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Of Wolves, Hunters, and Words: A Comparative Study of Cultural Discourses in the Western Great Lakes Region

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**OF WOLVES, HUNTERS, AND WORDS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CULTURAL DISCOURSES
IN THE WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION**

A Dissertation Presented

by

TOVAR CERULLI

**Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MAY 2016

Department of Communication

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I remember sitting in this cabin . . . reading over the notes of all these encounters, and recalling Joseph Campbell, who wrote in the conclusion to *Primitive Mythology* that men do not discover their gods, they create them. So do they also, I thought, looking at the notes before me, create their animals.

—Barry Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*

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ABSTRACT

OF WOLVES, HUNTERS, AND WORDS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CULTURAL DISCOURSES
IN THE WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

MAY 2016

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This study is a description, interpretation, and comparison of talk about wolves. The study is based on diverse data—including in-depth interviews, instances of public talk, government documents, and letters to the editor—gathered over three years. An overarching research question guides the study: How do hunting communities create and use discourses concerning wolves? The study is situated within the ethnography of communication and, more specifically, the framework of cultural discourse analysis. The study employs cultural discourse analysis methods and concepts to describe and develop interpretations of how participants render wolves symbolically meaningful, and of beliefs and values underpinning such meanings.

One finding of the study is discovery of five distinct discourses: a discourse of conservation and management, two discourses of predator control, an Ojibwe discourse of kinship and shared fates, and a discourse of coinhabitation. Major descriptive and interpretive findings within each, respectively, include central imperatives to (1) recover and maintain viable wolf populations while addressing wolf-human conflict, (2) reduce an overabundant wolf population unjustly forced upon local people by outsiders, (3) manage the wolf population for the benefit of the people, especially deer hunters, (4) ensure the future of brother Ma'ingan whose fate parallels ours, and (5) appreciate wolves as members of intact, wild, natural places and communities.

Major comparative findings include contrasting conceptualizations of the following: human-wolf relations, interactions, and boundaries; wolves' effects on deer; wolf "management"; (in)appropriate reasons for hunting or trapping wolves; the (ir)relevance of an ethic of utilization in hunting or trapping predators; wolves' larger symbolic meanings. A broader comparative finding is resonance between two groups of discourses (2-3 and 4-5), revolving around contrasting hubs.

This research demonstrates that hunters, hunting communities, and related institutions speak about wolves in distinctly patterned ways that (A) differ from one another, (B) are deeply rooted in historically transmitted expressive systems and in historical relationships among groups of people, and (C) evolve over time. This research suggests that intergroup conflicts regarding wolves and other predators (e.g., coyotes) are deeply cultural and—more broadly—that wildlife conservation is deeply cultural: informed by science, but rooted in values and meaning.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Some hunters speak of the wolf as an “opportunistic killer”; others call the wolf “a fellow hunter.” Some hunters speak of the wolf as a “population” to be “managed”; others call him “our brother Ma’iingan.” Some say that wolves have “absolutely decimated the deer”; others say that wolves “obviously . . . aren’t killing all the deer.” Some say that wolves “eventually wipe everything out if not controlled”; others say that wolves have “inherent value” as part of “intact ecosystems.”

Some hunters speak of the longtime federal protection of wolves as part of a larger pattern of outsiders unjustly “deciding for us what our life is going to be like,” and of the establishment of state hunting and trapping seasons as a chance to “make [things] right.” Others speak of the removal of that protection and the establishment of those seasons as part of a larger pattern of states “sticking it to us” and trying to “take away” “resources” and “land.”

To those familiar with wolf politics in the western Great Lakes region or elsewhere, some or all of these voices may sound sensible. To those unfamiliar with hunting and wolves, the mix may sound odd. Indeed, people speaking in these ways are sometimes incoherent to one another. How can hunters have such radically different views of wolves? What does it mean for some to conceptualize the wolf as a “decimating” “killer” with which they compete, and for others to conceptualize the same animal as a “fellow hunter” with “inherent value”? What does it mean to speak of “managing” wolves? What does it mean to call the wolf a “brother”? Why is it that wolves and wolf-related policies function in dramatically opposed symbolic ways for two hunting communities, each of whom feels oppressed by the government at precisely the same time as the other feels vindicated or liberated?

In this study, I show that these and other ways of speaking about wolves are part of complex, coherent, distinctly patterned, historically rooted expressive systems used by various

hunters, hunting communities, and hunting-related institutions. I accomplish this by describing, interpreting, and comparing several prominent ways of speaking and writing about wolves.

Early in 2012, I began seeing articles online about the recent removal of the western Great Lakes region's wolves from the federal endangered species list. The stories indicated that—with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service having relinquished management authority—Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan were planning to initiate wolf hunting and trapping seasons, as states in the northern Rockies had done in the previous few years. In light of my interest in matters related to wildlife conservation and hunting, the news piqued my curiosity.

Several months later, that curiosity was galvanized by an article about how the proposed wolf seasons were not only sparking controversy in general but also igniting a specific culture clash between Ojibwe and Euro-American people and their respective governments. That spring, Karen Diver—Chairwoman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa—had sent a letter to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, objecting to the planned hunting and trapping seasons. “Many Ojibwe have a strong spiritual connection to the wolf,” she wrote. “Many Ojibwe believe the fate of the wolf is closely tied to the fate of all the Ojibwe. For these reasons the Fond du Lac Band feels the hunting and trapping of wolves is inappropriate.” Commenting on the Fond du Lac letter, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Fish and Wildlife Division Director Ed Boggess had acknowledged that there are different cultural views of wolves. He reportedly stated, however, that “all we can deal with are issues of conservation, public safety and public health.” He added that “cultural issues are for each culture to address as they see fit” (Smith, 2012).

The questions that began to swirl in my mind were not at all orderly, academic, or specific. They were global and chaotic, along the lines of “What the heck is going on there?” A slightly more refined version of that question, tuned to my current disciplinary focus on communication, could be put this way: “How are people talking and writing about wolves there? And what do they mean?” In Chapter III, in discussing the methodological framework employed

in this study, I restate this as a single, broad research question: How do people create and use discourses concerning wolves? There I also offer a number of sub-questions.

For the moment, though, the colloquial version works well. I wanted to understand how people spoke and wrote about wolves, and I wanted to understand what they meant. For reasons to be discussed shortly, I opted to focus on the speech of hunters and hunting communities, treating their ways of speaking as particular instances of “discourses concerning wolves.”

As soon as these questions started churning, I began doing preliminary research. I learned, among other things, that a meeting of the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board (WI-NRB) was scheduled for the following week, with public testimony about the proposed wolf seasons (and harvest quotas in particular) expected to dominate the day. A few days later, I was on my way to Stevens Point. During that all-day meeting in July 2012, I found myself fascinated by the diversity of voices I heard. In the following weeks, contemplating the experience and exchanging e-mails with my adviser, I decided that I had found the dissertation topic I had been seeking.

I was already familiar with the rough outlines of the history of wolf-human relationships since Euro-American colonization of what is now the United States. As I began to wade in among the whirl of particular voices audible in the western Great Lakes region, however, I recognized two things: first, that I needed to take a step back and get a more complete picture of this overarching history and, second, that this history is not *the* singular history of wolf-human relationships here. Rather, it is one history of these relationships over time, an account which encompasses—and is woven of threads from—multiple narratives, and which excludes others. Because this is where my understandings began, I introduce wolf issues by way of this history. Later, as my and our understandings broaden, there will be time to consider some of the stories it excludes.

A. One brief history

1. Millennia of fear and hatred

Dating to the domestication of sheep and goats six to ten millennia ago, Western civilization has, by and large, feared and hated the wolf. From *Gilgamesh* and the Old Testament to belief in werewolves and the story of Little Red Riding Hood, wolves have been described—and persecuted—as dangerous, treacherous, and evil (Marvin, 2012). There appears to be a strong historical link between attitudes toward wolves and primary means of subsistence. Around the globe, from Mongolia to the Balkans to Scandinavia to North America, traditional hunting cultures have honored the wolf as a hunter. Nomadic shepherding cultures, from south-central Asia to Germany, have been consistently hostile toward wolves, which threatened their mobile and relatively vulnerable livestock. Farming and sedentary shepherding cultures, in which livestock could be more easily protected but could fall prey to wolves on occasion, have typically held mixed and ambiguous views (Boitani, 1995).

In his *History of Rome*, Livy suggested that the story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a she-wolf may have been a commentary on the animal-like nature of a female human (Marvin, 2012). An alternative explanation is that the twins symbolized the unification of the agricultural Romans with the neighboring Sabines, who were both shepherds and hunter-warriors and followed religious practices centered on the wolf (Boitani, 1995).

A notable and relatively recent exception to the overall pattern of Western fear and hatred was Rudyard Kipling's sympathetic portrayal of the wolf family that adopts Mowgli in *The Jungle Book*, published in 1894. Kipling's fictional tale, in turn, inspired many of the ideas presented in *The Wolf's Cub Handbook*, published in England in 1916 as a guide for the junior division of the nascent Boy Scout movement; division members were called Wolf Cubs until being renamed Cub Scouts in 1967 (Marvin, 2012).

There is no extensive literature on American Indian relationships with or attitudes toward wolves prior to, or at the time of, European contact; there was undoubtedly considerable variation among tribes and cultures. However, the native peoples of North America apparently followed the broad global pattern: being hunter-gatherers and, in some cases, agriculturalists, they tended to honor the wolf or hold ambiguous views. They did not hold the hostile views typical of nomadic shepherding cultures (Boitani, 1995).

In contrast, the story of Israel Putnam—who, in 1742, killed what was believed to be the last wolf in Connecticut and who later became a Revolutionary War general—is typical of the North American colonial narrative of man-versus-wolf. The historian Daniel Justin Herman contends that this “drama of hunter versus predator (or hunter versus American Indian) has always represented the righteousness of the American cause,” the triumph of good over evil and “civilization over savagery” (2001, p. 28). Wolves, it has been argued, have long occupied “a special cultural niche in American society as the leading symbol of an evil wild nature, a demon to be conquered and extirpated as quickly as possible by any means available” (Schlickeisen, 2001, p. 61).

From the earliest decades of European colonization until well into the twentieth century, populations of wolves and other wild, four-footed predators were systematically reduced or eliminated across the present-day United States. During most of this time period, Euro-Americans participated in wolf killing both individually and collectively, employing pits, deadfalls, drives, guns, poison, bait, hooks, snares, and steel traps. Starting in the 1630s, when Massachusetts and Virginia began paying bounties on wolf scalps, wolf killing was supported by government coffers (Dunlap, 1988; Marvin, 2012).

By the 1880s, ranchers in the West were asking for assistance with predator and rodent control. State governments obliged by developing poisons and passing new bounty laws. By 1905, the federal Forest Service had begun to hire trappers to kill wolves on federally owned forestland. The federal Division of Biological Survey—an entity which grew out of the

Commission on Fish and Fisheries and the Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy in the 1870s and 1880s, and which would become the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 1940—soon joined the effort by studying wolves’ habits and offering technical assistance and advice to ranchers seeking to kill them (Dunlap, 1988, pp. 34-39).

A 1907 article published in Washington, DC, illustrates the views that supported the Biological Survey’s wolf-eradication efforts. According to the article, these “predatory beasts” were a grave “menace,” inflicting “enormous losses” on stockmen in the West and guilty of “destruction of game in the forest preserves, game preserves, and in national parks.” The duty of the Biological Survey and the Forest Service was to find “the best methods for destroying the pests” (“Menace of wolves”). Other articles from the same time period contended that wolves posed a threat to human safety. “Timber wolves are terrorizing the inhabitants of northern Minnesota,” stated a 1902 article from Ohio. Woodsmen, the article reported, were “afraid to go any distance from camp after nightfall. Even when traveling in numbers and armed they are afraid of being pounced upon by a pack” (“Timber wolves numerous”).

2. Early questions

Based on a journal entry written half a century earlier, Henry David Thoreau has been cited as the first Euro-American to challenge such attitudes toward wolves. In that 1856 entry, however, Thoreau did not explicitly question anti-wolf hostility. Rather, he lamented the more general consequences of civilization, including the extermination of a wide range of “the nobler animals,” by which he appears to have meant bigger animals, including not only large predators but also turkeys, beaver, moose, and deer. The absence of such creatures, he wrote, made the land feel “tamed” and “emasculated,” its wildness diminished (McIntyre, 1995, pp. 51-52). Thoreau’s focus was less on the animals themselves than on the human experience of the “tonic of wildness” (Thoreau, 1854, p. 419) as embodied in these animals.

From a rather different perspective, Theodore Roosevelt voiced early doubts concerning traditional views of predators, including his own. In his book *The Wilderness Hunter*, Roosevelt had declared that the wolf was “the arch type of ravin, the beast of waste and desolation” (Roosevelt, 1893, p. 386) and that cougars were “ferocious and bloodthirsty” (p. 344). As an avid hunter, Roosevelt was keen to protect favored game species such as deer and elk from the ravages of these beasts. Reducing predator numbers in national parks and elsewhere would, he believed, help cervids recover in the wake of the market hunting era. In 1901—in the name of sport, predator control, and specimen collection for scientific purposes—Roosevelt participated in a guided hunt in Yellowstone, personally killing a dozen mountain lions (Johnston, 2002, pp. 15-16).

During a return visit to the park in 1903, however, Roosevelt observed that the elk appeared to be overpopulated. He became concerned that they might over-browse their winter range, leading to widespread starvation. Given that the hunting of elk in Yellowstone had been banned since 1883, he concluded that four-footed predators were necessary to control elk numbers. Though he misjudged the capacity of the park’s few remaining cougars to substantially affect elk population growth, and for several more years supported continued cougar reductions in areas frequented by deer and bighorn sheep, Roosevelt did suggest that large predators could play a positive role in relation to prey species and their habitats (Johnston, 2002, pp. 18-19).

A more direct defense of the wolf was published in 1914 by Pennsylvania folklorist and conservationist Henry Wharton Shoemaker. Writing of the wolf’s “inherent right to live, to be protected by mankind,” Shoemaker contended that wolves, by then extinct in the Keystone State, had “accomplished much more good than harm,” playing “an important role” in maintaining “Nature’s balance” by preying “upon the weak and sickly wild animals and birds, preventing the perpetuation of imperfect types and the spread of pestilences.” Shoemaker blamed “the white man” for wiping out wolves’ food supplies (especially deer) thus forcing wolves to attack livestock. And, he claimed, most of the sheep supposedly killed by wolves were actually killed by

“half-wild, vicious dogs.” Wolves, Shoemaker contended, were relatively harmless and, like “all living things,” had a “useful purpose in the world” and should not have been “marked for extermination by the rapacious settlers” (Shoemaker, 1914, pp. 5-7).

Shoemaker went so far as to suggest the possibility of reintroducing the wolf to Pennsylvania. Shoemaker’s vision was not one of peaceful coexistence between humans and wolves. Rather, he argued that protection should only be extended in regions “uninhabited except by wild beasts,” where the wolf could pursue “the tenor of his way, upholding nature’s balance and adding to the picturesqueness of the wilderness.” Much of his argument was founded on the value of the wolf as a game animal. Hunting this “noble beast” should, he argued, be recognized as “sport-royal” and the wolf should not be placed in “imminent danger of extinction by cheap bounty hunters, mercenary trappers and poisoners” (pp. 92-93). In its proper place, the wolf would provide “civilized men” and their hounds with “excitement” and “game worthy of the name,” sport far superior to “the feeble pastime of slaying a few mangey rabbits” (p. 87). Arguments such as Shoemaker’s, however, do not appear to have had much of an impact on either public sentiment or public policy. The more serious long term challenges to wolf-related attitudes and policies came not from folklorists or sport hunters, but from natural scientists.

3. Scientific doubts

Early seeds of change were sown by the 1871 publication of Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* which “shattered the world of special creation, where a Divine purpose guided everything and a gulf was fixed between man and the ‘beasts’” (Dunlap, 1988, p. 18). One of the most vehement objections to Darwin’s book was that it did not consider the “exalted and ennobling belief” that “man was created with an immortal soul.” Critics were troubled by the suggestion that we had both origins and fates in common with “the beasts,” that we “‘evolved’ from a degraded ‘organism,’” and that our existence was not a “preparation for a nobler state of being” (“Is man merely an improved monkey?”).

More specific to wolves and other predators were the tensions that began to develop among scientists and wildlife managers in the early the twentieth century. By the 1920s, the Biological Survey was heavily involved in killing predators. Its operations were carried out under “cooperative agreements” with ranchers who supplied enough funds to cover a quarter of the Biological Survey’s budget, mainly footing the bill for its new Division of Predator and Rodent Control (PARC) (Dunlap, 1988, p. 39). PARC also conducted predator-killing operations on National Park Service (NPS) land. The National Park Service Act of 1916 had authorized NPS to destroy plants and animals deemed “detrimental to the use” of the parks, thus officially sanctioning well-established efforts to kill wolves and other predators, with the particular aim of protecting elk, deer, and other species that park visitors enjoyed seeing (Sellars, 1997, p. 44).

Just as PARC and NPS predator-control efforts peaked, however, they also began to spark questions, both within these agencies and in the wider scientific community. By the mid-1920s, with only remnant populations of wolves and mountain lions remaining in the contiguous United States, the focus of predator-control efforts had shifted to coyotes. PARC was killing an estimated 35,000 coyotes annually and some biologists were becoming alarmed. At the 1924 meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists, which had been established five years earlier by employees of the Biological Survey, the issue of predator control was openly debated. Critics of Biological Survey policy contended that the agency was not engaged in “control,” but in “extermination” (which was, in fact, the official heading used until 1929). Defenders of the Biological Survey argued that the coyote was not in real danger and that even if larger predators like the wolf were extirpated in the contiguous United States, they would certainly persist in Canada and Alaska. In any case, argued Biological Survey biologist E. A. Goldman, “large predatory mammals, destructive to livestock and game, no longer have a place in our advancing civilization” (Dunlap, 1988, pp. 48-50).

A series of disputes ensued, including arguments over rodent-coyote population dynamics and the collateral damage inflicted on non-target wildlife by poisoning campaigns. In

1928, as a member of the American Society of Mammalogists Committee on Wild Life Sanctuaries, Goldman signed a report stating that predators were of “much scientific, education, and economic value,” urging “intelligent control, rather than wholesale extermination,” and recommending “the preservation of at least a few predatory animals,” particularly in national parks and wilderness areas (Bailey et al., 1928). That same year, Paul G. Redington, chief of the Biological Survey, was sufficiently concerned by dissent over poison use to tell a gathering of his field agents that they faced “opposition” from people who wanted “to see the mountain lion, the wolf, the coyote, and the bobcat perpetuated as part of the wildlife of the country” (Dunlap, 1988, p. 48).

In 1931, the leadership of the Biological Survey and their allies, including ranchers, still had the upper hand. That year, the U.S. Congress passed the Animal Damage Control Act, which bolstered predator-control programs and would remain part of the PARC charter for the next four decades. Even within the Biological Survey, however, this political victory did little to quell doubts, and biologists continued to question whether the agency was operating on a scientific basis. In 1931, one such Biological Survey biologist—Olaus Murie, who was studying coyotes in Wyoming for PARC—wrote privately to a friend and fellow scientist that the agency was “passing around an appalling amount of misinformation about the effects of predators on game.” From his research, Murie concluded that coyotes posed no threat to elk populations. His superiors at PARC disapproved of the finding, just as NPS officials had disapproved of his younger brother Adolph’s similar findings in Yellowstone several years later (Dunlap, 1988, pp. 51-61, 74-75).

4. National Park Service policy

The debates over Biological Survey policy were paralleled by debates over National Park Service policy. The two sets of policies overlapped considerably, as PARC did a great deal of predator-control work on NPS land. By the 1920s, statements from the NPS had begun to emphasize that their policies were aimed at reducing predator populations, not eliminating them.

In 1922, park superintendents stated that predators should only be killed in the parks when they jeopardized “the natural balance of wild life.” Some parks had already suspended most of their predator control efforts, while others continued them, especially to protect valued game species such as deer, elk, and trout. By the mid-1920s, wolves and cougars were virtually extinct in a number of parks, including Yellowstone and Glacier (Sellars, 1997, p. 73).

Wildlife science and management within the NPS system took a dramatic turn in 1928, when George M. Wright offered to fund a study of fauna within the national parks. Twenty-four years old at the time, Wright had studied zoology and forestry at UC-Berkeley, was working as a part-time ranger and naturalist at Yosemite, and had inherited enough wealth to underwrite a system-wide survey of the parks’ wildlife. The NPS accepted Wright’s proposal and by 1933 the results had been published in a landmark report, *Fauna of the National Parks of the United States* (Sellars, 1997, pp. 95-97). In addition to surveying the existing wildlife populations within the parks and analyzing various “disturbances” and “maladjustments” affecting those populations, the report proposed substantial changes in NPS policy. In particular, it proposed that the parks should protect year-round habitats, especially for animals that migrated seasonally, and that special protection should be extended to predators. Beyond the maintenance of existing natural conditions, the report proposed the restoration of park fauna to a “pristine state” (Wright, Dixon & Thompson, 1933).

In 1936, the NPS officially adopted a new wildlife management policy specifying that predators were not to be killed unless they threatened another animal with extermination. Drawing directly from the language of Wright’s 1933 report, the new policy stated that predators were to be protected from extermination and “considered special charges of the national parks in proportion that they are persecuted everywhere else” (McIntyre, 1995, pp. 311-312). This policy shift established scientific research as a central basis for wildlife conservation in the parks.

5. Game management research

By the early 1930s, some university researchers in the emergent field of game management were also beginning to question longstanding predator-control practices and their own long-held assumptions. Foremost among these was Aldo Leopold. In 1915, while working for the U.S. Forest Service, Leopold had encouraged the destruction of wolves and other predators, referring to them as “vermin,” “varmints,” and “skulking marauders of the forest” for what he believed to be their harmful impact on deer and other desirable species that game managers sought to produce (Meine, 1988, p. 155). In the 1920s, however, his attitudes began to shift and in 1930 he wrote, “All past and present ideas about predator-control seem inadequate. A rational policy must be built up on a foundation of scientific facts yet to be determined” (p. 274). By the time his book *Game Management* was published in 1933, Leopold was arguing against predator control as a default policy. Instead, he urged wildlife managers to apply scientific methods in determining whether killing predators would, in fact, achieve the desired result in the particular situation at hand (Dunlap, 1988, p. 74).

During the 1930s, as a graduate student, Sigurd Olson underwent a similar shift in perspective “from outright hostility to appreciation to advocacy” (Meine, 2009, p. 6). His field research in the Superior National Forest of northeastern Minnesota was one of the first detailed studies conducted on wolves anywhere in the world. Olson concluded that predation by wolves did not threaten the region’s cervid populations with long-term diminishment, let alone extermination. He also contended that “the timber wolf is an integral part of the wilderness community” (Olson, 1938, p. 336), one that could not be eliminated without ecological impacts on that community and aesthetic impacts on the “charm and uniqueness” (p. 324) of wilderness. In reporting his findings and expressing his new views, Olson questioned “not only the wisdom of control techniques but also the cultural stereotype of predators that had motivated the control programs” (Meine, 2009, p. 6).

By 1941, Leopold had become alarmed by rapidly expanding deer populations in the western Great Lakes region. That year, he wrote to the chair of the American Society of Mammalogists' Committee on the Conservation of Land Mammals that wolf policy was the region's most urgent issue:

All of the lake states as far as I know continue an official policy of wolf extermination, despite the fact that excess deer are a growing menace to forestry, to conservation of flora, and to their own welfare. I, for one, think the time has come to begin an earnest agitation for reversal of such antiquated policies. (Meine, 2009, p. 8)

Leopold harbored some hope that hunters and farmers would not strongly oppose the reform of wolf-control policies in the region. But William Feeney, who headed a deer-research project initiated by Leopold and others in 1941, thought resistance would be fierce. Wardens, lumbermen, and settlers, he warned Leopold, were "not very receptive" to the idea and did "not rate wolves valuable, esthetically or otherwise, except for the bounty they bring." Feeney was right. The 1940s brought intense controversy to the region, as researchers, officials, and citizens argued over both deer and wolves (Meine, 2009, p. 8).

By the 1940s, Leopold had shifted away from his earlier, predominantly utilitarian, views of nature and had begun to argue that nature should be understood as more than a set of economic resources. Human relationships to the larger world should, he contended, be guided by an ethic that "enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land." Such a "land ethic," he wrote, "changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such" (1949, pp. 239-240). In this idea, we can hear implicit echoes of Darwin's suggestion that humans are part of the larger community of the planet's life forms.¹ Elsewhere in Leopold's writing, these echoes become explicit:

¹ In Leopold's time, as in Darwin's, this perspective was not without its critics. Nor is it now. One striking example is the recent independent film *Crying Wolf*, which encourages a Biblical understanding of

It is a century now since Darwin gave us the first glimpse of the origin of species. We know now what was unknown to all the preceding caravan of generations: that men are only fellow-voyagers with other creatures in the odyssey of evolution. This new knowledge should have given us, by this time, a sense of kinship with fellow-creatures; a wish to live and let live; a sense of wonder over the magnitude and duration of the biotic enterprise. (1949, pp. 116-117)

By 1944, Leopold had perceived a connection between “the near-extirpation of the timber wolf and the cougar” and the subsequent “plague of excess deer and elk and the threatened extirpation of their winter browse foods.” In comparison to open hunting seasons on cervids, Leopold considered the wolf “a precision instrument” that regulated “not only the number, but the distribution, of deer.” Though he did not advocate repopulating the entire landscape with wolves, he thought they should inhabit some areas, where they would help maintain a healthy relationship between deer and land. Writing of Wisconsin, Leopold contended that “in thickly settled counties, we cannot have wolves, but in parts of the north we can and should” (Meine, 1988, p. 458).

Later in 1944, Leopold proposed the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone and the introduction of wolves to Lake Superior’s Isle Royale.² In the last four years of his life, which ended in 1948, Leopold corresponded with NPS biologist Victor Cahalane about the presence of, and potential for the conservation of, large predators in national parks. These discussions continued to be circumspect. When wolf tracks were found in Yellowstone in 1946, Cahalane wrote to Leopold to tell him. Leopold, in turn, shared the news with his graduate student Dan Thompson, and with Feeney, but made it clear that the information was confidential (Meine, 2009, p. 10). Leopold was evidently concerned about what might happen if the news reached the wrong ears.

humanity’s God-given “dominion” over and “stewardship responsibility” for the earth, and criticizes environmentalists for “rejecting the Creator” and “worshipping the creature.”

² As it happens, wolves got there on their own several winters later, by crossing the ice from northern Minnesota. The island, which is technically part of Michigan, became one of the most famous wolf research sites in the United States.

Thompson completed his thesis in 1952. Though Wisconsin's wolf-bounty law was still on the books at the time, in the conclusion of his thesis Thompson made several recommendations on how to provide wolf habitat in northern parts of the state. He had no illusions about his suggestions being adopted in the near future. Despite the fact that wolves were all but extirpated from the state, he knew that "public opinion [was] unprepared for such an extension of conservation thinking" (Meine, 2009, p. 11). Public opinion may have been unprepared but, just five years later, the Wisconsin legislature repealed the state's bounty system and extended full protection to the wolf. Michigan repealed its bounties in 1960 and Minnesota followed suit in 1965 (Schanning, 2009, pp. 253-254).

In the same time period, major policy shifts were beginning at the national level. In 1962, amid controversies over NPS policies, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall called for detailed studies of the park system's resource management. One study would focus on natural history and science, the other specifically on wildlife management. Udall convinced Aldo Leopold's son, A. Starker Leopold, to lead the latter (Sellars, 1997, p. 200). The resulting reports—known colloquially as the National Academy Report and the Leopold Report—criticized the NPS for pursuing policies that lacked scientific basis. The Leopold Report urged a turn toward science, while also promoting an ethnocentric, nationalistic vision of the parks as proxies for the pioneer past and the "illusion of primitive America." The report recommended that the NPS should "recognize the enormous complexity of ecologic communities" and further that all management should be guided by science and fall under the "full jurisdiction of biologically trained personnel" (pp. 214-215).

The Leopold Report's guidelines, in conjunction with the more scathing critiques and more detailed recommendations of the National Academy Report, challenged many aspects of NPS policy, including predator elimination and continued PARC operations on NPS land. Though the reports did not immediately lead to the dismantling of predator control operations, they did result in changes to NPS leadership and structure. One such change was the renaming of

PARC, which became the Division of Wildlife Services, and the adoption of a new mission statement that reflected the Leopold Report: henceforth, the division's predator control program would aim to remove "the offending individual animal" rather than the population as a whole. These changes, along with Senate hearings on predator-control policy in 1966, put western ranchers and wool producers on the defensive (Dunlap, 1988, pp. 127-130).

6. The road to the Endangered Species Act

Meanwhile, the environmental and humane movements were gaining momentum. By 1970, the poisoning of wildlife had become a national issue and anti-poison campaigns were being waged by the Audubon Society, Defenders of Wildlife, and the National Wildlife Federation. That year, the Department of the Interior assembled a new committee to revisit predator-control policy and to assess how closely the Division of Wildlife Services was adhering to its new mandate. The committee—again including Starker Leopold—returned a critical report, recommending a complete overhaul of the division and reaffirming the guidelines of the original Leopold Report. In a remarkable political shift, ranchers and wool producers were excluded from the committee. Moreover, they were not even given an opportunity to review and comment on the report. It went straight from the Department of the Interior to the White House.

In February 1972, President Nixon delivered a State of the Union Address that enumerated several environmental priorities for the administration. One of those priorities was an immediate ban on the use of predator poisons on federal land and a push to prevent their use on private land as well. Within eight months, the Environmental Protection Agency had banned interstate shipment of the most common predator poisons and Congress had passed legislation mandating state compliance with federal pesticide- and poison-control standards.

By then, the political shift toward federal protection of endangered species was already underway. Since the 1930s and 1940s, the USFWS and NPS—sometimes in collaboration with the Canadian Wildlife Service and non-profit organizations including the Audubon Society—had

been working to protect individual species such as the whooping crane and trumpeter swan. In 1962, the USFWS had created a Committee on Endangered Species to catalog endangered species and make recommendations for their protection. The initial list, completed in 1964, had included the gray wolf.

Though years of bitter political struggle ensued, both on the national stage and in individual states, the political tide was turning in favor of species protection. Following passage of the federal Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966—which directed the Secretary of the Interior to purchase and manage land for the purpose of protecting threatened species, but was short on specifics and gave the federal government no substantial enforcement power—wildlife advocates continued fighting for more serious measures. Not long after Nixon’s landmark environmental State of the Union address, major precedents were set by the passage of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Finally, in 1973, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was signed into law, with the express purpose of protecting “the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend.” In 1974, the western Great Lakes region subspecies known as the Eastern Timber Wolf was protected by the ESA. By 1978, all gray wolves in 47 of the contiguous United States were listed as endangered under the ESA and killing them (except in defense of human life) became a federal offense. In Minnesota, they were listed as threatened, which allowed the government to practice lethal control of wolves that killed livestock. Over the next three decades, an average of 91 wolves were killed by federal employees in Minnesota each year (Erb & DonCarlos, 2009, p. 51).

Protection under the ESA allowed wolves in northern Minnesota—the only remaining population in the contiguous United States—to begin a remarkable recovery, multiplying in number and returning not only to significant portions of that state but also to Wisconsin and to

Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Elsewhere in the country, particularly in the northern Rockies, protection also set the stage for reintroduction of wolves by the federal government.

7. Resistance and defiance

State and federal wolf-protection policies were not universally accepted. In some places, they were resented, resisted, and violated. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, for instance, reintroduced four wolves into the state's Upper Peninsula in 1974. Within a year, all four were dead: three shot and one killed by a car. Over the next two years, wolves migrating into the same area—presumably from Minnesota and Wisconsin to the west—were also found trapped and shot (Schanning, 2009, p. 255).

One night in December 1976, a dead wolf was deposited on the steps of the headquarters building at Voyageurs National Park in northern Minnesota. The animal had apparently been killed by a bullet to the head. On its fur, in white paint, were the letters "SOS." A group calling itself "Sportsmen's Only Salvation" claimed responsibility and threatened to kill more wolves. Soon thereafter, a second carcass appeared in front of city hall in Minneapolis. And the severed head of a wolf was left on a stairway in the building that housed the Duluth Herald and News-Tribune. At the time, the federal penalty for killing a wolf in Minnesota could run as high as \$20,000 plus a year in prison (Hornblower, 1977). These violations of federal law illustrate the intense antipathy felt by some toward wolf protection and toward governmental agencies and other entities perceived as supportive of such protection. They also indicate one source of that antipathy: the belief that wolves constitute an imminent threat to the deer population cherished by "sportsmen."

By early 1977, there was widespread agitation across northern Minnesota to rescind all wolf protection (Wehrwein, 1977). In a 1985 survey conducted in Minnesota, 12 percent of responding farmers and 17 percent of responding trappers stated that they had killed a wolf personally, despite continued legal prohibitions. More than 40 percent of all respondents from the

northern section of the state, where wolves were most densely populated, indicated that they knew someone who had killed a wolf (Schanning, 2009, p. 257).

On the other hand, Minnesotans' views of wolves were far from wholly negative and most residents supported protection and conservation of the species. Based on the 1985 survey, three competing social constructions of wolves were described: (1) the wolf as "evil predator," (2) the wolf as "aesthetically pleasing and ecologically necessary," and (3) the wolf as generally acceptable but "considered in relation to competing human needs, wants, and desires." It was hypothesized that the strongest anti- and pro-wolf attitudes might be "the product of a generation who did not have to live with wolves on the landscape," while the third—"utilitarian or pragmatic"—attitude might, in part, be the result of co-existence with wolves (Schanning, 2009, p. 256-257).

8. Recent policy battles

In recent years, wolf-policy battles have again become heated in the western Great Lakes region, as well as in other regions of the U.S., including the northern Rockies. In 2003, the USFWS downlisted Wisconsin and Michigan's wolves from endangered to threatened. With this status change, and with it becoming increasingly difficult to find places to which wolves could be relocated, lethal removal of "problem wolves" (mainly animals involved in livestock depredation) became standard operating procedure for state agencies. In 2005, however, Wisconsin and Michigan's wolves were federally relisted as endangered. The Michigan and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources responded by applying for permits to allow continued lethal control in response to wolves killing livestock. Permits were issued by the USFWS, enjoined by a federal court due to insufficient public notice, reissued by the USFWS, and finally annulled in 2006 as the result of a lawsuit filed by the Humane Society of the United States and others. In 2007, the USFWS removed the entire western Great Lakes distinct population segment of wolves from the threatened and endangered species lists. By 2008, however, the region's wolves were

back on the lists following another lawsuit filed by the Humane Society and its allies. A similar delisting proposal and court-ordered relisting occurred in 2009 (*Gray Wolves in the Western Great Lakes States*).

In January 2012, the USFWS removed the western Great Lakes population segment of wolves from the threatened and endangered species lists completely, thus returning wolf-management authority to the states, and to tribes—primarily Ojibwe but also Menominee and Mohican, among others—with jurisdictions and treaty rights related to natural resources management in the region. Shortly after this delisting, the legislatures of both Wisconsin and Minnesota proposed and passed bills that established wolf hunting and trapping seasons to begin that autumn; Michigan’s first wolf season would begin the following year. Not surprisingly, controversy quickly arose.

That, of course, is when I began seeing online articles about the wolves of the western Great Lakes. Most of my research was conducted between the summer of 2012 and the autumn of 2014. In December 2014, a federal court ruling returned the Great Lakes wolves to the federal threatened and endangered species lists. My research thus coincided with a unique three-year period during which the western Great Lakes population segment of wolves was not on the federal lists.

In 2015, a number of federal legislators advocated Congressional action to overturn the court ruling and delist wolves in all of the contiguous United States. By December 2015, it was widely expected that a massive year-end federal tax and spending bill would include a rider, removing wolves in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Wyoming from federal lists and returning management authority to those states. At the last minute, budget negotiators removed the provision (Karnowski, 2015). At the time of this writing, in early 2016, the western Great Lakes wolves remain on the federal threatened and endangered species lists.

9. Summary

The preceding pages have briefly sketched certain aspects of Euro-American interactions with, and understandings of, the wolf over the past several hundred years, with a primary focus on the twentieth century. The early view of wolves as a dangerous menace—a “beast of waste and desolation,” as Theodore Roosevelt put it, that destroyed both livestock and game—predominated in Euro-American culture into the early twentieth century. Largely successful efforts to eradicate wolves were made by farmers, ranchers, hunters, and state and federal agencies. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, however, early doubts were raised by Roosevelt, Shoemaker, and mammalogists both within and outside of the federal Division of Biological Survey.

By 1924, “predator control” was a subject of open debate within the scientific community, with some biologists arguing that extermination must be avoided and others arguing that it was inevitable. By the 1930s, both policy and science were in upheaval, as research—conducted by the Murie brothers, George Wright, Aldo Leopold, Sigurd Olson, and others—shed new light on predator-prey-habitat relationships and expressed appreciation for those relationships, and for the wolf, in increasingly favorable aesthetic, ethical, and ecological terms.

By the 1940s, Leopold, among others, had become an advocate for wolves and their role in ecological systems, and had quietly begun suggesting the possibility of reintroduction in relatively unsettled areas. These shifts in perspective set the stage for further research and for early state wolf-protection in the 1950s and early federal protection in the 1960s. Sweeping federal protections came in the 1970s, when longstanding scientific challenges to predator control policies were combined with the rising forces of the environmental movement and the movement for the humane treatment of animals.

In short, Euro-American discourses have long treated the human-wolf relationship as one of enmity, yet in more recent decades have attributed ecological and symbolic value to wolves (Kellert et al., 1996; Meine, 2009). Throughout those decades, however, such shifts in thinking

and policy have been met by resistance. This resistance has often been political and symbolic, yet has also been physical and material, as evidenced by the persistent illegal killing of wolves in the western Great Lakes region since federal protection began. Despite the dramatic shift in the wolf's political fortunes that came with passage of the Endangered Species Act, it is evident that Euro-American cultural attitudes toward, and tangible treatments of, the wolf have not undergone a complete transformation. Rather, values and discourses concerning wolves have become more diverse and conflicted. Utilitarian viewpoints—and protective stances in relation not only to livestock but also to game—remain, dueling with views informed by ecology, biocentrism, and aesthetic appreciation of large predators.

As noted at the outset, the pages above are but one brief history of wolf-human relations in the United States in general and the western Great Lakes region in particular. Though it acknowledges some voices, it excludes others. Though it acknowledges some nuances, it is a telling which also reinforces a familiar binary: extirpation versus recovery, anti-wolf versus pro-wolf.

Even within the relatively narrow scope of this dissertation, things turn out not to be so simple. Among hunting communities in the western Great Lakes region, there are other views and narratives. Some, rooted in this same cultural history, complicate the familiar binary. Others, including Ojibwe views and narratives, spring from entirely different ground.

B. Focus and relevance of this dissertation

From the beginning, at that first Wisconsin Natural Resources Board meeting in Stevens Point, I found myself listening to and talking with a remarkably diverse array of people: from deer hunters to anti-hunting activists, from state-employed wildlife biologists to representatives of the Humane Society of the United States. It soon became clear that, for my study to be practical and doable, I would need to narrow its scope. (My committee members, in their wisdom, encouraged me to narrow it even further than I did. I probably should have heeded their advice.) I

ended up deciding to focus my research on discourses among hunting communities, especially deer hunting communities. My reasons are explained below.

First, however, I want to make an emphatic note: My choice to focus on these communities' discourses does not reflect a belief on my part that other communities' views on wolves are less important or less deserving of attention. Other views and voices are critically important, in their own right and in their interactions with and relations to hunting communities. I hope that this dissertation will, in some small measure, contribute to improving those interactions and relations.

It is also important to note that, in choosing this focus, I did not have a particular definition of "deer hunting community" in mind. Rather, listening to voices readily audible in the local wolf debate, I simply focused on ways of speaking that (1) addressed wolves and wolf-human relations, and (2) prominently depicted deer hunting as an accepted practice. This discourse-oriented approach led me to include the voices of individual hunters, leaders of hunting-related nonprofit organizations, and state and tribal natural resources employees (many of whom hunt deer, and for whom hunting is closely linked to the purposes and practices of wildlife management), among others. One consequence of focusing on hunting discourses readily audible in local wolf debates is that the voices of some local hunting communities and cultures (e.g., Minnesota's numerous Hmong hunters) are not represented in this study.

In part, I chose to focus on hunting communities because hunting and deer are, by all accounts, central to wolf politics in the western Great lakes region. Though farming and livestock issues come into play, they are secondary in most public debates. At the meeting in Stevens Point, for instance, there was no vocal contingent of dairy farmers. Those who mentioned livestock concerns were mainly hunters. (In western states, ranching and livestock tend to play a much more prominent role in public discourse.)

In part, I chose this focus out of personal curiosity. After a decade as a vegan with strong anti-hunting sentiments, I became a deer hunter in my early thirties. Since then, a significant

portion of my research and writing has focused on hunting-related matters (e.g., Cerulli, 2011, 2012). Extending these explorations in a new direction, by tracking cultural dimensions of a controversial predator, appealed to me.

In part, I chose this focus out of professional curiosity. In recent years, as a consultant and presenter, I have often found myself moving among various social and cultural camps, helping people gain insight into hunting- and conservation-related issues. Deepening my understanding of hunting communities' varied understandings of predators was therefore attractive.

In part, I chose this focus because of common cultural stereotypes of hunters as enemies of predators. Such stereotypes—which encompass political assumptions, and which are frequently perpetuated both by the mainstream media and by participants in conflicts—hold, for instance, that proposals to delist wolves “[prompt] howls of protest from environmentalists and congressional Democrats” but “[give] ranchers, hunters and Republican lawmakers reason to cheer” (Chebium, 2013). From personal and professional experience, I knew in general that hunters' predator-related values and beliefs are diverse and nuanced, that “pigeonholing hunters can be as difficult and foolhardy as stereotyping ‘the environmentalist,’” and that “some of the most ardent wolf and wilderness advocates hunt” (Nie, 2003, p. 58). From acquaintances and friends, I knew in particular that hunters in the western Great Lakes region understand wolves in diverse ways. As recently as the late 1990s, survey responses in Wisconsin indicated that 78 percent of those with at least some hunting experience felt it was “either somewhat or extremely important to protect rare predators” (Wisconsin Wolf Plan, p. 68). In choosing to conduct this study, I aimed to illuminate such diversity and nuance.

In part, I chose this focus because I see two barriers between the social sciences and wildlife conservation, and believe that both must be overcome. First, although social scientists have long studied human-nature relations, many have tended to ignore or disparage contemporary hunting in the United States, with critical analyses predominating. With notable exceptions,

scholars have paid hunting little ethnographic attention. As a result, hunting communities' discourses and values have not been examined as closely as warranted. By way of this project, I want to suggest that modern hunting communities must be approached with the kind of interpretive commitment afforded traditional hunting communities by anthropology and related disciplines.

Second, in the field of wildlife conservation, much examination of human values has been confined to quantitative subfields of "human dimensions" research. I want to encourage inclusion of greater contributions from qualitative social sciences, suggesting that increased interpretive study of values is essential to effective wildlife conservation. From water quality legislation to critical habitat preservation, from eradication efforts to the Endangered Species Act, from removal of federal protection for some species (e.g., wolves) to continued protection for others (e.g., eagles), all decisions about fish and wildlife conservation are rooted in sometimes-conflicting human values and the communication of those values.

Finally, and in a closely related vein, I chose this focus because hunters' values and beliefs—deeply rooted in history, identity, intergroup relations, and senses of place—are consequential for predators and for wildlife more broadly. One reason is that effective conservation depends on meaningful collaboration among disparate players, requiring the reconciliation of complex, deep-seated social conflicts among organizations, social and cultural groups, and state, federal, and tribal governments (Madden & McQuinn, 2014).

A second reason is that, through license purchases and excise taxes, hunters have long supplied the majority of funding for most state wildlife agencies. Non-hunting wildlife advocates, as well as some hunters, have questioned both the fiscal soundness and the propriety of a funding model so dependent on hunters (and anglers). This model is sometimes characterized as incompatible with the so-called "public trust doctrine," which holds that wildlife resources are held in trust for all citizens. The arrangement generates political tensions, especially in relation to predators. With costs outstripping revenues, it also faces imminent change. As the funding base

broadens, a central challenge will be to shift agency priorities without alienating hunters (Bruskotter,ENZler & Treves, 2011; Cerulli, 2013; Jacobson et al., 2010; Nie, 2003, 2004; Treves et al., 2015).

Problems inherent in such a funding model were, incidentally, foreseen by Aldo Leopold and fellow members of the Committee on Game Policy of the American Game Association, who wrote in 1930 that it was necessary to “*recognize the non-shooting protectionist and the scientist as sharing with sportsmen and landowners the responsibility for conservation of wild life as a whole*” and to “*insist on a joint conservation program, jointly formulated and jointly financed,*” with “public funds from general taxation [paying] for all betterments serving wild life as a whole” and “sportsmen [paying] for all betterments serving game alone” (“Report to the American Game Conference,” emphasis in original).

If we are to facilitate a positive future for wildlife and wildlife conservation, we need greater insight into how hunters symbolically construct their relationships with nature and animals, including predators. Studying battles like the one still fought over wolves in the western Great Lakes region, we need to understand the dueling dynamics at play, and listen for the multifaceted truths and potential mediating forces often drowned out by polarized rhetoric.

In his analysis of a land-use debate that pitted “locals” against “outsiders,” Carbaugh (1996b) observed that bringing people together required that one “be willing or able to understand not only one’s own [discursive] code, but moreover to speak in terms of both codes—and to create hybrid codes—forcefully, in order to give each its due” (p. 185). That is my overarching hope and aim in doing this research and writing this dissertation: to help people hear each other more deeply and understand others’ ways of speaking and thinking, so that they may, perhaps, begin to speak in and on one another’s terms, opening up the possibility of bridging and common ground.

In this project, I seek to give forceful voice to several distinct discourses which often sound incompatible and even irreconcilable. I then offer a few tentative suggestions and questions

concerning relations among them and, more widely, among other prominent predator-related discourses.

As this project neared completion, I shared several draft chapters with interviewees and others familiar with the Great Lakes wolf situation. One of those, a hunter from Wisconsin, on reading my interpretation of a discourse which dramatically opposed and challenged his ways of thinking and speaking, e-mailed me, saying: “Now I better understand why some of those people think the way they do, and that somehow makes empathy and understanding a little easier.” If this project helps others gain similar insight, I will be grateful.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This dissertation is topically related to a vast array of literature—on wolves, wolf-human relationships, intercultural relationships, and hunting—across many disciplines. In addition, it is theoretically and methodologically related to a wide range of literature in cultural communication, sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, speech codes theory, and cultural discourse analysis.

This review focuses on the several sets of literature most closely related to this study, especially those which share both related topical concerns and methodological approaches. These sets of literature have origins in the subfield of environmental communication, in ethnographic investigations of relationships between Euro-Americans and American Indians (especially in connection with nature), and in ethnographic investigations of Euro-American and indigenous (especially Ojibwe) understandings of nature, animals, and hunting. The broader theoretically and methodologically related corpus of work—particularly in the ethnography of communication (EC) and cultural discourse analysis (CuDA)—is discussed in Chapter III, where I address this study’s framework.

A. Environmental communication

Various studies in the subfield of environmental communication have explored subjects closely related to this dissertation. A number of environmental communication scholars have, for instance, examined boundaries between humans and non-human nature. Corbett (2006), for example, devoted a chapter to “communicating the meaning of animals,” with a subsection on predators including wolves and cougars and their perceived relationships with favored game species such as deer. Milstein (2008, 2011) employed EC in exploring human/nature interactions in a wildlife tourism setting. Schutten (2008) discussed the film *Grizzly Man* and proposed that

the discomfort it evokes in viewers is linked to how it challenges the nature/culture binary, as the human protagonist ends up as prey and food. Similarly, a textual analysis by Cassidy and Mills (2012) examined media treatments of two infants in East London being attacked by “urban foxes.” Drawing on phenomenology and study of Nez Perce discourse concerning wolf reintroduction in Idaho, Salvador and Clarke (2011) proposed integrating embodied experience into rhetorical analyses in environmental communication research, with the goal of moving beyond symbolic/material dualisms. In various ways, each of these studies raises the question of human/animal boundaries and their construction.

Other scholars have examined indigenous cultural perspectives and practices concerning human relationships with nature. Rowe’s (2008) rhetorical analysis examined news coverage of Mattaponi Indians’ opposition to the creation of a reservoir. Rowe noted that media focused attention on the species of particular concern (the shad) rather than on the values represented by the shad for the Mattaponi. Employing the rhetorical concept of synecdoche (a part representing a whole; see Burke, 1969), she noted that a single species can represent conflicting cultural realities because of the varied connotations assigned to the species by different stakeholders.

Also employing synecdoche and in more direct connection with this dissertation, Clarke (1999) examined controversy over the 1995 reintroduction of wolves to Idaho, devoting particular attention to the clash between Euro-American opponents of the reintroduction and Nez Perce supporters. Euro-American opponents, Clarke argued, viewed the wolf-reintroduction program as a manifestation of “environmentalism in general, which is a threat to the economic progress and the liberty and lifestyle of the American farmer.” For Nez Perce supporters, in contrast, the program was an indicator of “cultural resurgence and environmental wholeness” (p. 124).

In her exploration of indigenous understandings of rivers in New Zealand, Tipa (2009) employed CuDA, noting that almost all water management methods are based on Western science techniques that emphasize physical, chemical, and biological criteria, rather than cultural values and needs. Further, drawing on Carbaugh and Rudnick’s (2006) work on Blackfeet place-naming

and storytelling, Tipa argued for the value and potential of a sustainability assessment method that encompasses social and cultural values.

In a related rhetorical analysis, Endres (2012) discussed the role of values in public participation concerning proposed storage of nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain. In particular, she noted that the dominant model for such participation lacks any viable means for discussion of competing values. Lack of such discussion, she argued, prevents meaningful and effective participation by American Indians.

The four studies above have particular resonance with my proposed research, as they variously deal not only with cultural perspectives and communication practices but also with particular species and associated cultural values, interactions between indigenous cultural values and Western science, and indigenous cultural values in the context of public participation processes.

Other studies in the subfield of environmental communication are closely related to this dissertation in that they employ the same methodological and theoretical frameworks. As noted above, Milstein (2008, 2011) employed EC and Tipa (2009) employed CuDA. Additionally, Carbaugh employed EC, cultural communication, and speech codes theory in his examinations of a land-use controversy in western Massachusetts (1996b), Finnish relationships with nature and a U.S. American discourse of wildness (1996a), and a mythic form of Blackfeet cultural narrative that treats the landscape, people, and spiritual life as intimately connected (1999). Morgan (2002, 2003) also employed these frameworks in analyzing discourses of place and water, and exploring how aspects of nature function in communicative terms. Cerulli (2011) employed CuDA in exploring adult-onset hunters' talk about hunting, as did Carbaugh and Cerulli (2013) in discussing cultural discourses of dwelling and place-based communication practices. In short, this study is linked to specific sub-portions of environmental communication, both by method (e.g., EC, CuDA) and by topical foci (e.g., indigenous perspectives and practices, human/nature boundaries).

B. Ethnography of communication on Euro/Native relations

This dissertation is also linked to EC investigations of relationships between Euro-Americans and American Indians, especially where land and nature are involved. In one related study, Hall (1994) explored the conflict between Ojibwe people and Euro-Americans over the former's assertion of treaty rights related to spearfishing for walleye in the western Great Lakes region. Hall found that "rights" functioned as a key symbol in both communities. Among whites,³ Ojibwe fishing practices and treaty rights were symbolically constructed in terms of inequality: a special-interest-group denial of individual rights, such rights being constructed as a matter of equitable, personal freedom to pursue self-sufficiency and material well-being. Among Ojibwe, their fishing practices and treaty rights were symbolically constructed in terms of identity: a symbol of who they are as Ojibwe people and an affirmation of their collective rights, such rights being constructed as a matter of a collective way of life involving various relationships and responsibilities.

In another related study, Carbaugh and Rudnick (2006) explored dueling cultural discourses at the border of the Blackfeet Reservation and Glacier National Park. The focal genre here was "tour talk" and the focal practices were place-naming and storytelling. The authors examined how places are identified in naming and storytelling practices, what symbolic meanings are constructed, and how people are discursively situated in those places and in relation to those meanings. In tendencies of practice among non-Native tour guides (toward discourses of science, scenic splendor, natural resources, discovery, and nation-building) and among Blackfeet guides (toward discourses of a traditional homeland, sacred places, and a continued history of difficulty with white settlers and officials), discursive identity boundaries are presumed and created, especially as they are mapped onto symbolically constructed landscapes. This study devoted

³ In this dissertation, I have opted to use "white" and "Euro-American" interchangeably.

attention to mythic narratives, as did Carbaugh's (2001) earlier interpretation of storytelling as a resource for contemporary Blackfeet living.

C. American Indian understandings of animals

Another set of literature related to this dissertation focuses on Ojibwe (and other American Indian) understandings of animals. In a classic anthropological essay on Ojibwe ontology, for instance, Hallowell (1960) wrote of a categorical understanding of "persons" that includes not only humans but also a wide range of other beings, including animals, stones, thunder, and the sun, all of which are understood to be communicative. Hallowell noted that the web of social relations (and moral values and obligations) within which humans live and act extends beyond humans to these other beings.

Philosophical and linguistic examinations of Ojibwe narratives and worldviews (e.g., Callicott, 1989; Overholt & Callicott, 1982) have similarly noted that the identity category of "person" extends beyond humans. Here, the defining characteristic of personhood is not human form but rather the ability and willingness to enter into social relationships. In an ethnographic examination of communication, Valentine (1995) indicated that Ojibwe "legends" are identified as stories temporally located in a time when humans could understand the animals, and that human-animal communication continues today, though primarily in the spiritual realm or dream world, rather than in face-to-face interaction. Morrison (2000) employed the notion of interpersonal interaction among human and other-than-human persons in exploring how the beings commonly glossed as "spirits" can be understood in various American Indian (and especially Ojibwe) realities. Drawing both on his own anthropological fieldwork among the Kluane in the Southwest Yukon and on literature concerning the Ojibwe and other hunting peoples, Nadasdy (2007) argued that serious consideration of aboriginal ontology is warranted; in particular, he argued for a reconsideration of hunting cultures' accounts of human-animal relations as relations among human and animal persons. Other related analyses include those by

Nelson (1983) and Harrod (2000), of American Indian relationships with animals in western Alaska and on the northern Great Plains, respectively.

Though developed across a range of academic disciplines, examinations of human and animal identities can be seen as related to identity literature developed by scholars studying culture and interaction. Barth (1969), for instance, proposed that ethnic and cultural identities are defined by the boundaries drawn and recognized by group members and non-members. Those boundaries entail social processes of exclusion and inclusion—processes that establish and maintain discrete categories. By Barth’s definition, ethnic and cultural groups are categories of (self- and other-) ascription and identification, and can be understood as fields of communication and interaction. Similarly, Carbaugh (1996b) proposed a cultural pragmatic understanding of identity (including not only group identity but also individual identity) as something that people invoke, achieve, and perform by way of interaction and communication. This cultural pragmatic approach suggests various “cultural codes of the agent,” in which the very notion of personhood is variously shaped and variously ascribed to various entities, whether embodied in human form or not. In this sense, the cultural pragmatic approach does not assume a particular typology of persons and identities and relations/interactions among them; rather, it assumes that activities (including the creation and maintenance of identities) take place in communication practices, and proposes that we investigate the nature of such activities where and as they occur.

D. Other literatures

Also relevant are the writings of Ojibwe authors (e.g., Benton-Banai, 1979) concerning their own cultural traditions, including creation stories in which the wolf (*ma'iingan*) plays a central role, especially in interaction and relationship with humans. Though not reviewed here, such material is considered as part of this study’s corpus of data.

Another set of relevant literature encompasses extensive and varied writings concerning wolves. These include a wide range of general audience books (e.g., Lopez, 1978; Steinhart,

1995) as well as texts focused on natural sciences (e.g., Mech, 2012; Mech & Boitani, 2003; Olson, 1938), social sciences (e.g., Dunlap, 1988; Heberlein & Ericsson, 2008; Houston, Bruskotter & Fan, 2010; Kellert, 1985, 1991; Kellert et al., 1996; Marvin, 2012; McIntyre, 1995; Nie, 2003, 2004; Scarce, 1998; Van Horn, 2008), and mixes of the two (e.g., Sharpe, Norton & Donnelley, 2001; Wydeven, Van Deelen & Heske, 2009). Among these, a number of studies have focused on human attitudes toward wolves in the western Great Lakes region (e.g., Hogberg et al., 2015; Kellert, 1985; Lute & Gore, 2014; Schanning, 2009; Treves & Martin, 2011; Treves, Naughton-Treves & Shelley, 2013), and on Ojibwe and Euro-American viewpoints (e.g., David, 2009; Shelley, 2010; Shelley, Treves & Naughton, 2011). Though this broad wolf literature is beyond the scope of this review, a number of these works—especially where they overlap most directly with this study’s central concerns—are referred to in the dissertation and are considered as part of the corpus of data.

More broadly related—given my focus on hunting communities—is the ethnographic literature on Euro-American hunting. In sociology, such work includes Dizard’s (2003) examination of the place of hunting in contemporary U.S. American society. In anthropology, it includes Marks’s (1991) examination of the history and contemporary meanings of hunting in the rural American South, and Boglioli’s (2009) examination of the same in rural Vermont. Of particular note here is Boglioli’s chapter on coyotes, in which he discusses the view held by some hunters: that these four-footed predators are “illegitimate killers” of deer.

It is my hope that this study will contribute something of value to this already rich, vast, and varied literature.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

A. Cultural discourse analysis

This study is conceptualized and conducted within the theoretical and methodological framework of cultural discourse analysis (CuDA). The origins of CuDA can be found in the ethnography of communication (EC), a conceptual framework for analyzing culture as a complex expressive system of communication practices. EC's origins can, in turn, be found in diverse intellectual traditions which, in various ways, have explored relationships among language, culture, symbols, interaction, and meaning. Crucial to the emergence of EC was the attention each of these traditions devoted to situatedness; that is, to the ways in which communication is always situated both within systems and within particular social contexts and scenes. From this perspective, a cultural system can be understood as being made up of symbols, their meanings, and their situated social uses.

EC, originally called the "ethnography of speaking," was first proposed as a program of research by Hymes (1962), drawing together core strands from linguistics and anthropology to initiate a study of speaking. His proposal was that scholars explore speaking as an activity in its own right, including variations (by group and community) in the structures, functions, uses, and social rules of speech. He proposed that primary attention be given to the investigation of how communication is shaped in social contexts.

A decade later, Hymes (1972) offered programmatic specifics. He proposed a set of social units for analysis, including speech events, speech acts, speech situations, and speech communities. He also proposed the mnemonic SPEAKING, referring to a set of components which could be employed in studying those units: S (setting/scene), P (participants), E (ends, both intended and achieved), A (acts and act sequences), K (key or tone), I (instruments or channels), N (norms for interaction and interpretation), G (genre).

In recent decades, EC has developed into a comprehensive philosophy, theory, and methodology which are fundamentally investigative, exploratory, and interpretive. Its guiding questions are these: What culturally distinctive means of communication are used in a given context? What are the meanings of such communication to participants? EC's primary goals are descriptive (of communication as used and shaped in the context of a particular case), interpretive (making what was inscrutable and inaudible more readily available for consideration), and comparative (yielding cross-case insights and claims).

EC has been extended in several interrelated directions. Prominent among these directions are cultural communication, speech codes theory, and cultural discourse analysis. Like their progenitor (EC), each of these approaches focuses on distinctive means of communication as used in specific contexts of sociocultural life, and on the meanings of those communication practices for participants.

Cultural communication was proposed as a field of study by Philipsen (1987). Among other foci, the field would attend to how communication functions to balance the forces of individualism and community, by way of the creation and affirmation of shared identity in social life. Cultural communication would also attend to specific forms of communication, including ritual, myth, and social drama.

Carbaugh (1995) provided an overview of EC and cultural communication, noting key theoretical elements, including these assumptions: (1) communication exhibits systemic organization, (2) communication is a sociocultural performance, involving both cultural meaning systems and social organization (meaning that to speak is always to speak both culturally and socially), and (3) communication is constitutive of part (though not all) of sociocultural life. Another key element of these approaches is dual attention to society (including norms, rules for action, and social positions and relations) and to culture (including symbols, symbolic forms, their patterned uses, and interpretations of those symbols, forms, and uses). In EC and cultural communication, symbols and meanings are understood to be historically grounded, culturally

accessible, socially negotiated, and individually applied. Philipsen (2002) further defined and discussed cultural communication as a complex practice encompassing culturally distinctive ways of communicating (including means and meanings) and culturally distinctive ways of performing the communal function (i.e., constituting communal life and providing people with the opportunity to participate in, identify with, and negotiate that life).

Building on EC and cultural communication, Philipsen (1997) offered the first detailed explication of speech codes theory; Philipsen, Coutu, and Covarrubias (2005) offered a subsequent restatement and revision. Speech codes theory provides a theoretical conceptualization of a code as a system of symbols, symbolic forms, norms, and premises (beliefs and values). Each code or system is active in patterns of speaking and distinctive in its means and meanings. Employing this conceptual model, Carbaugh (2005) provided a detailed examination of discursive codes in four cultures, with each code revolving around a focal symbol: the “self” and “self-expression” in American culture, “silence” and quietude in Finnish culture, “soul” and “soul talk” in Russian culture, and “spirit” in Blackfeet culture. In each case, the focal symbol is shown to be tied to particular forms of communicative action and conversation, and also to various premises created and presumed in such actions and interactions.

Cultural discourse analysis (CuDA), in turn, emerged out of cultural communication and speech codes theory, and is conceptually housed within the broader framework of EC. Building on these earlier frameworks, CuDA devotes primary attention to culturally distinctive communication practices and the meaning-making active in them. The approach assumes (1) that people create and use localized communicative means and meanings, (2) that these vary cross-culturally, (3) that these should be investigated and interpreted on and in their own terms, (4) that social life is formed and shaped by communicative practices, and (5) that these expressive practices are rooted in the past, drawing on deeply historical resources and using these resources to create new practices.

CuDA encompasses five distinct but interrelated modes of inquiry: three of which (theoretical, descriptive, and interpretive) are required and two of which (comparative and critical) are optional. In the necessary theoretical mode, the analyst formulates and explicates the conceptual framework guiding the particular study at hand. In the necessary descriptive mode, the analyst investigates, records, and presents multiple instances of communication relevant to the particular study. In the necessary interpretive mode, the analyst identifies and explicates meanings and beliefs active for those participating in the communication practices described. In the optional comparative mode, the analyst examines and provides an account of similarities and differences in these communication practices and underlying meanings and beliefs. In the optional critical mode, the analyst—having already described and interpreted communication practices from participants' viewpoints—evaluates those practices from some explicitly articulated ethical standpoint (Carbaugh, 2007).

As a model for interpretation, CuDA presumes that communicative practices are meaningful to those engaged in them, and that these practices and meanings are deeply rooted in often-unspoken premises about the world and proper action in the world, including beliefs and values concerning people, nature, spirit, and their interrelations. In other words, communication encompasses both explicit and implicit meanings. As people communicate with each other, they are saying things literally about the specific subject being discussed, and they are also saying things culturally, about who they are, how they are related, what they are doing together, how they feel about what is going on, and about the nature of things.

To interpret such meanings, we employ a conceptual model of five discursive hubs and radiants: identity, relationship, action, feeling, and dwelling. In any communication practice, at any given moment, one (or more) of these may be verbally explicit; when, for instance, identity is made verbally explicit, it can be conceptualized as a discursive hub. An explicit hub is only one part of a larger discursive web, however. To understand cultural discourses, we also interpret the taken-for-granted, implicit meanings activated and invoked by such communication; such

meanings can be conceptualized as radiants. Thus, various implicit meanings (e.g., about how one acts, or should act, as a certain kind of person) might radiate from an explicit discursive hub of identity (Carbaugh, 2007, 2010; Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013).

With these hubs and radiants in mind, CuDA analysts can examine participants' communicative practices for *cultural terms* (symbolic key terms), especially as they appear in clusters, and then seek to formulate *cultural propositions* (arrangements of cultural terms that express taken-for-granted views) and *cultural premises* (statements that capture the essence of participants' beliefs). Cultural premises can include both premises of existence (beliefs about what exists) and premises of value (beliefs about what is better or worse) (Carbaugh, 2007). This draws our attention to the fact that, in communicating, we make systematic statements about beliefs and values. That is, cultural discourses are morally infused. In creating and using cultural discourses, we tell ourselves and each other how we should be, relate, act, feel, and dwell.

Note that the phenomena of concern here are discourses, not groups of people. In other words, though communicative and interactional processes are central to the establishment and maintenance of group identities (e.g., ethnic, social), use of a given discourse is not restricted to a single group. Rather, distinctive, morally infused ways of speaking may be—and, as we will hear in this study, sometimes are—employed by members of multiple groups.

B. Research questions in theoretical context

As noted in Chapter I, my overarching research question is this: How do people create and use discourses of wolves? Or, more simply, how do people talk and write about wolves, and what do they mean?

What, for instance, does it mean for some people to say that “the fate of the wolf is closely tied to the fate of all the Ojibwe”? What does it mean for others to say that conservation and wildlife management can and should be separated from “cultural issues”?

As I began to think about these questions in more detail, they suggested others: In these ways of speaking, what (or who) is the wolf? What principles and ethics are said to best guide human interactions with wolves? In what ways do such beliefs differ from one community to another? In what ways might they be similar or resonant? And what implications might insight into these discourses and premises have for scholarly and popular understandings of, and professional practices of, wildlife management, especially in cases involving intercultural conflict?

Guided by the conceptual frameworks of EC and CuDA, this study examines (1) distinctive means of communication used in relation to wolves in specific sociocultural contexts and (2) the meanings of such communication for participants. In particular, it describes and interprets specific instances of these means and meanings among hunting communities in the western Great Lakes region, explores their historical roots, and makes comparisons among them.

The study's primary questions reflect the middle three of CuDA's five modes of inquiry: theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, comparative, and critical (Carbaugh, 2007). The starting point is a descriptive question: How are wolves discussed and verbally represented by participants? The next set of questions is interpretive: How do various communicative means render wolves—and the larger world—meaningful? What links are drawn between wolves and other topics and terms? What cultural logic is used in and created by these discourses? What beliefs and values underpin such logic? What historical roots-of-discourse are explicitly or implicitly referenced? What must be presumed for participants' communicative actions to be coherent? In terms of CuDA's model of five hubs and radiants, additional interpretive questions include these:

- What (or who) is the wolf said to be? Who are the participants said to be? [identity]
- What kind of relationships is it said (should) exist between humans and wolves? [relationship]
- What kinds of (inter)actions are said to occur between humans and wolves? What kinds should occur? [action]

- How are humans said to feel about wolves? How is it said they should feel? [emotion]
- What parts is it said that humans and wolves play (or should play) in the natural world? [dwelling]

The final set of questions is comparative: In what ways do these communicative means and meanings, and the underpinning beliefs and values, vary? In what ways are they consistent? How do these discourses interact with one another, dueling, resonating, or in other dynamics?

Broadly speaking, these questions orient the study toward the explication of cultural logics through the investigation of communicative means and meanings. By attending to each hub and radiant, these questions tune the analysis to a range of dimensions, assuring that the prominence of one does not obscure the role and importance of others. They assure, for example, that despite the prominence of action-specific language and terms (e.g., “management”) in dominant public discourse, the study also attends (1) to how such discourse is rooted in other, less immediately audible ideas (e.g., about the identity of the wolf) and (2) to how other, less dominant discourses (e.g., Ojibwe discourse) are rooted in fundamentally different central concerns and ideas (e.g., about the history of white/Indian relations). Guided by these questions, the overall study—framed by CuDA—adds new dimensions of cultural voice(s) and analyses to the aforementioned literatures on environmental communication, on Euro/Native relations, on American Indian understandings of animals, on wolves, and on hunting. By attending to cultural discourses as historically transmitted expressive systems, the study puts distinct ways of speaking in larger contexts, each evolving over time (in the past, present, and future) and in relation to one another.

More specifically, each hub/radiant-focused question above serves particular purposes:

- Asking what (or who) the wolf is said to be draws our attention to a frequently overlooked dimension of wildlife-related discourses and analyses thereof: the identity of animals. Asking who participants are said to be draws our attention not only to social and cultural identity (which is sometimes considered in nature- and wolf-related scholarship) but also more particularly to ways in which such identity is communicatively created and shaped.

- Asking what kind of relationships it is said (should) exist between humans and wolves draws our attention to conceptualizations made explicit in some discourses and literatures (e.g., concerning human-wolf coexistence) and left largely implicit in others (e.g., concerning wolf management).
- Asking what kinds of (inter)actions are said to occur, and should occur, between humans and wolves draws our attention to actions by wolves, actions by humans, interactions between the two, and related cultural understandings and beliefs as they are communicated. These culturally-specific understandings and beliefs (e.g., about “predation” and “depredation”; about what “management” means as a program of action) are not often made explicitly scrutable in wolf- and other wildlife-related literatures.
- Asking how humans are said to feel about wolves, and how it is said they should feel, draws our attention to emotional dimensions of wolf-related discourses. These dimensions play critical (and sometimes conspicuously muted) roles in these discourses, and do so in ways more subtle than the stereotyped contest of wolf-hater-versus-wolf-lover.
- Asking what parts it is said that humans and wolves play (or should play) in the natural world draws our attention to broad ideas often investigated in literatures concerning humans and the larger-than-human world. In this study, our attention is drawn to these ideas as part of multiple, distinct discursive webs, each also encompassing the other four hubs and radiants.

Subsequently, asking cross-discourse comparative questions—about similarities, differences, and relations among communicative means, meanings, beliefs, and values—helps us hear commonalities, contrasts, and interactive dynamics with greater clarity. This sort of comparison, particularly across distinct discourses created and used by hunting communities, is a new addition to the aforementioned literatures. It will, I hope, provide helpful insight and suggest new avenues and possibilities for participants, practitioners, and scholars alike.

C. Data collection

As already indicated, this study is focused on communication. It asks how actual language-based communication practices are used to render the world meaningful, especially with regard to wolves. In other words, the study’s primary data are instances of verbal communication as they occur: things people actually say and write.

As also indicated, my broadly defined research site is the western Great Lakes region of the United States, primarily Minnesota and Wisconsin. More particularly, this dissertation is focused on the communication practices of various communities involved in hunting, especially deer hunting. Primary participants thus include people from Ojibwe hunting communities, people from Euro-American hunting communities, leaders of hunting organizations, and others variously involved with hunting and hunting-related institutions, including state wildlife agencies. Thus, the data of primary interest and relevance are instances of wolf-related communication as they occur among various hunting communities in this region.

Data collection began with my first trip to Stevens Point in July 2012. There, I audio-recorded the day-long meeting of the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board (approximately 100 participants), using an Edirol R-09HR recorder, and also took handwritten field notes which I later typed into my laptop. As it happened, the nonprofit channel WisconsinEye video-recorded the meeting and made the material available online; WisconsinEye's archives offer invaluable resources for anyone interested in Badger State politics. From that starting point, I pursued multiple avenues of further data collection.

First, I made additional digital audio-recordings—and also video-recordings using a Canon PowerShot SX50—of various events in the region from 2012 through 2014. These events included a wolf conference hosted on the White Earth Reservation (8 hours; approximately 100 participants), the International Wolf Symposium (3 days; approximately 450 participants), an Ojibwe-organized wolf-hunt protest (2 hours; approximately 60 participants), the annual Midwest Wolf Stewards conference (2 days; approximately 75 participants), and three presentations and discussions at the annual conference of The Wildlife Society (3 hours total; approximately 300 participants). In each case, I took handwritten field notes which I later typed into my laptop. Where public events are referred to in the chapters that follow, most speakers' names are used.

Second, via the Internet and archive requests, I gathered video recordings of three public events I was unable to attend: two panel discussions hosted by the Center for Ethics and Public

Policy at the University of Minnesota-Duluth (2 hours each; 5 panelists each; audience size unknown), and a lecture delivered at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point by a representative of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (1 hour; audience size unknown).

Third, I conducted in-depth interviews with 25 participants in the region. These interviews—which ranged in duration from 38 to 105 minutes—were primarily conducted in person, though three were conducted by phone. Interview participants included five employees of state Departments of Natural Resources, eight representatives of Ojibwe communities and governments, four representatives of nonprofit hunting-related organizations, and eight individual hunters active in hunting and conservation matters. Each came to my attention as a result of their personal, cultural, political, or professional involvement and interest in regional wolf issues.

All interview participants were offered informed-consent forms which were pre-approved by the Department of Communication's Human Subjects Review Committee. Written and/or verbal permission for interview use was obtained from each participant. As part of the informed consent process, I committed to making every effort to prevent public identification of participants' identities. Except in cases where participants expressed a desire to be identified, names are omitted in the chapters that follow.

In twenty cases, interviews were audio-recorded; in five cases, where requesting permission to audio-record did not seem appropriate, detailed interview notes were handwritten and subsequently typed into my laptop. Interviews were semi-structured, so that important topic areas would be addressed while allowing participants' own thoughts, ideas, and terms to emerge. Though I employed an interview guide (see Appendix A), its questions were used only as a general framework. Many interviewees spoke at length with little prompting. Depending on how each conversation progressed, most questions proved unnecessary or needed to be asked in a different way, sometimes with reference to earlier parts of the conversation. Often, unanticipated lines of conversation opened up, requiring entirely new questions.

Fourth, I engaged in informal conversation with more than 100 participants in a wide variety of settings, including the events mentioned above. Details of these sometimes brief but often illuminating interactions were handwritten and subsequently typed into my laptop.

Fifth, I gathered a range of texts related to wolves in the region. These included 94 articles and letters published online or in *Wisconsin Outdoor News*, *Minnesota Outdoor News*, and *Michigan Outdoor News* (which I photographed from the bound archives stored at the *Outdoor News* office near Minneapolis), 62 examples of written testimony submitted to government entities (obtained online and by request), text from 14 relevant websites, 28 newspaper and magazine articles, 8 wolf management plans (from Wisconsin, Minnesota, and six Ojibwe communities), and 9 books on wolf recovery and management. Books aside, these texts totaled approximately 540 pages.

When I began considering this research site and topic, the geographic distance between the western Great Lakes region and my home in Vermont gave me pause. And the distance did prove to be a challenge. For various reasons, it was not feasible for me to spend an extended amount of time in region. But I was able to make six trips, totaling nine weeks on the ground there. Those weeks yielded twenty-two of my in-depth interviews, audio- and video-recordings of events, informal conversation, and event observation. They also yielded archival materials including the *Outdoor News* texts mentioned above.

In total, my primary data included the following:

- 26 hours of in-depth interviews audio-recorded by me,
- 64 hours of events audio- and video-recorded by me,
- 14 hours of audio- and video-recordings by others,
- more than 100 hours of informal conversation and observation,
- 96 pages of single-spaced typed field notes, and
- several hundred pages of text produced by others.

D. Data analysis

In their sheer volume, these data seemed daunting at times. Knowing this challenge first-hand, my adviser reminded me to tune my ear—when in the field and also when reviewing data—toward participants’ vantage points, toward what those people living and speaking in these situations would prioritize amidst all the terms, phrases, symbols, ideas, and meanings at play. This was my guiding principle in sifting through data, aiming as I was to give participants’ views and interpretations their due. Consequently, though all data contributed to my understandings, not all are directly used or quoted in the chapters that follow.

I started in a descriptive mode, transcribing all recorded interviews and events at the topic level, creating descriptive outlines of each, noting topics discussed. Still in a descriptive mode, I then sought to identify and make note of apparent patterns of communicative practice concerning these topics. Then, shifting toward interpretation, I began to review these descriptive transcriptions and notes, my field notes, and the written texts I had gathered, seeking to elucidate recurrent themes and meanings in these patterns of practice. Over the months, as I watched, listened, and reviewed, I began to recognize the recurrence of certain patterns of talk: certain broad, as-yet-vaguely-defined patterns of practice (e.g., the repeated use of specific terms and phrases) and meaning. Simultaneously, I was struck by the great diversity in talk, not only among different participants but also among utterances made by each individual.

As I began to wrestle with this complexity, I decided that one important step toward understanding the patterns I was hearing was to conceptualize practices and meanings as being clustered around themes that were central for participants. In the transcriptions, notes, and texts, I identified particular segments where participants’ speech appeared to constellate around such themes, and began to examine these segments for terms which appeared to play key symbolic roles. Identification of these terms helped refine my tentative map of prominent themes apparent in hunting communities’ verbal depictions of wolves and human-wolf relations.

For example, in transcribing interviews and events, and in reviewing texts, I described and noted how programs of human action toward wolves were verbally depicted, and how the term “management” was frequently employed in such depictions. Shifting toward interpretation, I noted other terms, phrases, and clusters of terms and phrases which often co-occurred with it (e.g., “endangered species recovery,” “depredation control,” “predator control”). Proceeding further with interpretation, I investigated how various uses of “management” were, in specific instances of communication, linked to these and other central terms and phrases and used to shape and express values and meanings central to one or more discourses.

Where necessary, I returned to a descriptive mode, making verbatim transcriptions of the most relevant segments of audio- and video-recordings. At this stage, in identifying themes, in mapping them, and in choosing what to transcribe in detail, I was already making analytic choices.

For all spoken utterances (e.g., interview or event excerpts) which are (1) more than several words long and (2) analyzed in any depth, I employ a transcription style informed by ethnopoetics (Hymes, 2003). The aim is to draw attention to cultural features and meanings. Such excerpts are readily identified, as they appear in Courier font and not in typical paragraph form. Line breaks typically indicate pauses, though longer utterances are sometimes wrapped to the next line out of necessity. Indentations draw attention to parallel constructions and illustrate narrative and conceptual structures. Stanza breaks draw attention to larger shifts (e.g., in time, setting, character, or topic). The intent is to give the reader a sense of the rhythms and patterns of speech and to make certain features more readily available for consideration and analysis. Briefer spoken excerpts as well as some analyzed in less depth are presented as in-text quotes without the use of this ethnopoetic transcription style, though I employ a forward slash to indicate where line breaks would occur using the ethnopoetic approach. Excerpts from written texts are also presented as in-text quotes and block quotes, without use of any transcription style.

Referring both to the detailed transcripts and to the thematic map, I then began to formulate a more detailed interpretive map, articulating the range of meanings apparently audible in the clusters of terms and phrases identified, and the relationships within and among these clusters. At this stage, I began to formulate cultural propositions using participants' own words. (This dissertation makes extensive use of quotation marks, indicating that a term, phrase, or excerpt comes directly from a primary data source. They are not intended as so-called scare quotes, which convey irony or skepticism.)

I then began to ask what must be presumed—for instance, about being, relating, acting, feeling, or dwelling—for participants' speech and writing to be coherent. Here, my aim was to formulate cultural premises, abstract statements that captured the essence of the terms and propositions identified. I also sought to discover how participants' speech invoked history, actively employing it in discourse, and how their talk might be part of a “historically transmitted expressive system” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 169).

Tacking back and forth—between my broad thematic map and detailed analyses of terms, propositions, and premises—I formulated a model of four prominent and distinctive cultural discourses among regional hunting communities. In each discourse, I recognized some substantial variations, most of which I heard as sufficiently compatible to constitute variations within a single discourse. In one case, however, I eventually concluded that I was hearing patterns sufficiently distinct to warrant treatment as separate discourses.

Thus, the four chapters that follow encompass five discourses: a discourse of *population conservation and management*, two discourses of *predator control*, a discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, and a discourse of *cohabitation*. Though not inclusive of every way of speaking about wolves in deer hunting communities in the western Great Lakes region, these discourses provide what I hope is a useful framework for developing an overall understanding of diverse verbal depictions.

Throughout the process of analysis, I regularly returned to the primary data—for instance, setting aside line-by-line transcriptions in favor of watching or listening to recordings—and also to the results of earlier phases of analysis. In these cyclical returns, I asked whether my interpretive analyses might require improvement in order to be faithful to the patterns of meaning apparent in participants' own meanings and their interactional contexts.

Once confident in my interpretive analyses—as confident as I could get in such an endeavor, at any rate—I shifted into a comparative mode. Here, I focused on identifying similarities, connections, and overlaps, as well as distinctive differences, among the five discourses. I also sought to identify dynamics apparent among them.

The next four chapters examine the five discourses in turn. In each chapter—employing careful analysis, hopefully without bogging the reader down in painstaking detail—I have sought to show how my understanding of a way of speaking developed. In each, I use various data to demonstrate both the patterns that came to my attention and the meaningfulness of those patterns for participants. In these primarily interpretive chapters, I make a few explicitly comparative observations. These four chapters—investigating several wolf-related discourses in sequence—are also intended to be comparative in a more implicit way, offering the reader opportunities to hear commonalities and differences. Following these chapters, I move on to a few more explicit comparative and inter-discursive considerations and, finally, to concluding remarks.

In writing these chapters, and considering new details and connections, I often found it necessary to return to and revise prior analyses. Once I had completed and edited full drafts of the following chapters, I sent them to people (including some interviewees) with longtime, firsthand experience of these matters in the western Great Lakes region. In particular, I asked people who, as I heard it, employed a given discourse to reflect and comment on my description and interpretation of that discourse. Their feedback was invaluable in confirming and refining my analyses, and is occasionally noted in the final text that follows.

As clearly as possibly, I hope to draw the reader's attention to how this study was conducted and to the conceptual moves I made in the process. The discourses identified are my formulations; they are artifacts of analysis. Though I hope to demonstrate that my conceptualizations are useful, I invite the reader to utilize them only to the degree that they help to deepen understandings, taking advantage of my articulations only to the degree that they are helpful as guideposts.

E. Onward

As noted earlier, this study focuses on ways of speaking that (1) address wolves and wolf-human relations, (2) prominently depict deer hunting as an accepted practice, and (3) have been audible in the western Great Lakes region in recent years. The scene, as already described, involves the removal of the region's wolves from the federal endangered species list at the beginning of 2012. Shortly thereafter, Wisconsin and Minnesota—the two states from which the vast majority of this study's data were gathered—established wolf hunting and trapping seasons to begin that autumn. (A small subset of this study's data was gathered from Michigan, where wolf seasons were established in 2013.) These events elicited public comment and engagement from a wide range of social and cultural voices. These included voices from the hunting communities of central concern in this study: the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, hunting-oriented non-profit organizations such as the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association and the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Ojibwe communities across the region, and the region's deer hunters more broadly.

As also noted, early stages of data analysis led me to formulate a model of four prominent and distinctive wolf-related cultural discourses; in later stages, I divided one of the four in two, for a final total of five. Four of these discourses loosely correlate with communities mentioned above: (1) the discourse of *population conservation and management* is drawn from the official discourse of state Departments of Natural Resources, (2) one discourse of *predator*

control is drawn in part from a discourse employed by certain non-profit organizations (e.g., the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association), (3) the other discourse of *predator control* is drawn from the discourse of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, and (4) the discourse of *kinship and shared fates* is drawn from a discourse employed by many Ojibwe people and communities. The fifth discourse—that of *coinhabitation*—is not apparently represented by a particular institutional entity in the region, but is audibly created and used by some deer hunters there. All five discourses can be, and are at times, employed by a variety of individuals, inside and outside these institutions, organizations, and communities. An individual hunter and biologist who works for a state Department of Natural Resources, for instance, may use the official discourse of *population conservation and management* in certain circumstances and utterances, and may use a discourse of *predator control* or of *coinhabitation* in other circumstances and utterances.

The next four chapters (IV-VII) describe and interpret these discourses, with a few brief and occasional shifts into an explicitly comparative mode. In these chapters, I describe more than I interpret; as I shift from description to interpretation, in other words, the scope narrows. I hope readers will find described-but-not-interpreted data portions worthy of consideration. After those four chapters, the next (VIII) shifts into a more explicitly comparative mode, though a few new data are introduced there as well.

Versions of the first discourse examined (*population conservation and management*) are dominant in many contemporary, public discussions of wolves and other wildlife in the United States. As a dominant discourse, this way of speaking about wolves and other wildlife sets the terms and context for other ways of speaking about them. I therefore present it first.

I have arranged the subsequent three chapters in order of what I have perceived as decreasing public prominence. Those discourses presented later are by no means less interesting or less worthy; on the contrary, I think they have much to offer. But among hunting communities' various discourses concerning wolves, they have been, to my ear, less publicly audible.

CHAPTER IV

“MAINTAINING A HEALTHY VIABLE POPULATION”: A DISCOURSE OF CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter investigates a discourse which depicts the wolf as a population to be conserved and managed. Drawing on state wolf management plans, instances of public talk, interviews, and other data, I describe and interpret this discourse, which has been central to state wildlife agencies’ engagement with the public regarding wolves in the western Great Lakes region in recent years. My aim is to describe and interpret the discourse’s central discursive features, making its cultural logic and underlying values more audible and more readily available for consideration.

The discourse examined here is institutional: an official way of speaking and writing employed by representatives of state Departments of Natural Resources in this case, and by others in other cases (e.g., representatives of federal agencies, academic institutions, NGOs). Those who employ this discourse in professional, public settings may, and often do, employ other discourses in other settings, speaking privately, for example, of their personal experiences with wolves or of their perspectives as hunters.

This discourse is linked to and shaped by other and larger discourses: scientific and professional discourses of wildlife management and conservation biology; related legal and legislative discourses; political discourses which vary from state to state and administration to administration (e.g., Minnesota and the Dayton administration; Wisconsin and the Walker administration); discourses employed by diverse participants in “stakeholder engagement” processes concerning endangered species, game species, predators, and so forth. In this chapter, I focus more narrowly on primary forms of expression employed by state representatives in public documents and public presentations, on primary terms and concepts in those forms of expression, and—briefly—on their historical roots.

Matters of particular and interrelated concern in this discourse include the following:

- endangered species recovery and conservation;
- maintenance of viable wolf populations;
- the need to address wolf-human conflicts, especially livestock depredation;
- the delineation of suitable wolf habitat in relation to human land-use patterns;
- management and stewardship of wolf populations;
- the wolf's relationship to valued game species (e.g., deer);
- the potential for making the wolf itself a valued game species.

My goals are to describe the shape of this discourse and interpret the cultural logic of “conservation” and “management” both presumed and created when this discourse is used.

A. “The goal of this management plan”

This chapter begins with brief excerpts from the all-day meeting of the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board which I attended in Stevens Point in July 2012, and from the Wisconsin and Minnesota wolf management plans. I start here because these are prime examples of the kind of public presentations and public documents in which this discourse is employed, and in which its main forms of expression are audible.

When the wolf issue was introduced at the meeting in Stevens Point, the first person to speak was Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI-DNR) Land Division Administrator Kurt Thiede. He spoke only briefly, mentioning—among other things—that “much has been invested in a successful recovery of the gray wolf” and that WI-DNR’s “goal remains to assure that we have a viable and sustainable population of wolves in Wisconsin for future generations.” Thiede ended by introducing Bill Vander Zouwen, WI-DNR’s Wildlife Ecology Section Chief.

Vander Zouwen proceeded to set the stage for the day's meeting, providing context in historical, legal, and scientific terms. After brief introductory remarks, he spoke of the reason for the day's meeting.

the real reason we're here is really not Act 169⁴
it's the incredible story of the wolf
the wolf population has recovered in the state
it came in from Minnesota
quite a few years ago
didn't do real well for a long time
and then started to increase
and we started realizing
hey we need a wolf management plan
and back in 1999 the board did approve a plan
for wolves
set a population goal of 350
above which there could be control actions
whether depredation controls or
public hunting
and we've been at 350 or higher since 2004

As we begin to explore this discourse concerning wolves and wolf-human relations, this opening statement offers a helpful starting point.

Similarly helpful is the introduction to the 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan mentioned by Vander Zouwen. It states that “these guidelines provide a conservation strategy for maintaining a healthy viable population of gray wolves in the state, and contribute toward national recovery, while addressing problems that may occur with wolf depredation on livestock or pets” (p. 8). The 2001 Minnesota Wolf Management Plan includes a closely related statement: “The goal of this management plan is to ensure the long-term survival of wolves in Minnesota while addressing wolf-human conflicts that inevitably result when wolves and people live in the same vicinity . . . In particular, the plan addresses wolf conservation concerns in the areas of

⁴ This was the act of the Wisconsin legislature that required wolf hunting and trapping seasons in 2012. The act also determined many of the parameters for those seasons, including season dates and harvest methods: details traditionally determined by WI-DNR. Left to the NRB and DNR was determination of “wolf harvest zones,” “wolf harvest quotas,” and the maximum number of wolf hunting and trapping licenses to be sold. Act 169's mandate led directly to this July 2012 meeting. Here, Vander Zouwen defines “the real reason” for the meeting in a broader way.

population monitoring and management, depredation management, habitat management, law enforcement, public information and education, research, and program administration” (pp. 17-18).

Though we have little material on the table at this point, we can begin to take initial steps in our analysis. Employing the basic methods of CuDA, we can start by identifying key symbolic terms and clusters thereof. Looking for key terms above, for instance, we find that wolves are prominently and consistently referred to as a “population.” This population is variously depicted as having “recovered,” as needing to remain “healthy,” “viable,” and “sustainable” (at a level that ensures long-term “survival”), and as causing “problems” and “conflicts” with humans. Various past and potential human actions toward wolves are also mentioned, including “conservation,” “management,” and “control.” In beginning to tease out the semantic logic of this discourse, we can consider these clusters of terms one at a time.

B. “Recovery”

In spoken remarks above, and in Wisconsin’s 1999 wolf management plan, it is said that local “recovery” of the gray wolf “population” has been “successful,” even “incredible,” that much human effort has been “invested” in this recovery, and that this is intended to contribute to “national recovery.” As used here, what meanings and values does “recovery” invoke?

Though a complete history of the term’s usage in relation to wildlife species is beyond the scope of this chapter, we can gain insight by reviewing historical uses closely linked to this particular scene. For example, Wisconsin’s 1999 plan refers to the state’s “recovery plan”—and to its wolf population having “recovered from an endangered status”—in the historical context of the wolf having been listed “as a Federally Endangered Species in 1967 . . . [and] in 1974 under provisions of the 1973 Endangered Species Act” (p. 8). Similarly, the Minnesota Wolf Management Plan of 2001 opens with references to the wolf having been “given full protection in 1974 by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA)” and to the plan’s “ultimate goal” being to

“exceed the population guidelines set forth in the 1992 federal Recovery Plan for the Eastern Timber Wolf, and have the subspecies removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened species because of its successful recovery” (p. 9).

These uses of the term “recovery” situate state discourses in the context of a national discourse closely linked to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA). Let us look briefly at that Act’s findings and purposes. In its opening section, the U.S. Congress found and declared that:

- (1) various species of fish, wildlife, and plants in the United States have been rendered extinct as a consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation;
- (2) other species of fish, wildlife, and plants have been so depleted in numbers that they are in danger of or threatened with extinction;
- (3) these species of fish, wildlife, and plants are of esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people;
- (4) the United States has pledged itself as a sovereign state in the international community to conserve to the extent practicable the various species of fish or wildlife and plants facing extinction, pursuant to [various treaties and agreements]; and
- (5) encouraging the States and other interested parties, through Federal financial assistance and a system of incentives, to develop and maintain conservation programs which meet national and international standards is a key to meeting the Nation’s international commitments and to better safeguarding, for the benefit of all citizens, the Nation’s heritage in fish, wildlife, and plants.

Congress stated the ESA’s purposes as follows:

The purposes of this Act are to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species, and to take such steps as may be appropriate to achieve the purposes of the treaties and conventions set forth in subsection (a) of this section.

The phrase “endangered species” is defined as “any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.” And a “threatened species” is defined as “any

species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.”⁵

The term “recovery” becomes prominent later in the ESA, beginning with this usage: “RECOVERY PLANS.—The Secretary shall develop and implement plans (hereinafter in this subsection referred to as ‘recovery plans’) for the conservation and survival of endangered species and threatened species listed pursuant to this section.” Subsequent uses include further discussion of “recovery plans,” and references to appointment of “recovery teams” and to implementation of a system for monitoring “recovered species”—“species which have recovered to the point at which the measures provided pursuant to this Act are no longer necessary and which, in accordance with the provisions of this section, have been removed from either of the lists published under subsection (c).”

With these excerpts before us, we can begin to build a sense of the meanings and values invoked by the terms “recovery” and “recovered,” as used in the Wisconsin and Minnesota plans and by wildlife officials in these states. In the ESA, for example, we find several key terms and term clusters, including these: “species”; “ecosystems”; “value”; “extinction,” “danger,” and “threat”; “conserve” and “conservation.” We also find “recovery” and “recovered,” of course. Employing these, we can formulate several cultural propositions that express views taken for granted in this discourse:

- Wild “species” have particular kinds of “value,” including “esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific.”
- Human actions, notably “economic growth and development,” have caused and may continue to cause “extinction” of “various species.”

⁵ The phrase “a significant portion of its range” (and how that portion relates to a species being “in danger of extinction”) is not clarified in the ESA and has been extensively debated in and out of court. In June 2014, the USFWS announced a new policy to clarify interpretation. Six months later, the aforementioned federal court ruling—which set aside the USFWS’s delisting decision and put the western Great Lakes wolves back on the endangered species list—hinged largely on interpretation of this very phrase. Given that I am neither an attorney nor an attorney-in-training, I will not lead the reader any farther into this particular tangle of interpretive weeds.

- “Populations” of “endangered” and “threatened” “species,” and the “ecosystems” upon which they “depend,” should be “conserved” and “recovered.”
- Human actions should be “tempered” by “concern” and “conservation.”

Explicit here are the discursive hubs of action and dwelling. Particular kinds of human action (“untempered” “economic growth and development”) are depicted as having caused harmful impacts (“extinction,” or the “danger” and “threat” thereof) to the natural world (“species” and “ecosystems”). Contrasting human action (“conservation” and “recovery”) is prescribed as a remedy for those impacts. Further, it is said that human action toward the natural world should be guided by “concern” and by awareness of species’ various kinds of value in both larger-than-human (“ecological”) and human (“esthetic,” “educational,” “historical,” “recreational,” “scientific”) terms.

Audible in this discourse are several cultural premises of belief and value:

- Wild species are valuable culturally (i.e., to humans).
- Wild species are valuable ecologically (i.e., to nature).
- Humans should not cause species to go extinct.
- Humans should take action to prevent extinction and to remove threats of extinction.

In the context of the ESA, “recovery” can be heard as synonymous with “conservation,” or as a desired future condition to be achieved through “conservation.” The Act states that “recovery plans” are plans “for the conservation and survival of endangered species and threatened species.” “Conservation” is defined as “the use of all methods and procedures which are necessary to bring any endangered species or threatened species to the point at which the measures provided pursuant to this Act are no longer necessary.” “Recovery” is similarly defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as “the process by which the decline of an endangered or threatened species is stopped or reversed, or threats to its survival neutralized so

that its long-term survival in the wild can be ensured, and it can be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species.”⁶

In the context of state DNR discourses, the two terms “recovery” and “conservation” are related but not synonymous. The 2001 Minnesota wolf plan, for example, noted that federal and state “recovery goals” had already been met, but that “conservation” (i.e., “ensuring the long-term survival of the wolf in Minnesota”) remained an ongoing priority. Here, species “recovery” can be understood as a subset of species “conservation.” In other words, in this state discourse, “conservation” is a broad category of human action intended to ensure long-term survival of a species; “recovery” is a narrower category of action, required to bring a species back to a point from which survival can be assured.

Similarly, the 1999 Wisconsin wolf plan is said to “provide a conservation strategy for maintaining a healthy viable population of gray wolves in the state, and contribute toward national recovery, while addressing problems that may occur with wolf depredation on livestock or pets.” Here, “conservation” again depicts a broad category of human action that extends beyond recovery to encompass “maintaining a healthy viable population.” In a related way, Wisconsin State Statute 29.605 directs WI-DNR to implement programs “directed at conserving, protecting, restoring and propagating selected endangered and threatened species to the maximum extent practicable.” Of the four actions mentioned here (conserving, protecting, restoring, and propagating) “conserving” can be understood as the broadest category of action.

In short, “recovery” and “conservation” are central and related key terms in state DNR discourse concerning wolves. The former is explicitly tied to the ESA, depicting actions intended to alleviate harmful impacts and remove threats of extinction. The latter is broader, also encompassing actions intended to assure species survival in the long term, even after recovery has been achieved. In the context of a centuries-long history of extirpation—and decades of national

⁶ <http://fws.gov/endangered/about/glossary.html>

debate and policymaking concerning endangered species—use of these terms invokes two primary discursive hubs (action and dwelling), depicting forms of human action intended (A) to remedy harm done to species and ecosystems by previous actions, and (B) to ensure the long-term survival of a species and the health of its habitat.

C. Kinds of “conservation”

Before digging deeper into the details of this discourse, it may be helpful for the reader—as it has been for me—to consider how the term “conservation” has, at various times and in various contexts of use, invoked a wide range of meanings.

1. Muir

Van Dyke (2008) traces the intellectual origins of the field of conservation biology to a number of sources including John Muir, who advocated the preservation of forests and other natural places on moral and religious grounds. For Muir, these places offered the opportunity for worship, contemplation, healing, and aesthetic appreciation. Places in nature should be reserved and preserved, Muir argued, so that these higher uses and values could be enjoyed (pp. 11-12).

Muir wrote of the Sierras in such terms: “These blessed mountains are so compactly filled with God’s beauty” (1911, p. 238). He marveled at the intricacy of natural systems: “What pains are taken to keep this wilderness in health—showers of snow, showers of rain, showers of dew, floods of light, floods of invisible vapour, clouds, winds, all sorts of weather, interaction of plant on plant and animal on animal, beyond thought! How fine Nature’s methods! How deeply with beauty is beauty overlaid!” (p. 237). Muir was adamantly opposed to “development” of the wild places he loved.

The smallest forest reserve, and the first I have ever heard of, was in the Garden of Eden; and though its boundaries were drawn by the Lord, and embraced only one tree, yet even so moderate a reserve as this was attacked. And I doubt not, if only one of our grand trees on the Sierra were reserved as an example and type of all that is most noble and glorious in mountain trees, it would not be long before you would find a lumberman and a lawyer

at the foot of it, eagerly proving by every law terrestrial and celestial that the tree must come down.” (1896, p. 276)

2. Pinchot

In marked contrast, Muir’s one-time friend and ally (Miller, 2007) Gifford Pinchot—the first Chief of the United States Forest Service—envisioned conservation in terms of three primary utilitarian principles. The first was development.

The first great fact about conservation is that it stands for development . . . Conservation does mean provision for the future, but it means also and first of all the recognition of the right of the present generation to the fullest necessary use of all the resources with which this country is so abundantly blessed. Conservation demands the welfare of this generation first, and afterward the welfare of the generations to follow. (Pinchot, 1910, p. 42)

Pinchot’s second principle was the prevention of waste. “The attack on waste,” he wrote, “is an industrial necessity” (p. 44). In his view, such prevention was “a simple matter of good business.” Further, he considered it humanity’s “first duty” to “control the earth it lives upon” (p. 45). In Pinchot’s thought and language, economic and industrial imperatives were closely tied to morally infused imperatives of duty.

Pinchot’s third primary principle urged that the aims of the first two principles (resource development and waste prevention) be accomplished “for the benefit of the many, and not merely for the profit of a few.” His concerns here—summarized in the phrase “the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest time”—were that people should “get their fair share of the benefit” and that the nation “be made to endure as the best possible home for all its people” (pp. 46-48).

Of the three ideas that dominated Progressive Era conservation thinking (Koppes, 1988), Muir spoke and wrote primarily in terms of one (aesthetics), while Pinchot favored the other two (efficiency and equity, both rooted in a Progressive Era belief in technical, scientific fixes).

3. Roosevelt

Theodore Roosevelt, a contemporary of both Muir and Pinchot, serves as a kind of historical bridge between them. Roosevelt wrote of nature in aesthetic and religious terms, as when he described camping with Muir in the Yosemite Valley in 1903: “It was clear weather, and we lay in the open, the enormous cinnamon-colored trunks rising about us like the columns of a vaster and more beautiful cathedral than was ever conceived by any human architect” (Fox, 1981, p. 125). During his presidency, he also acted as a preservationist, establishing numerous wildlife sanctuaries, national monuments, and national parks (Van Dyke, 2008, p. 13).

On the other hand, Roosevelt’s concern over the pillaging of the West by timber and mining corporations led him to appoint Pinchot as Chief of the Forest Service, and to embrace the European model of sustained yield forestry Pinchot advocated (Van Dyke, 2008, pp. 13-14). As his presidency progressed, Roosevelt’s way of speaking about conservation increasingly echoed Pinchot’s. In 1908, he warned that “the natural resources of our country” were “in danger of exhaustion.”

We have become great in a material sense because of the lavish use of our resources, and we have just reason to be proud of our growth. But the time has come to inquire seriously what will happen when our forests are gone, when the coal, the iron, the oil, and the gas are exhausted, when the soils shall have been still further impoverished and washed into the streams, polluting the rivers, denuding the fields, and obstructing navigation. These questions do not relate only to the next century or to the next generation . . .

As a people we have the right and the duty, second to none other but the right and duty of obeying the moral law, of requiring and doing justice, to protect ourselves and our children against the wasteful development of our natural resources, whether that waste is caused by the actual destruction of such resources or by making them impossible of development hereafter . . .

The conservation of our natural resources, though the gravest problem of today, is yet but part of another and greater problem to which this Nation is not yet awake, but to which it will awake in time, and with which it must hereafter grapple if it is to live—the problem of national efficiency, the patriotic duty of insuring the safety and continuance of the Nation. (Roosevelt, 1908)

A few years later, he emphasized that conservation must be accomplished “not by disuse, but by use.”

There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country. Just as we must conserve our men, women and children, so we must conserve the resources of the land on which they live. We must conserve the soil so that our children shall have a land that is more and not less fertile than our fathers dwelt in. We must conserve the forests, not by disuse, but by use, making them more valuable at the same time that we use them. We must conserve the mines. Moreover, we must insure so far as possible the use of certain types of great natural resources for the benefit of the people as a whole. (Roosevelt, 1913)

In Pinchot's discourse, and often Roosevelt's, we can hear close links between "conservation" and a number of key utilitarian terms, including "development," "use," "efficiency," and "resources." Muir, who wrote instead of preserving "beauty," "blessed mountains," and "noble and glorious" trees, was quite aware of these connections. "The general acceptance of the term itself, conservation, reflected the triumph of the utilitarian approach . . . Given these implications, Muir seldom used the term" (Fox, 1981, p. 108).

4. Leopold

The utilitarian meanings of conservation were core principles for the Yale Forest School, which was established in 1900 by a donation from Pinchot's family and which, from 1906 to 1909, trained Aldo Leopold as a forester. By 1933, when his book *Game Management* was published, Leopold was a leading voice in American conservation.

In the book, the utilitarian roots of its conservation discourse are evident. Its subject matter, for instance, is defined as "the art of making land produce sustained annual crops of wild game" (Leopold, 1933, p. 3). Leopold noted Roosevelt's role in making conservation a national issue, and cited the fundamental influence of "the Roosevelt doctrine of conservation" in determining "the subsequent history of American game management" (p. 17). Leopold also made it clear that, despite the book's focus on "the conservation of game by management," its principles were "of general import to all fields of conservation" (p. xxxi) including forestry. All forms of "land-cropping," he wrote, were "applied ecology" (p. 39).

Leopold died just 15 years later, at the age of 61, and his most famous works—*A Sand County Almanac* and *Round River*—were published posthumously. In them, he discussed conservation at length. Though the idea of natural “resources” remained key, here Leopold wrote of the importance of an “ecological conscience,” offering new definitions of conservation:

- “Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land” (Leopold, 1949, p. 243).
- “Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity” (p. 258).

In these texts, Leopold argued that conservation involved asking “what is ethically and esthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient” (p. 262). It required “love, respect, and admiration for land” as well as “high regard” for its “value,” in both economic and “philosophical” terms (p. 261). As mentioned in Chapter I, when Leopold wrote of “land,” he meant not only soil but also “waters, plants, and animals” (p. 239). He emphasized that right and wrong could be determined based on whether or not an action tended “to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community” (p. 262). This concept was closely linked to his most enduring idea, that of a “land ethic.”

A land ethic of course cannot prevent the alteration, management, and use of these ‘resources,’ but it does affirm their right to continued existence, and, at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state. In short, a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such. (p. 240)

In contrast with his earlier, strongly utilitarian views, Leopold urged his readers to “quit thinking about decent land-use as solely an economic problem” (p. 262). “One basic weakness in a conservation system based wholly on economic motives,” he wrote, “is that most members of the land community have no economic value” (p. 246). He argued that such community members “should continue as a matter of biotic right, regardless of the presence or absence of economic advantage to us” (p. 247).

In Leopold’s thought, these species included not only songbirds but also predators. Critiquing the notion that “evidence had to be economic in order to be valid,” he welcomed the

more recent, “more enlightened,” and “more honest argument that predators are members of the community, and that no special interest has the right to exterminate them for the sake of a benefit, real or fancied, to itself” (p. 247). Praising the work of the Wilderness Society which he helped found and of the Sierra Club (p. 278) which Muir founded, Leopold also depicted outdoor recreation as an essentially “esthetic exercise” (p. 283) and wrote of “the incredible intricacies of the plant and animal community—the intrinsic beauty of the organism called America” (p. 291).

In Leopold’s words, we can hear an evolving cultural discourse of “conservation,” one that employs historically transmitted discourses and uses them to create something new. We can hear, for instance, a blending of economic, utilitarian ideas that echo Pinchot (e.g., “crops of wild game,” “resources,” “economically expedient”) and aesthetic ideas that echo Muir (e.g., “harmony,” “preserve,” “esthetic,” “beauty,” “love,” “respect,” “incredible intricacies”). These blended and hybridized discourses—these multiple and sometimes conflicted meanings—are readily audible in more recent conservation discourses, including those concerning wolves.

As we have heard, the Endangered Species Act of 1973 defined “conservation” as human action necessary to accomplish the recovery of species threatened and endangered by “economic growth and development” and established its necessity on the basis of multiple values attributed to those species, “esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific.” Here, “conservation” was used in a way that Muir might have appreciated: not as synonymous with development but as a remedy for it.

D. Discourses of law and science

As noted above and as suggested by data excerpts and introductory histories, state discourse concerning wolf conservation and management is linked to, and part of, much larger scientific and legal discourses. In-depth consideration of those broader discourses is beyond the scope of this project. Yet it has been helpful for me, as I hope it will be for the reader, to consider briefly a few primary ways in which the recovery and conservation of wildlife populations in

general—and federal and state agency actions toward, and relationships with, wolf populations in particular—are defined in terms of law and science.

1. “Pursuant to this Act”

The legal and legislative roots of this discourse are highly visible and audible. Most prominent is the classification of wolves as “endangered,” “threatened,” “delisted,” or “nonlisted.” Rooted in the ESA, these status classifications are used in assigning management authority to various federal, tribal, and state government entities and in defining mandates for action by such entities. The Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan of 1999, for example, notes that WI-DNR “is directed by State Statute 29.605 (formerly s.29.415) to implement programs ‘directed at conserving, protecting, restoring and propagating selected endangered and threatened species to the maximum extent practicable’” (p. 8).

Similarly, we can hear how the ESA’s definition of a “recovered species” hinges on a particular concept: “species which have recovered to the point at which the measures provided pursuant to this Act are no longer necessary and which . . . have been removed from either of the lists.” In other words, the “recovery” of a species—though assessed in terms of science—is defined in terms of legal listing status.

2. “Canis lupus”

The scientific roots of this discourse are also highly visible and audible in the terms used, for example, to classify wolves taxonomically (e.g., “species,” “*Canis lupus*,” “subspecies”), to depict their populations (e.g., “population density,” “population distribution,” “subpopulation connectivity”), and to indicate their likelihood of collective survival (e.g., “viability analyses”). Such scientific terminology is, of course, applied not only to wolves but also to other wildlife species. In some instances, related language is also applied to humans; the 1999 Wisconsin plan,

for example, notes that “human population density” is one variable used to evaluate potential wolf habitat (p. 22).

More broadly, human understandings of wolves and other wild species are described as emerging primarily from “biology” and “ecology,” or, broadly speaking, “science.” The 2001 Minnesota plan, for instance, notes that “worldwide, wolves have been scientifically studied more than any other carnivore species, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of their ecology and relationship to humans” (pp. 10-11). We can formulate two cultural propositions here:

- “Wolves” can be, and are best, “understood” through “science.”
- “Relationships between “wolves” and “humans” can be, and are best, “understood” through “science.”

In short, scientific disciplines and methods—especially from biology and ecology—are widely recognized as core means of understanding wolves and other wildlife species and human relationships with them. Not surprisingly, the centrality of the natural sciences “as a base for informed decision making in wildlife management” (Organ et al., 2012) is frequently emphasized in wildlife-related professional publications and in public discussions of wildlife management and policy.⁷

3. Discursive uses of “science”

This emphasis has led to particular uses of scientific language. Speakers on all sides of a contested wildlife issue (e.g., wolf conservation) commonly call for “science-based” decision making. Such calls are coherent in civic settings (1) because emphasis has long been placed on science as a basis for wildlife-related decision making, (2) because science—in contrast to emotion, faith, or sociocultural values, for example—is presumed to yield neutral, objective

⁷ In recent decades, wildlife professionals have also developed an increasing appreciation for the “human dimensions” of wildlife management: the ways in which human society, culture, and values influence and shape wildlife and wildlife-related decisions and policies (e.g., Brown & Decker, 2001).

truths, and (3) because neutral, objective rationality has long been a core ideal in deliberative democracy. In other words, scientific language, and sometimes simply the word “science” by itself, is commonly employed as a symbolic stand-in for rationality.

Such calls for and emphasis on “science-based” policy often obscure other foundations for speech and decision making including emotion,⁸ and contribute to a collective inattention to—and perhaps an impaired ability to recognize and discuss—the central roles played by sociocultural values in such decision- and policy-making. Nie (2004) contends that we need to “recognize the limitations of science and biology as a way to resolve wolf-centered political conflict.”⁹

Environmental politics, including the subject of wolves, is often characterized by an adversarial form of analysis in which opposing groups use ‘their science’ to forward their policy objectives. If I only had a dollar for every time someone involved in wolf politics told me, ‘The other side isn’t using good science.’ Even when stakeholders agree on the science, they often filter this science using disparate belief systems. (p. 206)

Though he certainly acknowledges the value of science in informed decision making, Nie (2003) argues for paying attention to the words, ideas, symbols, values, and cultural meanings at play in wolf policy.

While science can certainly answer a question such as how much livestock depredation can be expected from a recovered wolf population in a national forest area, it cannot answer the normative question of whether wolves or cows *should* be in this national forest. (pp. 19-20)

⁸ The role of emotion in public debate and participation, and the relationships between emotion and rationality in such communicative action, have been examined by scholars in a variety of fields, from theology (e.g., Elliott, 1928) to geography (e.g., Cass & Walker, 2009; Woods et al., 2012), social policy and political theory (e.g., Thompson & Hoggett, 2001, 2012), and communication (e.g., Beck, Littlefield & Weber, 2012; Gesch-Karamanlidis, 2015; Keith, 2007; Mumby & Putnam, 1992; Tracy & Durfy, 2007). Some researchers (e.g., Slagle, Bruskotter, & Wilson, 2012) have specifically investigated the role of emotion in position-taking on wolf management.

⁹ One biologist suggested to me that, in recent years, some who want wolf-hunting seasons and substantial reductions in the wolf population have recognized the limitations of science as a way of achieving their goals, and have “switched tactics” and “adopted a legislative-based approach.”

My research in the western Great Lakes region indicates that at least some carnivore biologists agree. During an informal, unrecorded conversation, one DNR biologist in the region observed that the natural sciences can tell us how to increase and maintain wolf populations, and can also tell us how to extirpate them. Those sciences can also predict likely material consequences of each. But they cannot tell us which path to take. That decision is inevitably rooted in other ground.

During a recorded interview, another DNR biologist spoke of wolf seasons this way:

it's not the biology that
says we have to or need to
it's the biology that says we can
the question is more a social question
I mean the science is clear
you can allow hunting and trapping of wolves
you can have a regulated season

In response, I restated this biologist's view as "the science doesn't say you need to or should / but it says you can." He affirmed my summary: "Right / and science rarely can answer that question."

Later in the interview, he added this comment: "I don't try to make the case [that] we need to hunt wolves . . . we don't need to."

Leopold—a disciplined and dedicated scientist—likewise contended that scientific knowledge could not serve, by itself, as the guidepost for human-nature relations. In addition to ecological knowledge, he argued for the importance of developing an "ecological conscience," a process involving "change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions" (1949, p. 246). He argued for the importance of "love," "respect," "admiration" and "high regard" for the "value" of the "land community" in a "philosophical sense." And he asserted that "the evolution of a land ethic is an intellectual as well as an emotional process" (pp. 261-263).

Wilber (1998) comments as well:

There is a strange and curious thing about scientific truth. As its own proponents constantly explain, science is basically value-free. It tells us what *is*, not what *should be* or *ought to be* . . . [S]cience, in elucidating or describing these basic facts about the universe, has virtually nothing to tell us about good and bad, wise and unwise, desirable and undesirable. Science might offer us truth, but how to use that truth wisely: on this

science is, and always has been, utterly silent . . . Truth, not wisdom or value or worth, is the province of science. (p. x)

This is not to say that practices and discourses of science lack cultural roots; they do not. It is simply to say that science does not, by itself, provide us with substantial guidance concerning proper human action.

These statements by scientists and observers of science provide a context for considering other statements concerning, and discursive uses of, science. In Chapter I, for instance, I mentioned Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN-DNR) Fish and Wildlife Division Director Ed Boggess's reported wolf-related statements: "all we can deal with are issues of conservation, public safety and public health"; "cultural issues are for each culture to address as they see fit." These utterances suggest a taken-for-granted understanding (1) that issues related to wolf (and other wildlife) management can and should be answered by scientific, technical, and rational means, without involving "cultural" factors and, more broadly, (2) that "conservation" is not a "cultural issue."

Yet we know from the brief history sketched in Chapter I that the very ideas and practices of conservation and wildlife management are deeply cultural, and have changed dramatically over the past century. And DNR biologists themselves tell us that wildlife conservation and management decisions are based primarily on cultural and social questions which science cannot answer. Thus, when science is invoked—or when conservation and management are depicted as being solely scientific, technical, and rational matters—we need to listen for the ideas, symbols, values, and cultural meanings embedded in these invocations and depictions.

E. "A viable and sustainable population"

Let us return to the July 2012 Wisconsin Natural Resources Board meeting. In his opening remarks, Thiede stated that WI-DNR's "goal remains to assure that we have a viable and sustainable population of wolves in Wisconsin for future generations." Vander Zouwen made a

similar statement: “I hope it comes across that our goal is / a managed but sustainable / wolf population in the state / for all time to come.” Likewise, the 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan states that part of its goal is to “provide a conservation strategy for maintaining a healthy viable population of gray wolves in the state.” And the 2001 Minnesota Wolf Management Plan states that part of its goal is to “ensure the long-term survival of wolves in Minnesota.”

In these phrases, “viable” and “sustainable” appear to be employed as synonyms, describing a population for which “long-term survival” is assured. Clearly articulated here are two cultural propositions taken for granted in this discourse:

- “Wolves” are “a population.”
- It is appropriate and necessary to “assure,” “ensure,” and “maintain” a “viable” and “sustainable” “wolf population,” one that will “survive” indefinitely.

State DNR uses of “viable,” “sustainable,” and “survival” echo ESA and USFWS definitions of “recovered” species for which “long-term survival in the wild can be ensured.” These uses presume two of the premises of recovery formulated above: (1) humans should not cause species to go extinct, and (2) humans should take action to prevent extinction and to remove threats of extinction. A “viable and sustainable population” of wolves, in other words, is—at a minimum—not in danger of extinction; “viability” and “sustainability” can also be heard as referring to more robust populations, exceeding the bare minimum of avoidance-of-extinction. In either case, the key idea is that the population’s survival is assured, as it should be according to this discourse.

F. “Problems,” “conflicts,” and “zones”

Population viability, however, is not the only aim highlighted in this discourse. Recall that the 1999 Wisconsin plan describes its guidelines as being intended to maintain a viable population of wolves and contribute to national recovery “while addressing problems that may

occur with wolf depredation on livestock or pets.” The plan addresses these matters in more detail:

- “The large land requirements of wolves can conflict with human uses of those lands. Examples of direct conflict over land use by humans include livestock production, urban areas, and intensive recreational activities. Conflicts may also arise anywhere people have the opportunity to encounter wolves either accidentally or intentionally” (p. 13).
- “The purpose of zone management is to vary management depending on potential wolf habitat and the possibilities of conflicts between wolves and humans . . . Wolves belong in some areas and not others because of potential conflicts with humans” (p. 18).

Recall, too, that the 2001 Minnesota plan states that its goal is to ensure survival of the wolf population “while addressing wolf-human conflicts that inevitably result when wolves and people live in the same vicinity.”

In these brief excerpts, “problem” and “conflict” are used to describe interactions between wolves and humans, and between wolves and animals owned by humans (“depredation on livestock or pets”). These problems and conflicts are variously described as events and situations that are “potential” and “may occur,” or that “inevitably result,” when wolves and humans live near one another.

Each state’s goal is defined in terms of two main elements: (1) maintaining a “viable” or “sustainable” population, and (2) addressing wolf-related “problems” and “conflicts.” In these verbal depictions, the discursive hubs of dwelling and action are central. Acting to maintain a viable wolf population is articulated as an imperative part of a proper way of dwelling in the world. Acting to address interactional conflicts between humans and wolves is also said to be imperative. Drawing on terms used above, we can formulate a cultural proposition:

- “Wolf-human conflicts” and “problems”—particularly “wolf depredation” on “livestock” and “pets”—often “result” when wolves and people live near each other.

We can also formulate simpler versions:

- “Wolves” often “cause” “problems” for “people.”
- “Wolves” and “humans” often “conflict” with each other.

More particularly, it is said that wolf-human conflicts should be addressed in place-specific ways. “Because of potential conflicts with humans,” it is said that “wolves belong in some areas and not others.” During his presentation in Stevens Point, Vander Zouwen spoke of how WI-DNR “wanted to set up zones / that would allow for sustainable wolf management in the state / and be responsive to problems that they can cause.” On the map he presented, heavily forested northern portions of the state were zoned as “core areas for sustaining wolf populations” where hunting and trapping quotas would be relatively low.

we also know that as the forest
in the green areas
primary forested areas
transitions into farmland
we end up with more problems
more potential for problems
so the yellow zones
are areas where we'd have a higher harvest rate
this first year
and try to get down to lower population levels

and then
reflecting the '99 plan
the rest of the state is an area
where we think there's going to be lots of conflict
and is really not well suited to manage for wolves
even though wolves could live there
and there we're looking for a very high harvest rate

In Vander Zouwen's words and on the screen at the front of the room, the main contrasts illustrated were among “forested areas” (shown in green as “primary range” for wolves), areas where forest “transitions into farmland” (shown in yellow as “secondary range”), and “the rest of the state” (shown in muted red as “unsuitable range”).¹⁰ As described and conceptualized, (1) “core areas for sustaining wolf populations” transition into (2) areas where there are “more problems / more potential for problems” which then transition into (3) areas where it is anticipated that “there's going to be lots of conflict” and which are “really not well suited to

¹⁰ Also illustrated were five “zero quota” zones within the boundaries of tribal reservations: one Menominee and four Ojibwe.

manage for wolves / even though wolves could live there.” The proposed “harvest rate” was relatively low in the first, moderate in the second, and “very high” in the third.

In other words, the delineation of “zones”—and prescribed action in each zone, from a low to a “very high” “harvest rate”—is said to hinge directly upon “land use by humans.” Though ecological factors contribute to evaluation of “potential wolf habitat,” the crux of zone definition is “potential conflict with humans.” Areas highly utilized by humans for agriculture and other purposes are, it is said, “really not well suited” for wolves, even if the physical and ecological conditions are sufficient to support them (“even though wolves could live there”). The general idea of zones, and how they hinge on human land-use, echoes what Leopold had to say in 1944 when—writing of the wolf’s value in regulating “not only the number, but the distribution, of deer”—he stated that “in thickly settled counties [of Wisconsin] we cannot have wolves, but in parts of the north we can and should” (Meine, 1988, p. 458).

Drawing directly on the Wisconsin plan and Vander Zouwen’s presentation, we can summarize the basic idea of zone management with these cultural propositions:

- “Wolves” “belong” in “some areas” and “not others.”
- Where “wolves” “belong” depends on “conflicts” and “potential conflicts” with “humans.”
- In “areas” where “wolves” “belong,” “harvest rates” should be low.
- In “areas” where “wolves” do not “belong,” “harvest rates” should be “very high.”

These place-specific ways of addressing wolf-human interactions explicitly activate the hubs of dwelling, action, and relationship. Relations between wolves and humans are said and understood to be defined in terms of conflict and potential conflict. In light of those relations, where and how humans dwell (the degree and kind of human land-use) is said and understood to define where wolves should dwell. Thus, proper human action toward wolves in different areas—prescribed in terms of the number of wolves to be killed in each through hunting and trapping—is

defined by where and how humans dwell.¹¹ We can summarize these understandings by formulating cultural premises:

- Wolves and humans often conflict.
- How humans live on and use the land makes conflict more or less likely.
- Wolves belong where conflict is unlikely.
- Wolves do not belong where conflict is likely.
- Where conflict is likely, humans should kill most or all wolves.

We will leave this line of analysis here for the moment. Not surprisingly, ideas about where wolves should and should not dwell—especially in relation to where humans dwell—will surface again before long.

G. What does “management” mean?

At some point in this project, I found myself starting to puzzle over the ubiquitous terms “manage” and “management.” What, I began to wonder, do people mean by them? What do these terms express and invoke?

In Wisconsin, in Minnesota, and elsewhere, the guiding DNR document is the state “Wolf Management Plan.” These plans refer extensively to “management”—of wolf populations, of deer/ungulate populations, of habitat, and of damage and depredation—and also to “management authority” and a wide range of “management practices” and “management activities.”

The introduction to the 2001 Minnesota Wolf Management Plan states that, since the protection of wolves by the Endangered Species Act in 1974, “the federal government and states

¹¹ Regarding these ideas, a Wisconsin biologist remarked that DNR planners “completely missed” the issue of “where people hunt,” “how they interpret the effects of wolves where they hunt,” and their consequent “lack of acceptance” of “a healthy wolf population” as part of conservation. The importance of this—where people hunt, not just where people dwell—will become apparent in Chapter IV.

in the western Great Lakes region have managed wolves with the primary objectives of enhancing populations in Minnesota and re-establishing viable populations in Wisconsin and Michigan” (p. 9). The executive summary of the 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan states that WI-DNR “has reclassified wolves from endangered to threatened, and developed this plan to manage wolves as a threatened and eventually as a delisted species” (p. 3). In describing proposed wolf-management zones, Vander Zouwen spoke of various areas being more or less “suited to manage for wolves.”

As used in these instances, “managing” wolves and their habitats encompasses “enhancing populations,” “re-establishing viable populations,” “sustaining wolf populations,” and various activities and practices deemed appropriate in relation wolves, whether “threatened,” “endangered,” or “delisted.” In other words, “manage” is employed here to describe a wide range of activities and practices, including those directed specifically toward “recovery.” In wildlife and conservation biology discourses more broadly, it is not uncommon to read of wolves and other species being “managed for recovery.”

A different use of “manage” is also prominent in this discourse. Consider, for instance, Vander Zouwen’s description of the history of the wolf in Wisconsin in recent decades: “the wolf population . . . started to increase and we started realizing / hey we need a wolf management plan.” The approved plan “set a population goal of 350 / above which there could be control actions.”

Here, “manage” describes activities and practices which are needed when the wolf population increases (“hey we need a wolf management plan”) and which are intended to control wolves in various ways (“control actions”). In other words, “manage” is employed to describe a narrower range of activities and practices aimed at various kinds of “control” appropriate to a population that has recovered sufficiently. This usage of the word does not encompass practices directed toward “recovery.”

1. “A form of agriculture”

To illuminate these (and other) apparently different meanings-in-use of the term “manage,” it is helpful to consider meanings-in-use as they were shaped in the formative years of North American wildlife management as a field of practice and study. Let us turn again to Leopold, widely considered the father of the field, and his seminal 1933 book *Game Management*, mentioned previously.

The first chapter opens with this definition: “Game management is the art of making land produce sustained annual crops of wild game for recreational use.”¹² Leopold made it clear that game management, like forestry, was a “form of agriculture,” one that employed wild “natural species” rather than domesticated species and that was practiced “with a view to maintaining or enhancing the yield.”¹³ Reviewing the history of game management from the Mongol Empire through feudal Europe to early twentieth-century America, Leopold stated that game management practices typically followed a sequence: (1) limitations on hunting, (2) predator control, (3) reservation of parks, forests, and other lands for game, (4) artificial stocking and farming of game, and (5) manipulation of environmental factors such as food, cover, and disease (pp. 3-5).

With action and dwelling as explicit discursive hubs, these brief excerpts from Leopold’s 1933 text describe “game management” as a set of “practices” for “making land produce” “annual crops” of wild animals. As used here, “management” is focused on “game” species “with a view to maintaining or enhancing the yield.”

¹² Leopold used “recreational” (as well as “sport”) to describe hunting not necessary for survival (p. 391), a definition which encompasses the vast majority of hunting in the contemporary United States. These descriptors, however, have become problematic in public discourse, as they are used and interpreted in connection with disparate and radically different meanings (e.g., “killing for fun”). Not surprisingly, these terms will reappear later in this dissertation.

¹³ These agricultural roots continue to be evident in present-day game management discourse. For example, births and birth rates among many species, including game species, are described in terms of “production.” Deer born in a given year are often described as the annual “fawn crop.” The killing of deer and other game species by human hunters is described as a “harvest.” And so forth.

Before his death a decade and a half later, Leopold offered a critique of this utilitarian production framework. Though still engaged in and supportive of “wild husbandry,” he noted a “plane of cleavage” common to a range of conservation fields, including forestry and wildlife management. “In each field,” he wrote, “one group (A) regards the land as soil, and its function as commodity-production; another group (B) regards the land as a biota, and its function as something broader.” In the wildlife field, he wrote, “for Group A the basic commodities are sport and meat; the yardsticks of production are ciphers of take in pheasants and trout.” In contrast, Group B—in which Leopold clearly put himself—“worries about a whole series of biotic side-issues.” The first issue he mentioned was this: “What is the cost in predators of producing a game crop?” (1949, pp. 258-259).

His later critique notwithstanding, Leopold’s 1933 language suggests a cultural proposition: Through “management,” “game” is and should be “produced” for “harvest.” In other words, “game management” is defined here as a form of animal husbandry, with wild species such as deer being “produced” much as domestic livestock species are.

A conceptual fusion of “game” and “livestock” is also evident in relation to predators such as wolves. Listen to Leopold, again from 1933, noting that the use of predator control in game production is virtually impossible to separate from its use in livestock production: “The first public predator control for game purposes is so thoroughly fused with livestock predator control that no dates can be set. Bounties on predators go back indefinitely” (p. 16).¹⁴

The 1999 Wisconsin wolf plan, in a section entitled “History of Wolves in Wisconsin and Public Attitudes,” suggests a similar fusion. The plan notes that early Euro-American fur traders

¹⁴ As noted in Chapter I, by 1933 Leopold was already challenging conventional wisdom about predator-prey relationships and was not advocating the elimination of any predator species. He emphasized that “our knowledge of the inter-relationships of animals is still very imperfect” (p. 230). He also argued that we have “a moral responsibility for the perpetuation of the threatened forms of wild life” and credited naturalists of “the Rooseveltian era” with championing that responsibility (p. 19). A few years later, he wrote that wolves and other predators were among the “threatened species” on which conservationists were obligated to focus effort (Leopold, 1936).

“were generally indifferent to the presence of wolves because they posed no threat, and were not considered valuable furbearers.” Only later, in 1865, after Euro-American settlement had progressed into the region and “wolves were perceived as a menace to livestock,” did the legislature institute a bounty. By 1930, with wolves exterminated in all but a handful of the state’s northernmost counties, “sport hunters also favored a bounty on wolves because wolves were considered unwanted competitors for deer” (p. 8).

As discussed by Leopold in 1933 and by the Wisconsin plan in 1999, relationships between humans and wolves, human actions toward wolves, and institutional stances toward wolves have, in large part, long hinged on perceptions of the threats posed by wolves to other animals valued by humans. Human relationships with these other animals are described in terms of agricultural production: they are produced as “livestock” or as “crops of wild game.”¹⁵

2. Types of “management”

Using the contemporary and historical data above, we can formulate three cultural propositions, each articulating a distinct meaning of “manage” and “management,” as terms employed to depict human action in relation to wildlife.

a. Management for production

“Managing” wildlife involves “producing,” “maintaining,” and “enhancing” a “sustained yield” or “crop” of “wild game” for “harvest” and “use.” We can refer to this particular meaning-in-use as *management for production*.

¹⁵ As a DNR biologist remarked to me, today these relationships, actions, and stances hinge increasingly on the value ascribed to wolves by the general public, most of whom are not overly concerned by such threats. Among that general public, he commented, “people like wolves and want more.” As he stated, it is important to consider “whose values are being expressed and how and where they are expressing them.”

When the field of game management was defined by Leopold as “a form of agriculture,” this was the most prominent North American use of “management” in connection with wild animal species and their habitats. It remains active in present-day game management discourses. Historically, this meaning does not appear to have been employed in relation to wolves. In 1933, for instance, Leopold did not write of “producing” or “harvesting” a “crop” of predators; rather, “predator control” was described as a tool used in the production of game.

b. All-purpose management

“Managing” wildlife encompasses all professionally planned “practices” and “activities”—those appropriate to “endangered” and “threatened” species and their habitats, as well as those appropriate to “game,” “non-game,” “non-listed,” and “delisted” species and their habitats. We can refer to this meaning-in-use as *all-purpose management*.

During Leopold’s lifetime and continuing since, the field of wildlife management has expanded to include non-game species and the field of conservation biology has emerged to focus on threatened and endangered species. In these and related contexts, “management” has been used in this inclusive, all-purpose sense. This meaning predominates in most contemporary wildlife management plans including the Minnesota and Wisconsin wolf management plans (e.g., “manage wolves as a threatened and eventually as a delisted species”) and in many other wildlife ecology and wildlife management texts.

c. Management for control and limitation

“Managing” wildlife involves “control actions” that limit particular “problems” caused by wildlife populations, or that limit wildlife “populations” themselves. We can refer to this meaning-in-use as *management for control and limitation*. “Management” in this sense is employed in two somewhat distinct wolf-related ways in the western Great Lakes region today.

One use is oriented toward wolf *actions* that are said to warrant limitation. Here, the term typically refers to control and limitation of impacts on domestic animals in specific places through “prevention,” “mitigation,” and lethal “removal” of specific wolves and wolf packs (i.e., “depredation management”). Another use is oriented toward wolf *populations* that are said to warrant limitation. Here, the term typically refers to control and limitation of wolf numbers and of their geographic distribution, especially as achieved through hunting and trapping (e.g., “a managed but sustainable / wolf population”). Let us further consider these two distinct uses of “management” in the *management for control and limitation* sense.

i. “Depredation management”

As noted, one use of “management” in the *management for control and limitation* sense is oriented toward wolf attacks on domestic animals. This is most commonly referred to as “depredation management” or “depredation control.” Both the Minnesota Wolf Management Plan of 2001 and the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan of 1999 describe such management as an imperative to be implemented:

- “Depredation control—Since 1986, control of depredating wolves has been the responsibility of the USDA Wildlife Services wolf depredation program headquartered in Grand Rapids. During 1993-1999, that program was responsible for investigating 159-249 complaints annually, and killing an average of 153 depredating wolves each year, many of which were utilized for scientific and educational purposes” (Minnesota Wolf Plan, p. 17).
- “Depredation management: Administration—DNR will assume administrative responsibility for an integrated wolf depredation management program, in consultation and cooperation with the MNDA [Minnesota Department of Agriculture] and USDA Wildlife Services. DNR’s Wolf Specialist will assume primary responsibility for developing and coordinating wolf depredation management activities” (Minnesota Wolf Plan, p. 21).
- “WDNR is charged with protecting and maintaining a viable population of wolves in the state, but also must protect the interests of people who suffer losses due to wolf depredation. Wolves occasionally kill livestock, poultry, and pets. Although wolf depredation is not anticipated to impact a significant portion of the livestock growers, poultry producers, and pet owners, it can bring hardship to individuals” (Wisconsin Wolf Plan, p. 23).

- “The objective of the wolf depredation program is to minimize depredations and compensate people for their losses. Euthanization is listed as a depredation management option statewide, but depredation management will focus on prevention and mitigation rather than wolf removal” (Wisconsin Wolf Plan, p. 24).

A cultural proposition can be readily formulated here:

- The state “must” and “will” take “responsibility” for “minimizing” “depredation” through “prevention,” “mitigation,” and “euthanization,” and for “compensating” people for “losses” of “livestock, poultry, and pets.”

In these plans, the depredation management options available to each state are described as varying with the wolf’s federal and state status over time (e.g., endangered, threatened, delisted). Depredation management plans and protocols are also described as varying across geographic zones of varying habitat types and human uses. Yet the overall imperative for action, as expressed in the proposition above, is clear.

ii. “Population management”

As also noted, another use of “management” in the *management for control and limitation* sense is oriented toward control and limitation of wolf numbers and of their geographic distribution, especially as achieved through hunting and trapping. Both the 2001 Minnesota plan and the 1999 Wisconsin plan depict control- and limitation-oriented “population management” as an option to be considered:

- “Wolves in Minnesota will continue to be allowed to naturally expand their range in the state. To assure the continued survival of the wolf in Minnesota, the minimum statewide winter population goal is 1,600 wolves. There is no maximum goal” (Minnesota Wolf Plan, p. 20).
- “Population management activities—Population management measures, including public taking (i.e., hunting and trapping seasons) or other options, will be considered by DNR in the future but not sooner than 5 years after Federal delisting by USFWS. If, in the future, public taking is proposed by DNR, there will be opportunity for full public comment. Decisions on public taking will be based on sound biological data, including comprehensive population surveys” (Minnesota Wolf Plan, p. 20).
- “A public harvest can be considered if other control activities do not adequately maintain the population near the 350 goal. All other control activities such as government trappers, law enforcement officer controls, and landowner controls will first be used to attempt to maintain the population at this goal. The Wisconsin State

Legislature would have to approve authority for a controlled public harvest of wolves” (Wisconsin Wolf Plan, p. 21).

- “The development of legislation that would allow a limited public harvest of wolves would require extensive public interaction as part of the process. Harvest by private citizens is controversial, but the taking of wolves in a recovered population is consistent with the management of other furbearers in the state of Wisconsin. Any public harvest would be closely monitored to ensure that the population does not decline below the management objective of 350 wolves. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources adheres to the principles of adaptive management, and the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan will be periodically reviewed, and adapted to meet changing biological and social conditions” (Wisconsin Wolf Plan, p. 21).

A cultural proposition can be formulated here as well:

- “Population management activities”—particularly “public” “taking” or “harvest” of wolves through “hunting and trapping”—“will” or “can” be “considered” in the future.

Such consideration of public hunting and trapping, it is said, would and should—like development and potential revision of the management plans themselves—involve both social values (“full public comment,” “Legislature would have to approve authority,” “extensive public interaction,” “social conditions”) and scientific data (“sound biological data,” “biological conditions”). Both plans, in other words, say that the *population-control and -limitation management* of wolves through hunting and trapping can be considered and implemented, if supported by society (the public; lawmakers) and by scientific assurances that preexisting goals will continue to be met (i.e., that the wolf population will not decline below numeric statewide population minimums).

The plans thus echo what state DNR biologists told me about the public hunting and trapping of wolves: “It’s not the biology that / says we have to or need to / it’s the biology that says we can.” The science may tell us we “can allow hunting and trapping of wolves” and still maintain a “viable” population in a given area or state. Whether we should is a “social question.” (Note that the goal of having a “viable” population in a given area or state is, in the first place, a sociocultural matter as well. As one DNR biologist told me, “as a society / we’ve agreed that

wolves are important / and we want to have them here.” Science can help us achieve that goal, but it does not dictate the goal.)

The reader may have noted a difference between the population goals mentioned in the Minnesota and Wisconsin plans (a 1,600-wolf population minimum versus a 350-wolf population goal) and between how those goals are linked to management activities. We will return to these differences.

iii. A decoupling of “predator control”

Consider the above-defined two uses of “management” in the *control and limitation* sense. Embedded in the first, “depredation management,” is an expression of the state’s obligation (1) to prevent wolves from killing domestic animals to the degree possible through a variety of means, including targeted lethal removal by government trappers, and (2) to compensate people for losses that do occur. In other words, these killings by wolves—which occur in specific, largely domesticated, non-forested places—should be prevented; when they are not prevented, restitution should be made.

Embedded in the second, “population management” in the limitation and control sense, is an expression of the consideration that should be given to the possibility of authorizing public wolf hunting or trapping seasons, and of the factors that should be considered. In other words, public hunting and trapping of wolves across the broader landscape, including large forested areas, is a future possibility which may or may not be deemed appropriate.

Consider the contrast between these two contemporary uses in the context of United States history. For centuries, as we have heard, wolves and other predators were not merely killed in close proximity to human dwellings, farms, and pastures. They were extirpated wherever they were found, to make the land (including national forests and national parks) safe both for wide-ranging livestock and for deer and other game. Such “predator control” has long been part of game management and livestock husbandry practices.

As we also heard, “livestock” and “game” have long been conceptually fused, both as products of husbandry and in relation to predators. In 1933, as Leopold stated then, the tradition of “predator control for game purposes”—including centuries-old “bounty” systems—remained “thoroughly fused with livestock predator control” (p. 16).

In these 1999 and 2001 wolf management plans, we find a clearly stated imperative to protect livestock. We find no parallel concerning game. Rather, we find the contrary.

In Minnesota, white-tailed deer are the primary prey for most wolves, though in some areas with few deer (e.g., the far northeastern part of the state), moose are the main prey . . . DNR will continue to maintain healthy populations of these species by regulating deer and moose harvest by hunters, estimating population numbers and reproductive success, monitoring and improving deer and moose habitat, and enforcing laws . . . Populations that provide sustainable harvests for hunters must be large enough to withstand natural mortality sources and still provide a harvestable surplus. Because wolf predation is one of several forms of natural mortality, any population capable of sustaining a hunting harvest will, by definition, also provide a healthy prey base for wolves . . . Experience in Minnesota strongly suggests that, at the population level, wolves do not suppress deer numbers. Recently, after the severe winters of 1995-96 and 1996-97, deer numbers in Minnesota’s wolf range were reduced by 45-50 percent. However, deer harvest management changes resulted in a quick recovery to former deer population levels, despite high wolf numbers. Considering these recent events, it appears unlikely that wolves in Minnesota will suppress deer populations, unless an unprecedented combination of other factors were to cause a catastrophic deer population reduction. For more than 20 years, Minnesota has successfully managed deer populations at levels that have provided increasing hunter harvests and ample prey for wolf recovery and persistence, despite variable winter conditions, highway collision losses, other predation, and other mortality factors. DNR expects that continuation of current deer management prescriptions will fully accomplish the goal of managing the ecological impacts of wolves on Minnesota’s deer population. (Minnesota Wolf Plan, pp. 25-26)

Many hunters continue to be concerned about the impact wolves may have on deer populations. During fall 1997, hunters became aware of the lower deer numbers across northern Wisconsin, and some blamed the deer decline on the increasing wolf population. The severe winters of 1995-1996 and 1996-1997 were the main factor that caused the deer decline across northern Wisconsin . . . Winter Severity Indices correspond to severe winters and declines in the deer population . . . Mech (1984) indicated that wolves rarely limit deer populations . . . Overall it does not appear that wolves are likely to be a major mortality factor to deer in northern Wisconsin . . . Much of the predation by wolves would probably compensate for other natural mortality . . . The current deer management system in Wisconsin adjusts antlerless deer harvest in individual deer management units by limiting the number of hunter choice permits per unit (Vander Zouwen and Warnke 1995). This system should be able to adequately adjust for the impacts of wolf predation in deer management units. Generally, wolf predation would have very limited impact on the number of hunter-choice permits issued, or the overall deer harvest within specific management units. (Wisconsin Wolf Plan, pp. 58-59)

In these excerpts from the two plans, it is said that wolves are very unlikely to threaten deer numbers across any large area. It is also said that deer hunters who presumed a causative link between high wolf numbers and declines in deer numbers in the mid-1990s were mistaken, and that “severe winters” were the main factor in those declines. “Wolf predation” is described as “not a major mortality factor” for deer populations under most conditions in these states.

In discussing deer populations and management, these plans emphasize hunting by humans. The maintenance of ample deer numbers is said to be effectively and appropriately achieved through regulation of “harvest by hunters.” Potential “ecological impacts of wolves” on deer are said to be best managed through “deer management,” including “very limited” adjustments to permits allocated to hunters for “antlerless deer harvest.”

Wolf predation is said to be (1) a form of “natural mortality,” (2) largely compensatory rather than additive (i.e., many deer killed by wolves, most of which are very young or very old, would have died in some other way in a similar time frame), and (3) of minor effect on deer numbers and hunter harvest. The deer population, in short, is said to be ample both for “hunter harvests” and for “wolf recovery and persistence.” These ideas are echoed by biologists in the western Great Lakes region. For instance, consider a newspaper article on plans for Minnesota’s inaugural wolf-hunting season:

Dan Stark, the DNR’s large carnivore specialist, said the wolf hunt proposal isn’t a reaction to what some deer hunters suggested was a subpar season in wolf country. “I don’t think deer management is related to a wolf season,” Stark said, adding that the current wolf population in the state is similar to the number of wolves during record deer harvests just a few years ago. (Spielman, 2012)

Similarly, consider the conclusion of this article on wolf and deer ecology: “The increase of wolves to numbers beyond recovery goals set for the Great Lakes states, along with concomitant record high populations of deer, provides conclusive evidence that wolves and deer can fulfill their natural relationship as predator and prey in this region” (DelGiudice et al., 2009, p. 168).

Drawing on the statements above, we can formulate several cultural propositions:

- “Wolves” rarely “suppress” “deer populations.”
- The “deer population” is “ample” for “hunters” and “wolves.”
- “Hunters” need not be “concerned” about the “impact” of “wolves” on “deer.”

Also notable is the distinction drawn between “depredation” and “predation.” In these state plans, as in other examples of contemporary wildlife management discourse, “depredation” refers to predators killing domestic animals (e.g., cattle), while “predation” refers to predators killing wild animals (e.g., deer). Historically, this terminological distinction was not drawn. In 1933, for instance, Leopold used “depredation” to refer to predators killing wild prey.

To summarize:

- Concerning the action of “depredation” on domestic animals, which is done by specific wolves in specific places, these plans say that management action (prevention and control) must and will be taken.
- Concerning the action of “predation” on deer, which occurs across the broader landscape, these plans say that management action (control and limitation of the landscape-wide wolf population) is unnecessary to protect deer populations and deer hunting.
- Concerning the wolf “population,” which inhabits the broader landscape, these plans says that management action (control and limitation through public hunting and trapping) can or will be considered but may or may not be taken.

Between the latter two summary statements above, a strong implicit link is audible: absent the need to protect deer and deer hunting, hunting and trapping intended to control and limit the wolf population can be considered but is not necessary and may or may not be authorized. This stands in marked contrast to the historical logic of “predator control for game purposes,” according to which (A) predator populations had to be limited or eradicated to protect game and hunting, therefore (B) hunting and trapping intended to reduce predator populations were necessary, authorized, and encouraged by bounty payments.

In both Minnesota and Wisconsin, official DNR discourse conveys the idea that management for control and limitation of wolf *behavior* is necessary and desirable in relation to livestock and pets, but that management for control and limitation of wolf *populations* is

unnecessary in relation to game and may or may not be desirable for other reasons. It conveys the related idea that wolf population management should not, in general, be based on concerns about deer. In other words, this discourse decouples the historical fusion between “livestock predator control” and “predator control for game purposes.” Underlying this decoupling are two distinct cultural premises:

- Depredation—It is unacceptable for wolves to kill domestic animals.
- Predation—It is acceptable for wolves to kill wild game animals, for the former do not threaten the latter as populations.

In this distinction, we can hear a significant shift in the historically transmitted discourse of wildlife conservation and management: a shift which began in the early decades of the twentieth century, which was hotly contested within wildlife-related professions and institutions at the time, and in which Aldo Leopold—among others, including Sigurd Olson and the Murie brothers—played a significant part.

In both Wisconsin and Minnesota, I spoke with DNR staff members who critiqued the ways in which each department communicated these ideas to hunters. Referring to the sort of text quoted above from each state’s wolf plan, a Wisconsin DNR staff member commented that they “point out the major failure,” which is that biologists “relied on the biology of deer” to address the “people problem” that constitutes “the largest threat to wolves” (i.e., perceptions of wolves by deer hunters). Similarly, a MN-DNR staff member told me how “frustrating” it was to hear biologists say at public meetings that “wolves do not affect the deer population”; “scientifically it might be true / but it just didn’t serve the DNR / to go out in public and say things like that.” A Wisconsin biologist also suggested that this decoupling of predator control may have occurred “in

the discourse,” but may not yet have occurred “in reality.” The practice and politics of wolf management, in other words, still encompass “predator control for game purposes.”¹⁶

3. “Managing wolves and controlling their numbers”

Above, I have distinguished among three wildlife-related meanings-in-use of the term “management.”

- *management for production*, used to refer to producing yields of game species such as deer,
- *all-purpose management*, used to refer to all professionally planned practices and activities, affecting all species and their habitats, and
- *management for control and limitation*, used to refer to controlling and limiting wildlife-related problems.

Within *management for control and limitation*, I have further distinguished between two meanings-in-use.

- *depredation management*, used, in connection with wolves, to refer to control and limitation of impacts on domestic animals, and
- *population-control and -limitation management*, used, in connection with wolves, to refer to numeric and geographic control and limitation, typically through public hunting and trapping.

All of these meanings-in-use occur in contemporary wildlife-related discourses. In relation to wolves and other predators, however, *control and limitation* uses predominate, particularly in speech. (In written documents, such as the Wisconsin and Minnesota wolf plans, *all-purpose* uses occur with some frequency in reference to wolves; *production* uses do not.)

¹⁶ It should also be noted that predator control is still practiced in many places in connection with various game species. In relation to some, including waterfowl, the efficacy and appropriateness of predator control is a matter of disagreement, even among hunting conservation groups. For instance, Ducks Unlimited contends that “the promotion of lethal predator control is harming the future of waterfowl conservation by diverting resources away from habitat conservation, which is critical for sustaining waterfowl populations in the future” (<http://www.ducks.org/conservation/how-we-serve/predator-control-faqs>). In contrast, Delta Waterfowl argues that “predator management is the most cost-effective waterfowl management tool available to increase annual duck production” (<http://www.deltawaterfowl.org/what-we-do/management.html>).

Population control and limitation uses are particularly common; as one hunter commented in an e-mail to me about wolf “management,” “the term would appear to nearly always be a euphemistic way of saying ‘shoot ‘em.’” Reconsider, for instance, this expanded excerpt from Vander Zouwen’s remarks at July 2012 WI-NRB meeting:

```
I hope it comes across that our goal is
  a managed but sustainable
  wolf population in the state
  for all time to come
. . .
the real reason we’re here is really not Act 169
  it’s the incredible story of the wolf
the wolf population has recovered in the state
  it came in from Minnesota
  quite a few years ago
  didn’t do real well for a long time
  and then started to increase

and we started realizing
  hey we need a wolf management plan
  and back in 1999 the board did approve a plan
  for wolves
  set a population goal of 350
  above which there could be control actions
    whether depredation controls or
    public hunting
  and we’ve been at 350 or higher since 2004
so
  we’ve been basically waiting for this day a long time
  at least those that are interested in managing wolves
  and controlling their numbers at a certain level
  and that’s the real reason we’re here
```

Here, “manage” is clearly intended in the *control and limitation* sense, especially population control and limitation.

- “Manage” is contrasted with “sustainable” (“a managed but sustainable wolf population”), suggesting that management is a matter of population limitation and control.
- “Managing wolves” is said to be a course of action which interests only some people (those who “are interested in managing wolves” and “have been waiting for this day a long time”).
- “Managing wolves” is used in parallel with “controlling their numbers at a certain level.”

Though said to be compatible with maintaining a “sustainable” and “viable” population, as used here “manage” clearly does not encompass the practices of “recovery,” “enhancing,” or “re-establishing” wolf populations.

Note that Vander Zouwen expresses his “hope that it comes across” that WI-DNR’s goal is “a managed but sustainable wolf population in the state for all time to come.” In this communicative situation—speaking before the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board and a broader audience of some 100 people, regarding the state’s upcoming wolf hunting and trapping seasons—his expression of “hope” can be heard as an expression of some uncertainty as to whether the goal of “a managed but sustainable population” will be apprehended by listeners. This uncertainty seems to include doubt as to whether the establishment of wolf hunting and trapping seasons will be perceived as consistent with population sustainability. Similarly, Thiede’s prior assertion—that the “goal remains” assurance of “a viable and sustainable population of wolves in Wisconsin for future generations”—can be heard as a response to other assertions, particularly that the establishment of wolf hunting and trapping seasons indicates that WI-DNR’s goal has shifted to something other than ensuring long-term viability of the state’s wolf population.

These communicative tensions—between wolf-population sustainability and “management” of wolves through public hunting and trapping—can be attributed, at least in part, to that particular scene in Stevens Point in July 2012. Then and there, the final parameters for Wisconsin’s first wolf hunting and trapping seasons were in the process of being established. There was, not unexpectedly, controversy over the creation of those seasons, the goals of those seasons, the relative speed with which the legislature acted in the wake of the federal delisting, and the fact that the seasons and many of their parameters were legislatively mandated rather than determined by the DNR and Natural Resources Board. In that particular scene, the concept of

protecting an endangered species was clashing with the concept of hunting and trapping a now-delisted species.¹⁷

4. “I’d rather call it a wolf stewardship plan”

“Management” is a central and dominant term in the wildlife-related discourses employed by professionals and laypeople alike. But the ubiquity of the term does not go unquestioned within wildlife-related professions, nor even among predator biologists in the western Great Lakes region. Consider, for example, a comment made by a DNR biologist I interviewed. He was speaking of how wolf-related decision making “comes down to differences of opinion” among members of the public, and of how state biologists are, by virtue of the roles they play, “kind of in the middle” of those differences.

```
we're always trying to manage
I guess management is
  not necessarily the
  best term
I think
you know we have a wolf management plan
  I'd rather call it a wolf stewardship plan
    because that's really
      we don't necessarily have to manage wolves
it's just
you know we need to
we need to be good stewards
  and management is a component of that
    and that's kind of more of a societal
      aspect that has different influences
        in what those management
          methods are
```

As he speaks, this biologist pauses to question the use—in his own speech and by his department, state, and profession—of the terms “manage” and “management” to describe the wolf-oriented actions humans need to take, and expresses a preference for the term

¹⁷ One Wisconsin biologist remarked to me that the clash at this meeting was more between the concept of protecting an endangered species and the concept of “demolishing and eliminating” a now-delisted species.

“stewardship.” When he speaks of “management” here—saying that “we don’t necessarily have to manage wolves,” and that “management methods” are influenced by a “societal aspect”—it is clear that he means *population control and limitation*. He is not speaking of *production management, all-purpose management, or depredation management*. His utterances can be restated as follows:

- We don’t necessarily have to control and limit the wolf population.
- Controlling or limiting the wolf population is an optional component of good stewardship.
- Decisions about controlling or limiting the wolf population numerically or geographically, and potential methods for doing so (e.g., public hunting and trapping), are influenced by social values and differences of opinion.

This usage affirms that “wolf management” is, to this speaker’s ear and in this institutional discourse, predominantly used to indicate active control and limitation of the wolf population, especially through hunting and trapping.

In the contrast he draws between “management” and “stewardship”—and the preference he expresses for the latter—we hear a metadiscursive commentary on, and criticism of, the key term “management” and its implications. Being “good stewards” is, he says, the imperative course of action. Control and limitation of the wolf population, on the other hand, is optional. Rather than use this discourse’s predominant terminology—speaking of himself as a “wolf manager” guided by a “management plan”—he would prefer to speak of himself as a “wolf steward” guided by a “stewardship plan.” “Management,” with its implications of population control, limitation, and manipulation, does not express the truth as he sees it, either regarding the program of action needed in relation to wolves or regarding his professional role. The term, in short, does not say what he wants to say. “Stewardship,” he suggests, says it better.

In a similar way, Heberlein (2005) writes of the English term “management” as a “manipulative word” suggestive of “control.” He notes that the Swedish language includes no word for “management.” Though Swedish speakers have increasingly borrowed the English term,

in relation to wildlife they have long employed Swedish words which translate more closely as “caretaking.” Further, he reports that Swedish culture traditionally included no concept of humans being able to “control nature.” And he asks U.S. wildlife professionals to “try for a week not to use the word ‘manage’ and replace it with ‘caretaking’” and to refer to themselves as “Wildlife Caretakers.”

Heberlein and the biologist quoted above express much the same sentiment about and criticism of the term “management,” including a preference for alternatives (“stewardship,” “caretaking”). For Heberlein, as for this biologist and others, the trouble with “management” is not simply its specific population-limitation meaning but its more general connotations of manipulation and control, including control of something that is troublesome or dangerous. We need not look far to be reminded of these understandings of “manage.” We can look, for instance, to colloquial uses (e.g., “anger management”), dictionary definitions (e.g., “to have control of,” “to make and keep compliant”), and etymological roots (*maneggiare*: to handle, train, and control a horse). We will return to the term and idea of “management” in subsequent chapters.

H. Two sequences in wolf “management” and “conservation”

As we have heard, the 1999 Wisconsin and 2001 Minnesota wolf management plans both take the importance of wolf recovery for granted. Propositionally speaking, both assume the following:

- When “endangered” or “threatened,” wolves should be “managed” to “enhance” “populations,” “restoring” and “re-establishing” them as “viable” and “sustainable.”

Both plans also depict control- and limitation-oriented “population management” as an option to be considered, with related decisions to be based on both scientific data and social values.

Regarding the compatibility of wolf conservation and population management, both assume the following:

- “Wolf populations” can remain “viable” and “sustainable” while being “managed” and “controlled.”

There are, however, differences between the sequential logics of the two plans. The Minnesota plan illustrates one sequence.

- “Wolves in Minnesota will continue to be allowed to naturally expand their range in the state. To assure the continued survival of the wolf in Minnesota, the minimum statewide winter population goal is 1,600 wolves. There is no maximum goal” (p. 20).
- “Population management measures, including public taking (i.e., hunting and trapping seasons) or other options, will be considered by DNR in the future” (p. 20).

Here, a set of intentions is clearly stated: (1) to allow wolves to “naturally expand their range,” (2) to assure a minimum winter population of 1,600 wolves, (3) not to set a population cap, and (4) to consider “population management measures” in the future. Once the wolf population has recovered, the state’s role will be to ensure a minimum wolf population while also controlling depredation. Population management (i.e., limitation or control) will be considered as an option, but will not hinge on any maximum population goal or threshold.

This sequential logic was reflected in Minnesota’s stated objective when wolf hunting and trapping seasons were established in 2012: to keep the state’s wolf population at its current level, a winter count of roughly 3,000. This logic also echoes the statements made by the biologist who spoke of needing to be “good stewards,” and of not “necessarily [having] to manage” (i.e., control and limit) the wolf population. The 2001 Minnesota plan, in short, expresses a sequential logic of wolf conservation which could be called *recovery-and-stewardship*: (A) population recovery leads to (B) stewardship of the recovered population, with limitation and control as an option.

The Wisconsin plan illustrates another sequence.

- “A public harvest can be considered if other control activities do not adequately maintain the population near the 350 goal. All other control activities such as government trappers, law enforcement officer controls, and landowner controls will first be used to attempt to maintain the population at this goal” (p. 21).
- “Any public harvest would be closely monitored to ensure that the population does not decline below the management objective of 350 wolves” (p. 21).

Here, a different set of intentions is clearly stated: (1) to “maintain” (i.e., limit and control) wolves slightly above (“near” but not “below”) the winter population goal of 350, (2) to “ensure that the population does not decline below the management objective of 350 wolves,” and (3) to use a variety of “control activities,” potentially including “public harvest,” to keep the wolf population near that objective. Once the wolf population has recovered, the state’s role will be to keep the wolf population at or slightly above 350, while also controlling depredation. Active management (i.e., limitation or control) of the population will be necessary if the population rises much above a winter count of 350.

This sequential logic was reflected in Wisconsin’s stated objective when wolf hunting and trapping seasons were established in 2012: to reduce the state’s wolf population from its current level (a winter count of roughly 850) to near the goal (a winter count of 350). This logic also echoes the statements made by Vander Zouwen, who spoke of “waiting for . . . a long time” for the opportunity to manage wolves and “[control] their numbers at a certain level.” The 1999 Wisconsin plan, in short, expresses a sequential logic of wolf conservation which could be called *recovery-and-control*: (A) population recovery leads to (B) limitation and control of the recovered population.

Though reflected in the Minnesota and Wisconsin plans, these two sequences cannot be simply correlated with the two states. In each state, both discursive sequences are employed by wildlife professionals, including DNR biologists. As we shall hear, both are also used by hunters and hunting communities outside of government agencies and wildlife professions.

I. “Predator” as “game”

Historically, as we have heard, “predator control” was described and practiced as an integral part of game management and production. Predators, it was understood, posed threats to valued populations of wild game just as they did to valued domestic animals. Predators were, therefore, “controlled” to the degree possible, sometimes resulting in landscape-wide extirpations.

As we have also heard, the two long-fused purposes of predator control—to prevent depredation on livestock and to prevent predation on game—have been decoupled in contemporary wolf management discourses in the western Great Lakes region. There, in the case of wolves and deer, state wildlife managers have officially abandoned predator control for game purposes.

As wolf hunting and trapping seasons have been proposed and implemented in the region in recent years, another shift has also been evident. DNR officials have spoken of managing wolves as “game.”

- Kurt Thiede of WI-DNR was quoted as expressing “hope that changing wolves to a game animal [will] change the idea that they are vermin,” and as saying that “as a game animal, they will have more value” (Eisele, August 10, 2012).
- Dan Stark of MN-DNR was quoted as describing his department’s intention to manage wolves “as a prized and high-value fur species by setting the season when pelts are prime, limiting the take through a lottery, and requiring animals be registered” (Spielman, 2012).

A central idea here is that “game” animals—unlike “vermin”—are recognized as having “value” and are “prized” by those who pursue them. Restated as a premise, this could read:

- Hunted species are valued species.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the concept of valuing the wolf as game goes back, in North America, at least to 1914, when Henry Wharton Shoemaker wrote of wolf hunting as a potential “sport-royal.” But the idea never really caught on, to say the least. Now, a century after Shoemaker’s suggestion, is it possible to “change wolves to a game animal”? In the western Great Lakes region, are cultural conceptions of wolves and game sufficiently compatible?

1. Kinds of “sustainable”

One difference between conceptualizations of game and conceptualizations of wolves is audible in how the term “sustainable” is applied to each. “Game” management has long been aimed at a “sustainable” “crop” of animals. Here, the term is used to describe a population which

will be “maintained and enhanced” and which will thus be of long-term benefit to humans, especially by providing a “sustainable” “yield” in the form of hunting “harvest.”

Consider how Minnesota’s deer management goals, for instance, are depicted in the state’s 2001 wolf plan: “Ungulates are managed on a regional basis to ensure *sustainable harvests for hunters*, sufficient numbers for aesthetic and nonconsumptive use, and to minimize damage to natural communities and conflicts with humans such as depredation of agricultural crops” (p. 17, emphasis added).

Wolves, in contrast, have not been traditionally “managed” or “produced” as a desired and valued “game crop.” Rather, they have been historically (1) “controlled” and extirpated as “predators” and “vermin,” and (2) “protected,” “recovered,” and “conserved” as “threatened and endangered species.”

In contemporary wolf conservation discourse, we do not generally find expressions of the idea that wolves are to be managed or stewarded to “ensure sustainable harvests.” Rather, we find that they are to be managed or stewarded to ensure a “sustainable population”—a population which will “survive” rather than vanish, which can be expected to remain “viable” in the long-term, and which will not again be listed as “threatened” or “endangered,” but which may be subject to various “control actions” including public hunting and trapping.

Note the markedly different meanings-in-use of “sustainable.” Deer management is intended to produce a “sustainable harvest” (high “crop” yields within the limits of maintaining healthy habitats and ecosystems). Wolf management is intended to maintain a “sustainable population” (one that will not become threatened or endangered, even if “control actions” are taken).

Similarly, though the term “harvest” is applied to wolves and other predators, this is most sensibly attributed to the fact that this is the term typically used to describe the legal killing of

wildlife in the context of public hunting and trapping seasons.¹⁸ Likewise, the use of “production” to describe the birth of wolf pups is apparently rooted in the broader, agricultural discourse of wildlife management. The application of these terms to wolves does not appear to stem from a conceptualization of these animals as a desired and valued “crop.”

2. Hunting as end or means?

Along related lines, a difference can be heard in how hunting is depicted. High-quality public deer hunting is said to be a primary goal and purpose of deer management. Management for a healthy and abundant deer population is a means to an end: good deer hunting. We can summarize this with a simple proposition.

- “Hunting” “harvest” is a goal of “deer management.”

In relation to wolves, public hunting “harvest” is not typically said to be a goal. Rather, “harvesting” wolves through hunting and trapping is described primarily as a means to an end, as a tool for achieving limitation and control of the wolf population. We can summarize this with a simple proposition as well.

- “Hunting and trapping” are “control actions” that can be used to “manage wolves.”

Note the reversed emphases:

- Hunting deer (deer harvest) is primarily an end *goal* of game production.
- Hunting (and trapping) wolves is primarily a *means* to an end goal (wolf control).

Hunting plays a significantly different primary role in each (end versus means) and the term “management” is used in a significantly different primary way: “production” versus “control.” (As often noted in state deer management plans, deer do cause substantial agricultural damage. And hunting “harvest” of deer has been employed as a tool for population control, to keep deer

¹⁸ Public “harvest” is distinguished from “lethal control” of predators by government trappers.

numbers within a range that farmers can tolerate, and to reduce over-browsing of habitat. Yet producing relatively high deer numbers *for* harvest remains a core goal of deer management.)

Game management is practiced, and was developed by Leopold and others, because game species (e.g., deer) were highly valued, particularly by hunters. That is to say, cultural value placed on game and hunting drove the development of modern game management a century ago and continues to drive its practice today. Game management—which has historically included predator control—was and is a means to achieve an end goal rooted in preexisting values and desires.

The suggestion and hope expressed in the Great Lakes region in recent years—“that changing wolves to a game animal [will] change the idea that they are vermin”—is quite different. Rather than a species long culturally valued as “game,” here wildlife professionals are speaking of a species long culturally devalued as predatory “vermin.” Rather than game management practices serving widespread preexisting cultural values (as in the case of deer management) here it is asserted that defining and managing a species as game might change cultural values.

This raises questions. For instance, do particular regulatory actions—such as designating the wolf as a “game animal,” or “limiting the take through a lottery”—constitute “managing wolves as game”? What does it mean to speak of wolves as a “game animal” when “wolf management” is spoken of and conceptualized primarily in terms of population limitation and control and wolf hunting and trapping are conceptualized primarily as “control actions”?

Referring to the situation in his state, a Wisconsin biologist asked whether speaking of wolves as game might be “a Trojan horse.” He expressed the understanding that the language of “game” is “no mistake” and is “a reflection of . . . values”; in other words, the term “game” invokes the idea of valuing a species and the related history of highly successful game conservation efforts. Yet his impression was that—in connection with wolves in Wisconsin—the

language of “game” was “lipstick on a pig,” a thin veneer for predator control and population reduction. Similarly, another Wisconsin hunter wrote this to me in an e-mail:

Although I am a hunter and value the species I hunt, I’m just not buying this argument [that hunted species are valued species]. Varmint hunters love to hunt species they don’t value, so hunting doesn’t automatically change their thinking about coyotes, prairie dogs, woodchucks, crows, or California ground squirrels. And if it worked to simply call wolves ‘game,’ that would be a historical first.

So how do various wolf hunters understand what they are doing? Are they “controlling” a problematic “predator”? Are they “harvesting” valued “game”? These questions will resurface as we consider and compare what various hunters have to say about wolves.

Two biologists I interviewed drew a parallel between wolves and muskellunge (a large predatory fish). They spoke of the value anglers ascribe to muskies as a game species and, consequently, the strong support they give to muskie conservation. One biologist’s point was that perhaps the same could happen for wolves in Minnesota, though he noted that muskie conservationists frequently release their catch and also support regulations that require catch-and-release fishing. The other biologist’s point was that many Wisconsin hunters’ views of wolves seem too negative to permit a muskie-like valuation of the fish’s terrestrial counterpart. Other observers and researchers (e.g., Treves & Martin, 2011; Hogberg et al., 2015) have similarly questioned the assumption that hunter support for conservation of game species is translatable to wolves.

J. Summary analysis: Conservation and management in hubs and radiants

Here, as we have heard, the wolf is spoken and written of as a population to be conserved and managed. This institutional (and cultural) discourse is a complex web of symbolic terms, their uses, and their explicit and implicit meanings, a web that encompasses wolves and wolf-human relations, as well as a wider range of ideas.

In preceding sections of this chapter, I have focused attention on particularly central ideas and terms, including “recovery,” “conservation,” and “management,” and on the primary goals

described in state wolf management plans. In the process, several sets of cultural propositions were formulated. Based on those propositions, a number of cultural premises were proposed. In this final section, I revisit these analyses from the perspective of discursive hubs and radiants. My aim here is to summarize the overall discourse, distill its key dimensions, and illuminate how these dimensions relate to one another.

As I have heard and interpreted this discourse, its most prominent hub is action. Primary attention is given to the kinds of action which human beings (notably including wildlife professionals) should take toward wolves. Most generally, such action is described as “management” and “conservation” which, as we have heard, are broad umbrellas, encompassing a wide range of practices and aims, defined and described in terms of science, particularly wildlife biology and ecology (see sections IV.B and IV.C). Along the radiant of dwelling, these practices and aims are underpinned by the idea that humans are responsible for taking (science-based) action to manage and conserve wild species and their habitats.¹⁹

As articulated in the state wolf plans, proper human action is focused on (1) recovering a viable wolf population, (2) maintaining a viable wolf population, and (3) addressing wolf-human conflict.

1. Recovery is described in terms of various actions intended to return the wolf (among other native species) to “significant portions of its original range” and to ensure the sustainability and viability (i.e., to prevent the endangerment) of wolf populations in given areas (e.g., states such as Minnesota and Wisconsin). The language of the ESA and this discourse’s orientation toward wolf “recovery” are underpinned by key ideas concerning action and dwelling, including these: wolves have value to natural systems and to humans; we should not cause wolves to go extinct (see section IV.B).
2. Sequentially following recovery, maintenance of a viable wolf population is described according one of two broad logics: (1) once recovered, wolf populations are to be stewarded, with population limitation and control as an option to be considered, or (2) once recovered, wolf populations are to be limited and controlled (see section IV.H).

¹⁹ As one DNR biologist noted, this idea raises the question of “which wild species” should be prioritized, and for whom: a question which, he remarked, leads to “great conflict” in the case of wolves.

3. The imperative to address wolf-human conflict is rooted in the understanding that the two species often come into conflict when dwelling in proximity to one another. One form of action (depredation management) addresses depredation—the killing of livestock and pets by specific wolves—through various forms of prevention and control, including the killing of those wolves. Another form of action (zone management) addresses geographic distributions of wolves through more widespread control methods, including public hunting and trapping; this second form is based on the understanding that human land-use patterns determine the likelihood of conflict, and that wolves do not belong in places where conflict is likely (see section IV.F).

Historically, game management discourse strongly linked the action of wolf (and other predator) control to concerns over both livestock depredation and predation on deer and other game “crops.” In the western Great Lakes region today, game species (and underlying presumptions about the value of game production) remain central to wildlife conservation and management discourse in general. In this discourse, however, the idea of wolf population control for game purposes has been largely abandoned; whether it has been abandoned in practice and politics is a different question (see section IV.G).

The ubiquitous term “management” is employed in a variety of ways. The differences among its various meanings-in-use make the term somewhat ambiguous. Its predominant meaning in connection with wolves, denoting population limitation and control, leads some speakers of this discourse to question its appropriateness and express preferences for alternatives such as “stewardship” (see section IV.G).

Though wolves’ actions—especially the problematic action of livestock depredation, which is central to descriptions of the conflicted wolf-human relationship—are depicted in this discourse, the primary emphasis is on human actions, including those intended to manage and address such actions by wolves.

The wolf is explicitly identified and defined (1) in scientific terms as a biological species with particular physical, genetic, and behavioral characteristics, and as part of ecological systems, and (2) in legal terms as a species with federal and state statuses which change over time (see section IV.D). Wolves are also defined as a valuable part of nature that must be recovered and

sustained, as a problematic force that must be addressed and controlled, and—potentially—as a “game species” that may become valued as such (see sections IV.E, IV.F, and IV.I).

In both scientific and legal terms, emphasis is placed on the wolf as a population. Wolves—and the aims and measures of wolf population recovery, conservation, and management—are centrally described in terms of numerical abundance, with an emphasis on defining numerically appropriate populations in given areas and with population numbers serving as a kind of balance: not too many, not too few. The idea of wolves as numeric populations and the usefulness of target numbers (e.g., population goals, harvest quotas) in finding such balance are taken for granted here.

Human beings in general, and wildlife professionals in particular, are identified more implicitly. Depicting ways in which we should act, dwell, and relate, this discourse presumes that we are (1) occupants of the landscapes in question and (2) managers and stewards of those landscapes, including wolves and other wild species inhabiting them.

This scientific, rational, institutional discourse does not express or prescribe human emotions. Rather, it mutes them. Feelings about wolves are depicted only as part of the challenging social dynamics with which wildlife professionals contend in the outside world.

Like all cultural discourses, this one is a “historically transmitted expressive system” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 169). Listening for the roots of its terms, uses, and meanings, we can readily hear echoes of ancient historical ideas—and ways of speaking and writing—about human relationships and interactions with nature and wildlife, specifically including predators. As noted, such ideas and culturally significant language are also rooted in a more recent history, in which state and federal wildlife agencies once tasked with the elimination of predators have, over the past century, been increasingly tasked with protecting, conserving, and restoring predators. This discourse stems from multiple fields and sources, including law (e.g., the Endangered Species Act), science (e.g., ecology, conservation biology, game management), agriculture (e.g., animal husbandry), and cultural practices and histories of hunting.

CHAPTER V

TWO DISCOURSES OF PREDATOR CONTROL

This chapter, divided into two sub-chapters, investigates two discourses which express the need to control and manage wolf populations, particularly through public hunting and trapping. Drawing on interviews, instances of public talk, letters to the editor, website content, and other data, I describe and interpret these ways of speaking, which have been central to hunting organizations' public engagement regarding wolves in the western Great Lakes region in recent years. Though both discourses prominently express the need to control and manage wolves in order to reduce predation on game animals, especially deer, they articulate this imperative in differing terms.

A. "Get the wolf population under control"

This first sub-chapter is devoted to describing and interpreting one discourse concerning the need to control and manage wolves. Matters of particular and interrelated concern in this discourse include the following:

- wolves' significant negative impacts on deer and deer hunting;
- wolves' killing of livestock, pets, and bear hounds;
- people's perceptions of, and the risk of, threats to human safety;
- the imposition of wolves and wolf policies by outside political actors whose lives and livelihoods are unaffected;
- abuse of the Endangered Species Act by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others;
- the untrustworthiness of DNR biologists and other government representatives;
- the illegal killing of wolves by local people who, frustrated with government inaction, take matters into their own hands.

My goals are to describe the shape of this discourse and interpret the cultural logic of “getting the wolf population under control” both presumed and created when this discourse is used. Though versions of this discourse are employed across the Great Lakes region, I found it to be particularly prominent in Wisconsin.

1. “The need to control them”

Following introductory remarks by WI-DNR staff and the chair of the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, the first person to testify about wolves at the board’s July 2012 meeting was Wisconsin state legislator Scott Suder. He spoke of his role as co-author and proponent of legislation to “give the DNR authority to begin managing wolves in Wisconsin / using public harvest as a method to control the growing population.” Suder further commented on the proposed rules:

after reviewing the proposed rule
I am disappointed that the harvest levels are not higher
I understand this is the first season
and we need to take a conservative approach
but I do feel it could have been more aggressive
for the past ten years
my office has received numerous calls
concerning wolves
and the need to control them
eighteen counties in northern Wisconsin
have passed resolutions
to manage wolves down to the 350 goal
a number that is part of the DNR wolf management plan
while I understand this is an emergency rule
and the department is working
to develop a permanent rule
I would like to make the legislative intent
of the bill known to this board
to be clear
the intention is to manage wolves down to the 350 goal
which is part of the Wisconsin wolf management plan
that is what my constituents in my district
along with many others
throughout the northern counties
are demanding of legislators
and are demanding of this board

Later in the meeting, related statements were made by individual hunters and representatives of various hunting-related organizations. Mike Brust, president of the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association (WBA), expressed concern that “as structured / this plan may not even / stem the continued increase in the wolf population,” and that there was a “risk . . . of a gross under-harvest / if far too few permits are issued / where the population would actually to continue to grow / contrary to the legislative mandate.” The WBA, Brust said, found the “primary [wolf] range” categorization of “the central forest zone” “especially disturbing because / much of this area is made up of small woodlots / farms / and residences / and is surrounded by areas of very high human population and agricultural use.”

Joe Koback, speaking on behalf of Wisconsin’s chapters of Safari Club International, stated that his group “would like to see higher [harvest] numbers / because the wolf [population] is not stable / it is exploding / and this year’s harvest / will not stop that / it will still grow more.” Al Lobner, speaking on behalf of the Wisconsin Bear Hunters’ Association, said that “at this rate / we will never get the wolf population under control” and that the population should be “reduced before depredation becomes more than our citizens can bear.”

Laurie Groskopf, a hunter and community organizer, expressed similar concern that the framework was “custom-designed to keep the wolf population at the current level / or perhaps even increase it.” She described her several-year effort “to organize citizens / who felt like they weren’t able to voice their feelings about the wolf program,” which led to the eighteen county-board resolutions referenced by Suder.²⁰ Those boards, Groskopf said, “represent a population of 400,000 people / in the heart of wolf territory,” and the resolutions reflect the “extent and depth” of the “dissatisfaction” felt by those people, “a large majority” of whom are “very angry about having wolves there / and about the fact that this wolf program has sort of been forced down their

²⁰ Wolf-control advocates asserted that, by December 2015, this list of Wisconsin county boards had reportedly grown to 32 of the state’s 72, including counties in southwestern Wisconsin, well away from “wolf country.”

throat.” It was, she said, “very important to us in our day-to-day life / that you do something to get this population brought down.”

Each of these speakers articulates key terms and themes echoed by other hunters and hunting organizations in the western Great Lakes region. In the excerpts above, we find emphasis on an imperative for action (“very important . . . that you do something”), particularly the need to “control” and “manage” wolves (“using public harvest as a method to control,” “the need to control them,” “manage wolves down to the 350 goal,” “get this population brought down”). Here, the meanings-in-use of “control” and “manage” clearly echo what I earlier termed *population-control and -limitation management*.

This imperative is articulated in relation to a wolf population said to be “increasing” rapidly (“exploding,” “growing,” “not stable”). A central concern expressed is that actions previously taken have been—and that actions being contemplated will be—insufficient to stabilize, let alone reduce, the wolf population (“this year’s harvest / will not stop that / it will still grow more,” “this plan may not even / stem the continued increase,” “at this rate / we will never get the wolf population under control”).

The imperative for action is also closely linked to the people who dwell in wolf country (“constituents in my district,” “many others / throughout the northern counties,” “citizens,” “residences,” “very high human population,” “400,000 people / in the heart of wolf territory”). Emphasis is placed on expressions of their will (“numerous calls,” “resolutions,” “what [they] are demanding”) and their feelings and lived experiences (“dissatisfaction,” “very angry,” “more than our citizens can bear,” “feelings about the wolf program,” “our day-to-day life”).

2. “Save what’s left of the deer herd”

As these and other hunters speak of it, the imperative to control the wolf population is strongly tied to hunting, particularly the hunting of white-tailed deer. A few letters to the editor published in *Wisconsin Outdoor News* provide a helpful introduction.

- One expressed this concern: “Assembly Bill 502, if passed, would maybe have an effect on wolf numbers in five or more years. That’s too far out to save our deer, elk, and livestock, and give some relief to northern Wisconsin’s deer-hunting economy. A better solution is a statewide year-round \$100 bounty on wolves. Acceptable wolf numbers would be reached more quickly. The goal is to eliminate as many wolves as soon as possible to give deer and elk a chance” (February 24, 2012).
- Another, addressing the lack of “mature bucks” available for hunting, suggested that the state “get rid of at least two-thirds of the wolves” (June 15, 2012).
- A third stated that “the way the antlerless hunters and predators are killing deer off, the whitetail will be extinct before my grandkids are old enough to hunt.” The writer made several “suggestions for the DNR to save what’s left of the deer herd in northern Wisconsin,” including “giv[ing] out 3,000 wolf permits with landowner preference.” The letter stated that the wolf “blunder . . . is the main reason our deer population has crashed,” and urged “deer hunters who are disgusted with the wolf problem” to contact Wisconsin’s lead wolf biologist (July 13, 2012).

Similar letters have appeared in *Minnesota Outdoor News*.

- Regarding the deer population, one described a significant “problem”: “It’s the wolf, which has proliferated to an uncontrollable number. There should be an open year-round season on this top predator until the original goal number is reached, not just a handful of licenses” (January 6, 2012).
- A week later, another had this to say: “I have talked to many hunters across northern Minnesota, and their one common theme is ‘there are too many wolves’ and ‘there are more wolf tracks than deer tracks.’ The way we’re headed is soon there will be very few deer and fewer wolves because they have eaten their No. 1 food source down to nothing . . . I hope the DNR moves aggressively on getting a reasonable wolf season going this fall” (January 13, 2012).
- A third suggested calculations leading to this conclusion: “It’s entirely possible that 100,000 to 150,000 deer are ‘harvested’ by wolves each year in our state. (Note that the annual harvest by deer hunters in Minnesota in recent years has been in the 180,000 to 200,000 range.) Yet, incredibly, in this publication (and I’m sure others), comments from our DNR repeatedly state that it’s habitat, hunting, and natural cycles that have caused the decline of Minnesota’s deer herd” (March 2, 2012).

Note the strong feelings (e.g., “disgusted”) and also the urgency expressed here. “Five or more years,” it is said, is “too far out.” There is a need to “move aggressively,” as wolves are “killing deer off.” The aim, it is said, should be “to eliminate as many wolves as soon as possible,” and to “get rid of at least two-thirds of the wolves,” in order to “save what’s left of the deer herd.”

Emphasis is placed on big game (especially “deer” and “mature bucks”). These animals are, like livestock, referred to using the possessive pronoun “our,” suggesting collective human ownership (“our deer, elk, and livestock,” “our deer population”).²¹ In these letters, the link between (A) “eliminating” wolves by a variety of means, and (B) “saving” animals valued and used by humans, echoes traditions of public predator control, in which game purposes have long been fused with livestock purposes.²²

In referring to wolves killing deer, one of the letters above uses the term “harvest” but puts it in scare quotes, indicating irony. In the next sentence, the same term is applied to hunters killing deer, without the scare quotes. In other words, hunters killing deer at the described level constitutes a true harvest, while wolves killing deer at a similar level constitutes something else.

In an interview, the leader of a hunting advocacy group put it this way:

```
we want them controlled
  where everything's more balanced
because right now
  based on at least the paradigm we were used to
    before we had wolves
it's now out of balance
  there's quite a few wolves
  and a lot less deer
. . .
we asking for less [wolves]
we want more deer
we want more bears
```

²¹ Referring to Boitani (1995), one biologist I met commented on the idea that agricultural and herding people have historically tended to despise wolves, while people in traditional hunting societies have tended to admire them: “In modern hunting with baiting and intense efforts to attract deer to specific areas for harvest, hunters are perhaps creating almost a herding mentality toward deer as ‘my deer.’ Such concepts of ownership toward wildlife are perhaps part of the reason many modern hunters oppose predators. Perhaps part of the challenge in wildlife management is to manage more like traditional hunting societies and not like agriculture.”

²² Though one of the letters quoted above proposed a bounty on wolves, this idea is not central to this discourse and is explicitly rejected by many who speak in this way.

As articulated in these and many other similar statements, the basic problem is said to be excessive “wolf numbers” which have led to an “out of balance” situation characterized by “a lot less deer.”

More broadly, this problem is described in connection with multiple predator species. An article on coyote hunting, for instance, depicts the coyote as a “heavily furred meat-eater” and describes the importance of taking careful aim at—and killing—a coyote in terms of the animal’s consumption of deer: “since all of the coyote droppings I’d seen in the past few days were full of deer hair, I made sure I concentrated a little harder on my sight picture” (Zeug, 2012). The link, between predators’ eating of a valued game species and hunters’ interest in controlling predator numbers, is explicit. This concern was succinctly summarized in another letter to *Wisconsin Outdoor News*: “large predator numbers reduce game populations” (January 27, 2012).

a. “Powerful predators”

In this discourse, wolves are often described as “top predators” and “powerful predators” (a phrase often used in *Wisconsin Outdoor News* editorials). Their effectiveness and power is said to set them apart from other predators. In one interview, a hunter described how he thought wolves were impacting his deer hunting.

```
the thing with wolves is they
  they don't stop at fawns
  they pretty much prey on deer all year round
  and they eat a lot
. . .
do bears have an impact?
  sure
do coyotes?
  sure
bobcats?
  sure
but most of that is on fawns
  and I think that
  the fawn population
```

is more durable than
the adult population²³
and that's where wolves
take their toll
is I think on the adult deer
. . .

fawn mortality is a given
fawn mortality is designed so that
there can be a pretty substantial mortality
and still
the herd can do well
but when you get into adult mortality then it's
it's a different picture
I think that's where the wolves are
having an impact
. . .
hunters I think by and large don't mind the wolf
being there
until it starts really impacting the quality of their hunt

Another hunter I interviewed made related statements:

I don't see what purpose there is
to having them around here

they say they take the weak and the young?
well, they just did a study
and found out they didn't take any of their fawns
. . .
they are killing the mature bucks
there's no doubt about that
after they're dilapidated from going through
breeding season
. . .
and as far as them just killing the weak animals
no

and they're pretty opportunistic killers too
when it comes to deep snow like we had this last winter
they'll go in and kill every deer in an area
because they can

²³ He presumably did not mean that individual fawns are more durable than individual adult deer. Rather, as suggested by later utterances, he meant that deer (like most species) typically sustain very high mortality when very young. In other words, deer can sustain a high number of fawn deaths without much impact on the overall population ("there can be a pretty substantial mortality / and still / the herd can do well").

I'm not saying they're bad
they're not bad animals
they're just animals
they just do what they do
they're not evil or bad
I don't hate them
they're just animals that do what they do
and if the conditions are right
and the deer are having trouble moving
and the snow's deep
they will do away with them
well, maybe those animals would have starved anyway
I don't know

I just don't see what good they are

Wolves are large and powerful enough to kill adult deer. It is said that “they don't stop at fawns” as other local predators tend to do. According to some accounts, they do not even take many fawns; according to others, they do. They “eat a lot” and are able to “prey on deer all year round,” not just in summer when fawns are most vulnerable. Moreover, wolves are “killing the mature bucks.” Such bucks are highly valued by many hunters.

Wolves' killing of mature bucks is described above as occurring after bucks are “dilapidated from going through / breeding season.” Similarly, under other conditions, including deep snow, wolves are said to behave as “opportunistic killers,” killing “every deer in an area because they can.” As one hunter puts it, this doesn't mean wolves are “evil or bad.” But, in the context of this discourse, it does raise the question of “what good they are.” Drawing on key terms employed above, we can formulate these cultural propositions:

- When present in “large numbers,” “predators” “reduce game populations.”
- “Wolves” are “powerful predators” that “eat” “deer” “all year round.”
- “Wolves” are “opportunistic killers” that “eat” “adult deer,” including “mature bucks.”
- “Wolves” are now “here” in “large numbers.”
- We now have “a lot less” “deer” and other “game.”
- We should “get rid of” and “control” the wolves.

Underlying these, we can hear basic premises, including these:

- Wolves kill and eat many deer.
- It is unacceptable for wolves to kill many deer.
- Wolves are a major competitor for hunters.
- Wolves and their impacts are out of control.
- The wolf population should be controlled and reduced.

b. "It just has been terrible"

In this way of speaking about wolves and deer, a central problem articulated is that wolves have impacted hunters' experiences, specifically their opportunities to see and take deer.

In an interview, one hunter put it this way:

it just has been terrible
last year we had probably sixteen people
hunting pretty much the whole nine days
until actually they gave up
because they weren't seeing any deer
and there were no bucks taken
not one

This kind of experience, it was said, has also been shared by others, in other places.

not just our hunting shack but also
the neighboring hunting shack
they've got thousands of acres
practice quality deer management
never shoot does
they've got food plots out there
and all kinds of stuff that they do
to support the deer
and then there's big timber company land around there too
so there's not a lot of hunting pressure
the wolves have absolutely decimated the deer out there
. . .
they've got twenty, twenty-five family members out there
the whole nine day season
and I think they harvested one maybe two
that's not what we traditionally harvested

A letter to *Wisconsin Outdoor News* depicted a similarly altered experience of hunting:

I have hunted in Unit 31 for more than 30 years. Since Oct. 25, I've missed two days of bowhunting. I never saw a buck, and only six does. I may not have the best stands in Unit 31, but when I walk a couple of hours each day looking for sign and see none, I start to wonder. During rifle season, I saw a doe and a fawn, a single fawn, an 8-point buck, which I shot, and four wolves in 50 hours on my stand. After that, I sat two more days, with a doe tag, to see if anything else would walk through. However, after seeing wolves follow my drag trail from my stand to my truck on Wednesday at noon, I never saw another deer . . . In Unit 31, when I registered my buck, they had 11 bucks for 94 people. Most of what was brought in were does and fawns. Instead of more seasons and doe tags, why don't we try building up the herd to realistic numbers? (January 13, 2012)

As we listen to these hunters' verbal depictions of their experiences, we can hear a dramatic and negative change described, from how good the deer hunting used to be ("what we traditionally harvested") to how bad the deer hunting has become ("terrible," "no bucks taken," "one maybe two," "never saw a buck," "never saw another deer") despite concerted hunter effort ("the whole nine day season," "missed two days," "50 hours"). In this discourse, this dramatic change in experience is linked directly to the increased presence of wolves ("the wolves have absolutely decimated the deer out there," "after seeing wolves follow my drag trail").

In these depictions of changed experiences of deer hunting (action) over time, another discursive hub (dwelling) is also prominent. This hunting, for instance, is described as occurring in particular places ("our hunting shack," "the neighboring hunting shack," "Unit 31," "my stand") in which individuals and families ("our," "they," "twenty-five family members") have hunted over extended periods of time ("traditionally," "more than 30 years"). In these depictions of relationships with place over time, we can hear a valued sense of tradition-in-place, a valued belief in stewarding deer habitat and hunting grounds ("quality deer management," "food plots," "all kinds of stuff that they do to support the deer"), and a valued confidence in local knowledge, perspective, and observations of the change that has occurred ("I have hunted in Unit 31 for more than 30 years . . . when I walk a couple of hours each day looking for sign and see none, I start to wonder").

Employing participants' terms, these cultural propositions can be formulated:

- “Wolves” have “decimated” the “deer.”
- As a result, the “hunting” has been “terrible” in and around “traditional” hunting places, including “stands,” “hunting shacks,” and lands long managed “to support the deer.”

Audible here is a strongly felt dissatisfaction with the diminishment of long-valued traditional hunting experiences, in places to which people have a longstanding sense of connection and feel a sense of stewardship responsibility, especially in relation to the deer they hunt. As described, this diminishment is so intense that hunting can begin to feel futile (“they gave up / because they weren’t seeing any deer”).

On occasion, hunters such as these say that it’s “hard to know” precisely “how much” wolves are impacting their hunting. On occasion, they also say that wolves are not decimating deer everywhere (e.g., “it’s not generalized across Wisconsin that the deer herd’s affected”) but are, rather, affecting deer and deer distribution in specific places (e.g., “it’s more localized in the areas where the wolf packs are fairly strong”). Such imprecision and localization, however, do not alter the deep dissatisfaction and frustration expressed by these hunters.

c. “A way of life”

To understand this dissatisfaction and frustration concerning the diminishment of long-valued traditional hunting experiences, and the broader discourse in which these feelings are expressed, we must attend to other things these hunters have to say about their hunting.

As one hunter put it during an interview, “these hunting shacks / they’re not just a hobby / it’s like a way of life.” In this utterance, the places where hunting is practiced—“hunting shacks” and, by extension, the land around them where hunting occurs—serve as potent symbols of a “way of life,” the status and value of which are explicitly stated (“not just a hobby”). In other words, these places and practices (hunting deer, building and maintaining hunting shacks, stewarding deer and deer habitat, and the like) are not expendable or trivial. Rather, these places

and practices constitute a meaningful way of dwelling to which participants feel strongly attached. As spoken of here, deer hunting is not merely a specific, isolated practice. Similarly, hunting locations are not merely physical places. Rather, both practice and places hold deeply symbolic meanings. For these hunters, this meaningful “way of life” is at stake in ongoing debates over wolves.

During an interview, the leader of one hunting organization spoke about an opinion survey that was then being conducted concerning wolves. Though anticipating that the results would be informative, and would provide additional insight into the views of “the public” and various “stakeholders,” he noted that “the problem with that survey / is that it’s the total population.” As a result, he said, this survey would continue a pattern in which “the weighted impact on hunters” has been “neglected.” Such broad public opinion research, he stated, “doesn’t really say how hunters feel about this.” The members of his organization, he said, provide its leadership with “a lot of input” about wolves and “generally they want to see the population reduced / they don’t want it / very few want it eliminated / but they would like to see it where it’s not causing substantial impacts on the deer herd.”

Here, the discursive hubs of identity (“hunters”) and feeling (“how hunters feel about this”) are central. The feelings and desires of hunters are described as being overlooked by public opinion research. This is said to be a “problem” because the burgeoning wolf population has a “weighted impact on hunters,” particularly by “causing substantial impacts on the deer herd.” In other words, wolves are said to have a disproportionate impact on deer hunters, while public opinion research on wolves is distributed evenly across all people. These disproportionate impacts on, and the feelings and desires of, hunters (a minority) are said to be unfairly “neglected.”

Drawing on these interview excerpts, we can formulate these cultural propositions:

- “Hunting” and “hunting shacks” house “a way of life.”

- The wolf “population” has an “impact” on “hunters” and their “way of life” by causing “impacts” on “the deer herd.”
- Public policy and public opinion research on wolves have “neglected” this “impact” and have not reflected “how hunters feel.”

Underpinning these are several premises:

- Hunting is central to a valued way of living, encompassing valued relationships with places and deer.
- Hunters feel strongly about that way of living.
- Wolves have greatly diminished hunters’ valued way of living and their experiences in relation with places and deer.
- Other people should—but often do not—respect that way of living and hunters’ feelings about it.

In this discourse, in short, hunting is spoken of as a valued practice performed in particular places and as a symbol of a broader way of life. That practice, that broader way of life, and the impacts of wolves on both are depicted as being ignored and neglected by society at large and by those making wolf-related policy decisions.

3. “It changes your whole life”

In this discourse, however, deer and deer hunting are not the only dimensions of human experience said to be impacted by wolves. Recall, for instance, Al Lobner’s statement during the July 2012 Natural Resources Board meeting in Stevens Point, regarding the need to reduce the wolf population “before depredation becomes more than our citizens can bear.” Though speaking as a hunter and on behalf of the Wisconsin Bear Hunters’ Association, Lobner spoke of all local people (“citizens”) and what they can tolerate. During an interview, another hunter described traditional views and local experience in northern Wisconsin, beginning with an overall

“uneasiness” felt by people in the 1980s, when wolves were just beginning to repopulate the state and were seen only rarely.²⁴

they cause trouble
they were after your animals
they were a danger to people
and that's the way people thought of them
and that's the way people think of them nowadays
if they have direct experience with them
. . .
it's about people's day to day lives and
how comfortable they feel in their surroundings
and it's about farmers being able to have
different kinds of animal husbandry
that they're not going to go to bed thinking
'oh, is this the night it's going to happen?'
. . .

it changes your whole life
you can't take your dog for a walk
without thinking about it
people in the neighborhood do not let their children
and grandchildren play outside
the little ones by themselves
like we used to do when I was little
. . .
the deer hunting
the farming
the family life
the outdoor recreation
the hound hunting
it's all profoundly affected

Consider, too, the impacts enumerated in a few letters to *Wisconsin Outdoor News*:

- “Large predator numbers reduce game populations. We are clearly seeing that from ongoing deer surveys, and from elk management problems. They also negatively affect non-game animals, and are a danger to pets and livestock” (January 27, 2012).
- “There’s a reason man wiped out wolves in the past: They will eventually wipe everything out if not controlled . . . Wolves are predators that only know how to hunt and kill for food. They spread like wildfire when not managed, and once a food source runs dry, they’ll be waiting at your door for grandchildren to come out and play” (August 24, 2012).

²⁴ Throughout most of the 1980s, Wisconsin DNR reports that there were about five wolf packs in the state, consisting of a total of about twenty wolves at the annual winter low point.

- “There is no question that wolves kill deer, birds, squirrels, rabbits, turkeys, calves, cats, cattle, horses, and elk . . . We had fewer problems when there were no wolves” (November 16, 2012).

Here, wolves are said to be a source of “trouble,” “danger,” and “problems” for humans, domestic animals (including pets, hunting hounds, and livestock), game species, and non-game wildlife species alike. If not “controlled,” they “spread like wildfire” and “wipe everything out.” Such ways of thinking about wolves are said to be locally traditional (“that’s the way people thought of them”) and an inevitable consequence of actually living near wolves (“that’s the way people think of them nowadays / if they have direct experience with them”).

The dramatic increase in the wolf population from the 1980s to the present is described as having serious consequences (“changes your whole life,” “profoundly affected”) for local people’s everyday experiences (“people’s day to day lives”), sense of safety in place (“how comfortable they feel in their surroundings”), and full range of activities (“hunting,” “farming,” “family life,” “outdoor recreation”). Note the emphasis on how people’s experience of dwelling in place has been negatively “changed” and “affected” in recent decades, and on how the growing and unwelcome threat posed by the wolf population has impacted people, making them feel dramatically less “comfortable” in “their surroundings.” Ways of acting and being in place that were once commonplace (“take your dog for a walk,” “let their children and grandchildren play outside”) are now a cause for concern.

a. “When the dogs get killed”

As we have heard, wolves’ impact on deer populations and deer hunting is a central concern in this discourse. Another prominent concern is the threat wolves can pose to hunting dogs (especially bear hounds, which sometimes encounter wolves) and to companion animals. Immediately above, we hear references to both: “hound hunting” and taking “your dog for a walk.”

During interviews I conducted, killings of dogs by wolves were described, for example, as “a very traumatic experience” that “sticks with you.” Hunters spoke of their own and others’ experiences of losing dogs as constituting an important part of the current local situation. The situation includes, as one put it, “the feeling that I’m never going to be able to tell when something bad is going to happen / and when it does happen it’s just going to be so horrible . . . I’m always conscious of where could the wolves be / you never know / I do the best to try and avoid them.”

One hunter I interviewed spoke of an acquaintance whose bird dogs were attacked during a walk. Deeply frightened by having wolves run within fifteen feet of her, the acquaintance acquired and learned to use a handgun for the first time in her life and now has to force herself to get out for walks. The interviewee made these observations:

she creates this little paradise on her grandfather’s land
and builds her house
after working hard as a teacher in Superior her whole life
comes back to have a really good retirement
this happens
it just
every day is clouded by the possibility
that could happen again
. . .
she has to think about this every time she goes
out the door now
and that’s the same way I am
I have to think about
what do I need to do to keep the dogs safe
and still have a life

Another interviewee spoke more specifically of the impacts on people who train and run bear hounds.²⁵

the guys with dogs
their livelihood in terms of
if they guide for bear hunting
is really affected

²⁵ It is legal to hunt bears with hounds in Wisconsin. It is illegal in Minnesota.

and a lot of them
when the dogs get killed
it's personal
. . .
they lose a lot of dogs
. . .
there are sections where they won't even go in
because they know there are wolves in there
so their hunting opportunities are somewhat
in some cases pretty drastically limited

As articulated here, the impacts of the “horrible” and “traumatic” killings of dogs extend beyond the deaths of the dogs and the immediate “personal” effects on the people involved. In some cases, people’s “livelihoods” and “hunting opportunities” are also “affected” and in some cases “drastically limited.”²⁶

More broadly, such killings are said to deeply affect people’s sense of the places where they live and the kind of lives they can lead there. These unwelcome, potent changes are described in terms of awareness (“always conscious of where could the wolves be,” “she has to think about this every time”), emotion (“the feeling that I’m never going to be able to tell when something bad is going to happen”), and action (e.g., carrying a handgun on walks, “what do I need to do to keep the dogs safe”).

These changes are described as affecting one’s entire life (e.g., “still have a life,” “every day is clouded by the possibility”). They are also described as unfair and unreasonable impacts on

²⁶ One biologist commented that it still surprises him that bear hunters get so upset. He noted that, in recent years, 7 to 23 dogs have been killed by wolves annually, and that there are some 2,000 bear hunters in Wisconsin with some 11,000 hounds: “Most probably lose ten times as many dogs to bears. Prior to 2000, bear hunters readily told me about all their dog losses to bears, but in recent years they almost seem to be in denial that it happens. Perhaps it weakens their case when they complain about wolves . . . I guess bear hunters treat death and injury by bears as more of a noble act, but attack by wolves is some kind of deviant act. I suppose most dogs killed by bears are probably not as messy as wolf attacks. The bears just want the dogs to go away and probably more often kill with a swat of the paws that breaks a neck or vertebra, but wolves like to tear their prey apart.” In an e-mail, a Wisconsin hunter who appreciates having wolves around offered these thoughts on bear hunters’ beliefs and attitudes: “They believe that the consequences of a wolf/bear interaction are part of the risk you run, but that wolves are not part of the bargain. When they took up hound hunting, that was not a risk they ever planned on assuming. They can accept it when a bear injures or kills one of their dogs, but not when a wolf does. (Kind of like if you go downhill skiing, you might figure you’ve assumed the risk of falling down and breaking your leg. Part of the deal. But when the cable snaps on the chairlift, that’s not a risk you’ve agreed to assume.)”

valued, hard-earned qualities of life (e.g., “after working hard as a teacher in Superior her whole life / comes back to have a really good retirement”) experienced in valued, long-inhabited places (“she creates this little paradise on her grandfather’s land / and builds her house”).

Specific to dogs, we can formulate these propositions:

- “Wolves” “kill” “dogs.”
- The experience of one’s dog being killed by a wolf is “horrible” and “personal.”
- We have to “think” about keeping our dogs “safe” “every time” we “go out.”

b. “We used to sit down at the picnic table after dark”

As already suggested by excerpts above, in this discourse wolves are also depicted as posing a danger to humans. Though this concern is less prominent than those regarding deer and dogs, it plays a notable role. We heard above, for instance, descriptions of wolves as “a danger to people” and of how “people in the neighborhood do not let their children and grandchildren play outside” for fear that they might be attacked.

During one interview, a hunter said that some bowhunters have begun carrying handguns to protect themselves against wolves, and recounted how a logger friend of his was backed up onto his skidder by an advancing wolf. The man I was interviewing stated that he, personally, had never had a direct confrontation with wolves and has “never been too worried about them / but some people are.”

historically they’re not a big threat
but a lot of it has to do with perception
and the perception of wolves isn’t good

In part, he attributed this to the abundance of European fairy tales about “big, bad wolves.” The effects of such perceptions, however, struck close to home.

my wife
she doesn’t want to go in the backyard
we used to sit down at the picnic table after dark
have a little fire down there
she’s just not comfortable with that anymore

and if you multiply that times how many people
there are like that
is that worth then
having these wolves here?
or an excess population of wolves here
it depends on who you ask

Similarly, another hunter I interviewed stated that “you can’t let your kid ride his bike off down the dirt road.” Depicting a risky scenario (“what if he fell off his bike and broke his leg / and he’s just laying there”) she stated that a wolf attack would still be unlikely (“even with that / probably still nothing would happen”). She also noted that local people face much more credible threats in their daily lives, including the simple act of driving an automobile. Yet their sense of the potential danger posed by wolves remains (“you just never know / and everybody up here is very surprised that there hasn’t been a negative interaction like that already”).

A MN-DNR official I interviewed in the autumn of 2013 mentioned a recent incident in which a wolf bit a Minnesota teenager as he lay on the ground outside his tent at a campground in the Chippewa National Forest. As this official put it, the incident “refueled the discussions” and local people “felt vindicated” because “everybody around here” has a personal or family “story” of “somebody encountering a wolf / and the wolf having no fear.”

that’s consistent
I mean you don’t hear that about bears
you don’t hear that about other predators
but with the wolf
people just have always sensed they have no fear
you know
it was only a matter of time

With apparent sympathy for local understandings of wolves, and apparent skepticism regarding the state’s view of the event, the official went on:

and yet of course the DNR position is that
this wolf was deformed
it was a very rare incident

it had a deformed jaw²⁷
but
. . .
mothers with small children and stuff
were suddenly much more concerned about the issue

Similarly, an online comment—made in response to an opinion piece expressing dismay over the “misinformation and fear associated with the wolf” (Weber, 2011)—asserted that “it is just a matter of time before someones kid [sic] gets drug off while playing in their own yard.”

In these and other depictions, it is clearly acknowledged that wolf attacks on humans are far less likely than wolf attacks on dogs. Yet people’s sense of potential danger to human life (“perception,” “you just never know”) is spoken of as an important dimension of the situation.

As with the risk posed to dogs, this discourse depicts significant changes to people’s sense of the places where they live, and the loss of comfort, ease, and a valued way of living. In that valued way of living, children could play alone outdoors, a boy could ride his bike down the road, and a husband and wife could comfortably enjoy a fire by their backyard picnic table after dark. Note that the sense of potential danger is said to affect intimate dwelling places, very close to home (e.g., “the backyard,” “the picnic table,” “the neighborhood”) where people should presumably feel safe, altering not only people’s feelings but also their actions.

Regarding the broader impacts of wolves on daily life, these propositions sum up much of what is said here:

- Wolves have “no fear” of, and are “a danger” to, people.
- We cannot let “children” “play outside.”
- Even if wolves are not “a big threat” to human safety, the “perception” of wolves is “not good.”

²⁷ The wolf, which had also been observed engaging in other unusual behavior, was trapped and killed two days after the incident. The necropsy report indicated that the animal had “a severe facial deformity, dental abnormalities and brain damage caused by infection.” Its stomach contained only the remains of fish, further suggesting an impaired ability to hunt. According to MN-DNR wolf biologist Dan Stark, the wolf’s condition explained its behavior; he expressed surprise that “a wolf in this condition survived to this point given its reduced ability to survive in the wild” (Smith, 2013).

- It is not “worth” making people “uncomfortable” to have “wolves” “here.”
- “Wolves” “profoundly affect” your “whole life”: not just “deer hunting,” but also “farming,” “family life,” and all kinds of “outdoor recreation” including “walking your dog,” hunting with “hounds,” and letting “kids” “play outside.”

c. “Keep them in the remote areas”

In this discourse, the perceived threats posed by wolves to dogs and humans—and the consequent impacts on people’s senses of, and behavior in, their dwelling places—are closely linked to depictions of certain areas as inappropriate for wolves. Recall, for instance, the statement made by Mike Brust, president of the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association, at the July 2012 meeting of the Natural Resources Board in Stevens Point. His organization, he said, found the “primary [wolf] range” categorization of “the central forest zone” “especially disturbing because / much of this area is made up of small woodlots / farms / and residences / and is surrounded by areas of very high human population and agricultural use.” In a spring 2015 message published on the WBA website, he also stated that wolves “have clearly overextended their range and have decimated other wildlife populations, not to mention their depredation of livestock, hunting dogs and pets.”

During an interview, one hunter had this to say:

I just want to see less negative interactions
 less interactions of any kind
 and I think in order to do that
 we can still maintain a healthy population of wolves
 keep them in the remote areas
 get them out of the inappropriate areas
 everybody will be much happier
 . . .
 we’ve got wolves around the house that are quite familiar
 from time to time
 and this past few months has been one of those times
 where people in the neighborhood
 are seeing these wolves constantly
 they’re laying around in the middle of the day
 making themselves visible
 and when that starts to happen

you know that the wolves are way too familiar
with human interactions
and that eventually there's a possibility
something could happen

. . .

the real question is where is it appropriate to have wolves
and where is it not?

Another Wisconsin hunter put it this way:

they're around here
which is interesting
because this area is actually considered
non-suitable habitat

. . .

one of the things that I think is a little bit
telling
was back when we first tried to reestablish wolves
in Wisconsin
the idea of what wolf habitat was
was pretty limited
was vast tracts of roadless country
then of course they were protected by
the Endangered Species Act
for many years
and they expanded to
way beyond that
and I guess nobody really expected that

. . .

part of our discussion now revolves around
not so much how many wolves should we have in the state
as where do we want them

A different Wisconsin hunter added these thoughts:

Minnesota and Michigan have these very large expanses
of pretty much vacant unsettled areas
appropriate for wolves

Wisconsin doesn't
it's a lot more broken up

. . .

now because the wolves proliferated
and where else did they have to go basically
they're pretty much everywhere
across the northern part of the state
and the central forest

. . .

they're adaptable animals
they're smart enough to get by on what's there

and I just don't
 a lot of people up here just don't believe
 they belong this close to people
 which is going to cause problems
 . . .
 it's not something that seems to be routine behavior
 for wolves to go after agricultural animals
 I think they prefer to stick to the wild game
 and be in wild areas if they can
 it's only when they learn a behavior
 or they're desperate for food
 that that happens
 . . .
 it's fine if they want to put them in places
 where there's not too many people
 and there's hardly any agriculture
 that's fine
 but that doesn't describe my area

In these excerpts, certain areas are identified as distinctly human, by virtue of how they are used by people (e.g., “small woodlots,” “farms,” “agricultural use”) and the full-time presence of people (e.g., “residences,” “areas of very high human population,” “the neighborhood”). Other areas are identified as distinctly wild, by virtue of relative non-use by humans and absence of human settlement (“remote areas,” “wild areas,” “vast tracts of roadless country,” “very large expanses of pretty much vacant unsettled areas,” “places where there’s not too many people and there’s hardly any agriculture”). The latter are depicted as “appropriate for wolves,” the former as “inappropriate” and “non-suitable habitat.”

The overall problem is said to be that the wolf population, under Endangered Species Act protection, has expanded beyond appropriate areas and into inappropriate areas (“clearly overextended their range,” “expanded to way beyond that,” “proliferated,” “they’re pretty much everywhere”). Wolves are described as having become too casual about being near humans in these inappropriate areas (“way too familiar with human interactions,” “they’re laying around in the middle of the day / making themselves visible”). These broad problems of territorial overextension and over-familiarity are described as causing more specific problems by posing risks for humans and domestic animals (“depredation of livestock, hunting dogs and pets,”

“negative interactions,” “going to cause problems”). Wolves’ territorial overextension is also said to cause problems for other wildlife species (“decimated other wildlife populations”).²⁸

In response to wolves expanding beyond “their range” into human areas, particular actions are prescribed. First, we need to focus less on the question of wolf population numbers and more on the “real question” (“where do we want them?”; “where is it appropriate to have wolves and where is it not?”). With “appropriate” areas defined, we then need to take action to restrict wolves to those areas (“keep them in the remote areas / get them out of the inappropriate areas”).

As a result of removing wolves from inappropriate areas, it is said, “everybody will be much happier.” This improved situation will benefit not only humans but also wolves which are said to “prefer to . . . be in wild areas if they can.” Wolves’ presence in areas of denser human settlement is said to be an involuntary consequence of their growing numbers (“where else did they have to go”). Similarly, wolves are said to “prefer to stick to the wild game.” Their depredation on “agricultural animals” is said to be the result of learned behavior or desperation, not natural or “routine behavior.” Wolves, in other words, are said to prefer to live in wild places and wild ways.

Drawing on participants’ terms, we can formulate several cultural propositions, with dwelling and action as central discursive hubs:

- “Wolves” “belong” in “vast tracts” of “remote,” “wild,” “roadless country.”
- “Wolves” do not “belong” in areas of “high human population” or “agricultural use.”
- “Wolves” have “overextended their range,” “expanding” “way beyond” “appropriate” areas into “non-suitable habitat.”
- In these “inappropriate areas,” wolves spend time too “close to people” and have become “too familiar” with humans.

²⁸ In a more extreme expression of this viewpoint, an online business based in Idaho sells a T-shirt labeling wolves as “eco-terrorists.”

- In these areas, wolves inflict “depredation” and cause “problems.”
- Wolves also “decimate other wildlife.”

The action required to counteract these problems can be articulated by another proposition:

- Humans should “keep” wolves in “remote areas” and “get them out” of “inappropriate areas.”

As I hear it, what these hunters have to say is underpinned by premises including these:

- Wolves are a physical threat to livestock, pets, and hunting dogs.
- Wolves should not be allowed to threaten livestock, pets, hunting dogs, or people.
- Wolves pose dangers—real, potential, and perceived—to humans, especially children, making people feel unsafe.
- Growing wolf populations cause trouble for people, make them feel afraid, change their behavior, significantly diminish their quality of life, and take away valued ways of living.
- Wolves significantly harm other wildlife populations.
- These harms and risks are unfair, unreasonable, and unnecessary

These lead, in turn, to other premises concerning dwelling places and appropriate action:

- Wolves have invaded, and do not belong in, areas densely settled by humans.
- We should restrict wolves to remote, wilderness areas.

4. “Who are you guys to say that we should have these animals?”

In an interview excerpt presented in the previous section, one hunter had this to say: “It’s fine if they want to put [wolves] in places where there’s not too many people / and there’s hardly any agriculture / that’s fine / but that doesn’t describe my area.” This hunter is saying quite clearly that a group of people from outside the local area (“they”) have “put” wolves in places with “people” and “agriculture,” and that these actions have been inappropriate. The following section is devoted to exploring this dimension of this discourse: depictions of who “they” are and the problematic nature of their actions.

a. “More of a stake in the issue”

At the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board meeting in July 2012, Al Lobner, speaking on behalf of the Wisconsin Bear Hunters’ Association, expressed concern about the wolf population being too high. Setting lower population goals and reducing the number of wolves was necessary, he said, “so that we can have a socially acceptable wolf population.” Lobner also drew a distinction between those who are and are not directly impacted by wolves:

certainly those that have nothing to lose
would like to see more wolves on the landscape
but for those that their livelihood depends
on a lower population of wolves
this is not acceptable

During an interview, another hunter voiced similar sentiments:

one of the things that’s very frustrating
for a lot of the people in the north
especially like the beef producers
people who run dogs
and things like that
is they have to deal with them every day
in their business or
when they’re chasing their hounds
or whatever
so they feel they have more of a stake in the issue
than somebody that’s sitting down in
Madison or Milwaukee
and just wants to have more wolves
but doesn’t have to deal with them
on a day to day basis

An article from Michigan summed up the issue this way: “Most of the people who oppose a wolf hunt do not live in places where there are wolves. They aren’t raising livestock in wolf country or running dogs for rabbits or bears. It’s easy for them to protest the hunt from the comfort of their armchairs” (Pink, 2012).

Another Wisconsin hunter posed this question:

what are you guys telling us to do?
you know
‘don’t have a life
don’t have the life you moved up there
and gave up so much to have’?

that's what they're telling us
and for what?
so they can have their symbol of the wilderness?
. . .
who are you guys to say that we should have these animals?

According to this interviewee, some of the people who want wolves in northern Wisconsin are “sportsmen from downstate” who “for whatever reason” oppose the hunting and trapping of wolves: “I don't know . . . I have no idea why those people would be for / moderation / in an area where it's clear” what “the people in wolf territory” want, at least most of the people there:

not everybody obviously
there's a lot of people who
want more wolves up here
or the same as what we've got
but for the most part
. . .
I think it's pretty clear
there's a preponderance of people up here
who think that we need to
cut numbers down
. . .
what if we decided
well, we think we should reestablish buffalo
down in southern Wisconsin
and to hell with what those people
would have to go through
to have thundering herds of buffalo
going across their freeway
you know?
they shouldn't be able to decide for us
what our life is going to be like
and yet they frequently do
in ways more complicated and interesting
than just wolves

Here, a clear distinction is drawn between local people (“us”) and people from elsewhere (“those people”). One obvious dimension is geographic, with “people up here” (“in the north,” “in wolf territory”) being distinguished from people, including other hunters, “from downstate,” “sitting down in Madison or Milwaukee.” This geographic distinction is closely tied to a crucial

difference in lived experience, between those who “have to deal with [wolves] on a day to day basis” and those who are sitting in “the comfort of their armchairs.”²⁹

Listening to these speakers and writers, we can develop a deeper understanding of how they perceive the wolf situation. Being—or identifying with—local people in the north, they see themselves having much “more of a stake in the issue” than people from elsewhere. This greater stake is said to be rooted in real, everyday experiences, emotions, and economic realities (“livelihood”); this is contrasted with the less substantial and less valid preferences (“just wants to have more wolves”) and ideas (“their symbol of the wilderness”) of people from elsewhere who “have nothing to lose.” Though it is acknowledged that people in the north have diverse views (e.g., “not everybody obviously / there’s a lot of people who / want more wolves up here”), those who want wolf numbers to remain stable or rise are said to be a clear minority.

Listening closely, we can also develop an understanding of these speakers’ strong feelings about how wolf protection and growing wolf populations have been imposed on people in the north. Such imposition is “not acceptable” and is “very frustrating,” especially given that the authors of the imposition are perceived as thinking, in essence, “to hell with what those people have to go through.” We can hear the anger about people from elsewhere being “able to decide for us what our life is going to be like.” Recall what Laurie Groskopf said at the July 2012 meeting about “a large majority” of people in northern Wisconsin being “very angry about having wolves there / and about the fact that this wolf program has sort of been forced down their throat.”

²⁹ It should be noted that this way of speaking is not restricted to people who live “in the north.” Recall that some of the Wisconsin county boards that have passed resolutions (in favor of reducing the state wolf population to 350 or less) are located in southern Wisconsin. Some hunters who live in the north express frustration with how they hear this way of speaking employed by people from elsewhere. “It is interesting all the people who identify with people up north,” one commented. “I think probably more of the bear hunters that use hounds live in central or southern WI, but come up north to hunt and train.” Another put it this way: “I know a lot of people around here who *don’t* hate wolves, and wolf-haters might even be in the minority. Meanwhile most of the people who want a wolf hunt do not live in places where there are wolves. They live downstate, and want to come up here to hunt wolves.”

The wolf issue, it is also suggested, is but one of many ways in which such imposition and control are exercised. Though outsiders “shouldn’t be able to decide for us what our life is going to be like,” “they frequently do / in ways more complicated and interesting than just wolves.” Those “more complicated and interesting” ways encompass a range of issues. A letter published in *Wisconsin Outdoor News* gives a general idea:

I believe it’s about time someone spoke up for the people of northern Wisconsin. They have been kicked in the teeth time and again. Nobody is sticking up for them. First there was the fish spearing, which resulted in smaller bag limits, which hurt tourism in northern Wisconsin. Then came the wolves, which have hurt the deer herd and resulted in fewer hunters up north. Then there was the mining issue, which would have resulted in about 5,600 jobs. (November 30, 2012)

After raising other issues, the letter urged “all sportsmen to contact their state and federal representatives and tell them to . . . allow mining, develop a better wolf plan . . . do something about the spearing.”³⁰ In this range of Wisconsin issues, extending beyond wolves, economics are clearly said to be at stake (“tourism,” “jobs”) as are hunting and fishing opportunities and harvests (“smaller bag limits,” “the deer herd”).

Likewise, in Minnesota a hunter told me “you cannot understand the wolf issue without understanding the Boundary Waters issue.” Though glad to live and hunt near wolves, he said he understood others’ hostility. Reflecting on history, he linked the highly public wolf killings of 1976-1977 to the simultaneous fight over proposed wilderness designation for—and a ban on motors in—the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, where people had been boating for generations. He recalled a spring fishing trip along the Gunflint Trail when he was a teenager. His father’s wooden rowboat had a small motor. “These two canoers paddled up to us / and started shouting at us / they said / ‘You don’t belong here!’ / I’ve never forgotten that.” In relation to wolves, wilderness, and motors alike, he recalled that local people felt attacked by non-local

³⁰ “Fish spearing” invokes a conflicted history between white and Ojibwe people, involving assertion of treaty rights. This was mentioned briefly in Chapter I in connection with research done by Hall (1994) and will resurface in Chapter VI.

environmentalists: “It’s not very fun to have someone take your culture / and dehumanize it.” It was not so much the wolf that was hated, he said, as “the system that protected the wolf.”

On occasion, the contemporary debate over wolves is said to pose imminent danger for hunting in general. A notice posted on the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association website in 2015, for example, stated that “wolves are just the opening battle in a war over the future of hunting.” If wolf hunting is prohibited “just because some people think they are ‘special,’” it continued, “then the hunting of any species just becomes a subjective discussion of how people feel about that species. That’s a slippery slope we don’t want to start down.”

In the western Great Lakes region, in other words, the wolf is often symbolic of—and used symbolically to speak about—struggles for self-determination, against imposition of outside values and control. Similarly, when reintroduction of wolves to New York State’s Adirondacks was proposed in the 1990s, for some people wolves came to represent “controlling outsiders” and their “attitudes toward deer hunting” (Heberlein, 2012, p. 41). Related discourses about local control have a long and widespread history, tied to a wide variety of issues, including conservation, natural resources, and hunting (e.g., Jacoby, 2001).

In Wisconsin, feelings concerning local people’s “stake in the issue” are often expressed in connection with a multi-generational sense of belonging and a consequent rightful claim to a place and one’s way of living there (e.g., “she creates this little paradise on her grandfather’s land / and builds her house”). For example, one hunter I interviewed spoke of a wolf pack “in the area where my friend’s hunting shack is / that he inherited from his dad who got it from his grandfather.” Similarly, the hunter spoke of a farmer acquaintance who has had problems with wolves attacking his livestock, who “wouldn’t mind these wolves if they’d just stick to the woods like they’re supposed to,” and who—aware of potential threats, especially to his animals—has begun carrying a gun everywhere he goes on the farm.

that's not a way that somebody whose grandfather
great-grandfather
settled this land
and made the first farm
you know
it's not a way we want to live

Here, multi-generational connections with place and ownership of property are explicitly invoked. A hunting shack passed down through a family is said to give that family a certain stake in the issue. A family that has lived on the same land for several generations—and whose forefather, moreover, “settled” the land and “made the first farm”—is likewise said to have a certain stake in the issue.

Such multi-generational dwelling-in-place, it is suggested, gives these hunters and farmers—and, by affiliation and extension, other local people who share their views—the right to decide how to live in those places. It is when these local, multi-generational stakes and rights are overpowered by human outsiders (e.g., people “from downstate”) that four-footed outsiders become a problem by overpopulating, failing to stay in appropriate areas, and invading long-settled human dwelling places.

Propositionally speaking, we can say the following:

- People from “downstate” do not have to “deal” with “wolves” and have “nothing to lose.”
- People from “downstate” should not be able to “decide for us” what “our life” is going to be like.
- As people who “live here” and have “a stake” in “the wolf issue,” we should be able to decide “how we want to live.”

b. “The state’s right to manage wolves”

People “from downstate” are not the only problem, however. On a broader scale, the wolf problem is said to stem from another, larger outside force: the federal government. In his testimony at the July 2012 Wisconsin Natural Resources Board meeting, Scott Suder said that “after the federal delisting of wolves,” he co-authored a bill to “give the DNR authority to begin

managing wolves in Wisconsin.” An article from earlier that year reported that Suder spoke at a February 1 hearing on that bill. According to the article, after speaking of the need to “manage” the “exploding” wolf population, Suder “added that legislation was necessary to protect the state’s right to manage wolves, rather than have it done by the federal government.” According to the same article, “Scott Meyer, of United Wisconsin Sportsmen, said this is a state’s rights bill” (Eisele, February 10, 2012).

Similarly, a letter to *Wisconsin Outdoor News* expressed support for an end to the “micro-managing” of “Wisconsin’s wolf management” by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “That’s what the delisting effort was all about—to turn management over to the state!” (January 27, 2012).

During an interview, another hunter put it this way:

the whole Endangered Species Act really
created a lot of the problems we have now
because we just
we couldn’t control them when they were depredating
we couldn’t control them when they were scaring people
in their backyards
and so
it’s got the population to a level that I think is
a problem
for a lot of people
and if we could have kept them in that range where
in the areas where we felt
it wouldn’t be a problem
I think people would be a little more likely
to support wolves now

In these instances, various arms and acts of “the federal government,” especially the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Endangered Species Act, are depicted as problematic and as a longstanding threat to “state’s rights.” By usurping state authority and preventing local control—both of wolf numbers and of their geographic distribution—the federal government is said to have “created a lot of the problems we have now,” including local people’s current lack of support for wolves. In these and similar communicative actions, speakers and writers implicitly identify themselves as members (citizens) of a group (a state) whose rights (“state’s rights”) have been

usurped by “the federal government.” In one sense, this identification with the state is similar to the local, rural group identification described above: in both cases, the group in which the speaker asserts membership is said to have had its rights usurped by outsiders with greater political power. In another sense, this identification with the state is distinct: here, the state is described as an entity to which speakers belong and from which power has been taken; elsewhere, the state and those with clout in state politics, are described as entities to which speakers do not belong and which have taken power from local people.

On a related note, a letter to *Minnesota Outdoor News*, citing the film *Crying Wolf*, stated that “the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ‘stole’ \$60 million from the Pittman-Robertson fund” to finance reintroduction of wolves in the Rocky Mountain states. One of the problems with the taking of that money is said to be that the Pittman-Robertson fund “specifically targets projects that create more and better hunting experiences, and is funded by a 10 to 11 percent excise tax on firearms and archery equipment” (March 2, 2012). The federal government, in other words, used hunters’ money against them.

Not surprisingly, local frustrations with the federal government have been exacerbated by the December 2014 federal court ruling which returned the Great Lakes population segment of gray wolves to the federal endangered species list.

c. “They’ve never been an endangered species”

A related frustration frequently voiced in this discourse is tied to the idea that wolves have never been endangered on the continent as a whole. As one Wisconsin hunter put it, “wolves have never been threatened or endangered / they have always been perfectly healthy in Canada and Alaska / they’ve never been an endangered species.”

An above-mentioned letter to *Minnesota Outdoor News* likewise states that “wolves are not currently, nor have they ever been, ‘endangered.’ There are tens of thousands of wolves in North America, and the USFWS used the endangered species act to permit an uncontrolled

population explosion of wolves in the United States” (March 2, 2012). A proposition is succinctly stated here: “Wolves” are not—and never have been—“endangered” in North America.

In light of robust wolf populations to the north, these hunters say that federal wolf policies in the contiguous forty-eight states amount to what one called “an abuse of the whole Endangered Species Act.” Wolves, he pointed out, will never be “reestablished in their entire original range . . . we’re never going to have wolves in Chicago / or Saint Louis or New York / it’s not going to happen.”

Implicit in this critique of how the ESA has been interpreted and implemented, and the mention of major cities, is a question: If wolves are not in danger of extinction on the continent as a whole, and are never going to be reestablished in their entire original range, why have they been reestablished here in this place? Why, in short, have they been imposed on us? Implicit in this question, in turn, are two taken-for-granted views:

- “Wolves” do not need to be “recovered.”
- It is arbitrary and unjust that wolves have been “reestablished” and “forced down [our] throat” here.

Underpinning these propositions and the broader issue of relations between local people and outside people, we can hear these premises:

- Ways of living, and ways of dwelling with nature, should be determined locally.
- Outsiders have unjustly imposed their views and values on us, shaping and constraining our ways of living and dwelling.

With these ideas in mind, we now shift our attention to this discourse’s depiction of state Departments of Natural Resources, and the roles they play—and should play—in relation to wolves and local people.

5. “The DNR really loves predators”

As we have heard, this discourse emphasizes the need for state (i.e., local), rather than federal (i.e., outside), control over wolf policy and management. Yet it also depicts the state as

untrustworthy and too friendly toward predators. In part, this is linked to the local/outsider contrast: the idea of undue influence being wielded by people “from downstate” (e.g., “politicians down in Madison”). It is also linked to specific distrust of the DNR, including biologists who may technically be local by virtue of living in northerly “wolf country” but whose values concerning predators are alien.

a. “Their fascination with wolves”

A letter to *Wisconsin Outdoor News* stated that “the DNR and the politicians must get past their fascination with wolves and get serious about the problems caused by wolves”

(February 24, 2012). A second letter to the same publication a few weeks earlier had this to say:

Large predator numbers seem to appeal to many wildlife officials at the DNR, as Olson and Adrian Wydeven, the state’s wolf manager, have conspired to write the proposed coyote season into a future revision of the state’s wolf management plan. . . Lots of bears, a season on coyotes, reduced bobcat harvest, and no plan to control wolves—the DNR really loves predators. (January 27, 2012)

A related view was expressed by Mike Brust, president of the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association, at the July 2012 meeting of the state’s Natural Resources Board. He stated his organization’s objection to the DNR practice of managing wolves based on “an arbitrary minimum count” rather than a scientifically calculated “actual population” estimate which would, he said, be two to three times higher. Brust encouraged others to treat data provided by WI-DNR with “skepticism,” and to be “cautious of its accuracy.”

A letter to *Wisconsin Outdoor News* that same month stated that DNR biologists “do not really want the citizens to know how many wolves they think are out there” (July 13, 2012). And a similar view was voiced in a letter to *Minnesota Outdoor News* the previous winter: “I’m sick of the so-called experts and wildlife biologists that tell everyone we have only 3,000 wolves in Minnesota. I don’t have a college degree; I have 42 years of outdoor schooling that started at age 6 with some muskrat traps” (January 20, 2012).

In these and similar examples, terms such as “fascination,” “appeal,” and “love” are used to describe state wildlife biologists’ attitudes and feelings concerning wolves. These ascribed attitudes and feelings are said to make these “so-called experts” inattentive to “the problems caused by wolves” and to skew their perspective in favor of “large predator numbers.” According to one interviewee, these attitudes lead state natural resources boards and DNR staff to “just go along with what [pro-wolf people] want.” Such “fascination” with, and “love” for, wolves are also said to lead the DNR to act with duplicity, in favor of predators and against local people (e.g., providing data that should be treated with “skepticism,” or “conspiring” to establish a closed season on coyotes for part of the year in place of Wisconsin’s longstanding tradition of allowing coyote hunting all year).

Propositionally speaking, in short:

- “The DNR” is “fascinated” by and “loves” “predators.”
- “The DNR” wants “large” “numbers” of “predators.”
- “The DNR” is not “serious” about “predator” “problems.”
- We should be “skeptical” of “how many” “wolves” the “so-called experts” say are out there.

b. “A deal’s a deal”

This distrust of DNR biologists’ attitudes toward wolves, and this skepticism concerning their motives and data, are articulated in connection with distrust of other stakeholders as well. In Wisconsin, for example, some hunters say that the state has colluded with wolf advocates in pushing wolf population goals higher and higher over the decades, and in violating consensus-based agreements.

One interviewee, for example, recounted how “hard feelings” have developed. A few decades ago, he said, WI-DNR expressed an interest in protecting wolves that were coming over from Minnesota: “They wanted to protect them / and see if Wisconsin could develop their own population / and they wanted to establish a wolf plan.” At the time, he said, representatives of

hunting organizations had no problem with the idea and supported allocation of a million dollars of hunter-generated revenue to the wolf protection and reestablishment effort. These hunters, he said, were given a specific idea of what would happen.

according to the biologists at the time
it would take about eighty wolves
to reestablish a sustainable population
in the state of Wisconsin
and they would be in these remote tracts
of roadless area that
probably nobody would ever hardly see or hear a wolf

Most hunters and other local people thought it was “a good idea,” he said, “as long as it’s a very limited population / in areas where they’re not going to be in conflict.” Within a year, however, “the goal was changed from eighty to a hundred / and then we had another plan / where they wanted to increase it to two hundred and fifty.” In light of the fact that local and state hands remained tied by ESA protection of wolves, representatives of hunting organizations decided to approve the increased goal of 250. In any case, he said, state biologists assured everyone that wolf numbers would never get that high: “they said / well, based on the habitat and everything else / we will never have more than about two hundred wolves in the state / can’t happen.”

By the time Wisconsin’s 1999 wolf plan was created, he said, the Timber Wolf Alliance and many others were involved in the issue. He recalled how stakeholders worked hard to hammer out a compromise, finally arriving at a population goal of 350 wolves in the state.³¹ But the wolf population “just kept growing and growing.” In the years since—with the exception of brief periods when wolves were temporarily downlisted to threatened status, allowing the government to kill wolves involved in livestock depredation—ESA protection has meant that “nobody could do anything about it.” Today, he said, there are a lot more wolves than had been

³¹ Though the 1999 plan seems to state a clear intent to limit the state population to near 350 (“maintain the population near the 350 goal”), there is debate—among those who participated in formulating the plan, and among others—over what that number meant at the time (i.e., whether it was understood as a minimum, a maximum, or both) and whether it should be revised upward now.

agreed. But, with wolves delisted and the state taking over wolf management, pro-wolf stakeholders don't want to abide by the agreement.

the people that want to have responsible wolf management
in, I guess, a hunter's opinion
feel that
the people who want as many wolves as we possibly can have
used the Endangered Species Act
to get the population built up
and now
when we want to get to the level that we all agreed to
back when this all started
they're like
well, no
we're kind of liking this eight hundred and some
official count
or two thousand
or whatever it is
and so there's a lot of kind of
hard feelings
. . .
so a lot of hunters feel
hey
a deal's a deal
. . .
you guys took advantage of a situation
but now it's time to make it right

In this and related examples, hunters are said to have been supportive—both conceptually and financially—of reestablishing wolves in the state. Their support is said to have been based on specific parameters for how many wolves would inhabit the state and where those wolves would be located: parameters communicated by the DNR. Over time, the DNR is said to have sought—and gotten—agreement from hunters to increase the goal from 80 to 100 to 250. That agreement is depicted both as having been partially coerced by continued ESA protection and as having been based on assurances from the DNR that it would be impossible for more than 200 wolves to exist in the state. Finally, in 1999, hunters are said to have worked hard with the DNR and other stakeholders, and to have agreed to an increased goal of 350.

As depicted in this discourse, all of the numeric parameters (the shifting goal from 80 to 350, as well as the supposed capacity limit of 200) have been far exceeded over time.³² And wolves have reestablished themselves in and around areas of relatively dense human settlement, not staying in the predicted “remote tracts / of roadless area.”

In this discourse, then, hunters and other local people are said to have been negatively impacted by the actions of multiple actors:

- The federal government, by way of the ESA, has constrained hunters’ and others’ options for controlling wolf numbers, and consequently their options for negotiating with the DNR and other stakeholders.
- The DNR has provided people with false assurances and erroneous predictions concerning future wolf numbers and where wolves would be (and continues to provide a dubious “official count”).
- The DNR and other stakeholders have repeatedly pushed for higher wolf population goals.
- The DNR and other stakeholders have taken advantage of ESA protections to build the wolf population even higher.
- The DNR and other stakeholders are now balking at the idea of reducing the wolf population to the last agreed number.

Taken together, all of this is said to have led to “hard feelings” on hunters’ part. The “deal” so laboriously hammered out among stakeholders should, it is said, be honored. This is explicitly articulated as a matter of fairness and justice: “a deal’s a deal . . . you guys took advantage of a situation / but now it’s time to make it right.” Alongside other stakeholders, in other words, the DNR is said to have communicated and otherwise acted in ways which—

³² A biologist commented to me that “many hunters are confused on the issue” of “incrementally increasing” population goals in Wisconsin: “The numerical goals reflect different state and federal goals with different meanings. The 80 downlisting goal was a state and federal goal and was intended to be maintained for 3 or more years in a row for downlisting from endangered to threatened to be considered. The feds had a delisting goal of 100 wolves for 5 or more years . . . to consider federal delisting for WI, but also a stable or increasing population in MN (1251-1400 or more). A total of 250 wolves in WI for one year was enough to consider state delisting. And 350 was a state management goal for WI to try to achieve and stay near that level (the goal was set at a time when fewer than 200 wolves occurred in WI). So each of the goals mean something different, but many hunters perceived the goals as DNR or USFWS constantly increasing the goals of the number of wolves the state wanted.”

whether based on unintentional misjudgment or intentional collusion—have unfairly harmed hunters.

Though the details above are specific to Wisconsin, I have heard similar speech in Minnesota and elsewhere. My aim here is to illustrate a broad discursive pattern: one in which state officials and other stakeholders are depicted as acting improperly and unfairly, against hunters and in favor of wolves and wolf advocates.

c. “The goals of the people who pay their wages”

In this discourse, improper action—against hunters and in favor of wolves and wolf advocates—is said to be especially unjust in light of how state DNR wildlife budgets are funded. In large part, these funds come from (1) the sale of state hunting licenses and (2) federal excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery gear. Though a substantial portion of the latter is not linked to hunting (e.g., taxes on firearms and ammunition purchased for self-defense or for recreational or competitive shooting) it is widely understood that hunters are state wildlife programs’ primary funding source and primary public constituents.³³ It is in this context that statements such as these appear in letters to *Wisconsin Outdoor News*:

- “Wisconsin’s hunters are paying for the salaries of wildlife managers through their hunting and trapping fees. When are we going to employ game managers who reflect the goals of the people who pay their wages? Where is the common sense in limiting harvest of healthy predator populations when controversy surrounds our deer and elk programs, and citizens are suffering the damages done by predator attacks?” (January 27, 2012)
- “There [are] more wolves on the landscape than the DNR is telling us . . . For once the DNR should be honest with the people who pay their wages.” (November 16, 2012)

³³ In parallel, fishing license fees and excise taxes on fishing equipment make anglers a primary source of funding for state fisheries programs.

In a related vein, recall the letter to *Minnesota Outdoor News*, stating that “the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ‘stole’ \$60 million” of the federal excise taxes paid on firearms, ammunition, and archery gear (March 2, 2012).

In such statements, “hunters” are identified as “the people who pay for the salaries of wildlife managers.” As a consequence of paying DNR wages, it is said that hunters are owed certain kinds of communicative action (e.g., “honesty” about the wolf population) and also policy decisions and management actions that “reflect [hunters’] goals” (e.g., improving “deer and elk programs” and alleviating citizens’ “suffering” by allowing greater “harvest” of “predators”).³⁴

DNR wildlife managers are depicted as failing to perform such proper actions: failing to be “honest,” failing to “reflect the goals of the people who pay their wages,” failing to adequately manage “deer and elk,” and failing to prevent “the damages done by predator attacks.” The DNR is said—as another writer put it in a letter about deer and chronic wasting disease—to have “long since forgotten who works for whom with respect to game management” (*Wisconsin Outdoor News*, September 21, 2012). In summary:

- “Hunters” “pay” “wages” to “the DNR.”
- “The DNR” should be, but is not, “honest” with “hunters.”
- “The DNR” should, but does not, pursue the “goals” of “hunters.”

Here, the relationship between hunters and wildlife managers is described as an employer-employee relationship. In this relationship, the employee (the DNR) is said to have failed in the performance of the actions and duties owed to the employer (hunters).

In light of this relationship, non-hunters are often depicted as less relevant to wildlife policy and management. Non-hunters, it is said, do not pay DNR’s wages or otherwise contribute substantial funds to wildlife conservation, and so have not established a real financial stake.

³⁴ As noted in Chapter I, these claims are contested in other discourses. As a result of hunters’ fiscal and political influence, it is argued, state wildlife managers act improperly and unfairly in precisely the opposite direction: against predators and in favor of hunters.

Therefore, it is often suggested directly or indirectly, non-hunters have less of a right to influence state wildlife policies.

At the July 2012 WI-NRB meeting, for example, a woman spoke against the proposed wolf hunt, on behalf of a small and recently formed group. After she spoke, NRB member Greg Kazmierski, who is affiliated with the Hunters Rights Coalition, posed an oft-asked rhetorical question: “How much has your group contributed to the reestablishment of the wolf in Wisconsin?”

To summarize this section, we can formulate several premises:

- Hunters fund the DNR.
- Hunters have supported wolf restoration.
- The DNR owes honesty and allegiance to hunters.
- The DNR favors predators over hunters and other people.
- The DNR has colluded with outsiders against local people, especially hunters.
- The DNR is untrustworthy.

6. “Shoot, shovel, and shut up”

In any region of the United States where wolf populations are protected and controversial, you will hear and see references to “SSS” or “the three Ss”—“Shoot, Shovel, and Shut up.” The appropriate response to wolves, and to the protection of wolves by the federal ESA or state regulations, is said to be this: kill wolves, bury their bodies, and keep quiet about it. (A biologist commented that he had never encountered an illegally killed wolf that had been buried: “I think it is more ‘shoot, leave it lay, and shut up.’” The covering up of dead wolves may be metaphorical and alliterative, rather than literal.) Along similar lines, bumper stickers and decals showing a rifle scope’s crosshairs superimposed over a wolf encourage the reader to “Smoke a Pack a Day.”

Despite the potential penalties for such violations, they are a regular occurrence. Recall, as noted in Chapter I, that four wolves were reintroduced to Michigan's Upper Peninsula in 1974; within a year, all four were dead: three shot and one killed by a car. Recall also that, in 1976 and 1977, several wolves were shot and deposited in conspicuous locations in Minnesota—the headquarters building of Voyageurs National Park, city hall in Minneapolis, and the Duluth Herald and News-Tribune building—with responsibility being claimed by a group calling itself “Sportsmen’s Only Salvation.” And recall the 1985 survey indicating that significant numbers of people in northern Minnesota had killed wolves illegally (Schanning, 2009, p. 257).

In his presentation at the WI-NRB meeting in July 2012, Bill Vander Zouwen stated that, based on radio-collar data, at least 9 percent of the minimum winter wolf count is lost to illegal kills each year, and that the loss could be as high as 19 percent. With a minimum winter count of approximately 850, in other words, the DNR expected that between 77 and 162 wolves would be illegally killed in Wisconsin that year.

One hunter I interviewed described an ideal future, in which humans could live with wolves peaceably. This, it was said, would require there being “very few” wolves, few enough that there would be very little need for federal government trappers to eliminate packs, or for landowners to request shooting permits. In this ideal future, there would also be

very little desire for people to kill them illegally
which is a huge thing going on now
because people are so fed up
with the lack of government response
that they just have to take matters into their own hands
I don't like that at all
I think that's bad for democracy
it's bad for the wolves
it's bad for people
because once people
start doing something illegal
then all the rules are out the door
so that I would like to see eliminated

Another interviewee, also critical of federal and state government inaction to curb the wolf population, said, “You run into people who say, ‘Well, you should shoot as many as you

can.” That, he said, is “not the answer either.” He went on to tell me of a chance encounter five years earlier with some men who were out hunting with dogs.

we got talking about wolves a little bit
and the guy said
‘yeah’
he said
‘we shoot every one we see’
he said
‘we got seven so far this year’
they don’t know me from Adam
don’t be telling me this
because I don’t want to know it

In these interviews, and in public statements from various organizations with which these speakers are aligned, we do not hear endorsement of SSS-style killings. Such actions, they say, are improper (“not the answer either,” “I don’t like that at all”) and have the potential to lead to social disorder (“all the rules are out the door”). These speakers acknowledge, however, that SSS is widely practiced (“a huge thing going on now,” “he said / ‘we got seven so far this year’”). They articulate understandings of the feelings and perspectives that motivate such killings (“people are so fed up / with the lack of government response / that they just have to take matters into their own hands”). And they also articulate a preference for not knowing the details of violations (“don’t be telling me this / because I don’t want to know it”) and an implicit unwillingness to report such violations to authorities.³⁵

Though endorsement of the illegal killing of wolves is not part of this public discourse, the idea of illegal killing and its persistent practice is employed in important ways. In this way of speaking, “SSS”—as a symbolic, communicative expression—explicitly and dramatically evokes the discursive hub of action (the physical practice of vigilantism). It also activates the radiants of emotion (e.g., “angry,” “so fed up”), identity (e.g., “hunters,” “citizens”), relationship (e.g., “lack of government response”), and dwelling (e.g., “in the north,” “up here”), all of which are

³⁵ Similar sentiments were expressed by a DNR official who told me somewhat cryptically, “I’m not going to tell you I have actually witnessed SSS / or performed SSS / I just know of the culture.”

important in this discourse. Both the act of killing a wolf illegally and the act of speaking about the illegal killing of wolves can be understood, both here and in others parts of the world (e.g., Finland) as a form of “political dissent and resistance against dominant conservation regimes” (Pohja-Mykrä, 2016, p. 53).

The logic here draws our attention to two aspects of the current wolf situation—“lack of government response” and “kill them illegally”—and marks both as unacceptable and improper; neither is “the answer” to the wolf problem. The first, it is suggested, is to blame for the second: if there was adequate government response, people would not be “so fed up” and would not “just have to take matters into their own hands.”³⁶ As articulated here, the only answer, the only proper solution, is for the government to establish policies and practices that reduce and restrict—and permit hunters to assist in reducing and restricting—the wolf population to significantly lower numbers and significantly more remote areas.

A few premises can be formulated here regarding human action and the wolf situation:

- Action must be taken.
- If authorities fail to act, local people eventually must and will.
- To prevent improper, illegal action by local people, authorities should take and authorize proper, legal action.

7. Summary analysis: Get-them-under-control in hubs and radiants

Here, as we have heard, the wolf is spoken of as an out-of-control population and problem. Like that considered in the preceding chapter, this discourse is a complex web of

³⁶ Recent research (Olson et al., 2015) “suggests that consistent and responsible depredation management programs may reduce illegal killing.” Though not advocating significant reductions in Wisconsin’s wolf numbers, the researchers “demonstrate a link between illegal wildlife killing and management authority under the ESA.” In particular, the research suggests that, from to 2003 to 2011, dramatic “pendulum swings” in “wolf status led to inconsistent management authority, declining local support for wolves, and possibly the unintended backlash of more illegal kills and a legislatively mandated wolf hunt” (p. 358).

symbolic terms, their uses, and their explicit and implicit meanings. Like others, this discourse and the taken-for-granted understandings which underpin it encompass not only wolves and wolf-human relations but also a wider range of cultural meanings. As in the previous chapter's summarizing section, here I revisit this chapter's analyses from the perspective of discursive hubs and radiants. Again, my aim here is to summarize, distill, and further illuminate.

As I have heard and interpreted this discourse, its most prominent hub is action. One central aspect is depiction of the need for—and failure of—the state to take appropriate management action to reduce and control an out-of-control wolf population (see sections V.A.1 and V.A.5). A second central aspect is depiction of the unjust political actions of people who live elsewhere (see section V.A.4). A third central aspect is depiction of what wolves do, have done, and could do to deer populations, other wildlife, livestock, dogs, and humans, and the consequent effects on people's hunting experiences, sense of safety, and quality of life (see sections V.A.2 and V.A.3). These three aspects can be heard as a unified set of allied actions with consistent, combined impacts—the disruption of local life (natural and cultural) and the triggering of social conflict—with wolves' direct impacts being a consequence of state inaction and unjust action by outsiders. This hub also encompasses illegal actions taken by some people in response to these impacts (see section V.A.6).

Closely linked to state inaction and unjust action by outsiders is the radiant of emotion. Here, this discourse articulates (1) the discomfort local people feel about wolves being in close proximity and (2) more potently and broadly, the anger and resentment they feel about policies and programs being imposed upon them, about their wishes and feelings being disregarded, about the consequences they suffer (especially as hunters), and about the ways in which they have been denied the right to self-determination: the right to choose how to live and how to deal with local issues. Heard in this context, the call for the state to control the wolf problem gives voice to people's deeply felt desire to reclaim control over their own lives and places.

Also closely linked is the radiant of dwelling. This discourse depicts (1) hunters' and other local people's generations-long inhabitation of particular places, (2) the dramatic and invasive changes wrought on their experiences of those places and their long-valued ways of living in them, (3) the kinds of remote places where wolves should dwell, and (4) the more densely human-populated regions where wolves should not dwell (see section V.A.3). As noted, the changes wrought upon people's lived experiences of dwelling—what it means and used to mean to live here, especially as deer hunters and stewards of game populations—are frequently voiced in a tone of anger.

Along the radiant of relationship, this discourse depicts problematic and conflicted relations with wolves, with people who live elsewhere, and with federal and state governments. In relationship with state wildlife managers, it is said that hunters are employers who are owed (but do not receive) honest communication and other action in their best interest (see section V.A.5). More implicit is a relationship of solidarity among local people, united against these problematic forces.

Along the radiant of identity, wolves are depicted as an invasive population that is out-of-control both in its numeric size and in its geographic distribution. They are also depicted as a source of problems, danger, and trouble. For deer hunters in particular, these predators are depicted as serious competitors that have unacceptable negative impacts on game populations (see section V.A.2). As we have heard, high numbers of wolves living in close proximity—both to human dwelling places and to favored hunting places—are closely identified with oppression of local people by federal and state governments.

The identities of hunters and other local citizens are depicted in terms of belonging in place, having been dealt with dishonestly and unjustly, and rightfully seeking to reclaim the way of life they once had and still desire. Hunters in particular are identified as people who (1) have made substantial investments (financial and otherwise) in local places, wildlife habitats, deer populations, cultural traditions, and state wildlife conservation and management programs, (2) are

central to the implementation of wildlife management policies (through hunting), and (3) should have a substantial say over wolf populations and be actively involved in managing them (through hunting).

In short, the wolf population is spoken of as a problem which must—along with the politics and policies that foisted wolves upon local people in the first place—be remedied so that natural and social disruptions can be set to rights, self-determination can be reclaimed, and ways of living can be restored.³⁷

Roots of this historically transmitted expressive system are audible in traditional Euro-American views of wolves (e.g., “perceptions” said to be rooted fairy tales about “big, bad wolves”) and actions toward them (e.g., “there’s a [good] reason man wiped out wolves in the past”). More centrally, roots can be heard in political histories of interaction between rural communities and centralized governments. As noted in this chapter, locally relevant historical and contemporary contexts include environmental contests over national (e.g., ESA) and regional (e.g., BWCA, mining) issues. Similar histories and discourses can be found elsewhere in North America and on other continents (e.g., Jacoby, 2001; Madden & McQuinn, 2014; Skogen & Krange, 2003).

B. “Management should be the way we go forward”

This second sub-chapter is devoted to describing and interpreting another discourse concerning management and control of wolves. Matters of particular and interrelated concern in this discourse include the following:

³⁷ In the context of this discourse, the wolf “problem” could be conceptualized as a four-phase *social drama* in the terms outlined by Philipsen (1987): Various *breaches* have occurred over the decades, a long-term *crisis* is ongoing, and federal delisting of the region’s wolves brought potential for (but not full realization of) *redress*. Final resolution—*reintegration* of the DNR and other offenders, or another result—has not been achieved.

- wolves' significant negative impacts on deer and deer hunting;
- the importance of science and rationality as foundations for wildlife management;
- the value and significance of progressing beyond wolf recovery to wolf management;
- the many benefits—for hunters, farmers, deer, wolves, and others—of managing wolves as a game species;
- the various central roles played by hunters and hunting in North American wildlife conservation.

My goals are to describe the shape of this discourse and interpret the cultural logic—of “management” as “the way forward”—both presumed and created when this discourse is used. Though versions of this discourse are employed across the Great Lakes region, I found it to be particularly prominent in Minnesota. There, its most publicly audible voice is that of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, which I use here as my primary data source.

1. “Because they affect deer”

As we heard in the preceding sub-chapter, the idea that wolves have a significant impact on deer and deer hunting is important in the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse. As noted immediately above, it is also central to the discourse of *management-as-the-way-forward*; here, however, this idea is expressed in different terms, with a particular emphasis on the language of management and science. I begin consideration of this concept—and this discourse as a whole—by gathering a number of statements that give voice to some of its central ideas. Posted on the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association website, for instance, is a succinct statement of the organization’s “Predator Control Position.”

Minnesota Deer Hunters Association supports the legal harvest and control of predators in Minnesota. Further, MDHA feels it is to the benefit of predator and prey species alike that predators are managed by DNR as game animals with hunting and trapping as part of that management. One example is the coyote. Minnesota has a large population of coyotes across most of the state. While coyotes can have a significant impact upon the survival of deer fawns and other prey species, too many coyotes can also accentuate the spread of mange and diseases such as parvo virus. The managed harvest of coyotes through hunting and trapping can be of great benefit to the future health of both the coyote and their prey, including deer.

Prior to federal delisting of the regional wolf population segment, MDHA's website also included a position statement specific to wolves.

Minnesota Deer Hunters Association supports the recovery objectives as outlined in the 1992 (revised) Eastern Timber Wolf Recovery Plan. This plan includes population goals of 1251-1400 wolves in Minnesota by the year 2000, and a delisting of the species when "two viable populations within the 48 contiguous United States of America exist." MDHA also believes that any objectives regarding population levels of the Eastern Timber Wolf must be considered in coordination with the traditions of deer hunting in the state. This consideration includes the economic and social impacts on human populations, as well as the ecological considerations of the wildlife involved. Furthermore, MDHA believes it is in the best interest of both predator and prey to have their management directed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

In early October 2012, the Center for Ethics and Public Policy at the University of Minnesota Duluth hosted a panel discussion about the state's first regulated wolf hunting and trapping seasons, which would begin a few weeks later. One of the panelists was Mark Johnson, Executive Director of MDHA. Early in his presentation, he stated that one of the organization's founding "tenets" was to be "supportive" of "management of predators . . . because they affect deer."

```
do wolves in particular affect a huge number of deer?  
that's debatable  
they eat deer  
that's what they're made to do  
they also are made to eat moose  
and evidently dogs and cats and all kinds of critters  
because they're a carnivore  
and they're going to eat what they can
```

In a written statement issued in autumn 2013, the organization conveyed the following:

The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association's mission is 'working today for tomorrow's wildlife and hunters.' At MDHA we care about all wildlife species, including the gray wolf. However, without the use of balanced wildlife management efforts the future of MN's wolves, deer and other species can easily be threatened.

In a February 2014 edition of MDHA's e-mail newsletter "Bullet Blasts"—titled "What is MDHA doing about low deer numbers and wolves?"—Johnson wrote:

With the end of the firearms deer season, the phone started to ring and the emails increased. From MDHA members and non-members alike came the common statement 'There are no deer!' and the common question, 'What is MDHA doing about it?'

The low deer number problem is real. MDHA's effort toward fixing it started in 2012 by meeting with DNR Commissioner Landwehr. Changes were initiated in the 2012 deer hunt to reduce doe harvest but were negated by the severe winter that followed. In 2013 the changes did not continue, evidently due to Wildlife Division retirements and personnel changes and inconsistent communication. This year, continuity appears restored with assurances that changes will happen.

At the executive/commissioner level DNR has been very open and communicative with MDHA. He has been very willing to listen, discuss and consider, as are his Wildlife Division staff. This past Thursday, MDHA President Denis Quarberg and I met with Deputy Commissioner Dave Schad and G&F Chief Ed Boggess. Our discussion focused upon deer numbers, what is reality, what hunters think, what are the options and what can be done now. We outlined possible collaborative efforts between MDHA and DNR . . .

The goal of 'increasing deer numbers' is clear, but even with huge changes that I believe DNR will make this year, it will take at least 3 years without more severe winters to build back the deer herd. Efforts to increase deer numbers will bring short-term pain to hunters with antlerless harvest restrictions and 'buck-only' in some or many areas. Hunter opportunity to take multiple deer will be restricted, possibly to only urban hunts, so don't be surprised. This will continue for 2-4 years and we deer hunters will need to be patient and supportive. In the meantime, we can make long-term impact by increasing efforts to improve deer habitat (especially near wintering yards), provide food plots and manage predators. That said, besides continuing our habitat enhancement efforts, MDHA will continue to work toward the solution in collaboration with DNR and actively work with DNR to attain it . . .

Another question this year was, 'What is MDHA doing about wolves?' On January 28th, MDHA provided written testimony to the House Natural Resources Committee. In it we stated our support for DNR's continued management of wolves including hunting and trapping.

Johnson wrote that MDHA asked the committee to consider several policy changes, including managing wolves "more in tune with Wisconsin with 25-30% as the harvest target vs the current 10%." In other words, MDHA asked that Minnesota's public hunting and trapping season quota—the number of wolves to be killed—be increased to 25-30% of the winter population count.

With these data on the table, let us go back and identify a number of key terms and clusters thereof. We can start with deer. The organization quoted here is, of course, a "deer hunters" association. The association's explicit concerns include "the traditions of deer hunting in the state" and the "survival" of deer including "fawns." A central issue for the association is the

“low deer number problem.” The association’s “goal of ‘increasing deer numbers’” is said to be “clear” and shared by MN-DNR.

Deer-related concerns are explicitly linked to “wolves” and other “predators.” Predators such as coyotes, it is said, can have “a significant impact” on fawn survival. Similarly, wolves “eat deer . . . that’s what they’re made to do.” Though the scale of wolves’ impact on deer is “debatable,” it is certain that wolves “affect deer.”

The depicted relationship between (1) “deer” and “deer hunting” and (2) “wolves” forms a crux of this discourse. Wolf population objectives, it is said, “must be considered in coordination with the traditions of deer hunting in the state.” One of MDHA’s “tenets,” it is said, is to be “supportive” of “control” and “management” of “predators” because they “affect deer.” For instance, the organization supports MN-DNR’s “management of wolves including hunting and trapping” and urges that the “harvest target” be increased two-to-threefold. To help “increase deer numbers,” it is said, hunters can take several helpful actions, including “increasing efforts to . . . manage predators.”

Using these basic terms, we can formulate several cultural propositions:

- “Deer numbers” are “low” and should be “increased.”
- As “predators, “wolves” “affect” “deer” by “eating” them; a high “wolf population” “affects” “the traditions of deer hunting.”
- Therefore, “wolves” and other “predators” should be “managed” and “controlled.”
- State “management of wolves” including “hunting and trapping” should be “supported” and increased to a higher “harvest target.”
- “Hunters” should “increase efforts” to “manage predators.”

As used here in relation to wolves, “management” is clearly intended in the *population-control and -limitation management* sense: lethal “predator control” meant to result in (1) fewer wolves on the landscape and therefore (2) more deer.

Considering the utterances and propositions above, we can formulate several premises:

- Deer hunting traditions are important and valuable.
- Deer are not numerous enough.
- Wolves are too numerous.
- High wolf numbers contribute to low deer numbers.
- High wolf numbers threaten deer hunting traditions.
- Wolf numbers should be reduced.

2. “Management as a step of progression”

Also central to this discourse is articulation of a sequential relationship between “recovery” and “management,” one described in terms of wildlife science. During the panel discussion at the University of Minnesota Duluth in October 2012, for instance, Johnson said that while some MDHA members oppose the wolf hunting season and others want wolves eradicated from the state, the overwhelming majority take a moderate position:

right down the middle
 saying
 it's sound science
 it's biologically based
 it's not endangered
 it's now off the endangered species list
 so management should be the way we should go forward

Similarly, a Minnesota deer hunter I interviewed said that once wolves are officially “recovered”—having progressed “beyond the thresholds” of “endangerment” or “threatened” status—“then it’s management beyond that.” He expressed some frustration with the fact some people “fail to accept management as a step of progression / a step of success.” As he sees it, there has been a “successful recovery of the wolf” in the region, “management is a sign of success,” and “hunting and trapping means that we’ve got a healthy viable population.”

Furthermore, he noted that hunting and trapping are part of the Minnesota wolf management plan. Because that plan is “biologically sound” and “scientifically based,” he said, we should “follow through” with it. State and federal “scientists” alike, he said, “are telling us”

that wolf management is scientifically sound and will not endanger the region's wolf population. We should, he said, "listen to the experts" and "let the professionals do their job."

From the perspective of this discourse, wolf recovery leads logically and sequentially to wolf management. We have scientific assurances that such management, which includes hunting and trapping, will not endanger wolves. Moreover, the inevitable progressive step of moving on to management is an indicator of the successful recovery of the species. Thus, we should support such management. We should listen to the expert scientists who are telling us to proceed with wolf management. We should not prevent the professional wildlife managers from doing their job.

Drawing on terms above, we can formulate propositions that articulate these taken-for-granted understandings:

- The "wolf population" has "recovered" and is no longer "endangered."
- "Wolf management" will not "endanger" the "wolf population" in the future.
- The "wolf management plan," which includes "hunting and trapping," is based on "sound science."
- "Management," which indicates a "healthy viable population," is a "step of progression" and a "sign of success."
- Therefore, "we" should "manage" "wolves."
- We should "listen" to the "experts" and "let" them "do their job."

Considering these utterances and propositions, we can formulate several premises:

- It is good to recover wolf populations.
- Once a wolf population has recovered, it is good to proceed with active management.
- The transition from recovery to active management is logical.
- The transition from recovery to active management is a sign of successful recovery.
- Wolf management is rational and scientific.
- We should take action based on rationality and science.
- Active wolf management should include public hunting and trapping.

- If we can hunt and trap wolves without endangering the population as a whole, we should.

3. “Hunting as a key tool”

In this discourse, hunting is understood and described as a central and necessary part of wildlife management. The wolf-related statement issued by the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association in autumn 2013 included this sentence:

MDHA views wildlife species as renewable natural resources and, in accordance with the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, MDHA views regulated hunting as a key tool that allows the public to be intimately involved in wildlife management and finance management efforts through their purchase of hunting licenses.

An article in *Michigan Outdoor News*, criticizing those who oppose wolf hunting and trapping seasons, commented that

most of them do not have a clue as to how wildlife populations are managed in this country. They have no idea how much money hunters and trappers have paid for wildlife habitat and fail to acknowledge that wildlife populations in the state would be in trouble if it were not for the contributions of sportsmen and wildlife agencies. (Pink, 2012)

Similarly, during the panel at the University of Minnesota Duluth in October 2012, MDHA director Mark Johnson spoke of how wildlife in the United States does not belong to individual landowners. Rather, wildlife is

subject to management
 by the federal government
 by the state government
 by the people
 we manage everything for the people
 with the North American Wildlife Conservation Model
 we manage with those tenets
 based on revenue that's generated
 by hunters
 that's generated by participants
 who are willing to pay for that activity
 I don't know if you realize but
 wildlife management in the United States basically
 is paid for by
 excise taxes on hunting equipment
 and it's paid for by
 hunter license fees

. . .
another thing you might not realize
is that hunters across the United States
last year spent 34 billion dollars
they put that into the economy in license fees
and excise taxes
things like that
it doesn't mean that we're any better than anybody else
it just means that hunters are interested in
putting their money
into where their passion is
and into the management of those critters
that they like to pursue

In the excerpts above, regulated hunting in the context of “the North American Wildlife Conservation Model” is described as “a key tool” with two related dimensions: “allow[ing] the public” (1) to “be intimately involved in wildlife management” and (2) to “finance management efforts.” Let us briefly articulate these strong discursive links between hunting and wildlife management by formulating a few propositions.

- “Hunting” is a “tool” of “wildlife management”; through regulated “harvest,” a wide variety of wildlife populations are and should be “managed.”
- “Hunting” “allows” “the public” to be “intimately involved” in “wildlife management.”
- “Hunting” “allows” “the public” to “finance” “wildlife management,” through “license fees” and “excise taxes.”

Drawing links among these propositions, we can explicate aspects of this discourse:

Wildlife management is necessary and valuable. Hunting is necessary and valuable, as a vital tool in implementing wildlife management, financing it, and allowing the public to participate in it. Public wildlife management and public hunting form the necessary and valuable core of the democratic North American Wildlife Conservation Model. Distilling these ideas, we can formulate several premises:

- It is necessary and good to conserve and manage wildlife populations.
- Hunting is necessary for good wildlife conservation and management.
- Hunting is good for both people and wildlife.

- Hunters play a positive and unique role, both implementing and funding wildlife conservation and management.

It is in the context of these understandings that hunters—by virtue of their actions and financial contributions—are said to play a unique, necessary, and valuable role in the management and conservation of North American wildlife. Further, hunters’ participation in, and financing of, wildlife management and conservation are depicted as intentional and voluntary (e.g., “participants / who are willing to pay,” “hunters are interested in putting their money / into where their passion is”). Hunters are said to voluntarily and intentionally contribute to wildlife management and conservation in unique, necessary, and valuable ways. Implicit here is the understanding that hunters have a unique status and voice in the realm of wildlife management, that their direct involvement and financial contributions set them apart from the rest of the public in certain ways. Hunting is also described more broadly as a valuable economic engine (e.g., “hunters across the United States / last year spent 34 billion dollars / they put that into the economy”).³⁸

In the case of wolf management in the western Great Lakes region, it is widely recognized that hunting is not a very effective means of implementation (i.e., killing wolves). Trapping is understood to be much more effective. One MDHA member told me that “trapping will continue to be the major tool” for achieving the desired goal of “reducing wolf populations overall.” Hunting, he said, will be “a portion of that tool for removing wolves,” but will be “more a revenue source for wolf management.” As this example indicates, hunting—even when not the

³⁸ As previously noted, this idea—of hunters having special status and voice in wildlife management and conservation—has been critiqued. This idea, and the notion of the “North American Wildlife Conservation Model,” raise questions about the identity of “the public” and “the people” by and for whom wildlife species are managed and conserved. In this so-called “users pay, everyone benefits” model, it is asked, how much does everyone actually benefit? Both the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan of 1999 and the Minnesota Wolf Management Plan of 2001 suggest that funding for wolf management should come from alternative funding sources.

primary tool for on-the-ground management—retains its central role in this discourse, particularly in connection with its fiscal contribution to that management.

4. “Like we manage” “all the other game species”

Another central dimension of this discourse is depiction of the wolf as a game animal, and of wolf management as game management. Several statements from MDHA articulate these ideas. Recall, for instance, the organization’s “Predator Control Position.”

MDHA feels it is to the benefit of predator and prey species alike that predators are managed by DNR as game animals with hunting and trapping as part of that management . . . While coyotes can have a significant impact upon the survival of deer fawns and other prey species, too many coyotes can also accentuate the spread off mange and diseases such as parvo virus. The managed harvest of coyotes through hunting and trapping can be of great benefit to the future health of both the coyote and their prey, including deer.

In the February 2014 edition of MDHA’s “Bullet Blasts” newsletter, Johnson wrote:

MDHA is not anti-wolf. We are pro wildlife and support wolves within our landscape for future generations to enjoy. Proper management of Minnesota’s wolves is the key to their healthy future, just like with deer, elk, pheasants, etc.

At the October 2012 event in Duluth, he made this similar statement:

we manage wolves
like we manage deer
or like we manage bobcat
like we manage grouse and ducks
and all the other game species

Later in his presentation, he emphasized that Minnesota’s wolf management plan has a “minimum population” goal but no “maximum” goal, and that Minnesotans are “interested in maintaining the wolf on our landscape.”

The wolf position statement on MDHA’s website prior to federal delisting similarly said that “delisting will bring the wolf under state wildlife management oversight as a big game species with all associated protections so wolves can remain forever as a wild and thriving species on our landscape.” And the organization’s written statement of autumn 2013 said that “without the use of balanced wildlife management efforts the future of MN’s wolves, deer and

other species can easily be threatened . . . MDHA supports gray wolves in Minnesota and we support gray wolf management that includes hunting and trapping.”

The central proposition here is that “predators,” including “wolves,” should be “managed” as “game animals.” As with deer, pheasants, ducks, and “all the other game species,” “proper management”—specifically including “hunting and trapping”—is said to be “the key” to assuring a “healthy future” for wolves and assuring the presence of wolves for “future generations” of humans to “enjoy.” Being designated as a “game species” brings “associated protections,” assuring that wolves will “remain forever as a wild and thriving species.”

The “managed harvest” of wolves and other predators “as game” is said to provide “great benefit” to the “health” of these species by reducing the risk of “diseases,” and is also said to benefit their prey (e.g., deer) by reducing predation. Managing wolves in this way is said to be an essential part of “supporting” and “maintaining the wolf on our landscape” and helping the species “thrive.” In a nutshell: Through management, we ensure the healthy future of species we value, especially game species. Therefore, wolves will fare best if we designate and manage them as a game species.

This encompasses the concept that wolves will become more valued as a result of designating and managing them as a game species. In early 2012, for instance, MDHA’s Mark Johnson was quoted as saying that “the sooner we can get a season going, the sooner it’s going to change the culture out there that wolves aren’t vermin on the landscape—that they are a game animal” (Albert, 2012). A Michigan column similarly stated that “a hunting season should go a long way toward helping to change the way that humans view these animals” (Pink, 2012). The explicitly stated idea is that implementation of a wolf hunting season will shift the cultural conception (“change the culture”) of wolves as useless and harmful (“vermin”) to a conception of wolves as useful and valuable (“game”).

The statements and utterances above are evidently underpinned by premises formulated in the previous section, concerning hunting, conservation, and management. Also evident here is a premise formulated in the preceding chapter: Hunted species are valued species.

5. “Some way to manage that interaction”

Though this discourse is focused on wolves in the contexts of deer and hunting, it also invokes depredation on domestic animals. Pets are occasionally mentioned, as in Johnson’s passing comment in Duluth, about wolves being “made to eat moose / and evidently dogs and cats and all kinds of critters.” But livestock are more central.

Here is Johnson, again from the October 2012 event in Duluth:

```
depredation
  wolves are a predator
  they're going to eat things
to say that a farmer shouldn't have his farm here
  because wolves decided to move into the area
  or have repopulated the area
  is kind of unfair to the farmer
to say that wolves shouldn't be able to live there
  is unfair to the wolf
so we have to find some way to manage that interaction
  and to be that middle ground
and the middle ground
  that's the same with the rest of us
  we have to consider what are our positions
  and how is there middle ground
so that we can actively manage the wolf in Minnesota
so that all of us
can have wolves in the future
  and our grandkids can see wolves in the future
and we can all live peaceably with them
  peaceably meaning
  managed
```

Central here are the identity and actions of the wolf, and the resulting relationship between wolves and farmers dwelling in the same areas. As “predators,” wolves “eat things,” including livestock. When wolves “repopulate” an area that is now farmed, an “interaction” ensues. In that interactional relationship, it is “unfair” to conclude that the farmer shouldn’t farm

there; it is likewise “unfair” to conclude that the wolves shouldn’t live there. The solution to this dilemma is to “manage that interaction.” Literally speaking, these utterances invoke the imperative of managing livestock depredation. And they assert that public hunting and trapping can and should play a valuable role in such management.

As used here, however, the term “manage” has other and broader meanings. Finding a “fair” way to “manage” the wolf-farmer interaction is verbally linked to finding “middle ground,” not only between wolves and farmers but also among other parties and positions (“the same with the rest of us / we have to consider what are our positions / and how is there middle ground”). As stated here, the purpose of finding “middle ground” is to “actively manage the wolf” to (1) assure the future of the wolf population (“so that all of us / can have wolves in the future / and our grandkids can see wolves in the future”) and (2) create the conditions for good wolf-human relations (“so that . . . we can all live peaceably with them / peaceably meaning / managed”).

Here, in short, “manage” serves as a far-reaching and positive symbolic term. The action of “managing” is said to resolve wolf-farmer interactions and is also linked to people finding middle ground in their conflicts over wolves. When people do find such middle ground, they can be more effective in “managing” the wolf, ensuring “the future” of the wolf and “peaceable” wolf-human relations.

To put it simply, two premises can be formulated:

- Relations between people and wildlife are better and more peaceable when managed.
- Management is good for people and wildlife.

6. “Balance,” “science,” and “irrational thinking”

Above, a link was noted between “management,” especially of wolves, and fair, balanced “middle ground” (e.g., between wolves and farmers; among people’s wolf-related positions). This link is emphasized elsewhere as well. Recall, for instance, Johnson’s statement in Duluth about how the overwhelming majority of MDHA members take a moderate position “right down the

middle / saying / it's sound science / it's biologically based . . . so management should be the way we should go forward." Recall, too, the February 2014 edition of "Bullet Blasts":

MDHA is not anti-wolf. We are pro wildlife and support wolves within our landscape for future generations to enjoy. Proper management of Minnesota's wolves is the key to their healthy future, just like with deer, elk, pheasants, etc.

And consider this excerpt from MDHA's fall 2013 statement:

'Balance' is our goal. As a result, with the delisting of the gray wolf in the Great Lakes Region, and the return of gray wolf management from the USFWS to the MN DNR, and the approval of the Official MN Wolf Management Plan by the USFWS and the MN Legislature, MDHA supports the managed hunting of wolves in Minnesota under the authority and implementation of the MN DNR. MDHA supports gray wolves in Minnesota and we support gray wolf management that includes hunting and trapping.

"Management" is said to be a way of finding "middle ground," and of ensuring "fair" and "peaceable" relations, both between wolves and humans and also among humans. MDHA and most of its members are said to be "right down the middle," neither opposing a wolf hunting season nor opposing the wolf's continued existence in the state ("not anti-wolf"). MDHA's explicitly stated goal is "balance," which is depicted in terms of (1) "support[ing] gray wolves in Minnesota" and simultaneously "support[ing] gray wolf management that includes hunting and trapping," and (2) acting in accordance with the recommendations of authorities, especially scientific authorities (e.g., "it's sound science / it's biologically based," "approval . . . by the USFWS and the MN Legislature," "authority and implementation of the MN DNR").

In this discourse, "management," "balance," and "science" are closely linked. Propositionally speaking, we can say that "wolf management" is "scientific" and "balanced." Support for such proper, rational management is central to this discourse and to MDHA's position on wolves.

Implicit in this discourse's self-description—as balanced, moderate, scientific, and rational—is the idea that some conflicting ways of thinking and speaking are unbalanced, extreme, unscientific, and irrational. At times, this is made explicit. As a MDHA member put it during an interview, there is one "extreme radical tiny component of society that hates wolves."

Similarly extreme, he said, is “the other radical component” that thinks “wolves should not be managed / they should just be left to run free.” The latter “radical component”—those who oppose “wolf management through hunting and trapping”—seek to gain “leverage,” he said, through “outside groups / the Humane Society of the United States and / the Defenders of Wildlife and so on.” Such radical opponents and outside groups, he said, ignore science.

one of the major arguments for not delisting the wolf
and not allowing wolf management
through hunting and trapping
is that
quote
wolves are not everywhere they used to be
end quote
and until they are
then that perspective says they are not
recovered
but that's
scientifically and biologically
that's not
the definition
of recovered

This hunter then pointed out that it is not possible for wolves to return to places like New York, Chicago, or Minneapolis. The idea that wolves should not be delisted or managed until they are “everywhere they used to be,” said this MDHA member, is irrational and contributes to an irrational political process.

when you have the US Fish and Wildlife Service
you have their entire endangered species specialists
and everything
and they start saying that
these animals are
need to be delisted
and then it takes
ten years of fighting lawsuits
to just get to the point where
you can ask for public input
it doesn't make sense anymore
and that's
that's the
irrational thinking
that is being interjected into this
into the whole
discussion about

wolves
you know
are they recovered
are they not
can we harvest them
or can't we

This kind of “irrational thinking”—and consequent public processes that don’t “make sense anymore”—are, he said, the biggest obstacles to “progress.” The Michigan column mentioned above conveys a similar message:

Among hunters, trappers, and others with an informed interest in the outdoors, there are many level-headed people who understand that a carefully crafted hunting and trapping season can play a part in managing the state’s healthy wolf population. But there are too many people who become very emotional at the thought of harming a wolf. (Pink, 2012)

Above, I formulated a proposition: “Wolf management” is “scientific” and “balanced.” We can now add its inverse: Opposition to “wolf management” is “irrational,” “extreme,” and “radical.”

A scientific, balanced, pro-management, pro-progress voice—which says that wolves are “recovered” and therefore can and should be “delisted,” “managed,” and “harvested”—is attributed to experts (including MN-DNR and USFWS endangered species specialists) and to local people (including the vast majority of MDHA members). A non-scientific, extreme, anti-management, anti-progress view—which says that wolves are not “recovered” and therefore should not be “delisted,” “managed,” or “harvested”—is attributed to a “radical component” of society allied with “outside groups.”

These statements and utterances are underpinned by several premises already articulated, especially this one: Wolf management is rational and scientific. We can formulate additional premises as well:

- Management, rationality, and science are moderate and balanced.
- Moderation and balance are better than irrationality and extremism.
- Moderation and balance are supported by locals.
- Irrationality and extremism are fueled by outsiders.

7. Summary analysis: Management-as-the-way-forward in hubs and radiants

Here, as we have heard, the wolf is spoken of as a population that should be managed. This discourse is a complex web of symbolic terms, their uses, and their explicit and implicit meanings, a web that encompasses wolves and wolf-human relations, as well as a wider range of issues and ideas. As in previous summarizing sections, here I revisit analyses from the perspective of discursive hubs and radiants. As before, my aim here is to summarize the discourse, distill key dimensions, and further illuminate interrelations among these dimensions.

As I have heard and interpreted this discourse, its most prominent hub is action. Central to this hub are depictions of the significant need for—and value of—active management and control of the wolf population. “Management” is used and declared as this discourse’s focal term. As one interviewee said of the wolf issue and the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association’s position, “it’s all about management.”

Wolf management and control are said to follow logically and sequentially from wolf recovery and delisting, as a step of progress and an indicator of conservation success (see section V.B.2). Broadly, wolf management is said to be a rational and balanced program of action. Specifically, it is said to be based on, and to be a matter of heeding, sound science and the recommendations of experts (see section V.B.6).

As depicted by MDHA and others, the value of wolf management is closely linked to the value of deer and deer hunting: Deer are, and should be, managed to provide a robust population for human hunters to pursue. Having ample deer to hunt is essential to the continuation of valuable deer hunting traditions. As predators, wolves affect deer and therefore deer hunting. Thus, the wolf population should be limited and controlled; having fewer wolves on the landscape will improve deer survival rates and protect deer hunting traditions (see section V.B.1).

Active wolf management is said to ensure the health and future of all wildlife, including wolves, deer, and other species. Failing to manage wolves, in contrast, is said to threaten the future of all. In particular, designating and managing wolves as a game species, it is said, brings

protections to—and will shift cultural ideas about—the wolf, elevating the animal from worthless (“vermin”) to valuable (“game”) (see section V.B.4). More broadly, wolf management—as a means of mitigating problematic relations and interactions between wolves and humans, especially farmers, and ensuring fairness for both—is said to be the key to people’s peaceable coexistence with wolves. Relations between people and wolves are said to be better when “actively managed” (see section V.B.5). In short, this discourse depicts active wolf management including public hunting and trapping as good for all—hunters, farmers, wolves, deer, and other wildlife—and as the key to a positive future for all.

With particular reference to the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, the practice of hunting is depicted as a necessary and valuable core part of the larger program of action called “wildlife management.” Hunting is said to be (1) a tool for implementation of wildlife management, (2) a way of involving people directly in wildlife management, and (3) a critical source of public funding for wildlife management. Wildlife management and hunting, in turn, are said to serve the interests of the people. In these ways, hunting is described as central to the future of wolf-human relations, despite its relative inefficacy (in comparison to trapping) in on-the-ground implementation (see section V.B.3).

Closely linked to the actions of hunting and management is the radiant of dwelling. Here, support for wolf recovery and support for wolf management are both explicitly expressed. Value is placed on the recovery and survival of endangered species in general and of the wolf in particular. Value is also placed on the active, lethal management of this species. A proper human way of dwelling in nature is said to encompass (1) assuring the continued existence of wolves and other wildlife and (2) assuring peaceable co-existence between humans and such wildlife. The practices of management and hunting are said to play central roles in both.

Along the radiant of identity, wolves are depicted as a population with problematic potentials at both ends of a spectrum: When too small, the population is said to have been endangered. When too large, widespread, and unmanaged, the population is said to pose threats to

ecological systems, to various wildlife species including deer and wolves themselves, and to various human activities including hunting and farming. This bimodal problematic potential can and should be balanced and reconciled through proper human action (recovery followed by management); when properly managed, wolves can live peaceably with people (see sections V.B.5 and V.B.6).

Those employing this discourse identify themselves and their ways of thinking in terms of moderation, balance, science, and rationality (in contrast to others identified and criticized in terms of irrationality and extremism) (see section V.B.6). This self-identification and the values of moderation, balance, and rationality are, as we have heard, closely tied to ideas about “management.” More broadly, hunters are identified as intentional and voluntary supporters of conservation who play unique, necessary, and valuable roles in the management and conservation of North American wildlife (see section V.B.3). Biologists and other scientific experts, including those employed by state Departments of Natural Resources, are identified as allies who are on the right track, who are making the right recommendations, who should be heeded, and who sometimes need encouragement to continue in the right direction (see section V.B.6).

Along the radiant of relationship, and in primarily implicit ways, MDHA and others depict a positive, mutual relationship between themselves and DNR biologists whose expert knowledge should be respected and implemented. MDHA and others also depict (1) positive relationships with all hunters and non-hunters who support active wolf management that includes hunting and trapping, and (2) negative relationships with those irrational locals who, in collaboration with outside groups, oppose such management. Relations and interactions with wolves are said to be positive when actively managed, and problematic when not actively managed.

In this discourse, the radiant of feeling is muted. This way of speaking does not give direct or audible voice to emotions. When addressed in this discourse, emotions are typically described as problematic and inappropriate in the context of wildlife-related policymaking (e.g.,

“too many people . . . become very emotional”). This absence of explicit emotional expression, and this depiction of feelings as problematic in connection with wildlife policy, are significant features of this discourse.

Listening for the roots of this expressive system, we can readily hear echoes of historical discourses concerning population conservation, game management, and predator control for both livestock and game purposes which, in turn, echo broader discourses of science and rationality. We can also hear echoes of the ideals of American democracy, particularly in connection with what is often called the North American Wildlife Conservation Model; paraphrasing the Gettysburg Address, the model could—in terms resonant with this discourse—be called management and hunting “of the people, by the people, for the people.” When listening and thinking in terms of such communicative means and meanings, we can completely miss the significance of means and meanings central to another discourse deeply rooted in the western Great Lakes region, to which we now turn.

CHAPTER VI

“MA’IINGAN IS OUR BROTHER”: A DISCOURSE OF KINSHIP AND SHARED FATES

This chapter investigates a discourse which depicts the wolf as a brother whose fate the Ojibwe share. Drawing on interviews, instances of public talk, tribal wolf plans, and other data, I describe and interpret this way of speaking, which has been central to Ojibwe communities’ engagement regarding wolves in the western Great Lakes region in recent years.

Matters of particular and interrelated concern in this discourse include the following:

- kinship between the Ojibwe and Ma’iingan (the wolf);
- ways in which the fates of Ojibwe and Ma’iingan have paralleled one another;
- historical perceptions and treatment of Ojibwe and Ma’iingan by Euro-Americans;
- responsibility for ensuring the wolf’s lasting presence;
- maintenance of harmonious relations with the wolf;
- ways of dwelling in relation to the more-than-human world;
- wolves’ needs, and shared identity with the Ojibwe, as hunters of white-tailed deer;
- a hunting ethic encompassing respect and appropriate utilization.

My goals are to describe the shape of this discourse and interpret the cultural logic—of the wolf as a “brother” whose “fate” the Ojibwe share—both presumed and created when this discourse is used.

A. Four tellings of a creation story

This chapter begins with four tellings of a creation story. I start here because, in my experience over the past few years, this is where representatives of Ojibwe communities usually begin when speaking of wolves and of the establishment of state hunting and trapping seasons. This story is often heard and interpreted as a description and expression of the wolf’s special

status in Ojibwe cosmology. As we shall hear, however, focusing solely on its spiritual qualities tunes out other dimensions of the story, including its historical contexts.

1. White Earth

The day before Minnesota's 2012 wolf hunt started, I sat down with White Earth Nation natural resources director Mike Swan. When I asked about wolves, he spoke of his people's decades-long quest for cultural renewal. He then told me how the first human was accompanied by Ma'iingan the Wolf.

when the Creator
we call him Gitchie Manitou
he put man on this earth
he walked
and he was lonely
and
as he walked
it was
the Ma'iingan
that walked with him
kept him company
kept him
and they traveled together
and what they did is they walked around
and they
started naming everything
the plants
the flowers
everything there

Soon, Swan spoke more about relationship between Ojibwe and Ma'iingan.

because of that legend
in our history
we consider
the wolf
the Ma'iingan
as our brother
and
we always believed
what happens to the Ma'iingan
is going to happen to us
the same way
what happens to us
is going to happen to Ma'iingan

because we walked
that path together
and that's the reason why
when we look at history
that
for example
you know
one time
at one time
well
ma'iingans were hunted and
so were we
you know
lost a lot of land
and so did we

but
you know
those are just kind of parallels
to what
a person could generalize
of what
of what could happen between us
the Ojibwe Anishinaabe people³⁹
and
Ma'iingan the wolf

so we always believed
that
they are our brothers
and that's part of our history
that's part of our legends
and that's what was told a long time ago to me

2. Bad River

The July 2012 WI-NRB meeting in Stevens Point was held several months before I met Mike Swan. During the meeting, Joe Rose, Sr.—representing the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and the Voigt Intertribal Task Force of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and

³⁹ The Anishinaabe include three cultural groups: Ojibwe/Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi. Though “Ojibwe” and “Chippewa”—alternate anglicizations of the same word—and “Anishinaabe” are used somewhat interchangeably, the latter is most frequently employed by speakers referring to themselves and their own people.

Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC)⁴⁰—told a version of the creation story Swan had volunteered.

Rose began this way:

Ahaw boozhoo ikwewag ininiwag gaye
mooka'am-giizis nindizhinikaaz
migizi nindoodem
mashkiziibii-oodenaang nindoojibaa
nimidewininiw

To translate
my Anishinaabe name is Rising Sun
I'm Eagle Clan
a member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe
a member of the Midewiwin or the Grand Medicine Society
and Associate Professor of Native American Studies
at Northland College

Note that Rose began by speaking in Ojibwe (*Anishinaabemowin*). In that language, identified himself as Rising Sun (*mooka'am-giizis*), as a member of the Eagle Clan (*migizi nindoodem*, indicating a Euro-American patriline), and as a member of the Grand Medicine Society (*midewiwin*). A more literal translation of his opening words, provided by another member of his community, reads as follows:

Okay hello ladies and gentlemen
my name is Rising Sun
I am Eagle Clan
I am from Bad River
I am a member of the Midewiwin

He then translated most of his initial utterances into English, added that he is an associate professor at Northland, and proceeded.

This way of introducing oneself—stating one's name, clan, and other community memberships in Anishinaabemowin, and then translating these utterances into English—is

⁴⁰ From the organization's website: "Formed in 1984, GLIFWC represents eleven Ojibwe tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan who reserved hunting, fishing and gathering rights in the 1837, 1842, and 1854 Treaties with the United States government. GLIFWC provides natural resource management expertise, conservation enforcement, legal and policy analysis, and public information services in support of the exercise of treaty rights during well-regulated, off-reservation seasons throughout the treaty ceded territories."

common among Ojibwe speakers addressing non-Ojibwe audiences. Though in depth-consideration of this form of introduction is beyond the scope of this chapter, I want to draw the reader's attention to some of its more evident dimensions. First, it can be heard as an expression of identity. By speaking in this way, one demonstrates the survival and vitality of one's language and culture as well as one's own linguistic and cultural competence, and also expresses belief in the continued value of the language and personal and communal pride in the continued ability to speak it.

In a matter of seconds, Rose—like others who introduce themselves in this way—not only says things explicitly about his individual, communal, and cultural identity but also implicitly invokes other radiants. Along the radiants of identity and relationship, he tells his listeners that his membership in a particular community (Bad River) and in particular cultural groups and institutions (Eagle Clan, Midewiwin) are important to who he is and to how, and perhaps for whom, he speaks. Along the same radiants, by speaking Anishinaabemowin to people who do not understand the language, he reminds his listeners that he and they are members of different cultures with different understandings and perspectives. In Rose's case, as in others, this is not done with an intent or tone of defiance or exclusion; he does, after all, immediately accommodate his listeners by translating. But this cultural enactment and demonstration of difference, and its potential meanings, are noteworthy.

Rose's introduction in Anishinaabemowin also implicitly invokes the radiant of dwelling. He is not speaking in a language, or in terms of a culture, from just anywhere. He is speaking in a language and in terms of a culture with deep roots in the place where he stands. In other words, he is speaking as an indigenous person who lives in that place and whose ancestors lived there before Euro-Americans did. The act of speaking this "mother tongue" activates a complex web of deeply forceful meanings, relevant not only to Rose's identity (and to his qualifications to speak about indigenous cultural matters) but also to the specific topic he is about to address: human relationships with the wolf in a place long inhabited by both wolf and Ojibwe.

Rose's self-identification as a "member of the Midewiwin / or the Grand Medicine Society" tells listeners more particularly that he knows traditional Anishinaabe ways. Conventional English translations define Midewiwin as a "religion." Traditionally, however, Midewiwin encompassed what are commonly conceptualized as religion, psychology, higher education, and health and social services.

Rose's introduction can thus be heard both as saying certain things and as setting context for other things to be said. As we shall hear, telling a creation story can be heard similarly.

Rose began by telling of the four orders of Creation—the physical world, plants, animals, and humans, created in that order—and of how the Great Spirit lowered Anishinaabe (Original Man) onto Mother Earth, asking him to "visit all places / and to name all things."

and so Anishinaabe began his walkabout
and while he was traveling he met the one
that we call Ma'iingan
the wolf
now since the wolf was of the third order
he'd been here much longer
than Anishinaabe
so he became the guide
and in time
in time
blood brother
to Anishinaabe
they were inseparable companions

Rose then spoke of similarities between Ma'iingan and Anishinaabe, of how the Great Spirit later set them on different paths, and of the prophecy that "in this age of the Seventh Fire / you Ma'iingan / you may no longer have a place to retreat" and may "pass out of existence."

and you Anishinaabe
if your brother Ma'iingan passes out of existence
you will soon follow
and so what Gitche Manitou was referring to
was not just the wolf
but everything that the wolf represents
and if Anishinaabe passes out of existence
all other humans will soon follow
and so our destiny
is related to the destiny

of Ma'iingan
the wolf

Rose then spoke of how humans are “dependent / on the first three orders of the Creation,” are here “to live in harmony and balance.” He spoke of how, in this age of the Seventh Fire, which we entered “about three decades ago,” humans are approaching a “fork in the road,” with one path leading to pollution and destruction, the other to restoration and balance.⁴¹ He told how, in prophecies, even “in the eleventh hour,” “there is hope / because the Anishinaabe people were given a gift / we call it mashkiki / loosely interpreted / it means medicine.” With that gift, he said, comes “responsibility” “to share this knowledge and wisdom” with all other humans. So it is said

that in this age of the Seventh Fire
that a new people will arise
they'll turn and look back
begin to retrace their footsteps
the Anishinaabe will pick up those medicine bundles
that have fallen by the wayside
and go to the elders
for an interpretation of those teachings
those bundles
those teachings
had to be taken underground for generations
because of persecution
but now they're beginning to see the light of day
once more

Prophecies, he concluded, say that “a new paradigm / will come into being,” in which “true wealth / will be measured / in terms of clean water / and fresh air / and pristine wilderness / and all of those things that are represented / by Ma'iingan.”

⁴¹ Benton-Banai (1979), writing of seven prophets who came to the Ojibwe long ago, linked their prophecies to historical events including Ojibwe migrations, the coming of Europeans, the boarding school era, and the repression of Indian language and religion. He wrote of the Seventh Fire as a time of potential rebirth, and of the seventh prophet's prediction that “the Light-Skinned Race will be given a choice between two roads,” one leading to “much suffering and death to all the Earth's people,” the other to the lighting of “the Eighth and Final Fire—an eternal Fire of peace, love, brotherhood and sisterhood” (p. 93).

3. Two other tellings

A previous telling by Joe Rose, audio-recorded and posted online by the Timber Wolf

Alliance, is instructive.

Original Man
and the wolf
were brothers

and the Great Spirit
told them

He said
Original Man
Anishinaabe
the wolf
Ma'iingan
He said
in many ways
you are alike
He said
when you take a mate
you mate for life
He says
your social structure
will be the clan system
He said
both of you will be
good hunters

and He said
later on
there will be others who will come
who will misunderstand
both of you

Rose then told how Original Man and Ma'iingan were instructed to walk separate paths, and how the Great Spirit predicted their shared fates.

He said
whatever happens to one of you
will also
happen to the other
and He told
Ma'iingan the wolf
if you ever
disappear
from the earth

that means an end
to the
to the wilderness and all the wild places
and He said
if this happens
He said
Anishinaabe
Original Man
He said
you'll soon
pass from existence also

you'll die from great
loneliness
of spirit⁴²
and He said
if that happens
He said
it won't be too long
before all the other human beings
will pass out of existence
also

Helpful as well is an excerpt from a written version of this story (Benton-Banai, 1979) in which Original Man expresses his loneliness:

He spoke to his Grandfather the Creator and asked, "Why am I alone? Why are there no other ones like me?"

Gitchie Manito answered, "I will send someone to walk, talk and play with you."
He sent Ma-en'-gun (the wolf).

With Ma-en'-gun by his side, Original Man again spoke to Gitchie Manito, "I have finished what you asked me to do. I have visited and named all the plants, animals, and places of this Earth. What would you now have me to do?" [sic]

Gitchie Manito answered Original Man and Ma-en'-gun, "Each of you are [sic] to be a brother to the other. Now, both of you are to walk the Earth and visit all its places."

⁴² Intriguingly, Rose's phrase "die from great loneliness of spirit" echoes the famous speech/letter often attributed to Chief Seattle. This speech was penned by Ted Perry and included in the film *Home*, produced by the Southern Baptist Convention and aired in 1972 (see Kaiser, 1987). Perry wrote: "If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit." Perry also expressed the broader sentiment of "whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man." Essentially the same idea is articulated in the contemporary Ojibwe context, in terms of the connected fates of Ojibwe and wolf: "whatever happens to one of you will also happen to the other." These patterns of cultural discourse are worthy of consideration, as Perry (a Euro-American) was inspired by a previous version of a speech attributed to Seattle and these words, in turn, have traction among contemporary American Indians.

So, Original Man and Ma-en'-gun walked the Earth and came to know all of her. In this journey they became very close to each other. They became like brothers. In their closeness they realized that they were brothers to all of the Creation.

When they completed the task that Gitchie Manito asked them to do, they talked with the Creator once again.

The Creator said, "From this day on, you are to separate your paths. You must go your different ways.

"What happens to one of you will also happen to the other. Each of you will be feared, respected and misunderstood by the people that will later join you on this Earth."

And so Ma-en'-gun and Original Man set off on their different journeys.

This last teaching about the wolf is important for us today. What the Grandfather said to them has come true. Both the Indian and the wolf have come to be alike and have experienced the same thing. Both of them mate for life. Both have a Clan System and a tribe. Both have had their land taken from them. Both have been hunted for their wee-nes'-si-see' (hair). And both have been pushed very close to destruction.

We can tell about our future as Indian people by looking at the wolf. It seems as though the wolf is beginning to come back to this land. Will this prove that Indian people will cease to be the "Vanishing Americans?" Will Indian people emerge to lead the way back to natural living and respect for our Earth Mother? (pp. 7-8)

In earlier tellings, oral and written, of Ojibwe creation stories, the wolf played more varied roles and other animals were also quite prominent. One Ojibwe interviewee suggested that Benton-Banai's text marked a shift in the telling of this creation story, and that Ma'iingan plays a more unique, more central role in this and subsequent tellings. Benton-Banai's emphasis on the wolf may be related to historical circumstances discussed below. In any case, his book appears not only to reflect but also to have influenced Ojibwe discourses, beliefs, and values concerning Ma'iingan.

4. "They are our brothers"

With these descriptions of these four tellings before us, let us see what we can make of them interpretively. Most obviously, they speak of kinship, making relationship an explicit hub. Ma'iingan and Ojibwe/Anishinaabe are connected by terms and phrases including "(blood)

brother,” “inseparable companions,” “company,” and “close(ness).”⁴³ This relationship is defined in terms of guidance and dependence—“the wolf . . . became the guide,” “we . . . became dependent”—resonating with the use, in Ojibwe and other Indian discourses, of “more-than-human” to describe what Euro-Americans call “non-human.” Closely linked are terms concerning shared actions and interactions, through which kinship is said to have formed: “walk,” “traveled,” “naming,” “talk,” and “play.”

Kinship between wolf and Ojibwe is also linked to senses of place in, and relationships with, the larger world: “on this earth,” “land,” “everything there,” “wilderness and all the wild places,” “all the plants, animals, and places of this Earth,” “came to know all of her,” and “brothers to all of the Creation.” These senses of place and world are tied to particular ways of dwelling: “respect for our Earth Mother,” “natural living,” “live in harmony and balance.”

Integral to these depictions of kinship, wolf and Ojibwe are said to be “alike” in various ways, including social structures (“mate for life,” “clan system,” “tribe”) and means of subsistence (“good hunters”). Also integral are terms for emotion, describing how “lonely” and “alone” Anishinaabe felt before Ma’iingan joined him and how the Anishinaabe will feel if wolves ever disappear: “you’ll die from great / loneliness / of spirit.”

Employing these terms and phrases, we can formulate cultural propositions that express taken-for-granted views, including these:

- “Original Man” and “Ma’iingan” were “brothers” and “companions.”
- Anishinaabe and Ma’iingan became “brothers” and “companions” by “talking,” “walking,” and “traveling” together.

⁴³ In related stories, the interaction and bond are between Ma’iingan and Nanabozho, a part-human, part-spirit, hare-eared trickster hero. After our interview, Swan handed me a copy of a poster that had just been printed by the Anishinaabe Wolf Consortium. Its central image is a reproduction of a painting by Ojibwe artist Rabbett Before Horses Strickland, depicting Nanabozho in the company of three wolves. The image is accompanied by text from Benton-Banai’s 1979 book.

- In “walking,” “traveling,” and becoming “close,” Anishinaabe and Ma’iingan came to “know” “all the plants, animals, and places of this Earth” and realized they were “brothers to all of the Creation.”
- Being “brothers to all of the Creation” involves “respect for our Earth Mother,” “natural living,” and living “in harmony and balance.”
- “Ojibwe” and “Ma’iingan” are still “brothers.”
- Human beings are “dependent” on earth, plants, and animals, and rely on beings like Ma’iingan as “guides.”
- Without Ma’iingan, Anishinaabe felt (and the people would feel) deeply “lonely.”
- Anishinaabe people and wolves are “alike” in their “clan systems” and “hunting.”

These propositions offer insight into certain dimensions of a deeply felt relationship between Ojibwe and wolf: one that is said to go back to the beginning of human existence, to have developed through shared actions and experiences, and to be linked to relationships with—and valued ways of living in—the larger world.

In these tellings, humans are kin to wolves, are capable of cooperation and intimacy with wolves, are lonely without them, and are like them in various ways, including social structures and means of subsistence. As we can hear, all five hubs and radiants—identity (what kinds of beings humans and wolves are), relationship (how they are related), action (how they act and interact), emotion (how they feel about, and without, one another), and dwelling (how they live and should live in the world)—are active here.⁴⁴

Peter David, a biologist who has long worked for GLIFWC, contends that wolves have cultural and spiritual significance “so profound that many tribal members feel a certain degree of discomfort discussing it” (2009, p. 273). Lethal control of depredating wolves, he writes, is

⁴⁴ Nelson (1983) reported that the Koyukon of western Alaska also spoke of similarities between wolves and humans (especially as evidenced by similar cooperative hunting strategies) and of how “in the Distant Time, a wolf-person lived among people and hunted with them.” According to Nelson, “a strong sense of communality, a kind of shared identity, has held since that primordial time” between the Koyukon and wolves, though the wolf was considered “extremely dangerous . . . as a spiritual being” (p. 159).

difficult for many Ojibwe to contemplate, as one does not “apply the death penalty to brother wolf” (p. 276).

As I sat talking with two members of a tribe’s natural resources staff, one said that the closest European analogy he could come up with for the Ojibwe-wolf relationship was the relationship one might have with a favorite hunting dog or pet. Shortly thereafter, the other spoke of dogs as well, agreeing that, for them, the wolf is similar. He remarked that many Ojibwe are emotionally attached to and protective of wolves, as many people are with dogs. “Can we kill man’s best friend?” he asked. Dogs, he noted, attack people fairly often, while wolf attacks on humans are extraordinarily rare.

At this point, we can propose several cultural premises that illuminate the foundations of propositions formulated above, making key beliefs and values more readily audible.

- Humans and other beings are kin.
- Humans depend on and learn from other beings.
- Humans and other beings interact, communicate, and experience intimacy.
- Relationships develop through interaction.
- Relationships among humans and animals are part of larger webs of relationship among all beings, places, and earth.
- Relationships with other beings, places, and earth are important and deeply felt.
- Human interactions and relationships with other beings and the earth should be characterized by respect, harmony, and balance.

As these premises suggest, cultural views of communication encompass distinctive conceptions of what kinds of beings communicate with one another, in what ways, in what relationships, as part of what kind of world. These views, in other words, are intimately linked with particular models of personhood, sociality, and dwelling.

In this discourse, in short, wolves are spoken of as communicative persons. Hallowell (1960) argued that Ojibwe ontology involves an understanding of “persons” that includes not only humans but also other beings, including stones, thunder, the sun, birds, and mammals.

Guided by values and obligations, humans live and act within webs of relationship among these persons: “The world of personal relations in which the Ojibwa live is a world in which vital social relations transcend those which are maintained with human beings” (p. 43). Similar views of communication and personhood have been explored in literature on other American Indian discourses concerning more-than-human beings and places (e.g., Basso, 1996; Carbaugh, 1999; Deloria, 1991; Nadasdy, 2007; Nelson, 1983).

As noted in Chapter I, the defining characteristic of personhood is the ability and willingness to enter into social relations. Among other aspects, social relations encompass the making of agreements. In contemporary Ojibwe talk about wolves, it is not uncommon to hear people speak of binding “agreements” and “treaties” made long ago between the Anishinaabe and Ma’iingan.

5. “What happens to one of you will also happen to the other”

Let us return to the stories, where it is said that the fates of wolf and Ojibwe are bound together: “what(ever) happens to one of you will also happen to the other,” “what happens to the Ma’iingan / is going to happen to us . . . what happens to us is going to happen to Ma’iingan.” These shared fates have a dangerous aspect—“if your brother Ma’iingan passes out of existence / you will soon follow”—which extends to “all other humans” and to “everything that the wolf represents,” “wilderness and all the wild places.”⁴⁵ Here, three cultural propositions are expressed clearly, with relationship and dwelling as hubs:

- What “happens” to Ma’iingan “also happens” to the Anishinaabe, and vice versa.
- If Ma’iingan “disappears” or “passes out of existence,” the Anishinaabe will also.

⁴⁵ Note that Rose’s use of “wilderness” seems to invoke a kind of “wild place,” not a policy definition of land where humans may not dwell. Many people—Euro-American and Indian—simultaneously value wildness and resist wilderness policies (Freedman, 2002; Proescholdt, Rapson & Heinselman, 1995).

- The danger may extend to “all other humans” and to “wilderness and all the wild places.”

From these, we can formulate a cultural premise:

- The fates of humans, other beings, and earth are linked.

This premise about linked fates, and these propositions about things “happening”—species and peoples “disappearing” and “passing out of existence”—take on greater gravity if we listen to particulars.

The parallel paths of Ma’iingan and Ojibwe are said to have been foretold in relation to other people. “Later on / there will be others who will come / who will misunderstand / both of you.” “Each of you will be feared, respected and misunderstood by the people that will later join you on this Earth.” Ma’iingan “lost a lot of land and so did we”; they “were hunted and so were we.” “Both have had their land taken from them. Both have been hunted for their wee-nes’-si-see’ (hair). And both have been pushed very close to destruction.”

Here—with dwelling and relationship still foregrounded—much is said, both explicitly and implicitly. Here, the story brings attentive listeners down to earth, out of the realm of ancient, spiritual connection to the harsh ground of recent historical specificity. Here, the hub of dwelling draws our attention not only to “living in harmony” and protecting “wild places” but also to the “taking” and “loss” of “a lot of land.” It also draws our attention to how such words are doubly placed (Carbaugh, 1996a). These words not only create and express meanings about place and homeland but are also expressed in place—not just anywhere, but here, as when Rose stood speaking in “what’s called the state of Wisconsin” (as one tribal chairman put it during an interview) or as when Swan, sitting on a tribal reservation in what is called Minnesota, said that Ma’iingan “lost a lot of land and so did we.”

Here, the discursive strand of relationship draws our attention not only to relations between Ojibwe and Ma’iingan but also, obliquely, to relations with “others” who came later. Note that Euro-Americans remain unnamed, their identity implicit. They are not directly linked to

actions of taking or destroying. In most utterances, they are not even mentioned as participants. Actions “happen” without an actor. Similarly, the radiant of emotion is left implicit. One does not lose most of one’s homeland without feeling some mix of grief, anger, and the like. Despite being unspoken, these understandings and meanings—concerning the identity of those “others” who came later, and concerning how people feel about the loss and taking of their homeland—are important features of this discourse.

The “destruction” resulting from interactions between Ojibwe/Ma’iingan and these “others” invites us to reflect on endangerment, extinction, and genocide: on dangers posed to species and cultures alike, and on the sources of those dangers. When it is said that both wolves and Ojibwe were “hunted,” this can be heard as depicting attempted eradication of a species and a people or—from the perspective of this discourse—two peoples. “Destruction” and “hunting” powerfully evoke all five discursive radiants: identity and relationship shared with Ma’iingan, depth of feeling active there, deeply (and very differently) felt relationship between Ojibwe/Ma’iingan and Euro-Americans, and interactions that resulted in shared dwelling places being lost and taken. We are reminded of links between loss of homeland, loss of identity, and threats to multiple kinds of survival.⁴⁶

This comes into sharper focus if we attend to descriptions of wolf and Ojibwe both being “hunted for their wee-nes’-si-see’ (hair)” and reflect on historical bounty payments, for which Euro-Americans would supply “scalps” as evidence of having killed wolves or Indians. During the 2013 White Earth Wolf Conference, a woman sitting beside me spoke. She equated state-sponsored science and violence aimed at controlling wolf populations and “wiping out our brothers” with state-sponsored science and violence aimed at controlling Ojibwe populations and wiping out her people: “What they’re really talking about is what they’ve actually done to not just

⁴⁶ One interviewee shared a story he had written, depicting the relationship between Ma’iingan and the Anishinaabe and the arrival of white people in their shared homeland. The story was told from the wolves’ perspective.

animals but to us / there was bounty on our heads / you can go get a redskin / go get their scalps . . . that was a form of / ‘Here’s my bounty’ / you know / ‘Here’s the proof / I just killed an Indian / please give me my bounty.’” Her words, like Benton-Banai’s, refer to parallel, institutional efforts to kill—and control populations of—wolves and Indians.

Shimek (2013) also draws these parallels explicitly. In addition, like Benton-Banai, he discusses the Indian boarding school system in the United States, which “nearly eliminated the Indigenous Anishinaabe way of thinking about the world, the wolf, and just about everything else that stood in the way of White Man’s conquest and colonization of America, including other tribes.”

Indian-wolf parallels have been constructed not only in Ojibwe and other Indian discourses but in dominant cultural discourses as well. Barry Lopez cites a 17th-century Massachusetts law that imposed a five-shilling penalty for shooting within town limits “on any unnecessary occasion, or at any game except an Indian or a wolf” (1978, p. 170). A late 19th-century article lauded the Mexican state of Chihuahua’s policy toward Apache “fiends”: “It puts a price upon an Indian’s scalp the same as upon that of a wolf” (“An Apache ambushade,” 1887). Today, the phrase “the only good wolf is a dead wolf” appears regularly in public discourse, as does its parallel “the only good Indian is a dead Indian,” which has been in use since the 1860s (Mieder, 1993). As one historian has put it, and as the reader may recall from Chapter I, the “drama of hunter versus predator (or hunter versus American Indian) has always represented the righteousness of the American cause,” the triumph of good over evil and “civilization over savagery” (Herman, 2001, p. 28).

Recall also the letter to *Wisconsin Outdoor News* quoted in Chapter IV, in which it was said that “the people of northern Wisconsin” (implicitly, non-tribal people) “have been kicked in the teeth time and again.” “First there was the fish spearing [by the Ojibwe], which resulted in smaller bag limits. . . [t]hen came the wolves, which have hurt the deer herd.” The letter urged

“sportsmen” (implicitly white) to tell their state and federal representatives to “develop a better wolf plan . . . [and] do something about the spearing” (November 30, 2012).

Consider this, too: In 2015, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians confirmed the presence of a wolf within their reservation borders in Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. An article about the confirmation (Miller, 2015) noted that Ma’iingan’s presence had “cultural importance” for the Odawa, who are also Anishinaabe, and mentioned both kinship and shared fates. In it, the tribe’s language director was quoted as saying, “Now that the wolves are regaining their strength in our area, our tribe will as well through cultural revitalization.” Below the online article, a reader posted this comment: “Fence in the Rez and keep your killer mangy mutts inside.” All comments on the article were subsequently deleted.

6. “Beginning to come back”

“We can tell about our future as Indian people by looking at the wolf,” wrote Benton-Banai in 1979. “The wolf is beginning to come back to this land” (p. 8).

Rose spoke of how it was foretold that the Anishinaabe would “arise,” returning to “medicine bundles” and “teachings” that had been “taken underground for generations because of persecution.” Swan told me how the Ojibwe were “looking for their culture” and how “it was forbidden . . . to practice our own beliefs and religion openly until 1978,” referring to passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, four years after wolves received protection under the Endangered Species Act, and seven years after the American Indian Movement’s occupation of Alcatraz Island.

Since the 1970s, wolf populations in the western Great Lakes region have grown significantly, despite persistent illegal killing. During the same decades, the Ojibwe have experienced cultural and political resurgence; this has encompassed reaffirmation of treaty rights related to hunting, fishing, and natural resources, despite occasionally violent responses from Euro-Americans (David, 2009; Hall, 1994; Nesper, 2002; Whaley & Bresette, 1994). Though

there is not a universal American Indian view of wolves, members of other tribes—including the Nez Perce, who managed wolf reintroduction in Idaho (Clarke, 1999; Salvador & Clarke, 2011)—similarly perceive wolves and their people as mirrors of one another in their historical displacement from, and recoveries toward, their rightful places: ecological, political, and spiritual.⁴⁷

Rose spoke, too, of a “responsibility” coming with the gift of medicine, “to share this knowledge and wisdom / of how to live in harmony and balance,” echoing Benton-Banai’s question about whether Indian people would “emerge to lead the way back to natural living and respect for our Earth Mother.”

Stated and presumed above are several cultural propositions:

- Ojibwe “teachings,” “beliefs,” and “religion” were “taken underground” for generations because of “persecution.”
- When the wolf “comes back,” the Anishinaabe will “arise,” “look for their culture,” and “pick up those medicine bundles.”
- The Anishinaabe may “emerge” to “lead” others back to “natural living,” sharing “knowledge and wisdom” concerning how to “live in harmony and balance.”

From these, we can propose cultural premises:

- Teachings and practices can be recovered (and shared).
- Recovering as a people involves recovering key teachings and practices.
- Teachings and practices are connected to more-than-human persons and guides including Ma’iingan.

Here, we can see a more hopeful aspect of the fate shared by Ojibwe and Ma’iingan: they have recovered together. As wolf populations rebounded, Ojibwe cultural practices also rebounded. Here, the material reality of the wolf is employed as a powerful cultural symbol, and

⁴⁷ In 2013, while attending the White Earth Wolf Conference, I had breakfast at the tribal casino. On the dining room walls were two murals, one depicting a white-haired Indian on a white horse in the company of three wolves, the second depicting a dozen wolves, one of whom stares into a woodland stream, considering his reflection: the face of an Indian.

dormant cultural symbols (e.g., “medicine”) are depicted as being restored to their proper public, material, ceremonial forms. Hubs of identity (Anishinaabe), relationship (between wolf and Anishinaabe), and dwelling (reinhabiting, and ceremonially reconnecting to, a shared landscape) are foregrounded, reinforcing a sense of the wolf-Ojibwe bond.

Implicitly, a complex relationship with Euro-Americans is also suggested, for they are persecutors and also potential recipients of teachings about “natural living.” Wolf recovery is thus linked not only to cultural recovery among the Ojibwe but also to the redemptive potential of “the Eighth and Final Fire.”

7. Creation story as context

Perhaps we have begun to develop some sense of what it might mean for Ojibwe speakers to say that the wolf is a “brother” and that the fate of wolf and Ojibwe are “closely tied.” What webs of meaning must be activated for such speakers when the federal government delists wolves, state governments legalize public wolf “harvests,” and (mainly Euro-American) hunters and trappers start pursuing them? If, in the 1970s, Benton-Banai and others felt hopeful about wolves “beginning to come back to this land,” what must they feel four decades later, when there are many more wolves but states begin to “manage” their populations? What actions might federal and state governments, or Euro-American citizens, take toward the Ojibwe?

The historical hunting of, and land loss by, wolf and Indian are, Swan told me, “just kind of parallels to what a person could generalize . . . what could happen between us / the Ojibwe, Anishinaabe people / and / Ma’iingan the wolf.” As one tribal chairman summarized, “The wolf population / when we were depressed / was way down / on the verge of extinction / endangered species / wolf population’s coming back / tribes are doing better / for us, that’s what it’s about.”

Early in this chapter, I noted that Rose’s introduction of himself (by speaking in Anishinaabemowin) could be heard both as saying important things and as setting an important context for other things to be said. I mentioned, too, that his telling of a creation story could be

heard as doing the same. During that Wisconsin Natural Resources Board meeting, this was expressed in explicit terms. Following Rose, Bad River Tribal Chairman Mike Wiggins spoke. He said that Rose, as his “elder,” “set the context and foundation” for understanding “the Ojibwe worldview / as it pertains to the wolf bill and the hunting of wolves in general.”

This brief statement by Wiggins could be missed by many listeners. When I first heard these words, they did not strike me as especially significant. I now hear them as a precise and vital reminder of the fact that paying close attention to “the context and foundation” of this (or any) discourse is crucial to cultivating a meaningful understanding of that discourse. In this case, this means paying attention to ways in which communicative means (e.g., use of a language, tellings of a creation story, and references to historical events) create and express implicit meanings along multiple discursive radiants (e.g., concerning relationships with Ma’iingan and with Euro-Americans, people’s sense of cultural identity in their homeland, and ways of dwelling in that place).

Wiggins then went on to speak about several matters, including sovereignty, tribal management authority, wildlife science, the management of livestock depredation, and “the spirit of hunting.” He spoke of all these in relation to Bad River’s request for a “zero-quota zone”—in which public hunting and trapping would not be allowed—extending six miles beyond the reservation’s boundaries, to help insure the “sustainability” of “the wolf packs that call our reservation home.” As this brief description of Wiggins’s remarks tells us, the creation story, though crucial, is only one element of this discourse concerning the relationship between the Ojibwe and Ma’iingan.

I have written the first portion of this chapter with a similar intention, both to say a few important things and to provide context for other things to be said. In the remainder of this chapter, we will consider tribal wolf management plans and will examine the discursive construction and use of normative bounds for hunting, an activity through which wolves and Ojibwe hunters embody a shared identity.

This chapter is focused somewhat narrowly on cultural views of wolves (and hunting) and does not encompass significant discussion of tribal sovereignty, management authority, or related jurisdictional issues and debates between tribal and state governments. It must be noted, however, that such issues are an important dimension of state-tribal interactions regarding wolf management. In particular, tribal treaty rights—including tribal authority over natural resources management in the so-called Ceded Territories—are frequently invoked and debated. As mentioned previously, reaffirmation of tribal treaty rights related to hunting, fishing, and natural resources has played a crucial role in Ojibwe political resurgence over the past four decades: the same decades during which Ma’iingan has rebounded (see David, 2009). We shall return to these issues briefly in Chapter VIII.

B. Tribal wolf plans

In recent years, Ojibwe nations and organizations in the Great Lakes region have created various wolf-related documents, notably including “wolf management plans.” In this chapter section, I draw on six such plans—from Bad River, Fond Du Lac, Keweenaw Bay, Leech Lake, Red Cliff, and Red Lake—as well as a proclamation from White Earth and written testimony from the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC). My aim here, as in analyzing state wolf plans, is to describe and interpret their central discursive features, making cultural logic and values more audible and more readily available for consideration.

1. Legal and scientific language

Like the Wisconsin and Minnesota wolf management plans, tribal wolf plans employ legal language to classify wolves in federal, state, and tribal terms. Bad River’s *Ma’iingan Management Plan*, for instance, notes that “after being [federally] delisted, wolves were classified as a ‘tribally protected species’ by the Bad River Tribal Council” (pp. 16-17).

Like state plans, tribal wolf plans also employ extensive scientific language. They use such terminology to classify wolves and other wildlife species taxonomically (e.g., “Canidae family,” “*Odocoileus virginianus*”), to depict populations and research methods (e.g., “inventory and population monitoring”), and so on. Like state plans, these plans also discuss knowledge of wolves more broadly in terms of “biology” and “ecology,” and emphasize the importance of using “science” to understand and manage wolves (e.g., “science-based decisions,” “it is important for all jurisdictions to develop science-based management plans,” “continue to use the best available science and technology”).

2. “Cultural significance”

Tribal wolf plans also explicitly foreground cultural values concerning wolves. In general terms, they refer to the “cultural significance” of Ma’iingan to the Anishinaabe, to the “deep relationship” and “integral bond” between the two, to the “cultural and spiritual” “importance” of wolves, and to community members having “always been spiritually connected to the wolf” (Hill, 2013, pp. 4-5; Howes & Schrage, 2012, p. 1; Huseby et al., 2010, p. 1; Leech Lake DRM, 2012, p. 2; Nankervis, 2013, p. 1; Red Cliff F&W, 2015, p. 3). Similarly, written testimony submitted to the Wisconsin State Senate Committee on Natural Resources by the executive administrator of GLIFWC in February 2012 described the wolf as “a species of great significance to the Anishinaabe.” And an August 2012 proclamation by the White Earth Tribal Council stated that “the Ma’iingan (Wolf) has a special relationship with the Anishinabe.”

More specifically, these documents often refer to the creation story discussed above, sometimes citing Benton-Banai’s written version. They invoke many of the ideas and meanings we have begun to consider, including Ma’iingan’s role as companion and guide, and kinship and similarities between wolf and Ojibwe. These ideas implicitly encompass the personhood of the wolf, as does a striking image included in the Keweenaw Bay plan: a painting of a wolf wearing not only ear cuffs but two feathers bound together with beads much like what an Ojibwe person

might wear in a ceremonial context. Quite explicitly, they also encompass the idea of parallel, shared fates:

- To many traditional Anishinaabeg the resurgence of wolf numbers is analogous with the resurgence of traditional lifeways and language. The comparison is made that much like the wolf our culture and language was assigned little value, feared, driven out, killed, and deemed acceptable to go extinct. It is seen by many Anishinaabeg as our duty to protect the wolf as fervently as we would our human family in order for us to continue to rebuild and maintain our unique lifeway. (Howes & Schrage, 2012, p. 1)
- Since the creator told Original Man and Ma'iingan that what happens to one will also happen to the other, many Bad River Ojibwe believe the recovery and attitude towards the wolf in Wisconsin is a direct reflection of their own recovery and attitudes towards them. (Hill, 2013, p. 10)
- The bond between Ojibwa tribal members and the wolf is timeless and continues to mirror each other's life experiences. Similar to rebounding wolf populations, the re-enforcement of Tribal Treaty Rights is often viewed by non-tribal citizens as a threat to sustainable wildlife populations. Continued support of tribal members for maintaining a natural level of wolves in the local environment remains essential to the long-term survival of wolves in Michigan. (Nankervis, 2013, p. 2)

Note the explicit expressions concerning parallel recoveries and resurgences (“wolf numbers” and “traditional lifeways and language”) and parallel perception and treatment by Euro-Americans (“feared, driven out, killed, and deemed acceptable to go extinct,” “attitude towards the wolf . . . attitudes towards them,” “similar to rebounding wolf populations, the re-enforcement of Tribal Treaty Rights is often viewed by non-tribal citizens as a threat to sustainable wildlife populations”). Because of these close parallels, Ojibwe support for and protection of the wolf is said to be vital (“our duty to protect the wolf as fervently as we would our human family,” “continued support of tribal members . . . remains essential to the long-term survival of wolves”).

3. Primary goals

Like state wolf plans, tribal wolf plans include explicit statements concerning purposes and goals. Consider these representative examples:

- The purpose of this management plan is to ensure the lasting presence of the wolf on the Bad River Reservation, while simultaneously providing ways to mitigate and respond to human-wildlife conflicts. This wolf management plan will seek to balance

the needs of people and wolves on the Bad River Reservation to ensure they continue to live in harmony with one another. (p. 6)

- A primary goal of this management plan is to maintain gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) numbers at levels that will contribute to the long-term survival of the species, and that are widely accepted by tribal members. It is our belief that humans and wolves need to coexist, in accordance with Fond du Lac tribal traditions and customs. Along that line of thought, it is also recognized that a system must be developed to deal with instances of depredation by wolves on livestock, domestic pets, and concerns for human safety. (p. 1)
- A primary goal of this management plan is to ensure the long-term survival of wolves on the Red Lake Reservation, while addressing wolf-human conflicts. (p. 13)

The main purposes and goals stated here are twofold: (1) to “ensure” the “lasting presence” and “long-term survival” of the wolf and (2) to “mitigate,” “address,” “respond to,” and “deal with” “conflicts” between humans and wolves (especially “depredation” and “concerns for human safety”) so that the two can “coexist” and “live in harmony.”

At this general level, the goals of tribal wolf plans and the goals of state wolf plans sound remarkably similar. Recall that Wisconsin’s 1999 plan is said to “provide a conservation strategy for maintaining a healthy viable population of gray wolves. . . while addressing problems that may occur with wolf depredation” (p. 8), and that the goal of Minnesota’s 2001 plan is said to be ensuring “the long-term survival of wolves in Minnesota while addressing wolf-human conflicts” (p. 17). As we listen more closely, however, differences become apparent.

a. “Ensure the lasting presence of the wolf”

As noted, one primary goal of these tribal plans is to “ensure” the “lasting presence” and “long-term survival” of the wolf. Though this goal is sometimes expressed in terms similar to those found in state plans (e.g., “the sustainability of wolves”), terms and emphases are quite different in tribal plans overall.

In these plans, the term “protect” is prominently used to describe proper wolf-related action. In various ways, the plans define the wolf as a “protected species” (Red Cliff F&W, 2015, p. 8) and state an intent “to protect” wolves from “adverse effects” (Huseby et al., 2010, p. 1;

Nankervis, 2013 p. 1) and to “conserve and protect Ma’iingan” (Hill, 2013, p. 16). Closely related are uses of the phrases “wolf sanctuary” (Nankervis, 2013, p. 4; Red Cliff F&W, 2015, p. 2) and “a sanctuary for wolves” (Huseby et al., 2010, pp. 1, 15) to define Ojibwe reservations. The provision of such protection and sanctuary—through prohibition of wolf hunting and trapping on tribal lands—is emphasized in these plans.

Another program of action prominently depicted is provision of good wolf habitat. Provision of such habitat is described in terms of (A) preventing human-caused impacts by maintaining areas of “undisturbed” and “connected” forest habitat that provide wolves with shelter, travel corridors, and the opportunity to avoid human contact, and by minimizing human disturbance of active den sites (Howes & Schrage, 2012, p. 6; Nankervis, 2013, pp. 6, 13; Red Cliff F&W, 2015, pp. 16-17), and (B) ensuring adequate food to support wolves.

The provision of food for wolves, in turn, is described primarily in terms of providing good habitat and food for deer: “to manage habitat to support a wolf population, one must manage the habitat for the wolf’s prey” (Hill, 2013, p. 14). “Management to maintain abundant deer populations” is thus a goal defined in several tribal plans; actions required to achieve this goal, it is said, may include “harvest of timber and management of the forest . . . to ensure a multi-aged and diverse forest” (Howes & Schrage, 2012, p. 6) and “protecting conifer-dominated wintering areas for white-tailed deer” (Nankervis, 2013, p. 13).

Here, we can formulate a few cultural propositions:

- We should “protect” and provide “sanctuary” for “Ma’iingan” by prohibiting “hunting” and “trapping.”
- We should “manage habitat” to “support” “wolves.”
- Good “wolf habitat” must include adequate “prey.”
- To “support wolves,” we should “manage habitat” for “abundant deer.”

The emphasis here is on “supporting wolves.” The understanding is that the well-being (e.g., health, abundance) of the wolf population is determined in large part by deer abundance. Thus, it is said, we should ensure abundant deer so that wolves have enough to eat.

b. “Continue to live in harmony with one another”

As noted, the other primary goal of these tribal plans is to “mitigate,” “address,” “respond to,” and “deal with” “conflicts” between humans and wolves (especially “depredation” and “concerns for human safety”) so that the two can “coexist” and “live in harmony.” Here, again, similarities are apparent between tribal and state plans, yet the emphases and terms differ.

While depredation and safety concerns are acknowledged in tribal plans, emphasis is placed on the lack of conflict between humans and wolves. Generally, the plans state that “human wolf conflicts” on tribal lands are “minimal” or “non-existent” (Leech Lake DRM, 2012, p. 9; Red Cliff F&W, 2015, p. 15). Regarding human safety, they state, for instance, that it is “occasionally of concern even though wolf attacks are very rare and one has never been reported on the Reservation” (Leech Lake DRM, 2012, p. 8) and that “wolves are not likely to attack any person who does not deliberately incite aggression” (Nankervis, 2013, p. 15). Regarding depredation, they state that problems are “negligible” and “unlikely to be a major management issue” (Huseby et al., 2010, p. 15).

In part, the depiction of depredation as “negligible” can be—and, in these plans, is—partly attributed to a material lack of commercial livestock production on tribal lands. But it can—and, I think, should—also be heard as part of a deeply symbolic pattern of expression, which can be summarized with a cultural proposition:

- “Conflict” between “wolves” and “humans” is—if not “non-existent”—“minimal,” “negligible,” “very rare,” and “unlikely.”

The core idea—that there is very little conflict between wolves and humans—can be restated as a premise:

- Harmony between wolves and humans is the norm.

Noting this can help us understand a statement such as “this wolf management plan will seek to balance the needs of people and wolves on the Bad River Reservation to ensure they continue to live in harmony with one another.” The plan, in other words, seeks to “continue” a normal state of affairs between people and wolves: “living in harmony.” In light of this understanding of harmony as a norm to be continued, we can more easily interpret these plans’ descriptions of proper conflict-related actions.

Emphasis is placed on “minimizing potential for conflict,” “resolving potential wolf-human conflicts that may occur,” “avoiding potential problems before they develop,” “resolving complaints,” and “minimizing” “wolf-human” “conflicts” (Hill, 2013, pp. 4, 16; Howes & Schrage, 2012, p. 4; Nankervis, 2013, p. 15; Red Cliff F&W, 2015, p. 15). Note, first, that the focus of action is on “minimizing” and “resolving” problems and, second, that such problems and conflicts are often depicted as “potential,” as ones that “may occur.” Ideal action is said to combine the two by “minimizing” or “resolving” the “potential” for conflict before it occurs. In other words, ideal action promotes the continuation of the normal state of affairs: harmonious coexistence.

Not surprisingly, the tribal plans consistently prescribe the use of “non-lethal methods” “whenever feasible” (Howes & Schrage, 2012, p. 4). They do state, however, that “removal” of wolves by “lethal control” may be “necessary” “from time to time” as a “last resort.” They likewise state, for instance, that tribal members “are allowed to kill wolves that pose imminent threats to domestic animals or humans” and “may use lethal force at any time to take wolves they feel are an immediate threat to life or property” (Howes & Schrage, 2012, p. 5; Nankervis, 2013, p. 16). During our interview at White Earth, Mike Swan similarly said, “we do understand / the concerns of farmers . . . and they have a right to protect themselves / and also their livestock.”

In the context of this discourse, then, “dealing with conflict” and “conflict management” can be understood as part of an overall tribal program of “wolf protection,” not as part of a

program of “wolf management” in the limitation and control sense. In this discourse, the imperative is to maintain harmony by taking action that balances the parties’ needs and prevents any disruptions in their relationship; this includes “managing” (preventing, minimizing, and resolving) potential conflicts in that relationship.

4. “Population goals’ may broaden the divide”

While current and past numeric wolf population *estimates* are frequently discussed in the tribal plans, numeric wolf population *goals* are not. In some cases (e.g., Bad River), a minimum wolf population goal is set for a reservation; in general, local population goals are not discussed in numeric terms at all. In all cases, maximum population goals are only mentioned in the context of expressing opposition to them. To better understand this pattern, let us consider some examples.

- Keweenaw Bay’s plan states the intention to maintain “a natural level of wolves in the local environment” and “a healthy, self-sustaining population of wolves” (pp. 2, 12).
- The Bad River plan states that the tribe is “presently opposed to the State of Wisconsin Wolf Hunt and the State’s current population goal of three hundred fifty individuals. The Bad River Tribe feels there should be no population cap placed on Ma’iingan and management should be directed towards resolving current and future wolf conflicts” (p. 17).
- Red Cliff’s plan states that the community is “not committed to managing wolves for a minimum or maximum population within the reservation. Preservation of quality landscape-scale habitat ensuring long-term potential for wolf existence (and other species) at Red Cliff is the main priority” (p. 14).
- Testimony submitted to the Wisconsin State Senate Committee on Natural Resources by GLIFWC in February 2012 states, “For the Commission, wolf recovery does not hinge primarily upon some minimum number of animals comprising the current wolf population. More importantly, it hinges on whether wolves are fully restored and will be sufficiently protected to ensure the healthiest and most abundant future for our brother and ourselves . . . Some have argued that a take is needed to control the population. In fact, the population will stabilize when suitable habitat has been occupied . . . The Voigt Task Force does not believe that a numeric goal for wolves in the state is appropriate. Ma’iingan itself will determine its proper abundance.”

One prominent feature of these statements is the emphasis, in various terms, on maintaining “a natural level” of wolves, and on ensuring conducive conditions (i.e., providing quality habitat and resolving potential conflicts). Such a wolf population is described here as “healthy,” “self-sustaining,” and “abundant,” with “long-term potential” for the “future.” The restoration and future of the population is defined in these terms, not primarily by a “minimum number.” Nor should wolf numbers be limited by a human-imposed “population cap”; the wolf itself should “determine its proper abundance.”

Considering what we have learned about Ojibwe understandings of Ma’iingan, particularly the idea that the fates of the people and the wolf parallel one another, this makes sense. This is what the Ojibwe (and any people, for that matter) want for themselves: to be healthy, abundant, self-sustaining, and self-determining. They therefore want this for Ma’iingan as well, the one whose fate parallels theirs. This parallel goal—of “the healthiest and most abundant future” for their brother and themselves—is made central in this discourse.

The idea of “a natural level” of wolves that determines its own “proper abundance” can be heard this way: a population cap is not needed, as wolf numbers self-regulate and will “stabilize” at a certain level. This understanding is echoed by plan mentions of wolves’ population self-regulation through breeding behavior, and of limits placed on wolf numbers by food availability and adjacent wolf packs (Leech Lake DRM, 2012, p. 5; Nankervis, 2013, p. 6).

If we listen more closely, another aspect becomes audible. Numeric goals, especially caps, are not merely said to be unnecessary. They are said to be inappropriate: the “tribe feels there should be no population cap placed on Ma’iingan”; “the Voigt Task Force does not believe that a numeric goal for wolves in the state is appropriate.” This sense of impropriety can, in turn, be variously interpreted.

On one hand, it simply reflects the sense that a numeric cap should not be put on one’s relatives. This idea is conveyed in the story of a Swedish commission that visited the U.S. to learn about wolves and met with Ojibwe representatives:

The Swedes pressed, asking, ‘How many wolves are enough?’ This is the question preoccupying bureaucrats, ranchers, and conservationists elsewhere in America. The Chippewa looked puzzled. They finally answered, ‘How many brothers are enough?’ (Heberlein, 2012, p. 115)

The same idea was conveyed by a tribal chairman who said to me, “How many wolves are enough? / well / how many people are enough people?”

On the other hand, the sense of impropriety reflects something else. Consider a somewhat oblique reference from the Red Cliff wolf plan:

Non-tribal agency ‘population goals’ may broaden the divide when one considers the relationship as brothers between the Ojibwe and wolves and the associated awareness of ‘*what happens to the wolf, happens to you*’ described in the Ojibwe Creation Story. (p. 7)

And recall the words of the woman at the 2013 White Earth Wolf Conference, who spoke of “bounties,” “scalps,” and “what they’ve actually done to not just animals but to us.” Recall that she directly equated state-sponsored science and violence aimed at limiting and controlling wolf populations with state-sponsored science and violence aimed at limiting and controlling Ojibwe populations.

Though Ojibwe speakers rarely name them explicitly, we can hear how these meanings—and associated feelings of grief, rage, horror, and fear—are invoked by “wolf population goals.” We can hear how such policy and management goals, and their symbolic connections to past (and potentially future) events, might “broaden the divide” between Ojibwe communities and non-tribal wildlife agencies. We can hear why population goals and caps, often central to state wolf management plans, are seen as inappropriate from this viewpoint. We can understand why “there is probably no topic for which the language of discussion between the state and the tribes has less common ground” (David, 2009, p. 274).

5. “The arrival of Europeans”

In the context of discussing wolves, several tribal plans comment on Euro-American cultural values and history. Consider the following examples:

- The Red Lake plan notes that “wolves were often feared or viewed as competition for food by European settlers” (p. 5).
- The Bad River plan mentions that “the war against wolves in the United States started shortly after Europeans began settling on the East Coast,” that “hatred of the wolf was brought from Europe, where wolves were known to prey on sheep,” and that “European folklore perpetuated an antagonistic relationship between man and ma’iingan” (p. 8).
- The Keweenaw Bay plan states that “upon settling in the Upper Peninsula, Europeans saw wildness but the wolf and the Ojibwa saw home,” and that “settlers brought their wolf prejudices with them including werewolf mythology, fairy tales, and views that wolves were incompatible with civilization” (pp. 8-9).
- The Leech Lake plan draft remarks that “many European cultures . . . feared and disdained wolves and brought these beliefs to this country,” leading to wolves being “persecuted,” “greatly reduced,” or “extirpated from the landscape” (p. 3).

At a general level, these comments resonate with those made in some state plans. The 2001 Minnesota wolf plan, for instance, states that, in contrast to American Indians, “European settlers definitely did not value wolves,” “had a long history of persecuting them in their homelands,” “had a mostly unfounded fear of wolves,” and “knew that wolves killed livestock and competed with humans for wild ungulates.” As the Minnesota plan puts it, “culturally, wolves had little or no value to European settlers and were viewed as a species to be eliminated” (pp. 13-14). In describing this history, the Minnesota and tribal plans use common terms such as “fear,” “compete,” “persecute,” and “extirpate/eliminate.”

Yet striking differences are also apparent. Where the Minnesota plan refers to settlers believing that wolves lacked “value,” the tribal plans refer to Europeans waging “war,” feeling “hatred,” bringing “prejudices,” demonstrating “disdain,” “perpetuating an antagonistic relationship,” and seeing wolves as “incompatible with civilization.”

The tribal wolf plans make no explicit reference to the consequences of European settlement for the Ojibwe or other American Indian peoples. But it does not require much sensitivity to hear the phrases above as commentary on how Europeans have historically perceived, related to, and interacted not only with the continent’s indigenous canid populations but also with the continent’s indigenous human populations. Likewise, when we read in White

Earth's 2012 proclamation that ma'iinganag "are once again, in danger of being misunderstood and mistreated," it is abundantly—and, in that document, explicitly—clear that this is also intended as a description of past and current misunderstanding and mistreatment of the Ojibwe and of concern for the future "health and welfare of the tribe."

In related ways, comment is also made on settlers' specific impacts on wolves, prey species, and the land as a whole. Here are a few examples:

- The Bad River plan remarks that "bison, elk, moose, white-tailed deer, and caribou existed in Wisconsin prior to European settlement" but that as the state "was settled, the land was logged and by 1880 whitetail deer were the only large prey species available for wolves in Wisconsin" (p. 8).
- The Leech Lake plan draft notes that "wolf numbers started to drop shortly after the arrival of Europeans and by the 1960s and into the 1970s they were all but absent from the reservation. This was due to changes in habitat due to timber harvest that altered the prey base and unregulated killing." Following several decades of federal protection, the plan indicates that the wolf population is "currently fairly stable at numbers thought to be similar to pre-European Settlement" (p. 5). In discussing wolves' hunting habits, the plan describes the alteration of the local prey base in more detail, especially moose, caribou, bison, and elk: "Due to timber harvest that altered the composition of our forests and overharvest by European settlers . . . these species have all been extirpated." Today, local forests are "more suitable for white-tailed deer and this is the primary prey species for wolves on the Leech Lake Reservation" (p. 4).
- The Red Cliff plan includes this depiction of the changes that came to wolf and land alike: "Multiple factors contributed to the decline of Wisconsin wolf populations during the period of European settlement. As the number of settlers increased in Wisconsin, the landscape was quickly transformed from the expansive prairies, oak savannas, and northern woodlands to land suitable for active farming communities." Citing Thiel (1993), the plan states that "in addition to the impact landscape changes had on wolves, many wolf prey species were hunted excessively to supplement the settler's diets," and that "with lost habitat and scarce prey, depredation of livestock by wolves became an increasing issue and a source of conflict with settlers" (p. 4).

These excerpts depict effects of "European settlement" on the land: "logged," "changes in habitat," "timber harvest that altered the composition of our forests," "quickly transformed from the expansive prairies, oak savannas, and northern woodlands to land suitable for active farming communities." These rapid habitat changes—combined with "excessive hunting" and "overharvest" of "many wolf prey species" by settlers—led to "extirpation" of bison, elk, and caribou across all of the western Great Lakes region and of moose across most of it, leaving deer

as “the only large prey species available for wolves.”⁴⁸ Habitat alterations and scarcity of wild prey contributed directly to a “decline” in wolves and also led to increased “conflict” and “depredation of livestock.” Combined with the “unregulated killing” of predators, these factors led to the widespread “extirpation” of wolf populations.

In short, European ways of acting, relating, and dwelling are depicted as having had a cascade of negative consequences for the land, for ungulates, and for wolves. It is, again, not difficult to hear meanings regarding how this cascade also impacted the Ojibwe and their ways of dwelling. As such meanings become audible, and as we tune our ear to this cultural discourse, we might begin to hear some of the implications of the Keweenaw Bay plan’s depiction of the arrival of Europeans: “Europeans saw wildness but the wolf and the Ojibwa saw home.”

Key points can be summarized by way of propositions:

- “European settlers” “feared,” “misunderstood,” “mistreated,” “hated,” “disdained,” “persecuted,” waged “war” on, and tried to “extirpate” “Ma’ingan.”
- “European settlers” saw the “wolf” as “incompatible with civilization.”
- By “logging,” “European settlers” “altered” the “landscape” and “habitat.”
- By “altering” “habitat” and “hunting” “excessively,” “European settlers” “extirpated” most of the wolf’s “prey species.”
- By “altering” “habitat,” “extirpating” “prey,” and direct “killing” of predators, “European settlers” caused the “decline” and “extirpation” of the “wolf.”

And, lest we forget: “What happens to the wolf, happens to you.”

6. “Hunters of white-tail deer”

As discussed in Chapter IV, the Wisconsin and Minnesota wolf management plans of 1999 and 2001 state that it is necessary to protect livestock and farming from wolves, but do not

⁴⁸ In marked contrast, the Minnesota plan simply notes that wolves historically preyed on these five species (p. 11). The Wisconsin plan says the same, adding that “by 1880, deer were the only wild ungulate species remaining in viable numbers” (p. 8). The issue of what happened to the other four is not raised.

say the same about protecting deer and deer hunting. Rather, they state that wolves are very unlikely to threaten deer numbers (or deer hunting) across any large area, and that winter severity has been the primary factor in unplanned declines in deer populations.

Quite similarly, tribal wolf plans indicate that there is no need to limit wolf numbers to protect deer and deer hunting, as “available information strongly suggests” that wolves “do not suppress white-tailed deer numbers” on a landscape-wide scale. The impact of wolf predation on the overall numeric abundance of deer is, they say, “minimal” and “only a small factor among many,” far less significant than hunting by humans, car accidents, and winter severity. Wolf predation is said to be largely compensatory, primarily removing “young, injured, and old animals” that would have “high mortality anyway.”⁴⁹ On the Red Lake Reservation, where “subsistence harvest of game and fish” remains “very important,” it is said that the potential perception of wolves as “competition for some game species (e.g. deer) . . . has not generated major concern” (Huseby et al., 2010, p. 2; Leech Lake DRM, 2012, pp. 4, 7; Nankervis, 2013, p. 7; Red Cliff F&W, 2015, p. 10).

On two reservations, biologists told me that a minority of tribal members had expressed concern over deer numbers and wolves’ potential impacts. The biologists said that such concerns were unfounded, and that adjustments in the number of tribal deer permits—like adjustments in state deer regulations and the number of tags made available to state license buyers—have a much more significant impact on the deer population than wolves do.

Tribal plans also make note of the difficulties wolves face in hunting and trying to survive. Citing DelGiudice (2009) and others, they state that wolves are “ineffective hunters of

⁴⁹ The Minnesota Wolf Management Plan of 2001 similarly notes that “wolves most often kill very young ungulates and very old ungulates because they are the most inexperienced and debilitated, respectively, in the population, and thus the easiest to capture” (pp. 11-12). World-renowned wolf biologist David Mech likewise states that wolves “tend to take prey that is more feeble or debilitated, for example older animals, the very young and those that are diseased, parasitized or abnormal,” and that “in the long run” such predation is “beneficial to prey populations” (“Do wolves cause trophic cascades?”).

white-tail deer,” are “frequently unsuccessful,” and “may go for long periods without food.” In most situations, they note, “wolves have a difficult time catching and killing a healthy mature [deer].” The Leech Lake plan draft further notes that hunting deer and other ungulates is “risky,” “as a single well placed kick can kill or seriously injure a wolf” (Leech Lake DRM, 2012, p. 4; Red Cliff F&W, 2015, p. 10).

“Historically” and “traditionally,” it is said, Ojibwe hunters “realized ma’iinganag⁵⁰ require many of the same resources for survival as themselves.” They therefore took signs and sounds of wolves as indicators that they were in “deer country” where hunting would be “good” and “fruitful” (Hill, 2013, p. 7; Red Cliff F&W, 2015, p. 4).

Though it is said that wolves can “reduce deer numbers in localized areas,” most effects of wolf predation on deer are said to be “beneficial.” Potential positive “ecological” effects are said to include contributions to “the health of a deer population,” the health of “deer habitat,” and “greater biodiversity.” Mechanisms identified include potential contributions to prevention of excess “deer numbers,” “protection” of “habitat” from “over-browsing,” “removing the individuals that are not as strong, smart, or healthy,” and making “disease . . . less problematic for deer over the long term” (Hill, 2013, p. 14; Leech Lake DRM, 2012, pp. 4, 8; Nankervis, 2013, p. 8).

Along related lines, the Leech Lake plan draft recalls years of excessive deer numbers, and asserts that state and tribal natural resources managers, while serving deer hunters, share a responsibility for keeping “deer populations low enough” to ensure healthy “habitat for other wildlife,” “forest regeneration,” and “medicinal plants” (Leech Lake DRM, 2012, pp. 7-8). By keeping deer numbers at reasonable levels, in other words, wolves and human hunters can both contribute to ensuring biodiversity and well-being for all species, including humans.

⁵⁰ The plural form of “ma’iingan.”

Regarding deer, we can summarize a few of the tribal plans' key points with propositions:

- “Wolves” have “minimal” numeric impact on “deer populations.”
- “Wolves” help keep “deer” and “habitat” “healthy.”
- The deer hunters among us have little “concern” about “competition” from “wolves.”
- It is “difficult” and “risky” for “wolves” to “hunt” “deer” and obtain “food”; as deer hunters, wolves are often “unsuccessful.”
- To “survive,” “ma’iinganag” need “many of the same resources” as the “Ojibwe,” including “deer.”

C. “Everything that’s taken is honored”

As I listened to tribal members and representatives speak, and as I read tribal wolf plans, I noticed recurrent comments about hunting. These utterances, phrases, and sentences were often linked to wolf hunting, but also ranged more broadly, encompassing hunting in general. This talk and writing appeared in a variety of forms and contexts. It took a while for me to recognize that they formed a coherent whole.

1. “To eat” or “just for the sake of killing”?

During my interview with Mike Swan at White Earth, he volunteered these thoughts:

our hunting is based on subsistence
our hunting and fishing and gathering is based on
subsistence harvest
gathering for your family
gathering to feed your family
and
we see this
hunt
with the wolves as
sports hunting
hunting for a trophy
because you’re not going to eat the wolf
you’re just going to go
get it for its pelt
or its fur

its teeth
and that's it
so
I guess that's another thing that
we don't quite understand

Later in our conversation, speaking about the fact that many clan animals are hunted, Swan compared Ojibwe relationships with wolf and bear, saying

but we eat bear
and we use the bear
the medicines
and everything else like that
that the bear has to offer
same way with the other
different types of animals
same way
we eat them too
but the only one we don't eat is
the wolf

He was silent for several seconds, then said, "I guess I wouldn't even know how to cook up a wolf!" and laughed aloud.

He went on to say that non-Ojibwe people often ask him what he means by "subsistence hunting."

I say
that's hunting to support yourself and your family
it's something you're going to kill to eat
you're not killing something
just for the sake of killing it
and put up its hide on the wall
and you're not going to do anything with the meat

Killing something in the latter manner, he said, is "sports hunting . . . and that's something that we really don't care for."

On another Ojibwe reservation, I sat talking with two members of the natural resources staff. One commented that he and his fellow tribal members hunt for "something to eat" and "not for trophies"; they only take "big deer" incidentally, he said. The other said that, in the state's wolf hunting season, animals were mainly taken "just for trophies," so that the hunter could "brag" about it, saying "I killed a wolf."

In another community, a tribal member spoke of non-tribal hunters wanting “a trophy canine.” He spoke of their motives being connected to “werewolf” stories and to “the wolf that / took care of Grandma / and was going after Little Red Riding Hood.” These hunters, he said, “want to be that woodsman with the axe.” For them, killing a wolf is like a “feather in their cap.”

In a fourth Ojibwe community, a tribal member spoke of not “understand[ing] sport hunting.” He remarked that such hunting is “very different” from what his people do, and that “you should eat what you kill.”

In these and other communities, similar remarks were made by other tribal members. In these utterances, we can readily identify two clusters of key terms and phrases linked to the practice of hunting. The first includes “subsistence,” “to feed your family,” and “to eat.” As used here, these terms focus attention on hunting as a means of acquiring food. This, it is said, is an appropriate, meaningful purpose for hunting, and is the central motive for Ojibwe hunters (“our hunting is based on,” “we eat bear,” “something to eat”).

The other cluster includes “sport,” “for a trophy,” and “just for the sake of killing.” As used here, these terms are (1) equated with one another, and (2) contrasted with the first cluster. “Sport” hunting and hunting for a “trophy” (e.g., a “hide on the wall”) are said to be the same as “killing something / just for the sake of killing it.” Such hunting, it is said, does not include doing “anything with the meat.” This is depicted as an inappropriate kind of hunting rooted in inappropriate motives.

These terms and phrases are used to help explain why the Ojibwe do not hunt wolves. Unlike deer and bear, the wolf is not perceived as edible by tribal members, and is likewise presumed to be perceived as inedible by non-tribal hunters (“you’re not going to eat the wolf”). Swan’s joke—“I guess I wouldn’t even know how to cook up a wolf!”—succinctly expresses his sense of the outlandishness of the idea of eating wolf.

Even more centrally, these terms and phrases are used to critique others’ interest in hunting wolves. For hunting that is disconnected from eating, these speakers express both a

communal lack of comprehension (“we don’t quite understand”) and clear disapproval (“something that we really don’t care for,” “you should eat what you kill”). Beyond simply being pointless (“just for the sake of killing”), non-tribal interest in wolf hunting is said be rooted (1) in hostility toward and the desire for triumph over perceived evil (“werewolf,” “the wolf that . . . was going after Little Red Riding Hood”) and (2) in egotism and a desire for self-glorification (“brag,” “a feather in their cap”).

2. “For a reason” and with “respect”

In this discourse, however, ideas about appropriate and inappropriate kinds of hunting in general, and about wolf hunting in particular, are not so simple. Consider, for instance, the questions posed by a tribal chairman I spoke with in October 2013, in “what’s called the state of Wisconsin”:

why would you take something
why would you kill it
if you’re not going to use it?
why?
I’m just curious as to why anybody would do that
what use is it?

is it a use
to take the pelt
and to get it tanned
and to put it on the wall
is that the use?
or is it to take it
take it when the pelt is prime
so that you have the best fur
the warmest fur
and utilize it
to keep yourself or somebody else warm
for survival
totally different
different reasons
the acceptability to me is different
to just go and kill it
for no reason
or a piss poor reason
isn’t acceptable to me
. . .

I haven't seen the respect for the wolves

And consider these remarks, made later in the same interview:

I've shot coyotes
I've trapped coyotes
but it was always for a reason
it was always for bartering
or for trade
you know
to put food on the table for my kids
when they were younger
. . .
you'd take 'em in December or January
when their pelt is worth more
and you'd get more for 'em
you don't get nothing for a pelt right now
why shoot it then?
. . .
I think the respect thing again
is what it all comes down to
I'm not going to go shoot a coyote this time of year
I'm not going to trap a coyote this time of year

Here again, we can identify two clusters of terms and phrases linked to the practice of hunting, this time specifically the hunting of coyotes and wolves. The first is centered on “use” (as both noun and verb) and particular uses of an animal’s pelt (e.g., “to keep yourself or somebody else warm,” “for bartering / or for trade . . . to put food on the table for my kids”). Such uses are predicated on the quality and value of the pelt (“prime,” “best,” “warmest,” “worth more”) which are, in turn, predicated on the pelt being taken in winter. These uses, it is said, are appropriate, meaningful purposes for hunting and trapping.

The other cluster revolves around lack of use (e.g., “not going to use it”) and uses considered insufficient (e.g., “to put it on the wall”). Such lack of use is linked to deficient quality and value of pelts at other times of year, specifically October when the Wisconsin wolf season began (“you don’t get nothing for a pelt right now”). Hunting or trapping associated with lack of use, insufficient use, and deficient pelt quality is depicted as killing “for no reason / or a piss poor reason.” The meaningfulness and “acceptability” of the two are said to be “totally different.”

- Killing an animal in winter, obtaining a prime pelt, and using that pelt in a way that meets basic physical needs (e.g., warmth, food) are said to constitute a practice that is done for “a reason” and with “respect.”
- Killing an animal in early autumn, perhaps obtaining a relatively worthless pelt, and either not using it at all or hanging it on a wall are said to constitute a practice that is done without a good “reason” and without “respect.”

In the previous section, we heard that food is an ideal way of using an animal killed in hunting, and an ideal motive for hunting that animal. In addition, we are now hearing that food is not the only meaningful and appropriate use, not the only meaningful and appropriate reason for hunting. With this in mind, recall what Swan said about bear hunting: “we eat bear / and we use the bear / the medicines / and everything else like that / that the bear has to offer.” Food is central, but the bear also “offers” other things, including “medicines.” A tribal biologist from another Ojibwe community summarized this cultural view:

if I take something
 it's because I am going to use it
 . . .
 everything that's taken is honored
 . . .
 you only take what you need

Meaningful use, in other words, is a necessary motive for taking an animal, and an important component of respecting and honoring that animal. Meaningful use is central to taking life for a “reason” and with “respect.” These ideas are encapsulated here:

“Prayer to a Deer Slain by a Hunter”

I had need.
 I have dispossessed you of beauty, grace, and life.
 I have sundered your spirit from its worldly frame.
 No more will you run in freedom
 Because of my need.

I had need.
 You have in life served your kind in goodness.
 By your life, I will serve my brothers.
 Without you I hunger and grow weak.
 Without you I am helpless, nothing.

I had need.
Give me your flesh for strength.
Give me your casement for protection.
Give me your bones for my labours,
And I shall not want. (Johnston, 1976, pp. 57-58)

Johnston also offers these succinct statements concerning the Ojibwe view of animals and hunting, which we can hear as cultural premises: “All life must be honoured . . . Take life but not in anger. Life for one means death for another. By honouring death, life itself is honoured” (p. 57). We can summarize these ideas in cultural propositions:

- We “hunt,” “take,” and “kill” animals in order to “use” them, not for “sport” or “trophies.”
- Good “uses” include “food,” “warmth,” and “medicine.”
- “Hunting” should involve “respect.”
- In hunting, “respecting” and “honoring” an animal involve sufficient “use.”
- It is not “acceptable” to “hunt” an animal you will not “use.”

Underpinning such expressions are cultural premises about hunting, killing, and the deep link between “use” and “respect”:

- Hunting can and should involve respect.
- A proper hunter/animal relationship requires respect.
- Proper respect requires sufficient, acceptable use of the animal.
- Sufficient, acceptable uses include those that meet basic physical needs.
- It is unacceptable to hunt and kill for less serious reasons.
- It is unacceptable to hunt and kill out of hostility.

These premises form the core of what I have elsewhere called an *ethic of utilization* (Cerulli, 2011). They provide context for understanding what Mike Wiggins may have meant when he spoke of “the spirit of hunting,” and for another tribal chairman’s assertion that “respect . . . is what it all comes down to.” Note that utilization for basic physical needs is the crux of this ethic. Though terms like “survival,” “subsistence,” and “need” are sometimes employed, they are

not intended in an absolute, literal sense; in other words, one's life need not hang in the balance for one to practice respectful hunting.

3. "For traditional and cultural purposes"

With these basic interpretations spelled out, we may more readily comprehend the presence—within this discourse of kinship and shared fates—of what may at first seem surprising, if not contradictory: talk about the appropriate killing of wolves by Ojibwe people. It can be challenging enough for some listeners to grasp systems of cultural meaning in which animals are understood as social, communicative persons who are related to and serve as spiritual guides for humans. It can be even more challenging when those systems of meaning also encompass the morally acceptable killing of these animals.⁵¹

At one point in our conversation, I asked Mike Swan if wolves had been traditionally hunted by his people. He replied that they never had "a wolf hunt" specifically. He mentioned, though, that some wolves were caught in traplines. He also said that

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there would be people that
  would have a wolf hide
  a wolf head or something like that
but
  what they're doing is using that to show the respect
  of that animal
  and generally too
  when they dance they
  imitate that particular kind of animal
  that they have

so
  it's showing that respect
```

To help us understand better, let us turn again to the tribal wolf plans. As noted previously, the plans emphasize the importance of providing protection and sanctuary by

⁵¹ The film *Diet of Souls*, directed by John Houston, quotes an Inuit shaman as saying, "The great peril of our existence lies in the fact that our diet consists entirely of souls." The central question of the film is this: "Can animals be spiritual equals and one's daily bread?"

prohibiting wolf hunting and trapping on tribal lands. In some of the plans, a certain kind of wolf hunting and trapping is mentioned as being of particular concern: the taking of wolves for “sport.” The Keweenaw Bay plan, for instance, expresses concern about the fact that “regulated sport hunting is quickly becoming a reality in Michigan” (p. 3). The Bad River plan reports that, at a Tribal Council meeting in May 2012, council and community members “spoke out against the sport harvest of wolves” (p. 17).

Yet some of the plans also explicitly contemplate the use—and even the intentional taking—of wolves by tribal members.

- The Bad River plan, for instance, states that “any wolves found deceased on the Bad River Reservation shall be handled in a respectful way by the BRNRD. Samples may be taken from individuals if deemed necessary for biological studies or law enforcement investigations. BRNRD will cooperate with a certified lab and WDNR for necropsies and biological sampling of individuals. Some hides and skulls may be kept for educational and cultural purposes” (pp. 24-25).
- The Bad River plan also includes a section on “How to Obtain a Wolf Hide.” It states that Wisconsin DNR “obtains numerous wolf carcasses each year. These wolves were either found dead or taken legally by lethal abatement methods conducted by APHIS-WS or a private land owner off-Reservation. These wolves can be made available for educational or cultural uses. Bad River Tribal Members interested in obtaining a wolf hide or any parts of a wolf should contact the BRNRD. Distributions of wolf hides shall happen on a first come, first serve basis and will ultimately need to be approved by Tribal Council” (p. 25).
- The Red Lake plan reports on tribal residents’ responses to an opinion survey. Though “eighty percent would not support harvest of wolves (hunting or trapping),” the plan states that “some expressed interest in receiving a wolf pelt, if a distribution program were in place” (p. 13).
- The Red Lake plan also reports that while “hunting and trapping of wolves on tribal lands is strictly prohibited,” at some point in the future “the Tribal Council may issue special permission for the harvest of wolves for cultural and ceremonial purpose” (p. 15).
- The Fond du Lac plan says much the same: “Hunting and trapping of wolves on tribal lands is strictly prohibited at this time. The Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee may issue permission for the harvest of wolves in the future” (p. 5).

In most of the tribal plans, such uses and the potential hunting and trapping of wolves are discussed only briefly and secondarily. In the Leech Lake plan draft, however, they are foregrounded and discussed in more detail. The plan’s statement of purpose is unique among the

tribal plans in mentioning utilization: “The purpose of this plan is to ensure the long-term survival of wolves on the reservation while dealing with wolf/human conflicts and accommodating desires of some band members to utilize them for traditional and cultural purposes” (p. 2). Consider these additional excerpts:

- The plan draft states that the wolf has long been important for “spiritual and cultural” reasons and that the wolf “is also a clan figure for some Native Americans. We were unable to find any historical information that would indicate that tribal members viewed wolves as a threat or that they harvested them to reduce their numbers. They did, however, take wolves for traditional and cultural purposes” (p. 3).
- In discussing potential “harvest for traditional and spiritual purposes,” the plan draft states: “There is no compelling reason to hunt wolves on the Leech Lake Reservation as wolf numbers are stable, in balance with available food supply, and human wolf conflicts are minimal. The wolf population could, however, support some tribal harvest of an estimated 8-10 animals per year. Over the years the DRM has received a few requests for gray wolf hides and in some cases we have been able to accommodate these requests with wolves accidentally killed by vehicles or taken as part of the USDA depredation program. We anticipate that we will continue to be able to utilize wolves from these sources to help to meet tribal member requests” (p. 9).

The plan draft then discusses the “factors that will need to be considered and resolved” if, at some point, the Tribal Council decides to “authorize a harvest of gray wolves for traditional or cultural use” (p. 9). Several of these factors echo those addressed in state DNR discourses of population conservation and management and related regulations: the “number of wolves” that could be taken, the importance of avoiding “relisting under the ESA,” the establishment of a “lottery drawing” to allocate permits, and determination of legal “harvest methods.” Other factors differ from those addressed in state discourses and regulations:

- The Leech Lake plan draft states that “seasons would need to be set at a time when pelts are prime to eliminate the waste of an animal.”⁵²

⁵² As will be discussed later, some voices within state agencies have suggested similar seasons, for similar reasons, but have been overridden during legislative sessions and other rule-making processes. In the 1999 Wisconsin and 2001 Minnesota wolf plans, this issue is not addressed. Here, in the one tribal plan which (at least in draft form) discusses potential “harvest” in detail, seasons corresponding with prime pelt quality are said to be imperative.

- The plan draft also poses this question: “How would wolf parts be passed down to descendants?”

In what Swan said, and in the tribal wolf plans, we find repeated mentions of “traditional,” “cultural,” “ceremonial,” and “spiritual” uses of wolves by Ojibwe people. Specifically, we are told that one can use “a wolf hide” or “a wolf head” “to show respect” for that animal; in a ceremonial context, for instance, one might “dance” in a way intended to “imitate” the wolf. In each case, the idea of “respect”—and thus of relationship—is made central, whether implicitly or explicitly. Swan says this quite directly. The Bad River plan, while addressing the collection of samples to meet scientific and legal needs, requires its natural resources staff to handle deceased wolves “in a respectful way.” Hides and skulls, we are told, can only be kept for particular purposes.⁵³ The distribution of wolf hides is significant enough to require approval by the Tribal Council.

Discussion of the potential hunting and trapping of wolves by tribal members likewise coalesces around the imperative for respect. If “special permission” is issued for “the harvest of wolves,” such taking could only be done for “traditional,” “cultural,” “ceremonial,” and “spiritual” purposes and uses. Such respectful purposes and uses are implicitly contrasted with “sport hunting,” with “[viewing] wolves as a threat,” and with “[harvesting] them to reduce their numbers.”

The strong link between respect and use is clearly expressed by the Leech Lake plan’s emphasis on the need for seasons “to be set at a time when pelts are prime to eliminate the waste of an animal.” Implicit here is the belief that “waste” (i.e., no “use” of any kind) is antithetical to

⁵³ Regarding wolves “found deceased,” the Bad River plan mentions that hides and skulls may be kept for “educational” and “cultural” purposes. The Wisconsin plan also mentions “education” and “Native American cultural and religious purposes,” but only as a second priority if “specimens” “remain available after research needs have been met” and after specimens have been offered to “research museums.”

respect.⁵⁴ Moreover, the Leech Lake plan draft poses the question, “How would wolf parts be passed down to descendants?” Implicit here is concern for the respectful handling and treatment of wolf parts across generations. It is virtually impossible to imagine this issue being raised in Wisconsin or Minnesota’s wolf plan or even in a plan draft. This reminds us that although state and tribal discourses have some overlap (e.g., in stating that we do not *need* to hunt wolves but *could* do so sustainably), the two are rooted in radically different cultural ground. The ideas which each presumes, creates, and makes central—and around which each revolves—are markedly distinct.

Local perceptions of these distinctions are evident in the above-mentioned contrast, drawn between (1) what is appropriate and respectful (“traditional,” “cultural,” “ceremonial,” and “spiritual” purposes and uses), and (2) what is inappropriate and disrespectful (“waste,” hunting for “sport” or a “trophy,” viewing wolves as a “threat,” and seeking to “reduce their numbers”). It is in the context of this contrast that state-sanctioned wolf hunting is depicted as something which speakers “do not understand” and which runs counter to an Ojibwe ethic of utilization.

The latter motives and behaviors are attributed not only to state natural resources agencies, state legislatures, and non-tribal hunters but also to some tribal members. This discourse asserts that anyone within the community who would kill wolves for anything less than “traditional and cultural purposes” is someone who has been assimilated, adopting different cultural views and values. As this suggests, and as tribal leaders and tribal wolf plans acknowledge, there is diversity of perspective among the Ojibwe. Some tribal hunters believe that wolves are driving down deer populations. Others simply want to hunt wolves. One tribal hunter I

⁵⁴ In describing how coyotes hunt deer when the snow gets deep, one tribal member said, “it’s survival for them . . . they’ll go and kill that deer / and they’ll consume the whole thing / they don’t waste.” In such utterances, he communicated his respect for coyotes (and wolves) and their ways of hunting. We will return to this idea in subsequent chapters.

spoke with said he did not think wolves “need that much protection” and expressed interest in hunting them.⁵⁵

D. Summary analysis: Kinship and shared fate in hubs and radiants

Here, as we have heard, Ma’iingan is spoken of as a brother whose fate the Ojibwe share. Like those of *conservation and management* and *predator control*, this discourse is a complex web of symbolic terms, their uses, and their explicit and implicit meanings, a web that encompasses wolves and wolf-human relations, as well as a wider range of issues and ideas. As in previous summarizing sections, here I revisit analyses from the perspective of discursive hubs and radiants. As before, my aim here is to summarize the discourse, distill key dimensions, and further illuminate interrelations among these dimensions.

As I have heard and interpreted this discourse, its most explicit and prominent hub is relationship, particularly kinship between the Ojibwe people and “brother Ma’iingan.” In this relationship, the more-than-human wolf is an elder “brother” and “guide” upon whom Original Man was, and the Anishinaabe people remain, dependent. As described and interpreted in this chapter, this hub of relationship is explicitly linked to all of the other radiants. The ancient Ojibwe/wolf relationship is said to have developed through shared experiences and interactions (action), to be permeated by strong feelings of “closeness” and “loneliness” (emotion), to be founded on similarities between wolves and humans (identity), and to be linked to broader relationships with—and valued ways of living in—a larger world (dwelling) (see section VI.A.4).

In a more muted but vitally important way, relationship between (1) Ojibwe and Ma’iingan and (2) Euro-Americans is also central to this discourse. This relationship is articulated in terms of how Ojibwe and Ma’iingan share common fates, including attempted eradications

⁵⁵ In a survey conducted in Wisconsin when wolves were federally protected, 8 percent of Bad River tribal members agreed with the statement, “if I were out hunting and saw a wolf I might shoot it”; twice as many non-tribal respondents agreed with the same statement (Shelley, Treves, & Naughton, 2011).

followed by recoveries and uncertain futures. Though the dimensions of these shared fates—and particularly the roles played by Euro-Americans—tend toward the implicit, the hub of relationship is again linked to all radiants. This relationship is tied to persistent persecution and survival (action), losses and recoveries of shared homeland (dwelling), threats to existence and culture (identity), and largely unarticulated feelings of grief, anger, and hope (emotion) (see sections VI.A.5-7).

Along the radiants of action and dwelling, Ojibwe communities express the intent to ensure the lasting presence of the wolf on the shared landscape. This includes a duty to provide “sanctuary” from state-sanctioned hunting and trapping, and a responsibility to provide good habitat and ample prey (see section VI.B.3). It does not include a focus on numeric wolf population goals. Such a numeric approach is said to be just as inappropriate as setting a population goal for one’s siblings; less explicitly, it is also suggested that government plans focused on wolf population numbers are as disturbing as government plans for a specific, numeric Ojibwe population (see section VI.B.4).

Conflicted interactions and relations between humans and wolves, particularly in connection with livestock and human safety, are said to be minimal. “Harmony,” in other words, is the norm. Proper conflict-related actions are described in terms of preventing disruptions to that normal state of affairs, so that the two can continue to dwell together peaceably (see section VI.B.3).

Similarly, the relationship between wolf and Ojibwe hunter is said to be harmonious. Though both hunt deer for food, the wolf does not harm the deer population or the hunter’s opportunities. The two can and should continue as they have in the past, dwelling together peaceably, hunting on parallel paths (see section VI.B.6).

Also along the radiants of action and dwelling, an *ethic of utilization* is articulated for hunting. In it, meaningful and appropriate “use” of the animal is required as a motive for hunting and as an actual outcome of killing. Such use is deeply tied to understandings of an appropriate

relational attitude of “respect.” In the context of this ethic, the possibility of appropriate tribal hunting and trapping of wolves is contemplated for “traditional” ceremonial purposes. State-sanctioned hunting and trapping—rooted in animosity, intended for “sport,” and resulting in “trophies” and “waste”—is rejected (see section VI.C).

In short, Ma’iingan is spoken of as a native part of this native place, as part of a natural and cultural community, as one who—like the Ojibwe—belongs here, should flourish here, and lives in harmony with us. The people are bound to honor and respect wolves, and protect them against those who do not. The roots of this historically transmitted expressive system are audible both in Anishinaabe (and, more broadly, American Indian) cultural traditions and in a long political history of interaction with Euro-Americans.

CHAPTER VII

“THEY BELONG HERE”: A DISCOURSE OF COINHABITATION

This chapter investigates a discourse which depicts the wolf as a valued coinhabitant. Drawing on interviews, instances of public talk, op-ed articles, and other data, I describe and interpret this way of speaking, which—though it has played a less prominent role in hunting communities’ public engagement regarding wolves in the western Great Lakes region in recent years—uniquely echoes, contrasts with, and responds to discourses we have already examined.

Matters of particular and interrelated concern in this discourse include the following:

- the value of wild, intact nature, particularly as embodied in certain kinds of animals;
- human experiences of being in wild places and interacting with wild creatures;
- the importance of maintaining ecological integrity;
- the wolf’s inherent value and inherent right to exist as part of nature;
- the wolf’s integral roles in the ecology, evolution, and behavior of deer;
- the wolf as an acceptable, natural predator and fellow hunter;
- the maintenance of appropriate boundaries and distances for the good of wolves, humans, and domestic animals alike;
- the importance of increased acceptance of wolves;
- the impropriety of animosity toward them;
- the imperative to make use of animals we kill.

My goals are to describe the shape of this discourse and interpret the cultural logic—of the wolf “belonging here”—both presumed and created when this discourse is used.

The reader may note commonalities between matters of concern listed immediately above and matters of concern explicated in the previous chapter. Some communicative means and meanings are, in fact, common to the discourse of *kinship and shared fates* and the discourse of *coINHABITATION*. As we shall hear, however, each of the two is rooted in distinct cultural ground.

A. "The character of our forests"

This chapter begins with talk about the character of the places where people dwell and hunt. I start here because, in my experience, this is where those who speak this way begin. As they depict living and hunting alongside wolves in the western Great Lakes region, they ascribe value to particular qualities of place and landscape.

As part of an Ojibwe-organized protest against state-sanctioned hunting of wolves, for instance, one white hunter—who said he had lived in the north woods all his life and had been hunting deer near Bemidji for more than fifty years—put it this way: “For me / the comeback of the wolf in Minnesota has totally changed the character of our forests / it’s not the same anymore.”

What is the “character” of a place? And what do wolves have to do with it? And what might this white hunter’s action—speaking as part of an Ojibwe-organized protest—say about the cross-cultural resonance of certain wolf-related ideas and values?

1. “A wilder, better place”

In northern Wisconsin, I sat talking with a hunter on the deck of the modest home where he and his wife have lived for the past decade. I asked him about how he saw wolves.

we feel fortunate to live here on this lake because
it's not true wilderness obviously
but it's relatively wild
and it's shallow and we've got some rocks and stumps
so it's not a place where people go jetskiing
or waterskiing
you see a few little fishing boats on pontoons

but we see loons and eagles
two
you could say
benchmark species that make this place feel wilder
and we were talking about how it looks like there's
a new occupant in the beaver lodge over there
that's great news as far as I'm concerned
and once in a while we'll see an otter
they make this feel like a wilder, better place

the eagles
the loons
and if we're really lucky beaver and otter

in the same way
wolves
even more so
that feels like you're in a special place
if you've got wolves around there

This hunter begins by speaking of the place where he and his wife live (“here on this lake”). He explicitly links their feeling about living there (“fortunate”) with the “wild” character of the place (“not true wilderness obviously / but it’s relatively wild”). This relative wildness, in turn, is linked to the kinds of human activities that do and do not occur there: there are some houses on the lake and you see “a few small fishing boats,” but people do not “go jetskiing or waterskiing” there.

More prominently, he links the “wild” character of the place to the presence of particular birds and animals. He and his wife “see loons and eagles” and “once in a while . . . an otter.” During a canoe excursion earlier that day he and I had noted evidence that the lake was home to a “new occupant in the beaver lodge over there,” which he considered “great news.” He feels “lucky” to see all these creatures, which make “this feel like a wilder, better place.” And wolves, he says, make the place feel wild “in the same way” but “even more so.” “It feels like you’re in a special place,” he says, “if you’ve got wolves around there.”

The discursive hub of dwelling is central as this hunter speaks of the “place” and “lake” where he and his wife “live,” and of the “wild” and “special” nature of that place. He draws explicit links between (1) the nature of that place and his felt experience (“fortunate”) of living there, and (2) the presence of particular species of wildlife (whether one sees them directly or only perceives signs they have left, such as fresh sticks at a beaver lodge). In a column printed in Michigan’s *Battle Creek Enquirer*, another hunter drew similar links:

My wife and I have a camp on property we own in the western Upper Peninsula. There are many reasons why we maintain our property in the U.P., but one of the most important ones to us is because the U.P. is wild. And one of the things that make it wild is the gray wolf. (Coupe, 2014)

For these hunters—as for the hunter who spoke of hunting deer near Bemidji for decades—the character of a place, and what it feels like and means to live and be in that place, is linked to the presence of non-human creatures in that place, especially wolves. For these hunters, the presence of wolves fundamentally shifts one’s experience of that place.

Over a meal in a roadside restaurant, a hunter from northern Wisconsin recounted a conversation with another hunter:

```
that's what I said to the one guy
  you know
    he
      I have hunting dogs and I had my dog with me
and he said, 'How would you feel if-'
  he was talking about his buddy whose dog got
    I can't remember if it got attacked by a wolf
      or killed by a wolf or whatever
and I was just saying
  'Well, that's the risk you run, I guess'
and he says 'Well, that's easy to say
  how would you feel
    if your dog got killed by a wolf?'
I said
  'Well, obviously I wouldn't like it
    but personally I would feel good that he got killed
      in a woods that was
        in a Wisconsin woods
          that was still wild enough to have wolves'
to me that would be
  I mean I wouldn't like it
    but I wouldn't hold a grudge against the wolf for doing it
what do you do?
  you're out there
```

Here, the explicit focus is on emotion. As this hunter recounts it, the other hunter challenged him, asking how he would “feel if [his] dog got killed by a wolf.” The core of his reply is that—though he “obviously . . . wouldn’t like it”—he would “feel good” that his dog’s death occurred “in a woods . . . that was still wild enough to have wolves.” Further, he says he “wouldn’t hold a grudge against the wolf.”

Note how this hunter's description of how he would feel about a potential experience of a specific, future event—involving his bird-hunting dog and a wolf—encompasses a description of how he feels about an ongoing experience of the place where he and his dogs live and hunt. What he says he would “feel good” about is “obviously” not his dog's death, but the character of the “woods.” It is not just “a woods” anywhere; it is “a Wisconsin woods,” a woods here in the place where he lives and hunts. And what makes him feel good about this place is that it is “still wild enough to have wolves.”

As in other hunters' talk of place and wolves, wildness plays a key role in this hunter's depiction of a place (and his feelings about it) as “good.” Like others, he makes no claims about the place being “real wilderness.” He says only that it is “still wild enough” for wolves. A temporal dimension is invoked here; in depicting these Wisconsin woods as “*still* wild enough,” he draws our attention not only to their wildness but also to the extension of that wild character, from the wild past into the “wild enough” present. The survival of this character of place is important to him, as are wolves: living indications and embodiments of that character.

Notably, similar expressions are audible in Ojibwe hunters' speech. Recall, for instance, how—after his telling of the creation story in Stevens Point in July 2012—Joe Rose spoke of how it was foretold that a “new paradigm will come into being.” In that new paradigm, he said: “true wealth / will be measured / in terms of clean water / and fresh air / and pristine wilderness / and all of those things that are represented / by Ma'iingan.” Here, the wolf is explicitly described as a symbol of the wild. Goodness and true wealth are said to be measured in terms of healthy, wild nature, which is said to be represented by Ma'iingan. Links between wolves and the wild, good character of the land are clearly indicated.

Similarly, one afternoon I sat in a tribal office, talking with two Ojibwe men, both employed by the tribe's natural resources department. As we talked about wolves, one of them commented that there is “not much habitat or cover” left in the state as a whole. He went on to describe a road trip from Edmonton, Alberta, to Thunder Bay, Ontario. He spoke of driving

across one thousand miles of agricultural land: “There was nothing there. I was lucky if I saw a bird.” Reaching the eastern edge of Manitoba and crossing into Ontario, he finally saw trees.

It was, he recalled, “like night and day.” The forested landscape was, he said, “the way it’s supposed to be.” Contrasting those forests with what he had driven through earlier in the trip, he spoke of the squares of agricultural land he had also seen from a plane, describing that grid of farmland as “a mess,” and commenting, “I don’t know how anything can live there.” His talk in these few minutes was all about the contrasting characters of landscapes: the lifeless, messy nothingness of heavily farmed land versus the life-filled forest (the way land is “supposed to be”). Though he did not draw an explicit link between the characters of these landscapes and the absence or presence of wolves, the connection was implicit in our overall conversation: heavy farming means fewer hospitable places for wolves (and other non-humans); wild forest (hospitable to wolves and other creatures) is the way the land is supposed to be.

To begin developing our interpretation of these verbal depictions of place, we can formulate several cultural propositions:

- A “wilder” place is a “better” place, where a person feels “fortunate” to “live.”
- Part of what makes a place feel “relatively wild” is the absence of certain human uses, such as “jetskiing or waterskiing.”
- More importantly, the presence of certain wild species—especially “wolves”—make a place “feel” “wilder” and “better.”
- It “feels good” to have local “woods” that are “still wild enough” to “have wolves.”

As with eagles and beavers, experiencing wildness in such places includes seeing wolf sign and having encounters with wolves themselves. A hunter in northern Wisconsin spoke of it being “fun to see” a young wolf and a rendezvous site⁵⁶ “not too far from [his] house,” and likewise “fun to see” two wolves he encountered while deer hunting.

⁵⁶ Rendezvous sites are “the home sites or activity sites used by wolves after the denning period, and prior to the nomadic hunting period of fall and winter. Pups are brought to rendezvous sites from dens when they are weaned, and remain at rendezvous sites until they are old enough to join the pack on their

An older hunter and trapper in northern Minnesota, who trapped (and killed) wolves before they were protected by the ESA in 1974, described how he still follows wolf tracks and puzzles out what the wolves have been doing: “It’s fun / you know / just / following and seeing what they do.” When I asked him what it is about seeing wolves that he likes so much, he replied:

I don’t know what it is
it’s just a thrill
. . .
I’ve seen hundreds of them
but I still
stop to look at one if there’s one standing there

Most of these sightings, he said, have been from the highway. Unlike him, he said, people who hate wolves “don’t appreciate seeing one.” He also described a particular encounter he had while deer hunting, when a wolf came within a few yards before realizing he was there, looking at him in surprise, and disappearing into the woods:

that was one of the most beautiful wolves I’ve ever seen
it was
almost completely white except for
right between the shoulder blades
it had a few brown hairs
it was just
absolutely beautiful
outstanding
but
you know
I can’t remember
how many I’ve seen when I’ve been deer hunting
but it hasn’t been that many

These and other hunters depict the experience of seeing wolves and wolf sign as enjoyable and exciting (“fun,” “a thrill”). Though they cannot necessarily articulate why (“I don’t know what it is”), they describe a consistent “appreciation” for seeing wolves and a persistent impulse to watch them (“I’ve seen hundreds of them / but I still / stop to look at one”). One specific dimension of this appreciation is stated in aesthetic terms (“beautiful”).

hunting circuits” (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/wolf/rendezvous.html>). This hunter described this one this way: “there were bones all over and / it was all dug up / and there was wolf scat all over.”

2. “No interest in hunting deer someplace that doesn’t have wolves”

The hunter I met at the roadside restaurant also spoke more generally about hunting:

I like hunting big woods
so I hunt far northern Wisconsin
where it's
really no farm land
no open land at all
it's just all woods
it's all National Forest

In these few words, with the hubs of action and dwelling explicitly activated, we hear a preference for engaging in a particular practice (hunting) in a particular kind of place: “big woods” without “farm land” or “open land” of any kind.

Another hunter linked his hunting to wolves more specifically. We sat in his kitchen on the North Shore of Lake Superior, in northeastern Minnesota, where he has lived for more than forty years. When I asked him to share his views on wolves, he began by talking about his experiences hunting in particular kinds of places.

one thing I was thinking that to me is really important
and I know I'm not the only person that feels this way
I have no interest in hunting deer someplace
that doesn't have wolves
I have absolutely no interest in that

I've hunted places a couple of times
where there was no major predator
and it's
I don't know how to put it
it's different
it's not as
it's not the same experience
it's not anywhere near as fulfilling to me as a hunter
I'm not interacting with an intact ecosystem
I'm on a farm essentially
if there's no major predator there
to be able to control the game
other than me

and so I like the challenge of hunting deer that have been—
their wits have been sharpened by wolf packs
it's a very different animal
it's an animal that's on the cusp of survival every day
and that to me is something that's really important

I mean if I was going to travel to hunt
it would be as important to me what the predators
were there
as what the game was
so Colorado for elk?
maybe not
they don't really have any big predators in Colorado
they have lots of elk
Montana on the other hand has all the big predators
that would just make it a far more interesting
far more wild experience for me
I would travel to a place like that
if I was going to travel to hunt

Later in our conversation, he summed up his perspective this way: "If it's wild enough for wolves / it's wild enough for me."

This hunter speaks of how vitally "important" it is for him (and others) to hunt deer in a place where there are wolves. He depicts his experiences of hunting in places with "no major predator" as "different," "not the same," and "not anywhere near as fulfilling." He links this difference to the character of such a landscape: a place so modified by human activity that it is not "an intact ecosystem" and is, instead, "a farm essentially," a system in which humans are the only "major predator" remaining.

Additionally, in an intact ecosystem, with other major predators present, the character of the deer is different: their "wits have been sharpened" by being "on the cusp of survival every day." For him, as a hunter, this is "important" as well, making the hunt more of a "challenge" and engaging him with "a very different animal."

A wildlife biologist I interviewed expressed similar sentiments. First, he spoke of how, "areas that support wolves"—"a keystone species"—are generally perceived as being "pretty healthy," and expressed a belief in the importance of "keep[ing] that intact." "We should try to maintain that," he said, and should not "further detract from . . . what can live there."

Second, he said that deer—having "developed adaptations / to avoid predation"—"wouldn't be what they are if it wasn't for wolves." In light of the "millions of years [that] have gone into the evolution of wolves and the prey that / they focus on," he said, "you have to have

that appreciation for both.” Particularly “as a hunter,” he said, he “appreciate[s]” the “connection between wolves and their prey” and finds it “fascinating.” Rhetorically, he asked, “How can you have one / without the other? / I mean this relationship has been ongoing long before / we were here / and involved in hunting deer.”

I hunt areas where there's wolves and I always have
from early on
probably some of my early
first deer hunting experiences
there were signs of wolves
or other hunters in our party saw wolves
and that always really
kind of captured my imagination
about being in a wild place

In these hunters' words, we can hear a deeply felt sense of the experiential meaning and value of interacting with an ecosystem inhabited by wolves. For them, the entire interactive experience of hunting—including their sense of the landscape and their experience of deer—hinges on the co-presence of other major predators and on those predators' interactions with deer: interactions which shape both the wild character of the deer and the wild character of the place. The absence of those other predators strips the landscape of its wildness, rendering it a farm in all but name, rendering the deer more domesticated than wild, and rendering the hunter's experience a shallow, domesticated shadow of its potential wild self.

These dimensions were further emphasized and clarified later in my conversation in that North Shore kitchen, when the hunter spoke of spending time in grizzly and cougar country elsewhere in North America, and seeing bear and cat tracks in each, respectively. “That adds as much to the whole experience as having an abundance of game,” he said, “probably more, actually.” He also returned to the topic of what it's like to hunt deer where he lives.

we all kind of joke
you know
if you read deer hunting stories
and you're supposed to find the bedding area
and the feeding area
and these deer just basically are like cattle
they do the same thing every day

and you position yourself so that you're somewhere
in this daily pattern
that doesn't happen here
everything happens at random here
 where the deer bed today is not where they're going
 to bed tomorrow
 where they're feeding today is not where they're going
 to feed tomorrow
I mean, they have places where they're going back to
for a week or two
but everything's totally at random
because you've got a big predator pushing things around

I asked him if he thought this randomness affected hunters' experiences of being able to see deer.

for sure
especially if they buy into that it's supposed to be
 something else
 than what it is
if they buy into it's supposed to be easier than it is
which is a lot of what the modern hunting industry promotes
 is that this is supposed to be something you can go out
 and do for a morning
 and come home with a trophy buck
you know
 that's what they do on TV
so I think that can affect people

This hunter, like others I interviewed, spoke of needing to be adaptable, flexible, and willing to move from place to place to find deer in wolf country. The problem arises, he said, when hunters have just one place they hunt and cannot—or, being habitual, simply do not—hunt in other places. Another lifelong hunter from northern Minnesota described his own approach this way:

I've got several places where I hunt
and so I
get in there and
 if I can see there's wolf sign around
 and I feel that there aren't any deer around
I just go to the next spot
go down the road five miles
or whatever
and pick another spot
try it there

For these, and other local hunters, the hunting articles that advise you to figure out deer's daily patterns are kind of a "joke," and the deer that behave so predictably in other places are "like cattle." Here, by pushing deer around, wolves make things much more "random" in the woods. As a result, hunters cannot rely on predicting deer movement.⁵⁷ They may not see as many deer, especially if they "buy into" the idea that "it's supposed to be easier than it is . . . that this is supposed to be something you can go out / and do for a morning / and come home with a trophy buck." Instead of being habitual and hunting the same place doggedly, hunters need to accept that hunting deer is hard, pay attention to "sign," and be prepared to "pick another spot."

In short, it is said that the absence of major non-human predators not only makes the woods like "a farm," the deer like "cattle," and the hunting experience far less "interesting"; it also makes the hunter less adept.⁵⁸ All of these—land, deer, experience, and hunter—are diminished and rendered less wild.

In these words and ideas, we can hear distinct echoes of earlier voices, including that of Sigurd Olson, who hunted deer and studied wolves in northern Minnesota: "To go into a region where the large carnivores are gone, to see hoofed game with its natural alertness lacking, to know above all that the primitive population has been tampered with, is like traveling through a cultivated estate" (1938, p. 324).

We can summarize several key ideas as follows:

- The presence of "wolves" is "important" to the "experience" of "hunting deer"; a fulfilling "experience" involves "interacting with an intact ecosystem" where other "major predators" also hunt deer.

⁵⁷ Researchers have noted that deer are "more elusive" in wolf territory, do not come out "as readily during the daytime," and are "harder to see," thus giving "the impression there's a lot less deer" (Bence, 2014).

⁵⁸ A letter to *Minnesota Outdoor News* contended that the presence of wolves is not a problem for deer hunting and offered this sarcastic suggestion: "If you are looking for easy hunting opportunities, maybe shooting cattle in a fenced-in area might be a good option" (March 9, 2012).

- “Deer” and “wolves” have an ancient “relationship”; you cannot have “one” without the “other”; “deer” would not “be what they are” without “wolves.”
- In a place with wolves, “deer” are constantly “on the cusp of survival” and their “wits” are “sharpened” by wolves; for the hunter, it is “important” to engage with this “very different animal.”
- Among other “big predators,” a hunter’s experiences of “place” and “game” are “far more interesting,” “far more wild.”
- A place where humans are the only “major predator” is “a farm essentially” and the “deer” are like “cattle”; “hunting” in such a place is not “fulfilling.”
- We should “keep” “ecosystems” and “landscapes” “intact” and “wild.”

Though the discursive hub of action (hunting) is made most explicit in the excerpts above, it is clear that all four radiants are vital: dwelling (the nature of a place; the experience of living, being, and acting there; the importance of keeping such places intact), relationship (among hunter, deer, wolf, and land), feeling (about the importance of hunting among other predators), and identity (who one is as someone who lives and hunts in a place like this). These hunters’ utterances provide us with a vivid sense of part of why they choose to live and hunt where they do. For some at least, character of landscape is closely bound to senses of self and place: “if it’s wild enough for wolves, it’s wild enough for me.”

Underlying the excerpts presented in this and the previous section are foundations of belief and value, which we can articulate as premises:

- Wild places are good (better) places.
- It is good—and feels good—for humans (including hunters) to experience wild places.
- Wild places make human experiences—of living, hunting, and so forth—more fulfilling and interesting.
- The land should be wild; ecosystems should be intact; we should take action to ensure these conditions.
- A place need not be untouched wilderness to be and feel wild.
- Places heavily impacted by humans—including places without large non-human predators—are domesticated, not wild.

More particular to wolves is this premise:

- The presence of wolves (and other large non-human predators) contributes powerfully to the wild character of a place and the human experience of wildness.

Leopold (1949) wrote of how places and landscapes have a “numenon,” a creature which embodies the character or “imponderable essence” of those places and landscapes, and which carries “an enormous amount of some kind of motive power.” He asserted that “the grouse is the numenon of the north woods.” In those days, though, there were virtually no wolves in the north woods of Wisconsin. If he walked and hunted those woods today, I wonder if he would give the wolf that title. I wonder if he would feel that the absence of the wolf—like the imagined future absence of the jaguar from the “green lagoons” he and his brother explored in Mexico’s Colorado River Delta in 1922—would leave the woods “forever dull for adventuring hunters” (pp. 146-152). Leopold did also ask, after all, “Is a wolfless north woods any north woods at all?” (1953, p. 150). This, as I hear it, is part of what these hunters are saying.

B. “Part of nature”

As we have heard, some hunters place great value on the wolf’s presence, feeling that this predator plays a vital role in defining the wild character of places and deer. Closely linked to this value are others, including a sense that wolves are part of a larger natural community. In my conversation with the hunter at the roadside restaurant in northern Wisconsin, I asked him to give me a summary of his overall thoughts and feelings about wolves. He began this way:

```
they have an inherent value
  I value them no more or less than I value a deer
    or a chipmunk
    or anything else
  they’re just part of nature
    you know
  and people want them here
```

Shortly thereafter, he reiterated the point, explicating in a bit more detail.

to me they're just another animal and they belong here
I guess that's what drives my whole
wanting them around
I just feel they have an inherent right to be here
they're part of our natural Wisconsin landscape

In such utterances about “nature,” “landscape,” and those beings who “belong here,” dwelling is made an explicit discursive hub. The wolf is depicted as an integral “part of nature,” and more particularly as part of a local and specific natural region: “they belong here . . . they're part of our natural Wisconsin landscape.”

Though this hunter elsewhere articulated a sense that wolves hold special meaning in connection with wildness (e.g., “a Wisconsin woods still wild enough to have wolves”), here he emphasizes wolves' equal membership in nature (“I value them no more or less than I value a deer / or a chipmunk / or anything else”). Here, it is not so much wildness as simple belonging and membership in nature and in this region that are said (1) to give the wolf “inherent value” and “an inherent right to be here” and (2) to make this hunter and others desire their presence (“drives my whole / wanting them around,” “people want them here”).

Related valuations of nature and the creatures inhabiting it are expressed in excerpts already presented from interviews with other hunters. Recall, for instance, the value placed on the presence of certain species (e.g., loons, eagles, otters, beavers, and especially wolves) and the wildness of such creatures and the places they inhabit. Recall, too, the value placed on the presence of major predators as part of the kind of “intact ecosystem” with which a hunter wants to “interact.”

In all of these, with varied emphasis on wildness, wolves are described as a valued part of nature and of particular local landscapes. From these, we can formulate the following cultural propositions:

- “Wolves” are “part of nature” and part of our “landscape.”
- “Wolves” “belong here.”
- “Wolves” have “inherent value.”

- An “intact ecosystem” includes “wolves” among other species.

In these propositions about dwelling, wolves are explicitly described as valued members of valued natural communities and intact ecosystems. Implicit here is a positive valuation of “nature” and “intact ecosystems.”

Also implicit is an idea concerning human action. It was made explicit in another part of the interview at the roadside restaurant, when this Wisconsin hunter spoke of his respect for the vast majority of “resource professionals” who, in his opinion, consistently seek to “do what’s right for the ecosystem.” With no rearrangement, his words form a proposition: We should “do” what is “right” for “the ecosystem.”

The above propositions can be distilled to a premise concerning dwelling and action:

- All members of the natural land community have inherent value and belong in the community; human action should honor this.

This distinctly resonates with Leopold (1949), who wrote of the “the land” as “a community” encompassing “soils, waters, plants, and animals,” of “predators” as “members of the community,” and of all community members’ “right to continued existence” (pp. 239, 240, 247).

C. Wolves and deer

When talking about wolves, hunters in the western Great Lakes region inevitably talk about deer. In this discourse, which can be heard as responding to discourses of predator control, the wolf’s role as a hunter of deer is depicted as a natural part of larger natural systems, as generally unproblematic in relation to deer populations, and—in certain ways—as parallel to hunting by humans.

1. “They’ve gotta eat”

One prominent aspect of talk regarding wolves and deer focuses on consumption of the latter by the former. A hunter in northern Wisconsin, for instance, had this to say:

as far as them eating a deer
I'm fine with it
I mean
one of the other things that really
bugs me
is people try to make wolves
out to be some wanton
vicious
merciless
indiscriminate killer

Their killing, he said, “is no different than / any predator / you know what I mean? / that’s what predators do.” He went on to describe how he has bird feeders at his house and how hawks come to hunt there.

they pick birds off
and they bring `em up in trees
and they sit there and tear `em apart
why is a wolf eating a deer any worse than that
from a predatory standpoint
what’s the difference?
to me there’s none
but we have such a connection with deer
somehow we make this huge leap
that this wolf killing a deer is so horrific beyond belief
you know
it’s like
`oh my God
they killed that little fawn
they ripped it to shreds’

He then spoke of how wolves hunt deer.

personally I have a lot more respect for a wolf
that has to run down a deer
risk his life
to get that deer
than some hunter sitting in a stand
with a pile of corn in front of him
with a high-powered rifle
shooting this half-tame deer that comes in to eat his food

Here, the wolf is depicted as “no different than any predator,” an animal that—like a hawk—kills to eat. Many hunters’ negative perceptions of and attitudes toward the wolf are attributed to having “such a connection with deer,” making the death of these cervids “horrific beyond belief.” In this hunter’s depiction, the wolf’s method of hunting and the effort, hardship,

and risk involved are more worthy of “respect” than the lazy, easy methods employed by some hunters.⁵⁹ Note the recurrence of the previously discussed positive evaluation of hunting as a wild practice and experience, and the corresponding negative evaluation of hunting becoming too easy, the prey becoming too domesticated and predictable (“half-tame”).

In addition, consider the words spoken by the older hunter and trapper who trapped wolves in Minnesota before they were protected by the ESA, and who also applied for a wolf license in 2012. He says he feels no animosity toward wolves and, as a deer hunter, does not begrudge wolves the animals they eat.

yeah they take deer
and they take moose
but they've gotta eat

Later in our conversation, he elaborated a little.

like I say
they've gotta eat too
and you know
if I don't get a deer
it's not between me and starvation
you know
I don't need it

Here, the necessity of wolves' hunting (“they've gotta eat”) is central to depicting their “taking” of deer and moose as acceptable.⁶⁰ That necessity is contrasted with the killing of deer by the speaker who, unlike the wolf, does not “need” the food and does not face “starvation” if he fails in the hunt.

Along similar lines, a hunter in northern Wisconsin spoke about how whitetails are often referred to by hunters as “our deer.”

⁵⁹ As noted previously, wolves are sometimes kicked and sustain serious and even fatal injuries when hunting deer and other large cervids.

⁶⁰ As used here, the term “take,” as in “yeah they take deer,” should not be heard as pejorative; it does not imply that wolves take deer *from* hunters. Like “get,” the term “take” is commonly employed by hunters to describe their own killing of deer as well.

some hunters believe that
it's all there for
us
and those are our deer
those deer were meant for them
not for a wolf
and
maybe the wolves have as much right to them as we do
and if I'm out hunting where there are some wolves
and I'm not seeing any deer that morning
it might be hard for me to think about it that way
but
those
aren't our deer

In these utterances, a belief in a kind of ownership of deer is ascribed to some hunters, and is explicitly contradicted. Wolves, it is suggested, have “as much right” to deer as we do.

These three hunters articulate related aspects of this discourse's depiction of wolves' consumption of deer. Central to this depiction is the discursive hub of action, particularly (1) wolves “killing,” “taking,” and “eating” deer, and (2) humans “hunting” and “shooting” deer. Wolves' killing of deer is described as natural and acceptable (“that's what predators do,” “they've gotta eat”) and no worse than all the other killing that constantly occurs in nature (“no different than / any predator”). Wolves' killing of deer is also depicted in relation to humans' hunting of deer; wolves, it is said, have “as much right to [deer] as we do,” and their necessarily difficult method of hunting (“has to run down a deer / risk his life”) is said to deserve “more respect” than the unnecessarily easy methods employed by some humans (“some hunter sitting in a stand / with a pile of corn in front of him. . . shooting this half-tame deer”).

Implicitly, these utterances activate radiants of dwelling and relationship. The wolf's ways of dwelling (and acting) in nature are said to be appropriate. Human ways of dwelling (and acting) in nature, it is said, should be—but are not always—worthy of the same respect. As human hunters, it is suggested, we should accept and respect wolves as predators. Proper human-wolf and human-deer relationships, it is suggested, include human understanding and acceptance of wolves killing and eating deer.

Attentive to this hub and these radiants, and drawing on the excerpts above, we can formulate these cultural propositions:

- “Killing” and “eating” is what “predators” do.
- “Wolves” “need” to “eat.”
- It is “fine” for “wolves” to “eat” “deer.”
- “Wolves” have “as much right” to “deer” as “hunters” do.

Underpinning these, we can articulate two premises:

- It is natural, necessary, and appropriate for wild predators to kill and eat other wildlife.
- Wildlife does not belong to humans.

Here again, we can hear resonance with Leopold who—though a hunter and angler, and father of the field of game management—came to disagree with “the sportsman” who would dispute the otter’s “title to the trout” (1949, p. 163).

2. “Obviously the wolves aren’t killing all the deer”

Another feature of this discourse is that the numeric and territorial growth of wolf populations in recent decades is not linked to a precipitous or unacceptable decline in deer numbers. Current deer populations are generally said to be sufficient. In cases where deer numbers have declined substantially, this is attributed to causes other than wolves. North of Lake Superior, for instance, one hunter spoke of local deer and wolf numbers in historical terms.

you go back to the early seventies
when there were virtually no deer
the wolf population was low
both have hit abundance that was never seen before
since that time
so obviously the wolves aren’t killing all the deer

Another hunter in northeastern Minnesota had this to say:

it’s up and down
but I think we have probably more deer now

than we had
before the wolf was protected

In these utterances, spoken in and about heavily wooded areas subject to extreme winters, deer numbers are depicted as being higher than they were when wolf numbers were lower.

In Wisconsin, in an area of mixed woods and farm land where winters are somewhat milder, a hunter described seeing deer all the time.

where I live
there's like deer everywhere
and people there complain about not seeing any
I mean it's insane
. . .
if I take a walk anywhere behind my house
you know
you get to this field and there's ten twelve over there
you walk over here and there's ten twelve over there

He expressed the view that the deer population is locally overabundant and—to maintain biodiversity and healthy habitat—should be reduced, or at least held steady, through the taking of does (female deer) by hunters. But many local people, he said, are opposed: “Even in 2013 / they don't believe in shooting does . . . because there's no such thing as too many deer to them.”

In his words, deer numbers are depicted as not only high, but too high. The situation, in which deer are overabundant yet people “complain about not seeing any,” is characterized as “insane.” Similarly, criticism is implied of some people's continued resistance—even in this day and age (“even in 2013”)—to “shooting does” to achieve an ecologically appropriate number of deer.

In this overall discourse, deer mortality is attributed to a wide range of causes, among which predation by wolves ranks quite low. Regarding direct causes, for instance, one hunter in northwestern Wisconsin put it this way: “Wolves are / not the leading cause of deer mortality / even here in the north woods / in their range . . . ahead of them rank many other causes.” He noted that the “number one” direct cause of deer mortality is “human hunters,” followed by

“motor vehicles,” “bears / which are a huge predator of fawns,” “coyotes,” and “various diseases / and parasites.”

Regarding deer population changes more broadly, another hunter in same region spoke of how deer numbers have dropped in the past decade. As he depicted it, this drop was appropriate.

I mean back in the nineties
here in Wisconsin
we were shooting half a million deer every year
. . .
I think people really got used to that
in a pretty short period of time
where they thought that's the way it should be
and that isn't sustainable
I mean it's
it's not ecologically sustainable

Now, he said, “we don't have as many deer as we had ten years ago / but that isn't the predators' fault.”

The major long-term factor behind the drop in deer numbers, he said, was habitat change, stemming from a dramatic reduction in clear-cutting which led to a dramatic reduction in the kind of young forest habitat in which deer numbers soar: “Things have changed greatly as far as habitat in northern Wisconsin / in the last twenty-five years / and that's reflected in deer populations.”

The major short-term factor, he said, was the number of deer killed by hunters, as appropriately intended by WI-DNR to bring down overabundant populations: “We're killing a half million deer a year / specifically to take the population down / I mean that was the wildlife managers' goal.” Those wildlife managers, he noted, were widely criticized by “disgruntled hunters,” but much of the blame was placed on the wolf.

we have habitat that's
aging by the year
and we have
us shooting a lot more deer than we ever historically have
. . .
and unfortunately that's about the time
the wolf population really started to grow
got a nice easy scapegoat forming for us

it's not this other stuff
it's the wolf

The practice of hunting is identified as the primary direct cause of deer mortality and the primary short-term driver of population changes. Habitat change is identified as the primary long-term factor. Other hunters' expectations concerning the number of deer they were shooting ("people really got used to that," "they thought that's the way it should be"), and their belief that deer numbers should remain at "unsustainable" levels, are depicted as problematic. Their frustration at lower (though still excessive) deer numbers is implied to be unwarranted, and the blame they direct at the wolf is said to be misplaced ("a nice easy scapegoat").

3. "Deer continue to thrive"

In a related way, this discourse depicts some situations in which wolves do impact deer numbers more noticeably. Most such situations are defined by snow conditions. A hunter with decades of outdoor experience in northern Minnesota put it this way:

it seems like
to me
that on the years that the wolf numbers are way up
the deer numbers do drop
and of course that's
in relationship with the amount of snow we get
you know the more snow we get
the easier it is for the wolves to
to get the deer
especially like getting on toward March
when the snow gets crusted
when they can stay on top
on the years when we don't have much snow
I think it's pretty tough on the wolf
trying to find enough to eat

He also described a particular scene:

about five years ago I think it is
the snow was fairly deep
and I found one spot where
there were four different deer carcasses in this one
little area
you know like from here to the driveway across

and I think what happened there
the whole pack got the deer in
and the snow was deep
and I think they just nailed all of 'em
I think they got 'em all at one time
the way it looked

Here, the explicit hub of action (wolves “get” or “nail” deer) is directly linked to, and nested within, a larger force (“the amount of snow we get”): a dynamic and unpredictable element of the natural world within which wolf, deer, and human dwell. That larger force is said to have consequences for both wolf and deer, some years favoring the wolf (“the more snow we get / the easier it is for the wolves to / to get the deer”) and some favoring the deer (“on the years when we don’t have much snow / I think it’s pretty tough on the wolf / trying to find enough to eat”).⁶¹

Similarly, a hunter and DNR biologist told me that the research makes it “pretty clear” that the two primary causes of deer mortality are “winter severity and hunting.” “Of course wolves are a component of the overall mortality,” he said, “but they’re certainly not really the driving factor.”

Another hunter in northern Minnesota made related statements, but started with a caveat: “the wild card now is climate change / because anything going forward / is not going to be like anything in the past / we already know that.” He went on to say that, other than hunting, in the past “what’s always controlled the deer in the north is winter.”

you get a series of decent winters
and you get some good deer survival
deer numbers go up
wolf numbers start following the deer numbers up
you get a hard winter
where the deer population crashes
it’s also a great winter for wolves
and they just
they do what they call surplus killing

⁶¹ Citing research by David Mech and others, conducted in northeastern Minnesota during a series of severe winters in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Thiel (2014) recounts how “the deer population declined by 60 percent” and “wolves began starving,” yet also how “both the deer and the wolves preying on them persisted and the populations of both rebounded” (pp. 13-14).

you know these deer are trapped in deep snow
they'll kill every deer they can
and that is what drives a lot of the animosity
toward wolves
is people hear about or see that surplus killing
going on
and think 'oh these things are just ruthless killers'

A couple minutes later, he described the pattern in another way:

the deer population goes up
the wolf population follows along
deer population crashes
wolf population two three years later
does the same thing
drops back down to the level of its prey base
but there's a period there where it seems like
there's a hell of a lot of wolves and not too many deer
and that I think is what drives a lot of people
to think that
you know
it's the wolf that's the problem

Here again, the hub of action (“kill”) is linked to and nested within a larger natural force (“winter”). While “decent winters” help deer numbers “go up,” a “hard winter” causes the deer population to “crash,” as deep snow limits access to food. Such a “hard” winter is also “great” for wolves, enabling them to kill deer trapped in deep snow. Note how the particular action of “surplus killing”—which, for some, is said to activate a particular emotion (“animosity”) and lead to a particular conclusion about the nature and identity of wolves (“ruthless killers”)—is depicted here as a natural behavior nested within the larger natural forces at play (“winter,” “deep snow”).⁶² Likewise, the particular times when “it seems like / there’s a hell of a lot of wolves and

⁶² Most of a century ago, Olson (1938) addressed this as well, similarly depicting it as a natural behavior. He noted that, at times, “more deer are killed than [the pack] will consume immediately” and that “condemnation” of this “habit” is rooted in “the impression that the members of the pack do not kill for the express purpose of food, but rather to satisfy the blood lust of the race . . . Investigation, however, convinces the unbiased observer that such killing habits are purely storage acts.” The occasions when wolves fail “to return to their kills,” he contended, were best explained “by the many years of poisoning and trapping which have made them suspicious of every old carcass” (p. 333).

not too many deer” are depicted as nested within larger natural cycles, not as evidence that the wolf is “the problem.”

Note also the causative links described: winter controls deer, and deer numbers determine wolf numbers (“wolf numbers start following the deer numbers”). Winter is said to be the overarching force, and deer are said to influence wolf numbers more than the other way around. More broadly, even winter is nested within a larger force (“climate change”) which is destabilizing familiar patterns (“not going to be like anything in the past”) with uncertain consequences (“wild card”) for deer, wolf, and human.

Less centrally, this discourse encompasses depictions of other natural forces involved in these dynamics. In Minnesota, for instance, one hunter mentioned mange, which “just like winter” “goes in cycles.”

```
every ten years or so you'll get a mange outbreak
  that seems to really knock the wolves back
    you'll go through a couple years
      where basically every wolf you see is half hairless
        . . .
    so you have that interplay
  and you've got all these cycles going on at the same time
```

In short, the emphasis here is on forces of the natural world within which deer, wolf, and human all dwell. These forces—which are all “going in cycles” and “going on at the same time,” all “interplaying” and interrelating—are said to control deer populations, wolf populations, and hunting success by both wolves and humans.⁶³ Wolf, deer, and human alike are depicted as natural actors that belong in a natural system.

The hunter who described finding the four deer carcasses in one spot also recounted a story he had heard many years earlier, about a local logging operation around which deer congregated to feed on felled tree tops and around which wolves therefore hunted.

⁶³ Thiel (2014) puts it this way: “Predator-prey dynamics are very complex, and unraveling cause-and-effect is complicated by many variables, including humans themselves” (p. 14).

there was over fifty deer killed there that winter
they said
and of course the logger was one of these
you know
'kill every wolf out there'
and a couple years later
there were a lot of deer back there again
so
didn't seem to
you know they seem to rebound pretty quickly

He recounted how there was “a lot of snow” in the late 1960s and how it “knocked the deer population way down.” Then, he said, in the mid-to-late 1970s there were a number of “open winters”—winters with relatively little snow on the ground—and the deer “popped back pretty quickly.” A hunter and biologist told me much the same:

there can be significant winters
where wolves kill a lot of deer
and despite that
deer continue to thrive
and especially in years when
winter severity is low
deer just reproduce
at significant numbers
and quickly replace individuals that are killed
so I think it's a hard thing for people to grasp
that their personal experience might be different
where they hunt
or at a local small scale
they might see different influences
which is very real
but in general
as a whole
when you look at it on a broad scale
wolves alone have very little influence
on that overall
deer population

Here again, larger natural forces (e.g., “winter,” “snow”) are said to control deer numbers, and wolves' killing of deer occurs within the context of those forces. When winters are mild, deer not only do well but “thrive,” “rebound pretty quickly,” and “reproduce / at significant numbers.” Under the right conditions, wolves might kill a significant number of deer in a

particular spot (“fifty deer killed there”) but the deer come back (“a couple years later / there were a lot of deer back there again”).

Similarly, a hunter in northern Wisconsin said that he didn’t think the state’s wolf population had a significant impact on deer numbers, except in small areas “where they might have an effect on a population / in a very localized setting / for a period of time.” Such effects, he said, are “not going to be long term” or “catastrophic.”

In the context of large landscapes and large natural forces, then, wolves’ impacts on deer populations are said to be limited in scope, both geographically (“very localized,” “local small scale”) and temporally (“a period of time”). It is in these contexts that feelings of “animosity” toward wolves, conclusions about wolves’ identity as “ruthless killers,” and actions such as “kill[ing] every wolf out there” are understood and depicted as unwarranted.

Regarding wolves’ impacts on deer numbers, we can state the broad outlines of this view in terms of several propositions:

- “Wolves” are not “killing” “all the deer.”
- The “deer population” is mainly determined by “hunting,” “winter,” and “habitat.”
- “Deer” “rebound” quickly.
- The “wolf population” is mainly determined by its “prey base.”
- “Numbers” of “wolves” and “deer” are part of larger “cycles.”
- “Wolves” are often blamed as a “scapegoat,” especially when drops in deer numbers correlate with the cyclical presence of “a lot of wolves” or with “growth” in “the wolf population,” making people “think” that “the wolf” is “the problem.”

We can, in turn, distill underlying premises:

- Wolves do not threaten the deer population.
- Deer determine the wolf population.
- Humans, wolves, and deer all belong to the natural world and are affected by larger forces.
- Hunters should not blame wolves.

4. “An important ecological role”

In some instances, this discourse also encompasses depictions of wolves playing positive ecological roles, especially in places where deer have become significantly overpopulated. In Wisconsin, for example, where wolves were extirpated in the mid-20th century and where—due largely to habitat and climate differences—the deer population is much higher than in northeastern Minnesota, some hunters speak of valuing wolves because they play “an important ecological role.” One put it this way:

```
if we have too many deer
  that's not a good thing
and
over much of the North American landscape
  we've removed all those predators from the landscape
. . .
human hunters can
  take on part of that job
  and help to maintain or restore that ecological balance
but
where they're present
  in those areas
  wolves can really play an important role
and
  that really makes a difference for
  a whole complex ecosystem
if there are too many deer
  there's going to be fewer songbirds
a lot of people think it's impossible to have too many deer
but it
  it's really a zero-sum game
if we have more deer
  we have less of a lot of other things out in the woods
it's great to have a few more
  but when they're truly overabundant
  and they've eaten away the understory
  it makes a difference for everything else
  out in the woods
```

Here, the discursive hubs of action and dwelling are explicit. Deer, when “truly overabundant,” are said to damage habitat (“eaten away the understory”) thereby decreasing biodiversity (“fewer songbirds,” “less of a lot of other things out in the woods”). Wolves, in turn, are depicted as playing “an important ecological role” by keeping deer numbers from becoming

excessive: helping with the problem of “too many deer” and thus helping “to maintain or restore that ecological balance.” Humans, it is said, can also contribute to such maintenance and restoration by hunting deer (“take on part of that job”) but the presence of wolves remains significantly valuable: “really makes a difference for / a whole complex ecosystem.” Humans can also obstruct ecological health by believing “it’s impossible to have too many deer.”

As ecological actors, deer, wolves, and humans are said to have various impacts on the systems of which all three are part and in which all three dwell: Human action removed wolves and other large predators from much of the continent. In the absence of large predators, deer have—in some regions—acted upon habitat to the detriment of other species and the ecosystem as a whole. Actions by wolves and human hunters have helped and can help prevent deer overabundance and counteract its impacts. This depiction is echoed by the hunter whose column was printed in Michigan’s *Battle Creek Enquirer*: “Wolves provide many benefits to the ecosystem” (Coupe, 2014).⁶⁴

In such statements, we hear an emphasis on ecological values, especially biodiversity and intactness. Though these hunters value the chance to see and successfully hunt deer (“it’s great to have a few more”), they do not value high deer numbers at the cost of “fewer songbirds,” for example. They prefer a “balance” in which deer are present as part of a whole, “intact ecosystem.”

Here, a parallel is audible between wolves and human hunters, both of which are described as “major predators” who act in concert with one another, hunting deer and effecting positive ecological conditions. Together, wolf and hunter are said to help maintain balance and

⁶⁴ The idea here is that, though wolves do not significantly suppress deer numbers across large areas, they can help alleviate the negative ecological impacts of very high deer densities. There is scientific debate over where and when this occurs and is likely to occur. On one hand, wolf expert David Mech echoes what Leopold and others knew decades ago, stating that “science has long known that after wolves and other carnivores were exterminated from many areas, their prey such as deer overpopulated and overbrowsed plants.” On the other hand, Mech contends that today, “compared with the effect of human activities,” in most landscapes the results of wolf predation “make little difference” for deer herds or for the plants they eat (“Do wolves cause trophic cascades?”).

wholeness, shaping the kind of natural, wild places in which both prefer to dwell and hunt. A potential reparation is also implied, in which historical actions (“removed all those predators from the landscape”) and negative ecological consequences can, in part, be corrected by people—especially hunters—who understand wolves and the roles they play in nature. As I hear it, the fundamental premise here is this: Wolves can play beneficial roles in nature.

5. “A fellow hunter”

The ways in which this discourse depicts wolves and humans and their parallel hunting and consumption of deer are worthy of closer attention. First, let’s consider what three different hunters had to say about their experiences and perceptions of hunting deer in landscapes where wolves are abundant. One hunter from northern Wisconsin, after expressing his appreciation for wolves in terms of both wildness and ecology, acknowledged that observations and experiences can lead hunters to draw certain conclusions about wolves’ impacts on deer numbers:

```
there might be times when I'm out in the woods
  and I'm not seeing many deer
  and I see some wolf sign
  and I put those two things together
and if there's some hunter who
  has a deer stand out in the woods
  and he comes back the next year
    he doesn't seen any deer
    but he does see some wolf sign
  and he
  maybe even if he's really unlucky
    there's a wolf den
    twenty yards away under another tree
  and then
  maybe that's not going to be a real good hunting spot
  for a while
```

A hunter from northeastern Minnesota, when asked whether he saw the wolf as a competitor for deer, responded this way:

```
well, yeah, in a way
because it seems like when the wolves come through
  the deer move out
```

and it'll be
several days before they'll
move back into the
you know
deer move back into that area

He then went on to speak of having—and needing to have—multiple places to hunt, of moving along to another spot if wolf sign is fresh in one, and of knowing that the deer will come back to each place.

Another hunter in northern Minnesota had this to say:

we occasionally see wolves when we're deer hunting
I don't really think much of it
I don't want to hunt in the same place
as a pack is hunting at the same time
I've had that experience
and we'd just go someplace else
I've had the opportunity to shoot wolves
on several occasions
I don't know maybe a dozen times
where I could have shot a wolf
and nobody would have been the wiser
I've never felt the urge to do it
. . .
I've just never had that
I've never thought that I was competing with the wolf
when I was in the woods

These hunters speak of encounters with wolves and wolf sign as occurring in specific, localized times (“times,” “for a while,” “several days,” “occasionally”) and places (“a deer stand,” “hunting spot,” “that area,” “the same place”). This echoes the way in which this discourse depicts wolves’ impacts on deer populations as limited in scope, both temporally and geographically.

They likewise depict their own perception and feeling of competition with the wolf, if any, as being minimal (“in a way,” “I don’t really think much of it”) and narrowly limited to specific times and places (“there might be times”). As we saw earlier in this chapter, this discourse prescribes an appropriate action for the hunter who encounters concentrated wolf activity: temporary relocation (“just go someplace else”). In broader landscapes and larger natural

systems, the wolf is not depicted as a competitor (“I’ve never thought that I was competing with the wolf”). Thus, these hunters say they feel no hostility toward wolves, and no related desire to kill them (“I’ve never felt the urge to do it”).

Another key dimension here involves how hunters and wolves are defined and described. As we saw in Chapter V, predator-control discourses depict “hunters” (humans) and “predators” (wolves) as distinctly different and employ separate terms for each. In this coinhabitation discourse, the two are depicted as more similar and the terms are more interchangeable.

Earlier, for instance, we heard a Minnesota hunter speak of both wolf and human as “major predators.” Another Minnesota hunter said that “some of these wolves are pretty smart.” He then went on to describe finding two scenes where wolves appeared to have intentionally chased a moose over a cliff so they could kill and eat the animal. He said that he thought this was “pretty neat,” that he figured the wolves “must have learned” this strategy, and that he wondered if the same pack had been involved in both cases, which occurred two to three years apart in the same vicinity. He spoke, too, of another strategy employed by local wolves:

```
they patrol the highway here  
  looking for roadkill  
you know  
they're opportunists like anybody else  
  if they get an easy meal  
  they're going to take it
```

In a published opinion piece, a Wisconsin hunter also commented on wolves and how they are perceived:

As we move forward with management of the wolf it is my sincere hope that attitudes towards this animal soften. It truly is a success story, but the story has not ended, yet continues to be written. I think a nice ending would be a day in which the wolf is no longer regarded as a fierce competitor, but a fellow hunter on the trail. (Weber, 2011)

In these excerpts concerning both wolves and humans, the hubs of identity and action are central. In connection with their shared activity of hunting deer, both wolf and human can be—and, on occasion, are—called “predators.” Likewise, both can be—and, on occasion, are—called “hunters.” The wolf, it is said, ought to be regarded as “a fellow hunter on the trail” rather than as

“a fierce competitor.” As predators and hunters, wolves are said to be “pretty smart,” employing “learned” strategies. Their interest in, and strategies for, getting “an easy meal” are said to be sensible, as they are “opportunists like anybody else.”

In these ways, the activities that wolves and humans share—especially “hunting,” but also looking for “an easy meal”—draw our attention to similarities between the two. We are both said to be “predators,” “hunters,” and “opportunists.” Wolves, it is said, can and ought to be regarded as “fellow hunters” and as actors behaving “like anybody else.” Implicitly, a kind of personhood is ascribed to the wolf. In short, these hunters give voice to these premises:

- Wolves’ impacts on deer hunting are limited, temporally and geographically.
- Wolves—as fellow hunters and fellow members of a natural community—are not in competition with human hunters.
- As predators and hunters, wolves and humans are similar.

D. Taking “measures” and drawing “lines”

We have heard how this discourse links wolves to the wild character of places, how it defines wolves as part of a natural community in which human hunters also act and dwell, and how it depicts relations between deer and wolves—and between humans and wolves as deer hunters—in the context of larger natural forces.

In addition, this discourse addresses relations between wolves and humans in other contexts. Mainly, these relations are said to be peaceable. As one Wisconsin hunter put it, “we live with wolves very happily / and are glad to have them most of the time.” At times, such utterances are audible simply as depictions of how things are. At other times, they are clearly audible as responses to assertions of the kind we heard earlier about how “people in the north” want fewer wolves, but are being overruled by people from “downstate.” A number of hunters I interviewed expressed frustration with such assertions. The reader may recall how one hunter

from northern Wisconsin put it in an e-mail: “I know a lot of people around here who *don't* hate wolves, and wolf-haters might even be in the minority.”

As the phrase “glad to have them most of the time” suggests, however, there are exceptions to what is said to be a normal, peaceable state of affairs. In this section, I consider this discourse’s depictions of problems (real and potential) and of how to handle them.

1. “This creature out there that will kill your dog”

Among the dimensions of the wolf-human relationship said to warrant caution, dogs are prominent. For instance, a Minnesota hunter spoke of his awareness of potential danger:

```
since I'm usually in the woods with a dog
  unless I'm deer hunting
I don't want to encounter wolves
  so I
  take measures to not encounter wolves
```

At the end of our conversation, he returned to the topic.

```
being a dog owner
  I just
  can't emphasize that enough
  . . .
  you're just always aware of it
I mean if I'm out here in the yard in the morning
  with the dogs
  you know
  I try to make sure that I'm
  you know
even if I'm going to let them out at night
  I'm always just like making a scan before I
  let 'em out
  just so that I know what's around
  you know
it just gets to be part of your nature
  where you're just aware that there's this
  creature out there that will kill your dog
  you know
  if it gets the opportunity
```

He expressed no interest in hunting or trapping wolves, and no concerns for his own safety in the woods. But he said that if a wolf posed an immediate threat to his dog and he felt that he “needed

to kill a wolf” he would “do it without hesitation” regardless of the wolf’s legal status and the potential consequences. As this hunter expressed it, such action would be a matter of “need,” not “animosity.”

He spoke, too, of a local woman whose dog was killed by a wolf, and of how—despite her sadness—she did not hold a grudge against wolves. In a similar vein, recall the Wisconsin hunter who, in expressing the value he placed on “a Wisconsin woods . . . still wild enough to have wolves,” said that if his dog was killed by a wolf in those woods he “obviously . . . wouldn’t like it” but “wouldn’t hold a grudge against the wolf for doing it.”

When in places where wolves are known to dwell (“in the woods”), it is said to be appropriate to “take measures to not encounter wolves.” Even outside the woods, in more human dwelling places (e.g., “here in the yard”), it is appropriate and necessary to be alert and attentive to the potential presence of a wolf (“aware,” “making a scan”). This vigilant way of interacting and dwelling, it is said, becomes deeply habitual and ingrained (“gets to be part of your nature”) when living near wolves (“creature[s] . . . that will kill your dog”).

Note how dwelling in wolf country is said to appropriately involve particular habits of preventive action motivated by the imperative of protecting one’s dog. This can be simply stated as a cultural proposition:

- “In the woods” and even “in the yard,” we are “always aware” and “take measures” to make sure our “dogs” do not “encounter” “wolves.”

This proposition is underpinned by two premises:

- Wolves will kill dogs.
- We are responsible for preventing encounters between wolves and dogs.

Note that these beliefs and these ways of interacting and dwelling—even the willingness to kill a wolf to protect one’s dog if necessary—are explicitly articulated as not being rooted in feelings of hostility and not warranting preemptive violent action toward wolves.

2. “A wolf hanging around at the bus stop”

This discourse also depicts the danger wolves could pose to humans. One hunter said that “sometimes it gets a little spooky.” He described having three wolves “come at” him in a V-shaped formation one time: “I suppose they thought I was a deer / all it took was one shot in the ground / boy they turned and left.” Another time, he said, a wolf walked ahead of him along a road for a quarter mile, maintaining a consistent distance between them, apparently unafraid. Another hunter described how a local woman was followed by a wolf as she was walking along a highway. Though it was unclear what the wolf’s intentions might have been, that situation, he said, “would not be fun / I don’t want to experience that.”

Some hunters spoke of carrying a handgun for self-defense while walking in the woods, while others spoke of choosing not to. One of the latter put it this way: “I mean I could get attacked by a wolf tomorrow / I could get attacked by a bear tomorrow / could / I ain’t worried about it.” He and others contrasted the very low likelihood of such an event to the much higher likelihood of getting hit by a car or attacked by a domestic dog.

In an interview conducted in Minnesota in the autumn of 2013, I asked one hunter about the incident in which a wolf bit a teenager there that August. Did that incident, I asked, affect local ideas and attitudes? He replied that he had seen “a couple letters in Minnesota Outdoor News / you know see-I-told-you type of letters” but that he hadn’t heard local people talking about it much.

```
it just seemed like it was so unusual that
  I think everybody realizes that stuff like that happens
  I don't think they blame every wolf
  when something like that happens
it's the same when there's a black bear
. . .
I mean there were what?
half a dozen bear attacks
in Minnesota and Wisconsin this year?
far far more bear attacks
```

During an interview the same week, a hunter in Wisconsin brought up the same incident. He reported being surprised that he hadn't heard much said about it in Wisconsin. He then stated that, in light of "the population of wolves we've had now for the last ten or twelve years," the lack of any previous incidents suggested to him that wolves' threat to human safety should not be a "top level concern" for citizens or wildlife managers.

On the other hand, despite saying that "wolves don't attack people" as a rule, a Minnesota hunter made the following comments:

```
I don't want my little kid or my grandkid to be the first
if you think about how little kids run
  they fall down
  they squeal
  they make noises
  you know
  they look like prey
. . .
that is the one thing that you will hear
in northern Minnesota
where people are like
  'hey we got kids waiting for the school bus
  can't have a wolf hanging around at the bus stop'
  and that does happen
  and people don't like 'em
  when they start hanging around towns
. . .
people aren't going to tolerate that
any more than they're going to tolerate bears doing that
so I think there are some logical lines to draw there
```

Whereas it is stated that wolves "will kill your dog," it is said that "wolves don't attack people." Danger to humans is not to be "worried" about as a matter of personal safety and not to be treated as a "top level concern" in wildlife policy. Bizarre cases, like the deformed and brain-damaged wolf attacking a Minnesota teen, are said to be very "unusual" and not perceived as reflective of wolf behavior in general ("I don't think they blame every wolf").

Yet the potential for uneasy and uncomfortable situations (e.g., "spooky," "would not be fun") is acknowledged. Especially worrisome is potential danger to children ("can't have a wolf

hanging around at the bus stop”). “That,” we are told, “is the one thing that you will hear in northern Minnesota,” the one serious concern people will express.

The main potential for danger is said to arise when wolves mistake humans for prey species (e.g., “I suppose they thought I was a deer,” “how little kids run . . . they look like prey”). To mitigate potential danger, it is said that certain commonsense limits and boundaries should be drawn (“some logical lines to draw there”) to prevent particular kinds of behavior in particular places (“hanging around at the bus stop,” “hanging around towns”).

The threat posed by wolves to human safety is often paralleled and contrasted with the threat posed by bears. The connection is used to express a lack of concern about both (“I could get attacked by a wolf tomorrow . . . by a bear . . . I ain’t worried”). It is also used to illustrate the much lower chance of being harmed by a wolf (“far far more bear attacks”). And it is used to suggest that bears and wolves should be treated similarly in terms of appropriate proximity to places like bus stops and towns (“any more than they’re going to tolerate bears doing that”).

Note how attacks on humans are clearly depicted as outside the normal range of wolf behavior, and how humans and wolves dwelling in the same general area is presumed to be appropriate. These depictions can be simply stated as cultural propositions:

- As a rule, “wolves” “don’t attack” “people.”
- “People” and “wolves” both “belong” “here.”

Note, too, how problems are said to arise only when certain boundaries are crossed: when a wolf inappropriately perceives a human as prey, or when a wolf gets in the habit of spending time in close proximity to places where humans (especially children) dwell. These “logical lines,” it is said, must be drawn and enforced, ensuring that wolves do not mistake humans for prey or get in the habit of “hanging around bus stops.”

3. “Woods,” “yards,” and mutual “distance”

As we have heard, this discourse depicts certain kinds of interactions and potential interactions occurring in a landscape where both humans and wolves belong:

- Wolves pose a real risk to dogs. Thus, people need to be aware and take measures to prevent wolf-dog encounters.
- Wolves do not pose a significant risk to humans. Yet people need to maintain appropriate local boundaries and distances to minimize risk.

Often implicit, but sometimes stated explicitly, is the idea that maintenance of these boundaries and distances is good not only for humans and dogs but for wolves as well. “It’s good for the wolf,” said one interviewee, “if they have some fear of humans.”

```
if you have kids or dogs or something
  you don't want wolves in the yard
. . .
for a lot of people
I really think that's where they draw the line
  if they're not bothering me I'm not going to bother them
  they're keeping their distance and I keep my distance
```

Also often implicit, but sometimes stated explicitly, is the idea that responsibility for avoiding harmful encounters lies not only with wolves (whose natural inclination is to attack dogs but not people) but also with humans. Multiple interviewees, for instance, mentioned a group of wolf pups frequently seen the previous summer in the community of Brimson, Minnesota, forty-some miles north of Duluth. One hunter volunteered these reflections:

```
there were several news stories on it
  they were basically hanging around in the parking lot
  of this very remote bar
  just out there in the middle of nowhere
what struck me as interesting
is what people were upset about
was that people were feeding these wolves
  and the poor little guys were going to get hit by cars65
  and they were going to get habituated to people
  which was ultimately not going to be good for the wolves
```

⁶⁵ One of the eight pups was reported to have been hit and killed by a vehicle (Kraker, 2013).

that was the people living there
that were saying that kind of thing
they weren't afraid of them
they didn't think they were going to eat all their deer
or anything like that
it was more
hey they're cute little guys but
we're trying to discourage people from feeding them
we really don't them hanging around here
they need to go off and be wolves

The solution to the situation, as he related it, was that the pups were driven off by hosing them with water from a firetruck. In places where people are not as accustomed to living with wolves, he said that the pups would likely have been killed: “that’s the difference in having been around wolves all the time / we just have different attitudes here.”

In this situation, a group of young wolves got into the habit of crossing a boundary into a distinctly human space (“hanging around in the parking lot”). This habit was reinforced by humans who crossed a boundary by feeding the wolves. As described by this hunter, local feelings of distress about the situation were focused on the inappropriate action taken by humans, and the likely consequences for wolves (“get hit by cars,” “get habituated to people . . . not going to be good for the wolves”). The feelings expressed, he said, did not focus on fear for human safety or concerns about wolves eating deer. The outcome desired and ultimately achieved by nonlethal means was that the pups “go off and be wolves.” That, he said, is what wolves “need” to do. As he clarified a short while later, “go off and be wolves” meant “go off into the woods and be wolves.”

Note that the woods he spoke of, where it was said the wolves needed to go, were local woods. Though the “very remote bar” was “out there in the middle of nowhere,” people did not express the need to remove wolves to an even more remote, roadless wilderness. And, as he emphasized, the people expressing these wolf-friendly sentiments were local people, not wolf advocates living elsewhere: “that was the people living there / that were saying that kind of thing.”

Speaking more generally of wolves not being “afraid of people anymore”—and thus coming into yards and sometimes killing pets—another hunter similarly stated that part of the problem is that wolves have become “habituated” by people who feed them out of a desire to see them. In another interview, it was said that a lot of human-wolf human interactions result from people feeding deer, as wolves are drawn to places where deer are concentrated.

As depicted here, humans and wolves can live in the same area as long as both species “keep their distance” and don’t “bother” each other. Wariness, it is said, is “good for the wolf” just as it is good for people. Wolves, it is said, should not come into people’s yards or hang out in parking lots. Humans, it is said, should not attract wolves to such distinctly human spaces by feeding them or by feeding deer. Though it is understood by people who have “been around wolves all the time” that wolves will sometimes appear along roads and highways, for the most part these speakers say that wolves should be “in the woods” where they can “be wolves.”

As we have heard, specific kinds of places are consistently invoked and depicted in this discourse, with particular ways of dwelling and acting assigned to each. Some distinct places (e.g., “towns,” “yards,” “parking lots”) are appropriate for humans but inappropriate for wolves. Humans dwell in such places. Wolves should not spend time in such places and people should not attract wolves to them. In relation to dogs, people do not want wolves in these places (e.g., “yards”) but need to stay aware of their potential presence.

Other, nearby places (“the woods”) are appropriate for wolves. Wolves should live there and people should encourage them to stay there. Humans can and do go into the woods, but the rules of “towns” and “yards” do not apply there. In the woods, a person with a dog should take measures to avoid wolf/dog encounters. Likewise, hunters should relocate if a wolf pack appears to be concentrated in a spot where the hunters have come looking for deer. These place-specific behaviors, accommodations, and precautions are said to be good for humans, dogs, and wolves alike.

Underlying these understandings are several premises, regarding actions by wolves, where wolves dwell, and human/wolf interaction:

- Wolves almost never attack humans.
- Wolves belong near us, in nearby woods.
- Wolves do not belong among us, in distinctly human spaces.
- Humans and wolves should accommodate each other, acting in ways that respect each other and each other's places.

This cultural logic leads to the conclusion that, for the good of wolves and humans alike, we should (1) take action to maintain appropriate local boundaries, preventing wolves from frequenting distinctly human spaces, and (2) refrain from actions that attract wolves to such spaces.

This discourse also includes depictions of human-wolf relations and interactions on a larger geographic and temporal scale. Speaking of his own lack of animosity, one older Minnesota hunter put it this way:

```
I don't have a grudge against the wolf
you know
and another thing is probably the
human population's expanding
and it keeps cutting more and more into the area
that they were traditionally
in
I mean like
we built here eleven years ago
this was all
woods
so we cleared it all off and
took our two acres out of their
territory
you know
I mean that's
the way it is
```

On this broader scale, human populations and actions are depicted as “cutting into” wolves’ “traditional” “territory.” The speakers’ own home and yard are described in these terms: “this was all / woods / so we cleared it all off and / took our two acres.” This, he says, is “the way

it is.” Just as he does not express guilt or regret over the specific clearing done there eleven years ago, he does not condemn the expanding human population in general. He does, however, speak of human encroachment on the “woods” as an action which puts wolves’ actions in context and which partially explains increased interactions between the two species.

E. “To kill a wolf”

Now that we have developed an understanding of several central aspects of this discourse, let’s consider more specifically how the hunting and killing of wolves is depicted.

1. Four hunters speak

I begin by presenting portions of interviews with four hunters: two in northern Wisconsin and two in northern Minnesota. All four were conducted in the fall of 2013, shortly before the start of each state’s second annual wolf seasons.

a. “I don’t believe that no wolves should ever be killed”

A hunter in northern Wisconsin spoke of the lethal removal of depredating wolves as a potential way of increasing tolerance:

```
I don't believe that no wolves should ever be killed
if they're depredating livestock
maybe if some of those quote unquote bad wolves are gone
then maybe people will be more tolerant
of the wolves that remain
```

I asked him to say more about whether wolves’ killing of deer and livestock needed to be controlled, and if so, how.

```
I would say
no
to the first part of your question
the deer part of your question
. . .
they're two very separate issues
deer and livestock
```

and
by the way
controlling
livestock depredation
and recreational wolf hunting
are also two very separate things

He expressed the view that “controlling livestock depredation is good for a couple of reasons.”

First, “to help out” “those farmers” who are “losing . . . livestock” and “deserve some relief.” And second, “the issue . . . of tolerance and acceptance.”

if we do take care of these quote unquote bad wolves
they're not really bad
they're just being their normal wolfly selves
but if those wolves are gone
then people
not just those farmers
but others too
will be more willing to tolerate the wolves that remain
and
to do that
we might have
trappers working for the government
or shooting
we might have a real targeted approach
to removing just those wolves
and that's very different from a recreational hunt

Though he allowed as how “there might be / some wolves on public land near those farms and ranches / and maybe that's a [population] reservoir from where / they come in and get those cattle,” he contended that “most hunters / are going to be wolf hunting in areas where / there are no farms.” Thus, “there's very little relationship between recreational wolf hunting / and depredation control.”

I also asked him whether he had any interest in hunting wolves.

no
and neither do most hunters actually
. . .
it's just a very very tiny percentage of those deer hunters
that have any interest in hunting wolves
and
from the trends we see so far this year
it looks like those numbers are falling

the novelty's wearing off
or people are realizing it's not so fun or easy after all
so
small numbers

He was silent for several seconds, then said, "By the way I've also heard they're not very tasty!"
and laughed aloud.

b. "A deep understanding of the animal"

Northeast of Duluth, Minnesota, another hunter had this to say about the state's wolf-hunting regulations:

I'm not too keen on the fact that they have
a wolf hunt during the deer season
where, you know, that's
just happenstance
that's just a wolf wanders by somebody that's got
one of those tags
I would really prefer to see it go
primarily to after the deer season
when the furs are more prime
number one
and also to push it more into a trapping
and a serious predator hunter thing
people that are going to appreciate
the animal more
and what they're doing
I mean that's what they're out there to do
is to trap a wolf or to hunt a wolf
that will ultimately be the strongest constituency
for the wolf long-term
because those people are going to develop
a deep understanding of the animal
a deep appreciation for it
that's not going to happen with the deer hunter who's
'got my wolf tag this year'

He continued, speaking about the number of hunters who have applied for wolf licenses:

there wasn't much interest to begin with last year
we've got a half a million hunters in the state
and only twenty-four thousand applied for a wolf tag
that tells you something
and I think that number dropped
by a third or better this year
as far as applicants

He said he thought this downward trend would continue and then level out at some point.

kind of like other things have
bear-hunting and various
niche activities
where there will be a core group of people
that like to do it
and
I just think that makes more sense
and I think also if you get that
once you develop that core group of people
especially trappers
you can use those
in a much better management sense
where if you've got areas where there's
a lot of livestock and a lot of wolves
you can direct trappers in there
and knock the wolf numbers down in those places

Personally, he said he had no interest in hunting wolves. He said he thought it possible that he might someday "try wolf trapping once / just for the challenge of it" but "probably not / I just don't see myself doing that." As for those who are interested in hunting and trapping wolves, he said he thought they were motivated in different ways.

some of 'em really like to hunt
and some of 'em like to trap
that's what motivates 'em

He mentioned several friends and neighbors who applied for wolf tags the previous year, including one friend "over on the Iron Range."

I don't know if he ended up getting a wolf license or not
but he's trapped since he was a kid
and he's trapped in wolf country since he was a kid
well if he gets an opportunity to trap a wolf
yeah he's going to do that
you know
I mean it's something new
it's special
but yeah they're doing it because
there's no animosity towards the wolf in it
they're doing it because it's something they take
the challenge of
yeah
I don't have any problem with them

some of the people that I've talked to that applied
during the deer season
it's just on a lark basically
you know
'we gotta do something to reduce the wolves
around our huntin' camp'
you know
that kind of thing
where I just don't think
the other people I know
especially the people I know that are interested
in trapping
that's just not where they're at at all

He went on to tell me about some local “hardcore outlaws” who, according to local stories, used to kill significant numbers of protected wolves by shooting a moose, setting snares all around the carcass, and never going back to the spot. You “do a lot of damage to a wolf pack doing that,” he said.

c. “In the best interest of the wolf”

Another hunter in northern Wisconsin told me that he was “not averse to managing wolves.” There are, he said, a couple of ways such management could be done. One approach would be to have trappers employed or paid by a government agency to focus solely on areas where “problem wolves” deplete livestock and pets. From a practical standpoint, he said he thought wolves “could be managed that way” because “landscape-wide” they are not “that big of a problem . . . not what they’re made out to be.” At another point in our interview, he said, “we don’t have a real problem / I’ve lived here for twenty-five years / I’ve never had a problem with a wolf.” He stated that he knew just one family that had had a problem—losing some sheep to wolves—and knew “a lot of dairy farmers,” none of whom had experienced problems.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ This hunter, like others, expressed frustration at characterizations—in the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse—of how people and their animals are being profoundly and negatively affected across northern Wisconsin.

The other approach would include a public hunt:

socially I think there needs to be
a hunt
. . .
to put 'em on that pedestal
where somehow they've got
different rules than the coyotes and the bears
and the other things
that just creates a lot of animosity
. . .
so I think a bigger part of me feels that way
as long as there's a population big enough
to safely hunt them
I think there should be a controlled hunt
. . .
I really think
in the long run it's going to be in the best interest
of the wolf
if done right
which is what I'm worried about

I asked if he meant that he was worried that wolf hunting and trapping would be done for the wrong reasons and with the wrong number of wolves killed, with policies and quotas determined “politically,” as he had put it. He said yes. I also asked if he saw a need to manage wolves as predators.

for me personally
the threshold for a hunt
isn't from them preying on deer
for me it's more of the social

He went on to explain that, by “social,” he meant social tolerance of wolves in light of the fact that they kill dogs and livestock. In other words, a hunt might improve social tolerance; people might be more accepting if the wolf—a dog- and livestock-killer—is taken off its “pedestal.”

He also clarified that he did not think wolves should be hunted on the grounds that they kill “bear-hunting dogs.” Given that wolves and bears alike pose a danger to dogs, he said, “that’s part of the risk / of that form of hunting,” “that to me is / the risk you run.”

but I mean they do get other people's dogs
and they do get people's
livestock and stuff

so you know
we're here so
we're on the landscape
we have to manage them at some acceptable level
for our society

He said that he did not know anyone who hunted wolves the previous year, and he was not going to apply for a wolf tag either.

I can't see myself doing it
. . .
personally
that's the way I feel
if somebody wants to go out and hunt wolves and it's legal
I'm not against it

I also asked him what he thought motivated people who were interested in hunting and trapping wolves.

I'm sure it's just like anything else
it's across the board
I'm sure there's those out there that feel they're
doing their part to rid the
woods of this
useless vermin
but they're probably the minority
I think most of them it's
I mean I really believe most hunters are at their core
you know
ethical respectful people
and so I just think it's another species to hunt
and they don't have any problem hunting it
they don't I think hold any animosity towards the wolf

He reported having heard or read several interviews with wolf hunters who were "very respectful of the wolf."

it wasn't like
'yeah you know
we struck one for the hunters
we got rid of another one of these rats'
they were very respectful
so I think that's probably most people
just something else to hunt
a challenge
the trophy?
I mean
I don't know

wolf pelts are cool
.
.
.
just the trophy I guess would be a
motivator
a lot of people I think
look at it as kind of a once-in-a-lifetime thing
just do it just to say you did it I guess
.
.
.
so I think it's a wide gamut of motivators

d. "I think it's a good thing"

Along the north shore of Lake Superior, I asked another hunter what he thought of Minnesota's current hunting and trapping seasons. "I think it's a good thing," he said. "Yeah, I don't have a problem with that." He recalled how it had been said that when the Minnesota wolf population reached 1,700 "they were going to take 'em off the endangered list." But the population growth "kept on going / kept on going . . . and they wouldn't take 'em off." As he sees it, one source of people's animosity toward wolves are the positions taken by "environmentalists."

I think part of these people's attitude
that they want to kill 'em all
is because so many of the protectionists
don't want any killed
and you know
they said
'well okay
when the population gets to be so much
then we'll open it up to having seasons again'
and with all the lawsuits
and everything
the protectionists did
I think it's upset some of these people
and they said
'well
to heck with 'em
we'll just take care of 'em
we'll do our own thing'

Now that the state wolf population has "gotten up to three thousand or more," he said, "I think we could have a season."

One of the benefits of a season, he said, is that it might give “some of these guys something else to do . . . rather than just shoot ‘em and leave ‘em / you know shoot ‘em and bury ‘em.” One of the things that bothered him about illegal wolf killings, he said, was that “it’s a resource that’s being wasted.”

2. “Controlling livestock depredation” versus “recreational wolf hunting”

In this discourse, as represented by the excerpts above, support is consistently voiced for the targeted removal of wolves that kill livestock (and sometimes pets). Removal of “problem wolves” responsible for such acts is said to be a matter of fairness, particularly to help farmers who “are losing . . . livestock” and “deserve some relief.” Additionally, if those wolves are “gone,” it is said, people are likely to be “more tolerant of the wolves that remain.”⁶⁷

Note that “problem wolves” are described, using verbal scare quotes, as “quote unquote bad wolves,” wolves that are “not really bad . . . just being their normal wolfly selves.” Even when they cross human boundaries and take action unacceptable to humans, wolves and wolf behaviors are spoken of as “normal” and natural.

The delineation identified earlier, between human spaces and “the woods,” is echoed here. Regarding both livestock and pets, the “problem” is that wolves cross into spaces marked as belonging to humans (yards, farms, pastures) and kill animals that are marked as belonging to humans (dogs, cattle, sheep). As depicted here, being “in the woods” is inherently risky for dogs (as it would be, it goes without saying, for sheep or cattle). When walking their dogs, people have to take responsibility through preventive measures. If such measures fail, it is said to be acceptable to kill a specific wolf to protect a specific dog, but lethal management of wolf populations is not said to be an appropriate way of preventing dogs from encountering wolves.

⁶⁷ As noted previously, recent research (Olson et al., 2015) echoes this idea, suggesting that “consistent and responsible depredation management programs may reduce illegal killing.”

(When running “bear-hunting dogs,” which often range far into “the woods,” wolves and the likely consequences of a wolf/dog encounter are said to be part of “the risk you run.” As we heard earlier, of course, most Wisconsin bear hunters do not share this view. They may, as more than one hunter suggested, see bear-caused harm to dogs as “part of the risk you run” but wolf-caused harm as “not a risk they ever planned on assuming.”)

Controlling depredation, then, is said to be a matter of reducing natural but unacceptable incursions by wolves, in the interest of being fair to farmers and cultivating tolerance and acceptance. A proposition can be formulated here:

- To help “farmers” and “wolves,” we should “control” “depredation.”

A strong distinction is drawn between (1) depredation control and (2) the establishment of public wolf seasons. One of our Wisconsin hunters, for instance, tells us that “controlling / livestock depredation / and recreational wolf hunting” are “very separate,” “very different.” He says that the former, depredation control, could be accomplished by way of a “targeted approach” using “trappers working for the government” to remove “just those wolves.” He says that the latter—with “most hunters . . . wolf hunting in areas where / there are no farms”—has little to do with the former.

One of our Minnesota hunters likewise indicates that a “core group of people / especially trappers” could be “directed” to “areas where there’s a lot of livestock and a lot of wolves.” Such focus on areas where livestock depredation is common or likely would, he says, constitute “much better management” than hunters and trappers taking wolves across the landscape in general.

In a printed column, a Michigan hunter draws a similar distinction, stating that the “killing of the actual wolf attacking the livestock” seems to him “a much more effective method than the open hunting of any wolves” (Coupe, 2014). In another column, a Minnesota hunter draws this distinction as well:

Even most wolf advocates agree a control program is necessary to reduce wolf-human conflicts and encourage public acceptance of the animal. But it is one thing to kill problem wolves and quite another to hunt them for sport. (Perich, 2012, January 6)

Another Wisconsin hunter makes the same distinction. Practically speaking, he says that wolves “could be managed” through depredation control by government trappers. Given that wolves are not “that big of a problem” on a landscape scale, he says that the site-specific problems they cause could be handled this way.

Another proposition can be formulated here:

- “Depredation” “management” and “control” are best accomplished through “directed,” “targeted” “trapping,” not through “open” “hunting” and “trapping” “seasons.”

In this discourse, public wolf seasons are represented in a range of ways. In some cases, they are said to be undesirable and inappropriate. In most cases, such seasons are characterized in ambivalent terms, as are specific rules and regulations (e.g., “I would really prefer to see it go / primarily to after the deer season”), the processes by which seasons and rules were established (e.g., driven by politicians rather than DNR staff), and the prospects for implementation in the long run (e.g., “if done right / which is what I’m worried about”).

One Wisconsin hunter, for instance, wrote of being “happy” about the federal delisting of the wolf, “as now it can be managed like any other species of wildlife, as it should.” He wrote, however, that his feelings were “tempered . . . by a large dose of reality. The reality is, of course, that the wolf is not viewed as any other species.” He expressed concern that management would be influenced by “rhetoric, misinformation and fear associated with the wolf” (Weber, 2011). He later expressed concern about the crafting of Wisconsin’s “wolf hunt legislation” and stated that “politically, the well-being of our natural resources have never been in worse hands in my lifetime” (Weber, 2012).

To the degree that support for public hunting and trapping is expressed, it is linked to the intention to increase “tolerance and acceptance” of wolves. For instance, it is sometimes said that longtime legal protection under the Endangered Species Act and related lawsuits by “protectionists” have put wolves on a “pedestal.” By failing to honor population thresholds and

by expressing the desire to not have “any killed,” it is said that protectionists have “created a lot of animosity” and, on the part of some people, an “attitude” of wanting “to kill ‘em all.” Thus, some say that a “controlled” hunting and trapping season is “socially” needed to take wolves off that pedestal, treating them more like coyotes, bears, and other species. Such a shift away from strict protectionism, it is said, would defuse animosity toward the wolf, animosity which has been created by the system of protectionism.

In spite of varying representations of the need for and appropriateness of a public hunting season, these speakers and ways of speaking concur on a core goal for wolf-related policies and practices overall: to increase “tolerance and acceptance” and reduce “animosity.” These speakers and these ways of speaking, in other words, are oriented toward doing what they understand to be “in the best interest of the wolf,” given the fact that we, as humans, are “here . . . on the landscape” and “need to coexist,” as one hunter and biologist put it. Support for public seasons is not expressed in terms of animosity toward wolves or a desire to reduce wolf populations.

Based on the above, several underlying premises can be proposed:

- Humans should tolerate and accept wolves.
- We should take action to increase tolerance and acceptance.
- Such action may include killing some wolves.

Previously, we formulated a premise concerning where wolves dwell: they belong near us in nearby woods, but not among us in distinctly human (domesticated) spaces. This cultural logic led to the conclusion that, for the good of wolves and humans alike, we should take action to maintain appropriate local boundaries. Such boundary maintenance includes protecting domesticated animals (and humans) in domesticated spaces. Here, these additional premises are suggested:

- We should not limit wolf populations to reduce risks to domesticated animals in the woods.
- Public hunting and trapping of wolves is not necessary to reduce risks to domesticated animals.

- It may be appropriate to hunt and trap wolves to defuse animosity created by their protection.

3. “They’re two very separate issues, deer and livestock”

In this discourse, a distinction is also drawn between (1) valid reasons for killing wolves, particularly to reduce livestock depredation and to increase human acceptance and tolerance of wolves, and (2) less valid reasons for doing so, particularly in relation to deer.

Recall that one Wisconsin hunter, when asked whether wolves’ killing of deer and livestock needed to be controlled, replied, “I would say / no . . . to the deer part of your question . . . they’re two very separate issues / deer and livestock.” Another Wisconsin hunter similarly said that, for him, “the threshold for a hunt / isn’t from them preying on deer.” And he expressed disapproval of those who kill wolves with the attitude that they have “struck one for the hunters” in some kind of battle or war.

A Minnesota hunter expressed similar disapproval of deer hunters who apply for wolf-hunting licenses based on the notion that “we gotta do something to reduce the wolves around our huntin’ camp.” In a column mentioned above, a Michigan hunter put it this way:

Some hunters state we need to kill the wolves to protect the deer herd. Well, as one who hunts deer, I disagree with that argument. Wildlife biologists who study the wolf/deer relationship have determined that wolves do not actually have a significant impact on the deer population. (Coupe, 2014)

Such statements echo beliefs and meanings articulated in previous sections of this chapter, especially (1) the idea that wolves are not a serious threat to the deer population as a whole, (2) the idea that deer do not belong to humans, (3) the idea that wolves, as fellow hunters and fellow members of a natural community, are not in competition with us, and have as much right to deer as we do, and (4) the idea that we kill significantly more deer than wolves do. As a consequence of these beliefs and meanings, it is said:

- We do not need to “kill” “wolves” to “protect” “deer.”

Discourses of predator control hold that such killing is necessary; this discourse rejects that claim. Unlike people's concerns over the safety of livestock in pastures, pets in backyards, and children at bus stops, hunters' hostility toward wolves as predators of wild deer in the woods is not depicted as a kind of intolerance that can or should be alleviated by killing wolves. In short:

- It is unnecessary and inappropriate to kill wolves to reduce supposed impacts on deer.

4. “Appreciation” and “animosity”

In the event that wolves are hunted or trapped, this discourse gives voice to distinct beliefs concerning the attitudes, values, and feelings with which such action should be undertaken. These attitudes and values concern both the wolf and the practice.

Regarding the wolf, a Minnesota hunter speaks of how he doesn't “have any problem” with—and would much prefer to see hunting and trapping done by—people who (1) have “a deep understanding of the animal / a deep appreciation for it,” (2) have “no animosity towards the wolf,” and (3) are not motivated by the idea that wolves are problematic competitors (“gotta do something to reduce the wolves around our huntin' camp”). Almost identically, a Wisconsin hunter speaks of most hunters, including several interviewed wolf hunters, being “ethical respectful people” who (1) are “respectful of the wolf,” (2) do not “hold any animosity towards the wolf,” and (3) are not motivated by the idea that wolves are problematic competitors (“rid the / woods of this / useless vermin,” “we struck one for the hunters / we got rid of another one of these rats”).

Regarding the practice, the same Minnesota hunter speaks of how he would prefer to see wolf hunting and trapping done by people who “appreciate” “what they're doing,” people who are specifically “out there . . . to trap a wolf or to hunt a wolf.” For such people, the practice itself is central; they “really like to hunt . . . to trap / that's what motivates 'em.” In the context of such activity, wolves are “new” and “special” and present a particular “challenge” for the hunter or

trapper. For these people, wolf hunting and trapping is “serious”; it is not “just happenstance”; these are not just deer hunters “on a lark” motivated by animosity. Such a “core group” of dedicated hunters and trappers, he says, are apt to be “the strongest constituency for the wolf long-term.”⁶⁸ Such a core group, he says, could also be used to effect “much better management” by focusing on areas where livestock depredation is likely.

The Wisconsin hunter echoes most of these ideas, saying that for most hunters (who are, as noted, “ethical respectful people”) the wolf is “just something else to hunt.” In other words, the practice of hunting is central, and the wolf provides a particular “challenge” in that activity. In light of the number of tags available, the opportunity to hunt a wolf is also special (potentially a “once-in-a-lifetime thing”). Though he does not speak of objecting to “happenstance,” he clearly voices opposition to hunting based on animosity.

Similar sentiments were articulated by a hunter and DNR biologist I interviewed. He described the findings of a survey conducted in Minnesota, indicating that many wolf hunters and trappers have “a strong appreciation for wolves.” He characterized these findings as “positive,” especially in light of common portrayals of hunters as “just interested in killing wolves because they don’t like them.” He also contrasted these findings with findings from research in Wisconsin, indicating greater antipathy toward wolves. And he noted that those who hunted wolves earlier in the season (typically during deer season) were more likely to do so because of a perception that wolves “affect deer,” and that those pursuing them later in the season were more likely to do so “for the experience.”

⁶⁸ This echoes the idea, mentioned in previous chapters, that for some the wolf may already be—and for others might become—a valued “game” animal. Along related lines, Hogberg et al (2015) write: “Primary motivations for wolf hunting and trapping are likely to shape hunters’ preferred population levels and management policies. Hunters that are motivated by the recreational value of the hunt (such as the challenge of the hunt, skills and methods training, or time spent outdoors), may in time move towards more positive attitudes and eventually stewardship of the species’ population. However, wolf hunters that are motivated to participate in the hunt by fear or hostility would likely be less inclined to steward large carnivore populations.”

In this discourse, then, certain attitudes, values, and feelings—both toward wolves and toward the practice of hunting or trapping them—are said to be appropriate for those who engage in these activities. These can be summarized in a few cultural propositions:

- People who “hunt” or “trap” “wolves” should “understand,” “appreciate,” and “respect” them.
- People should not “hunt” or “trap” “wolves” out of “animosity.”
- “Hunters” should not see “wolves” as enemies, competitors, or “vermin” to “reduce” or “get rid of.”
- People who “hunt” or “trap” “wolves” should “appreciate” the “special” and “challenging” activity of hunting or trapping them.

Underpinning these, we can hear several premises:

- Hunting and trapping can and should involve respect and appreciation for the animal.
- Hunting and trapping can and should involve respect and appreciation for the practices themselves.
- A proper hunter/animal relationship requires respect and appreciation.
- One should not hunt or trap out of animosity.

5. “You do not kill living things without good reason”

This discourse also gives voice to the idea that an animal killed by a hunter or trapper should be used in some substantial or meaningful way. Consider the two Minnesota hunters quoted above. One states that he would “really prefer” to have wolf hunting and trapping occur “after the deer season / when the furs are more prime.”⁶⁹ The other, in expressing disapproval for the illegal killing wolves, says “it’s a resource that’s being wasted.”

⁶⁹ This comment refers to the fact that the Minnesota wolf season began in November, at the same time as deer season. The Wisconsin wolf season began even earlier, in October, also coinciding with deer season. Wolf quotas were met earlier than expected in both states; as result, seasons were closed before winter and virtually no prime pelts were taken.

Consider the two Wisconsin hunters also quoted above. In talking about his own and other hunters' lack of interest in hunting wolves, one jokes that he has "also heard they're not very tasty!" The other expresses disapproval for the view that wolves are "useless vermin," as well as some uncertainty about pelts as a motivation for killing wolves: "the trophy? / I mean / I don't know / wolf pelts are cool . . . just the trophy I guess would be a / motivator."⁷⁰

Consider the Michigan hunter who writes that "one of the simple rules my parents taught me was that you do not kill living things without good reason." Having stated that a public hunting season is not an effective way to prevent livestock depredation, he asks, "So why have a wolf hunt? It's certainly not for meat" (Coupe, 2014).

And consider, too, how a biologist spoke of the "sustainable use" and "value" of wolves' "extremely warm," "protective," and "rich" "fur," long used as "a ruff around people's parkas." He characterized this as "a positive way" of looking at the hunting and trapping of wolves. Though he spoke of how "rewarding" he found "the experience" of trapping wolves for research purposes—needing to understand how the wolf moves in order to catch it, holding the tranquilized animal, and releasing it unharmed—he expressed a lack of interest in hunting or trapping to kill a wolf:

I don't know what I would do with the fur
unless I'm going to
decide I'm going to utilize it
I probably wouldn't do it personally

In various ways, each of these hunters speaks of utilization. One of the reasons that few hunters are interested in hunting or trapping wolves is, they say, that wolf flesh is not likely to be used as food ("they're not very tasty," "certainly not for meat"). They also say that wolf fur has some practical "value" and can be put to "positive" use ("extremely warm," "protective"). The

⁷⁰ In a related way, David Mech has been quoted as saying, "The first couple of years there will be a certain number people who want to hang a wolf rug on the wall. But after you get that first wolf rug, I mean, how many more do you want to hang on your wall?" (Hemphill, 2012).

pelt of a wolf killed in winter is more useful and more valuable on the fur market (“prime”). It is inappropriate to kill wolves with the idea that they are “useless.” A wolf shot and buried is not being put to any use (“wasted”). Though some people might hunt or trap a wolf just to keep a pelt, this is not a very substantial use and seems a somewhat doubtful motivation (“the trophy? / I mean / I don’t know / wolf pelts are cool . . . just the trophy I guess would be a / motivator”).

These ideas and values are summed up in these lines: “unless . . . I’m going to utilize it / I probably wouldn’t do it personally”; “one of the simple rules my parents taught me was that you do not kill living things without good reason.” In short, a core “good reason” for hunting or trapping—and a central part of what makes such activity “ethical” and “respectful”—is good “use” of the animal taken. Underlying this proposition, a premise is audible:

- Respectful hunting or trapping requires sufficient use of the animal.

These ideas, of course, echo what we heard in Chapter VI. We will return to the idea of an ethic of utilization in Chapter VIII.

6. “There wasn’t much interest to begin with”

As mentioned earlier, I interviewed some who employed this discourse of coinhabitation and also had experience with, and continued interest in, hunting or trapping wolves. But most who spoke this way expressed a lack of personal interest in pursuing wolves (e.g., “I just don’t see myself doing that,” “I can’t see myself doing it . . . personally / that’s the way I feel”).

In this discourse, it is often said that relatively few hunters were interested in hunting wolves in the first year (“a very very tiny percentage of . . . deer hunters . . . have any interest in hunting wolves,” “there wasn’t much interest to begin with”). In Minnesota, we are told, less than 5 percent of the state’s deer hunters applied for a wolf tag the first year (“we’ve got a half a million hunters in the state / and only twenty-four thousand applied for a wolf tag”). In both Minnesota and Wisconsin, we are also told that interest dropped after the inaugural year (e.g., “it looks like those numbers are falling,” “that number dropped / by a third or better this year”).

This low level of interest, it is said, “tells you something.” What does it—and multiple hunters’ invocations of it—tell us? Literally speaking, these invocations make an explicit statement about intention and action, telling us that most hunters are not interested in “hunting wolves.” Most hunters, it is said, weren’t interested to begin with or will soon lose interest.

Implicitly speaking, these invocations tell us more. Consider what we have heard about motives for hunting and trapping wolves:

- A primary (and appropriate) motive for hunting in general is utilization of the animal, especially for food. Though a prime wolf pelt can be useful and valuable, it is unlikely to motivate many people. In short, the material usefulness of a wolf is not expected to be a significant motive for many.
- A second potential motive is said to be acquisition of a wolf pelt. Though professional trappers could earn money by selling a pelt, most wolf-tag applicants are not said to be motivated by money. And a pelt-as-trophy is not said to be a strong motive for many (“the trophy? / I mean / I don’t know / wolf pelts are cool . . . just the trophy I guess would be a / motivator”).
- Another potential motive is to reduce or control depredation. But most hunters and trappers are not expected to focus efforts near farms. That is not expected to be their motive. Livestock depredation control is understood to be mostly the domain of farmers and government trappers.
- A fourth potential motive is the practice of hunting or trapping itself. For a certain “core group” of hunters and trappers, the pursuit of wolves may become a “serious” and valued “niche activity.” But this is not expected to be a large group; for most people, the “novelty” is already wearing off.
- The other likely motive is animosity, especially in connection with the deer: the idea that hunters should “strike one for the hunters,” “do something to reduce the wolves around huntin’ camp,” and “do their part to rid the woods of this useless vermin.”

Combined, these motives have motivated only a small fraction of hunters to have “any interest” in seeking wolf tags. What are invocations of this fact supposed to tell us? As I hear them, they are supposed to tell us that hunters aren’t that antagonistic toward wolves. Given that the first four motives above are presumed to motivate relatively few people, only the fifth could account for substantial interest in pursuing wolves.

The lack of substantial interest—“a very very tiny percentage of deer hunters”—is used here to suggest a lack of substantial animosity. Even among the interested, we are told that the vermin-haters are “probably the minority.” In other words:

- Most “hunters” do not feel “animosity” toward “the wolf.”
- Therefore, very few “hunters” have any “interest” in “hunting” “wolves.”

This message about hunters’ emotions toward wolves—and consequent lack of interest in hunting them—is especially meaningful in the context of a common cultural stereotype: that hunters see and treat predators, especially wolves, as competitors and enemies. As mentioned in Chapter I, this stereotype holds, for instance, that proposals to remove wolves from the endangered species list give hunters “reasons to cheer” (Chebium, 2013). This discourse says something different. It says that most hunters do not feel animosity toward wolves and have no interest in hunting them. It says that the stereotype and public perception of hunters as anti-wolf (and anti-predator more generally) is wrong.

Concerning hunters’ feelings about wolves, and what the hunting majority feels, there is some tension within this discourse. On one hand, we hear these depictions of a lack of animosity and consequent lack of interest in hunting wolves. On the other hand, we also hear concerns about the fact that “the wolf is not viewed as any other species” and about hunter-driven political threats to the “well-being of our natural resources,” particularly the wolf. But on one related point this discourse is consistent: it depicts hunters who primarily employ *predator control* discourses as *not* representative of all hunters. A number of interviewees stated explicitly that their views and beliefs, and perhaps the views and beliefs of the majority of hunters, are not reflected by what prominent public figures and organizations (e.g., the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association) say and do.

Though explicitly focused on the activity of hunting wolves, utterances concerning hunters’ general lack of interest implicitly activate all five hubs and radiants. They say a great

deal about who hunters are, how they feel about, relate to, and act toward wolves, and thus also about how they dwell in the larger natural world.

F. "I hate to see the animals get that"

Also audible in this discourse, and worthy of mention, is the use of empathetic terms in speaking of wolves and human experiences with them. Earlier, for instance, we heard a hunter and trapper say that, in winters with little snow, he thought it was "pretty tough on the wolf / trying to find enough to eat." At another point in our conversation he mentioned coyotes and mange:

```
I haven't seen much coyote sign around here lately
  they got the mange
and the wolves got it too
but the last coyote I shot was right here
  and the only reason I shot it was because it
  looked just terrible
    it was cold out
      wasn't hardly any hair left on it
  and I just shot it and dragged it back in the woods
  let it go back to nature
yeah that's
really pathetic
and they said last winter
  there were several wolves that had the mange
and
yeah I hate to see the animals get that
  but it seems like once they get it in a pack
  it's pretty tough on 'em
```

In northern Wisconsin, another hunter told me that he and his wife had once come upon a scene where another driver had just hit and killed a wolf along the highway. The wolf, he said, was "not as big and scary as we're / told they are." After describing how events unfolded there along the highway, he went on to tell me how he had "seen wolves other times under happier circumstances."

In these and other ways, wolves' struggles (e.g., with hunger and mange) are acknowledged as being "pretty tough." Like coyotes and other animals, their suffering, it is said,

can be “really pathetic” and “terrible”; in the case of the coyote described, the animal’s condition was so terrible that the hunter, who says he had no other reason to shoot, performed a mercy killing. Mange in particular is something one “hates to see the animals get.” Similarly, seeing a wolf killed by a car is identified as not being a “happy circumstance.” Implicit in all of these utterances are expressions of empathy and compassion for wolves (and coyotes), and sadness at suffering and unnecessary death, underpinned by a premise: We feel, and should feel, compassion for other creatures, including wolves.

G. Summary analysis: Co-inhabitation in hubs and radiants

Here, as we have heard, the wolf is spoken of as a valued co-inhabitant. Like the other discourses already considered, this is a complex web of symbolic terms, uses, and explicit and implicit meanings, encompassing more than just wolves and wolf-human relations. Here again I revisit the chapter’s analyses from the perspective of discursive hubs and radiants, with the aim of summarizing, distilling, and illuminating.

As I have heard, described, and interpreted this discourse, its most prominent hub is dwelling. High value is ascribed to (1) “wild,” “intact” nature—particularly as embodied in certain kinds of creatures and in places free of intensive and disruptive human uses—and (2) human experiences of being in such places and interacting with such creatures. The presence of wolves is said to add significantly to these in multiple ways, by augmenting the intactness of “ecosystems,” the wild character of landscapes, the wildness of the deer inhabiting those landscapes, and the experience of living and hunting in those places. Rooted in these values, this discourse depicts the presence of the wolf in nearby woods as desirable, and the wolf as belonging in local landscapes (see section VII.A).

Radiating from that hub of dwelling, the wolf is identified and defined as an essential and potent part of certain places (see section VII.A), as a part of nature with “inherent value” and an “inherent right” to exist (see section VII.B), and as a “fellow” “hunter” and “predator” (see

section VII.C.5). As such, the wolf's actions are understood to be natural and are primarily evaluated as neutral or positive. Wolves' actions are not said to be disruptive of local life (natural or cultural); if any, their net ecological effect is said to be added balance, stability, and wholeness (see section VII.C).

Wolves' actions are also understood to occur within, and to be bounded by, larger natural systems and forces. In the context of those larger systems and forces, wolves' subsistence predation on deer is depicted as natural and acceptable, and as affecting deer presence and deer populations only in limited places and for limited times (see section VII.C). From the perspective of this discourse, the only substantially problematic actions taken by wolves are those that harm—or have the potential to harm—domestic animals (especially “livestock” and “dogs”) and humans (especially “children”) in distinctly human spaces (especially “yards,” “towns,” and “farm” pastures) (see section VII.D).

Likewise, human needs and desires are understood to exist within larger contexts. Nature's needs, including wolves' need for food, are acknowledged and respected. Deer, for instance, are not said to belong to hunters. We, it is said, have no more “right” to—and less “need” for—deer than wolves have (see section VII.C.1). It is also acknowledged that human hunters kill significantly more deer than wolves do.

Along the radiant of relationship, it is said that wolves and humans can—and should—co-inhabit landscapes in ways based on mutual respect and accommodation. Such ways are said to include maintenance of appropriate “lines” and “distances” (i.e., keeping wolves out of distinctly human spaces) for the good of wolves, humans, and domestic animals alike (see section VII.D). In the woods, and especially in relation to deer, wolves and humans are understood as “fellow” “hunters” and “predators,” not as “competitors” (see section VII.C.5).

Along the radiant of emotion, primary emphasis is placed on the importance of “acceptance” and tolerance of wolves (and the need for these feelings to increase in some places) and on the inappropriateness of general “animosity” toward them (see section VII.E.4). Also

depicted are feelings of “respect” for wolves, empathy for them, and enjoyment of and “appreciation” for experiencing their presence (see sections VII.A, VII.C.5, and VII.F).

Both implicitly and explicitly, this discourse defines speakers’ own identities as people who live and hunt (and want to live and hunt) in wild places where wolves also dwell. A kind of ideal hunter identity is also suggested: one who is adept enough to hunt in wild places, one who—like the places hunted, the deer hunted, and the experience of hunting—has not been overly diminished by domestication (see section VII.A).

This discourse outlines several key aspects of proper human action. In relation to nature generally, it is said that we should do what is “right” for “ecosystems” (see section VII.A). In relation to wolves specifically, it is said that we should act in ways that are informed by, and intended to increase, acceptance and tolerance. As hunters, for instance, we should hunt in ways that take the wolf into account (e.g., accepting the challenge of deer being unpredictable, and moving to a different spot if a wolf pack is hunting where we planned to hunt) (see sections VII.A.2 and VII.C.5). We should also keep a respectful “distance” from wolves, maintain appropriate local boundaries, refrain from inviting wolves to cross into distinctly human spaces (e.g., by feeding wolves or deer in our backyards), and take precautions when crossing into wild spaces (e.g., when taking a dog for a walk in the woods) (see section VII.D).

Human action intended to increase acceptance and tolerance of wolves, it is said, can include killing some wolves. Such killing should be primarily focused on dealing with direct conflicts, including credible risks to children, pet depredation, and especially livestock depredation. It may, more broadly, include hunting and trapping some wolves to defuse “animosity” generated by their strict protection. It is said, however, that the wolf population should not be (1) lowered to reduce purported impacts on deer populations, (2) lowered to reduce risks to domestic animals in the woods (e.g., hunting dogs), or (3) driven down across a wide area (e.g., a state) (see section VII.E).

If wolves are killed—as a way of reducing direct conflicts and animosity, or as part of a respectful hunting or trapping practice—it is said that such action should not be done with animosity; rather, it should be done with “understanding” and “appreciation.” Further, if wolves are to be killed, the animal should not be wasted; instead, use should be made of the animal (e.g., of a prime winter pelt) (see sections VII.E.4-5).

As humans and hunters, in short, it is said that we value and should protect “wild places” and “intact ecosystems.” As a vital, natural part of wild places, intact ecosystems, and the wolf-deer relationship, the wolf “belongs” here. If appropriate boundaries are maintained, humans and wolves can co-inhabit the landscape as “fellow hunters.” We should feel “appreciation” for, not “animosity” toward, wolves’ presence in the local landscape. We should act to maintain appropriate boundaries and to increase acceptance of wolves, not drive down their population.

The roots of this transmitted expressive system are audible in the history of changing ideas about ecology, wildness, and predators. In this history, notable voices include ones mentioned in Chapter I, such as Henry David Thoreau (who, in 1856, championed the “tonic of wildness” and lamented how the landscape was “tamed” and deprived of “the nobler animals”) and Theodore Roosevelt (who, in 1903, suggested that large predators could play a positive role in relation to prey species). In the 1930s and 1940s, notable voices also included Olaus and Adolph Murie (who questioned predators’ effects on game populations), Sigurd Olson (who wrote of the wolf as “an integral part of the wilderness community” and, living in Minnesota, became an ardent defender of wolves), and Aldo Leopold (who similarly questioned assumptions about predator control and, living in Wisconsin, became an advocate for predator conservation). With the exception of Thoreau’s, these historical voices are all those of hunters, and even he hunted in his youth.

CHAPTER VIII

DISCURSIVE RENDEZVOUS

In the preceding chapters, I have described and interpreted five distinct, prominent wolf-related discourses used by hunters and hunting communities in the western Great Lakes region: one institutional (DNR) discourse of *conservation and management* and four community discourses: two discourses of *predator control* (*get-the-wolves-under-control* and *management-as-the-way-forward*), a discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, and a discourse of *cohabitation*.

My principal aim has been, as Basso (1996) put it, to construct “principled interpretations of culturally constituted worlds” and, to the degree possible, to understand and convey “what living in them is like.” A related aim, as discussed at the outset of this dissertation, has been to help others to understand the multiple, dueling discursive codes that express and constitute these worlds, to speak in terms of multiple codes, and potentially to begin creating “hybrid codes” (Carbaugh, 1996b, p. 185) that open up possibilities for common ground.

The foregoing chapters—in explicating these distinct discourses—have been implicitly comparative, intended to give forceful voice to each discourse, making them more readily audible and available for consideration, side by side. In that implicitly comparative way, it is my hope that the preceding chapters will help others understand these multiple systems of meaning-making.

In this chapter, I draw on those parallel interpretations and shift into a more explicitly comparative and inter-discursive mode, examining relationships among the five. My goals are to consider and compare prominent aspects of the varying shapes of these discourses and the cultural logics both presumed and created when they are used. These discourses could be compared and contrasted, and their relations and intersections examined, in a multitude of ways. Here, I attend to only a subset of those many possibilities. In other words, this shift to an explicit

comparative mode is another narrowing of scope: just as I interpreted only a portion of what I described, I explicitly compare only a portion of what I interpreted.

In this chapter, I return to several themes which have already been made audible. In relation to each, I note ways in which these discourses speak to and past each other, dueling with one another in some places, echoing one another or suggesting possible bridges in others. I also offer a few tentative suggestions and questions concerning relations among these (and other) discourses. I write “tentative” because I am not a full participant in the western Great Lakes wolf situation. I am not a resident of the region, let alone a DNR biologist, an Ojibwe tribal member, someone who has long lived with wolves, someone who has witnessed the return of wolves, or someone who has lost dogs to wolves; only through others’ generosity have I been privileged to step into these culturally constituted worlds. These worlds—and their futures—belong to those who inhabit them.

A. Matters of focal concern

By way of review, and as a first step in comparative analysis, I would like to step back to get a landscape-wide view of how these discourses depict wolves and people and interactions and relations among them. Central questions here include these: From the perspective of each discourse, as it addresses wolves and humans and their interactions and interrelations, what matters are of focal concern? In each of these discourses, who is speaking? What (or who) is the wolf they speak of? In each, what is the central human imperative in relation to the wolf? On what premises is that imperative based?

The DNR discourse of *conservation and management* presumes and creates an identity that is “kind of in the middle” of the wolf problem. According to this discourse, its speakers (mainly DNR biologists) want to do the right thing for wolves and wolf conservation, but must constantly deal with not only wolf-human conflicts but also vocal factions at both extremes (from those who want every wolf extirpated to those who want every wolf protected from harm).

From this perspective, the wolf is a “population” that we have a responsibility to “recover,” “maintain,” and potentially “control.” The central imperative is to balance wolf recovery with wolf-human “conflict.” This imperative is rooted in several core ideas, including these: wolves are a numeric “population”; a “viable” population should be maintained in the state; “conflict” between wolves and humans is likely; such conflict must be “managed,” “mitigated,” and “controlled”; human land-uses determine the likelihood of conflict from area to area, and thus the suitability of each area for wolves.

The *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse presumes and creates an identity of local people, especially in the rural north, who have been “kicked in the teeth” time and again. They have been put in this intolerable situation by outsiders who, out of misguided, romantic ideas about the wild, and in collusion with federal and state governments, have imposed wolves on local people without any concern for the consequences.

From this perspective, the wolf is a population that is “out of control.” The central imperative is to get the population “under control,” reducing it both numerically and geographically. This imperative is rooted in core ideas, including these: wolves are far too numerous across the landscape as a whole, where they negatively impact deer and deer hunting; wolves are inappropriately present in areas of intensive human land-use, where they pose a persistent and intolerable threat to humans and their animals; these impacts and threats, which diminish people’s valued ways of living, must be greatly reduced if not eliminated.

The *management-as-the-way-forward* discourse presumes and creates an identity of hunters who must deal with “irrational” opposition. According to this discourse, its speakers are deeply invested in the future of “all wildlife.” Their interests in making reasonable reductions in wolf numbers to benefit deer hunting, and in adding the wolf to the long list of effectively managed “game species,” are unreasonably opposed by outsiders and by a minority of locals who are disconnected from nature and ignorant of the many benefits of hunting and scientific management by the DNR.

From this perspective, the wolf is a population that has fully recovered. The central imperative is to actively “manage” that population using public hunting and trapping. This imperative is rooted in premises including these: wolves eat deer; high wolf numbers affect deer and deer hunting; active management of a wildlife population is a sign of conservation success; human-wolf relations are most “peaceable” when wolves are actively “managed”; public hunting and trapping are key parts of “wildlife management”; if managed as a “game species,” the wolf will be more valued and its future better ensured; wildlife management is a “rational” and “scientific” endeavor.

The discourse of *kinship and shared fates* presumes and creates an identity of Ojibwe people who have, like brother Ma’iingan, been “misunderstood” and mistreated for centuries. According to this discourse, its speakers feel kinship with the wolf and recognize their common fate, particularly in relation to non-tribal people. The wolf is being unjustly persecuted by state governments and by “sport” and “trophy” hunters whose ethics and behavior display disrespect for the animals they pursue, especially predators.

From this perspective, “Ma’iingan” is a “brother” whose path and fate parallel that of the Ojibwe. The central imperative is to continue to relate to wolves appropriately and ensure their well-being and future as we would our own. This imperative is rooted in core ideas including these: historically, Ma’iingan and Ojibwe have experienced similar “fates”; what is good for the wolf is good for the people; the people have a “responsibility” to ensure Ma’iingan’s well-being; relational “harmony” is the normal state of affairs between humans and wolves.

The discourse of *cohabitation* presumes and creates an identity of local people, especially in the rural north, who appreciate wolves and dislike the “animosity” some others exhibit. According to this discourse, its speakers value the wolf as an embodiment of “wildness,” as “a fellow hunter,” and as part of “intact” natural places, landscapes, and ecosystems. Those who “hate” the wolf, and blame deer declines on the wolf, have failed to understand these animals and the larger systems of which they are part.

From this perspective, the wolf is a valued coinhabitant. The imperative is to continue dwelling with wolves and encourage others' "appreciation" for and acceptance of them. This imperative is rooted in premises including these: the presence of wolves makes places feel "wilder" and better; the presence of wolves indicates a healthy, "intact ecosystem"; wolves have inherent "value" as part of nature; overall, wolves do not adversely affect deer populations; wolves' consumption of deer is natural, acceptable, and necessary for their survival; some people, including some hunters, feel unnecessary hostility toward the wolf.

B. Hubs of wolf-human relations

Another central question, asked on a similar landscape-wide scale, is this: Thinking in terms of primary discursive hubs, what can we say about how wolves and wolf-human relations are conceptualized in these discourses?

In the DNR discourse of *conservation and management*, the wolf-human relationship is primarily conceptualized in terms of human action. It is spoken and written of mainly as a relationship of subject and object, actor and acted upon. Humans "manage"; wolves are "managed." To remedy past actions, humans "recover" and "conserve" wolf populations; wolves are "recovered" and "conserved." To mitigate problems and conflicts, humans "control" wolves and their actions; wolves and their actions are "controlled." The primary hub of human action, however, is closely tied to the radiant of dwelling. This radiant encompasses a sense of human responsibility for ensuring the well-being of wolves and their "habitats," and for minimizing the "conflict" that often results when humans and wolves dwell near one another.

In both discourses of *predator control*, the wolf-human relationship is also primarily conceptualized in terms of human action. Humans (should) "manage" and "control"; wolves are (or should be) "managed" and "controlled". According to both, appropriate human action is overdue and necessary. In the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse, a highly conflicted wolf-human relationship—revolving around wolves' multiple impacts on local people—is strongly

linked to relations between local people and outside forces, including federal and state governments which are said to have long been impeding appropriate action. In the *management-as-the-way-forward* discourse, a problematic but manageable wolf-human relationship—revolving around wolves’ predation on deer—is linked to a collaborative relationship between hunters and state wildlife managers, working together to implement appropriate action.

In the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, the wolf-human relationship is primarily conceptualized in terms of, well, relationship: kinship, mutuality, and shared experience and identity. It is spoken and written of as an intersubjective relationship, a relationship between two peoples (or cultural agents) who dwell near one another. It also deeply linked to historical relations between Ojibwe and Ma’iingan on the one hand and Euro-Americans on the other. Any actions to be taken by the Ojibwe in connection with wolves (e.g., the responsibility to act to ensure their future) are conceptualized as radiating from the hub of relationship.

In the discourse of *cohabitation*, the wolf-human relationship is primarily conceptualized in terms of dwelling. Wolves are said to be valued and inherently valuable members of intact, wild, natural places and communities. Hunters and other humans, it is said, can accept and appreciate wolves’ roles. In this discourse, opportunities to dwell near wolves and experience their presence are valued and celebrated. The drawing of appropriate boundaries between wolves’ wild dwelling places and distinctly human dwelling places is conceptualized in terms of ensuring the mutual well-being of both humans and wolves.

Previous studies have identified the wolf as a powerful symbol often used as a proxy in social and cultural conflicts (e.g., Clarke, 1999; Nie, 2003). In this study, note how the wolf functions in such symbolic ways, especially in the discourses of predator control and the discourse of kinship and shared fates.

In the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse, the wolf issue is a proxy for hunting traditions and, more broadly, for domination by outside forces and the desire for local autonomy and self-determination, with strong links to numerous other issues (e.g., mining, spearfishing,

treaty rights). In the *management-as-the-way-forward* discourse, in a somewhat more muted way, the wolf issue is also depicted as symbolic of hunting in general; those who oppose active wolf management including hunting and trapping are typically characterized as being unfamiliar with hunting, opposed to hunting, and disconnected from the land.

In the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, the wolf issue is similarly tied to others, including cultural survival and self-determination, with links to many of the same issues (e.g., mining, spearfishing, treaty rights) articulated from a dueling perspective. In the words of several tribal biologists I spoke with, “the wolf issue” “fits into” a bigger “whole package” in which the state “doesn’t like that we’re taking charge of resources,” “wants us to be invisible,” is “dictating” instead of “listening,” is “sticking it to us,” and is trying to “diminish our authority” and “take away” “resources” and “land.”

C. Common ground

Before proceeding further, I would like to note a few broad premises shared by all five discourses. First, all five discourses encompass the idea that wolves should survive and persist in the world, region, and state. This is foregrounded in the DNR discourse of *conservation and management*. In different ways, the discourse of *cohabitation* and that of *kinship and shared fates* are also each underpinned by strong beliefs in the importance and value of wolves’ survival and persistence. The idea of a “viable” wolf population is also central to the active game management advocated in the discourse of *management-as-the-way-forward*. Even in the *get-the-wolves-under-control discourse*, this idea is not typically disputed; generally, this discourse is rooted in a belief that the wolf population should be much smaller than it is now and should be confined to more remote areas, but only at this discourse’s fringes is it suggested that the population should be completely eliminated from the state, let alone the region or world.

In short, though expressed in differing ways, variously emphasized or muted, and variously central or peripheral, these premises are common to all five discourses:

- We should ensure the continued existence of wolves in the world.
- We should ensure the continued existence of wolves in this state and region.

Second, as I hear them, all five discourses also encompass or endorse the idea that conflict between wolves and humans—particularly as related to depredation of livestock and pets, and threats to human safety—should be prevented, minimized, and addressed. Across discourses, appropriate ways of addressing such conflict are said to include site-specific depredation management, including appropriate animal husbandry practices (e.g., proper disposal of carcasses to avoid attracting wolves), nonlethal deterrents, and lethal wolf removal. Emphasis on preferred methods varies, with the discourse of kinship and shared fates most strongly emphasizing that killing wolves should be a last resort. All five also encompass or endorse the idea of killing wolves that pose an immediate threat to livestock or pets.⁷¹

All five also agree that wolf attacks on humans are far rarer and far more unlikely than wolf attacks on livestock and pets. To further minimize any potential threat to human safety, all five encompass or endorse the ideas of (1) non-injurious wolf harassment to discourage contact with humans, and (2) killing wolves in defense of human life.

In short, though expressed in differing ways, variously emphasized or muted, and variously central or peripheral, these premises are also common to all five discourses:

- Conflict between wolves and humans should be prevented and minimized.
- Depredation of livestock and pets should be prevented and minimized.
- Threats to human safety are minimal and should be further minimized.
- People should have the right to defend themselves, their livestock, and their pets if in immediate danger.

⁷¹ I am writing here of these expressive systems and my interpretations of them. Technically, human action toward wolves has been, and continues to be, constrained by wolves' legal status, particularly under the ESA. When listed as "threatened," for example, as they long have been in Minnesota, wolves can be killed legally under certain conditions if they pose an immediate threat to domestic animals. When listed as "endangered," as they have been in Wisconsin, they can only be killed legally in defense of human life.

Any additional common ground found or created among these discourses will necessarily be compatible with these premises.

D. Places for wolves

One prominent theme in previous chapters has been the question of where wolves (should) dwell, especially in relation to where humans dwell. A closely related issue is the prevention of (1) potential depredation on livestock and pets and (2) potential threats to human safety.

- This issue of places for wolves is especially prominent in the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse. Here, the focal idea is that wolves should not inhabit areas of substantial human activity. To prevent impacts on people, livestock, pets, bear hounds, and deer alike, wolves should be kept to “remote areas,” especially large forested areas in the north.
- The discourse of *conservation and management* addresses this issue primarily in terms of “zones.” In each zone, wolf habitat suitability is predicated mainly on human land-use and the likelihood of wolf-human conflict. Among zones, there is variation in population goals, approaches to depredation management, or both.
- Though this issue was not specifically addressed in the data I gathered as part of the discourse of *management-as-the-way-forward*, more general references (e.g., to “active management” through hunting and trapping being necessary for peaceable wolf-human relations) suggest using lethal means to maintain boundaries.
- In the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, the focal idea is that wolves should be provided with sanctuary in areas of protected forest habitat, undisturbed by human-caused impacts and connected by travel corridors, so that they can avoid human contact.
- In the discourse of *cohabitation*, in which it is said that wolves “belong here,” the focal idea is that wolves should inhabit the woods, near and far, and that distinctly human spaces such as towns, yards, and parking lots are where “lines” should be drawn.

In the brief summaries above, we can hear distinct differences. One is in the acceptable proximity of wolves and in the scale of the human spaces which are said to need protection against wolves. At one end of the spectrum, the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse speaks of keeping wolves to “remote areas,” far from “inappropriate areas” of substantial human activity; these “inappropriate areas” include not just homes, farms, and small woodlots, but also areas

frequented by hunters and (in Wisconsin) bear hounds. At the other end of the spectrum, the discourse of *coinhabitation* speaks of keeping wolves in the woods, and out of distinctly human spaces such as towns and yards; similarly, the discourse of *kinship and shared fates* speaks of providing the conditions for wolves to avoid human contact.

When one says that wolves should be kept to “remote areas,” and that bear hounds should be able to run through local woods without encountering wolves, then landscape-wide population control by lethal means is heard and understood as a proper and necessary course of action. When one says, instead, that wolves should simply be kept to the woods, and that in those woods people should be expected to exercise caution regarding domestic animals including dogs, then such landscape-wide population control is heard and understood to be unnecessary and perhaps improper.

When one says that “it just gets to be part of your nature” to be “aware” of the risk wolves pose to dogs—and to take appropriate action (e.g., taking “measures to not encounter wolves”; “making a scan” of the backyard before letting a dog out)—then wolves are heard to be an accepted and natural part of one’s dwelling place; appropriate awareness of and action regarding them “gets to be part of your nature,” perhaps not unlike the habit of looking both ways before crossing a highway or street. When one says, instead, as one interviewee did, that having to go outdoors and stay alert every time one’s dog needs to pee is “bullshit,” then wolves are heard to be unacceptable intruders; the need to be aware of and take action regarding them is unreasonable: an accommodation one resents and should not have to make. In each way of speaking, different ideas are presumed concerning what is natural and appropriate as a way of acting and dwelling in one’s home place, and what risks are natural and appropriate in that place.

Listening to these varied ways of speaking about places for wolves, and about appropriate distances and accommodations, we can hear differing presumptions: about who and what belongs where, about whose needs are most relevant in what places, about how to minimize wolf-human contact and conflict, and about the baseline state of affairs in wolf-human relations (conflict

versus harmony). We can also hear the differing hubs of each discourse at play in, for example, place- and dwelling-related statements about the need to “get them out of the inappropriate areas” (action) as opposed to the need to “manage habitat to support a wolf population” as a way of providing “sanctuary” for one’s “brother” (relationship).

Emerging from these differing depictions of where wolves belong, we also find contrasting assertions concerning how one thinks and feels about wolves if one actually lives and interacts with them.

- In the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, it is said that people and wolves have long inhabited the same places without animosity. Both, it is said, have seen “home” and good hunting grounds in the same places. The people, it is said, have made no attempt to reduce wolf numbers in the places where both dwelled.
- In the discourse of *cohabitation*, it is similarly said that people who live with wolves for an extended period of time do not harbor animosity toward them. If wolf pups show up in the parking lot of some remote bar, it is said, people—rather than killing them—want to discourage habituation and get them to “go off and be wolves.” It is said that “having been around wolves all the time” gives people this kind of “different,” non-hostile “attitude.”
- In the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse, in contrast, it is said that living with wolves makes it clear that they are “after your animals” and are “a danger to people.” That, it is said, is both a traditional way of thinking and an inevitable consequence of actually living near wolves. That, it is said, is “the way people think of them nowadays / if they have direct experience with them.”

In these differing depictions of and assertions regarding actual experience with wolves in places, we hear expressions of each discourse’s premises concerning these matters: people, wolves, interactions and relations between them, and places for each or both. In each, the presence of wolves is interpreted and described differently. In each, it is said, more or less explicitly, that this is the natural, if not the inevitable, human experience of actually living with wolves.

It should be noted that the kinds of places most predominantly involved in these depictions, and the kinds of places where these are most often heard, are variable (e.g., places with higher levels of agriculture and other intensive human land-use in the case of the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse; more forested areas in the case of the discourse of

cohabitation). Similarly, the time frames and wolf populations involved are variable (e.g., centuries of Ojibwe people dwelling with plentiful wolves across the region; generations of Euro-Americans dwelling with a varying number of wolves on the North Shore; decades of Euro-Americans dwelling with a growing population of wolves in Wisconsin, following decades without any wolves there). Differing depictions may be rooted in these differing material contexts as well as in differing cultural contexts.

E. Interactions with wolves

Linked to the question of where wolves should dwell are verbal depictions of encounters and interactions with wolves. Though these depictions are not as prominent in my data or interpretations—and are absent from my data on the discourse of *management-as-the-way-forward* and the institutional DNR discourse of *conservation and management*—they deserve brief attention here.⁷²

In the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse, we heard how close encounters with wolves and especially wolf attacks on dogs are often described in terms of emotion and trauma (“scared,” “traumatic,” “horrible,” “sticks with you,” “it’s personal”). We also heard how potential encounters are often described in terms of discomfort and potential threat to oneself or one’s animals (“just not comfortable,” “the feeling that I’m never going to be able to tell when something bad is going to happen,” “every day is clouded by the possibility”).

In the discourse of *cohabitation*, we heard how seeing a wolf is often described in terms of “appreciation” and excitement (“I don’t what it is / it’s just a thrill”). Though it is said that wolves pose definite risks to dogs, such risks—and actual encounters between wolves and dogs—are not described in terms of animosity or fear. In this discourse, virtually all accounts of wolf-

⁷² For intriguing accounts of prominent biologists’ encounters and interactions with wolves—which are consistently absent from the institutionally bounded discourse of *conservation and management*—see Thiel, Thiel & Strozewski (2013).

human encounters, even the rare “spooky” one where wolves mistake humans for prey species, conclude with the wolf or wolves recognizing the human and disappearing without posing any threat.

In these differing depictions, radically different feelings are central: fear and anger versus excitement and appreciation. (At times, speakers of these discourses express understanding of the other set of feelings; at other times, the opposing set is derided.) Each type of depiction also ascribes different intentions and characteristics to wolves: very potentially threatening on the one hand, very unlikely to be threatening on the other.

A related aspect of verbal depictions of wolf-human encounters also deserves attention here. Recall an earlier mention of the stories many people have of wolves “having no fear” of humans. This is a consistent type of story, heard across discourses: though wolves usually disappear when they see people, sometimes they display a lack of fear. In the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse, the usual interpretation is that such behavior is a sign of danger and that it is “only a matter of time” before something bad happens.

In the discourse of *coinhabitation*, it is somewhat similarly said that it is good for everyone if wolves have some fear of humans. And it is emphatically stated that wolves should be discouraged from acting too boldly, and that people should refrain from actions (e.g., feeding wolves or deer) that habituate wolves to people, towns, and backyards. Yet different interpretations of wolves’ lack of fear are also offered. Several interviewees described seeing wolves—and especially seeing and being seen by them at close range—as an experience of mutual regard.

Without any question from me about wolf encounters, for example, a hunter in Minnesota said he has noticed that, unless startled, wolves typically stop and look at you. He spoke of one encounter he had with a wolf while deer hunting: “he looked at me / and I looked at him.” The wolf then trotted off, making an arc around the hunter and continuing on his way in a

“nonchalant” manner. Other encounters have been similar, the hunter said. He has developed the impression that wolves are “not that afraid of me” and “don’t see me as a threat.”

Also without prompting, another hunter in Minnesota told me of a neighbor who was outdoors near his house when “he happened to look up / and here’s this wolf coming at him.” The wolf, he said, “stopped just a few feet from him.” Not knowing what the wolf was going to do, the neighbor picked up a piece of steel to use as a weapon if necessary. Finally, the wolf “just turned and went away / just like it was / ‘oh hi what are you doing today?’” The hunter concluded his story by saying, “Yeah / they’re different.”

Twice during another interview, again without prompting, an Ojibwe tribal chairman mentioned that “when you see a wolf / now in the north woods of Wisconsin / they stop and they look / they stop and they watch you go by / they look back at you.” Such an encounter, he said, “makes you wonder / okay well / what’s going through / their mind? / this is part of their / territory / their life / and they have to deal with us as human beings / there too.”

In such accounts of wolf-human encounters, relationship and (inter)action are highlighted, as wolf and human “look” at one another, aware and perhaps wary—but not “afraid”—of one another. In these interactions, there is the suggestion of curiosity and communication (“oh hi what are you doing today?”; “what’s going through / their mind?”). Wolves, it is said, are “different.”

Such interactions have led some to wonder about “the ancient association between man and wolf” as “fellow” travelers, hunters, and scavengers, an association which “eventually led to the domestication of dogs.” Once humans became herders and farmers, one hunter notes, we “began protecting livestock herds from other hunters—like the wolf.” He wonders if “the wolf behavior we now describe as ‘fearless’ or ‘habituated’—when wolves don’t immediately flee from people—is really just a wolf being a wolf.” He wonders if the past few decades of “protection from indiscriminate killing” have, for the wolf at least, “rekindled ancient memories of our coexistence” (Perich, 2012, February 17). Though the expression of such thoughts is

outside the purview of the institutional DNR discourse of *conservation and management* and related professional and peer-reviewed academic discourses of biology and ecology, I am told that such ideas have occurred to more than one senior wolf biologist, based on countless hours in the field and many encounters with wolves.

Particularly in the discourse of *cohabitation* and that of *kinship and shared fates*, these and similar accounts and interpretations of wolf behavior express and create a certain ambiguity about (1) the identity, nature, and personhood of the wolf, and (2) the wolf-human relationship in the present and in the broad scope of history. They also suggest overlap between the discourse of *cohabitation* and the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*.

F. Wolf-hunter-deer relations

Another prominent theme in earlier interpretations has been relationships among deer, wolves, and hunters. As we have heard, valued game animals such as deer have long been central to Euro-American hunters' views of wolves and other large predators. They remain at the heart of wolf-related talk and politics in the western Great Lakes region today.

The idea that wolves “eat” and “affect” deer is clearly central to the action-oriented discourse of *management-as-the-way-forward*. In language from the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, we heard how valued deer-hunting traditions and hunters' desires for robust deer populations are linked to concerns about high wolf populations, articulation of the need to “manage” wolves, and requests that a higher percentage of the wolf population be “harvested” annually.

In the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse, wolves' impacts on deer populations (“absolutely decimated,” “killing deer off”)—and consequently on deer hunters and hunting traditions (“it just has been terrible”), especially in specific, traditional hunting locations—are described in related but more emphatic terms. Imperative actions are also spoken of in stronger terms (e.g., “get rid of at least two-thirds of the wolves,” “keep them in the remote areas”).

In the DNR discourse of *conservation and management*, wolf-hunter-deer relations are not as central. But they are explicitly addressed, largely in response to some hunters' expressions of concern. In this discourse, we heard it said that wolves rarely "suppress" deer populations on a landscape-wide scale, that hunters need not be concerned about wolves' impacts on deer numbers, and that there are ample deer for hunters and wolves alike (i.e., any deer population "capable of sustaining a hunting harvest will, by definition, also provide a healthy prey base for wolves"). This way of addressing hunters' concerns is, as we heard, critiqued by some DNR employees as counterproductive.

In the discourse of *coinhabitation*, these relations are likewise not as central. Here they are likewise explicitly addressed in response to other hunters' ideas (e.g., about how wolves are "killing all the deer"). Technically speaking, this discourse echoes DNR discourse, asserting that wolves do not suppress deer on a large scale, that their impacts on deer are localized in time and space, and that other factors (habitat, winter, hunting) are far more significant. Here, however, wolves and their hunting are more explicitly evaluated in neutral or positive terms ("they've gotta eat," "an important ecological role"), are described as inextricably linked to deer ("how can you have one / without the other?"), and are paralleled with humans and their hunting ("fellow hunter").

The discourse of *kinship and shared fates* echoes similar technical elements—wolves not suppressing deer on a broad scale, impacts being localized, and other factors (habitat, winter, hunting) being far more significant—at least partly in response to some tribal hunters' expressions of concern. Here, wolves and their hunting are evaluated in even more positive terms, and are paralleled even more closely with the Ojibwe and their hunting (e.g., "both of you will be / good hunters," "ma'iinganag require many of the same resources for survival as themselves"). In this discourse, it is said not only that we should be unconcerned about wolves impacting deer but that we should manage deer and habitat to support healthy wolf populations.

Broadly, on the question of “predator control for game purposes,” of whether wolf populations should be limited to aid in the survival and production of deer for human hunters, these discourses can be separated into two groups:

- Though in different tones, both discourses of predator control go one way, clearly saying, (A) wolves affect deer, therefore (B) wolf numbers should be reduced to increase hunter opportunity and ensure the future of deer hunting traditions.
- The other three discourses go the other way, clearly saying, (A) wolves do not suppress deer numbers on a landscape scale, therefore (B) wolf numbers need not be reduced to support deer hunting.

In more specific and nuanced ways, the community discourses in these two groups—(1) the two discourses of *predator control* and (2) the discourse of *coinhabitation* and the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*—are also internally consistent in their depictions of deer, wolves, and hunters, and can be heard to duel with one another. (The institutional DNR discourse of *conservation and management* is relatively mute on these more specific matters.)

In the action-oriented discourses of *predator control*, wolves are said to be harmful to deer and hunters alike. Wolves’ eating of deer is said to constitute problematic competition for hunters. The relationship between deer and wolves is also conceptualized as problematic. As one MDHA member said to me, “the deer and the wolves / I shouldn’t say they coexist / because that’s not really the right term.” The two continue to exist in the same places, he said, because “wolves can’t eat every deer / when you have good habitat.” Wolves, these ways of speaking suggest, are powerful predators with the capacity to eat (almost) every deer in a given area. In these discourses, humans are “hunters” and wolves are “predators.” Hunters’ “harvest” of deer is conceptualized as legitimate, while wolves’ “killing” of deer is not.⁷³ Human hunters, it is said, should respond to wolves’ widespread impacts on deer populations by reducing the number of wolves.

⁷³ Regarding some hunters’ views of coyotes as “illegitimate killers” of deer, see Boglioli (2009).

In the dwelling- and relationship-oriented discourses of *coinhabitation* and of *kinship and shared fates*, wolves are said to be beneficial to deer and hunters alike. The wolf-deer relationship and wolves' eating of deer are depicted as worthy of acceptance and respect. Wolves and deer are said to be parts of one whole: they coinhabit the landscape and, together, contribute to making it healthy and whole. As hunters, humans are said to be part of the same whole.⁷⁴ In these discourses, humans and wolves are both "hunters" (and sometimes both are "predators"); in various ways, they are more particularly said to be "fellow hunters," in parallel rather than in competition. Wolves, it is said, face serious challenges and risks in hunting deer, and starvation in winters with little snow. Wolves' killing and eating of deer is conceptualized as necessary for survival and therefore at least as appropriate as people's killing and eating of deer. Human hunters, it is said, should respond to wolves' impacts on deer behavior by being better hunters, and to wolves' localized and temporary impacts on deer numbers by being adaptable.⁷⁵

These two discursive groups—(1) the two discourses of *predator control* and (2) the discourse of *coinhabitation* and the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*—can thus be heard reflecting and creating different conceptualizations along all five radiants, each of which is made an explicit hub at times: *identity* (who are we? what/who is the wolf?), *action* (what do wolves do? what should we do?), *relationship* (what is the nature of the relationships among wolf, deer,

⁷⁴ Reflecting on the historical roots of the discourse of *coinhabitation* and its resonance with the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, it is intriguing to note Leopold's occasional use of kinship terms. Consider this line, for instance: "It may flatter our ego to be called the sons of man, but it would be nearer the truth to call ourselves the brothers of our fields and forests" (1934). And recall his discussion of the knowledge that humans are "fellow-voyagers with other creatures in the odyssey of evolution," knowledge which "should have given us, by this time, a sense of kinship with fellow-creatures (1949, pp. 116-117).

⁷⁵ The Leech Lake wolf plan draft put it this way: "In the core of a wolf pack's territory deer soon become wary and tend to be move to the outer edges of the wolf territory. If your favorite hunting spot is in the center of a pack territory you may see fewer deer, but just as hunters move their hunting spots as trees mature and the habitat changes . . . a move due to wolves can also be beneficial. If people are willing to move into wolf pack fringe areas they have an increased chance of seeing more deer as they will be concentrated there" (p. 8).

and human?), *feeling* (how do and should we feel about wolves?), and *dwelling* (how should we relate to and interact with the natural world?).

G. Reasons to hunt and trap wolves

Another theme prominent in my data and interpretations has been the hunting and trapping of wolves. This was an especially relevant local issue between January 2012 and December 2014, when the region's wolves were not on the federal threatened or endangered species lists, and states had the authority to establish public wolf hunting and trapping seasons. In each of the discourses we have considered, different ideas about hunting and trapping wolves—and about (in)valid reasons and motives for these actions—are expressed and constructed.

In the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse, public hunting and trapping are said to be crucial elements in a broad program of action aimed at dramatically reducing wolf populations, especially in areas where people live, farm, and hunt. As articulated in this discourse, the primary reason for such hunting and trapping is to limit and reduce the out-of-control wolf population, both numerically and geographically, and thus to alleviate wolves' negative impacts on local people, their lives, their livelihoods, their livestock, their pets, their hunting dogs, and their experiences and traditions of hunting.

In the discourse of *management-as-the-way-forward*, public hunting and trapping are said to be crucial parts of active management and control of the wolf population. As articulated here, a main reason for such hunting and trapping is to reduce wolves' impacts on the deer population and thus on people's experiences and traditions of deer hunting. A management program including public hunting and trapping is also said to be the key to mitigating wolf-human conflicts (especially those involving livestock) and ensuring people's peaceable coexistence with wolves, and to be the core vehicle for public involvement in the funding and implementation of wolf (and other wildlife) conservation and management. It is also said that public seasons will lead to wolves being more highly valued as a "game species." Management involving such

hunting and trapping should occur, it is said, because the science and DNR experts have indicated it as the proper course of action.⁷⁶

In the DNR discourse of *conservation and management*, public hunting and trapping are said to be options that can be considered, based on sustainability and sociocultural factors. As articulated here, a primary reason for such hunting and trapping would be to implement zone management, limiting wolf populations in areas where human land-use patterns make wolf-human conflict likely. In this discourse it is also said that public wolf seasons could lead to wolves being more highly valued as a “game species,” and thus to a stronger wolf-conservation constituency among hunters and trappers. There is no need, it is said, to manage wolf populations in order to protect deer and deer hunting. The optional actions of public hunting and trapping—and wolf population management more broadly—are also described as distinct from the necessary actions involved in depredation management.

In the discourse of *coinhabitation*, public hunting and trapping of wolves is addressed in variable and conditional terms. The only prominent, potentially good reason for such hunting and trapping—supported by some speakers and opposed by others—would be to defuse animosity created by the longtime protection of wolves, and thus to increase tolerance and acceptance of them. If wolves are hunted and trapped, it is said that this should be done with an attitude of respect and appreciation, not animosity, and should be done in winter when pelts are prime and will be put to good use. As in the DNR discourse of *conservation and management*, here broad-scale hunting and trapping—like wolf population management—are clearly distinguished from depredation management. Here, too, it is said to be unnecessary and inappropriate to kill wolves to reduce supposed impacts on deer and deer hunting.

⁷⁶ In contrast with this idea of the DNR as a scientific force dictating the need for such management, a MN-DNR official—who, incidentally, expressed great “respect” for MDHA—told me matter-of-factly that the organization was the political force behind the establishment of the 2012 wolf hunting seasons: “Certainly the Minnesota Deer Hunters drove the legislation . . . and certainly legislators up here have to run with the blessing of the Minnesota Deer Hunters.”

In the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, state-sanctioned wolf hunting and trapping seasons—and wolf population control more broadly—are rejected. They are said and understood to be aggressive actions which, rooted in animosity and resulting in trophies and waste, inappropriately serve the interests of white sportsmen and fail to treat either Ma’iingan or Ojibwe appropriately. In the words of Winona LaDuke, “Minnesota’s made a mockery of stewardship and respect by failing to understand the nature of the wolf in the north and the centrality of the wolf to Anishinaabeg people” (2015). In this discourse, public hunting and trapping are said to be distinct from depredation issues, and unnecessary and inappropriate in relation to deer and deer hunting. With an appropriate attitude of respect, however, and for appropriate traditional and ceremonial uses, it is said that the occasional hunting and trapping of ma’iinganag by tribal members could be considered at some point in the future.

Broadly speaking, in the order above, these discourses define a spectrum of views on aims and reasons for hunting and trapping wolves. At one end of the spectrum, the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse tells us that public hunting and trapping are necessary for a variety of reasons, including widespread reduction of the wolf population and protection of deer and livestock. In somewhat different and more muted terms, with more frequent references to science, the *management-as-the-way-forward* discourse conveys a similar necessity, especially in relation to deer.

The DNR discourse of *conservation and management* tells us that public hunting and trapping are optional, distinct from depredation issues, and virtually irrelevant to deer numbers. The discourse of *cohabitation* similarly tells us that public hunting and trapping are distinct from depredation issues and irrelevant to deer numbers, though possibly helpful in defusing animosity and cultivating appreciation and respectful use. The discourse of *kinship and shared fates* also tells us that hunting and trapping seasons are distinct from depredation and irrelevant to deer hunting, though limited hunting or trapping might be contemplated for appropriate traditional uses and purposes.

This spectrum audibly parallels each discourse's distinct conceptualizations (1) of the central human imperative in relation to the wolf (from getting wolves under control to ensuring wolves' well-being and continuing to relate to them appropriately), (2) of the nature of the wolf-human relationship (from conflict and competition to harmony and kinship), and (3) of the wolf as a predator (from competitor to be eliminated to fellow hunter to be respected).

1. Use, value, and respect

Linked to articulations of why we should or should not hunt (or trap) wolves are ideas about how animals killed in hunting (or trapping) should be utilized. In the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, we heard it said that a proper hunter/animal relationship requires respect, that respect requires sufficient, acceptable use of the animal, and that such uses include those that meet basic physical needs. Food was highlighted as the main, though not the only, example of such use. Hunting (or trapping) for less serious reasons, without any substantial use intended, or out of animosity, was evaluated as unacceptable.

In the discourse of *coinhabitation*, we similarly heard it said that respectful hunting or trapping requires sufficient use of the animal, and that wasting an animal is unacceptable. This premise was not quite as prominent in this discourse, and was more commonly expressed in terms of individual values (e.g., “unless I’m going to . . . utilize it / I probably wouldn’t do it personally”). But it was otherwise expressed in terms quite similar to those used in the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*.

In both, for example, we heard it said that—if wolves are to be hunted or trapped—it should be in winter when their pelts are prime and thus more useful and valuable. As an Ojibwe and white hunter each spoke of being part of a larger group of hunters with no interest in hunting wolves, we heard virtually identical jokes told about (1) not knowing “how to cook up a wolf” and (2) having heard that “they’re not very tasty.” One notable difference between Ojibwe and Euro-American articulations of what I call an *ethic of utilization* is that descriptions of ceremonial

use (e.g., “when they dance they / imitate that particular kind of animal”) are absent from the latter.

During an informal interview, a tribal biologist mentioned research (Ross, Medin & Cox, 2007) indicating that some Euro-American hunters share views and ethics with the majority of tribal hunters. His mention of that research can be heard as a communicative action, expressing his agreement with its premises. The common views and ethics described in the article include focusing on food as a motive for hunting and ascribing significantly more meaning to the forest as a whole than to game species that are part of it.⁷⁷ The research also examined mutual stereotyping between Menominee and Euro-American hunters. Among the latter, the authors wrote that “stereotyping of Menominee decreases as similarity between an individual majority-culture person’s goals and Menominee goals increases—similar understandings of the environment and similar goals lead to similar evaluations of specific activities” (p. 510).

In the discourse of *conservation and management*, utilization and respect are not explicitly addressed in connection with wolf hunting and trapping. Yet the idea of defining the wolf as a game species is directly linked to “changing the idea that they are vermin” and ascribing “more value” to them. Similarly, we heard it said that at least some DNR leaders intended to treat wolves “as a prized and high-value fur species by setting the season when pelts are prime.”

In the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse, the idea of utilization- and value-related respect is not central. Typically, it is not invoked at all. On occasion, it is explicitly rejected, as in a letter to *Wisconsin Outdoor News*, criticizing a DNR ecologist for saying that hunters need to “‘clean up our image’ as it pertains to coyote hunting.” The letter expressed concern about the

⁷⁷ For the Euro-American hunters who did not seem to share these views, the authors observed that “the forest may represent a ‘container of species’ with specific values. In this scenario humans cease to interact with the environment—instead, they act on it” (Ross, Medin & Cox, 2007, p. 510). This distinction between “acting on” and “interacting with” echoes the difference noted above, between the action-oriented discourses of predator control and the dwelling- and relationship-oriented discourses of *coinhabitation* and of *kinship and shared fates*.

wolf population being “way beyond the maximum capacity for the state,” asked “who are you to decide what uses a hunter has with a coyote carcass during the summer if it’s legal for that hunter to harvest one?” and concluded by expressing the “hope [that] in the future you will consider the hunters of Wisconsin over political correctness” (February 24, 2012).

In the *management-as-the-way-forward* discourse, the idea of utilization- and value-related respect is likewise not primary. On occasion, however, its relevance is suggested secondarily. Late in the panel discussion at the University of Minnesota Duluth in October 2012, for example, MDHA director Mark Johnson responded to a question about utilization, saying he expected that over time “we’re going to see more use of the critter,” and saying he had “some Hmong friends” interested in obtaining a wolf from “a hunter who doesn’t want the carcass / even if [the hunter takes] the hide” “because they’ve got a use for it,” presumably as food. Here, an *ethic of utilization* is depicted as at least tangentially relevant to wolf hunting.

Audibly at stake among these discourses are differing beliefs concerning the relevance of an *ethic of utilization* in predator hunting. These beliefs and the duels among them could be heard, for instance, in early 2012 when the Minnesota legislature began holding hearings about potential seasons. When the DNR proposed that wolf seasons begin later in the year “when pelts are prime,” some deer hunters—represented largely by MDHA—expressed a preference for an earlier “season parallel with deer firearms season,” maximizing their opportunity to take a wolf (Hemphill, 2012).

This drew criticism from some, including a longtime hunter and trapper who wrote a letter to *Minnesota Outdoor News*, expressing strong interest in “preventing wanton waste from unprime wolf pelts! Many deer hunters want the wolf season to coincide with the firearms deer season. The Senate bill calls for the wolf season to start no later than the opening of the firearms deer season. How stupid can one get?” Early season pelts, he wrote, “would be worthless as the hair would all fall out.” It would be better, he asserted, to start wolf seasons in late November, as the DNR was proposing (April 6, 2012).

In both Minnesota and Wisconsin, wolf seasons ended up beginning concurrent with deer firearms seasons. Looking back, a Wisconsin deer hunter wrote to me, expressing his strong displeasure with how wolf politics and wolf seasons played out in his state: “When quotas were met early [thus closing all wolf seasons], there *was* no late-season hunting or trapping. Lawmakers in Wisconsin understood that, and their motivations were all about killing wolves, not harvesting prime furs.”

Put most simply, two dueling premises are at play here. One says that a wolf should (or can) be killed and disposed of as worthless. The other says that a wolf, if killed, should be put to good and respectful use.

2. “Sport” and “trophy” hunting

In connection with these premises, terms such as “sport,” “trophy,” and “recreational” are sometimes used in these discourses, and sometimes contrasted with terms such as “food” and “subsistence.” A brief discussion of these terms and uses may be of help to the reader.

In Chapter IV, I mentioned that Leopold (1933) defined “game management” as “the art of making land produce sustained annual crops of wild game for recreational use” (p. 3), and that he used the terms “recreational” and “sport” to describe hunting not necessary for survival (p. 391). He further commented that “hunting for sport is an improvement over hunting for food, in that there has been added to the test of skill an ethical code, which the hunter formulates for himself, and must live up to without the moral support of bystanders” (p. 391).

Heard by themselves, such statements can be misconstrued. It would be easy to interpret Leopold as saying that the “recreational” or “sport” hunter has little or no interest in the food that hunting yields, and perhaps does not eat what he or she kills. That is not what he meant. His writings contain many descriptions of his own consumption of wild game. More explicitly, he stated that “a common denominator of all sporting codes is not to waste good meat.” The reprehensible act of shooting a deer and leaving the carcass where it fell was “not only without

social value,” he wrote; it also “constitute[d] actual training for ethical depravity elsewhere” (1949, pp. 212-213).⁷⁸

For Leopold, then, killing a deer just for the sake of killing it, and wasting all that good meat, was a form of “ethical depravity.” He held that what I call an *ethic of utilization* was “a common denominator of all sporting codes.”

Today, many who identify themselves as “sport” hunters—and also many who are highly selective about the deer they take, seeking especially large “trophy” antlers—articulate and follow similar codes of behavior. Similarly, state governments sell fishing and hunting licenses typically referred to as “sporting licenses,” and refer to hunting and fishing as “sports,” and also have “wanton waste” laws on the books: legally codified ethics of utilization, with penalties for anyone caught wasting certain species of wild game. (Notably, common predator species such as coyotes are typically not covered by these laws.)

In short, these terms can lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Though “sport” is widely heard—even by some hunters and others sympathetic to hunting—as referring to hunting for enjoyment and *not* for utilization, that is not the meaning generally intended by those who use it to refer to their own hunting. Likewise, the distinction often drawn between hunting for utilization and enjoying the hunt is a false dichotomy; traditional subsistence hunters who truly depend on animals for survival also enjoy the experience of hunting. As anthropologist Richard Nelson has reflected, “traditional Inupiaq, Koyukon, and Gwich’in villagers [are] utterly possessed by the thrall and enjoyment of hunting, no less than the most fervent of Euro-American hunters” (1996, p. 8).

⁷⁸ Moral evaluation of wolves’ hunting—especially occurrences of so-called “surplus killing”—sometimes hinges on this same standard. Recall, for instance, Olson’s observation that “condemnation” of this “habit” is rooted in “the impression that the members of the pack do not kill for the express purpose of food, but rather to satisfy the blood lust of the race” (1938, p. 333). At times, I have even heard wolves’ criticized for “killing for sport.” By the same token, a tribal chairman I interviewed spoke in positive terms of how coyotes will kill a deer in deep snow: “but it’s survival for them . . . they’ll go and kill that deer / and they’ll consume the whole thing / they don’t waste.”

H. “Management”: Aims and meanings

Early in this dissertation, I noted that the institutional discourse of *conservation and management* is dominant in many contemporary public discussions of wolves and other wildlife, and thus sets the terms and context for speaking of these matters. In Chapter IV, I noted that the terms “manage” and “management” are ubiquitous, and began an examination of several meanings-in-use. Now, having considered several different discourses, I would like to revisit these terms in the context of each.

1. “Managing” across discourses

In the discourse of *conservation and management*, from which the wildlife-related uses and meanings of “management” originate, we heard a number of meanings-in-use: production management (of game), all-purpose management (of all species), and management for control and limitation (of depredation; of populations). We also heard how control and limitation uses, especially population control and limitation uses, predominate in speech about wolves and other predators; consequently—and despite the idea of ascribing positive value to wolves by managing them as “game”—we heard how some who use this discourse question the ubiquity of the term “management” and express a preference for alternatives such as “stewardship.”

In the *get-the-wolves-under-control* discourse, we heard how, in relation to wolves, “manage” and “management” are used in the imperative sense of population limitation and control (e.g., “manage wolves down to the 350 goal,” “they spread like wildfire when not managed”). Here, in other words, “wolf management” is synonymous with “predator control.” At times, in this discourse, “wolf management” is said to be analogous to management of other species; for instance, Scott Suder, co-author of the legislative mandate for Wisconsin’s 2012 wolf hunting and trapping seasons referred to those seasons as “properly managing a burgeoning population, like we do bears” (Eisele, 2012, February 10). In Wisconsin, however, from the perspective of those who employ this discourse most prominently, including the Wisconsin Bear

Hunters Association and the Hunters Rights Coalition, these two meanings and practices of management are fundamentally different: bears, like deer, ought to be “managed” as valued game, wolves as problematic predators.

In the discourse of *management-as-the-way-forward*, we heard how “management” functions as a focal imperative term, describing balanced, rational action required to maintain proper, peaceable relations between humans and wildlife. In relation to wolves, it is used in the sense of population limitation and control, especially in connection with deer populations (“management of predators . . . because they affect deer”); here, too, in other words—despite greater positive value being ascribed to the presence of the wolf on the landscape, and despite the idea of ascribing positive value to wolves by managing them as “game”—“wolf management” is primarily used in the sense of “predator control” for “game purposes.” Here, “wolf management” is more frequently and prominently said to be analogous to management of other species (“proper management of Minnesota’s wolves is the key to their healthy future, just like with deer, elk, pheasants, etc”); here again, however, the meanings are fundamentally different: deer, elk, pheasants, and other species mentioned ought to be “managed” to ensure high yields, wolves to reduce their numbers and their impacts on deer.

In the discourse of *cohabitation*, we heard the terms “manage” and “management” on occasion, but not in a population control sense. At times, they were used to refer to the imperative of depredation management (e.g., “in a much better management sense / where if you’ve got areas where there’s a lot of livestock”). Primarily, they were employed in a generic descriptive way (e.g., “wildlife managers”) and were sometimes accompanied by qualifying comments, expressing unease with how “wolf management” is likely to be shaped by animosity (e.g., “now it can be managed like any other species of wildlife . . . however . . . the reality is, of course, that the wolf is not viewed as any other species”).

In the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, we heard these terms used primarily in tribal wolf plans. In places, they were used to refer to action necessary to address conflict (e.g.,

“conflict management”) and thus to maintain harmony. Primarily, they were employed in a generic descriptive sense, referring to the plans themselves and to their implementation (e.g., “management plans,” “management issue,” “manage habitat”). These terms were not used to refer to population control except where such control was explicitly rejected.

We can hear how fluid and ambiguous the terms “manage” and “management” are. They can mean everything from producing a desired game crop to limiting or eliminating an undesirable predator. In relation to wolves, they are most frequently used in the population control sense. This predominant meaning-in-use is echoed in the imperatives articulated in *predator control* discourses, but not generally voiced in the discourse of *cohabitation* or that of *kinship and shared fates*.

Due to their ubiquity and ambiguity, these terms often obfuscate meanings. For instance, they are sometimes employed to situate wolf “management” (meaning population reduction and control) alongside other, radically different, forms of wildlife “management” (e.g., production of game species such as bear, deer, and pheasant).

2. If not “management,” what?

The limited use of these terms in, and their relative absence from, two discourses—that of *cohabitation* and that of *kinship and shared fates*—deserve attention. In both of these discourses, unease or opposition is voiced in relation to the predominant meaning of “managing” wolves (i.e., limiting or eliminating an undesirable predator population). In both, most uses of “management” are generically descriptive (e.g., “wildlife manager,” “management plan”). Such generic uses reflect the dominance of these terms in wildlife-related discourse; “manager” is, by default, what you call someone who fulfills a certain kind of role in relation to wildlife; “management plan” is, by default, what you call a government’s guiding document concerning a given species. (Notably, Red Cliff bucked the norm by titling its document a “wolf protection plan.” Several tribal plans also include “ma’iingan” alongside “wolf” in their titles.) With the

exception of addressing depredation and conflict, in short, neither of these two discourses is talking about “managing wolves” as that phrase is commonly understood.

I am reminded here of Heberlein’s commentary on Swedish cultural ideas about “caretaking” wildlife, and his mention of the fact that Swedish speakers and institutions have increasingly borrowed the English word “management.” I am reminded, too, of the DNR biologist’s metadiscursive commentary, questioning the phrase “wolf management plan” and saying he would rather call it a “wolf stewardship plan.” “Management” does not convey what he means or wants to say. Yet that is the terminology that dominates the discourse of his profession and institution.

When I sit and read a tribal “wolf management plan,” I hear a similar tension. “Management” does not convey what the authors of these documents mean or want to say. (Red Cliff’s plan uses both “protection” and “stewardship” alongside “management.”) Yet the language of “management” dominates professional, science-based discussion of wolves, other wildlife, and related policies.

I am also reminded of a comment made by GLIFWC executive administrator Jim Zorn in October 2014 during a panel discussion on hunting ethics, hosted by the Center for Ethics and Public Policy at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. In attempting to describe the ethic underlying Ojibwe hunting practices, he spoke of everything in the world having “a spirit” and of “relationships of reciprocity” based on the “orders of creation.” (Recall, from the July 2012 hearing in Stevens Point, Joe Rose’s emphasis on humans being of the fourth order and thus dependent on the previous three orders of creation: physical, plant, and animal.) “We as humans,” said Zorn, “we’ve got a lot of hubris and arrogance / we talk about ‘managing’ things out there.” Questioning the idea that “we can control it,” he suggested that “when you really put it in perspective / everything else out there in the natural world / can get along just fine without us / we are all dependent upon everything else that’s out there . . . us two-leggeds / are the most pitiful / of all things out there in the natural world.” Articulating an Anishinaabe perspective, Zorn—

who, incidentally, is white—offers a metadiscursive commentary on the language of human “management” and “control” of nature.

If the language of management were not so predominant, what words might best express and create the meanings most central to the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*? (One does not, after all, “manage” one’s brother.) And what words might best express and create the meanings most central to the discourse of *coinhabitation*? (One need not, after all, “manage” fellow hunters.)

In one sense, I ask these questions simply in the interest of clarity, in the interest of more precise and accurate communicative means. In another and more important sense, I ask them in the interest of bridging understandings, in the interest of cultivating mutual insight into communicative meanings.

I. Breaking down binaries

These five discourses complicate what is often perceived and publicly expressed as a simple binary of belief, feeling, and position: either (A) you hate wolves, favor delisting, and want a public hunting and trapping season to reduce the population, or (Z) you love wolves, oppose delisting, and want to prevent hunting and trapping and thus protect the population. In typical perceptions and expressions of this binary, hunters consistently are categorized as a core element of group A. As noted previously, for instance, mainstream U.S. media assert that proposals to delist wolves “[prompt] howls of protest from environmentalists and congressional Democrats” but “[give] ranchers, hunters and Republican lawmakers reason to cheer” (Chebium, 2013). Similar assertions can be heard elsewhere in the world as well: “How many wild wolves should Sweden have? The question is a hot political topic and stirs up many emotions, pitting animal rights activists and conservationists against hunters and cattle farmers” (“Swedish wolves,” 2011).

This dueling conceptualization is reflected in status and policy options and related pendulum swings: either (A) wolves are delisted or (Z) they are not; either (A) there is a wolf hunting season or (Z) there is not. As legal, political, and ideological battle lines are drawn over these options, the black-and-white binary is discursively reconstituted and reinforced. Communicative actions are heard and represented as being on one side or the other; actors on each side malign the other's identity, motives, and actions.

In November 2015, for instance, two groups of prominent scientists sent letters to the federal government. The first letter urged that the Great Lakes wolf population segment be removed from the endangered species list, and expressed concern that failing to delist wolves in a case of such exceedingly successful recovery is ultimately harmful to wolf conservation and to the efficacy of the ESA. The second letter urged that the Great Lakes wolves remain on the endangered species list, and expressed concern that the authors of the first letter misunderstood public attitudes toward wolves, that state approaches to wolf hunting may be unsustainable, and that the requirements for delisting have not been met.

The first letter was heralded by the Sportsmen's Alliance—an organization that “fight[s] to protect hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities” and calls itself “the country's leading advocate for sportsmen”—as an affirmation of its position, and as a rejection of the position taken by the Humane Society of the United States and other “anti-hunting,” “fringe,” “radical” groups “bent on the manipulation of the Endangered Species Act and undermining scientific wildlife management.”⁷⁹ The second letter was heralded by the Humane Society Legislative Fund as an affirmation of its position, and as a rejection of the position taken by the “handful of old-school biologists and former government types” whose earlier letter advocated “the delisting of wolves

⁷⁹ <http://www.sportsmensalliance.org/news/scientists-agree-great-lakes-wolves-no-longer-endangered/>; <http://www.sportsmensalliance.org/news/sportsmens-alliance-files-brief-in-great-lakes-wolf-case/>

and the resumption of trophy hunting and trapping.”⁸⁰ Such mutual maligning and binary opposition are unsurprising. And some of the morally infused evaluative phrases employed (e.g., “undermining scientific wildlife management,” “trophy hunting”) are, by now, familiar.

Despite their disagreement over delisting, however, these two groups of scientists do not represent two diametrically opposed sets of beliefs, feelings, and positions. They are much more closely aligned than that, somewhere between A and Z. Both groups include scientists who have dedicated their careers to wolf recovery and conservation. Divided between the two are colleagues who have worked closely with one another for decades. The first group, maligned above as “old-school biologists and former government types” who favor “trophy hunting and trapping,” includes people such as Wisconsin’s longtime head wolf biologist Adrian Wydeven, whom some have charged with favoring predators over people (“the DNR really loves predators”), and David Mech, who founded the International Wolf Center in Ely, Minnesota, and wrote that hatred “must be outdone by a love for the whole of nature, for the unspoiled wilderness, and for the wolf as a beautiful, interesting, and integral part of both” (1970). Neither Wydeven nor Mech is remotely “anti-wolf,” as the Humane Society Legislative Fund might have us believe. Nor are the authors and signatories of the opposing letter—including veteran wolf biologist Rolf Peterson—remotely “anti-hunting,” as the Sportsmen’s Alliance might have us believe.

In public discourse, in media representations, and in interaction among involved communities, the persistence of simplistic binaries typically leaves little conceptual room for cultivating greater understanding of the issues and perspectives involved: of, for instance, what values and intentions underpin letters from two groups of scientists, of what delisting and wolf

⁸⁰ http://blog.hslf.org/political_animal/2015/12/scores-of-scientists-stand-up-for-wolves.html

hunting mean for many Ojibwe people, or of what feelings and experiences are at the root of some people's deep-seated resentment of wolf-protection policies.

Though the discourses I have begun to examine in this dissertation do, at times, create and express similar binaries, in them we can also hear considerably more complexity. In the discourse of *coinhabitation*, for instance, we can hear a deep appreciation for wolves and a dislike of anti-wolf animosity, combined with mixed and conditional support for public hunting and trapping (hinging largely on whether such action defuses animosity, is conducted with appreciation, and improves the wolf's long-term well-being). Such combinations tell us that other possibilities exist, and can be created and expressed, along an A to Z continuum.

They also remind us of something suggested at various points throughout this dissertation: the idea that the expressive systems we are calling "cultural discourses" are dynamic, not static. One of the basic assumptions of cultural discourse analysis is that, though deeply rooted in the past, expressive practices and systems change. People do not merely use them as is, they also use them to create new practices and systems of meaning. As they are used, cultural discourses evolve. It is therefore possible to integrate (at least parts of) divergent and perhaps dueling discourses to create new, integrative expressive systems.

Early on, we heard how Leopold's own ways of speaking and writing about "conservation" evolved over time, and how he drew on historical resources—including the words and ideas of Muir and Pinchot—in creating a new discourse of conservation. In the discourses we have examined, other evolutions are also evident.

Consider, for example, that none of these discourses express the idea that wolves or other predators should be extirpated from Wisconsin, Minnesota, the region, or the world. Though that idea is voiced now and then, it is not accepted or expressed by any of the discourses prominent in contemporary discussions of wolves in the Great Lakes region. It is easy to take this for granted. But it is evidence of a massive cultural shift. Less than a century ago, extirpation across broad regions was urged by many, including leaders of state and federal wildlife agencies. In my data,

several interviewees spoke of similar, more specific shifts in institutional, community, and individual understandings (including their own) concerning wolves and other predators.

Such evolutions and hybrids in the past and present suggest the likelihood of others in the future. The five discourses investigated here, like other wolf-related discourses (e.g., discourses of conservation biology; discourses of animal welfare) are also evolving. Perhaps they will shift—and can be hybridized—in ways that further break down our familiar binary categories, creating more conceptual room for cultivating mutual understanding and more effective collaboration.

J. Recognizing cultural significance

If these and other (e.g., non-hunting environmentalist) discourses are to be bridged and are to begin hearing one another in more fruitful ways, one crucial step will be recognition and acknowledgment of the varied ways in which the wolf is culturally significant for all of us; that is, the ways in which varied values, premises, and histories come into play when wolves are discussed.

The Anishinaabe discourse of *kinship and shared fates* is explicitly recognized and described, by Ojibwe and non-Ojibwe alike, as a cultural way of speaking and thinking. In speech about Ma'iingan and in tribal wolf plans, for example, the “cultural significance” of, and cultural ways of knowing and valuing, this animal are identified and acknowledged. They are also distinguished from other ways of knowing and valuing the wolf. During my interview with Mike Swan, for instance, he spoke of his “main concern as a Director of Natural Resources” being to ensure “a viable population” of wolves as well as “a good population of deer for people to go out and harvest”; alongside that role and its DNR-like discourse and duties, he spoke of the other “aspects” he needs to attend to “as an Anishinaabe person.”

Non-tribal discourses are not typically recognized and described as cultural ways of speaking and thinking. In his opening remarks at the July 2012 meeting of the WI-NRB, for

instance, Kurt Thiede said that wolves are “for some / a culturally significant issue”; in other words, wolves are “culturally significant” for “some” (i.e., tribal communities) and not for others (i.e., non-tribal communities). In such depictions, non-tribal discourses—especially those in which science plays a central role—are said to be objective and non-cultural. Embedded in dominant discourses alongside the language of science, culturally and historically specific ways of knowing and valuing wolves become almost inaudible and invisible (cf. Howitt & Suchet-Pearson, 2006).

I hope that previous chapters have illustrated some of the ways in which wolves are culturally significant in all these discourses. To be sure the point is clear, I would like to add a few observations here.

The centrality of cultural significance can be heard in contemporary U.S. conceptualizations of other species of wildlife. As we have heard, for instance, deer are treated as a game species (i.e., managed for production and harvest) because they are culturally understood and valued as such. Songbirds, in contrast, are treated as protected species (i.e., legally protected) because they are culturally understood and valued as such; though they have been eaten historically and still are eaten elsewhere in the world, here they are now to be enjoyed in visual, but not gustatory, ways. Raptors such as eagles, hawks, and owls are likewise treated as protected species.⁸¹ Not long ago, these predatory birds were culturally understood much as wolves were. In the first half of the twentieth century, as Leopold noted in an essay titled “The Hawk and Owl Question,” there was “an old saying that the only good hawk or owl is a dead one” (1999, p. 145).

A deeper appreciation for the centrality of cultural significance can also be gained by further considering the aforementioned idea of animals as persons, and the aforementioned question posed by the Leech Lake draft plan: how wolf parts would be passed down to

⁸¹ Citing David (2009), the Red Cliff Wolf Protection Plan notes that—following recovery and delisting—federal protection continues to be extended to eagles, largely for cultural reasons. Red Cliff’s suggestion is that similar continued protection should be extended to wolves.

descendants. This idea and this question are likely to strike the reader as distinctly cultural, as indeed they are. I would argue, however, that their absence from other discourses is equally cultural. As heard from some cultural perspectives, *not* addressing animals as fellow persons would be heard as distinctly (and oddly) cultural. Likewise, those of us who live in the contemporary United States have particular ways of caring for human bodies (e.g., cremation, burial) which we consider respectful; not caring for human bodies—or doing so in substantially different ways—are apt to strike us as distinctly cultural. As depicted in one discourse, the wolf is a mere animal, a carcass to be disposed of as the individual human sees fit; as depicted in another, the wolf is a kind of person, a sibling, a body to be cared for in particular, respectful ways. Both of these, the familiar and the unfamiliar, are deeply and equally cultural.

Howitt and Suchet-Pearson (2006), writing of relationships between indigenous and European beliefs and knowledges in Australia, argue that the idea of wildlife “management,” often presumed to be universally relevant, is culturally specific and problematic. The idea of management, they write, is a “virtually invisible foundational concept” that is “intimately woven into the twin Eurocentric notions of development and conservation.” Referencing Ingold (2000), they note that the ideas of development and conservation, in turn, “assume not only separation between society and nature . . . but also superiority of society and humans over nature and animals.” Embedded in the idea of “management,” they argue, are assumptions about the “primacy of the human domain at the top of the hierarchical chain of being,” assumptions that have “marginalized” and “overruled” “the idea of people as kin to other species and sentient entities, as co-equal occupants of places.” The indigenous concepts often overridden by the idea of management, they write, include one translated as “caring for country,” which I hear as potentially resonant with “caretaking” and “stewardship.” One crucial point here is that ideas taken for granted in certain systems of meaning-making (e.g., the notion that we as humans can and should “manage” or “control” wildlife) are deeply cultural, and deeply at odds with ideas taken for granted in other systems of meaning-making.

I wonder whether a search for common language, grounded in the recognition that the wolf is culturally significant for all, might help DNR biologists and Anishinaabe leaders rethink and co-construct the “conceptual building blocks that are conventionally used to shape and reshape landscapes.” I wonder, too, whether the discourse of *coinhabitation* might serve as a bridge toward “recognizing and responding respectfully to those elements of cultural landscapes that Eurocentric management discourses routinely deny exist” (Howitt & Suchet-Pearson, 2006, p. 333).

It is my hope that, in thinking of and listening for culture in these ways, we will reconsider our habitual characterizations of some perspectives as cultural and other as non-cultural. Non-tribal ways of speaking about wildlife are just as cultural—just as rooted in distinctive processes of meaning-making and distinctive expectations about what kinds of speech are relevant—as Ojibwe ways are. As noted in the literature review in Chapter II, Endres (2012), among others, has argued that lack of viable means for publicly identifying and discussing competing cultural values is a flaw in common models for public participation: one that obstructs full participation by marginalized groups including American Indians.

K. Summary

In this chapter, I have compared the five discourses in several (of many possible) ways. First, I discussed the contrasting identities, matters of concern, and discursive hubs central to each discourse, and also several premises which all five discourses appear to share, concerning (1) the need to ensure the continued existence of wolves in the state, region, and world, and (2) the need to prevent and minimize conflict between wolves and humans, depredation of livestock and pets, and threats to human safety. I then considered how these discourses variously express and depict ideas prominent in earlier interpretations, including where wolves should (not) dwell, the nature of human-wolf interactions, relationships among wolves, hunters, and deer, (in)valid reasons for hunting and trapping wolves, and how wolves killed in hunting or trapping are (not) utilized.

In these comparisons, considerable resonance is audible between the discourse of *cohabitation* and the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, despite markedly different cultural contexts. Considerable resonance is also audible between the two discourses of *predator control*, despite markedly different conceptualizations of the (un)welcome presence of the wolf on the landscape and of the DNR as an ally or enemy.

Between these two groups—(1) the discourse of *cohabitation* and the discourse of *kinship and shared fates* and (2) the two discourses of *predator control*—considerable differences can be heard (e.g., wolf as fellow hunter and brother versus wolf as undesirable competitor; deer and deer hunting as not threatened versus seriously threatened; dwelling and relationship as hubs versus action as a hub). These two groups of hunting communities may differ over wolves at least as substantially as we are often told (e.g., by media) that hunters and environmentalists differ. As noted in Chapters VI and VII, the discourse of *cohabitation* and that of *kinship and shared fates* both depict *predator control* discourses as *not* representative of how all hunters think and speak. (See Appendix B for a chart comparing selected features of the five discourses.)

Finally, I returned to an issue raised earlier in the dissertation—the language of “management”—and discussed ways in which consideration of these five discourses may help us break down binary ideas about views of wolves, bridge understandings, and potentially create hybrid discourses. In this chapter, and in the dissertation as a whole, a central point has been that wolves are culturally and symbolically significant for members of all the communities considered in this study: Departments of Natural Resources responsible for wolf conservation, Ojibwe leaders responsible for the future of their people and their brothers, white hunters who love living and hunting among wolves, white hunters who want wolf numbers reduced somewhat to help deer numbers, and white hunters who want wolf numbers and territories reduced dramatically for several reasons.

If understandings are to be bridged, these varied forms of cultural significance will have to be understood. These various discourses—as well as discourses created and employed by

others, notably including non-hunters concerned about wolves and other wildlife—will have to be honored. The hubs of meaning central to each will have to be comprehended. The histories in which each is rooted will have to be acknowledged. The deep feelings underpinning each—including feelings of anger and resentment—will have to be heard.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

In Chapters IV-VII of this dissertation, I described and interpreted five distinct, prominent wolf-related discourses used by hunters and hunting communities in the western Great Lakes region: one institutional (DNR) discourse (*conservation and management*) and four community discourses: two discourses of *predator control* (*get-the-wolves-under-control* and *management-as-the-way-forward*), a discourse of *cohabitation* and a discourse of *kinship and shared fates*. In Chapter VIII, I shifted to a comparative and inter-discursive mode, examining relationships among the five.

In this final chapter, I begin by reiterating key points about the nature of this study and its claims. Next, I draw together central findings from the preceding chapters. I then discuss the study's potential implications and contributions. Finally, I suggest avenues for future research.

A. Nature, scope, and limitations of the study

This is a study of discursive practices, of ways people speak and write. This study does not claim that all hunters or hunting communities in the western Great Lakes region speak or write about wolves in these ways, nor that all hunters (or other people) elsewhere do so. In this region and others, people may speak and write of wolves in distinctly different ways.

What this study claims is that certain ways of talking about wolves—certain cultural discourses—are created and used by some hunters and hunting communities. These discourses, as described and interpreted in this study, are rooted in distinct sets of cultural premises and are created and employed using distinct sets of cultural terms. This study also claims that these discourses are deeply significant to those who speak and write in these ways.

This study also demonstrates one way of using the theory and methodology of the ethnography of communication and cultural discourse analysis (CuDA). It shows how attending

closely to what people say and write, and describing and interpreting this, can assist us in (1) identifying patterns of discourse and ranges of meaning, (2) formulating understandings of the sometimes-unspoken beliefs and values that underlie people's utterances, and (3) linking these patterns, ranges, beliefs and values to broader cultural patterns, historically and in the present. It further shows how comparative analyses can assist us in identifying and gaining insight into inter-discursive echoes and duels. As I hope this study demonstrates, CuDA provides a valuable framework for understanding variations in communicative means and meanings, as they are created and used across different communities and cultures.

This study and its scope have a number of limitations. One limitation is that I spent limited time (nine weeks) doing on-the-ground fieldwork in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Though many data sources were accessible remotely, and though I was able to conduct some interviews by phone, this constraint limited my opportunities for conducting in-person interviews and attending public events.

Another limitation is that I favored breadth over depth. Though I sought to describe and interpret each discourse in some detail, the scope of the project (encompassing five distinct discourses) made deeper exploration impractical. As a result, I undoubtedly overlooked relevant dimensions of each discourse. In the case of the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, for example, I did not significantly explore related talk of tribal authority, sovereignty, or treaty rights. In the case of the discourses of *predator control*, I did not significantly explore related talk concerning issues such as mining or the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

Another limitation is that, despite my favoring of breadth, many communities and discourses did not receive the attention they warrant. From among the region's many tribal communities, for instance, the study only considers an Ojibwe discourse. Though the Ojibwe are the most numerous American Indian group in the region, and have been the most vocal in wolf-related debates, other tribal communities' discourses also deserve consideration. These include,

for example, the Menominee, Mohican, Dakota, and Ho-Chunk. As noted in Chapter I, the discourse(s) of Minnesota's numerous Hmong hunters are also not represented in this study.

B. Central findings

To briefly recap, the overarching question guiding this study has been the following: How do people create and use discourses concerning wolves? Or, more simply, how do people talk and write about wolves, and what do they mean?

This study discovered several distinct, patterned ways of speaking (and writing) about wolves, employed by hunters and hunting communities in the western Great Lakes region. Initial fieldwork and analyses led to the formulation of a model of four prominent and distinctive cultural discourses among regional hunting communities. This model was later refined to five: an institutional discourse of *conservation and management*, two discourses of *predator control*, a discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, and a discourse of *cohabitation*. The formulation of this model can be considered the study's first substantial finding.

I then proceeded with description and interpretation of these five discourses. As I described and interpreted them, the central ideas of each discourse are these:

- *Conservation and management*: We must act to recover and maintain a viable wolf population and to address wolf-human conflict.
- *Get-the-wolves-under-control*: The state must act to reduce and control an overabundant wolf population unjustly forced upon us by outsiders.
- *Management-as-the-way-forward*: The state must actively manage the wolf population for the benefit of all people, especially deer hunters, and all species, especially deer.
- *Kinship and shared fates*: Ma'iingan the wolf is a brother whose fate parallels ours and whose future health and abundance we must ensure.
- *Coinhabitation*: The wolf is a valued member of the intact, wild, natural places and communities where we dwell and hunt, and should be appreciated as such.

Then, in the chapter preceding this one, I compared these five discourses and considered relationships among them. As I interpreted and compared them, these discourses are all deeply

cultural and have several premises in common, especially concerning the continued existence of wolves and the prevention and minimization of wolf-human conflict. But they revolve around markedly contrasting hubs, ideas, and matters of concern, with the two discourses of *predator control* in audible tension with the discourse of *coinhabitation* and that of *kinship and shared fates*. Among these discourses, common themes include the following:

- how wolves should (not) be “managed”;
- what “management” means (or should mean) in relation to wolves;
- places where wolves should (not) be;
- where and how physical boundaries should be maintained between (1) wolves and (2) humans and domestic animals;
- the nature of human-wolf relations and interactions;
- wolves’ effects on deer, deer hunting, and deer hunters;
- wolves’ roles in the larger natural world;
- (in)appropriate reasons for hunting and trapping wolves;
- the (ir)relevance of an ethic of utilization in hunting or trapping predators;
- a range of larger symbolic meanings of wolves (e.g., wildness, people’s well-being, government oppression).

The reader may note that I have employed four of the modes of inquiry encompassed by cultural discourse analysis (CuDA)—theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, and comparative—but not the fifth mode (critical). I chose this approach not because I think the critical mode has no place in such research (see Carbaugh, 2007) but rather because I believe strongly in seeking to understand people’s systems of meanings on their terms and from their perspective. This requires a commitment to holding one’s own views and ethical evaluations in abeyance, at least until description, interpretation, and comparison have been completed in sufficient depth. Had I allowed my evaluative, critical voice to overshadow my interactions and analyses, I would almost certainly have failed to hear—or failed to comprehend—many of the basic concepts and premises presumed and created in these discourses.

C. Potential implications and contributions

As indicated at the outset, this study is linked to several different literatures. Methodologically and theoretically, it is housed within CuDA and the ethnography of communication more broadly. This framework has provided the study with an overall orientation toward culture and communication, including a crucial commitment to attending to participants' discursive means and meanings. This framework has also provided the study and author with a set of analytic concepts (e.g., cultural terms, cultural propositions, cultural premises, hubs, and radiants) which have proved vital in describing, interpreting, and explicating those means and meanings (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013). Though the study is not focused on theoretical or methodological contributions to or development of this framework, one aspect of the project is worth mentioning here: namely, the multiplicity of voices audible in it.

Had I investigated only one discourse, helpful descriptions and interpretations might have emerged. Had I investigated two discourses, helpful comparisons might also have been produced. But neither of these approaches would have yielded the variety and nuance of a multi-discourse analysis. If, for instance, I had only considered one *predator control* discourse—or one *predator control* discourse plus the Ojibwe discourse of *kinship and shared fates*—certain dimensions would not have been readily distinguishable. The distinct differences between the two *predator control* discourses, for instance, would not have been evident, nor would their very different relations with the DNR discourse of *conservation and management*. Likewise, the discourse of *cohabitation*—and its resonance with certain dimensions of the discourse of *kinship and shared fates*, as well as its distinct tensions with *predator control* discourses—would not have been evident.

The point here is simple: multi-case interpretive and comparative analyses draw our attention to different and more diverse dimensions (and roots) of discourses than do single- or two-case investigations. By conducting comparative analyses based on investigations of multiple discourses, we are pushed to step back from patterns of binary thought which are, for many of us,

quite habitual. Rather than attending primarily to contrasts between discourses, we are led toward more nuanced understandings (e.g., discourse A and discourse B employ a given term in markedly different ways, yet they share premises which discourse C does not; discourse C and discourse D share central premises and meanings, yet are rooted in radically different cultural histories and are expressed using substantially different communicative means). Such nuanced, non-binary understandings of cultural groups, viewpoints, and communication practices—and intentionally cultivating habits of, and commitments to, developing such understandings—are of significant value in the ethnography of communication, among other fields.

Topically speaking, the study is housed within the subfield of environmental communication. Previous research in this subfield has provided the study with a broad scholarly context. Such research, for example, set the project within the context of earlier investigations of human/animal boundaries and relations (e.g., Milstein, 2008, 2011; Schutten, 2008), predators including wolves (e.g., Clarke, 1999; Corbett, 2006; Salvador & Clarke, 2011), and indigenous cultural perspectives and practices (e.g., Carbaugh & Rudnick, 2006; Clarke, 1999; Endres, 2012; Rowe, 2008; Salvador & Clarke, 2011; Tipa, 2009). Some research within this subfield has also provided prior examples of nature-focused analysis rooted in the ethnography of communication and CuDA (e.g., Carbaugh, 1996a, 1996b, 1999; Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013; Cerulli, 2011; Milstein, 2008, 2011; Morgan, 2002, 2003).

This study contributes to the subfield of environmental communication in two ways. First, it offers descriptions, interpretations, and comparisons of communicative practices used by hunters, including both Euro-American and Ojibwe participants. As noted at the outset, contemporary hunters—especially white hunters—and their cultural practices and perspectives are not often considered carefully in the social sciences, let alone in this subfield. Rather, they are often treated as monolithic and univocal.

Second, this study offers an ethnographic investigation of a specific, situated, conflicted, contemporary social and cultural scene. Like other environmental communication research before

it (e.g., Carbaugh, 1996b; Carbaugh & Rudnick, 2006; Milstein, 2008), this study provides detailed analyses grounded in particular places and situations. In this study, it is shown that symbolic communicative means and meanings (e.g., concerning who or what wolves are; concerning how wolves interact with or relate to humans; concerning boundaries between wolves and humans) both shape and are shaped by tangible social and material realities (e.g., various political relations among groups of people; wolves' various patterns of behavior). The study thus contributes descriptions, interpretations, and comparisons of a new set of grounded, situated cultural voices.

Topically, this study is also linked to a vast extant literature on wolves, wolf-human relations, wolf conservation, and wildlife conservation more broadly. This literature has provided the study with an expansive scholarly and conceptual context, grounded in a wide range of disciplines, from biology and ecology to history, anthropology, sociology, and psychology. This study is especially linked to—and complements and converges with—others' work on beliefs, values, and practices concerning wildlife in general and predators in particular. This study contributes to this vast wolf-and-wildlife literature in several ways.

First, it offers an in-depth examination of hunters' wolf-related discourses. Previous research, especially survey-based quantitative studies, has investigated hunters' attitudes toward wolves. And social scientists have noted that hunters have diverse views; as the reader may recall, for instance, Nie has commented that “pigeonholing hunters can be as difficult and foolhardy as stereotyping ‘the environmentalist,’” and that “some of the most ardent wolf and wilderness advocates hunt” (2003, p. 58). Yet detailed interpretive and comparative analyses of hunters' ways of speaking about and conceptualizing wolves has been lacking. In this study, such analyses show, for example, that common values and beliefs concerning wolves can be found among hunters across cultural groups (e.g., the idea of the wolf as a “fellow hunter” to be respected is shared by Euro-American hunters who employ a discourse of *coinhabitation* and by Ojibwe hunters who employ a discourse of *kinship and shared fates*). They also show that markedly

contrasting beliefs and values can be found among hunters within a group that might, to outsiders, seem somewhat homogenous (e.g., some white Euro-American hunters in northern Wisconsin primarily employ a discourse of *coinhabitation*, while others primarily employ a discourse of *predator control*).

Second, the study offers descriptions, interpretations, and comparisons of terms, meanings-in-use, and cultural logics prominent in scientific, legislative, and public discourses concerning wolves and other wildlife. These analyses will, I hope, increase understanding of how such terms—especially the term “management” and associated meanings and logics—are employed in these and other spheres. Perhaps the study will even increase the likelihood that alternative terms and concepts will be considered and used, both to add clarity of meaning and to draw attention to other conceptual and cultural possibilities. The study may make more space for participants in these various spheres and discourses to consider critiques like that made by the biologist who expressed his preference for “stewardship,” by Heberlein (2005) who suggested “caretaking,” and by Howitt and Suchet-Pearson (2006) who investigated and questioned the dominant use of “management” as a wildlife-related term and concept.

Third, the study provides descriptions, interpretations, and comparisons of wildlife-related talk concerning science and values. In some cases, “science” and “rationality” are invoked in explicit contrast to “irrationality,” “emotion,” or “cultural values”; in such cases, it is said that wildlife-related decision-making should be based only on the former. In other cases, it is said that science can only inform such decision-making and cannot answer the fundamentally value-based questions involved; in such cases, science and other bases for decision-making (e.g., values, culture, feeling, tradition) are depicted as parallel resources, both of which are necessary and both of which should be acknowledged and employed. The study’s investigation of forms and instances of communication which make science and values explicit will, I hope, provoke further consideration of these dynamics in wildlife-related professions, in public discourse and debate over wildlife issues, and in other arenas.

Typically, portions of this study—namely, those that consider Ojibwe discourse—are also related to a range of literatures on Ojibwe and other American Indian (Native American) understandings of animals and on these peoples’ relationships with Euro-Americans. Though this study is not an in-depth ethnography of Ojibwe culture, it contributes to these literatures in several ways. First, it offers descriptive and interpretive analyses of an Ojibwe cultural discourse as used in a contemporary and hotly contested political scene: a scene in which public, civic participation plays an important role, and in which certain expressions of Ojibwe perspectives and values (e.g., tellings of a creation story) are widely heard as “religious” and therefore irrelevant to the civic debate over wildlife management policy and science (cf. Endres, 2012). Second, the study shows how central aspects of this Ojibwe discourse (e.g., the idea that Ma’iingan and Ojibwe share parallel fates) are rooted in historical and ongoing relationships between the Ojibwe and Euro-Americans, including actions taken by Euro-Americans toward both wolf and Ojibwe and Euro-American discourse created and used concerning both (e.g., “the only good wolf is a dead wolf,” “the only good Indian is a dead Indian”). Third, as noted above, the study shows that close attention to cultural discourses can yield insight into central premises (e.g., concerning the wolf as a “fellow hunter”) which, in different communities, may be voiced as part of substantially different cultural discourses. This provides a discourse-based demonstration of the kind of insights offered by Ross, Medin, and Cox (2007), who indicated that some Euro-American hunters share a range of views and ethics with the majority of tribal hunters. Such insights into cross-cultural premises can, of course, also be developed regarding matters other than hunting, wolves, wildlife, and nature.

It is my hope that this study will also make contributions that extend beyond scholarly literatures. In light of the study’s focus on diverse hunting communities and hunting-related discourses, for instance, it is my hope that it will increase the nuance and sensitivity with which these communities and their understandings are approached by scholars and professionals. It is

likewise my hope that it will increase the nuance and sensitivity with which these communities are understood by fellow inhabitants of wolf country.

Listening and watching as wolf-related events have unfolded in the western Great Lakes region over the past few years, I have been struck by the depth and difficulty of the social, cultural, and political conflicts involved. In light of that difficulty, I do not know—and would think it presumptuous to suggest—that my research will have significant implications for people’s social, cultural, and political lives there, or for the lives of wolves. In a modest way, though, perhaps this study has something to offer.

I am thinking here of the relationships among the five discourses considered in this study, among the people and communities who speak in these ways, and, more broadly, among all people and communities involved in and concerned about wolf-related issues. I am thinking of the deep distrust I heard voiced in these communities. I am thinking, too, of the great frustration I heard voiced, both about the wolf situation and about the obstacles to having what one Wisconsin hunter referred to as “productive,” “meaningful,” and “honest dialogue.” I am thinking, too, of a conversation I had with an Ojibwe tribal chairman who spoke of there being “multiple sides to this concern” and of the need to listen to all viewpoints. “I’d really love someday,” he said, “to get those . . . different opinions / in one room / and just talk about the animal / see what it comes down to.”

Considering these relationships, these feelings of distrust and frustration, and these apparent desires for greater understanding, I am reflecting on Madden & McQuinn’s (2014) contention that effective conservation depends on meaningful collaboration among disparate players, requiring the reconciliation of complex, deep-seated social conflicts among organizations, social and cultural groups, and state, federal, and tribal governments. Though it is often said (e.g., in DNR discourse) that conflict *between* wolves and humans are a cause for serious concern, Madden & McQuinn contend that predator-related conflicts are primarily conflicts among people *about* predators. Other scholars and researchers (e.g., Nie, 2003) concur.

As Boitani (1995) put it, “almost any wolf ‘problem’ is first a human problem, and as such it should be addressed” (p. 10).

In the interest of conservation, collaboration, and conflict transformation, I hope that my research will, in some small measure, help these communities and others reflect on their own and others’ perspectives and identify common ground in places where it already exists. Where common ground does not already exist, I hope that this study will, as one Wisconsin hunter put it, help more people to comprehend “why some of those people think the way they do” and will “somehow make empathy and understanding a little easier.” With a bit more empathy and understanding, perhaps each community will find it a bit easier to imagine—and even take steps toward—creating new common ground and common language (Carbaugh, 1996b).

I hope, too, that readers who do not inhabit the western Great Lakes region, and perhaps have no wolves nearby, will recognize and learn from similar discourses created and employed in the places where they dwell. In late 2015, as I was wrapping up a full draft of this dissertation, I read an article concerning coyotes in the mid-Atlantic states, as well as a critical commentary on the article. The article, written by a hunter, was immediately recognizable as an expression of a variant of *predator control* discourse, identifying coyotes as the “predominant killer” of fawns, advocating “population control,” and criticizing “anti-hunters” for failing to “understand wildlife management.” The responding commentary, written by a hunter with a wildlife biology background, was immediately recognizable as an expression of *cohabitation* discourse, identifying wild canids as “part of the local ecosystem,” advocating the “use of their beautiful and valuable fur” if they are killed, and criticizing the “‘humans are all that matter’ attitude” that underpins the idea of killing coyotes in an attempt to produce “more deer” for us. Though related to a different geographic area and a different species, the resonance was striking.

More broadly, I hope this study helps people recognize that culture and meaning are central to matters of conservation, that our decisions and actions (including our communicative actions) are rooted in values. It is, of course, crucial that conservation be *informed* by science. But

we are never simply *following* science. Acknowledging that science does not directly determine our courses of action—acknowledging that cultural values (even, and perhaps especially, the oft-invisible ones) play significant roles—would, I think, facilitate greater understanding and collaboration.

Finally, I hope that this study will encourage its readers to approach other situations and issues with an ear to the expressive systems and nuances of meaning audible in various discourses. We are all accustomed to hearing, understanding, and speaking of things from culturally specific vantage points. Whatever our vantage point, and whatever the situation or issue, there are other ways of hearing, understanding, and speaking, and other cultural logics that can be (and are being) presumed and created. We have much to learn from listening closely and thinking imaginatively, with or without the aid of a specific interpretive approach (e.g., CuDA).

If I were asked to make a policy recommendation regarding wolves, I would—echoing Boitani (1995), Nie (2003), and Madden and McQuinn (2013)—suggest that much greater attention be devoted to understanding the sociocultural dimensions of wolf conservation. Human understandings, perceptions, values, and beliefs have shaped the histories of the wolf around the world. They will shape its futures as well.

D. Future research

This study, and the interpretations and comparisons made herein, were guided by an overarching research question: How do hunting communities create and use discourses of wolves? Or, more simply, how do people in these communities talk and write about wolves, and what do they mean? This question, and related others, could be fruitfully explored in ways that would further develop and substantially add to this study's findings.

Within the general confines of this study's focus—discursive practices among hunting communities in the western Great Lakes region—several avenues could be pursued. The data I have gathered and similar other data could be further described and interpreted. Each of the

discourses I have formulated could be further investigated and explicated, my formulations of these discourses could be refined and revised, and comparative analyses of relations and dynamics among these discourses (and potential others that may be formulated) could be extended in several ways. Development of this study's findings could, for example, proceed along the lines of questions such as these: In what ways do dynamics among particular discourses play out in particular social and institutional (e.g., explicitly policy- and legislation-oriented) scenes? What roles are played in such scenes by communicative means or meanings shared by discourses (e.g., by that of *management-as-the-way-forward* and that of *conservation and management*; by that of *cohabitation* and that of *kinship and shared fates*)? What roles are played in such scenes by means and meanings that duel with one another?

Still within these general confines, future research could also attend to areas neglected by this study. Future investigation and analysis could, for instance, more deeply consider and address discursive dimensions touched on but not treated as focal here (e.g., tribal sovereignty in Ojibwe discourse; ecology and ecological responsibility in DNR discourse). Future research could also investigate other institutional discourses active in the region's wolf issues and debates (e.g., legal discourse in legislative and judicial contexts). Additionally, other hunting regional communities (e.g., Hmong, Menominee) could be investigated and their discourses compared with one another and with the discourses considered in this study.

Outside these regional and hunting community confines, yet still with a focus on discursive practices, many additional avenues could be pursued. Of the wide range of possibilities, here I suggest only a small fraction. Similar research could, for instance, be conducted among non-hunters and non-hunting communities and conservation organizations in the western Great Lakes region, exploring the discourses they create and use in relation to wolves. The findings from such research, and the cultural discourses formulated, could then be compared with discourses from hunting communities, identifying both similarities and differences in communicative means and meanings. Likewise, similar research could be done

among farmers and livestock producers in the region, and comparisons made among various hunting and farming discourses, considering how each conceptualizes wolves in relation to other animals (e.g., sheep, cows, deer). Similar research—among hunting communities, non-hunting communities, and farming communities—could also be pursued in other regions of the United States (e.g., regarding gray wolves in the northern Rockies, the Mexican gray wolf in the Southwest, the red wolf in the Southeast, and coyotes across much of the country) and in other regions of the world (e.g., regarding wolves in various parts of Europe) and cross-regional comparisons could be made; from my reading concerning wolf- and other predator-related discourses elsewhere, it appears there may be considerable resonance with my findings in the Great Lakes region.

Outside this study's focus on cultural discourses, future related research could be conducted in a wide array of disciplines, including several already mentioned. Employing other approaches to environmental communication (e.g., rhetorical studies) researchers could further investigate wolf-related talk and writing among various hunting communities and others, in the western Great Lakes region and elsewhere. In environmental communication and other fields, deeper analyses could be conducted concerning the ways in which the language of "science" is employed in public debates over wildlife policy (among many other matters), and how such language is contrasted and/or blended with emotion and morally infused cultural values.

Beyond the field of communication, scholars interested in wolves, wolf-human relations in general, and wolf-hunter relations in particular could extend these investigations in helpful directions. In the "human dimensions of wildlife" field, for example, in which extensive survey-based research has been conducted on attitudes toward wolves, the findings of this study could be used in the design of future surveys of hunters and others. This study could also be extended by scholars in various disciplinary approaches to Native American studies (e.g., anthropology, history, sociology), investigating various Ojibwe and other American Indian views and voices and the distinct shapes given by each to wolves, other predators, and wildlife in general, and how

these are—or are not—linked to the shapes given by each to relations with Euro-Americans in the past and present.

In any or all of these ways, it is my hope that future research will yield greater insight into the discourses I have identified, will refine my initial conceptualizations of them, and will identify variants of these discourses as well as distinct others. Even more so, it is my hope that such research will make a difference for the people, organizations, and institutions most invested in wolf country and wolf conservation—and in wildlife habitat and conservation more broadly—helping them as they seek to resolve conflicts, improve relations, and ensure the best possible future for humans and wildlife alike.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Wolves in general

- Growing up, how did you feel about wolves? Did you ever see wolves? Did you hear stories about wolves? [Talk about past feelings concerning, and human relationships with, wolves.]
- How do you feel about wolves now? What do you like or value about them? What do you dislike or find troubling about them? [Talk about current feelings concerning, and human relationships with, wolves.]
- Have you ever seen or heard a wolf? Do you know other people who have seen them? What were those encounters like? [Talk about interactions with wolves.]
- What are your main hopes or concerns about wolves here? [Talk about human/wolf relationships and interactions.]
- What do you think of current policies and politics in relation to wolves? [Past- and present-oriented evaluative talk concerning wolves, human-wolf relations, and wolf policy.]
- What do you think will happen if wolf policy continues on its current trajectory? [Future-oriented talk concerning wolves, human-wolf relations, and wolf policy.]
- What are your thoughts on wolf predation on deer? What are your thoughts on wolf depredation on livestock? Do you think predation or depredation needs to be controlled by humans? If so, how? [Verbal depictions of wolves as killers of animals especially valued by humans. Talk about appropriate human actions toward wolves.]
- Are there particular places where you think wolves should or should not be? [Verbal depictions of wolves and humans in place; discourses of dwelling and boundaries.]
- If you wanted someone from far away to understand your thoughts on wolves here, what would be most important to tell them? [Talk about motives and meanings, especially in relationship.]

Talk about wolves

- What do people here say about wolves? What different kinds of conversations do you have about wolves? How do those conversations go? [Reports of “wolf talk.”]
- How do other people respond to your views on wolves? [Talk about interviewee’s perception of how his or her position is treated by others.]
- Who else here thinks and feels the way you do? [Verbal depictions of communities that share values in relation to wolves.]

- What do other people think about wolves? What different positions do other groups take? Why do you think they think and feel the way they do? [Ascribed views and depictions of others' discourses and values.]
- Do you think other groups really get where you're coming from? If not, what don't they get? [Further depictions of others' discourses and values. Articulation of ways in which participants feel (mis)understood.]

Hunting/killing of wolves

- Do you have any interest in hunting or trapping wolves? Why or why not? [Avowed values, norms, and motives.]
- If you have hunted or trapped wolves, can you tell me about the experience? [Hunting and trapping stories.]
- Why do you think people want to hunt or trap wolves? [Ascribed motives and beliefs.]
- Do you know anyone who has killed a wolf? What have they said about it? [Talk about hunting and trapping of wolves, legal or illegal.]

Closing

- Is there anything else that's important to you about wolves? Anything else you find yourself thinking or talking about in relation to wolves? [Open space for expression of additional discursive meanings that are prominent for the participant.]
- Are there other people you would suggest I talk with, to better understand how wolves are seen here? [Suggestions of additional participants.]

APPENDIX B

COMPARATIVE CHART

| | <i>Conservation and management</i> | <i>Get-the-wolves-under-control</i> | <i>Management-as-the-way-forward</i> | <i>Kinship and shared fates</i> | <i>Coinhabitation</i> |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| Common ground | <p>We should ensure the continued existence of wolves in the world, region, and state.</p> <p>Conflict between wolves and humans should be prevented and minimized.</p> <p>Depredation of livestock and pets should be prevented and minimized.</p> <p>Threats to human safety are minimal and should be minimized.</p> <p>People should be able to defend themselves and their animals from immediate danger.</p> | | | | |
| Central hub | Action | Action | Action | Relationship | Dwelling |
| Central idea and imperative | The state must act to recover and maintain a viable wolf population and address wolf-human conflict. | The state must act to reduce and control an excessive wolf population unjustly forced upon us by outsiders. | The state must actively manage the wolf population for the benefit of all people, especially hunters, and all species, especially deer. | Ma'iingan the wolf is a brother whose fate parallels ours and whose future health and abundance we must ensure. | The wolf is a valued member of the intact, wild, natural places and communities where we dwell and hunt, and should be appreciated as such. |
| Central symbolism of the wolf | A legally, biologically, numerically defined population and species; a source of conflict and challenge | Domination by outsiders; a threat to local autonomy and ways of life, including hunting | A threat to deer and deer hunting; a predator that must be managed and controlled | Cultural survival and renewal; a brother and guide; a mirror of our past, present, and future | Wildness; ecological wholeness; a fellow hunter to be appreciated |
| Central problem(s) | Wolf-human conflicts; social and political conflicts over wolves | Imposition of wolves on local people by outsiders, including federal and state agencies | Irrational opposition to responsible, state-led wolf management | Euro-American fear of, hostility toward, and failure to understand both wolf and Ojibwe | Animosity toward wolves; hunters blaming wolves for perceived lack of deer |

| | <i>Conservation and management</i> | <i>Get-the-wolves-under-control</i> | <i>Management-as-the-way-forward</i> | <i>Kinship and shared fates</i> | <i>Coinhabitation</i> |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Should wolf numbers be reduced to improve deer hunting? | No; deer numbers are sufficient for wolves and hunters | Yes; deer belong to the people, especially hunters | Yes; deer belong to the people, especially hunters | No; wolves and people both need deer; there are enough deer for both | No; wolves have as much right to deer as we do; deer do not belong to us |
| Wolf-deer relations and appropriate human responses | Wolves do not impact deer numbers significantly; deer numbers dictate wolf numbers; management of both is determined ecologically and socially | Wolves decimate deer; predation should be reduced by dramatic reductions in wolf numbers | Wolves affect deer; predation should be controlled through responsible, rational management | Wolves do not impact deer numbers significantly; deer numbers determine wolf numbers; deer and habitat should be managed to ensure the future of wolves | Deer numbers determine wolf numbers; both are part of a whole, intact ecosystem; predation should be respected and accepted |
| Wolf-human relations (especially wolf-hunter relations) | Wolves are a species to be recovered and managed by humans; wolves and humans conflict with each other | Highly conflicted competitive relationship between predators and people, including hunters | Conflicted but manageable competitive relationship between predators and people, including hunters | As brothers, Ma'iingan and Ojibwe walk parallel paths; similar in many ways; in harmony; not in competition with each other | As fellow hunters, wolves and humans are part of the same whole; similar in some ways; not in competition with each other |
| Meanings-in-use of "wolf management" | Varied meanings; often encompasses all wolf-related policies and programs | Imperative of population control; should be much more aggressive than recommended by DNR | Imperative of population control; should proceed as DNR recommends, with input from hunters | Imperative of maintaining harmony; some need for depredation management; population goals and control rejected | Imperative to address depredation; rejection of management or population control guided by animosity |
| Public hunting and trapping of wolves | Optional; distinct from depredation control; virtually irrelevant to deer numbers | Necessary for multiple reasons, including substantial population reduction to protect deer and livestock | Necessary for responsible management and population control, especially to reduce wolves' impacts on deer and deer hunting | Unacceptable; distinct from depredation control; not needed in connection with deer hunting; possibility of tribal take for appropriate traditional uses | Optional; distinct from depredation control; irrelevant to deer hunting; possibly helpful in defusing animosity and cultivating appreciation |

| | <i>Conservation and management</i> | <i>Get-the-wolves-under-control</i> | <i>Management-as-the-way-forward</i> | <i>Kinship and shared fates</i> | <i>Coinhabitation</i> |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| Use of wolves hunted or trapped | Utilization not directly addressed; defining the wolf as a game species linked to ascribing more value to them | Utilization not addressed; ethic of utilization sometimes rejected explicitly | Utilization not central, though sometimes suggested as tangentially relevant | Respectful hunting or trapping of any animal requires sufficient use; wasting an animal is unacceptable; any wolf take should be in winter when pelts are prime; ceremonial uses are addressed | Respectful hunting or trapping of any animal requires sufficient use; wasting an animal is unacceptable; any wolf take should be in winter when pelts are prime |

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