

Mark Bove

Wolves invoke a feeling in everyone, often it is passion. To some it is a symbol of the wild, others it is a dreaded creature that was placed in their backyard by the federal government to kill their livelihood.

I live in a state where "Environmentalists" can place a ballot initiative to disallow hound hunting using a narrative that disingenuously portrays this method of hunting as cruel or unethical. As a hunter I cannot hunt this species with a clear conscience without the ability to determine age or sex of the animal. Over the past decade I have glassed 9 mountain lions with tag in pocket. Several in archery range. Why didn't I harvest? Females stash their kittens, and I refuse to orphan an animal when there is a better way, an ancestral way, to hunt the species. Our species survived extinction because we teamed up with dogs (wolves) sometime in Plasticine Era. This bond is largely why we are here today, and perhaps explains the passionate nature of wolf conservation in present day. Modern day Hound-men, by some ancestral calling buried in their DNA from thousands of years of hunting with our best friend, are stewards of the Cougars as a species. Most will only harvest a mature, fratricidal male, unless game agencies specify a female quota to be harvested in a unit due to predator-prey dynamics. Which is done in many states. This management tool is the best available science yet it is ignored.

Anecdotally one could easily conclude that the incredible uptick in dangerous cougar encounters in my home state is a product of banning the use of dogs, with our state not even allowing a pursuit season. Which despite my efforts and support from the legislature SB 5320 has been killed in rule committee.

My ethos centers on being a good steward of all that I am a part of, and with that I analyze every act while participating in an ecosystem be it a fishery or a GMU for hunting. As a hunter I am keenly aware of my place in the ecosystem and how my harvest decision have real world effect. Wolves are incredible creatures and I am fortunate enough to have had many encounters with them. With that comes the understanding that if I am to continue to hunt ungulates I must hunt predators. The wild world is simpler, there are predators and prey, in the absence of apex predator's ecosystems can collapse. Today's politically charged world wants to believe that man is not a part of the ecosystem: sound science is blatantly ignored, political wildlife management, management by litigation, and management by emotion are how things are playing out. Our ecosystems are suffering. As a wolf advocate, I believe that they have a place on the landscape. That belief also encompasses the reality that I am also a part of the ecosystem and its steward. To manage wildlife by public opinion is shameful it ignores sound science that involves stewardship of the land and its inhabitants. These are our resources, I am NOT advocating for the extermination of predators, be it cougar, wolf, sea-lion, term, cormorant or bear. I am advocating for sound scientific management to allow our resources to thrive. When needed we must give respite to prey animals where man's influence on the landscape have created predator pits, be it dams or road systems allowing higher prey mortality due to ease of travel for predators. In our state wolves are thriving. Let hunters contribute to the North American Wildlife Model so that all its game species will thrive.

I Hope and Pray that my home state will create a realistic management plan that includes hunting wolves where they are in no danger of extinction (2/3 the state...). I worry that one day a well-funded Non Profit will fund a ballot initiative that will be well received by blind racist bigots, whom view the quiet minority, that minority being hunters as evil. I have personally had online

death threats for being a hunter. Upon publicly announcing I would apply for the wolf advisory committee my office was vandalized when two rocks were thrown thru my office windows. These acts of vandalism and threats were from racists who hate anyone with a true connection with nature, those whom grow and harvest their own food from the land. I am a minority and when the tyranny of the ill-informed masses eventually bans all predator hunting our wildlife and ecosystems will collapse. Predators will turn to livestock all because of well meaning "animal rights" decided to demonize a minority group of stewards that brought wildlife back from the brink of extinction 100 years ago using the North American Wildlife Model.

Days ago I made the life decision to move a few miles east, into Idaho. I plan to return to my home state where I have resided nearly 30 years of my life. Take good care of her while I am gone. In the meantime you'll be receiving some new nonresident revenue from me, given all that fighting you and our wildlife you might need it.