

## 2 GOP legislators plan summit on wolves

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(Photo: Getty Images/iStockphoto)

Two Republican lawmakers from northern Wisconsin said Monday they would convene a Great Lakes wolf summit this fall involving public officials, scientists and citizens from Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan to push for state management of wolves.

The legislators are calling for the summit in the wake of a federal court's decision in December 2014 that returned protections of the Endangered Species Act to the western Great Lakes wolf population.

"Our intent is to send a crystal clear, grass-roots message that it is irresponsible to ignore this issue any longer," the legislators said in a statement, entitled "Enough is enough."

Sen. Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst) and Rep. Adam Jarchow (R-Balsam Lake) called for the summit, noting that wolves have killed or injured livestock or pets in 14 cases so far in 2016, according to Department of Natural Resources records.

The most recent example occurred last week in Shawano County when a young female cow ready to have her first calf was killed. The case "showcases the unfortunate results of a wolf population being allowed to run rampant in Wisconsin," Tiffany and Jarchow said.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C. in 2014 struck down the federal government's 2012 decision to remove gray wolves in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan from the federal list of endangered species. The suit was brought by the Humane Society of the United States.

The decision ended Wisconsin's wolf hunting season.

The implications of the court decision in Wisconsin, in most cases, lost its ability to use lethal means to address wolves considered to be problem animals.

Since the court decision, David MacFarland, carnivore specialist with the DNR, said the agency had relied primarily on nonlethal means to control nuisance wolves, including the construction of 19 miles of fencing, and the use of electric fences, sound and lights and posting guard animals.

"It's not that we are doing nothing," MacFarland said. "In fact we are doing quite a bit."

He said one wolf was killed last year by authorities in far northern Wisconsin with approval in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after the wolf was observed "getting uncomfortably close to people and was getting near buildings and barns."

MacFarland said that his agency would act to protect public health, but he also said that there were no known cases of wolves harming humans in Wisconsin.

The DNR reported that the April 2015 off-reservation wolf population was estimated at was 717 to 742 wolves.

Wolves returned to Wisconsin in the mid-1970s. In 1989, DNR biologists estimated the wolf population was about 80.

Source            Post-Crescent

Retrieval        <http://www.postcrescent.com/story/sports/outdoors/2016/05/09/2-gop-legislators-plan-summit-wolves/84149998/>