**November 2012**

**BCCA Key Messages: Draft Management Plan for the**

**Grey Wolf in BC**

**Background**

BCCA has been advocating for the Provincial Government to manage the wolf population in BC and is pleased that on November 14, 2012, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations released the province’s draft wolf management plan.

The plan is open to public comment until **December 5, 2012** at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/public-consultation/grey-wolf/>

BCCA wants to ensure that the views of our producers are considered in the final wolf management plan and encourages our members to provide constructive comments on the plan.

**General Comments**

We applaud the government for tackling what can be considered a very emotional and controversial issue. We are encouraged that the plan acknowledges that wolves present a considerable problem to livestock in specific areas of the province and that management of wolves is required. We support the implementation of a two-zone management system along with the use of improved data collection to inform regulation changes and management actions.

We urge the government to act swiftly on the nine ***Recommended Management Actions*** outlined in the plan. Specifically, we request the government to immediately develop a policy that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of landowners and the Conservation Officer Service in dealing with wolves that have killed or maimed livestock. We believe that the policy should include a clear process with benchmarks for when specific management tools will be implemented, with an escalating response to increased livestock depredation.

In addition, we want to emphasize that the full range of management tools needs to be available for the management of wolves where livestock kills are verified and that the government needs to keep the toolbox flexible so that new tools can be added.

**Highlights from the Wolf Management Plan**

* Wolf range is expanding and wolves are now found in areas of BC where they were previously considered extirpated such as the southern portions of Kootenay and Thompson regions.
* Current rates of hunting and trapping do not threaten wolf populations. Sustainable harvest is considered a legitimate use of BC’s wolf population.
* Wolf management in BC is becoming characterized by a two-zone management strategy. In areas where livestock depredation or species at risk are a concern, wolf management includes year round open seasons and/or no bag limits, and is some cases targeted removal of individuals or packs. Elsewhere, wolf management is primarily concerned with providing hunting and trapping opportunities with controls on harvest through specific season lengths and bag limits. In this plan, the government moves toward creating a formal implementation of the two-zone management.
* Programs to protect livestock and the program to recover species at risk can likely be accommodated within wolf conservation goals. The question is how to deliver these programs most efficiently, humanely, and effectively.
* The plan acknowledges that wolf predation on livestock has become a growing concern, especially in the areas of the Cariboo and Peace regions.
* The Province is investigating ways to enable landowners to assume greater responsibility for managing predator issues. The Conservation Office Service will be partnering with the full suite of stakeholders that have an interest in this issue on coordinating monitoring, verification, mitigation, compensation and outreach efforts for livestock-predator conflicts. Stakeholders will include local livestock producers and producer groups, industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, the BC Wildlife Federation, the BC Guide Outfitters Association, the BC Trappers Association and local hunters and trappers.

**Submitting Your Comments**

In submitting your comments at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/public-consultation/grey-wolf/> , please consider including the following along with your comments on the plan:

1. Indicate where your ranch is located, be as specific as you are comfortable, but at least indicate your region.
2. State your past history with wolf conflicts and your direct cattle losses. Make note of any trends. For example, are cattle losses increasing?
3. Document your experience working with the Conservation Office Service and previous predator control programs.
4. Indicate if you think there is an acceptable level of loss to wolves. If so, what do you consider to be acceptable?
5. Detail what other measures you have in place to reduce conflicts with wolves.

We would like to encourage all members to comment on the plan, whether or not you are directly impacted by wolves.