

# The Real Wolf

## The Science, Politics and Economics of Co-Existing with Wolves in Modern Times

*Book Review by George Dovel*

When Will Graves asked me if I would consider writing a chapter for *The Real Wolf*, which he co-authored along with Ted Lyon, my first reaction was that it would be a wonderful opportunity to provide factual information to countless people who have been bombarded with fairy tales about living with wolves.

But after learning the names of several bona fide experts from various fields who, like Graves, had already agreed to provide their facts, I felt that anything I added to the book would be coming from a researcher rather than an expert.

In late November of 2013, Ted Lyon sent me a manuscript of *The Real Wolf* and asked me to write a review in *The Outdoorsman*. When I took the time to read the manuscript thoroughly, I was amazed by the straightforward collection of facts presented without anger, apology or attempts at political correctness.

I agree with comments by Tom Remington in his “Foreword” that *The Real Wolf* is loaded with resources from several of the most renowned scientists, researchers, investigators, and historians the world has to offer. I also share Tom’s confidence that this book is destined to become the encyclopedia of wolf facts for readers who have never had the opportunity to read the whole truth.

### **Ted Lyon Did Not Believe Horror Stories at First**

After briefly sharing his outstanding 37-year career as an attorney representing clients in more than 150 jury trials, Lyon said he always relied on the truth. Then he confided that he did not fully believe the horror stories he kept hearing about wolves until after he bought a second home in Montana and experienced that reality himself.

His background as an avid hunter, including a period long ago as an outfitter and guide, probably influenced the amount of time he spent researching and verifying the information he has collected. The fact that he reported FWS biologists providing false information about wolves, and later, state biologists in Idaho and Montana lying to support what FWS said, reflects his intent to report all of the facts.

*The Real Wolf* also includes documentation by experts other than scientists of frequent radical changes in what was considered the legitimate wolf species to be protected. For example, Jim and Cat Urbigkit documented the existence of the original Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf, *Canus lupus irremotus*, on their sheep range in Wyoming before the larger Canadian wolves were introduced.

Cat Urbigkit reminds us that they presented their information through the courts, and Federal Judge William Downes finally ruled that introduction of Canadian wolves

was illegal. He also ordered immediate removal of all Canadian wolves that had been introduced two years earlier, along with their offspring.

But several days later he put a stay on the removal order until it was appealed. And several months later the new court held that FWS had authority to change the subspecies that was being preserved, and the charade continued.

Chapters by Arizona’s Laura Schneberger and Catron County New Mexico Wildlife Investigator Jess Carey are vital to explain why wolves that are crossbred with dogs and raised in captivity represent a special threat to livestock and humans. The calculated non-reimbursed losses for livestock in both locations should end efforts to continue the wolf transplants – but they haven’t.

### **Epilogue**

On November 1, 2013, Idaho Gov. Butch Otter wrote the “Epilogue” to *The Real Wolf*. Part of that document follows:

“There have been few issues during my 40 years in public life that have provoked the raw passions of so many people from around the world as the debate over wolves. I was deluged with some of the nastiest, most disparaging, and truly hateful letters, emails and phone calls from well-meaning but badly misinformed folks, who saw wolves only as big beautiful dogs harmlessly pursuing their majestic lives in the trackless wild. Wolves are an essential and misunderstood part of the Rocky Mountain ecosystem, many argued, and we owe it to our Western heritage to enable wolves to once again roam freely in the Idaho wilderness.

“The problem is that wolves don’t stay put. Their enormous range, high reproductive rate and insatiable hunger for ungulates inevitably draw them out of the woods to interface with man. As their numbers spiraled far beyond expectations, so did the conflicts, and so did my determination to manage wolves as we do any other species – with an eye toward the bigger picture of a balanced ecosystem that includes man.

“I’m grateful to Ted and the many good people who feel a strong affinity for Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and the other states where wolves were another government-imposed challenge to overcome. It was a problem created by “conservationists” who speak floridly about the primal necessity of having wolves in our midst, but for whom the real goal is raising money and disrupting or shutting down such traditional multiple uses of public lands as grazing, logging, mining, and especially hunting. It was a problem created by “conservationists” who

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consistently move the recovery targets, forum-shopped for a sympathetic judge, collected millions of taxpayer dollars to pay their lawyers, and looked for any opportunity to abandon their commitment to pay for our ranchers' losses to wolves released in Idaho.

“Ted, and many others who recognize that reality, fought tough odds to turn the tide on the wolf issue. Now Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming are managing wolves – wolves that never should have been here in the first place. But since they are, the happy ending to this story is that the people most affected by their presence now are managing them in a way that’s far more balanced and reflective of the realities of today’s West. They will never be “our wolves,” but at least now we have a primary role in controlling their population and impacts.

“It’s my sincere hope that The Real Wolf will help open some eyes to the bigger problems with the Endangered Species Act – a once well-intentioned but incredibly flawed law that undermines the real interests and values of conservation by placing the well-being of humans and their livelihoods far down the food chain.”

Idaho Governor C.L.  
“Butch” Otter  
November 1, 2013

(NOTE: The Epilogue that Governor Otter has supplied tells it ‘like’ it is in my opinion. Yet I remain concerned at his repeating our Fish and Game biologists’ standard phrase that they intend to manage wolves as we do any

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other species. I’ve been very close to this for a lot of years and I know of no place in the world that has ever been able to manage wolves as our wildlife managers do with other species.

When the ratio of wolves to elk – their primary prey species in Idaho – got higher than it is in any other place in North America, we needed to lethally remove at least 75%-80% of the wolves in those high density areas. Maintaining very few, if any, wolves for five years until recovery occurred was essential.

But now that our primary elk populations are in a predator pit from which they cannot recover, and wolves soon find them and drive them down each time they produce a few calves, we must initiate really aggressive control until elk numbers have reached the desired goal in each depleted area.

I am pleased that Gov. Otter has taken this step which will allow recovery IF he selects the proper individuals with the sole motive to lethally remove wolves with all of the tools at their disposal until our elk and deer populations have recovered.

I believe anything else would be a serious mistake at this point in time. – ED)

Dear hunter,

No matter what state you live in, I urge you to visit <http://www.farcountrypress.com/details.php?id=575> – then read about **The Real Wolf** and order at least one copy.

The price is \$21 for the Soft Cover or \$30 for the Hard Cover and I know of no book of this quality for sale anywhere near this low price. Once you have had the opportunity to read it, I urge you to get a copy into the hands of your resource committee members, or at the very least, to the state legislators who represent you.

Thank you,  
George Dovel

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