

Email Exchanges With FWP - Finding The Truth

Background

On September 3, 2011, I published the paper *Hunting Wolves In Montana - Where Are The Data?* in the peer-review, scientific journal *Nature and Science*. It reviewed the data collected by Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) regarding wolf population numbers. This is the state agency responsible for wolf management in Montana. They use this data, among other things, to determine the total number of wolves in the state, a major reference point in making management decisions. My review of FWP's data demonstrated that much of it was flawed or blatantly wrong, in addition to fabricating wolf numbers. It would be helpful to look over the paper before reading the email exchanges. To read or obtain a copy of this paper online, go to:

<http://www.wolfandwildlifestudies.com/downloads/natureandscience.pdf>

After publication of my review paper, I spent two months emailing and visiting FWP officials to understand how and why they used flawed information to decide how many wolves should die in public hunts. I also asked about the procedures used to collect their data, because FWP claimed that wolf hunts were based in science. Although my questions have remained mostly unanswered, the series of email exchanges seen below offer insights as to how the system of wolf management actually works, at least politically. Judge for yourself. The exchanges also provide examples of what the public can expect should they contact FWP. If nothing else, they are entertaining to read.

I urge anyone interested in this subject to email these people and demand the truth about wolf management and clarification as to what is really going on. Following is a list of the people involved in my email exchanges and their email addresses. They are arranged from the highest political level to the lowest, top to bottom:

Mike Volesky, Policy Advisor to the Governor, MVolesky@mt.gov.

Joe Maurier, FWP Director, jmaurier@mt.gov.

Jim Satterfield, Regional Supervisor, jsatterfield@mt.gov.

Jim Williams, FWP Wildlife Program Manager, jwilliams@mt.gov.

Kent Laudon, Wolf Management Specialist, klaudon@mt.gov.

Email exchanges

The emails are presented here in their original format. I have left the text unchanged, but I did remove some email attachments, such as scientific papers, and instead provided web links to these sources.

When I was researching the information for my paper, I contacted the local FWP official, Kent Laudon, and inquired about the protocols used to collect data, because FWP claimed that wolf hunts were based in science:

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From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Subject: Re: Wolf data

Date: September 6, 2010 5:07:24 PM MDT

To: Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>

Kent,

Thank you for your detailed descriptions and taking the time to answer my questions. I do have one more clarification to ask. When you do howling and flying, are there scientific protocols that you follow to collect your data? For example, during flights for collared wolves, do you follow straight lines, grid patterns, etc.? Thanks and have fun out there!

Jay

From: Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>

Subject: RE: Wolf data

Date: September 7, 2010 12:01:36 PM MDT

To: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Jay there are no protocols. No protocol would be necessary or even help really. Flights of course are for radio collared wolves only. Trying to find wolves by fixed wing aircraft would not be practical - cost would be too high for very limited success. We do, occasionally, find wolves incidentally by air craft. So, aircraft is used to monitor radio collared wolves/packs. Conversely monitoring radio collars from the air is the most effective and efficient way to monitor those collars. If things go well we can locate all radio collared packs in NW MT in two morning (~3.5 hours each). That's not even possible to do in that amount of time by ground and of course our ability to locate any pack from the ground is a lot less than from the air. Still we do occasionally miss collars from the air. Here's a detailed description of what that might look like on any given flight. We fly out of Kalispell, and on a particular day and decide that we will monitor wolves to the 'east'. We begin by heading to the Swan. Once in the air I begin to search for NW Montana missing radio collars. I will continue to do that until I near the Quintonkon pack homerange area, when I enter that radio collar's bracketed frequencies, and begin searching her as well as the missing. Once very close or in the Quintonkon pack homerange, I concentrate only on her bracketed frequencies. Eventually we get beeps (hopefully!) and we begin the process of locating. We use the duo antenna system - 1 antenna on each wing and a toggle switch in the plane that we can choose both or separate antennas, and on separate we can switch between left and right antenna. Once we have the collar pin pointed we try to get visuals. The location adds to our knowledge of the homerange and helps to build polygons, helps to fly more efficiently in the future as we begin the process of learning how the pack uses the landscape (newly collared packs can be tougher that way), and visuals help in our numbers and reproduction data. We fly about 1/month, but step it up a little during the end of the year (the real meat of our population data) and denning season. At that rate, I estimate it takes about 2 years of flying to begin to get an idea of a wolf packs homerange. Our numbers data is conducted through time. Each location is only 1 bit of information. NW MT is more difficult that some other places for visuals, but we do pretty well nonetheless. Of course each count is not a complete count, because all individuals may not be visible through the veg or otherwise are bedded and blend in well or all individuals may not be present. Through time we track all that information and make the best sense possible at that the end of the year. Wish we could fly more but can't afford it. Conversely I really would not want to fly any less than that and still have much value to the costs. I think about 1/month is the minimum rate. After Quintonkon and our location and number data, we fly to the next pack

again searching for missing until we get close, etc, etc. That's pretty much the radio collared packs. Having said all that, we do go into some kind of grid if we are unsuccessful at finding the collar (we've had a rash of those lately for some unknown reason). Or once in awhile I may choose to fly an area that we seldom or never get to to search for missing collars. Did that in Canada last fall and found a missing wolf from near Libby. Missing wolves that are or have dispersed are super difficult and require hyper vigilance. Seems like I usually find about 1-2/ year. That's always exciting!

The non collared packs are all by ground by the earlier methods described. Essentially we start with an idea of where we think the pack territory is. We utilize all techniques including howling to attempt to find homesites. There is no howling protocol, it's simply a tool to try to find the wolves and we apply it where it makes sense (eg meadow areas, basins or other places that seems like potential). Now, of course, if we either get no response, or we find little sign, it does not mean the wolves aren't there - somewhere. Just means so far we are unable to find them. Of course wolves do not always respond to howls as well.

While no rigid protocols are used, there is still method to all of it. And I think the best way to describe it is a process of gathering information and continually evolves as information is added. Again fun part of the job. Sometimes it's pretty easy, sometimes difficult or impossible even.

Does that make sense? I'll stop now - as you can tell I could go on and on about it. Trying to get out in the field again. Took the weekend off and now am dealing with an injured dog. What are you doing these days? Saw that you were talking at the Whitefish library. I was in the field in Troy - couldn't make it. Hope it went well.

Kent Laudon
Wolf Management Specialist
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Rd
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-751-4586 (w)
406-250-5047 (c)
406-257-0349 (fax)
klaudon@mt.gov
<http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/management/wolf/default.html>

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As you can see, the scientific method was never used to collect data. Not even howling protocols were followed. Protocols for howling surveys were established in the 1960s and have been modified and used ever since by scientists, including myself. Howling to find wolves follows a strict procedure, and for 14 years I taught these technique to my summer students. We found wolf packs for the government, and to stay in contact with the wolves I studied for 10 years, the Fishtrap pack. In the state of Washington, I taught these techniques to management agency employees from U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U. S. Forest Service.

After my paper was published, I asked higher-level officials in FWP additional questions regarding wolf management:

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From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Subject: Published paper

Date: September 4, 2011 1:38:58 PM MDT

To: Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>

Mr. Williams,

I have studied wolves for 20 years, 18 of which have been in Montana. I recently reviewed some of the data in the annual reports, specifically wolf population numbers and the claim that FWP uses science to justify the hunting of wolves. Yesterday, my review of this data was published in Nature and Science, a peer reviewed scientific journal. In it, I demonstrate that the population numbers for wolves are inaccurate, and therefore the quotas set for hunting wolves are completely arbitrary. A PDF copy is enclosed. Could you please comment on why an agency such as FWP can collect such blatantly incorrect data and still claim that they are using science to justify the killing of wolves? I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jay Mallonee
Wolf & Wildlife Studies

From: Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>

Subject: wildlife science

Date: September 12, 2011 4:31:01 PM MDT

To: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Cc: Satterfield, Jim <jsatterfield@mt.gov>

Jay,

Is there a chance that you will run your analysis through the Journal of Wildlife Management technical review process for publication? I have attached a recent wolf/hunting related paper as an example of the rigor and review of a paper that we would typically utilize at FWP. This should answer your questions about mortality modeling in a common technical wildlife journal format.

Feel free to work with Kent if you need more information Jay.

Jim



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The paper Jim Williams referred to was a response to another paper written by Scott Creel and Jay Rotella: “Meta-analysis of relationships between human offtake, total mortality and population dynamics of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*).” By the end of September 2010, the paper of these two Montana State University professors challenged the proposed wolf hunt for fall 2011. As part of their study, Creel and Rotella used FWP data (which is available to anyone) to arrive at conclusions that contradicted those of FWP. This prompted FWP to state that they will end their financial and intellectual cooperation with the university after 60 years if both institutions cannot continue to “collaborate” in the future.

By April 2011, some of the biggest names in FWP and the wolf world authored the paper that claimed to refute Creel and Rotella’s findings and instead supported FWP’s management policy of killing wolves: “Wolf population dynamics in the U.S. Northern Rocky Mountains are affected by recruitment and human-caused mortality.” To read or download either of these two papers, go online to:

<http://www.wolfandwildlifestudies.com/paperdownloads.php>

In the midst of all this, my paper demonstrated that much of the information everyone had based their predictions on was blatantly flawed. Thus the following email exchanges:

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From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>
Subject: Re: wildlife science
Date: September 17, 2011 12:00:41 AM MDT
To: Jim Williams <jwilliams@mt.gov>

Hi Jim,

Thank you for getting back to me. I have already worked with Kent in obtaining information about how FWP collects data in the field. We emailed back and forth over a several month period and he answered most of my questions. I tried to contact other FWP employees for their views but I was usually referred back to Kent, as you are doing now. Apparently he is the

authority on these issues, and as such, he told me that no protocols were followed or even help when collecting data about wolves. Therefore, no science was involved in the data collection, thus my question to you in my previous email. I never asked you about mortality modeling, nor is it relevant. My paper has to do with your data collection methods, the step before modeling and data analysis, which compels me to ask, did you read the entire paper? As stated in the text, data collection is crucial because analysis can only be as good as the quality of data collected. My paper did not require complicated statistical analysis to demonstrate that FWP data collection did not use scientific protocols. First, Kent said no protocols were followed, which by default means no science; and second your numbers literally do not add up. It does not make sense to take flawed data then apply scientific analysis. For example, modeling is used to make predictions based on trends provided by the data. When it comes to immigration, you have no numbers at all, yet 141 wolves "showed up" in the year end total for 2009. There is no classification in the annual reports for immigration data and no explanation as to where these "extra" wolves came from. By the end of 2009, FWP reported 524 wolves, but this includes the 141 undocumented wolves, or 27%. In scientific studies, this would be an unacceptable margin of error.

What is really required is a simplistic and straightforward method of demonstrating what FWP is doing so that the general public can understand how their money is spent on wolf recovery, thus my paper. There were other issues addressed as well, such as FWP's claims that depredation and threat to prey populations were the reasons for wolf hunts. Your data does not support either of these arguments. Although I can appreciate your concerns about peer review, I have published my studies in the Canadian Journal of Zoology and the Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, among others, and have experienced rigorous peer review. Nevertheless, the paper you sent me, authored by some of the top wolf people in the business, still used data that FWP provided, which my paper demonstrates is extremely flawed. So please, either show me where I am wrong, or answer the question. In fact, I will restructure my question: Where did the 141 wolves come from?

Jay Mallonee
Wolf & Wildlife Studies

From: Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>
Subject: RE: wildlife science
Date: September 19, 2011 2:00:45 PM MDT
To: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>
Cc: Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>

Jay,

Kent is the FWP Regional Wolf Biologist that collects the field data. Based on his field work in conjunction with our Area Biologists and Game Wardens, Kent and his team have determined that there are a minimum of 40 wolf packs in Region One. This number multiplied by average wolves per pack (~25 year long term average of ~7) = 280 wolves minimum in R-1. The approach through the entire data collection process is

conservative. You can hang your hat Jay on at least this number of wolves in R-1 alone.

Jay you might confused with the statewide annual wolf reports as they report only minimums?

Does that work for you?

Jim

From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Subject: Re: wildlife science

Date: September 19, 2011 5:43:06 PM MDT

To: Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>

Hi Jim,

Thank's for getting back to me. In reading the annual reports, i.e., 2010, I never saw or got the impression that FWP based their population count on averages. Instead, there are numerous tables of raw number counts of wolves. In fact, you said the average number of wolves in a pack was 7, but the 2010 report says 5 - 6 wolves (p. 11). Regardless, the annual reports do not explain the procedure you described in your email. The annuals reports are based on wolf counts rather than averages. So, could you please comment on the following:

1. Are the annual reports based on actual wolves counted, or on a statistical average?
2. If the reports are based on actual wolves counted, where did the "extra" 141 wolves come from in 2009?
3. If the reports are based on statistical averages, where is this documented in the annual reports, i.e., 2010?
4. If the reports are based on statistical averages, why are fixed numbers provided for population counts rather than the average pack size times the number of packs.
5. If the reports are based on statistical averages, where are you reporting your margin of error and what is it?
6. What criteria are you using to determine these are minimum numbers rather than a medium or maximum population number?

Thanks,

Jay

From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Subject: Questions

Date: October 4, 2011 12:04:20 AM MDT

To: Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>

Hi Jim,

Two weeks ago, on September 19, I emailed you a list of questions but have not heard from you yet. If you are unable or unwilling to answer them, could you please suggest someone who can. As a reminder the questions are:

1. Are the annual reports based on actual wolves counted, or on a statistical average?
2. If the reports are based on actual wolves counted, where did the "extra" 141 wolves come from in 2009?
3. If the reports are based on statistical averages, where is this documented in the annual reports, i.e., 2010?
4. If the reports are based on statistical averages, why are fixed numbers provided for population counts rather than the average pack size times the number of packs.
5. If the reports are based on statistical averages, where are you reporting your margin of error and what is it?
6. What criteria are you using to determine these are minimum numbers rather than a medium or maximum population number?

Thanks,

Jay

From: Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions

Date: October 4, 2011 8:04:49 AM MDT

To: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Cc: Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>

Hello Jay,

I have assigned my Regional Wolf Biologist to field your inquiries when he gets some free time. Our priorities at the current time are preparing for fall big game hunting seasons and registering game animals as they are taken. When Kent gets time he will surely zip you a note or give you a call.

Good luck on your fall hunts Jay,

Jim

From: Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions
Date: October 4, 2011 10:12:31 AM MDT
To: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>
Cc: Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>

Jay, sorry, I apparently have used the wrong email address for you. Here is the email I sent you on 9/30 to discuss your questions and your paper.

Kent

Kent Laudon
Wolf Biologist
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
406-751-4586 (o)
406-250-5047 (c)
406-257-0349 (f)
<http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>

From: Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>
Subject: paper
Date: September 30, 2011 4:17:28 PM MDT
To: Jay Mallonee (wws@kvis.net) <wws@kvis.net>

Jay, I finally got a chance to read your paper (along with some press on the issue). I do have quite a few comments on it. I think the best approach is a quick phone conversation to communicate the larger points, followed by actual written comments on the paper itself. But, I don't think I have a contact phone number for you.

Kent Laudon
Wolf Biologist
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
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406-257-0349 (f)
<http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>

From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Subject: Re: Questions

Date: October 4, 2011 6:30:06 PM MDT

To: Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>

Hey Kent,

All I really need is someone to help answer these questions, so an email will do. I like to keep a written record of what transpires in all my interactions that have to do with wolves and other "business." Plus, I'll be away from home and traveling for a week or two and emailing would be the most efficient way for me to communicate with whomever. Thanks.

Jay

From: Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions

Date: October 5, 2011 7:43:57 PM MDT

To: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

No problem - I don't see any hurry and can wait until you get back. The gist of much of it is very simple. But, there is a large enough disparity in understanding how these things work that I think a conversation in person would best cater to clear the case - rather than 'two dimensional' email that can certainly further perpetuate misunderstandings (as maybe has been the case from the very beginning?). I'm certain you can appreciate what I mean. I think a quick meeting to summarize should do it with the option to discuss in more detail if you like.

Like I offered, I will follow up with a copy of your paper with my comments inserted, and that should provide an excellent written record.

Thanks.

Kent

From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Subject: Re: Questions

Date: October 7, 2011 10:21:38 PM MDT

To: Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>

Cc: Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>, mvolesky@mt.gov

Hi Kent,

In the previous email I made these two statements: *All I really need is someone to help answer these questions, so an email will do. I like to keep a written record of what transpires in all my interactions that have to do with wolves and other "business."* Meeting with you or talking on the phone will not allow this to happen. If the gist of what you say is simple, as you put it, then an email should not be difficult to construct and would not hamper your ability to answer the questions. Thus, we don't need to meet. I think emails are a great way to NOT have misunderstandings and everything is in writing should any questions arise. I have always been up front with who I am and what I do, so I am not aware of any misunderstanding. Therefore, I have no idea what you mean. I am simply looking for someone to answer my questions in an efficient and documented manner. For example, today I was in Helena and met with Mike Volesky, the Environmental Policy Advisor to the Governor. Among other things, we looked over my published paper and reviewed my findings. He agreed to investigate and ask harder questions to find out why FWP's data collection is not as good as it should be. Perhaps now he can help me get my questions answered.

In summary, my paper was reviewed by two of the best scientists in the world (Erich Klinghammer and Marc Bekoff) in my field, in addition to the peer review provided by the journal I published in. However, if you wish to provide your own comments go ahead, but my main concern are the answers to my questions that both you and Jim Williams have not yet provided. So please, answer the questions in written format or suggest someone else who will. Thanks.

Jay

From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Subject: FWP email exchanges

Date: October 7, 2011 10:49:02 PM MDT

To: Mike Volesky <mvolesky@mt.gov>

Mr. Volesky,

Thank you for meeting with me and my associates today. I appreciated your candor and view of wolves and wolf recovery. For your records, I have enclosed my email exchanges so far with FWP regarding my paper and these issues. These people have not been forthcoming in regards to answering my questions. In the past, Kent Laudon has even come to my home unannounced and in my opinion acted in an unprofessional manner. However, I have no proof other than my notes. Since then, he will not put himself in a position for me to document my interactions with him other than emails. Therefore, I insist that he continue to communicate with me in written form so that I have a record of what happened, but he is highly resistant, as you'll see below. Nevertheless, I look forward to any suggestions you may have regarding a solution to FWP's poor data collection so that we can move on from all this and just enjoy having wolves in our state. As you now know, I am aware of the realities regarding peoples' perception of wolves, and would like to work together to provide accurate information about these animals that can be used

to make sound judgements and decisions by management agencies. Thank you again for listening today. You are the first.

Sincerely,

Jay Mallonee
Wolf & Wildlife Studies

From: Mike Volesky <MVolesky@mt.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions

Date: October 19, 2011 12:41:37 PM MDT

To: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>, Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>, Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>

Cc: Joe Maurier <jmaurier@mt.gov>

Jay, I would rather you did not put words in my mouth: "He agreed to investigate and ask harder questions to find out why FWP's data collection is not as good as it should be."

A more accurate statement might have been: "He agreed to investigate and ask harder questions to find how FWP's data can be improved."

I believe what I acknowledged was the fact that with limited time and resources, a precise count is not possible. I think everyone recognizes that limitation. Even with unlimited resources, such a count may not be realistic. Given multiple responsibilities and many competing priorities, I am confident Jim and Kent will get back to you with the best answers they can, when they can.

Mike

From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Subject: Re: Questions

Date: October 23, 2011 7:02:21 PM MDT

To: Mike Volesky <MVolesky@mt.gov>

Cc: Joe Maurier <jmaurier@mt.gov>, Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>, Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>

Hi Mike,

I apologize if I came across as putting words in your mouth. I was only attempting to paraphrase what you had told me. The way you restated my statement gives the impression that you find FWP's data acceptable but could be improved. My original statement, however, portrays what my paper proves: that FWP's data is flawed and reflects what we had talked about. You did say that the total number of wolves was a "wild-ass educated guess" and that "they (FWP) need to qualify this information" and "admit the limits of their data." Please correct me if I did not quote

you accurately. Your statements correlate well with what I originally wrote: "FWP data collection is not as good as it should be." So how is this putting words in your mouth?

I noticed that you did not change "he agreed to investigate and ask harder questions," which implies that you will still do so. Yet, you referred me back to Jim and Kent who you think will eventually answer me anyway. Given your statements, I was under the impression you would look into how FWP can obtain better wolf numbers. So far, Jim and Kent have only defended a system that works poorly. Although FWP admits that the total number of wolves is an educated guess, they still use this number to make management decisions. No scientific protocol was used to obtain it, despite FWP's claims that wolf hunts are based in science. Their data is incorrect, as my paper proved. Therefore, expecting the people responsible for non-scientific data collection to correct the problem of flawed data without "outside" influence seems unrealistic. They have had every opportunity to do so thus far and have not. Please let me know if you still intend to investigate further into how FWP can collect better wolf numbers. Thank you.

Jay

From: Mike Volesky <MVolesky@mt.gov>

Subject: RE: Questions

Date: October 25, 2011 11:01:17 AM MDT

To: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Jay, I'm not interested in a game of "Matlock", where you select phrases or statements, with or without context, to somehow prove a case about what I said. I don't doubt that I said something close to each of those quotes, but I'm not sure you further your case with that approach.

Again, I think all parties acknowledge that the data is limited, and can be improved. I think we also all acknowledge that better data does not come without costs. I think we also all acknowledge that FWP has a management job to do in the present, irrespective of the state of the data, and that they will never have perfect data—on this or likely any issue—but that doesn't mean we stop trying to improve it.

As I said, we will continue the discussion with FWP.

From: Jay Mallonee <info@wolfandwildlifestudies.com>

Subject: Re: Questions

Date: October 28, 2011 4:25:11 PM MDT

To: Mike Volesky <MVolesky@mt.gov>

Cc: Joe Maurier <jmaurier@mt.gov>, Kent Laudon <klaudon@mt.gov>, Jim Williams <jiwilliams@mt.gov>

Thank you for comparing me to a TV character that was known for his honesty and tireless pursuit of the truth. You are so perceptive. As such, you must be aware that when you wrote, "FWP has a management job to do in the present, irrespective of the state of the date" that this can be perceived as saying "No matter what the data says, we are going to kill wolves

anyway." You also accused me of putting words in your mouth. So how is asking for clarification on what you said versus what you meant not furthering my cause? Knowing what you said during our meeting requires no guessing. I can verify your statements and the context in which they were made. We were not the only ones in the room, remember? So, to be clear with no misunderstandings, could you please answer the following questions:

1. Do you believe the current methods of data collection are valid? After all, they are used to make management decisions, such as how many wolves should die in public hunts.
2. The same applies to the data. Do you believe the data obtained through these methods are valid? Again, this information is used to make current management decisions.
3. Do you really believe that flawed data can lead to responsible management decisions? The process of management is defined by the quality of data collected. Good data is required to make good decisions.
4. Why is the government not willing to spend more money to collect better data? Again, good data is required to make good decisions.
5. Why are there no scientific protocols used to collect data which would maximize time and money, and produce real science, the process that FWP claims they are doing? Using scientific protocols would give them better numbers at no extra cost. They just have to know what they are doing.
6. What is the state of discussions with FWP? In other words, what are some of the ideas they have for improving data collection?

I have always maintained that the quality of data can be improved. I am not asking for perfection, only for a solid attempt at using science to determine how wolves are managed, rather than making claims that are obviously false. In your two email responses since our meeting, you have made an accusation and compared me to a TV character, and you still have not answered my inquiries in a meaningful manner. Therefore, you could further your cause by answering the questions rather than avoiding an intellectual discussion of the issues. I'll wait for FWP to answer the previous questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Jay

* * * * *

Although my email exchanges ranged throughout the FWP hierarchy, no one has yet answered my questions. You can help by contacting FWP directly and asking your own questions or demanding answers to the ones I have asked. **Public pressure is needed to make these people tell the truth.** If you persist long enough, you may encounter the same general pattern that I did:

1. They begin with politically correct behavior and statements that come across as being cooperative. However, if you are aware of the data involved, their statements often make no sense. If you persist and ask for clarification, their answers sometimes make less sense than the previous ones.

2. Anger is usually next, or they pass the question to someone else. This creates an endless loop in which you may need to move on to someone else.

3. Another tactic was to blatantly ignore pertinent statements I had made in my emails. Sometimes their responses were contrary to what I had written, as if they had never read the emails. Therefore, I pointed out their oversights in future communications and asked them again to answer my questions. All this is a form of manipulation to avoid answering the questions directly.

4. Eventually, if you persist long enough, they no longer communicate with you.

Throughout this entire process, I got the impression that FWP does not often interact with people who ask them direct and meaningful questions and who want meaningful answers. If ignored long enough, these people usually go away, because they become frustrated with so many agendas and politics. As for others like myself, who persist in their quest for answers, FWP just rides it out because eventually whole issues often dissipate as well. This can only be overcome when a section of the public becomes involved and demands answers. If not, the following scenario will continue.

Wolves are killed in the state of Montana for no justifiable reason, often supported by agency rhetoric that has no basis in fact. Even statements that make no sense are given to the public as explanations for policy. For example, go to:

<http://www.wolfandwildlifestudies.com/foahuntingmontanaswolves.php>

This can be done because few people question anything, much less confront the source of misinformation. This is how management agencies derive their power and push their agendas forward. People often become angry about it afterwards, but they had the chance to speak up but did not. In addition, the employees of such organizations act as a group with a common goal, in this case wolf management. With this kind of solidarity, management agencies have more power than individuals, and they are often financed with money from taxpayers - the very people who complain but do nothing. Being passive only contributes to the problem. The tragedy is that this results in the death of wolves and other wildlife. Apathy kills. Agencies like FWP can then continue to make policy based on assumption and agenda rather than on facts and science, like they claim to do. The entire process can be summed up in the following quote:

The smaller the understanding of the situation, the more pretentious the form of expression.
-John Romano

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