

WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CONGRESS

Spring Hearings — April 2026

Proposed Resolutions Package

Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf & Wildlife

Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance | speakforwildlife.org

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RESOLUTIONS IN THIS PACKAGE

1. Conflict of Interest & Financial Disclosure — WCC Committees & DNR Stakeholder Groups
2. Climate-Threatened Species: Proactive State ESA Listing Review
3. 10-Year License Revocation & Public Offender Registry for Poaching Violations
4. Special Wildlife Crime Prosecutor Funded by Deer License Surcharge
5. Expanded Statewide Notification: Depredation, Hound Losses & Human Safety Threats
6. Elimination of State Financial Assistance to Captive Cervid (Deer Farm) Operations

SUBMISSION NOTE: Resolutions must be submitted in person at your county hearing. If a resolution was previously rejected, at least five words must be changed before resubmission. Delegates may adapt any resolution in this package for their county. Pre-modified versions available from GLWA upon request.

RESOLUTION 1

Conflict of Interest & Financial Disclosure Requirements for WCC Committee Members and DNR Stakeholder Groups

WHEREAS, public trust in Wisconsin's wildlife management depends on the integrity, impartiality, and transparency of those who serve on Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) advisory committees and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) stakeholder and oversight groups;

WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Madison requires all employees, researchers, and faculty to publicly disclose employment, financial interests, property holdings, organizational memberships, and outside affiliations as a condition of their public service — establishing a clear and well-tested precedent for transparency in taxpayer-funded decision-making;

WHEREAS, individuals who serve on WCC committees and DNR stakeholder, advisory, and oversight bodies exercise significant influence over wildlife policy, hunting and trapping regulations, and the management of Wisconsin's public natural resources, creating a heightened duty of transparency;

WHEREAS, financial interests, real property ownership, employment relationships, membership in or donations to national, regional, or state hunting, trapping, agricultural, or conservation organizations, and the holding of hunting or trapping licenses or permits can all constitute material conflicts of interest that may influence official duties;

WHEREAS, citizens have a right to know whether those making or advising on wildlife policy have financial stakes, property interests, or organizational loyalties that may conflict with the public interest — and those unwilling to provide that transparency should not be empowered to make decisions about public resources;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Conservation Congress and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources shall require all individuals serving on any WCC advisory committee or DNR stakeholder, advisory, or oversight body to complete and publicly file an annual conflict of interest disclosure that includes, at minimum:

- (a) Current employer and any employer with a financial interest in Wisconsin wildlife, natural resources, land management, or wildlife policy;
- (b) Ownership or financial interest in any real property in Wisconsin, including agricultural land, timber holdings, hunting leases, or land subject to DNR permits, licenses, or regulation;
- (c) Current and recent membership (within five years) in any local, state, regional, or national hunting, trapping, farming, conservation, or wildlife-related club, organization, or NGO — including any leadership, board, or officer position held in such organization;
- (d) Donations of \$250 or more in any calendar year to any wildlife, hunting, trapping, agricultural, or conservation organization that engages in Wisconsin wildlife policy advocacy;
- (e) Any hunting, trapping, fishing, or other DNR license or permit currently held by the member;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that failure to complete or accurately file the required annual disclosure shall disqualify the individual from serving on any WCC committee or DNR stakeholder body until the disclosure is filed and verified;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all filed disclosures shall be made publicly available on the WCC and DNR websites in a searchable, machine-readable format, updated annually;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the WCC shall adopt formal conflict of interest recusal procedures requiring members with a direct financial, property, or organizational stake in a matter before the committee to recuse themselves from deliberation and voting on that matter;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Legislature is urged to enact statutory authority for these disclosure requirements to ensure their permanent enforcement.

Note: This resolution mirrors existing standards at UW-Madison and other public institutions. Transparency about employment, property, memberships, and financial ties is a foundational democratic accountability measure — not a burden. This is not a radical concept. It is what every public university employee in Wisconsin already does.

Submitted by: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

RESOLUTION 2

Proactive State Endangered & Threatened Species Listing Review for Climate-Vulnerable and State Wildlife Action Plan Species

WHEREAS, climate change is altering the distribution, abundance, and survival prospects of numerous Wisconsin wildlife species at an accelerating rate — including species already identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan, compiled using the DNR's own scientific data;

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Endangered Species Law (Wis. Stat. § 29.604) authorizes the DNR to list species as Endangered or Threatened based on scientific evidence — yet the DNR has not conducted a systematic, publicly transparent proactive review of candidate species;

WHEREAS, the DNR has failed to respond to a citizen petition for state wolf listing filed over 260 days ago, demonstrating the urgent need for a mandated review process with defined response timelines;

WHEREAS, early, proactive listing of climate-vulnerable species enables protective action before populations reach critical thresholds, is more cost-effective than emergency intervention, and fulfills Wisconsin's public trust obligation to future generations;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Conservation Congress urges the DNR to establish a formal, recurring review process — conducted no less than every three years — to evaluate whether any species designated as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan should be elevated to Endangered or Threatened status under the Wisconsin Endangered Species Law;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the review shall specifically consider documented and projected climate change impacts on habitat, food availability, reproduction, and migration, using the best available scientific data;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DNR shall provide a public written response to all citizen petitions for state ESA listing within 90 days of receipt, with a final listing determination issued no later than 18 months from the date of petition filing;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the WCC urges the Wisconsin Legislature to amend Wis. Stat. § 29.604 to codify these review obligations and timelines.

Note: Wisconsin already identifies at-risk species through the Wildlife Action Plan. This resolution asks the DNR to act on its own data — before species decline to crisis — and to respond to citizens who petition for protections within a reasonable timeframe.

Submitted by: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

RESOLUTION 3

10-Year Hunting & Trapping License Revocation, National Registry, and Permanent Committee Bar for Poaching Violations

WHEREAS, wildlife poaching — including the unlicensed taking of any species and the illegal killing of Endangered, Threatened, or Species of Concern — is a serious violation of Wisconsin's public trust in natural resources and undermines law-abiding hunters, trappers, and wildlife managers;

WHEREAS, current penalties for poaching in Wisconsin are insufficient to deter repeat violations, and offenders frequently continue to hold hunting and trapping licenses and serve on public wildlife advisory bodies after documented convictions;

WHEREAS, a national license revocation database exists through the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact but is inconsistently applied, allowing convicted poachers to obtain licenses in other states;

WHEREAS, individuals who have demonstrated willful disregard for wildlife law should not be empowered to shape wildlife policy through service on taxpayer-funded committees, stakeholder bodies, or oversight groups;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Legislature and DNR amend Wisconsin's wildlife laws to provide that any person convicted of poaching — including unlicensed take of any species or the intentional killing or harming of any Endangered, Threatened, or Species of Concern — shall have all Wisconsin hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses revoked for a minimum of 10 years;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the revocation shall be reported to and enforced through the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact so that revoked individuals may not obtain hunting or trapping licenses in any member state during the revocation period;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any individual convicted of a wildlife poaching violation shall be permanently barred from serving on any WCC committee, DNR stakeholder or advisory body, or any other taxpayer-funded wildlife management or oversight group in Wisconsin;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DNR shall maintain a publicly accessible, searchable online database of all individuals whose licenses have been revoked for poaching violations, including the offense, date of conviction, and revocation period;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in any case involving a documented threat to human safety — including illegal killing, harassment, or pursuit of wildlife in proximity to residences, trails, farms, or public areas — the DNR shall publicly disclose relevant evidence consistent with applicable law to inform and protect the public.

Note: Those who break wildlife laws should face real, lasting consequences — including permanent loss of any role in shaping public wildlife policy. A searchable public database and national revocation reporting close the loopholes that let poachers move across state lines or continue influencing policy.

Submitted by: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

RESOLUTION 4

Dedicated Special Wildlife Crime Prosecutor with Statewide Investigative Authority, Funded by a \$5 Deer License Surcharge

WHEREAS, wildlife crime in Wisconsin — including poaching of Endangered and Threatened species, illegal trafficking, and large-scale unlicensed commercial take — is prosecuted inconsistently across counties, with rural districts frequently lacking resources, expertise, or political will to pursue complex wildlife cases;

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Justice and county district attorneys currently have no dedicated wildlife crime unit with statewide investigative authority, resulting in unequal enforcement of Wisconsin's wildlife laws based on geography;

WHEREAS, wildlife crime has documented connections to organized criminal activity and can involve interstate trafficking networks, requiring coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Homeland Security, and other federal agencies;

WHEREAS, Wisconsin deer hunters represent the largest group of licensed hunters in the state, directly benefit from healthy, well-managed wildlife ecosystems, and have a demonstrated stake in the integrity of Wisconsin's wildlife laws;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Legislature establish the position of Special Wildlife Crime Prosecutor, housed within the Office of the Attorney General, with statewide investigative authority and jurisdiction over all wildlife crime matters, including coordination with county district attorneys and with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Homeland Security, and any other relevant federal law enforcement agency;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the position shall be funded through a dedicated \$5.00 surcharge added to the base price of all Wisconsin deer hunting licenses, with the exception of licenses issued to youth hunters (under age 16) and disabled hunters, the proceeds of which shall be deposited into a dedicated Wildlife Crime Enforcement Fund;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Special Wildlife Crime Prosecutor shall issue an annual public report to the Legislature and the Wisconsin Conservation Congress detailing cases investigated, charges filed, convictions obtained, and legislative recommendations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the WCC urges the DNR and Attorney General to support and advocate for this legislation as a matter of equal justice and resource conservation.

Note: At current deer license sales, a \$5 surcharge would generate an estimated \$3–4 million annually — more than enough to fund a dedicated prosecutor and investigative staff. Consistent, expert, statewide prosecution is the single most effective deterrent to wildlife crime. This is a hunters-funding-hunters-interests solution.

Submitted by: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

RESOLUTION 5

Expanded Statewide DNR Notification System: All Wildlife Depredation, Hound Losses, Human Safety Threats & Real-Time Wolf Depredation Alerts

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin DNR currently operates an opt-in statewide notification system for wolf depredation threats and hound safety alerts in wolf-occupied areas, and Wisconsin residents may already subscribe to receive such alerts — demonstrating that the infrastructure for this notification system already exists;

WHEREAS, depredation of livestock, pets, and property by wildlife species other than wolves — including bear, coyote, and others — occurs on both private farmland and public land and similarly warrants timely notification to affected landowners and the public;

WHEREAS, hound hunters face risks from numerous species beyond wolves, and hound losses attributable to any wildlife species should trigger timely notification to the hunting community and affected landowners in the relevant area;

WHEREAS, public safety threats arising from wildlife activity — including injured or aggressive animals, disease-positive animals, or wildlife posing documented risk of human harm — require prompt, transparent communication from the DNR to protect Wisconsin residents;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Conservation Congress urges the DNR to expand its existing statewide opt-in notification system to include:

- (a) Depredation of livestock, pets, or property by any wildlife species on both private and public land, not limited to wolf activity;
- (b) Death or injury of any hunting hound attributable to any wildlife species, including wolf, bear, or coyote;
- (c) Any documented threat to human health or safety arising from wildlife activity, including attacks, disease-positive animals, or aggressive behavior posing imminent risk;
- (d) All confirmed wolf depredation events statewide, issued on a real-time or near-real-time basis via agency-wide email and text notification to all subscribers;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DNR shall publicize the expanded notification system through all agency channels, hunting and farming license mailings, and the agency website, and shall make subscription free and accessible via text, email, and phone;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DNR shall publish a monthly public summary of all depredation events, hound losses, and human safety notifications issued during the prior month, disaggregated by species, county, and land type.

Note: If farmers and hound hunters in wolf country can already opt in to receive these alerts — and they can — there is no reason the same system should not cover all depredation events, all species, and all public safety threats. This is basic transparency, not a new concept.

Submitted by: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

RESOLUTION 6

Elimination of State Financial Assistance to Captive Cervid (Deer Farm) Operations and Mandatory Insurance Requirement

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's captive cervid (deer farm) industry operates for private commercial profit and poses documented risks to Wisconsin's wild deer herd — including as a primary vector for the introduction and spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) into new areas of the state;

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin currently provides captive cervid operators with financial assistance including fencing cost-sharing, depredation payments for losses attributed to predators, and disease-loss compensation funded by Wisconsin taxpayers;

WHEREAS, Wisconsin taxpayers should not bear the financial risk of a private commercial enterprise — including losses from predator depredation, CWD, disease transmission, or the escape of captive animals into the wild deer herd;

WHEREAS, the escape of captive cervids from farm facilities poses serious risks to Wisconsin's wild deer population through disease transmission, genetic mixing, and habitat competition, and such escapes are preventable through proper facility management and operator accountability;

WHEREAS, insurance products are available to commercial agricultural and livestock operations to cover losses from predation, disease, and negligence, and captive cervid operators should bear the cost of such coverage as a basic condition of operating a commercial wildlife enterprise;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Legislature and DNR eliminate all state financial assistance to captive cervid (deer farm) operations, including but not limited to:

- (a) State cost-sharing or grants for fencing, facility upgrades, or CWD-related infrastructure on private captive cervid operations;
- (b) Depredation payments for livestock or captive cervid losses attributed to wolves, bear, or any other predator species;
- (c) Disease-loss compensation payments for CWD-positive herd depopulation or any other communicable disease loss in a captive cervid operation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature require all captive cervid operations to carry private liability and loss insurance as a condition of maintaining a captive wildlife permit in Wisconsin, covering predation losses, disease losses, and any costs associated with escape of captive animals into the wild;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any captive cervid operation whose animals escape and are determined to pose a CWD or disease transmission risk to Wisconsin's wild deer herd shall bear the full cost of any resulting testing, eradication, or remediation, and shall face automatic permit suspension pending investigation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that funds previously allocated to captive cervid assistance programs shall be redirected to wild white-tailed deer habitat improvement, CWD surveillance in wild herds, and public land hunting access programs.

Note: Deer farms are private commercial businesses in an industry that poses documented, serious risks to Wisconsin's \$1.5 billion wild deer hunting economy. Asking taxpayers to subsidize their losses while those businesses profit — especially as CWD threatens every hunter's future — is simply indefensible. Insurance exists. Use it.

Submitted by: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

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Defending Wisconsin Wildlife Through Litigation, Legislation & Public Accountability