

WOLF MANAGEMENT IN MONTANA TWS

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The wolf is listed under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 and Montana's Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1973. Among the federal requirements for delisting, the states of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming must have management plans in place to ensure that the recovered wolf population will remain secure within the northern Rocky Mountain Recovery Area. The Montana Wolf Management Advisory Council was appointed by an Executive Order signed by former Governor Racicot. The Council is charged to advise Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks as it prepares a management plan for wolves once they are delisted. The Council is comprised of 12 members from around the state who represent a variety of interests including tribal, agriculture, hunting, and wildlife conservation. Using an "interest-based" process, the Council specifically deliberated issues related to: defense of life and human safety, livestock depredation, compensation, management of prey populations, and wolf conservation and management. By consensus, the Council adopted 26 Guiding Principles which will serve as the foundation for Montana's Wolf Management Plan. The Council recognizes the wolf as a native species and a valuable part of our wildlife heritage. Integrating and sustaining wolves within the complex biological, social, economic, and political landscape of Montana presents many challenges and opportunities that all Montanans share. The State of Montana must ensure human safety, safeguard the livestock industry, maintain viable wildlife populations, and uphold the support of people with diverse public interests. The presentation will summarize the Council's Report to the Governor.