

Page 1

01 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
02
03 FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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08 Transcript of the Public Hearing
09
10 on
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12 Gray Wolf Delisting Proposal
13
14 held at
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16 Michigan Room, Don H. Bottum Conference Center
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18 Northern Michigan University
19
20 540 West Kaye Avenue
21
22 Marquette, Michigan
23
24 on
25
26 Tuesday, May 16, 2006
27
28 at
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30 7:30 P.M.
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33 Moderator - Mike Twohey
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Page 2

01 TABLE OF CONTENTS
02
03
04
05 PAGE
06 Opening remarks by Christie Deloria-----3

07 Opening remarks by Mike Twohey-----3
08 Comments by George Lindquist-----10
09 Comments by David Bahrman-----12
10 Comments by Robert Johnson-----13
11 Comments by Ginger Winn-----13
12 Comments by David Allen-----14
13 Comments by Charles Keranen-----15
14 Comments by Chauncey Moran-----16
15 Comments by Doug Cornett-----18
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

Page 3

01 Marquette, Michigan
02 Tuesday, May 16, 2006 - 7:30 p.m.
03 MS. DELORIA: We will get started with the public
04 hearing portion of our meeting tonight, and in case we've
05 got anybody new that's joined us -- I think I see one face
06 out there -- I'll reintroduce the Fish and Wildlife Service
07 staff that's here tonight.
08 My name is Christie Deloria. I work here in
09 Marquette and head up the Ecological Services office of the
10 U.P., and with me on my left is Ron Refsnider; he's our
11 listing coordinator out of the regional office in
12 Minneapolis, Minnesota. We also have two women over on my
13 left: Kim Mitchell and Georgia Parham. If you haven't got
14 a comment card tonight and would like to make a comment,
15 you'd want to do that right away and see them. They can
16 give you a card to make comments tonight.
17 I am going to hand this over to our hearing
18 officer, Michael Twohey, who is over on my right. He's
19 going to run the hearing portion of our meeting tonight, and
20 he works for the Fish and Wildlife Service but at the Sea
21 Lamprey office here in Marquette.
22 MR. TWOHEY: Thank you. On behalf of the Fish and
23 Wildlife Service, I welcome you to this public hearing. The
24 purpose of this hearing is to receive comments from the
25 public and other interested parties on the Fish and Wildlife

Page 4

01 Service proposal to delist the Western Great Lakes District
02 population segment of the gray wolf.

03 Again, my name is Mike Twohey, and I'm right here
04 in town at the Marquette biological station. I'll serve as
05 the presiding official for this hearing. Mary Amtmann will
06 be our court recorder, and she will prepare the written
07 record of all statements made during this hearing. The
08 transcript of the hearing will be posted on the Web site of
09 the Midwest region of the Fish and Wildlife Service in a few
10 weeks. The address for the Web site is available in some of
11 the materials that are out in the hallway. I'll have no
12 further involvement in this proceeding after this evening,
13 so I'm an impartial participant in this hearing.

14 However, there are other Fish and Wildlife Service
15 representatives with us this evening. They're assisting
16 with the hearing, and many of them will be involved with
17 reviewing the comments and helping the Service to come to a
18 decision on the proposal, and Christie has already
19 introduced those individuals.

20 This is a public hearing under Section 4 of the
21 Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973. Notice of the
22 proposal to remove the gray wolf in the western Great Lakes
23 area of the United States from the list of endangered and
24 threatened wildlife and the 90-day public comment period was
25 published in the Federal Register on March 27th, 2006,

Page 5

01 beginning on page 15266. The proposal included information
02 on the four public hearings that are being held. Convening
03 public hearings is one of the methods that the Service uses
04 to solicit data and comments on this proposal. No final
05 decision has yet been made regarding this proposal nor will
06 any decision be made at this hearing.

07 Public comments on this proposal must be received
08 no later than June 26th, 2006. After review and
09 consideration of the existing administrative record, your
10 comments, your interpretations of existing data and all
11 other information gathered during the comment period, the
12 Fish and Wildlife Service will make a final decision on the
13 proposal. Information that you provide in your comments
14 this evening will become part of the administrative record
15 and will be considered by the Fish and Wildlife Service in
16 the decision-making process.

17 I want to direct your attention to information
18 that's situated out in the hallway. One table is the
19 registration table where you'll need to get a numbered note
20 card if you wish to present oral comments. Christie already
21 mentioned that. If you'd like to get on our mailing list to
22 receive future information on this proposal, there's a place
23 out there where you can sign up for that as well. You can
24 add your name to the mailing address or email address on the
25 signup sheet that's out there.

Page 6

01 There's also a variety of written information
02 about this proposal, about wolves and about Endangered
03 Species Act. Please take a copy of anything that interests

04 you. I especially want to point out the light blue sheet
05 that's out there, which provides details on several ways you
06 can get more information on the proposal, and also explains
07 several methods you can use to submit written comments
08 either tonight or by mail.

09 When I call your number to present your comments,
10 please come to one of the microphones -- well, our one
11 microphone. When you begin your comments, state your full
12 name, spell it, identify any organization that you might
13 represent and give your state of residence, please. If you
14 have a written copy of your comments, you may give it to the
15 court reporter or to me for entry into the record as a
16 written comment. Oral statements: Normally we limit it to
17 five minutes. I guess, I don't think we have a lot of
18 speakers this evening. Why don't we try ten minutes, and I
19 expect that will be sufficient for this evening. And that's
20 so that all who wish to make oral comments will have the
21 opportunity to do so. If you stray from the issue, exceed
22 your time limit, engage in personal insults or make other
23 inappropriate remarks, I'll ask you to wrap up your
24 comments.

25 At the end of the evening, there may be time to

Page 7

01 provide another opportunity for speakers to finish their
02 comments if they weren't able to do so completely or in
03 their allotted time. To maximize the opportunity for others
04 to express their comments, I ask that you refrain from
05 commenting on issues beyond the scope of the Fish and
06 Wildlife Service's wolf delisting proposal.

07 This is an informal hearing. Therefore, you will
08 not be questioned or cross-examined in connection with your
09 comments. This hearing is solely intended to obtain your
10 comments so the Service can consider them when making their
11 final decision on the proposal. Therefore, the Fish and
12 Wildlife Service officials will not respond to questions or
13 engage in discussion of the proposal during the hearing.
14 The presentation and question-and-answer session earlier
15 this evening were intended for questions and discussion, so
16 we'll be devoting a portion of the evening to receiving your
17 comments, this portion. If you have questions about the
18 proposal or the Endangered Species Act, I encourage you to
19 take advantage of the materials at the information table and
20 on the Web site. You may want to read them and then submit
21 written comments later.

22 There may be opportunities to ask questions of
23 individual Fish and Wildlife Service staff outside of the
24 hearing, possibly after the hearing closes or during a
25 recess if we have one. But I emphasize, this hearing is

Page 8

01 intended to receive public input, not respond to it. The
02 Fish and Wildlife Service's response to issues and questions
03 raised during the comment period, including those that come
04 up at this hearing, will be published as part of the final

05 decision for this proposal. That publication will probably
06 occur in early 2007.

07 Again, your comments are being recorded by the
08 court reporter to assist the Service in reviewing them and
09 to preserve them for the record. Please keep in mind,
10 however, the reporter will only be recording statements made
11 into the microphones. Comments from the audience and other
12 statements made away from the microphones or made to the
13 audience will not become part of the record and will not be
14 considered by the Fish and Wildlife Service when making the
15 final decision on the proposal. All oral comments must be
16 made into the microphone and directed to the front of the
17 room, please.

18 In addition to or instead of providing oral
19 comments tonight, you may submit comments in writing, by
20 email or by fax. Written comments may be submitted to me,
21 to the staff at the registration table or sent in later.
22 Oral comments will not be accepted outside of the public
23 hearing setting. As I mentioned, written, emailed or faxed
24 comments must be received by June 26th. They'll be given
25 the same serious consideration as oral comments presented

Page 9

01 during this hearing.

02 We'll conclude the hearing at 9:00 p.m. If we've
03 covered all those who wish to speak before 9:00 p.m., we'll
04 recess the hearing as we'll go off record until either
05 additional persons indicate they'd like to talk or until
06 9:00 p.m. approaches. At that time, we'll reconvene the
07 hearing, go back on the record to receive additional
08 comments or to officially close the hearing.

09 We'll now open the floor for comments. After I
10 call your number, please come to the microphone, state your
11 name, spell it, identify who you represent if you're
12 representing somebody, give your state of residence and
13 begin your comments. Please speak clearly so the court
14 reporter can hear your comments accurately.

15 I remind you that tonight's hearing is designed to
16 gather public comments and especially additional data and
17 information regarding the proposal in order to help the Fish
18 and Wildlife Service to make the best possible decision
19 under the Endangered Species Act. To better serve that
20 purpose, I ask that you all remain respectful of the
21 speakers, of other members of the audience and of the
22 government officials that are here tonight.

23 So who's our -- I don't have the list of speakers
24 actually.

25 MS. DELORIA: Just call their numbers, call the

Page 10

01 numbers.

02 MR. TWOHEY: One.

03 UNKNOWN: I'll pass.

04 MR. TWOHEY: You'll pass. Okay. Speaker number

05 two.

06 MR. LINDQUIST: Good evening. I'm George
07 Lindquist, L-i-n-d-q-u-i-s-t. I'm a director at large with
08 Michigan United Conservation Clubs, and I'm also involved
09 with U.P. Whitetails in Marquette County.

10 I'd like to take this time to congratulate Fish
11 and Wildlife and the states involved for the success story
12 with wildlife. It's clearly -- the wolf population has
13 grown faster than anybody imagined, and it seems to be fully
14 recovered here and definitely not a problem as far as a
15 viable population anymore.

16 I guess I would like to -- my thoughts together
17 here on this, but I think the sooner we can get -- get this
18 moved on as far as getting these animals delisted and
19 getting into the hands of the state the better. They've
20 clearly met the criteria for a number of years now, and the
21 longer we wait, the more public -- public feelings get
22 negative. There's been -- I think if it could have
23 transgressed the way it was originally proposed as far as
24 when they were supposed to be delisted, there would be a lot
25 less public people against or down on wolves because the

Page 11

01 numbers have grown. There's essentially no management. The
02 only management there's been has been for depravation
03 control, and they're essentially being treated as varmints,
04 so we would like to see this -- the management of wolves put
05 back into the hands of the state and get some real
06 management here.

07 We feel that the -- an animal isn't fully
08 recovered until you have a viable, huntable population, and
09 it's there now. I feel if the states can get control of
10 this and manage this animal as a big game animal, the
11 sportsmen, the people that live in the woods, spend time in
12 the woods, would think of this animal in a much higher --
13 higher level and want to protect that animal. None of
14 the -- none of the animals that are -- none of the wildlife
15 that's managed as big game is -- is hunted to extinction or
16 brought to such populations that it's a problem because the
17 sportsmen care about that animal and want to manage it and
18 see it managed in a viable way, so that's where we're coming
19 with this is we'd like to see this population managed, some
20 control on it. That's where a lot of people get the ideas
21 where they don't see any management, they tend to go to the
22 philosophy of shoot, shovel and shut up, and that's --
23 that's not good for the animal; it's not good for the
24 population; it's not good for anybody involved, so the
25 sooner that this can get back in the hands of the state, the

Page 12

01 sooner it becomes a big game animal and managed as such, we
02 can have a viable population here and it's a feather in
03 everybody's hat. Thank you.

04 MR. TWOHEY: Thank you. Again, I want to remind
05 everybody that if you want to present oral comments but have
06 not yet registered to do so, you need to fill out a little

07 card out in the hallway. Number three.

08 MR. BAHRMAN: Good evening. My name is David
09 Bahrman, B-a-h-r-m-a-n. I'm representing Michigan Farm
10 Bureau. This is -- I want to commend you on pursuing this
11 after you -- the court challenges you had previously and
12 hopefully this will be -- take care of all the problems that
13 was presented there.

14 This is something that's been on our policy book
15 for several years. It came out of -- our system is set up
16 by counties, and it came out of a Mac-Luce-Schoolcraft
17 resolution that they saw several years ago that wolves
18 needed to be delisted before we could get management under
19 control, and we felt that this was a better -- to have the
20 state manage it when it got to a viable population. And
21 with the way you presented your program tonight, it sounds
22 like we're there and hopefully we can maintain that, so I
23 want to commend you for going on after you had a few
24 challenges in the courts, and that's about all I want to
25 say. Thank you.

Page 13

01 MR. TWOHEY: Thank you. Number four.

02 MR. JOHNSON: I am Robert Johnson, J-o-h-n-s-o-n.
03 I reside at 579 M-35, Negaunee, and I'm glad that you got
04 where you are now with this after being sued and everything
05 over it.

06 There's only so much space these animals can take
07 up with enough food for them. Our deer population is
08 plummeting here in the U.P., and the farmers -- they can't
09 put up with their livestock. A lot of them I've talked to
10 have been having animals killed, and that's a deterrent to
11 them. Not only -- they're the backbone of our country, so I
12 hope we can get this delisted now and get it taken care of.

13 I don't know if there's much more I have to say on
14 it, but it's the right track. These animals can only have
15 so many animals for so much food, and when the food ain't
16 there, they're going to give us a problem, which they are
17 already. They're after calves and this kind of stuff,
18 sheep, and so we can see they're running out of food or they
19 wouldn't be bothering humans and their livestock, so I guess
20 it's about time we delisted them. Thank you.

21 MR. TWOHEY: Number five.

22 MS. WINN: Ginger Winn, G-i-n-g-e-r, W-i-n-n,
23 Marquette, Michigan. I'm not for delisting them as
24 threatened or endangered. I don't think the count has been
25 tallied correctly or accurately. I think more work needs to

Page 14

01 be done. I'm more than happy to share my deer as a hunter
02 with wolves. I'm happy that there are deer or wolves in the
03 area. I don't think they should be delisted until the plan
04 is secure as to what will happen with them with the state.
05 I don't think killing problem wolves is the answer. I think
06 relocating is still the answer, so delisting them is
07 something I'm vehemently against.

08 MR. TWOHEY: Number six.
09 MR. ALLEN: Hi, David Allen, A-l-l-e-n, from
10 Marquette, Michigan. While I am a member of Upper Peninsula
11 Environmental Coalition and of the Sierra Club, please think
12 of my comments as my own and not as representative of those
13 organizations.
14 Like George, for example, I think all of us to a
15 large extent, particularly the DNR and the Fish and Wildlife
16 Service, deserve kudos for the great recovery of the wolf.
17 You know, it's a thrilling thing. Last year, coming out of
18 Bergland, a quarter mile up the highway on 28, a wolf
19 leaping across the road, and you know, just going ah-ah,
20 nice, nice, nice, and then right in front of the car came
21 the second one, and wow. You know, I mean, that is
22 something that is truly wonderful to have wolves around, to
23 hear them howling or what have you. It's part of the
24 outdoor experience.
25 However, there has been a tendency for public

Page 15

01 support for wolf to be decreasing somewhat. Worse, there
02 have been individuals who have actually threatened to blow
03 away wolves if they interfere with their deer. Now, this
04 thought of a desperate deer population is -- the deer going
05 extinct in some sense or another is patently ridiculous.
06 When I go out in the woods, the only reason why typically I
07 can't see deer tracks are because of pellets covering them.
08 Anyway, enough of that.
09 I think that delisting is premature. I think that
10 the next step should be to reduce them from endangered to
11 threatened where lethal control can be done if necessary to
12 get used to doing management. I think there should be an
13 additional goal set up, namely to perhaps think in terms of
14 the wolf becoming a game animal. I think I agree with
15 George, for example, when he says eventually that hunters
16 don't want to eliminate their prized game animal, so I think
17 that as an eventual goal is a very solid idea, and basically
18 that idea, going to threatened and setting up a goal as a
19 game animal, I think, ought to be considered. Many thanks
20 for the opportunity to speak.
21 MR. TWOHEY: Number seven.
22 MR. KERANEN: My name is Charles Keranen; it's
23 K-e-r-a-n-e-n, and I live in Ishpeming, Michigan.
24 I want to thank you for coming here and holding
25 this meeting and for the presentation, which I think was

Page 16

01 well prepared and well -- and well done. I think it shows
02 me that the proposal is based on good thought, a good
03 gathering of facts, and I think we're ready to delist the
04 wolf by the method in the proposal that you presented and
05 showed us tonight, and I very strongly support doing so, so
06 thank you for coming.
07 MR. TWOHEY: Number eight.
08 MR. MORAN: Hi, there. My name is Chauncey Moran.

09 I live in northern Marquette County in a log cabin up in the
10 mountains, and I see wolves at least once a month. And as
11 far as the delisting plan, the first thing I'd like to say
12 is it is a success story in the Upper Peninsula. When I was
13 a young boy, we shot wolves in the Upper Peninsula, and
14 there were \$20 bounty on them for the male and 15 for the
15 female. And those days are long gone by.

16 But I'd like to say that I think that delisting
17 the wolf completely is not quite in order quite yet. I
18 think if you do the numbers, that that's not that many per
19 square mile, and you can see the saturation of what they are
20 in Minnesota. Well, this isn't Minnesota; this is Michigan.
21 We certainly have enough people that I know that are the
22 local guys that are taking care of them on the other side of
23 the Huron River as they shot five last year and hung them up
24 on a buck pole, which was kind of stupid.

25 And as far as the wolves really cutting down the

Page 17

01 deer population, I see deer every day. And I'm sorry this
02 gentleman right here that doesn't have very many deer in his
03 backyard anymore, but I can tell you from long history of
04 walking around in the woods in the wintertime when people
05 were baiting deer and still do. They put all those big bait
06 piles in those hemlock stands, and the deer were there in
07 the wintertime, and they were there in December when the
08 snows came, and then they stayed there because the little
09 yearlings couldn't get out of there, and they died on their
10 way to the yarding areas. And so we must take
11 responsibility for killing the deer. As far as the deer
12 population goes, these two gentlemen right here would
13 certainly give credence to the fact that bruin and sow bears
14 kill a great number of deer, small deer, which are the fawns
15 that come each spring to feed their young.

16 I think you actually have done really good science
17 here. I appreciate this presentation, and that's how we
18 confound what the naysayers say, with good science. And
19 each day I'm out there, I think about people who work hard
20 to do good science, and so I just ask that you reconsider to
21 go to the threat level as opposed to going to the
22 endangered -- to delisting completely.

23 And in closing, I guess I would like to say that
24 as George has said, there are parts of this country -- and
25 of course we all know that it's been in Canada -- they shoot

Page 18

01 and trap wolves regularly there like vermin, and they hunt
02 them for prize in British Columbia and in Alaska. And maybe
03 it will become a big game animal, but I think it's not quite
04 yet time to completely delist them from the threatened
05 stage.

06 And thank you very much to my brothers from the
07 DNR, who are doing an outstanding job at what they do here,
08 and when you give it over to them, they can take care of it.
09 Thank you.

10 MR. TWOHEY: Number nine.

11 MR. CORNETT: Thank you for coming tonight. My
12 name's Doug Cornett. I represent an organization called
13 North Woods Wilderness Recovery. Our address is Post Office
14 Box 122, Marquette, Michigan 49855.

15 A couple of comments. We are opposed to the
16 delisting. The Upper Peninsula population is now, I think,
17 around -- the last numbers I've seen is between 350 and 400
18 animals. I don't think this -- this number of animals is --
19 may -- could possibly not be genetically viable if a disease
20 like parvovirus or something else like that that would go
21 through a population very quickly. I think very soon we
22 could see that we might not have a genetically viable
23 segment of the population here, so I'm concerned that
24 delisting is premature.

25 The other thing I've been concerned about is there

Page 19

01 is really been no distinguishing between the Upper Peninsula
02 and the Lower Peninsula. There have been individuals
03 spotted in the Lower Peninsula over the past couple of
04 years. There's a lot of public lands in the northern Lower
05 Peninsula that warrant habitat protection and enhancement to
06 see wolves re-established there, so I think that segment of
07 the population or that -- that area needs to be looked at
08 and wolves there be considered as a separate population.

09 Another thing, I just have not read through all of
10 the materials thoroughly. There's a lot of stuff out there,
11 thousands of pages, on this animal and the delisting, but
12 about ten years ago we had a wolf-dog hybrid kill a little
13 girl out in Michigamme, Michigan, about 30 miles west of
14 here. And the state -- the woman that her little girl got
15 killed went to the lengths of going to the state legislature
16 and trying to get legislation passed, and I always
17 questioned -- this question always came up in my head is why
18 aren't these wolf-dog hybrids regulated under the Endangered
19 Species Act? This -- the Endangered Species Act reads, "An
20 animal that's endangered certainly should be regulated
21 especially in that type of breeding situation." So I'm
22 going to pose that question to you is -- how is this
23 situation going to be treated? Why should the state have to
24 go through with its own procedure in creating legislation
25 when the Endangered Species Act should have covered a

Page 20

01 situation like this and should have gone after the people
02 that are breeding these animals, since they do have that
03 characteristic of being unpredictable and possibly vicious
04 and have the ability to kill people? Why hasn't the Fish
05 and Wildlife ever done anything about that?

06 So with that, we'll be putting in some other
07 written comments and working along with our partner
08 organization on many of these issues, Defenders of Wildlife,
09 and thank you for having this hearing.

10 MR. TWOHEY: Are there other individuals who would

11 like to make comments at this time? Well, we've gone
12 through all the individuals who have asked to speak so far,
13 so what we'll do now is recess the hearing until either 9:00
14 or until some other individuals suggest that they would like
15 to make comments. If you want to make sure you hear some of
16 those comments, you might want to hang close by. We'll
17 reconvene if somebody expresses an interest in doing so. So
18 we are recessed.

19 (At 8:00 p.m., hearing recessed)

20 (At 8:58 p.m., hearing reconvened)

21 MR. TWOHEY: At this time I reconvene the hearing,
22 and since there are no additional speakers, we now close the
23 hearing.

24 (At 8:58 p.m., hearing closed)

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Page 21

01 STATE OF MICHIGAN)

02)

03 COUNTY OF MARQUETTE)

04

05 I certify that this transcript, consisting of 21 pages, is a
06 complete, true and correct record of the public hearing held
07 concerning the gray wolf delisting proposal in Marquette,
08 Michigan on May 16, 2006.

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11 May 22, 2006

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