delisting NRM gray wolves: spokane wolf hearings

By Skie Bender, Membership Assistant

On Thursday March 8, Tami Williams, Wolf Haven’s Director of Conservation, and I attended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) public hearings on delisting the gray wolf from the Endangered Species Act.

The USFWS proposes to establish a Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains (NRM) of the United States. The proposed NRM DPS includes Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, the eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon, plus a portion of north-central Utah.

Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming must each manage 100 gray wolves and 15 breeding pairs, and maintain no less than 10 breeding pairs. A breeding pair is being defined as “an adult male and an adult female wolf that have produced at least two pups that survived until December 31 of the year of their birth, during the previous breeding season.”

At 2:30 p.m. the hearing room was packed to capacity, the chairs were filled, so we stood with a crowd in the back of the room. Before the hearings began, ED Bangs, USFWS Wolf Recovery Coordinator, presented a slide show, which summarized the Proposed Rule. He summed up, “We have three times as many wolves as our recovery goal.” The public hearings started promptly at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were hunters, ranchers, outfitters, environmentalists, The Human Society, Conservation Northwest, Defenders of Wildlife, and concerned citizens. Speakers had three minutes to submit their case for or against delisting. The two and a-half hour time frame allowed 56 people a chance to express their views. Those against delisting outweighed those for. The following are attendees’ quotes that best represent the gamut of perspectives.

The Humane Society – “We’re against delisting, because human persecution lead to decimation of wolves, and this threat has not been removed.” An Idaho Hunter – “I am for delisting. Wolves are a dog, they are prolific breeders, and they will never go extinct.”

Defenders of Wildlife – “We are against delisting, all the current success will be undone. We’ll turn back the clock.”

Wolf Haven’s own, Tami Williams – “In theory, Wolf Haven supports delisting in the NRM, however we see a variety of issues with the current proposal that we feel must be addressed before federal protections can be removed for the Northern Rocky wolf population.”

If we remove the gray wolf (or any endangered animal) from the Endangered Species List, we must, as human managers over the entire animal kingdom, have a collaborative commitment to conserve our species, there is no alternative. If our actions don’t embody every single living creature and its dependence on one another as our core goal, one day there may not be an Endangered Species List, not because the animals have all been recovered, but because there are no more animals.

In theory, Wolf Haven supports delisting in Northern Rockies. However, we see a variety of issues with the current proposal that we feel must be addressed before federal protections can be removed for the Northern Rocky wolf population.

We feel Wyoming must be included in any delisting for both biological and legal reasons. For years the state has been determined not to do its part to facilitate delisting. Both Wyoming state law and current recovery plan need to be changed

Teka came to Wolf Haven from Kamloops Wildlife Park in British Columbia. Prior to Kamloops, she was born and raised at a private facility without contact from any other wolves. Her resulting tendency to bond closely with humans became very apparent, as Teka would befriend people easier than she would most other wolves… A characteristic that would prove troublesome for her.

At Kamloops Teka was placed into an established pack that did not take to her and after failed attempts at placing Teka with various wolves, Kamloops contacted Wolf Haven to ask if we had the available space to take her in. Teka started lifting spirits here at Wolf Haven from the moment she arrived on September 19, 1997. Her connection with humans was apparent from the get-go. When I first met Teka, her best human friend, Wendy (Wolf Haven’s Animal Curator), introduced us. As Wendy and I entered the enclosure I genuinely felt welcomed by Teka as she slowly approached me, and I, in turn, slowly approached her. Not knowing each other, nor one another’s possible reactions, we both remained cautious. Teka did have one very special friend who isn’t human, who isn’t actually a wolf either… he is a wolf hybrid named Teka. He had a special connection with Wendy, who was the Animal Curator.

From Kamloops Teka had greater management authority by the USFWS, the state proposed to kill 75 percent of the wolves in the Clearwater region of Idaho over concerns of impacts on the local elk population. There were questions about the adequacy of the study used to justify this proposed action and the plan was ultimately rejected by USFWS.

Although Idaho’s management plan has been accepted by the USFWS, we are concerned about wolf management by that state. While a lot of what is heard from Idaho officials could be classified as political rhetoric, there may be some justifiable concerns about the future of wolves in Idaho under state management. Days after Idaho was given greater management authority by the USFWS, the state proposed to kill 75 percent of the wolves in the Clearwater region of Idaho over concerns of impacts on the local elk population. There were questions about the adequacy of the study used to justify this proposed action and the plan was ultimately rejected by USFWS.

Without federal oversight, Idaho may well have killed most of the wolves in the region without a clear picture of the true cause of the decline in the elk population. Though the state has complied with federal wishes to accomplish delisting, the plan is vague and their intent is clear. Outside monitoring of Idaho’s population beyond the mandatory 5-year period is necessary. Continued on page 22.
named Wolfe. He and Teka were best friends who did everything together. Wolfe loved Teka more than anything in the world and in fact, she was his world. Still, Teka didn't hesitate in the slightest to put Wolfe in his place when he did something she didn't agree with. Every once in a while Wolfe would try to usurp Teka's leadership position only to be promptly met with a loud growl putting a stop to his plans. The two would commonly be seen sleeping side by side, with Wolfe resting his head on her as if guarding his treasure.

Teka opened her heart up to many people here at Wolf Haven and in doing so touched their souls in a way that I believe no other wolf here has ever done. When you would enter the sanctuary she would always be there waiting to brighten up your day with a smile that stretched from ear to ear that felt like a warm hug. She would jump back and forth bursting with excitement reminding you to stop by her enclosure to say “Hi.” She was amazing at lifting your spirit. Many times I would feel that I was in a particularly bad mood and she might sing you a song that would bring you to a place of pure serenity. Teka was known for her singing ability and would often astound her onlookers with a melody of tunes solely composed by her pristine voice, with an occasional backup singer or two.

In April of 2006 Teka started exhibiting odd behaviors like drinking excessive amounts of water and urinating quite frequently. She was also becoming unsteady on her feet and unusually lethargic. As Teka began showing telltale signs of being hyperglycemic (having a high glucose level) the decision was made to take her into the Vet again to run tests for determining how to readjust her insulin dosage. During her last visit we ran blood and did a urinalysis to see what was happening with her. We were given false hope when we received the blood test results which indicated that she was higher than what she should be but not as high as she was in previous tests. With the urinalysis still pending we left the vet and brought Teka back home to recover from the anesthesia. The next day we received the results from the urinalysis. The test showed that her ketones were high, which was not a good indication, and we closely monitored her for any abnormal signs the next couple of days. Yet on March 17, Teka’s health took a dramatic turn for the worse. The morning of the 17th was the last time that I saw my friend Teka alive.

Teka, on that morning when I saw you I didn’t know you were fighting death. I wish I could have been a better fighter for you, and I’m sorry that I wasn’t. I will always remember the last time I looked into your eyes. I will always regret not being there with you when you passed. I am thankful that your very best human friend, Wendy, was with you, desperately trying to breathe life into your lungs as you slipped away. I know that you would have wanted her there by your side as you made the transition from this life to the next. I will always hold a place in my heart for you, my friend, and await the day that I can see your smile again. Teka because of you I now know what angels look like. See you again, “Squeak.”

Julie Lawrence
Fine Art Digital Photography & Design d.b.a. Kitty MultiMedia

Although I have only been with Wolf Haven for a few months, I am blown away by the amazing supporters we have. Not only do we have a constantly growing number of volunteers who give us their time to help complete important tasks that might otherwise not get done, we also receive extraordinary financial support from wolf conservation followers all around the world. When it comes to tangible financial expressions of support, there are literally scores of ways that our friends choose to make gifts to Wolf Haven. Of course, the most popular show of support is through membership, sponsorships and donations. Your generous financial support in these programs makes a direct impact on the lives of our wolves.

However, there are many other ways that Wolf Haven needs support. That is why we would like to make you aware of a special gift opportunity that has recently passed through Congress. In August 2006, Congress passed into law H.R. 7 (IRA Rollover Bill), now known as the Pension Protection Act of 2006, that allows individuals to make direct transfers from their IRA to qualified charities of their choice to help further their missions.

It is our desire to keep you informed. This new legislation can help:
• Meet your required minimum distribution
• Reduce your Social Security wage
• Reduce the phase-out of itemized deductions

However, this bill will be in place only until December 31, 2007, so time is crucial. Included in this WOLF TRACKS is also information on how you can support Wolf Haven through planned giving, memorial donations and an area often forgotten – supporting our supporters (see below). I encourage you to read them all and learn more about the many ways you can help Wolf Haven further its mission to work for wolf conservation.

Another way to maximize every dollar you give is through matching gifts. Many businesses will match your contribution to Wolf Haven at some level. That way, when you give to Wolf Haven your gift is magnified by the investment of others and has the power to bring about the changes that matter most in our organization.

Did you know that every time you use a business or group that supports Wolf Haven, you are also helping Wolf Haven achieve its goals for the year? Additionally, when you tell a business about Wolf Haven and your support, you’re helping get us closer to that business signing a business sign on to support us. In these times of great need and great change, there are many non-profits that are seeking support from the local business community. Wolf Haven understands that we need to be good stewards of every dollar you give and that we need to diversify our income stream. When we approach a business to solicit support, not only do we need to convey our need, we also need to show that business how it is going to benefit tangibly from a relationship with us. We need to earn their support.

How do we earn that support? First on the list is the ability to show that we have the kind of members they would like to have frequenting their business. We do that through knowing our demographics and knowing what businesses would make a good match. That is why we need you to fill out the surveys you will be seeing at Wolf Haven and on-line over the next year.

By Trudy Soucoup, Development Director

S.O.S. stands for “Support our Sponsors!”

Did you know that every time you use a business or group that supports Wolf Haven, you are also helping Wolf Haven achieve its goals for the year? Additionally, when you tell a business about Wolf Haven and your support, you’re helping get us closer to that business signing a business sign on to support us. In these times of great need and great change, there are many non-profits that are seeking support from the local business community. Wolf Haven understands that we need to be good stewards of every dollar you give and that we need to diversify our income stream. When we approach a business to solicit support, not only do we need to convey our need, we also need to show that business how it is going to benefit tangibly from a relationship with us. We need to earn their support.

How do we earn that support? First on the list is the ability to show that we have the kind of members they would like to have frequenting their business. We do that through knowing our demographics and knowing what businesses would make a good match. That is why we need you to fill out the surveys you will be seeing at Wolf Haven and on-line over the next year.

Information and numbers matter! For example, we know many Wolf Haven supporters are environmentally aware. Therefore, we concentrate much of our fundraising efforts on educating and informing our community. We understand the importance of supporting our community.

If you have questions and would like to find out more about the Pension Protection Act, planned giving, memorial donations, matching gifts or other specific ways you can make a tangible financial expression of support, please call me at (360) 264-6695 x226, or email tsoucoup@wolfhaven.org. I would be more than happy to discuss your plans and the best way for Wolf Haven to thank and recognize you for your continued support. Before making any final decisions please contact your legal or tax adviser.

You can make a tangible financial expression of support. Not only do we have a constantly growing number of volunteers who give us their time and that business how it is going to benefi t from a relationship with us. We need to earn their support.

Thank you again for your support. It is far more valuable than you know. §