

Wolf Management Advisory Council

2013 Recommendations

For 2013, the Wolf Management Advisory Council (WMAC) was asked to submit as its recommendation, their perspectives on the potential consequences should the recommendation for the public harvest of wolves (attached) be implemented. The WMAC were asked to categorize these consequences into 4 categories described below. The WMAC was asked only to comment on the Department of Natural Resource's recommendation and were not asked if they supported or opposed the public harvest of wolves. This recommendation is not meant to endorse or oppose the public harvest of wolves.

The WMAC recommends that the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) Wildlife Committee and the NRC Committee of the Whole consider these potential consequences when developing their recommendation and when considering their decision on the topic of the public harvest of wolves. The potential consequences below are listed in the order they were provided by the members of the WMAC that were in attendance at the April 24, 2013 meeting. This list is a complete list, not a consensus list. Each WMAC member was able to add as many or as few potential consequences as they desired.

After listing potential consequences, the WMAC had a limited, facilitated discussion to clarify the consequences listed. A summary of the discussion, as captured by the DNR, is available in the minutes of the WMAC meeting (attached) but are not to be considered as part of the recommendation since they are not the exact wording of the discussion. The WMAC was then asked to prioritize this list by voting for the potential consequences they felt were most important. Each of the 14 WMAC members in attendance were given five votes to distribute as they wished among all of the potential consequences (no more than two votes to any given item – WMAC members could spend one vote on five items, two on one and three on three more, or two on two each and one on a third). The number of votes each potential consequence received is listed after each potential consequence in parentheses.

The WMAC makes up a diverse group of stakeholder groups from many different perspectives. Most, if not all, public perspectives on wolves are represented by the WMAC and, as a result, the public perception of likely consequences of implementing the DNR's recommendation for the public harvest of wolves (both positive and negative) are represented here. The WMAC strongly encourages the NRC to consider these potential consequences before their May 9, 2013 decision regarding the public harvest of wolves.

What are the POSSIBLE BARRIERS to successful implementation of the draft regulation as you have heard it presented?

- Political/legislative/legal activity that distracts from science/biology
- Presentation of non-factual information by those against policy (3)
- Ballot referendum
- Lack of funding for non-lethal approaches
- Hunter/trapper understanding of the process, which is unique in Michigan
- Speed of process
- Failure to properly consult with 1836 treaty tribes

- MDNR- Resources to administer hunt (5)
- New legislature to change the future process
- Conflicts are not clearly defined by the department, they are not clearly presented, and the trends in those conflicts are not clearly presented (1)
- Lack of apparent evaluation of efficacy of plan and possible one-year vs. multi-year implementation
- Can hunters/trappers access the public wolf areas?
- Conflicts need to be addressed immediately and directly, still need Wildlife Services, hunting is additive mortality
- Tribal conflicts with a hunting season (1)
- Complete/proper tribal consultation
- Insufficient public input from the Detroit metro area
- Insufficient time for survey to be analyzed and included pre-draft
- Lack of support for hunting and trapping wolves by large percentage of Michigan Population (2)

What are the RESOURCE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS/CONSEQUENCES of implementation of the draft regulation as you have heard it presented?

- Funding required for wolf specialists to provide prompt, effective assistance to public (7)
- Opportunity for conservationists (WMAC members) to demonstrate we can manage/conservate a contentious species without political/legislative meddling (7)
- Geographic areas to not effectively impact the wolf population
- Need to include non-lethal approaches, where they are needed, what has been tried, what works, etc. on a map with access to public
- Lethal control NOT be based as preventative
- Backlash from both sides (2)
- Public attitudes towards wolves improves (2)
- Human conflict is addressed outside the designated hunting area (1)
- Still have illegal kills despite hunting
- Violation of 2007 inland consent decree (1)
- State law requiring use of science in management actions by MDNR. There might not be evidence that this will address the issues.
- Reduction in complaints from hunt will lead to fewer resources required to address complaints
- More success on private lands could shift more conflicts to public lands
- Need to better establish pack boundaries and population estimates
- Farmers are bearing the cost of non-lethal control methods – even when they are not necessarily successful – are not a planned cost of business (2)
- Alternative sources of funding for DNR to carry out mission (1)
- What changes have been made regarding penalizations for illegal harvest of wolves?

What might be some UNFORSEEN OR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES of implementation of the draft regulation as you have heard it presented?

- Disruption of pack dynamics could increase depredation especially with smaller packs: if an alpha is killed, pups are inexperienced (3)
- More people in the woods in Nov/Dec (deer/firearm season, public land user conflicts?) (1)
- Season may be too limited to achieve goal of conflict reduction
- Estimated harvest number may be too low to achieve desired populations (2)
- Increased social carrying capacity for betterment of wolf conservation (9)
- Potential over-harvest – via legal and un-legal harvest
- Targeting wolves is not responsible (1)
- Downward (continued) trend in overall wolf population
- Zones are too large
- Increasing fear of wolves by public (1)
- Increased depredation issues
- Resentment/mistrust of MDNR if management goals are not addressed by the hunt
- Movement away from other management tools (we may become dependent on lethal controls even though some non-lethal controls may work) (1)

What further INFORMATIONAL QUESTIONS do you have which need answers or INFORMATIONAL CITATIONS/WEBSITES/RESOURCES which you believe are important to share?

- Has any consideration been given to possible need for a mandatory education/training session prior to the hunt- similar to elk hunting? Since wolves haven't been hunted or trapped legally for several decades, should training be provided to ensure a safe/clean kill as humanely as possible? (1)
- How was lethal evaluated? Was lethal un-effective because other wolves moved in – how will the hunt resolve this specifically?
- What specifically is being done to reduce deer numbers in ironwood?
- Does the management of wolves from a negative perspective have long-term negative consequences? (1)
- How will the mandatory call in be enforced? Can it be verified to insure no unreported take? (1)
- Are there any stats on the illegal take of wolves?
- Explain why the DNR uses pack territories as zone determinates when DNR has “no confidence in them? Educated guesses are not sufficient.
- How much money was spend bringing MT biologist to MI and why was that state chosen?
- Need to clearly demonstrate how hunting will address management/conflict issues – scientifically. (2)
- How will success be determined? Need properly structure and fund evaluation

- How will conflict be used in future to authorize future hunts? Need to quantify and define what constitutes conflict and when hunting should be used to address.
- What plans does the DNR have to provide funding for wolf specialists to assist public conflict resolution? (4)
- Reduce wolf conflict, not “eliminate” wolf conflict – very purposeful wording
- Little education being done, DNR is reactive, not proactive
- Why wasn’t the MN model considered? MN uses citizen trappers to resolve these issues.
- Will livestock producers be required to open up their land to hunting and trapping to receive compensation? (1)
- *See other informational resource suggestions attached*

Wolf Management Advisory Council (WMAC) Members in Attendance at the April 24, 2013 meeting (listed according to seating arrangement):

Timber Wolf Alliance (Steve Schaub)
 Michigan Department of Natural Resources (Russ Mason)
 USDA- Wildlife Services (Pete Butchko)
 National Wolfwatcher Coalition (Nancy Warren)
 Michigan Trappers and Predator Caller’s Association (Tom Oakey)
 The Wildlife Society (Gary Roloff)
 UP Whitetails (Al Ettenhofer)
 Farm Bureau (Dick Pershinski)
 Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority (Doug Craven)
 Michigan United Conservation Clubs (Amy Trotter)
 Michigan Hunting Dog Federation (Mike Thorman)
 UP Sportsman’s Alliance (Dale McNamee)
 Michigan Humane Society (Linda Reider)
 Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (Roger LaBine)

WMAC Member Organizations Not in Attendance:

National Wildlife Federation
 Michigan Sheriff’s Association
 Michigan State University Extension
 Safari Club International
 Resource Stewards