

May 15, 2011

Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Review Committee
P.O. Box 31280
Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 5P7

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing this letter to comment on the recent review process that is taking place on the topic of wolf conservation and management in the Yukon. I had the opportunity to attend the Dawson City Community Meeting and I have a few observations to make.

When I moved to the Yukon in the spring of 2007, I obtained a hunting regulation guide and in it, the moose population was listed as approximately 50,000. A few years later, the same publication has the population listed at about 70,000. Has the territory seen a huge increase in moose or has the environment department merely reassessed their figures? One way or the other, this question needs to be answered before any wolf management programs can be reviewed. Failing to answer this question would make the review process questionable at best.

It is imperative that we base our decisions on “solid” scientific evidence and that we continue to “review” the review process. In other words, reviewing management plans every 20 years is inadequate (this seems to be the general consensus anyway).

We need to take another look at how we hunt these big game animals. If we hunt, using all the modern gadgets, we are promoting a type of hunting that seems to be somewhat “unfair”. I personally like to harvest a moose by actually “hunting” it. If it takes three days in the bush then so be it. A good hunter is an ethical hunter.

Living in the Yukon means living “in” wilderness. Rural residents, trappers, miners, and prospectors will encounter wolves just “because” we share the same territory. The Yukon has a growing population and an exploding mining sector which means we are going to come into contact with more wolves because of the fact we are entering some of their best habitat. This is to be expected and isn't necessarily caused by an increase in wolf numbers. Only if we can “scientifically” prove that a local population is out of control should we even think about wolf management.

When wolf management is in fact necessary, we should use local First Nation knowledge combined with that of local trappers working in the area. I support the harvesting of wolves if you are First Nations (for cultural reasons) or if you are a trapper.

I personally don't hunt wolves. If I can't eat it, I won't hunt it.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I respect and value opinions that differ from mine. That's the great part about being a Canadian isn't it. We are a diverse bunch. The ecosystem is meant to be just as diverse. Let's put some serious thought into this issue before even one wolf is “managed”.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this process.

Sincerely,
Mark Essiembre

