

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 29, 2015

The Honorable Jonathan B. Jarvis
Director of National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Director Jarvis:

As the National Park Service (NPS) considers actions related to the sharp decline of the wolf population from nine to three wolves at Isle Royale National Park, we urge that NPS immediately begin reviewing options to address the declining wolf population, including species augmentation, and that a final decision be made as quickly as possible. We request that NPS accelerate this process and complete its planning in a year or less, instead of NPS' estimated timeline of two to three years.

An extinction of wolves at Isle Royale could lead to significant, harmful changes to the ecosystem in this remote park. The three remaining wolves may struggle to reproduce, and if they do produce offspring, the tiny genetic pool will lead to inbreeding and further complications. Unless the NPS acts quickly, wolves are almost sure to disappear from Isle Royale.

Wolves are recognized in official NPS planning documents as playing an important role in the Isle Royale ecosystem. Wolves help keep the park's moose population in check. Moose numbers increased significantly over the past few years, and without an apex predator, the moose population will continue to grow unchecked until an eventual collapse due to degradation of vegetation.

It is our understanding that NPS has already made the decision to not bring new wolves to Isle Royale in the immediate term. Bringing new wolves to Isle Royale, also known as species augmentation, should be preserved as an option in order to prevent losing this unique wolf population. Valuable time has been lost because a review process has not yet started.

NPS is expected to start an initial scoping process in the coming months with a broader review expected to be completed in two to three years. This timeline simply does not align with the reality of Isle Royale's current wolf population. NPS should reach a management decision while all options, including species augmentation, remain available. If NPS is unable to complete a reasonable assessment in a year, an emergency action to address the dire genetic situation should be considered in the interim while a longer analysis and planning process is conducted.

We believe that NPS should prioritize review of options to address the Isle Royale wolf population as quickly as practicable. We urge that the NPS accelerate completion of a National Environmental Policy Act planning process and conclude this process by June 1, 2016. Replenishing the current Isle Royale wolf pack should be strongly considered, especially as an emergency measure if the process takes longer than twelve months. Given the timely nature of this issue, we would appreciate a response to this request by July 1, 2015. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue, and we look forward to working together going forward.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator