



Nez Perce

TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

P.O. BOX 305 • LAPWAI, IDAHO 83540 • (208) 843-2253

January 23, 2009

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

The Nez Perce Tribe worked closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for several years to manage the recovery of gray wolves in Idaho starting with the first release in the mid 1990's. The State of Idaho and the Nez Perce Tribe have taken all the actions requested by the Federal Government to move forward to assume more authority for the management of wolves in Idaho.

It is with great pride the Wolf Managers in Idaho write to affirm that wolf populations within the Tribe's Treaty Territory and Idaho exceed the targets established by the Federal Government. The Nez Perce Tribe (Tribe) fully supports the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to remove Endangered Species Act protection from wolves in Idaho, Montana, eastern Oregon, northern Utah, and eastern Washington. The Tribe wants, and understands that citizens of the United States also want, wolves to be conserved. The Tribe is confident that you understand the importance we place on being able to make decisions locally about how to wisely manage this resource in combination with all our other wildlife resources.

Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf populations met the United States Fish and Wildlife Service recovery levels goals in 2002 and now exceeds those levels several times over. In Idaho the 2008 population was estimated at over 800 wolves in 88 packs of which about 1/3 were involved in depredation on livestock. It is time for the delisting of wolves and for wolf management to return to local governments. Idaho has a US Fish and Wildlife Service approved wolf management plan and competent professional wildlife management agencies. I want to assure you that the Nez Perce Tribe is committed to taking actions as needed to support the delisting of gray wolves in Idaho.

We request that wolf delisting in the Northern Rocky Mountains and funding for wolf management in this area be a top priority in the new administration. We look forward to working with you on this challenging issue pertaining to the Endangered Species Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samuel N. Penney".

Samuel N. Penney
Chairman

Cc: Rowan Gould, Acting Director USFWS
The Honorable C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor, Idaho
Mike Crapo, US Senator, Idaho
Jim Risch, US Senator, Idaho
Walt Minnick, Representative, Idaho
Mike Simpson, Representative, Idaho
Cal Groen, Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game