



ADMINISTRATIVE RULES OF MONTANA



12.9.1301 COMMITMENT TO PRESERVATION OF THE GRAY WOLF AS RESIDENT WILDLIFE IN NEED OF MANAGEMENT

- (1) The department has management authority of the gray wolf, a resident native wildlife species, and is dedicated to the conservation of wolf populations within the state of Montana. Pursuant to the definition of management under the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act, 87-5-102, MCA, the department will implement conservation and management strategies to make sure that wolves continue to thrive and are integrated as a valuable part of Montana's wildlife heritage. The department will manage wolves to ensure that recovery criteria are met or exceeded. Montana will ensure maintenance of at least 15 breeding pairs and assist natural dispersal and connectivity between gray wolf populations in Canada, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. The department uses an adaptive management framework for the gray wolf, meaning that if the statewide number of wolves exceeds 15 breeding pairs, the department may, as outlined in these rules, approve lethal control of wolves. If there are fewer than 15 breeding pairs, the department will allow only conservative management of the wolf populations so that the number of breeding pairs does not go below 10 but may still approve lethal control. These rules set out the comprehensive structure governing control of the gray wolf so that all control actions fall within the department's adaptive management considerations. The commission has authority, when the statewide number of wolves exceeds 15 breeding pairs, to adopt a harvest season for wolves and will exercise that authority as part of the adaptive management framework for the gray wolf. The department's management decisions will be guided by the principles of maintaining and enhancing Montana's contribution to the overall northern Rocky Mountain gray wolf population and the gray wolf's connectivity between contiguous populations in Canada, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.

Authorizing statute(s): 87-1-201, 87-1-301, 87-5-105, 87-5-110, 87-5-131, MCA

Implementing statute(s): 87-1-201, 87-1-301, 87-5-102, 87-5-103, 87-5-104, 87-5-105, 87-5-108, 87-5-131, MCA

History: NEW, 2008 MAR p. 2165, Eff. 10/10/08; AMD, 2014 MAR p. 843, Eff. 4/25/14.