Wolf restoration to the Adirondacks: the advantages and disadvantages of public participation in the decision

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Abstract

The first time I ever saw a wolf in New York State’s Adirondack Mountains was in 1956. It was a brush wolf, or coyote (Canis latrans), not a real wolf, but to an eager young wildlife student this distinction meant little. The presence of this large deer-killing canid let my fresh imagination view the Adirondacks as a real northern wilderness.

Since then I have spent the last 40 years studying the real wolf: the gray wolf (Canis lupus). Although inhabiting nearby Quebec and Ontario, the gray wolf still has not made its way back to the Adirondacks as it has to Wisconsin, Michigan, and Montana. Those three states had the critical advantages of a nearby reservoir population of wolves and wilderness corridors through which dispersers from the reservoirs could immigrate.

The Adirondacks, on the other hand, are geographically more similar to the greater Yellowstone area in that they are separated from any wolf reservoir by long distances and intensively human-developed areas aversive to wolves from the reservoir populations. If wolves are to return to the Adirondacks, they almost certainly will have to be reintroduced, as they were to Yellowstone National Park.

Wolf reintroduction, as distinct from natural recovery, is an especially contentious issue, for it entails dramatic, deliberate action that must be open to public scrutiny, thorough discussion and review, and highly polarized debate. This is as it should be because once a wolf population is reintroduced to an area, it must be managed forever. There is no turning back. The wolf was once eradicated not just from the Adirondacks but from almost all of the 48 contiguous states. That feat was accomplished by a primarily pioneering society that applied itself endlessly to the task, armed with poison. We can never return to those days, so once the wolf is reintroduced successfully, it will almost certainly be here to stay.

Study Area
Another disadvantage of having a democratic form of government is the fact that unlike in a monarchical form of government where decisions are made by one individual, this type of government follows protocol when it comes to decisions and law-making. Since coming up with decisions will undergo processes, time is needed to do so and this can take a long time. 5. It favors the majority. Since elected officials are given the chance to be in office by way of the number of votes or a majority vote, members of the minority might not be given the voice. There is no perfect form of government – all have its upside and downside. What is important is that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Share. Tweet.