

### Madison County Large Predator Policy

WHEREAS, 87-1-217 (6) MCA states: The department (of Fish Wildlife and Parks) shall ensure that county commissioners and tribal governments in areas that have identifiable populations of large predators have the opportunity for consultation and coordination with state and federal agencies prior to state and federal policy decisions involving large predators and large game species;

WHEREAS, 87-1-217 **Policy for management of large predators – legislative intent** (1) states: In managing large predators, the primary goals of the department, in the order of listed priority, are to: (a) protect humans, livestock, and pets; (b) preserve and enhance the safety of the public during outdoor recreational and livelihood activities; and (c) preserve citizens opportunities to hunt large game species;

WHEREAS, 87-1-217 (2) (a) defines “large game species” as: deer, elk, mountain sheep, moose, antelope, and mountain goats;

WHEREAS, 87-1-217 (2) (b) defines “large predators” as: bears (no excepted species), mountain lions, and wolves;

WHEREAS, Canadian Grey Wolves, described by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as a “non-native, non-essential species” were introduced into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 & 1996 against the wishes of the Governor and State of Montana;

WHEREAS, the stated goal of 10 breeding pairs - 100 wolves by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service was reached by 2002 and expanded by MFWP to 15 breeding pairs – 150 wolves to provide a cushion for State Management for delisting;

WHEREAS, there are now a **minimum** number of wolves of at least 658 according to FWP with estimates ranging into the several thousands, well in excess of any stated target population;

WHEREAS, grizzly bears, black bears and mountain lion populations in undefined quantities are all competing with wolves for limited large game resources that are being stressed and depleted at alarming rates, resulting in: movement off traditional range, large game impacts on private lands, increased domestic livestock predation, reduced livestock birth rates, reduced livestock weight gain and increasing encounters with humans;

WHEREAS, the duty and responsibility of the Madison County Board of Commissioners is to: protect the lives, liberty, property, health and safety of the citizens of Madison County, protect the economic health and tax base of the county, and protect the right to harvest game species as guaranteed in the Montana Constitution;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Madison County is adopting the following policy regarding large predators;

- (1) We recognize that many state and federal large predator policies that impact the lives, property, livelihoods and safety of the citizens of Madison County have been implemented without a complete understanding of the ramifications of these policies.

- (2) We require that any **proposed** state or federal policies, discourse, rules or regulations involving large predators within or that could be within the boundaries of Madison County are consulted and coordinated with the Board of Commissioners **prior to policy decisions**.
- (3) We require that any **proposed** state or federal policies, discourse, rules or regulations involving large game animals within or that could be within the boundaries of Madison County are consulted and coordinated with the Board of Commissioners **prior to policy decisions**.
- (4) We recognize that large predators are part of our natural landscape and are willing to co-exist with them as long as they do not have an adverse impact on the health and safety of our citizens, domestic livestock producers, large game populations, natural resource production, and our county tax base.
- (5) Madison County will coordinate with other Montana counties impacted by large predators with the intent of working to achieve common goals and to provide a united message when dealing with state and federal agencies.
- (6) Madison County will participate in the MACo Agriculture Committee's Large Predator Working Group with the intent of developing and adopting a statewide policy that has widespread support, realistic goals, and is legally defensible.

PASSED and ADOPTED by the Madison County Board of Commissioners this \_\_\_\_\_ day of January, 2013.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Peggy Kaatz-Stemler  
Clerk and Recorder  
Madison County

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James P. Hart, Chairman

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Dan A. Happel

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David Schulz  
Board of Commissioners  
Madison County