Felice
Pace

28 Maple Road Klamath, Ca 95548 707-4820354
unofelice@gmail.com

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To Capital Press Editors:

A headline on a front page article in the January 13th edition is not only inaccurate it is irresponsible. “Californians howl over wolf’s arrival” suggests that the majority of Californians don’t want wild wolves in the state. That is not the case. If you check with the California Department of Fish & Game or look at letters to the editor around the state, you will see that the rabid wolf haters you focus on in the article are a minority even among Californian’s involved in agriculture.

Except for hard-core ideologs, most Californians understand that a return of top predators to California would have multiple benefits along with a few drawbacks. Active wolf packs make elk and deer herds healthy by culling old and sick animals and taking some fawns so that the remaining animals have a better chance of survival. Because they force elk herds to stay on the move, riparian vegetation will improve as has been demonstrated in Yellowstone National Park. Deer herds which have suffered as elk herds increased might make a comeback with wolves on the scene. Hay farmers might not lose so much of their crop to elk and deer.

A given area of wildlands can only support so many predators. Wolf packs in Northern California would mean fewer mountain lions and coyotes. Coyotes are by far the leading cause of livestock losses to predators; domestic dogs are the #2 cause. Wolves run off or kill coyotes and are known to kill dogs too; as a result, net losses to predators might not increase with wolves on the scene.

These statistics are available on line. They are available to the reporter who wrote the article in the January 13th edition and to the editor who wrote the headline. What is not clear is whether reporter and editor care about the facts or would prefer to take the easy road: don’t do research and sensationalize a story by reporting the radical minority views of rabid anti-wolf politicians.

Anti-nature politicians and ideology-driven Farm Bureau types notwithstanding, wolves will reinhabit Northern California on their own initiative and will survive in spite of persecution. Studies have shown that the habitat and prey base are more than adequate. OR-7 may have to leave to find a mate; but he also might return to Northern California with that mate. Sooner or later, wolves will once again live in Northern California wildlands.

Felice Pace
Klamath and Etna, CA