



January 12, 2021

The Honorable Rob Stafsholt
Chair
Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage
Wisconsin State Capitol
2 E Main St.
Madison, WI 53703

The Honorable Treig Pronschinske
Chair
Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage
Wisconsin State Capitol
2 E Main St.
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Senate Joint Informational Hearing on reinstating a Wolf Harvesting Season in 2021

Dear Chair Stafsholt and Chair Pronschinske,

On behalf of Wisconsin's Green Fire, we congratulate you on your appointment to leading legislative committees on Sporting Heritage and your commitment to protecting Wisconsin's natural resources and our outdoor traditions for all Wisconsin citizens. Wisconsin's Green Fire and our members look forward to working with you on hunting, fishing, and conservation issues in Wisconsin.

The recovery of the gray wolf is a conservation success story that we can all be proud of. **Wisconsin's Green Fire supports FWS de-listing of wolves, and we support the resumption of state and tribal management of wolves in Wisconsin.** Our challenge however will be to finally get it right this time and avoid the roller coaster of legal battles and on and off listing and de-listing of wolves that have marked the last twenty years in our region.

Already, some national organizations have promised litigation to stop the recent federal de-listing action. These groups have a history of telling the federal courts that the states cannot be trusted to manage our wolf populations responsibly. **Wisconsin should take a conservative approach to our new responsibility for managing wolves and not allow ourselves to become a litigation poster child.**

The actions we take for wolves today should be science-based and should allow citizens to fully participate in setting goals and establishing a management framework. **For those reasons we advocate not attempting what would have to be a rushed process to hold a shortened wolf harvesting season this winter. Rather, WDNR should begin work now to update our Wolf Conservation Plan.** In doing so we will re-engage stakeholders including sportsmen and women, conservation groups, tribal leaders, and interested citizens to establish goals and build broad public support for managing wolves and minimizing wolf-human conflicts.

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The 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan is over 20 years old and does not reflect the current conservation status of wolves in our region, current population trends, the latest ecological and social science, and public opinions on wolf conservation. Wisconsin also needs statutory authority for a wolf program that is consistent with our state's conservation tradition and that reflects established wildlife governance principles.

WGF does not oppose the public hunting and trapping of wolves. We urge the use of sound science and public input in a transparent process for setting harvest seasons and quotas. Wolf harvest quotas and seasons should ensure sustainable populations that maintain the ecological benefits of wolves, are sensitive to cultural concerns of Native Americans and other affected Wisconsin citizens.

Until a new wolf conservation plan is approved, we recommend that Wisconsin maintain our wolf population within levels that existed between 2016-2020. If we want to avoid the legal pitfalls of the past, Wisconsin's new Wolf Conservation Plan must reflect the best available science and a broad range of public interests.

We have the chance today to finally set a sustainable course with wolves that balances human needs with the conservation of this iconic species in our landscape. Let's do the work today to get it right.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Fred Clark
Executive Director
Wisconsin's Green Fire

To more information on wolf conservation and wolf policy please see our paper:
[*Creating A Shared Vision for Wolves in Wisconsin*](#)

For follow up questions please contact:

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