

Wolf Tales from the Timber Wolf Alliance

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Wildness and Wolf populations in Wisconsin

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DNR estimates an increase of 75-100 animals.

This past April, I attended the Wisconsin wolf population count public meeting. The objective was to gather all observations and data throughout Wisconsin and to come up with an estimated population of wolves. On the drive down I started thinking to myself about the day and how the meeting would be organized. I had ideas but it wasn't until the meeting's conclusion, that I became aware and appreciative of the thorough process in place. For those skeptical of the DNR's population numbers, I strongly encourage folks to attend this meeting. I was amazed at how the group, made up of biologists, naturalists, volunteer carnivore trackers, and folks that have submitted wolf observation cards, went through each management zone to estimate the number of wolves. The results were based on observation, tracking survey results, and aerial counts from radio-telemetry airplanes. At the end of the day, we came up with a statewide estimate of 702-746 wolves in 185 packs. This represents an increased wolf population of 75-100, over 2008-2009.

On my drive back north, I started to wonder about detailed monitoring processes, and what that means for our sense of wild and wilderness. Certainly, the process is thorough and trusted, and Wisconsin has an incredible handle on its Natural Resources. On another note, and as a personal aside, I admit that I did experience a lost sense of "wild."

During the fur trade, a very "wild" time, we saw 200 years of unregulated trapping. During the logging era and due to habitat loss, many animal populations were dangerously low and in some cases, state populations were extirpated. Since that time, in testament to the resiliency of animals and lands and to the intervention, management and monitoring by agencies such as the DNR, most of these animal populations have rebound. It goes to show... there are pros and cons to all manners of topics, here in our Northwoods region, as well as far beyond our region and borders.

Timber Wolf Alliance was founded in 1987 to promote and maintain a viable population of wolves in the western Great Lakes region.



Each year, the third week of October (October 17-23, 2010) is nationally proclaimed Wolf Awareness Week. Since 1990, TWA has produced educational wolf posters featuring original artwork. This year's winning artist is Jon Ren with his piece "Reverie." Jon's love of wildlife steered him toward becoming a full-time wildlife artist. Visit his website at www.jonren.com.