

Montanans weigh in on wolf delisting

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The federal government already announced plans to remove gray wolves from the endangered species list, just like a year ago. And when that happens, a group of 10 to 12 conservation organizations will file suit, just like they did a year ago -- an action that eventually returned wolves to federal protection.

Wolves are roaming Montana in their highest numbers in decades, but a decision to delist them did not go over well for many.



"We felt the Obama administration would take a closer look at one of the failed policies of the Bush administration, but instead they endorsed it wholeheartedly," said Michael Robinson with the Center for Biological Diversity.

It's not that environmental groups are against delisting, they just don't like the process where wolves are delisted in two Northern Rockies states and not a third.



"It doesn't make sense to have protections remain in Wyoming while delisting in Montana and Idaho because wolves don't read maps and packs that roam across state lines are treated different under laws," Louisa Willcox with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"With all that's going on, people get touchy and with a lack of management, ultimately the wolf ends up suffering," said Darby rancher and hunter, Luke Bush.

Bush just lost his \$1,500 Walker hound and family pet "Jody" to wolves as he hunted mountain lions in an area now over-run with wolves.



Reporting from KPAX in Missoula

"This probably isn't fair to the wolf really. You take him out of his element and put him in an area like the Bitterroot where there's so much room for conflict -- it puts a hate towards him," Bush said.

Wolves also killed Kristen Snavelly's dog Dusty from behind her home just outside Darby.

"Wolves weren't a threat when I moved here and people decided to place them in close proximity to people that live here and work here and it affects the way we live," Snavelly said.

Willcox does not want wolves in every community, but she does support a recovered population in the wild country.

"A good example is the continental divide between Idaho and Montana where wolves could have higher numbers and balance that out with fewer numbers by Darby," Wilcox said.

"There are difficulties we can share as a society and still share our world with wolves," Robinson said.

Willcox said until Wyoming can come up with a reasonable wolf plan, her group and others will continue to

oppose any effort to delist wolves as a whole -- Montana's population included.



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