indeed be trapping  
6 for a paid fee, so people would receive payment  
7 for trapping of wolves. This was stated in the  
8 Park Rapids paper two weeks ago in north central  
9 Minnesota. And there was a comment stating of  
10 that, stating of shooting of wolves for no  
11 apparent reason in the Minnesota plan. And I  
12 would encourage you to be more stringent in your  
13 requirements of the states to -- in their plans  
14 that they're making.

15 And I would ask you to really look at  
16 the science more carefully in your training as a  
17 biologist, to really look at an ecosystem  
18 perspective more carefully and let that be one  
19 aspect of your consideration.

20 Overlining that, however, fortunately  
21 your mission statement was on the wall in the  
22 hallway, and I was impressed by it. "Our mission  
23 is working" -- "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.  
24 Our mission is working with others to conserve,  
25 protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and

1           their habitats for the continuing benefit of the  
2           American people." This really does have to be your  
3           ethical perspective upon which your scientific  
4           views -- you know, there has to be an  
5           intermingling of those. And I think it truly  
6           comes down to a matter of ethics.

7                        I also want to say, however, that I'm in  
8           great sympathy with the people whose livelihood  
9           depends upon protecting their livestock and who  
10          are farmers. I work with people, I'm a teacher,  
11          and I appreciate that. I'm kind of chosen to be  
12          helpful to people, so I appreciate that too.

13                       And, also, then in a future delisting  
14          plan that you may accept, it would have to have  
15          maybe a plan that would compensate people in  
16          certain ways that didn't require trapping.  
17          Compensate people for loss of livelihood. And I  
18          think the federal government could do that sort of  
19          thing and so could the Fish and Wildlife Service,  
20          that that might be considered.

21                       So, in closing, then, I just want you to  
22          have this ethical perspective. With your  
23          statement it's wonderful, and it's very -- I find  
24          it very inspiring. And I hope that you'll  
25          consider this and really hold true to it. If you

1 think about yourself when you were 25, you  
2 believed this, and I hope you'll support it in  
3 your decision. Thank you.

4 MR. YAGER: Thank you.

5 Do we have 15, No. 15? Do we have  
6 anyone else who would like to speak?

7 Well, I stated the end for this hearing  
8 was nine o'clock, and we're about five minutes  
9 to. I guess I'd just as soon go on a short  
10 recess. If anyone decides they would like to  
11 speak, please come back at nine o'clock, we'll  
12 reopen the hearing briefly and then we'll close  
13 it. Right now let's just go to a recess. Please  
14 feel free to ask these folks any questions if you  
15 have any.

16 (Break taken.)

17 MR. YAGER: Everyone, I want to call the  
18 hearing back to order so we can close it, I  
19 think. It's nine o'clock, which is the published  
20 closing time for this hearing. Is there anyone  
21 else who would like to make an oral comment?

22 Seeing no one, I guess I'd like to  
23 express my appreciation for everyone coming  
24 tonight, for the respect you've shown all of the  
25 speakers. It's very appreciated. The comments

1           have been informative and they'll be considered  
2           before we make a final decision.  And on behalf of  
3           the Fish and Wildlife Service, thank you.  And the  
4           hearing is closed.  We're off the record.

5                           (Proceedings concluded at 9:00 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF MINNESOTA )

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3 COUNTY OF HENNEPIN )

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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I, Julie A. Rixe, do hereby certify

10

that the above and foregoing transcript, consisting of

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the preceding 50 pages, is a correct transcript of

12

my stenographic notes and is a full, true and complete

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transcript of the proceedings to the best of my

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ability.

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Dated October 20, 2004.

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JULIE A. RIXE

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Court Reporter

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