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A Cost/benefit Ratio for Wolves

June 22, 2007 / by [jimbeers](#)

COST/BENEFIT, WHERE ART THOU?

Scouring through all the reams and reams (actually boxcar loads) of “best science”, and justifications (for budgets and personnel), and lawsuits, and court cases, and Recovery Plans, and State “Management” Plans (proposed, disapproved, approved, and opposed by Federal overseers), and “Control” Plans, and “Depredation” Plans, and “Compensation” Plans, and “documentaries”, and explanations from bureaucrats and the professors getting grants and the radical Non-Government Organizations; all about wolves and why they are being foisted on rural America from the Mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes States (and soon New England States) to the Northern Rockies to the Mexican border: there seems to be something missing. Where we must ask is that ancient standby so heavily used in days of yore to stop and redirect everything from dams, roads, and water projects to justifying “more” money and people and power for government agencies? I speak here of the notorious and infamous “Cost–Benefit Ratio”.

The “cost-benefit ratio” was conceived, implemented, and utilized as a “scientific” or “mathematical” “formula” constructed by “scientists” and government “experts” (i.e. bureaucrats) to display for “decision-makers” (i.e. politicians) the complexities of natural resource issues that non-experts were unable to understand. Indeed the “cost-benefit ratio” was a formulaic depiction of the ONLY answer to the problem at hand. The “problems” ranged from why this or that project or human activity must be stopped; or this or that private property must be turned over to either government control or ownership; or simply why government solutions as opposed “private sector” solutions were always best.

Given the utility of the “cost-benefit ratio” before the advent of “Endangered Species Critical Habitat”, or global warming mandates, or UN “Conventions” treated as “Treaties”, or Wildlands “Corridors” as a government function, or the closure of public lands to public uses, or the shift from managing the plants and animals around us to worshipping them, or the avowed war on rural America being waged by Federal surrogates of radical organizations and their clandestine state bureaucrat partners State; one is forced to suggest a need for a “Cost-Benefit Ratio” for the introduction, protection, and dispersal of Wolves in the United States of America. I therefore, as a concerned citizen, volunteer to construct such a “Ratio”.

If you or any of your associates question any of the following facts, please consult the book, Wolves in Russia by Will N. Graves available for a pittance and less than 200 pages excluding the pictures and Endnotes (so it is short as well as informative and easy to read).

Let us begin by detailing the “COSTS”.

COSTS -

In 1988 the Soviet government had 1,055 collective, state farm, and forest management specialists in Kazakhstan (one of the smaller central Asian lands rarely mentioned in the news) fill out a questionnaire regarding wolves in this “Republic”. The results? “The total number of domestic animals killed by wolves in 1987 would be about 150,000 and in 1988 about 200,000”. So what domestic animal “COST” figure is appropriate for a nation calling itself a Republic with guaranteed rights, private property, and rural economies made up not of peasants bound to the land but men as free and as educated and as dependent on their livelihood for their families’ sustenance as any American urbanite? In order to leave room for each State to shoulder their “share” of the agreed-to “COST” in constructing their own “Wolf “Management” Plan when they get the wolves they are slated to get. So let’s enter 10 Million domestic animals annually so that the rural western states can suck up hundreds of thousands each as “tolerable” and the sanctimonious populous states like CA and NJ and IL and NY and MA et al can “shoulder their share of say, 10 or 15 thousand each.

(Note that this will include horses that we refuse to allow anyone to slaughter for human needs as well as llamas and alpacas and other “lovable” domestic animals exclusive of dogs.)

ENTER: 10 MILLION DOMESTIC ANIMALS ANNUALLY.

If the British reported 624 Indians (in India) killed by wolves in 1878: if wolves killed 33 children in one state in India in 1996: if one rabid wolf in 1957 in Byelorussia traveled 150 kilometers in 36 hours and bit 25 people: if a rabid Russian wolf in 1979 bit 26 people in just 11 hours: if it is true that unbothered wolves (as during wars when guns and men are gone) or during high population periods or during periods of food shortages, etc. are more likely to attack and feed on humans: if even only some percent of all the thousands of accounts in Asian and European news accounts, church records, and government records of wolves attacking and eating people (travelers, loggers, herdsman, washerwomen, trappers, hunters, etc.) of all ages and sex engaged in every imaginable activity are true: how are we to set a “COST” figure for the number of human lives to be “acceptable” in the US? Remember we must use a large enough figure to permit each state to use their “share” in their “Ratio”. So recognizing that eventually the Eastern and more populous states must have an even higher figure than the “rural” states (since the more populous the state, the greater the availability of wolf “food” - consult New Jersey about coyote’s grabbing kids or California about mountain lions dining on all manner of California “outdoorspersons”) and don’t forget that the figures will vary with the severity of winters, the availability of GUNS (carried and available), and the wolves understanding of what humans are (wolf-feeders, quick runners and tree climbers, or something to be feared) therefore it must allow for these “high-kill” years. So let us allow each state to list as an “acceptable COST” say, 50 each (let’s exclude Hawaii).

ENTER: 2450 MEN, WOMEN (should we somehow mandate gender equality here?), AND CHILDREN ANNUALLY.

If in 1977 Ukrainian wolves ate twice the amount of wild game meat than all the hunters supplied to the government: if in one Russian forest wolves kill 28.6% of the moose: if wolves kill otters and fox and raccoons and other furbearers: what is the tolerable “COST” to big game species and furbearers and hunting and trapping and all the money these things generate annually to rural residents and their economies and businesses such as fur, guns, ammunition, gear, guides, processors, motels, restaurants, etc.? Here we have a dilemma. Current non-millionaire rural residents knowingly observe that this COST is inestimable. Conversely, the extremist environmentalists, the animal rights radicals, the covetous (of the land) government bureaucrats, the proponents of a strong central government, state bureaucrats interested in hastening the day they are weaned from accountable game management tasks and shifted to Federally-financed and unaccountable “ecosystem monitoring” tasks, billionaires in search of baronial estates, and urban progressives in search of some heart-warming substitute like Nature worship for religious belief et al: all these consider this NOT a COST but a BENEFIT! Therefore it is entered on both sides of the ratio to be “fair”.

ENTER: THE DEMISE OF WILDLIFE USE AND RURAL AMERICAN LIFE PLUS THE GOVERNMENT SHIFT FROM A REPUBLIC WITH GUARANTEED RIGHTS TO A PURE DEMOCRACY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT RULED BY THE POWERFUL.

If wolves carry and transmit rabies, distemper, brucellosis, anthrax, neosporosis caninum, foot and mouth, mad cow, chronic wasting disease, various intestinal parasites, and probably other disease that (due to lack of honest research) directly threaten human health and the health of domestic and wild animals: how to arrive at a “tolerable COST”? When does an “outbreak” become a “plague”? What does it mean when an anthrax outbreak in the Black Hills suddenly spreads into Wyoming and then into Montana or when a brucellosis outbreak in Yellowstone buffalo suddenly moves steadily outward? How do we tack the vector role of wolves as the reason brucellosis infects dogs in a community and then kids come down with it? What about intestinal parasites that begin cropping up in dogs? But this one will cancel itself out regarding dogs since hunting dogs or unleashed dogs will become things of the past as wolves make pets or working dogs as rare here as they are in Asia where wolves occur because wolves will kill dogs that they don’t impregnate with even more dangerous (wolf/dog hybrids) offspring. (That is the reason that for hundreds of years, European dog collars sported spikes and nails – to delay the wolf’s ability to rip out the dog’s throat hopefully long enough for an owner to either run off or kill the wolf!) So in order to be “scientific” and “inclusive” we will add 100,000 to our domestic animal “COST”, 1,000 to our human cost, and leave cost #3 as is since the same folks will consider this “COST” a “BENEFIT” since they will not believe that wolves will ever affect them or their interests.

ENTER: 100,000 DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND 1,000 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN.

Financial COSTS are well hidden and obfuscated with great care by government and the environmental extremists and animal rights radicals. Suffice to say that \$40+Million per year have been spent just by the US Fish and Wildlife Service alone for each of the past 10 years. Add in another \$30 Million per year for the US Forest Service and BLM. Add in \$15Million per year for USDA to “control” (i.e. track, live trap, excuse, feed, and “release in another ‘wilderness’” problem wolves and as a last resort to kill and bury problem wolves). Add in \$5Million per year for the State fish and wildlife agencies to tag along and play “Federal gophers”. Add in the REAL COST of all the livestock not compensated for and all the dogs killed and maimed and all the adjustments made by rural folks (driving the kids to school instead of letting them walk to and from the bus, securing barns, loss of prized animals, loss of hunting income to towns, depressed land values, closed grazing or logging leases, loss of recreation access to “public lands”, gardening or trapping foregone, etc., etc), say \$500Million per year (that is way low but you wouldn’t believe the real figure). Add in the loss of revenue to Federal land agencies closing down management and use of timber and grazing, etc, for wolves (this increases their need for MORE money from Congress for the agencies because they no longer graze or log in the precious wolf habitats) and the money lost to County roads and schools that was promised to be “shared” by Federal agencies when they bought/condemned the lands promising to manage them for “multiple use” or “waterfowl”, etc. for another \$400 Million. Let’s see, $40 + 30 + 15 + 5 + 500 + 400 = \$9,990$. (See how “scientific” and “mathematical this appears?") We’ll just round it off to a cool \$1 Billion per year recognizing that as the rural countryside is vacated the “COSTS” to rural economies will disappear but they will be replaced by inestimable (because you wouldn’t believe me) government COSTS as government takes over rural America like something from a Ray Bradbury science fiction novel.

ENTER: FINANCIAL COST \$1 BILLION PER YEAR.

BENEFITS –

ENTER (from above): THE DEMISE OF WILDLIFE USE AND RURAL AMERICAN LIFE PLUS THE GOVERNMENT SHIFT FROM A REPUBLIC WITH GUARANTEED RIGHTS TO A PURE DEMOCRACY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT RULED BY THE POWERFUL.

Alright, alright; don’t rush me: I’m thinking. Hmmmm. How about “more” Federal grant money for Universities? No? Well what about all those Federal and state jobs for all those kids that “love” their golden retrievers or helped to get the slaughter of horses by their owners outlawed and those kids that wrote those letters to ban cockfighting (which they know about as much about as I do about Ming Dynasty art)? No? So, how about wolf howls? “They” say that lots of people will drive forever and stay overnight to hear one? Yeah I know that is nonsense but that is what “they” say. Well how about all those rural lands that will be bought for a “song” from people that can no longer raise their families and live where their families have for generations? No? Well how about all those rich folks like Turner and Donaldson and Letterman and the rich folks fleeing California et al that have backed all this environmental stuff and now can but millions of more acres surrounded by “pristine wilderness” while employees keep them comfortable? No? Yeah, well think about all those new and expanded National Forests and National Refuges and National Parks and State Natural Areas; how about all that? You say it will all just be closed to access so you can’t use it and it will be unused and unmanaged so it will merely accelerate the rural “Clearances” (see Scottish history from 1750 to 1850 or Irish history from 1515 to 1920) for the benefit of the rich and powerful? OK, OK; I give up.

THE RATIO –

COSTS:

1. FINANCIAL COST \$1 BILLION PER YEAR.
2. 10 MILLION, 100,000 DOMESTIC ANIMALS ANNUALLY.
3. 3,450 MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN ANNUALLY.

4. THE DEMISE OF WILDLIFE USE AND RURAL AMERICAN LIFE PLUS THE GOVERNMENT SHIFT FROM A REPUBLIC WITH GUARANTEED RIGHTS TO A PURE DEMOCRACY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT RULED BY THE POWERFUL.

BENEFIT(S):

THE DEMISE OF WILDLIFE USE AND RURAL AMERICAN LIFE PLUS THE GOVERNMENT SHIFT FROM A REPUBLIC WITH GUARANTEED RIGHTS TO A PURE DEMOCRACY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT RULED BY THE POWERFUL

There you have it, the vaunted Cost-Benefit Ratio. See how easy and scientific it is? See how it points in only one direction for government policy? See how well off you are in the hands of “experts” that understand “best science” and who are willing to tell the rest of us what is good for us? See how you could use this in court or at a meeting and everyone would be “forced” to agree with your conclusion and course of action? (I sound like one of those old 1940’s Coming Attractions films in the movies but you get the point.)

Americans have been sold a toy to take home to the kids and too late discovered that it is a pregnant viper that has escaped and is now living somewhere in their home. When it finally becomes apparent what was perpetrated will anyone take responsibility? Like the bureaucrats that first stole the millions of hunting and fishing excise taxes to kick this wolf business off after Congress refused to fund it: everyone will move on to a bigger and better position and no one will even miss a bonus. This old bureaucrat would just bet on it.

Jim Beers
22 June 2007

- If you found this worthwhile, please share it with others. Thanks.

- This article and other recent articles by Jim Beers can be found at <http://jimbeers.blogster.com> (Jim Beers Common Sense)

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- Jim Beers is a retired US Fish & Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist, Special Agent, Refuge Manager, Wetlands Biologist, and Congressional Fellow. He was stationed in North Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York City, and Washington DC. He also served as a US Navy Line Officer in the western Pacific and on Adak, Alaska in the Aleutian Islands. He has worked for the Utah Fish & Game, Minneapolis Police Department, and as a Security Supervisor in Washington, DC. He testified three times before Congress; twice regarding the theft by the US Fish & Wildlife Service of \$45 to 60 Million from State fish and wildlife funds and once in opposition to expanding Federal Invasive Species authority. He resides in Centreville, Virginia with his wife of many decades.

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