

Hunting stops growth in Idaho's wolf population

BSU survey shows broad support in Idaho for hunts

By Sean Ellis
EO Media Group

As hunting is resulting in a slow but steady decline of Idaho's wolf population, a Boise State University poll taken earlier this year showed strong statewide support for the hunting of wolves.

Idaho's minimum, documented wolf population has been on a steady decline since the state began allowing hunters to kill the animals.

It peaked at 856 in 2009, the first year Idaho allowed hunters to take wolves, before

a lawsuit that resulted in the animals being put back on the endangered species list halted that hunting season.

Since wolves were permanently delisted and hunting resumed in 2011, the population has slowly declined and was 786 at the end of 2015.

"The overall wolf population has stabilized since state management [and hunting] began in 2011," said Idaho Department of Fish and Game spokesman Mike Kackler. "That's when that 30-40 percent population increase we were seeing annually stopped."

A poll taken in January shows support for the hunts.

"Our ... survey showed it's not popular to be a wolf in Idaho," said Corey Cook, dean of BSU's School of Public Service, which conduct-



Contributed photo/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

A gray wolf. Idaho's minimum, documented wolf population has been on a steady decline since the state began allowing hunters to kill the animals.

ed the poll. "People didn't express a lot of support for wolves."

The phone survey of 1,000 Idahoans was conducted in all regions of the state and

the results — strong support for wolf hunting — were the same.

The poll results showed that 72 percent of people surveyed supported wolf hunting

while 22 percent opposed it. Fifty-one percent of respondents strongly supported wolf hunting compared with 13 percent who strongly opposed it.

Even in Boise, Idaho's main urban area, 64 percent of respondents favored allowing hunters to take wolves while 28 percent opposed that.

The poll results show that Idahoans understand hunting is an important wolf management tool, said Idaho Farm Bureau Federation spokesman John Thompson.

"It certainly is a good thing to hear," he said. "You certainly wouldn't expect to find that (support) in some of the other states that wolves are moving into."

After wolves were reintroduced into Idaho in 1994 and 1995, the animal's popu-

lation grew rapidly, expanding at a rate of 30-40 percent annually.

Hunting has stopped that growth.

"We're getting over the honeymoon period (and) people see hunting as a good tool in the management toolbox," Thompson said.

While wolf hunting has been successful in controlling the animal's population in Idaho, IDFG numbers show that wolves are getting smarter when it comes to avoiding hunters.

During the 2010-2011 hunting season, Idaho's first full year of wolf hunting, 181 wolves were killed by hunters. That number rose to 376 the next year but has declined each year since then, to 319 and then 303 and 249 last year.

New EPA grant tightens oversight to prevent another What's Upstream

By Don Jenkins
EO Media Group

The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded Western Washington tribes another \$25 million for Puget Sound projects, but with stronger instructions to collaborate with others, a response to congressional complaints that one tribe misspent EPA funds to malign farmers.

The new grant to the 20-tribe Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission extends for five years a federal program that financed What's Upstream, a media campaign directed by the Swinomish Indian tribe portraying farmers as careless and unregulated polluters.

EPA staff members had concerns about the project's tone and accuracy, but the EPA's Northwest administrator, Dennis McLerran, stated in a letter in May to a lawmaker that the agency couldn't control the grant-funded campaign. The EPA did, however, sever ties with What's Upstream when confronted on the national level by angry federal lawmakers.

Moving forward, the EPA will have 30 days to preview

plans by individual tribes and also require projects to be peer reviewed, according to the agency's agreement with the fisheries commission. The stipulations were not in the \$18 million grant agreement the EPA signed with the fisheries commission in late 2010.

The EPA has always intended for its grants to foster cooperation between tribes and other groups, an agency spokesman said. The new agreement is more explicit, he said.

The preview of projects addresses "internal and congressional concerns and provide more clarity on the collaborative nature of the program and the ability to proactively intervene," the EPA spokesman said in an email.

The EPA and fisheries commission signed the agreement Sept. 30. It was made available last week at the request of the Capital Press.

The EPA's new award comes as the agency's Office of Inspector General is still auditing whether the fisheries commission and Swinomish tribe misappropriated the 2010 grant to lobby lawmakers.

Umatilla Indian Reservation grapples with pipelines

By George Plaven
EO Media Group

The explosion shook the ground beneath the Umatilla Indian Reservation and unleashed a massive fireball that roared up to 500 feet into the air.

On Jan. 2, 1999, a natural gas pipeline ruptured about a mile south of Cayuse at the base of the Blue Mountains, triggering the blast that left behind a large crater and sent shrapnel flying hundreds of feet.

"It sounded like a jet engine had crashed," remembers Chuck Sams, now the communications director for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Fortunately, no one was hurt and no homes damaged in the accident, but for tribal officials it underscored the potential danger of fossil fuel pipelines criss-crossing the landscape where American Indians live, hunt and retain cultural resources.

Now as protesters clash with police over the Dakota Access Pipeline on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, Sams said the CTUIR knows firsthand that some utilities simply are not capable of protecting tribal resources and treaty rights.

"For the Standing Rock Reservation, that's what they're



EO Media Group/E.J. Harris

Markers denote the path of the Tesoro Logistics pipeline at the point where it crosses underneath the Umatilla River south of Cayuse.

trying to do," Sams said.

There are actually two underground pipelines that run underneath the Umatilla Indian Reservation — neither of which were originally negotiated by the CTUIR. The Northwest Pipeline, owned and operated by the Williams Companies, is what blew up on the reservation nearly 18 years ago. The entire line spans 4,000 miles over six western states, with the capacity to carry 3.9 million dekatherms of Rocky Mountain natural gas per day.

The other line is owned by Tesoro Corporation, an independent refiner and marketer of petroleum products based in San Antonio. Its Northwest

Products System pipeline stretches 760 miles from Salt Lake City to Spokane, Washington. It transports gasoline, diesel and jet fuel.

Both lines converge on the reservation east of Pendleton, and were essentially inherited by the tribes. The right-of-way for each was settled in the 1950s by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. At the time the CTUIR government was not developed to the point where it could provide much technical or legal analysis.

It wasn't until President Gerald Ford signed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 that tribes, including the CTUIR,

assumed greater control over their own welfare. The legislation also authorized the government to deal directly with federally recognized tribes.



"Those were the beginning days of the tribes developing government infrastructure to take over these rights-of-way with the natural gas companies," said longtime CTUIR attorney Dan Hester. "If there is a problem with the pipeline, we know who to call, and they know who to call."

The Tesoro line, through the BIA, was granted a permanent easement in 1970, Hester said. The original six-inch line was built in 1950, but has not been used for the past 20 years. Another eight-inch line was built in 1957, running parallel to the first line, which is what carries petroleum products today.

Company spokesman Brendan Smith said spills of any volume are unacceptable, and Tesoro conducts roughly 30 spill response drills annually across the system.

In North Dakota, protesters have raised concerns over the Dakota Access Pipeline potentially spilling crude oil into the Missouri River, which is the reservation's primary source of drinking water. Energy Transfer Partners is the developer of that project, reaching from the Bakken oil fields into Illinois.

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Please join us on Tuesday, December 6th at 6:00 p.m. for our annual Light up a Life event.

We take this time to remember those in our community who have passed away, but continue to live on in our memories and hearts. We would like to invite you to include your loved one in this memorial service. Please bring a picture of your loved one to our office, or email a picture and plan to join us on December 6th, at Valley View Assisted Living Facility. Donations are accepted, but there is no cost for participating in this memorial service.

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