

Majority of Minnesota voters support reinstating a five-year wait on wolf hunting and trapping

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (March 11, 2013) – The majority of Minnesota voters want to reinstate a five-year waiting period before another wolf hunt is allowed, according to a recently conducted statewide poll by Lake Research Partners. In fact, two thirds (66%) of respondents believe that there is no need for a wolf hunt if Minnesotans already have the legal authority to kill a wolf if it threatens people, livestock, and property. Just 25% disagree, saying that a wolf hunt is still necessary.

The Minnesota Wolf Management Plan stated that a public take (i.e. hunting and trapping seasons) or other options would be considered as population management activities but not sooner than five years following delisting. The plan formed the basis of Minnesota law passed in 2000 that required a five year wait before any proposed wolf hunting season. The five-year wait didn't take effect because the legislature removed the waiting period from law in an unrelated budget bill behind locked doors during the summer Special Session in 2011. The public was shut out of the process.

A comprehensive population survey was not done before the 2012 wolf hunt. The poll found that three in four (75%) Minnesota voters think it was wrong to allow a wolf hunt prior to conducting a comprehensive wolf population survey. The last comprehensive count undertaken in 2007-2008 showed a wolf population that was stable since 1998.

Seventy-nine percent of voters agree the gray wolf is an asset to Minnesota and should be protected for future generations. "Minnesotans clearly value the gray wolf and want to return to common sense strategies outlined in the original management plan reached through a consensus process", said Dr. Maureen Hackett, founder of Howling For Wolves. The plan states that, "Where wolves are not in conflict with humans, they will be left alone; where they are in conflict with humans, problem wolves will be removed." No documented cases of wolves attacking people have occurred in Minnesota.

It's not just the process and broken promise that have voters concerned. The survey also found that a majority of voters oppose the use of traps, snares and bait to hunt and trap wolves in Minnesota. In fact, sixty-six percent of voters oppose allowing the use of traps and snares to hunt Minnesota's gray wolves, with just 29% supporting it.

Sen. Chris Eaton (DFL - Brooklyn Center) wants the legislature to make good on a broken public promise that had been in state law for 10 years. S.F. 666 will be heard in the Environment and Energy committee Thursday, March 14th at 12pm. H.F. 1163 introduced by Rep. Jason Isaacson awaits a hearing date in the house.

For more information about the recent statewide poll results, visit <http://static.howlingforwolves.org/WolfPoll.pdf>

Howling for Wolves was created to be a voice for wild wolves and those who are concerned with their survival. We aim to educate the public about our wolf population and the advocacy that is necessary to keep wild wolves in a self-sustaining existence. For more information and resources: www.howlingforwolves.org

Maureen Hackett, M.D., the founder of Howling for Wolves, is a physician, a triple board certified forensic psychiatrist, and a former United State Air Force officer. In 2003, Hackett was instrumental in the passage of Minnesota law providing for tobacco-free state hospital grounds.

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