

Welcome to this week's presentation & conversation hosted by the **Canadian Association for the Club of Rome**, a Club dedicated to intelligent debate & action on global issues.

The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the speaker & do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of CACOR.

What if Wolves Could Vote?

Biography: Dr. Karen Shragg is a naturalist, writer, & speaker with a passion for wildlife. She has written on overpopulation & the health of ecosystems & the dismal future of humanity if balance isn't addressed properly. She ran an urban nature center for 28 years & wrote 16 books including, *Move Upstream: A Call to Solve Overpopulation*, & co-wrote the Nature's Yucky series for children. Her degrees are from U Minnesota & U St. Thomas. She now runs MoveUpstream Environmental Consulting & works with NGOs to raise awareness of the overpopulation issue.

Description: This session examines, from a wolf's perspective, political history of protecting, & often harming, the wolf in USA & Canada. Wolves have long been maligned, but we need them to thrive to maintain ecosystems at their optimal levels. What do wolves need & which political party is doing the most to help them? We'll do a deep dive into our attitudes & policies towards this most important mammal, while learning a lot about ourselves, because the better we treat the wolf, the better lives we can all have.

The presentation will be followed by a conversation, questions, & observations from the participants.

CACOR acknowledges that we all benefit from sharing the traditional territories of local Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, & Inuit in Canada) and their descendants.



Website: canadiancor.com
Twitter: [@cacor1968](https://twitter.com/cacor1968)
YouTube: [Canadian Association for the Club of Rome](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
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What if Wolves Could Vote?

**Partisan Politics
and the Future of Wildlife in North America**

By Karen I. Shragg
Dedicated in memory of Dave Foreman a Wildeor who advocated
for wild creatures.

Wolves have suffered from the mythology that they are beasts as in the big bad wolf story of Little Red Riding Hood.



I live in Minnesota,
and if you say
“timberwolves” most
will think of our
professional
basketball team

- Few will think that we are lucky to have 2691 of the -legged kind in the northern part of our state.



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In the 1800's the taming of the west was symbolized in the slaughtering and eradication of the wolf.

The U.S. government waged a ruthless war against the wolf, and the wolves went from 250,000 to just 300 wolves in 1960.

Today wolves still are considered 'varmints' in some states leading to acts of cruelty.

Let me help you fall in love with wolves like I have



They are an amazing species

You can't hate wolves and love dogs, they descend from them.

Sophisticated family organization, run by the alphas.

They take care of their elderly and share in the care of young.

Excellent group hunters, each with their own unique call.



Wolf (*Canis lupus*) Biology and Natural History

The species of wolf in the U.S. is called the Gray Wolf or Timberwolf other subspecies exist and have been found to be hybrids with coyotes

They are social animals moving in a pack led by a pair of alpha wolves

They mate for life at the age of 2-3 and feed the elderly members of their pack

They live about 5 years in the wild and roam up to 100 miles after leaving their pack

They are feast or famine eaters, devouring 20 pounds of meat at once and going for 12 days without eating.



Wolf packs usually hunt within a territory, which can range from 50 square miles (129 square kilometers) to over a 1,000 square miles (2,590 square kilometers).

Their sense of smell is 100,000 times greater than humans, scents over one mile away will reach their noses

In Early America (1630) there were bounties on wolves



- Wolves symbolized wilderness and to get rid of wolves was to tame the wild. Their persecution went beyond hunting. Millions of Wolves had to die so that the wilderness could be tamed. People had the same idea about Native people and native lands, they stood in the way of progress.



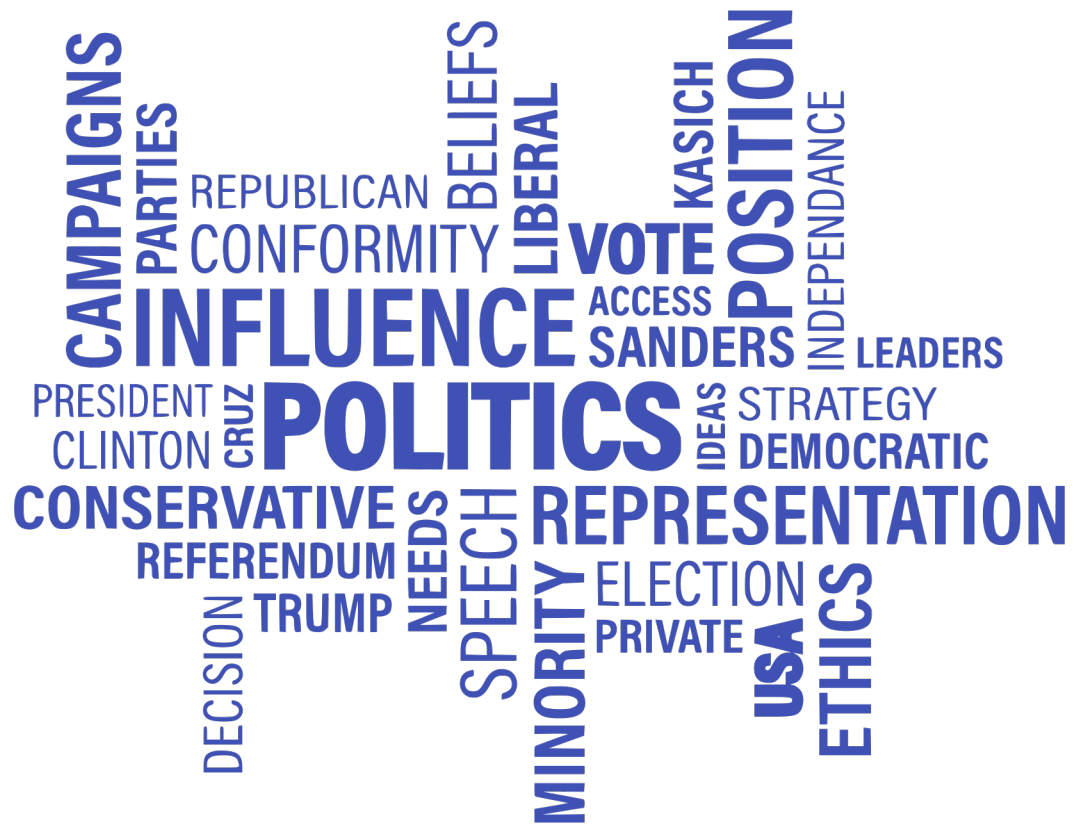
Wolves apex predators and are also considered a Keystone Species

Wolves play a key role in
keeping ecosystems healthy.
They help keep deer and elk
populations in check, which can
benefit many other plant and
animal species

When introduced to Yellowstone they
altered the landscape due to a
eutrophic cascade



Imagine if wolves
could vote to protect
their future...
Which side of the
political aisle would
they choose to
represent their
interests?



REMEMBER WOLVES HAVE NO PARTY LOYALTY

- They would be single issue voters and only have their own survival in mind. They are fighting two issues:
- a) the ramifications of growth
- b) varmint status.



What did wolves mean to native peoples historically and in present-day America?

- In most native cultures, the wolf is considered a medicine being associated with courage, strength, loyalty, and success at hunting. It is one of the most common clan animals in Native American cultures. Including:
- -the Creek
- -the Chippewa
- -Algonquian tribes like the Lenape, Shawnee and Menominee,
- -the Huron and Iroquois tribes, Plains tribes like the Caddo and Osage

Where did wolves live historically compared to now?

- **The wolf used to be the most widely distributed mammal besides humans.**
- **Parts of:**
- **ALASKA**
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
- **WYOMING (Yellowstone Area)**
IDAHO
MONTANA
OREGON
- **ARIZONA (these are subspecies recently reintroduced)**
NEW MEXICO
- **THEY are found throughout CANADA**
- **A subspecies is found in Russia and infrequently in other parts of Europe**



What do Wolves Need to Survive?



- **Lots of open space with no interfering development**
- **Plenty of prey and shelter.**
- **Water that is unpolluted and animals to eat which are free from toxins.**
- **Protection from hunting/trapping and poisoning**



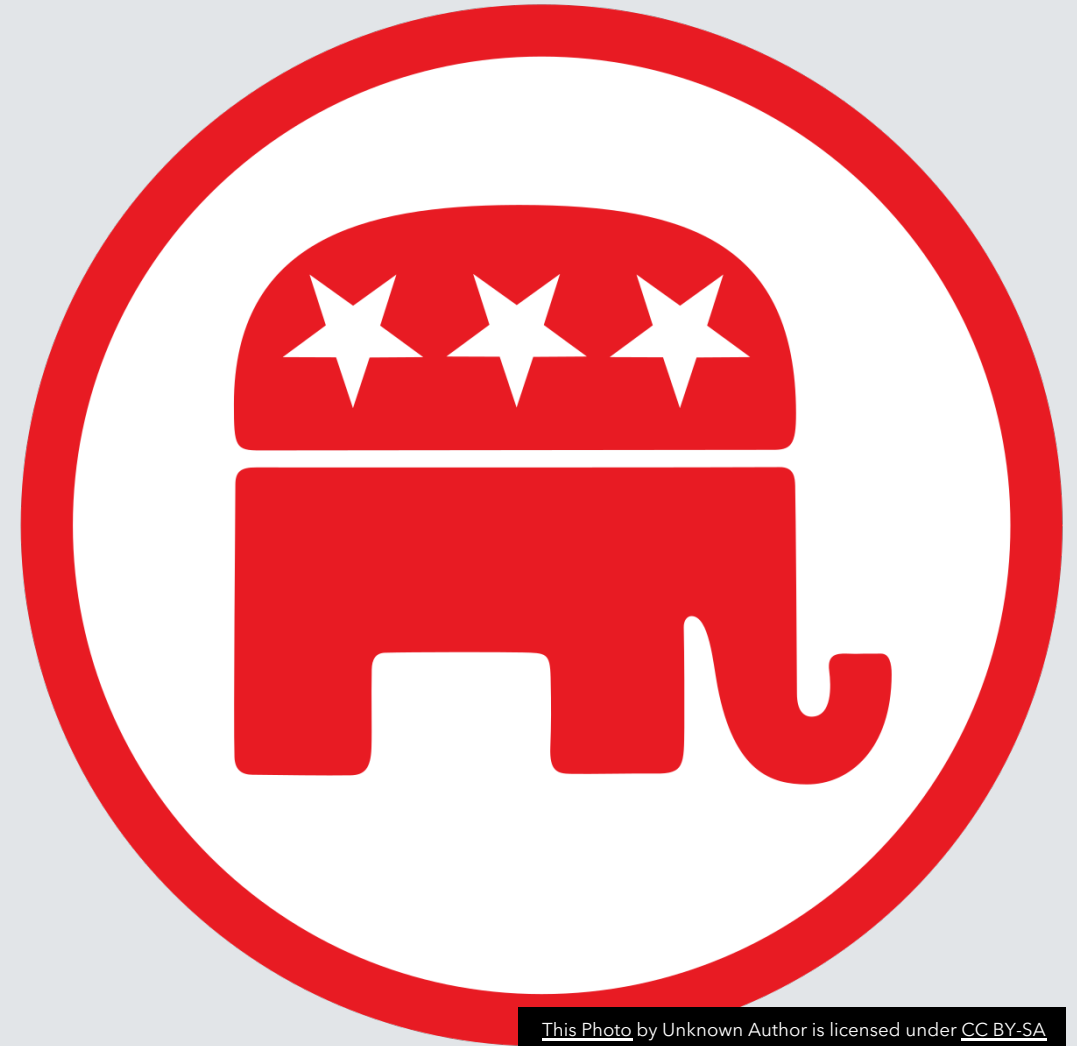
Over time things have
changed politically for wolves

Both parties have been
both good and bad over
the years for wolves

**First of all, the platforms
of the parties have
changed drastically over
the years**

- **The Republican party of today
according to their platform
believes in liberty, economic
prosperity, preserving American
values and traditions, and
restoring the American dream for
every citizen of this great nation.**

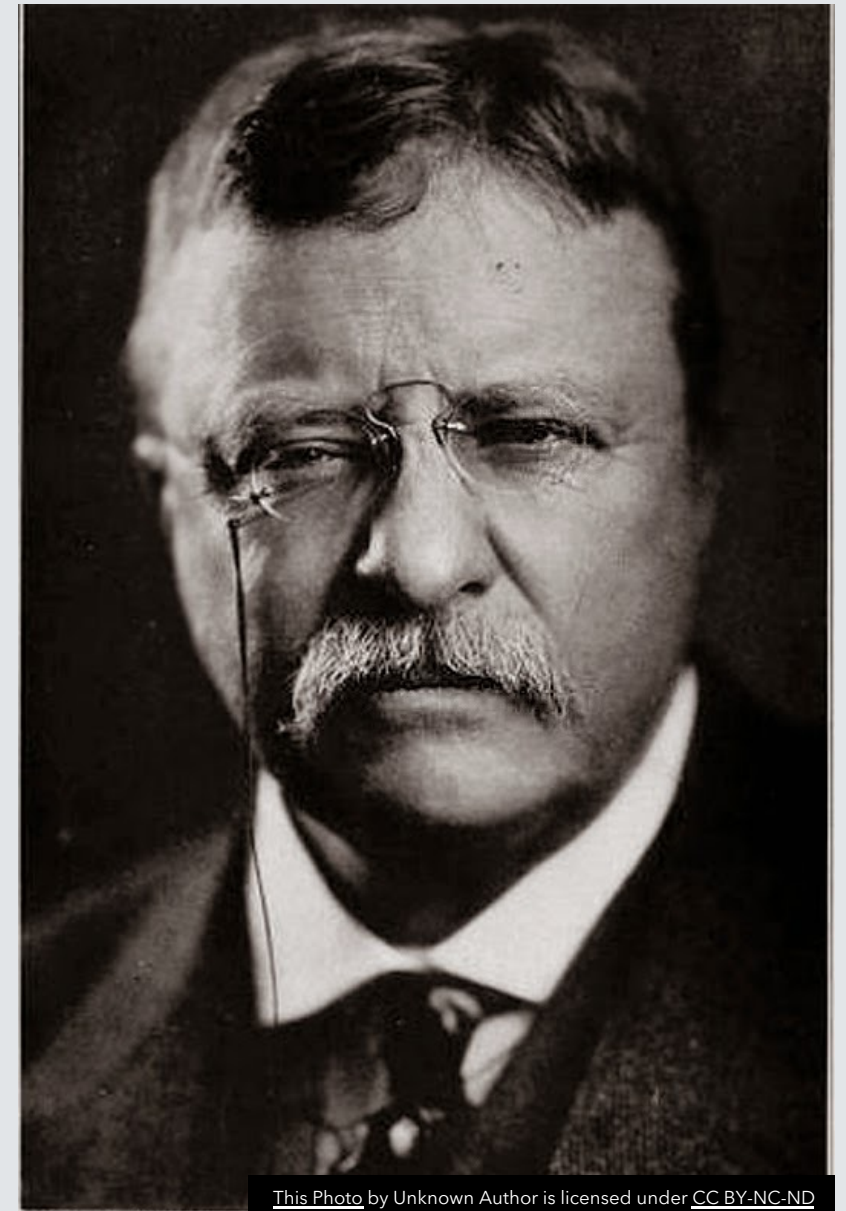
**No statement at all about wildlife
conservation**



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**And yet, Over 122 years ago,
The 26th President of the US was a Republican and
known as “The Great Conservationist”**

- Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt established approximately 230 million acres of public lands between 1901 and 1909, including 150 national forests, the first 55 federal bird reservation and game preserves, 5 national parks, and the first 18 national monuments. Many of these places become protected homes for wolves.




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But wolves would NOT have voted for him either !




Seen here with the TEDDY BEAR named for him because he refused to shoot a bear, wolves not so much

He declared the wolf “the beast of waste and desolation” and called for its complete eradication. Wolves were shot, trapped, poisoned, tortured, and burned alive.



Dismantling the EPA by gutting its budget was on Trump's agenda last time around and remains so. Wolf and climate protections are slated to be slashed.



The Democratic Party Platform of Today



- Has only reference to the environment:
- **COMBATING THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND PURSUING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**
- Its platform is 91+ pages long and is mostly about creating a more just world for people, there is no discussion about protecting land for wildlife by limiting development and growth of our population. Still Democrats tend to propose wildlife protection legislation instead of removing protections.

The policies which
wolves be in favor of
include:

Stop issuing logging permits

Stop issuing mining permits

And ones of course that stop hunting,
trapping and poisoning them, get rid of
predator status.





The Future and Fitness of the Wolf Population is tied to our own.

- **Globally and locally, human overpopulation is pushing the limits of our biodiversity, driving our most iconic wild animals towards extinction.**
- **Since the first Earth day 1970, the global human population has increased from**
- **3.7 billion to now over 8 billion.**
-

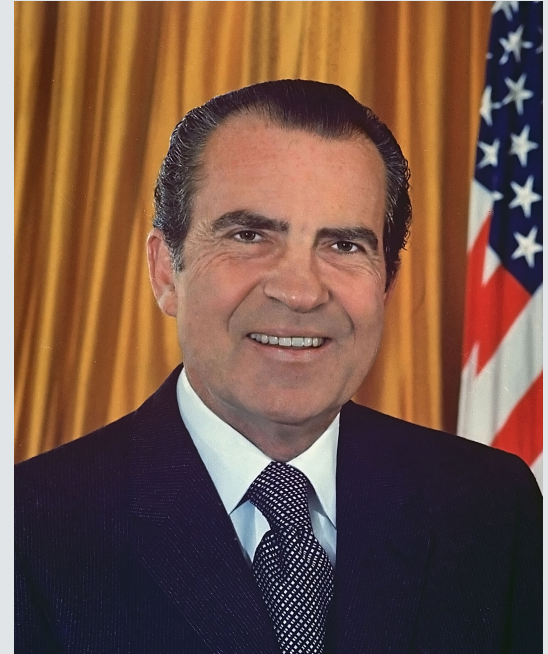
More People = More Roads and More Roads = Less Wildlife

- Impact of roads:
- Habitat fragmentation, mortality in the form of roadkill.
- Pollution from car/truck exhaust
- Blocked access to reaching young and to water during times of drought.



Did any U.S. president try to address population growth?

- YES.. The only one to establish a commission on population growth and the fear of what that would mean for the country's prosperity.
- If the commission's report had not been shelved, the wolves would have benefited greatly.
- (He also established the Clean Air Act)





Canada has the Second Largest Wolf Population in the World

- Russia has the most @ 300,000. With an estimated population of 50,000-60,000. About 15,500 wolves live in B.C. and Alberta. Wolves are currently in 90% of their original range. In Alberta, wolves can be hunted in season, and killed on private property if they threaten domestic animals. B.C. also allows wolf hunting and culling.



What political parties favor wolves in Canada

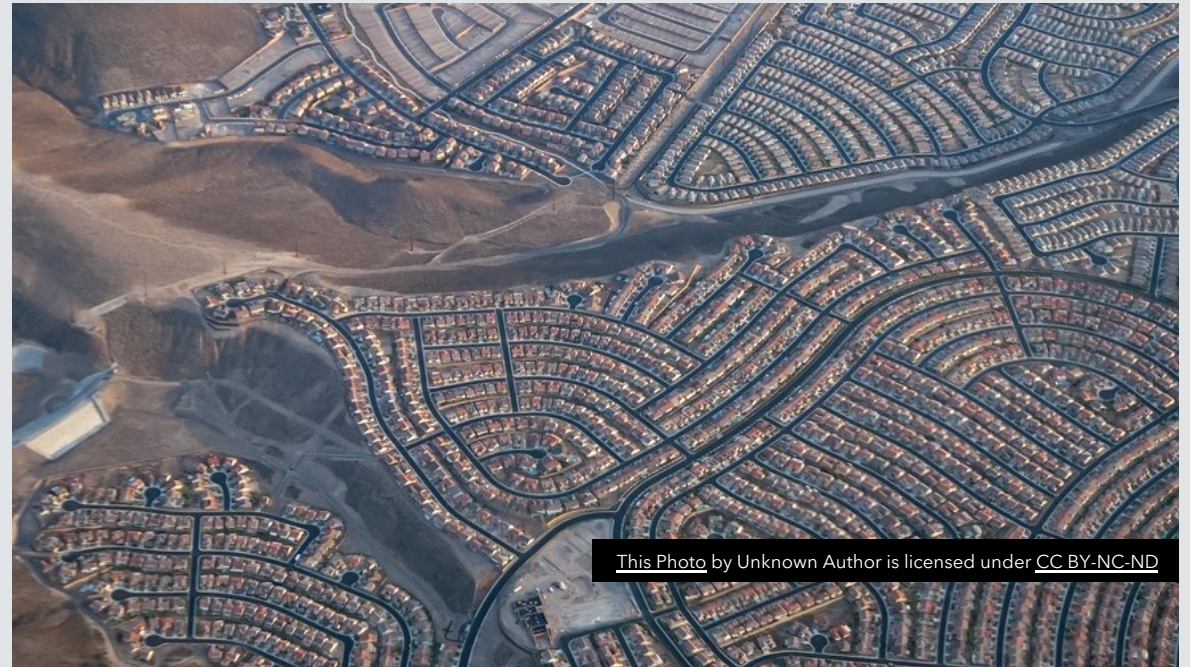
- **Canada has many political parties...**

BUT the People's Party is the only party against the unsustainability of mass immigration which will put pressure to develop on or near wolf habitat and increase the ecological footprint of Canada

If wolves could vote in either country,
what would they be seeking in a
candidate looking out for their
interests?

**NO HUNTING, NO
POISONING,
NO GROWTH**

- WWF's *Living Planet Report 2022* reported that global wildlife populations have plummeted by 69% on average.



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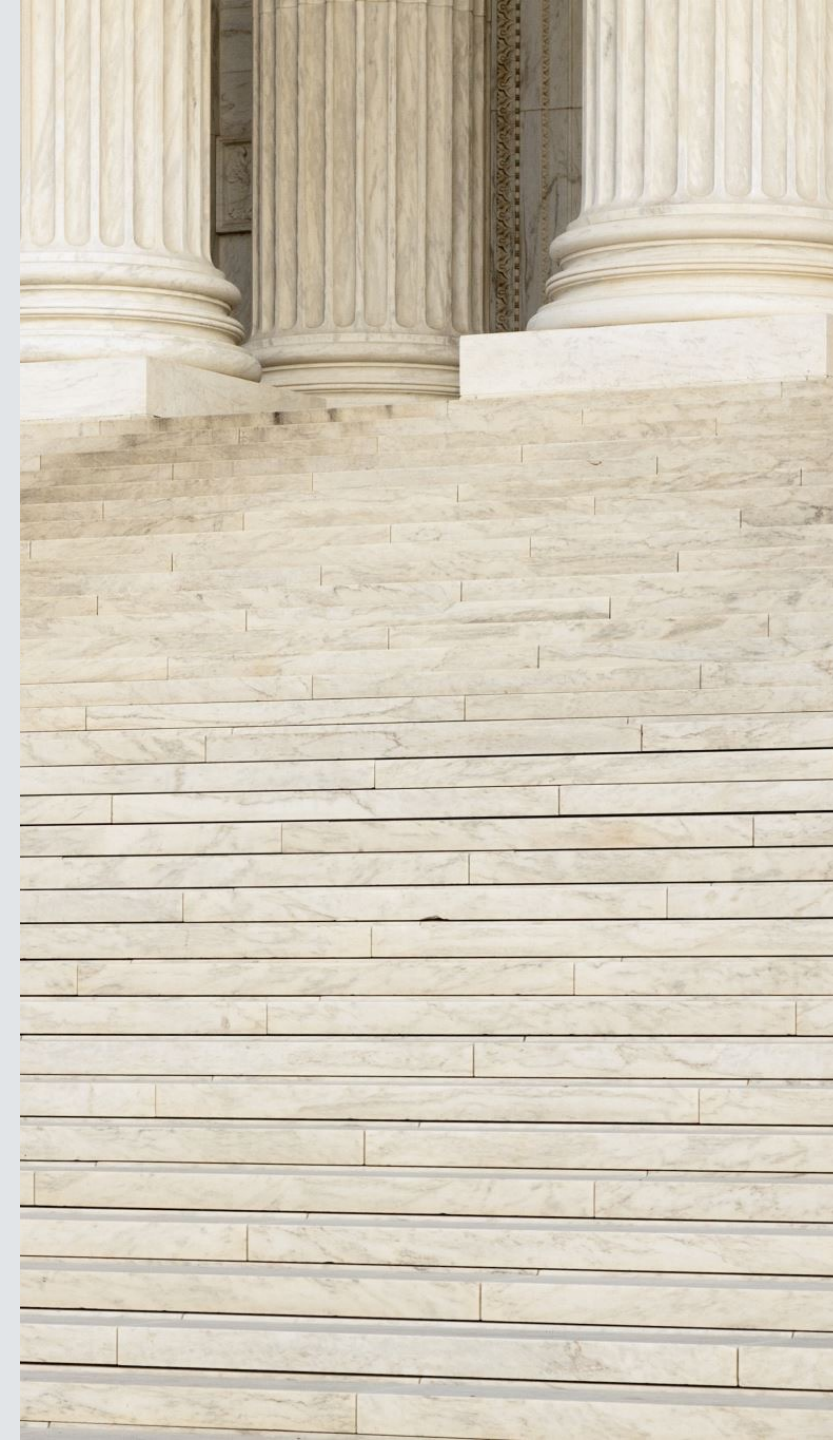


U.S. Legislation helpful to wolves was signed into law with bi-partisan efforts.

- **The Wilderness Act**
- **The Clean Air Act**
- **The Establishment of the EPA**
- **The Endangered Species Act**

The Endangered Species Act is an Example

- **The ESA was another bi-partisan effort and bedrock legislation spearheaded by Congressman John Dingell (D-MI) and Senator Harrison Williams (D-NJ).**
- **President Nixon (R) signed the Endangered Species Act into law on December 28, 1973, after it passed unanimously in the Senate and by a vote of 355-4 in the House of Representatives.**
- **The gray wolf was one of the first species listed under the ESA.**





Laws preventing wolves being classified as predatory which gives them varmint status.

Attacks on livestock have become a call for their control, yet they are relatively rare.

WOLVES CAN'T LIVE HERE



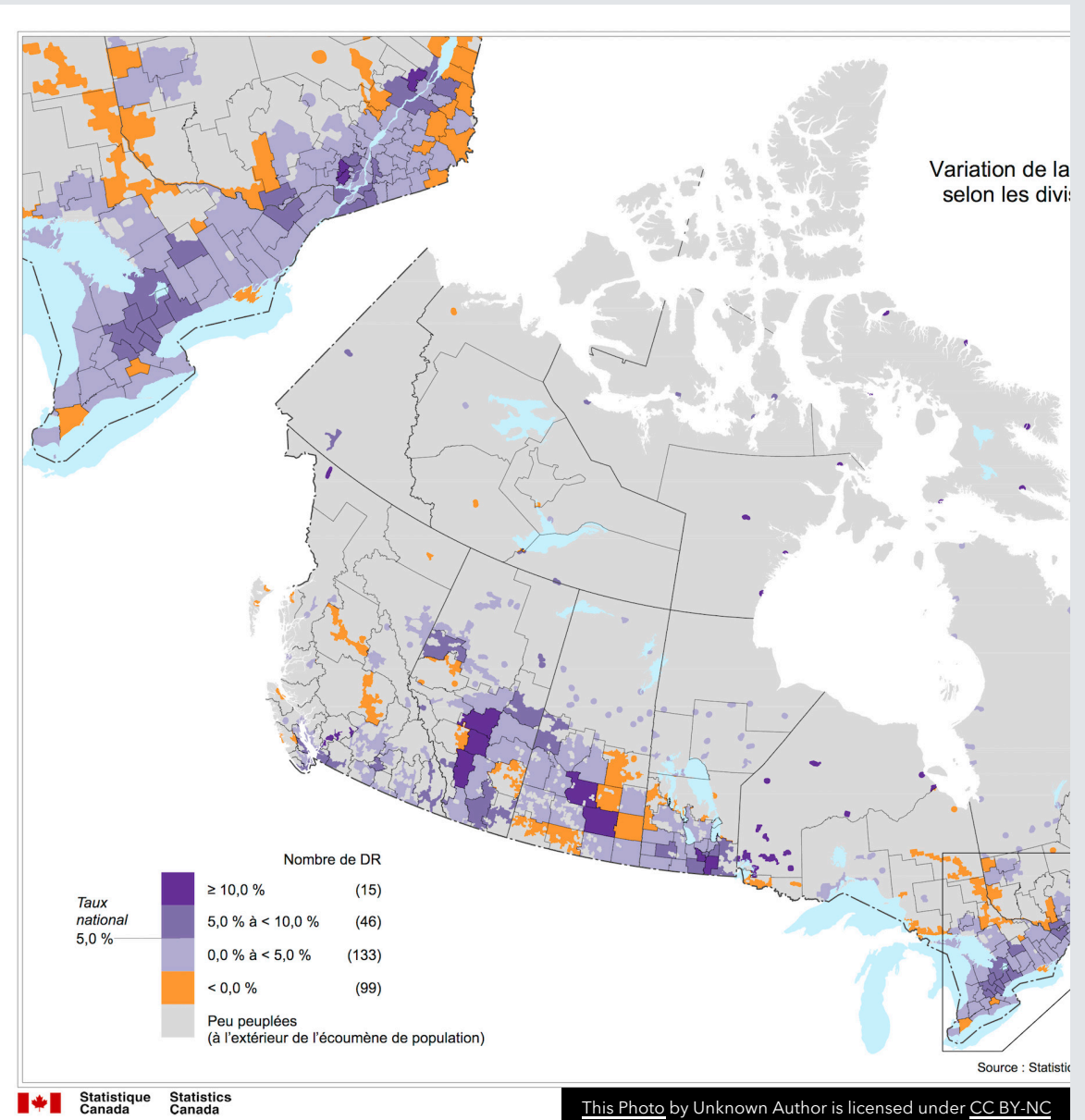
BUT the most effective: laws limiting population growth in our already overpopulated countries

- **By 2060, the Census Bureau projects that the U.S. population will have grown from 336+ million today to approximately 404 million Americans.**

THIS GROWTH IS MOSTLY DUE TO MASS IMMIGRATION WHICH DRIVES THE LOSS OF OPEN SPACE AND HABITAT FOR WOLVES AND OTHER SPECIES.

Canada has the same population problem as the US

- As Canada's population grows, wolves suffer.
- International migration continues to be the main source of Canada's population growth. In the third quarter of 2023, the vast majority (96.0%) of the population growth was due to international migration.





Population growth in Canada is bad for the wolf

- For it spurs sprawl and pushes wolves further into the Northwest Territories where territorial wolves already live

Democrats, though better on legislative protections for the Wolf have repeatedly refused to come to the table on limiting growth through immigration, where most of the current U.S. population growth is coming from.

The Democratic Party has a record of framing social justice for fellow humans as more important than sustainability and wildlife. It wants to allow mass immigration to continue when we are already living beyond our carrying capacity.



It has become a wedge issue weaponized to win votes instead of helping wolves.

A MIXED BAG

WHAT REPUBLICANS OFFER:

VARMINT STATUS

- **Wolves would not vote for those on the Republican side of the aisle who do not wish to keep them on the endangered species list and protect them from hunters, logging and mining,**

WHAT DEMOCRATS OFFER:

MORE HABITAT LOSS

- **On the other hand, Democrats have a bad record of increasing U.S. population by permitting more growth through mass immigration destroying habitat for all top predators who need lots of open land.**

Rewilding is only possible in the long run if we put the brakes on growth

- 30 by 30
- Nature Needs Half
- The Wildlands Project
- Removing dams and fences
- Creating wildlife corridors





U.S. population was significantly less back when most wildlife legislation was passed



CONSERVATION
CAN'T WORK WITH A
GROWING
POPULATION



From disrespect to conservation to environmental lip service

- **Wolves have suffered under policies which treated them as the enemy of progress i.e. expansion.**
- **Then they got some reprieve under conservation policies.**
- **But now wolves suffer from environmental lip service, because population growth is their newest and least addressed enemy.**



When we work to protect wolves, we work to protect ourselves

- What gets better with less population growth?
- Less traffic
- Less pressure on water usage
- Less pressure on infrastructure
- Less need for housing
- Less homelessness
- Safer cities





And we get more
open space !!!

Immigration policy and lack of enforcement of current laws have become an issue in this year's U.S. election

Pressure to do something about the failed policies of immigration are inflaming the political climate.



Ways to curb migration in the U.S. already exist

- But they need bi-partisan support and advocacy of a deep understanding of WHY they help the future of America and the future of Canis lupus
- E-Verify
- HR2 (the secure the border act)
- End to Chain Migration
- End to Visa Lottery



Canada's
immigration is set
at 500,000/year

- Although more regulated and not as subject to illegal immigration as the U.S., It is still too high for the future of wolves.

Welcome what

CANADA





In truth, wolves would leave the voting booth in the U.S. and Canada with no boxes checked

- **For their best leader has not yet emerged, one that both understands and advocates for limits to mass immigration and**
- **One that also advocates for protections.**

As it stands today,
wolves need better
choices in the voting
booth



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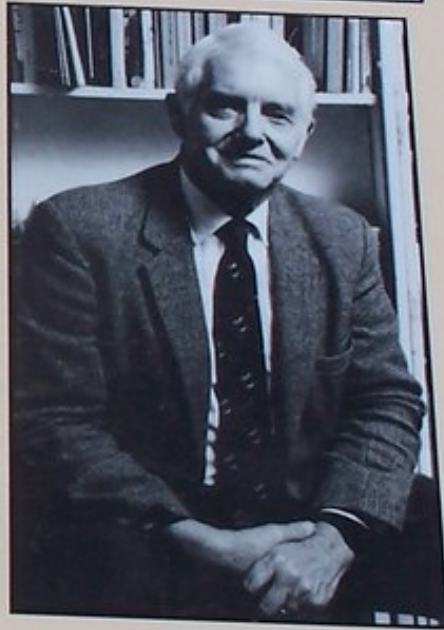
**Conflicts with
wolves will intensify
as the U.S.
Population grows.**

DAVID BROWER

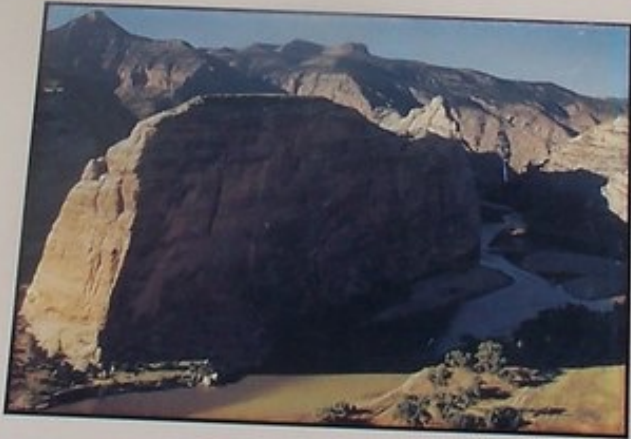
"When the subject was first raised, practically no one at the meeting knew anything about Dinosaur, much less the proposed Echo Park or Split Mountain Dam. What we did know was that the integrity of the National Park System was at stake."

Memories of Echo Park
David Brower
August 18, 1992

Struggle over a dam at Echo Park took on the aura of a 1950's morality play. Bold knights rallied to defend pristine canyons. Warring princes from the Bureau of Reclamation and the National Park Service came against one another on the field of honor. In the last act because of people like David Brower, Echo Park Dam was not built and the river canyons of Dinosaur were preserved.



In 1956 alternate sites were selected at little known places like Flaming Gorge and Glen Canyon.



As David R.
Brower
prophetically said:

**“You don't have a
conservation policy
unless you have a
population policy.”**



Curbing population growth must be framed as a liberal issue in the traditional sense of that word.

**WHEN YOU TAKE CARE OF WOLVES
YOU TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE.**

Thank you for having me
speak today. You may contact
me, KAREN I. SHRAGG

AT

www.movingupstream.com

