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Futility

I am here to tell you why the wolf does not belong into settled landscapes. Wolves do unbelievable damage to wildlife, they do great damage to agriculture, they pose a real threat to public health and safety, and they kill humans under now well-known circumstances. Moreover, after all the pain, suffering and deprivations that wolves inflict on people in settled landscapes, after the enormous public expenditures to maintain wolves, all the effort and costs are for naught, because in settled landscapes wolves degrade via hybridization with dogs and coyotes into worthless hybrids, that is into coydogs and feral dogs. Settled landscapers remorselessly destroy the real wolf. Wolves cannot be conserved as a species in settled landscapes. What is being done with wolves here and in Europe has nothing to do with nature conservation. What the US and the EU are doing with legislation is a very expensive, brutal and mindless way to destroy real wolves. We can do better!

Wildlife destruction

When wolves are introduced, they first destroy wildlife. When I worked in Banff National Park in the 1960's there were present about 2,500 elk. After wolves returned in the 1970's elk dropped to less than 300. Moreover, elk became invisible as they were not only hiding, but the bulls quit bugling during the rutting season. We have the same silent bull elk on Vancouver Island where I now live, courtesy of wolves, cougars and big black bears. After 1970 I was no longer able to observe the behaviour of elk in Banff. Also, the moose, which were readily observable in the 1960's went extinct or invisible.

The same pattern has been observed in the Yellowstone area after wolves proliferated following their introduction. The famous northern elk herd went from 19,000 to about 4,000. Why not less? Because the park elk left the park and went onto private land where there were safe from wolves. I was informed that only some 600 or so now winter in the park. Elk not only went onto private ranches, but also into hamlets or small cities such as Gardiner, where they were also safe from wolves. And that's exactly what elk have been doing in Canadian national parks for ages: go into towns to escape predation. Deer do that also. Currently in western Canada they are doing it on a grand scale and flee into suburbs, farms, hamlets and even into the very core of cities. Deer on Vancouver Island are concentrated in human settlements and virtually missing in the vast back-country. They are not welcome in cities, but tenaciously, they hang on. In Alberta elk have left the forestry reserve, the home of wolves, and moved onto private ranches. Moose have gone even farther and moved far, far out into the prairie where they now live along watercourses and in coulees. They did not do so that when I was still living in Alberta a quarter century ago. In Yellowstone park, however, moose went extinct. Which was, of course blamed on global warming. In early fall 2006 I rode for a week from dawn to dusk through some of the finest moose habitat I have ever seen. And I have seen a lot of moose habitat in Canada between the Montana/Idaho/ Washington and the Alaska boundaries. I never saw a moose or a track or a feeding

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sign. And that was during the moose rutting season when bulls are maximally active.

The very landscape I was riding through was also excellent mule deer habitat. During my week on horseback I saw two does and fawns and found one antler rub by a buck. I suppose they were also victims of global warming!

On Vancouver Island the annual deer kill dropped from about 25,000 a year to some 3,000 per year. Vast forest areas are now virtually without deer. My wife and I observed directly how deer vacated the landscape and rushed into suburbs and farms when a wolf pack showed up. At night deer lined up body to body along the walls of our neighbour's cattle barns, oblivious of the farm dogs. For the first time in four years they entered my garden and demolished the fruit trees I had planted. Some 80 trumpeter swans left with the wolf packs arrival, but only some 40 returned after the pack was extirpated; when the second wolf pack arrived the swans left and never returned. Nor did the geese, the large flocks of American widgeons, the green-winged teals, the pheasants and ruffed grouse. Note: it's not only big game that vanishes!

Alaska colleagues experimentally released wolves on a coastal island. The wolves exterminated the deer, tried catching seals, and starved to death. Similarly, Tom Bergerud, the premier caribou biologist on this continent, documented caribou extinctions on islands occupied in the current spread of wolves.

Research in Yellowstone has shown that wolves kill about 22 elk per wolf per year, and that wolves begin leaving the country once the kill declines to 16 elk per wolf per year. That's about the same amount of moose wolves kill in Scandinavia per year.

But where do the wolves go when they deplete the prey?

Outside the park, of course, in search of more prey. Here they may be trapped or shot. This has led to vociferous protests that the evil hunters are killing park wolves. A book has been written about it. No mention of park management which allowed wolves to exceed their carrying capacity of the land. A classical failure of "protectionism." However, more on that later.

You asked what will happen to your moose, elk and mule deer when wolves are introduced into Colorado and are free to multiply. The moose will be exterminated, the elk and deer decimated, except in so far as they can find shelter from wolves on private ranch-lands, as well as in hamlets and suburbs. However, protected wolves learn to hunt big game even in towns, as now witnessed in Germany. Game population will decline as well as your hunting opportunities. Wolf control can reverse that, but wolf control, as we shall see, will also accelerate hybridization and the genetic destruction of real wolves.

Hydatid disease

Wolves come with a number of diseases of which historically the worst have been rabies and hydatid disease. Modern medicine had reduced the dangers of dying from rabies if bitten by a rabid wolf, but

in the past it was cause for real anxiety, as the bite of a rabid wolf was fatal. As to hydatid disease, all

technical matters I mention are to be found in descriptions on the internet – except for context! There had been a presentation given by myself together with Dr. Helen Schwantje, Wildlife Veterinarian for the Province of British Columbia, to the Montana Legislature's Environmental Quality Council about *Echinococcus granulosus* and *E. multilocularis*, on April 27th 2010. Everything we said then applies to all western states. Nobody can claim they were not warned on the basis of very extensive research carried out by the late Professor James Adams of the University of British Columbia. My late wife was a student of his, and I have seen his extensive collection of images taken in the Vancouver regional hospital of this disease. A horror show beyond description! We also were privy to the shop talk of surgeons emanating from the operating rooms, that does not find its way into learned journals. It appears that hydatid disease was prevalent then in British Columbia as trappers still used dog sleds for transportation and were feeding to the dogs the viscera of moose, caribou etc including hydatid cyst infected viscera. This practice came to an end with the rise of snowmobiles for transportation which replaced dog-sleds by the 1960's. Soiled dog sled harnesses were one source of infection.

Hydatid disease is a nasty parasitic disease, caused by us ingesting the eggs of the dog-tape worm *Echinococcus granulosus*. It can be deadly! The danger resides primarily in the family dog getting infected, and then spreading infective tape worm eggs on lawns, drive ways, veranda and in the house. However, one can also catch the disease from handling the bodies and furs of infected wolves, or from berries and mushrooms contaminated with hydatid eggs from nearby wolf scats, or by running a lawn mover or hay-baler over some dry wolf scats, or drinking water that has percolated over wolf scat. The people in real danger are ranch families on whose lands infected elk and deer gather to spend the winter and who crowd in about buildings to escape the marauding wolves. Infected elk, moose or deer carry large cysts filled with tiny tape worm heads primarily in lungs and liver. Normally they become debilitated by these cysts and readily fall prey to wolves. These, upon ingesting the viscera, also ingest the cysts. The little tape worm heads are then freed and attach themselves by the thousands to the gut of the wolf. Here they produce masses of tiny eggs that go out with the feces of the wolf. When such dries, the eggs are blown about on the surrounding vegetation. That vegetation is fed on by elk and deer. The tiny eggs turn in the gut of elk and deer into tiny larvae that drill into the intestines and are carried by the blood to the liver, lungs and more rarely the brain of the elk, where they then grow in time into the large cysts, debilitating the elk, making it prey for wolves.

If hunters shoot an infected elk on a ranch and leave the viscera behind, there is the possibility that the ranch dogs will find it, feed on it, become infected by the dog tape worm and begin shedding eggs around farm buildings, barns, and lawns within about seven weeks. People will step into the infected dog feces and, inadvertently, carry it into veranda and house. Here the eggs spread over the floors, but may also drift onto tables and furniture. The dog, licking its anus and fur, transfers tape worm eggs into its fur. The eggs are most likely to infect babies crawling about on the floor, veranda or lawn. They child will lick its hands, or eat contaminated food, and the eggs will develop into cysts. Since re-infection is likely, numerous cysts begin to grow in the liver and lungs. Cysts in the brain are normally fatal. The cysts develop initially slowly, so that not much may be notices till the child is a teen. Then, while playing sports, a cysts in the abdomen may burst. Some children die right then and there of anaphylactic shock. Those that survive need to undergo extensive operations. Should even a tiny bit of parasitic tissue lining the cysts survive surgery, it will grow into another cyst. A terrible, debilitating lifelong condition.

The primary danger comes from dogs which have fed on infected gut piles of elk, moose and deer. Also from farm and ranch dogs that have found an infected dead elk in a coulee and fed on its innards. Since in winter elk will seek refuge also in suburbs and hamlets, any resident dog finding dead elk is likely to get infected, and infect its owners in turn. In short any dog, hunting dog or companion dog that finds a dead deer or elk or an infected gut-pile will bring the disease into the home and to the neighbourhood of its owner. And that will include school yards.

So, where elk winter on ranches, de-worming dogs regularly is a necessary precaution. So is the removal of all dead elk. It is essential to insure that during hunting season hunters bring in the infected viscera for destruction. The real problem will be teaching hunters to dispose in the field infected viscera.

And be weary of people belittling this disease! The claim of a benign parasite is flatly contradicted by Delane C. Kritsky; Professor Emeritus, Idaho State University, who was Associate Dean and Professor (35 years) within Department of Health and Nutrition. *"We should be asking who (the U.S. government, the Fish and Wildlife service, the wolf advocates) will be paying the health bills and funeral expenses for those who will ultimately become infected as a result of wolf introduction into Idaho, Montana and Wyoming?"*

Wolves are also known carriers of bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis, *Neospora caninum* (causes abortion in cattle) and, of course, rabies. In Yellowstone, by dispersing elk far beyond the park, the park elk met elk infected with brucellosis, and became infected themselves. In Wood Buffalo National Park wolves have not eliminated tuberculosis and brucellosis in bison. Wolves may not even bother taking down old diseases bison bulls, but looks to young bison instead,

Chronic Wasting Disease CWD

Chronic wasting disease is a juggernaut descending onto American wildlife. Because of its prevalence it has been suggested that predation would wipe out this pernicious disease. In short, introducing and spreading wolves within areas where this disease is endemic among deer and elk, would eliminate the disease. Not so. It would spread the disease. Wolves generate panic among deer and prey leading to desperate long-distance flight as well as desperate searches for locations free of wolves, primarily due to human presence. I have personally witnessed this wolf-induced panic among deer. And I have observed it personally also among livestock. Secondly, because wolves in dispersing go great distances, they would spread ingested CWD prions via feces and urine over very great distances. And they would disperse it in concentrated form. More ranches would wind up CWD infected, let alone public lands. And who in his right mind would buy a ranch infected with CWD, or even a ranch adjacent to an infected ranch? And the trouble is that, generally, we have been trying to contain CWD locally instead of eliminating the root cause of its spread: the commercial trade in wildlife.

Attack on humans the escalation model. While real wolves do indeed attack humans rarely and are very shy, they kill humans none the less under predictable circumstances. Historically wolves have killed in Eurasia tens of thousands of people, and are known as belonging to the "beasts of battle", who

occupied battle fields and devoured the dead. Medics noted on battle fields in modern times that wolves vastly preferred human flesh to that of horses and other domestic animals. Fortunately, when wolves begin targeting people, they do so in very diagnostic fashion. They sit or stand and begin watching humans at a distance. They close the observation distance gradually. They continue their exploration by pulling on clothing, licking exposed skin before trying an initially clumsy attack. Not only food shortages trigger exploratory behaviour, so do well fed wolves frequenting garbage dumps. The key factor to watch for is the steady, consistent observations by wolves of humans. Wolves, unlike dogs, are sight-learners, very intelligent sight-learners, I might add. And steady observation of humans by wolves signals an intent on behalf of the wolf to attack people as potential prey.

Why American wolves - were - “harmless”

A prevailing myth is that wolves are so shy as not to attack people, especially North American wolves, which had for the longest time no recorded attack on a person by healthy wolves. When the student Kenton Carnegie was killed by wolves, it was blamed on black bears by a scientist ignorant of tracking, but widely accepted by environmental interests. Totally ignored was the investigation by two educated native people that had exceptional qualification in tracking. That follows a pattern of ignoring the experiences of native Americans. The myth itself can be traced back to a number of North American wolf specialists in the 1950's who then lacked the understanding of wolves we have now, and who dismissed historical accounts as “tall tales”, precisely because of the scarcity of attacks by wolves on people in north America. It remained a puzzle for a long time even to great specialists in wolf behaviour, such as the late professor Erich Kinghammer of Wolf Park, Battle Ground, Indiana, with whom I discussed this puzzle many times in the decades past. However, I now know the answer: In the 19th Century, the wild spaces of Canada and Alaska were not only occupied by hamlets of rural and native people, and the wilderness widely exploited seasonally by an influx of hunters, while vast private lands were secured from predators by government predator control officers. Moreover, wolf control included the areal dispersal of poisoned horse meat. However, and most important of all: vast areas were divided into trapping territories and trapped over by – in the case of Canada – by about 60,000 trappers. These desperately poor, hard working men depended on wildlife for survival and on dog sleds for transportation. Since wolves disperse wildlife, follow trap-lines destroying fur and kill dogs, trappers were usually not well disposed towards wolves. The wolf population of Canada is currently estimated at 60,000 and was probably less than half that in the 19th century. Note: for every wolf alive there were one or two trappers, and that does not include the armed no-trappers occupying that land. Granted the huge territories wolf packs roam over, all wolves in 19th century Canadian wilderness were thus in constant contact with very hostile human beings. That is, all wolves were being continually educated to shun humans. Moreover, because of wolf control there was a super abundance of wildlife – which I still personally experienced. That is, wolves surrounded by a super abundant food supply grew into shy giants of almost unbelievable body size. I still experienced that personally. Because of reduced density, hydatid disease was relatively rare, attacks on livestock very limited and attacks on humans unheard of. Moreover, by keeping wolves out of settled landscapes it retained the integrity of packs as well as the genetic identity of wolves. Giant wolves living in functional packs will not hybridize with coyotes or dogs, but annihilate such. The wolf kill by trappers, however, was limited. It amounted only to about one wolf per five trappers per year, judging from bounty records.

Replacing the little wolf with the big wolf.

North America has two species of wolves, a little native wolf who survived the incredible predation hell-hole that characterized North America during the ice ages, and a big wolf who came from Siberia, repeatedly, who did poorly in the native North America fauna, and who spread and multiplied only after human had exterminated most of the native megafauna some 12,000 years ago. The little wolf is a very smart, adaptable little fellow, who does poorly in the presence of the big wolf, but explodes in numbers in settled landscapes and follows humans closely. With human aid it spread into Alaska as well as central America and is still expanding. And it is obnoxious enough to have triggered large scale control measures. In the US coyotes are killed at roughly 1000 per day.

You have also legislated via your endangers species legislation and endorsed by the courts that the big wolf will be placed where the little wolf is now.

Has anybody considered what this replacement will mean?

Do you think you will be happy having replaced the unprotected little wolf with the highly protected big wolf?

Do your legislators talk to one another?

Does the right hand know what the left hand is doing?

The real wolf versus the dog, destructive hybridization.

Protecting grey wolves in settled landscapes and letting them multiply freely leads in the long run to wolves hybridizing with other canids in the settled landscapes, with coyotes in north America and Golden Jackals in Europe, and with domestic dogs in both. That is, or will be, the fate of real wolves to be genetically degraded into extinction as a species. The end product of current American and European "wolf conservation" – so called – is to lose the real wolf as species and produce a human-caused artifact, a worthless hybrid.

The real wolf is a species. The dog is not. A species it is the product of Nature sculptured by such for millions of years. By contrast the dog is NOT a species, but an artifact of human creation using the genetics of the wild wolf and other canids. The dog is a very great, highly useful, but also artistic creation, one which I would not want to live without. And I thank providence that the dogs I have are not wolves! Dogs have been created by humans to fit with human needs, our habitations and professional activities. They are a great treasure, as dog owners can attest to.

But so is the real wolf. And there is no question that we must insure the perpetuation in modern times of the real wolf. However, it cannot be done the way it is practised now in the USA and the European

Union. For trying to maintain wolves leads remorselessly to slow, but certain, hybridization with dogs
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and coyotes and thus the loss of the real wolf. Hybridizing wolves with dogs and coyotes is a way to exterminate the real wolf by destroying its genetics. Of course wolves and dog are closely related genetically. However, very nearly the same basic genetics generates totally different animals. The dog is not a wolf, no matter what. Similarly, humans and chimpanzees are also very closely related genetically, but are very different organisms. Pigs and whales are closely related genetically, but you do nothing for whale conservation by protecting pigs. Placing dogs into the same species as wolves is a profound confusion of categories.

Consequently, after all the trials and tribulations of introducing wolves into settled landscapes, after all the cost to the public and private purses, after all the destruction caused by these wolves, after all the pain and suffering that befalls humans, livestock, pets and wildlife, after the loss of a great public treasure such as wildlife, at the end, the wolf is exterminated genetically and replaced by a worthless artifact of hybridization.

Some achievement, some nature conservation, something to be really proud of!

Ecological management for native biodiversity and productivity: The fiasco of “protectionism” advanced by good, but mindless nature lovers.

Right now the national park service is bemoaning the fact that in US national parks the bio-diversity is plummeting (species are going extinct) while at the same time the parks have now over 6,500 invasive plant and animal species in the parks. Management in national parks is primarily protection - that is, doing nothing! (after all, “nature knows best”, it will restore ecological “balance” and etc. etc.). However, in reality, doing nothing allows the extinction of sensitive native species, while the hoodlums of the plant and animal world, the invasive species, thrive and prosper under total protection. Is this nature conservation? Is the national park service intellectually capable of differentiating between degeneration and evolution? To make my point another way: In one project in California, Wildergarten, one gentleman, Mark Vande Pol, in fierce opposition to national parks and their ruinous do-nothing policy, bought 14 acres of ground on which there were only 60 species of plants total, currently visible and reproducing. After 28 years of hard, intelligent, insightful work the count today is some 245 native species, while he controls completely another 125 exotics that were once in the seed bank. Uniquely, the project has a special emphasis upon small annuals. In fact, he is actively replacing an exotic seed bank with natives! Have you ever even heard of such a public, foundation, or university project?

Do you see what I am getting at?

The publicity making lament of the National Wildlife Federation about the state of affairs on “protected” areas, is in good part due to the self-infliction of dogmatic, uncritical protectionism, in which even monitoring would be shunned as it smacks of intervention. Ergo, no science, no scholarship disturbs the fundamentalist religious view that “protection” is the salvation of nature. In reality, it's exactly the opposite! Protectionist policies lead to the unwitting degeneration of nature, the longer and more effective the protection, the greater the degeneration.

Has the Wildlife Federation, let alone the Sierra Club or humane societies ever learned any lessons from the great and - when it is allowed to work - wonderful North American Model of Wildlife Conservation?

Turkeys were virtually extinct. How about their numbers today? And turkeys cannot exist without a diverse, productive habitat!

Wood ducks were virtually extinct, but no more. How come?

In 1974 bighorn sheep across the US were in decline, despite all attempts at "protecting" them, and that for over a century in California. All to no avail. Well, the cause of the decline was identified publicly in 1974, a society to implement the rescue was called into life by 1976, and within 25 year the population of bighorns increased by almost 50%.

How come?

How come we have today so many more elk than three decades ago? Though of course not in Yellowstone National Park! There, the "within-park do nothing policy" has driven the park elk almost entirely onto private ranch land. What a success!

Oh, I must also add this one: place wolves into Yellowstone park - where everything is "protected". And the moose went extinct. How come? We are about to lose the woodland caribou in North America forever, courtesy protectionism of same and of "habitat". How come?

The natural "regulation" paradigm of the nature protectors is an intellectual failure, as it has to be if one understands that ecosystems, unlike individuals, are subject to positive, not negative feed back. Trusting nature to do it "right", whatever that may mean, leads often enough to impoverished landscapes of low productivity and biodiversity. Letting "nature" have its way does not always lead to the productive, the diverse and the beautiful. Quite the contrary. And we have missed the obvious right under our noses: The revolutionary North American System of Wildlife Conservation not only saved species from extinction, but its knowledgeable hands-on policies created a landscape full of life, full of productivity, full of awe and beauty, as well as to high benefits to society while proving that the public ownership of land and resources did not lead to the "Tragedy of the Commons", but quite the contrary. It led to the triumph of the commons. Tragedy resulted from pecuniary interests undermining the public good.

Must we abandon policies that generated productivity, richness and beauty, but also a humane treatment of wildlife? The fate of wildlife is to be changed from being killed quickly and humanely by a hunter's bullet, to being torn to pieces bite by bite, tortured sometimes for hours by wolves tearing and ripping their way towards their unfortunate victims slow death. Which hunter ever left wildlife torn savagely? Which hunter chokes his prey slowly to death? What inhumanities are the protectionists and their ilk imposing on our unfortunate wildlife?

We have to make it clear that we can vastly improve on Nature. In fact, we are doing so every day in our daily lives and dealings. We have improved on bird flight, and can transport humans in masses to distant earthly destination or to the moon and beyond. We can see so much farther in the night sky than

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the natural eye can achieve, and we can conserve nature on the smallest pieces of land, where as national parks fail in part because they are too small. So their lament! And where a continued existence of predators and prey is achieved in the “do nothing model”, it is on sizes beyond comprehension. Like some 150 wolves and 2,500 bison in Wood Buffalo National Park, which exceeds Switzerland in size! And I am thrilled that we have such an area for comparison. See the wonderful books of Lu Carbyn on bison and wolves in said park. Read and learn!

Not everything “Natural” is good, not everything “Natural” is beautiful, not everything “Natural” is worth fighting for. Quite the contrary! Wildfires are natural, so is tuberculosis, Lyme disease and septicemia. We are asked to abandon landscapes rich in wildlife with a proven and humane treatment of wildlife, for one that is so thoroughly impoverishing vast landscapes, while subjecting wildlife to the horrid cruelties and inhumanity of death by predation.

Is that a goal worth celebrating? Is that a goal worth striving for?

“I do not believe in reincarnation , but should I be wrong, all I can say is “Lord please do not let me come back on this earth as a BISON IN WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK!. Here is my story why.”
Dr. Lu Carbyn, Canada's primary wolf biologist.