

From: [Guinotte, John](#)
To: [Shoemaker, Justin](#); [Betty Grizzle](#)
Subject: briefing memo for Noreen
Date: Friday, June 9, 2017 7:19:32 AM
Attachments: [Briefing Memo for RD Wolverine SSA update JMG.docx](#)

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

DATE: June 7, 2017
FROM: Michael Thabault, Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services
SUBJECT: Wolverine Species Status Assessment Update

To inform the Regional Director of the progress made on the wolverine Species Status Assessment (SSA) and the key information that will be of interest to the eventual wolverine listing decision. Briefing scheduled for June 15.

BACKGROUND

In compliance with a Court order that remanded our previous withdrawal of a proposed rule to list the contiguous U.S. Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of the wolverine (79 FR 47522; August 13, 2014), we will prepare either a revised proposed rule to list or a revised withdrawal of the previous proposed rule (78 FR 7864; February 4, 2013). In October 2016, we published a notice to announce the vacature of the withdrawal rule to the public, announce the proposed status since the judge's ruling, and to reopen the public comment period on the February 4, 2013 proposed rule to list the wolverine as a threatened species.

DISCUSSION

Highlighted in Judge Christensen's Court order remanding the withdrawal were the Service's determinations regarding: (a) the threat posed to the wolverine by the effects of climate change at the reproductive denning scale, (b) the threat posed to the wolverine by small population size and lack of genetic diversity, and (c) application of the SPR Policy to the wolverine. In our SSA we are making every effort to inform these points and ensure we are using the most up-to-date science upon which to base our listing decision.

Range of the species – our current approach to delineating wolverine range in the lower 48 is different, and we believe more accurate, than the broader range considered in the 2014 withdrawal.

Trapping Data – we have gathered additional trapping data not available to us in 2014 to inform the range of the species and the effect of trapping in Canada (British Columbia and Alberta) as it relates to an updated DPS determination.

NOAA/CU snow persistence model – High resolution snow pack models have been developed for Glacier and Rocky Mountain National Parks. These areas bracket the DPS range in the lower 48. The majority of model scenarios indicate significant future snow persistence through April and May for elevations currently used for denning (Glacier) and the inferred elevations where wolverines would be expected to den in Rocky Mountain National Park.

New denning information – we have several records that were not available to us in 2014 of den sites found outside of modeled snow habitat in North America, as well as confirmation of successful wolverine dens outside of snow in Scandinavia.

PVA underway – we are coordinating with USGS on a PVA to inform minimum viable population size and the effects of demographic and habitat parameters on the wolverine population in the lower 48 States.

Genetics – see attached options paper.

NEXT STEPS

We plan to have the final SSA report, with peer and partner review incorporated, to the RD and decision team by December 2017.

ATTACHMENTS

Wolverine SSA and listing decision schedule attached.

Genetics options paper. 

Commented [SJ1]: We can revise the paper we put together for Mike w/ actual \$ amounts.