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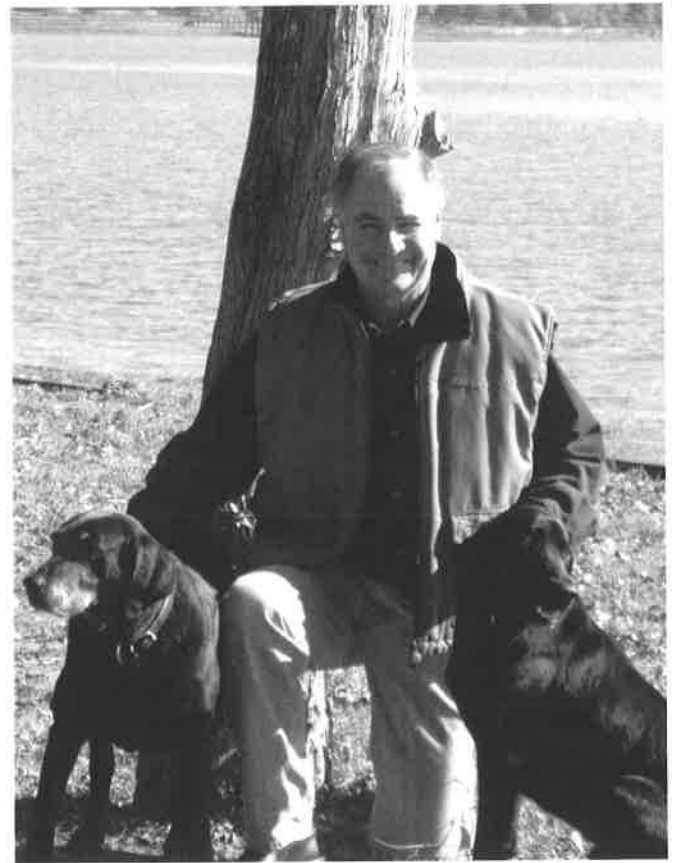
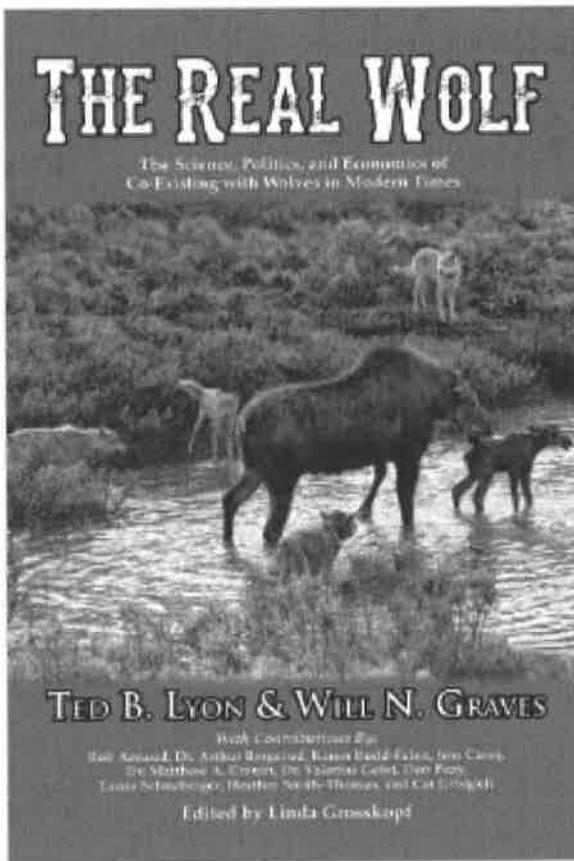
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ARE WOLVES OUT OF CONTROL?

TED LYON, AUTHOR OF THE REAL WOLF, THINKS SO

Put man in nature and allow him to do what he thinks is the right thing at the time and the unintended consequences that occur will make your head spin. Never has this been more true than the current controversy – saga, actually – of the gray wolf.

In the mid-90s, three-dozen gray wolves, which were at the time on the Endangered Species List due to their decimation by ranchers and hunters who were protecting their livestock, deer and elk, were captured in Canada, herded into planes, trucks and snowmobiles and dropped off in the wilderness of Idaho. Wildlife biologists, with the best of intentions, planned to see if the dwindling population of this species could be revived. The jury is in on this question.

According to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game there are now more than 680 wolves, now de-listed and no longer endangered, roaming the state and these wolves are wreaking havoc, much as they did before they were put on the endangered list the first time. Once again, destruction of the area's sheep and cattle populations along with the highly prized elk population has prompted the governor's office to embark on an effort to wipe out three-quarters or more of the population.

Why has this cycle repeated itself? What's makes some very intelligent wildlife biologists, fish & game bureaucrats and politicians think that the second time around this predator is going to play nice this time? Have any of these people seen Ground Hog day?

Actually the answers to these facetious questions are more complicated than yes or no. In fact, the saga of the wolf is also about politics, big money for non-profits who need an issue to rally the troops around and how tough it is to keep nature in balance when artificial restraints such as modern agriculture and hunting regulations and the industries they represent collide with wildlife preservation.

This controversy is stoked by shrill voices and just enough scientific facts to be dangerous on both sides of the issue. Into this fray jumps two men – Ted B. Lyon and Will N. Graves – who both live in the area and have attempted to rise above the wolf hysteria and offer some much-needed facts. The book is entitled “The Real Wolf: The Science, Politics, and Economics of Co-Existing with Wolves in Modern Times” and The Outpost recently talked to Lyon about why any sane person would jump in the middle of this mess! That interview is found below.

THE LATEST NEWS ON THE STATUS OF WOLVES IN IDAHO

The science, opinions and recommendations found in this new book are supported by the turn of events in Idaho as of mid-March 2014. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission made a rule change allowing year-round wolf hunting on private property in the state’s northern Clearwater Region, which was quickly followed by the passage of a bill that would set aside \$400,000 in funds to control gray wolf populations.

Animal rights groups are calling these latest actions a move by Idaho lawmakers to eradicate wolves from the state. House Bill 470 passed on the last day of Idaho’s legislative season and is expected to be signed by Governor C.L. Otter, who publicly supported the bill.

With the addition of the 16 hunting zones in the Clearwater region, hunters can harvest wolves year-round in much of northern Idaho—as long as their hunts take place on private property. The bag limit was also changed to five wolves per calendar year.

Not everyone was pleased with this action. “Political leaders in Idaho would love nothing more than to eradicate Idaho’s wolves and return to a century-old mindset where big predators are viewed as evil and expendable,” said Amaroq Weiss, West Coast wolf organizer at the Center for Biological Diversity. “The new state wolf board, sadly, reflects that attitude. The legislature couldn’t even bring itself to put a single conservationist on the board, so the outcome is predictable: Many more wolves will die.”

State wildlife officials, however, paint a different picture of Idaho’s wolf problem. According to the Wall Street Journal, the Idaho Fish and Game Department estimated that the state’s elk population had fallen 15 percent since wolves were reintroduced, accounting for a dip in the number of elk hunting permits issued. Federal tallies also counted 2,589 sheep, 610 cows, and 72 dogs killed by the new predators in the state. There are roughly 680 wolves in Idaho across 118 packs.

This ruling presents a tightrope for the state to walk. They want fewer wolves in order to reduce the slaughter of livestock and game but they don’t want the numbers to be so low that the threat of the wolves being returned to the Endangered Species List.



“We are of one mind, that Idaho wants to manage our wolves and we want to manage them to a reasonable number so that the species don’t get endangered again and the feds don’t come in and take it over again,” Governor Otter said.

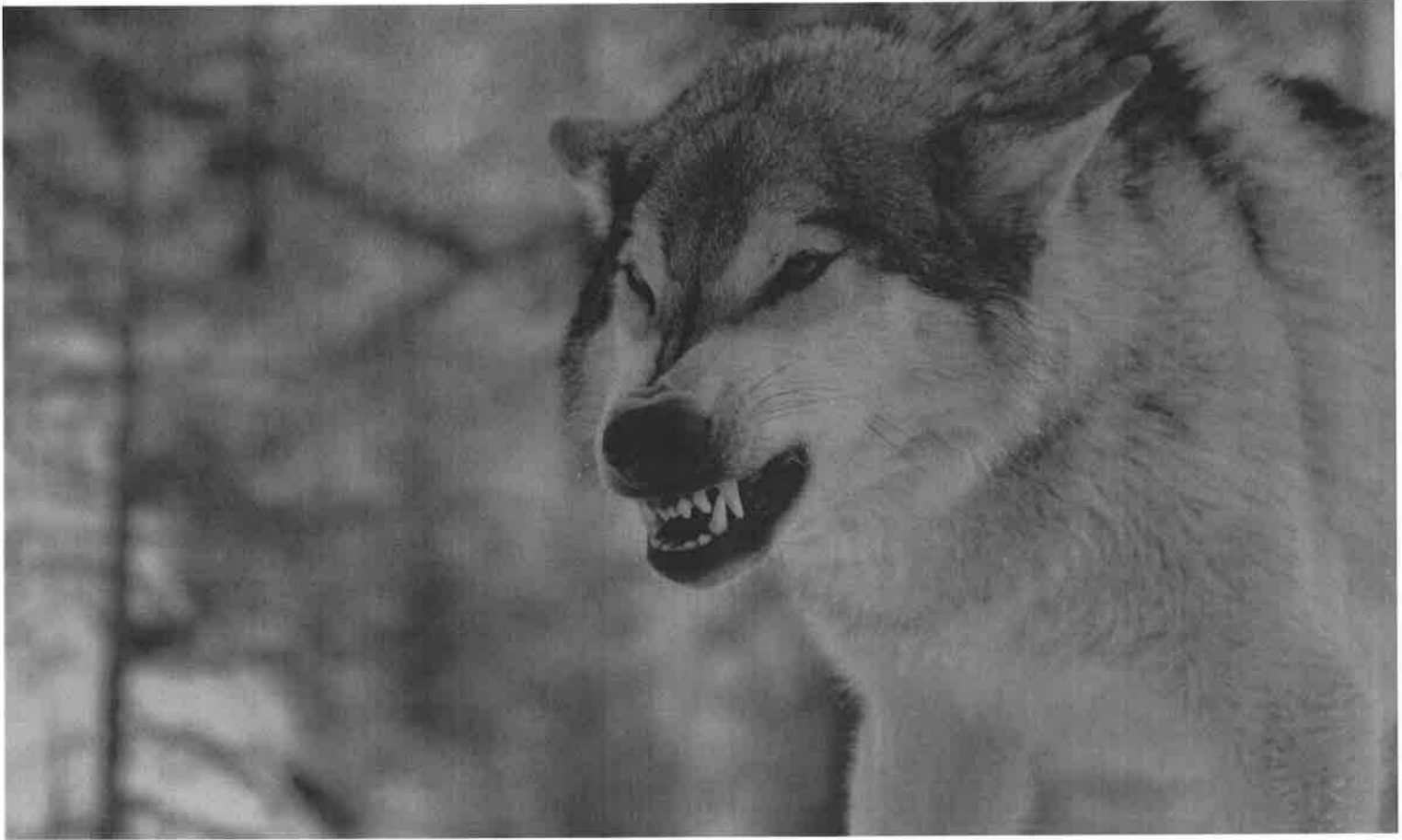
Otter previously signed a bill that declared the reintroduction of gray wolves into Idaho a state disaster. Supporters of House Bill 470 say that it will simply allow the state to properly manage wolves and keep the predators from endangering other wildlife. To date, hunters in the state have harvested about 300 wolves since 2011.

TED LYON THROWS THE BOOK AT THE GRAY WOLF

One of the authors of *The Real Wolf* is Ted Lyon, a well-known, very successful trial attorney from the Dallas area of Texas. In addition to representing clients in more than 150 trials he has represented constituents in the Texas Senate and Texas House of Representatives. Before becoming an attorney and elected official, Lyon was in law enforcement and has been a licensed fishing and hunting guide.

It is obvious from his questions of me before the interview about how the red snapper were running in the Gulf off Louisiana that Lyon is passionate about outdoor sports. It is also obvious that his political opinions tend toward the center of the spectrum – neither right wing nor left. When he was in the Texas legislature he enjoyed a diverse support base and received awards from: The Sierra Club, Texas Farmers Union, Texas Black Bass Unlimited, Greater Dallas Crime Commission, World Wildlife Federation and Texas Outdoor Writers Association

The Outpost: How did a Texas guy get involved in the wolf controversy in Idaho and Montana?



Ted Lyon: I love nature and outdoor sports, especially fishing and hunting. While I live in Texas, my wife and I own a home in Montana when we go to re-charge several times a year. Many of my friends and neighbors in the Montana and Idaho have had first-hand experience with the predatory actions of the wolves in the area. As I got to know the area, the wild game and the effect the wolves were having, I felt like it was important to get the facts straight. That's why Will Graves and I wrote this book.

What are the common misconceptions about wolves?

There are so many, you don't have time to hear them all! It's been said by various wolf-protection groups that they do no kill or attack people. This is incorrect. They do and will continue to.

Some say that wolves will only kill the weak and sick. This is also untrue. In fact, part of the uproar from Idaho is the result of wolves killing more than 2,500 perfectly healthy sheep and more than 600 cattle. Plus, since their re-introduction, wolves have decimated the elk population, reducing it by 15 percent.

The most dangerous myth about wolves is that they don't carry harmful diseases. They are rampant infectious disease-carriers such as tapeworms which cause Hydatid disease and this can be passed on to other wildlife, livestock and even family pets and humans.

You've written that this issue is about agenda, not about wolves. One of the groups with a clear agenda on this issue is a group called The Defenders of Wildlife. Are they just defending wildlife or something else?

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Groups such as the Defenders of Wildlife raise millions of dollars every year by taking an emotional issue such as the potential for wolves becoming an endangered species and building aggressive (and very successful) fund raising around this issue. These funds may or may not go towards protecting the wolves, but they do serve as a rallying cry for raising large sums of money.

As we noted in the book, according to Charity Navigator, in fiscal year 2010, Defenders of Wildlife had an annual budget of \$32,595,000 and its president received an annual salary of \$295,641. Much of this revenue comes from the "Save the Wolf" campaign. The American Institute of Philanthropy gives the Defenders a "D" for the percentage of the budget spent on charitable purposes (43%) and notes the organization sends out 10-12 million pieces of direct mail each year to draw in \$29 million. Sending out several tons of paper, direct mail is not exactly a "green" approach, but apparently it is effective!

There could be no successful campaign to bring back the wolves without the full support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. It had jurisdiction when the wolf was an endangered species and it was responsible for the wolf recovery operations including the re-introduction of the three dozen or so wolves which were moved from Canada to Idaho. We all now know what a mistake this was and yet the service continues to deny that wolf predation is a problem.

We noted in the book that an Ohio State University researcher, Jeremy Bruskotter, reported in "Bioscience" magazine in 2010 that the USFWS is essentially supporting the wolf advocates by suppressing research on the real and potentially negative consequences of wolf populations. This is contributing to the polarization of public opinion about wolves as well as misleading people about the negative consequences of expanding wolf populations.





They have to get involved and make their voices heard in the state and federal houses of congress. This is not a Republican or a Democrat issue. There are good men and women on both sides of the partisan aisle who are working to replace the myths about wolves with the facts. It's also not a rancher vs. outdoor sportsmen issue. Out-of-control populations of wolves destroy livestock and wild game with equal efficiency.

If you're somebody who loves the outdoors and want to keep elk and deer populations thriving, dig into this issue and start contacting your elected representatives and tell them to insist on wildlife policies that are based on science not emotion. Of course, we'd like you to read what we have to say about this issue in our book, but there are many places to go to find the scientific facts about wolves.

Don't fall for the argument that wolves are poor, misunderstood creatures. They are disease-carrying, destructive predators and while there is a place for them in the wild, their numbers must be controlled or the ecosystem will become unbalanced...again.

Apparently many people – outdoor sportsmen, conservationists, animal rights activists, farmers and ranchers – are interested in Lyon's new book. When we spoke with him, more than 2,000 copies had been sold (a large number for this type of subject matter) in the first week and those numbers are no doubt higher now. If you would like to purchase a copy of ***The Real Wolf: The Science, Politics, and Economics of Co-Existing with Wolves in Modern Times***, check your local bookstore or order from Amazon by clicking here:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B000183000>



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