

# The Association For the Protection of the Adirondacks

[www.protectadks.org](http://www.protectadks.org)

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## **FEDERAL PROPOSAL TO REMOVE WOLVES FROM THE PROTECTION OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IN THE EASTERN U.S. IGNORES SOUND SCIENCE AND POPULAR SUPPORT**

Niskayuna, NY -- In a letter to Interior Secretary Gale Norton, the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks (AfPA) objected strenuously to what it called an "ill-founded proposal" by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to remove wolves in the Eastern U.S. from protections currently afforded them by the Endangered Species Act.

By 1900, habitat destruction and bounty hunting had eliminated the last remaining wolves in the Northeast. According to Michael DiNunzio, an ecologist who serves as the Association's Director of Special Projects, "The landscape of the Northeastern United States has been ecologically crippled and made dysfunctional by the loss of its most important top predator, the wolf. Wolves help to restore the natural balance between wildlife and the environment that was the rule in our forests for thousands of years. Experience has shown that when wolves return to their natural range, populations of prey species such as deer and moose become more healthy, vegetation flourishes, and songbirds return to habitats previously decimated by herbivores."

"The proposal to remove Eastern gray wolves from the federal list of threatened and endangered species (a process called 'delisting') lacks ecological, social, and ethical merit," DiNunzio said. "It should be rejected and replaced by a proposal for the restoration of wolves in the region."

In 1992, the FWS produced a Recovery Plan for the gray wolf in the Northeast, in which the Adirondack Park and portions of northern Maine and New Hampshire were identified as "areas with reestablishment possibilities." Ignoring this recommendation, as well as the advice of scientific advisors and the general support of the public, the FWS now proposes to remove federal protection from wolves in a block of 21 so-called "eastern" states from the Dakotas to Kansas and from Maine to Pennsylvania. Contrary to the letter and spirit of the Endangered Species Act, the FWS contends that the successful restoration of wolves in three western Great Lakes states (Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin) constitutes recovery in the entire 21-state eastern region. -MORE-

In keeping with its long tradition of collaborative environmental advocacy, the AfPA teamed with William S. Lynn, Ph.D., Senior Ethics Advisor and founder of Practical Ethics (914-260-0344; [www.practicaethics.net](http://www.practicaethics.net)) to formulate a joint response to the proposal to delist the wolf. Lynn maintains that, “The Endangered Species Act envisions a biologically rich continent and world, not isolated, relic landscapes and species. We fail our responsibilities under the act when wolves are restricted by predetermined boundaries, beyond which recovery is forbidden or undermined.”

DiNunzio and Lynn concluded their letter to Secretary Norton and the FWS by stating that, “Wolves are an indicator not only of the health of a natural landscape, but of the moral health of our culture. We urge you to embrace this vision, face the ecological, social, and ethical challenges before you, and promote the recovery of wolves in the Northeast.”

The full letter to Secretary Norton and the FWS referred to above can be viewed on the AfPA web site: [www.protectadks.org](http://www.protectadks.org). The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks is a non-profit, member-supported organization founded in 1901 to protect the Forest Preserve and defend the “forever wild” clause of the NYS Constitution. The Association is dedicated to sustaining the ecological integrity and mutual well being of the natural and human communities of the Adirondack Park. The Association promotes strategies to realize the potential of the Park as a world model of integrated conservation in wild and lived-in landscapes.