

County adopts wolf management plan

By Chris D'Angelo

Published: Tuesday, February 23, 2010 4:04 PM PST

Commissioners have adopted a wolf management policy for Benewah County.

"It's our county recommendations for wolf management," said Rod Halvorsen of the Benewah County Natural Resource Advisory Committee, which introduced the plan. "It amends the current predator policy which is part of the natural resource plan for the county."

The policy passed by a vote of 2-0-1, with commissioners Jack Buell and Bud McCall voting in favor and Cristina Crawford abstaining.

The document states that the Board of Commissioners both "recognizes that the existence of the wolf in Benewah County threatens the culture, heritage, customs, property, and lives of the people of the county and restricts their free use of their own real estate and public lands" and considers the wolves to "represent an economic and cultural emergency."

"It is our recommendation for wolf management to be coordinated with whichever agency is managing wolves," Mr. Halvorsen said.

Right now that agency is Idaho Fish and Game. However, should the court at some point relist wolves as endangered, then the plan would be for coordination with the federal government.

"As I understand it, it is to permit the Natural Resource Committee to work with the various government agencies to encourage those processes that are detailed in the numbered passages," said Ms. Crawford.

Ms. Crawford said she abstained from the vote because she would have liked to have seen a "more reasoned document."

"I abstained because of the language that they (the natural resource committee) used," she said. "I would have liked to have seen less inflammatory language."

Among other primary objectives, the plan is meant to reduce wolf populations by expanding take methods and to educate citizens about the dangers of habituating wolves.

For more information about the plan contact the Benewah County Commissioners' office at 245-2234.