

Political and Economic Factors:

- As of December 2012, there are 683 wolves in Idaho.
- Grassroots organizations have played a huge part in the success of wolf reintroduction.
- Wolves are protected under rule 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act.
 - Under 10(j), states have flexibility in creating management plans; rural interests are more commonly catered to on the state level.
 - Wolf kills are legal under rule 10(j), depending on judicial interpretation. Wolf hunting seasons have been established in Idaho.
- Federal management has been hotly contested between urban and rural interest groups.

Cost-Benefit Analysis:

Quantifiable costs:

- \$10-15 million in reintroduction costs
- \$100,000 per year in livestock compensation.

Quantifiable benefits:

- \$35.5-58 million in Eco-tourism

Nonquantifiable benefits:

- Ecosystem services

Nonquantifiable costs:

- fear people experience from having wolves near their homes and livestock.

Historical Factors:

- Wolves lived nearly everywhere in North America prior to white settlement.
- Wolves were nearly extirpated in the early 20th Century in the U.S.
- In 1995 and 1996, the U.S. Federal Government reintroduced wolves from Canada to Yellowstone National Park and Central Idaho.
- In 2009, wolves were removed from the Endangered Species List, and state governments have taken over wolf management.
- For more on wolves, visit <http://www.thewildlifeneeds.com/>

For more information, visit www.collegeofidaho.edu/environmentalstudies

Wolf Reintroduction in Idaho and Yellowstone National Park



An Environmental Studies Senior Capstone Presentation



Biological Factors:

- Wolves are social animals with intricate pack hierarchies.
- As native top predators, they can have trophic impacts through their interactions with other species.
 - In some areas, wolves may reduce overgrazing by wild ungulates through predation and influencing prey behavior.
 - They also limit populations of mid-level mesopredators such as coyotes.
- Wolf eradication dramatically reduced the overall genetic diversity of gray wolves as a species.
 - Minimizing inbreeding and encouraging gene flow will be crucial to the success of reintroduced wolf populations.
- The gray wolves that were reintroduced from Canada are not considered taxonomically distinct from the gray wolves that lived in the western U.S. prior to extirpation in the 1930s.

Cultural Factors:

Native Americans:

- Wolves serve as a spiritual and religious symbol.
 - Wolves in mythology
- Native Americans see the wolf as a metaphor for humankind and their culture's history.

Historical Euro-American Views:

- American Romantics: Nature as a way to encounter the 'sublime'.
- Christians: Nature sometimes seen as 'savage'
- Euro-Americans: myths convey wolves as fearsome and deceitful (Ex. Little Red Riding Hood)

Environmentalists:

- Focus on wolves' biological functions and inherent value.

Hunters and Ranchers:

- Fear declines in prey populations and predation on livestock.
 - These factors can threaten their livelihoods.
- Adaptable ranchers have employed non-lethal methods of predation control.

Social Factors:

- Historical attitudes towards wolves were shaped by inaccurate information regarding wolf predation prior to eradication.
- Wolf reintroduction represents conflicting ideas regarding the future of the landscape and what role humans play in shaping that future

Rhetoric:

- Anti wolf: focuses on negative perceptions of wolf; uses phrases like "blood thirsty", "addicted to hunting", and "wild beast"
- Pro wolf: personifies the wolves to build a connection to humans

Media:

- Local media tends to have a more negative outlook on the wolves
- National media focuses more on environmental importance of wolves.

Wolf Opinions Elsewhere:

- People in regions without wolves tend to be favorable towards the possibility of the animal's presence.
- Regions with recent wolf introduction tend to have more negative views of wolves
- Places that have dealt with wolves for decades tend to have positive attitudes toward wolves.