

## Valerie Bittner

EACH and EVERY intact wolf pack residing today in Washington is a priceless critically necessary source for dispersal to prime habitat (including the north and south cascades). This is especially true given failed federal leadership tragically derailing the great promise of wolf 1995's reintroduction (after 70 years of extinction!) in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and Idaho.

The reintroduction of gray wolves to the Rockies (once numbering 2 million souls in pre-settlement America before our civilization systematically because of greed and disinformation "exterminate[] a species extinguishing a unique evolutionary lineage that trails back like paw prints in the sand, for tens of thousands of years" -- Barry Lopez ) was poignantly memorialized by Secretary Bruce Babbitt: "[t]he reintroduction of the wolf is an extraordinary statement for the American people. It reconnects our historical linkage with the wilderness that is so central to our national character. It admits to past errors and asserts our willingness to correct them."

Now, as the hideous fallout of the disregarding the requisite "best available science" demanding "genetic connectivity between all subpopulations throughout the Rockies and the 2011 rider to the Congressional arms appropriations bill stripping all protections under the ESA for wolves in Montana and Idaho -- thus leaving wolves subject to state so-called "conservation" management, -- virtually unregulated murderous world surrounds wolves and this spring's unwary pups --- beings of extraordinary sentience and intelligence and fundamentally defenseless in the face of pathological savagery of which only humanity is capable.

For instance, unmitigated bloodlust in Idaho has led to sanction by Idaho's Legislature and Wolf Depredation Control Board of its brand new Wolf Bounty Program (tax-payer funded payout of \$1,000 per wolf) of a century ago, wherein each bloodthirsty killer is authorized to senselessly waste (e.g., there are no known recipes for wolf meat) up to twenty lives a year, as well as the sanction of annual "wolf derbies" -- "celebrations" of spectacular brutality -- undeniably the antithesis of Secretary Babbitt's words.

Similarly, today in Wyoming, the descendants of Yellowstone wolves have vermin or predatory animal status in eighty-five percent of the lands (even those on the border of Grand Teton National Park) where they can be arbitrarily shot-on-site or gruesomely killed via ill-fitting brain-busting neck snares, by thrill seekers or by U.S.D.A.'s Wildlife Services (the kill happy so-called "control" arm of all federal and state wildlife service agencies -- including Washington state) at the behest of special interests (including most relevant to Washington welfare ranchers enjoying meager grazing fees as well as energy explorers and exploiters) seeking to control the public domain.

Inevitable dewilding due to the destruction of ESSENTIAL wolf pack integrity -- essential to their ecosystem interaction as a keystone ecological actor demonstrate the glaring converse of the overarching mandate of the E.S.A. to conserve resident ecosystems by ensuring the ecologically effective recovery of wolves -- a strongly interactive species -- meaning their interactions with other life forms contribute markedly to the maintenance of habitat and species diversity, including the Northern Rockies' caribou, bison, pronghorn, grizzly, wolverine, and birds of prey.

The 21st Century war on wildlife is now evident in the environmental existential crisis of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and interior Mountain West where fracking, with all of its ugly dimensions, rapaciously metastasizes as land is fast made unsuitable for newly discovered threatened species BEFORE they can be listed as endangered (e.g. think Sage Grouse and Pygmy

Rabbit).

Today, this metastasis, is bewildering irreplaceable scenery (e.g., Wyoming's Pinedale Escarpment; the glacial vistas of the Gallatin Mountains), and precious water -- obviously the most fundamental of life-sustaining resources, upon which all fauna (including ourselves) and flora (including our besieged national forests) depend.

Furthermore, the structural limits of the Earth are being tested, as escalated fracking triggers historic earthquakes up and down Idaho's central eastern border and in and around the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem -- an irreplaceable natural heritage of planetary importance.

Simply put, the best available science tells us that to preserve the precious ecosystems we have left, the wolf meta-population must be large enough to have an ecologically effective presence. The law requires change as the science -- meaning truth -- advances. As such a SEIS truly premised on the essential "best available science" must demand the preservation of pack INTEGRITY and a META-POPULATION throughout Washington that is truly "ECOLOGICALLY EFFECTIVE" -- one which is conserved so that it grows and disperses pursuant to the WOLVES's own decision-making instincts -- NOT one cavalierly subject to scientifically baseless non-sensical decentralized "control" actions akin to those routinely carried out in Idaho and Montana. The morally guided citizens and most especially the precious wolves of Washington deserve so much better!

In sum, "as we save the wolves we save ourselves."

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