

N

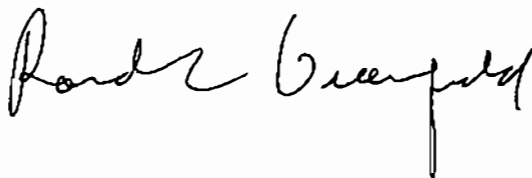
Rand L. Greenfield
747 Fairway Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107
Tel. 505-341-2281, e-mail: rand.greenfield@yahoo.com

RECEIVED
SEP 19 2007
FWS-NMFS

September 17, 2007

Brian Millsap
NM State Administrator, USFWS

Dear Mr. Millsap,
Mexican wolves are a critical part of a healthy ecosystem and must be protected. Standard operating Procedure 13 must be permanently suspended and wolves allowed to roam beyond the artificial boundaries of the program. Livestock owners in the area should be required to engage in mitigation efforts and improved animal husbandry. Thank you,



✓
Dear Mr. Milligan

November 30, 2007

This is in regard to Mexican gray wolf NEPA
Scoping program. I am unable to attend.

However, I fully support your program
and see that you and friends & gray wolves
can do to protect them and insure
they have a safe future in our state
and Arizona.

These beautiful animals are worthy
to protect + care for. Please do all you
can. Thank you

Billie W. Green

204

1325 Park Ave SE

Albany, NM 87102

✓
/

DECEMBER 3, 2007

Brian Millsap, State Administrator
US Fish and Wildlife Service
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Attn: Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping

In light of the fact that the USFWS plan to recover the endangered Mexican gray wolf has failed to meet its modest goals, I urge you to make major and serious changes to the entire wolf recovery plan in conjunction with changing the 10(j) rule. In order to comply with the Endangered Species Act which mandates that endangered species not only be protected but that they be recovered, the USFWS must stop the ineffective and detrimental practices that are failing to recover the species and put in place practices that set aside political appeasement and put in place sound biological practices that will ensure lasting wolf recovery.

USFWS must first and foremost:

Remove the "experimental, non-essential" status of wolves inside the "recovery zone" and reclassify them to "experimental, essential" or to what they are, "endangered". The classification of Mexican gray wolves as experimental, non-essential has been a complete failure and has hindered the successful recovery of the species.

Along with the classification change the USFWS must:

Stop killing and/or removing wolves. The wild population of wolves have been harassed, wounded, and killed to no end under the nonessential classification which allows USFWS to remove them by whatever means necessary.

The other huge failure of the current wolf management has been to impose political boundaries for the wolves. USFWS needs to:

Remove the politically-imposed recovery boundaries. It has been extremely frustrating to watch this failed policy as it has been implemented on the ground. Removing or relocating wolves that cross the boundary line have disrupted packs by breaking down the pack structure such that there is no cohesion, no expansion or natural dispersal of the wolves. Wolves need access to large areas of suitable habitat and sustainable recovery of the species is not possible under this rule of the current plan.

New measures need to be included in a revised wolf recovery plan. Many such measures were outlined in the USFWS-commissioned biological report by the renowned wolf biologist P.C. Paquet (Paquet, et. al., 2001). USFWS must:

Implement the recommendations given in the Paquet report, including removal of livestock carcasses and, as previously mentioned, allow wolves to roam freely. Livestock grazing on public lands is a privilege given to local ranchers and they need to take responsibility to implement whatever measures necessary to not habituate wolves

to easily-attained prey such as livestock. They must be required to remove or neutralize/make inedible livestock carcasses on public lands. If they are concerned about wolves coming near their homes they should employ better animal husbandry practices such as fencing in livestock, and bringing all domestic animals in at night to protected areas (barns, sheds, etc.). When people live near wild, natural areas they must be willing to adjust their lifestyles to accommodate for the wildlife they have chosen to live with.

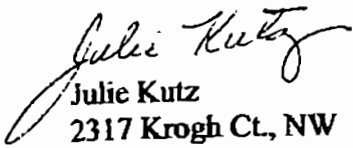
3.3 T

2711

Expand the number of wolves in the wild and locate new recovery areas. The arbitrary number of wolves that USFWS had previously set was for a minimum of 100 for a poorly-defined recovery of the species. This number has not been achieved and the effort to achieve that number has not been serious, therefore the way to ensure a true recovery is to set a higher goal and identify new recovery areas.

The area that wolves can be recovered in is 95% public land – most of which is federal public land that belongs to US citizens from around the country, not just a minority of the population that lives in adjacent or nearby counties. Polls have shown that the majority of the people in the states of Arizona and New Mexico and in the country as a whole support wolf reintroduction and recovery. USFWS must not forget its mandate with the ESA and must remember the will of the public at large when deciding how to manage the Mexican gray wolf.

The majority of opposition comes from local ranchers who are fortunate enough to be allowed to graze their livestock on publicly-owned allotments and from outfitters who also make money from taking hunters in to public lands to hunt elk. I believe that in order to have that privilege of making profit on public lands, these groups must be willing to compromise and allow USFWS to obey their mandated duty. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this critical issue.


Julie Kutz
2317 Krogh Ct., NW
Albuquerque, NM 87104
505-248-1511

kutzalbuq@aol.com

Reference:

Paquet, P.C., J. Vucetich, M. Phillips, and L. Vucetich. 2001. Mexican wolf recovery: three year program review and assessment. Prepared by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (IUCN) for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. CBSG-IUCN, Apple Valley, Minnesota.

✓
December 4, 2007

Brian Millsap, State administrator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

RE: Mexican Gray wolf NEPA Scoping

Dear Mr. Millsap

I am writing to comment on the rule change process regarding the future of Mexican gray wolves and requesting that everything necessary be done for wolf recovery. It is important to continue wolf recovery in New Mexico and I support and appreciate the U.S. Fish and Wildlife efforts.

Sincerely



Sharon Frazer
6501 San Antonio NE #2901
Albuquerque, NM 87109

RECEIVED
DEC 26 2007
USFWS-NMESFO

Cynthia Benedict
9415 De Vargas Loop NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
December 6, 2007

Mr. John Slown
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Dear Mr. Slown:

I attended the public scoping open house in Albuquerque on Nov. 30, 2007 and wish to submit my comments regarding the effort to make changes to the Rule 10(j) governing the New Mexico Gray Wolf Introduction Project. Please consider the following recommendations.

- The changes that are made to the Rule need to be done in conjunction with the revision of the Recovery Plan.
- Please consider a conservation alternative that would change the classification from "experimental, non essential" to "experimental essential". This change in designation is essential to provide stronger protections that will aid in the recovery of the wolf population.
- To the extent you can influence wolf migration and use of lands under non federal jurisdiction, please work to allow the wolves to cross jurisdictional boundaries without interference.
- Initial release of wolves should be considered throughout the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. This will provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a greater range of options for release and will enhance the opportunity to develop a stronger, more viable wolf population.
- Please work with permittees who graze livestock on federal lands to take a critical look at what can be done *on both sides* to reduce incidents of wolves killing livestock. Historically, before the introduction of cattle, wolves depended upon other prey for their subsistence. Do what can be done to not habituate wolves to feeding on cattle. Require permittees to remove the carcasses of livestock who die on federal land in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery area and National Forest lands adjacent to it.
- In the revision of the Rule, it is essential that the wolf removal or "take" be reduced. During their reintroduction, it is imperative that your agency provide deferential treatment to the Gray Wolf. Otherwise, your actions to kill or remove them will be counterproductive to your efforts to reintroduce them.

- Trapping and releasing wolves that move outside the boundary of the Recovery area is expensive and impactful to wolf packs. The Recovery area should be expanded east into the Gila National Forest and the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. This expansion makes good sense and will save time and funds and allow your agency to focus on more pressing needs related to the wolves, such as monitoring.
- Domestic dogs should not be protected. Pet owners and permittees have a responsibility to control and protect their dogs, and not put them at risk of an encounter with wolves.
- It is important to maintain the current regulations under the current rule. These address what actions may and may not be taken to harass or kill wolves. To expand harassment options or grounds for taking will impact the wolves' ability to recover and thrive.
- The Mexican Gray Wolf is an integral part of the larger ecosystem. Follow the will of the American public and work in due diligence to help the wolf population recover. Thoughtful changes to the Rule, and a concurrent amendment to the Recovery Plan is essential to meet the goal of re-establishing a viable population of Mexican Gray Wolves in Arizona and New Mexico.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Benedict
Cynthia Benedict

✓
Sallie McCarthey
3012 Don Quixote NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104
December 9, 2007

Dean Millsap, State Administrator
US Fish & Wildlife Service
NM Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Dear Mr. Millsap:

I hope you will do everything in your power to support the wolf recovery program. These creatures are familial, sociable, and protective of their young. We humans could learn something from them.

The fact that they are seen as wild predators should be viewed as something that benefits the ecosystem. Maybe your F&W Service could do more to help them prey on other wild creatures and not on cattle.

Thank you for your cooperation with this important work you are doing.

Sincerely,
Sallie McCarthey

Dec 10, 2007

Attn: Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping

Dear Mr Brian Millsap:

I am writing on behalf of the Wolf Reintroduction Program.



I fully support reintroducing wolves to New Mexico. However, it appears to me, our current plan is a death sentence for the wolves.

I urge you to support changes in the current wildlife rules. For example, a regulation requiring ranchers to dispose of cattle that die out in the fields. Also, given all the high tech surveillance equipment that exists, consider requiring such equipment to alarm or scare away wolves from cattedled enclosures. And also, to mandate that the 200 square miles per wolf need is met Before releasing the wolves into our state.



I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely
Janeth Blanchard

Phone 505-266-0279

Ms. Janet L. Blanchard
1024 Jefferson St SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108

2301 Artesanos Ct NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
December 15, 2007

RECEIVED

DEC 26 2007

Attn: Mexican Gray Wolf Scoping **USFWS-NMESFO**

Dear Mr. Millsap,

We are writing to express our support for the Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Program. We are very concerned about the degradation of our natural environments and know that the restoration of a top predator will bring many benefits to the ecosystem it lives in. We are very unhappy with the disregard that the Fish and Wildlife Service and other government agencies have shown for the conclusions of scientific studies. We ask that you please respect the wishes of the public and work to implement the management changes that scientists have recommended to ensure the Mexican Wolf's recovery.

Thank you,

Paul and Julie Chynoweth



12/19/07

Brian Millap, State Administrator
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
N.M. Ecological Service
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, N.M. 87113

Att: Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping

I have been concerned about the Mexican Wolf being released because Ranchers shoot them —
Maybe if ranchers were fined for shooting the wolves if the program would have a better chance —

Also, is there habitat enough away from highways where wolves are run over?

If wolves are not afraid of humans, I can see the concern parents have over the safety of their children —

I wish these wolves could roam freely as they once did. But, I'm against hunting & anything that harms wild

animals

why can't humans share the planet? — humans are violent & blood thirsty.

& most men would love to have a wolf head mounted above their fire place —

Good-luck to the wolves —
— but procedures will have to change if they have a chance —

M.V. Pregelzer
13009 Arroyo de Vista
Albuquerque, NM
87111

John Slown
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

RECEIVED

DEC 20 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

I would like to submit the following comments regarding the reintroduction of the Mexican gray wolf.

It is clear that the current rules under which the reintroduction is being managed are not working. Far too many of these animals are being captured or destroyed; making a mockery of the time and money that has gone into this program. This will go on and on under the current rules, at great disservice to the animals and the taxpayers. The Endangered Species Act *requires* this program go forward to a successful reintroduction and this should be done expediently.

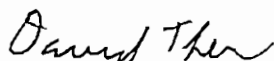
Most importantly, Fish and Wildlife must pull back from thinking that the livestock interests must continue doing business the way they always have, making absolutely no effort to modify their operations to accommodate the wolves. These are public, multi-use lands and grazing should be administered as a privilege, not a right. There is ample evidence that modifications to ranching practices can make these operations compatible with the presence of wolves.

There are large areas of the Gila ecosystem that are not being used for the reintroduction, especially the interior areas of the West Fork Gila and White Creek, where there many elk and large distances from human activities.

There should be no circumstance to justify destroying these animals in their habitat. It is beyond belief that Fish and Wildlife is in the habit of hiring people to go in, at great expense, using helicopters, to shoot these animals. How much wasted money do these kills represent, from captive breeding to field tracking to the costs of the kill operations?

I attended the recent scoping meeting in Albuquerque, NM. I heard Fish and Wildlife representatives describe the program and its problems. What most impressed me on listening to these folks is their lack of passion for the program. Frankly, they all seem to be coasting to retirement. This program would especially benefit from bringing in new professionals who believe in the program and want to do what it is required to make it a success.

Sincerely,



David Ther
1517 Stanford Dr NE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

December 20, 2007

John Slown
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

RECEIVED

DEC 20 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

Regarding: Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping

Dear Mr. Slown,

I am writing to offer my comments for the National Environmental Policy Act Scoping Process of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program. I support the recovery of the Mexican wolf from extinction.

Wolves are a keystone species. They contribute to the biodiversity necessary for the quality health of the ecosystem.

Like our nearby neighbors Colorado and Arizona, New Mexico is experiencing population growth. This growth jeopardizes the preservation of our great open spaces and our western heritage. By giving wolves the space to recover as a species, we are also saving the undeveloped land that we know and love. About 95% of the wolf recovery area is public land. I support multiple uses of public land, which includes use by ranchers, hunters, recreationists, and wildlife, including wolves. Let's not wake up too late to preserve the wild places that make New Mexico so special for both residents and visitors.

Recovering Mexican wolves as a species in New Mexico is an investment that will pay off far into the future in environmental preservation and accompanying sustainable economic development. Wildlife draws tourists to New Mexico, resulting in eco-tourism dollars. The presence of wolves can also improve the hunting experience. Wolves make elk skittish - that is, they behave "naturally" due to the presence of predators. In the northern Rockies, where the Rocky Mountain gray wolf has made a recovery at this time, elk no longer stand around in the open gawking at pickup trucks. This makes for a higher quality experience for hunters, not to mention the thrill of hearing wolves howl at night. Also, wolves cull the elk of animals sick with brucellosis, which can spread from elk to cattle. This is an economic advantage to cattlemen.

I believe in multiple uses for public lands in New Mexico. Multi-use of public land, in the end, protects all the uses on the land, as well as the land itself. The ranchers' cattle feed my body. Wolves feed my soul. Here are two quotes that relate to how wolves can stir the human soul. Thoreau wrote, "In short, all good things are wild and free." Aldo Leopold wrote: "Everyone reached for their guns and began to fire away; we reached the old wolf in time to watch the fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have

known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes - something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunter's paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view."

I believe that the human species has a God-given responsibility to preserve and protect all life on earth - no exceptions. This is the moral of the story of Noah's Ark. Everyday we hear about another species in the world that needs saving. Tigers, apes, polar bears, grizzly bears, and whales are some examples. New Mexicans have a wonderful opportunity to save the Mexican wolf, which is in danger of extinction in our own backyard. By saving the wolf, we help preserve the creation God gave us.

There have been exaggerated claims that wolves are a threat to humans. Rick Coddington, who writes a column for the Mountain Mail newspaper wrote on 11-15-07: "When we finally do have a tragedy, what then? Does anybody have an idea about how to get the feds' attention before we realize a worst case scenario?" Representative Steve Pearce used exaggeration in his efforts to end the wolf reintroduction program also. Speaking before a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, Pearce asked the committee chairman, "Do you want the blood of New Mexican children on your hands?" The fact is that a human is more likely to be injured by a pet dog than a wild wolf. Exaggerating the danger of wolves in the wild needs to stop. A typical Mexican wolf weighs 50-80 lbs., and is about 5 ½ feet in total length (the size of an adult German shepherd). No wolf in the wolf recovery area has injured a human. Other fearsome predators coexist with humans in New Mexico, such as black bears, mountain lions, and bobcats. Rather than instilling fear of wolves in our children, I believe we owe it to ourselves, our children, and our children's children to hold wolves in reverence and help them survive.

Historically, there has been an imbalance in the management of public lands and wildlife, such as wolves. The Fish and Wildlife Service was established in 1885 as a scientific research organization. It became a predator control agency, serving the interests of the agriculture industry. Michael Robinson, carnivore coordinator for the Center for Biological Diversity, writes in Predatory Bureaucracy that agents hired by the FWS were awarded an assigned number of points for killing a wolf, which influenced pay and promotion. The Fish and Wildlife Service distributed poison throughout rural America to exterminate wolves. Now the Fish and Wildlife Service is working to bring the Mexican wolf back from extinction through the Wolf Recovery Program. However, the policies and procedures of the program consistently give livestock primacy over wolf survival and recovery in all conflict situations. Former Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator David Parsons wrote on 12-12-06 that "anti-wolf politics have been controlling agency decisions and actions to the detriment of wolf recovery."

In New Mexico year-round public lands grazing of cattle has allowed ranchers to live on tiny parcels of private land and run their cattle on tens of thousands of acres of public

lands, usually with little or no tending or monitoring by range riders. Ranchers have a history of being good stewards of the land. But now I join many New Mexicans in asking the ranchers to share the publicly owned lands with other lovers of the Wild West, including those who want the return of the wolves to their native land.

The conflict between ranchers and wolf conservationists has been deliberately stirred up by some politicians and some media writers. For example, Rick Coddington in his "The Right Side" column for the Mountain Mail refers to "the Wolf War in Catron County." I agree with Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, the present Southwest regional director of the recovery program, when he says, "Ideally, ranchers ought to be able to ranch and wolves ought to be able to be wolves, independent of the politics."

I propose that a win-win situation is possible to resolve areas of conflict among stakeholders affected by the Wolf Recovery Program. It is very important that those with the most to risk be listened to and have their needs be considered in re-designing the program to accomplish its goal of wolf recovery more effectively than it has in the past. Ranchers and wolf conservationists do share common goals. For example, a group of ranchers called People for Preserving Our Western Heritage are calling for the permanent protection of 302,000 acres of federal lands in Dona Ana County. Their proposed legislation, called "Dona Ana County Planned Growth, Open Space and Rangeland Preservation Act," would prohibit the federal lands at issue from ever being sold, mined or drilled. This shows that ranchers and conservations share common goals and can work together to protect public lands. This gives me hope that cooperation from all sides can happen to save the Mexican wolf from a second extinction.

The example of Montana in the recovery of the western gray wolf also gives me hope for the Mexican wolf recovery in New Mexico. Like New Mexico, in Montana, rangeland is interspersed with wolf habitat. In the Montana program everyone had a say. Ted Williams wrote the following report in the May-June, 2007 issue of Audubon: "Good wildlife management cuts across party lines. In 2000 Governor Mark Racicot, a conservative Republican and ardent Bush supporter, appointed a Wolf Advisory Council, comprised of 12 citizens who represented everyone from hunters to stockmen to Indians to animal-rights activists to general wildlife advocates. The council heard from 49 states and collected 10,000 comments, then submitted everything to Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. The agency's plan lets the wolf population grow wherever it doesn't conflict with human activities. "Montana has basically hired all the good people who worked for the federal government," says the National Wildlife Federation's Struhsacker. "They're great negotiators, great proponents for wolves. They know how to talk to ranchers.""

In New Mexico the Wolf Recovery Program has been a hot topic of debate between extremes from the environmental and ranching communities. I propose that dialogue replace debate. I propose that the silent majority on all sides of the issue come together with a sincere motivation to get along. People from all sides who love the wildness of the West share common problems, such as drought, animal diseases, economic hardships, and residential and/or industrial over-development. They also share many common goals

- quality of the air, water, and land, and protection of open space. I believe New Mexicans have the skills in communication and problem-solving to arrive at win-win solutions for the continuation and success of the Wolf Recovery Program.

In addition to negotiating a win-win situation with all stakeholders, a well-managed wolf recovery program would include the following components, in my opinion. I support the Bailey Wildlife Wolf Compensation Trust of the Defenders of Wildlife. This fund reimburses ranchers for livestock losses caused by wolves. In this way the economic burden of wolf recovery is shifted from ranchers to those who support wolf reintroduction. The fund is a model of the incentives that might be offered to private landholders for supporting wolf recovery. In Idaho the U.S. Congress has arranged for a \$100,000-per-year slush fund that compensates ranchers even if they can't produce evidence that a wolf was responsible for a livestock loss. In the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, including Wyoming and Idaho, the National Wildlife Federation has purchased from ranchers 474,627 acres of federal grazing allotments. Then the Federation has retired the federal grazing allotments. The Forest Guardians are also building a fund for a voluntary buy-out program of grazing allotments. It would also be helpful if Congressman Steve Pearce would sponsor a bill to fund forensics research to help ranchers show evidence of wolf predation of livestock. This would be another example of working toward a win-win solution. It would be helpful to improve the timeliness and efficiency of the program to compensate ranchers for losses to wolves.

I also think it would be helpful to include a "Conservation Alternative" that would change the classification of the wolves from "non-essential, experimental" to "experimental, essential" or "endangered." This change would allow more flexibility in the rules and policies, resulting in a more pro-active recovery program. The "non-essential, experimental population" designation strips Mexican wolves of the protections to which they are entitled as an endangered species. The "non-essential, experimental" classification gives the Fish and Wildlife Service more legal latitude to "control" wolves, and gives ranchers more leverage in protecting their cattle. The Fish and Wildlife Service has a mandate under the ESA to "recover" Mexican gray wolves. They are not being recovered under the existing classification. The focus of the Fish and Wildlife Service should be on wolf survival in the wild, not on wolf control. The Blue Range population of Mexican gray wolves is essential to long-term recovery of the endangered Mexican gray wolf.

In 2001, the Three-Year Review of the Wolf Recovery Program included a recommendations by several prominent wolf researchers that the Fish and Wildlife Service have the authority to release wolves directly into New Mexico, that wolves not creating problems be allowed to roam outside the recovery area (just as "endangered" wolves and other animals elsewhere are allowed), and that ranchers be made responsible for removing livestock carcasses (which attract wolves into the proximity of live cattle) from their grazing allotments. I support these recommendations.

I also support the "interdiction plan" presented by Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, the Southwest

regional director of the Wolf Recovery Program, to the 2006 Cattle Growers' Convention in November, 2006. The plan would entail the development of an endowed fund for wolf management, to which cattle ranchers, state governments and other sources would contribute. Participating cattle ranchers would be compensated for wolf depredations using interest earned on the fund, with a management group, composed partly of ranchers, determining the amount of compensation. The plan also recommends taking measures to protect livestock from wolves, including the use of guard dogs, range riders, calving sheds and predator-proof fences.

The multi-agency Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC) was created in 2003. In my view, this group has given undue weight to anti-wolf political sentiment, and it has not followed through on the mandated "adaptive management" approach of the Wolf Recovery Program. For example, AMOC's own Five Year Evaluation suggests ways of handling cattle carcasses so that wolves do not become habituated to eating cattle. One suggestion is coating carcasses with lime. Yet AMOC has not implemented these recommendations.

Another component of a well-managed recovery program is education of the public and public relations with the media. I agree with Alex Rykken, who coordinates an education outreach program for the Bosque Del Apache Wildlife Refuge, when she says, "Unless something touches our hearts, we don't care for it." In order for people to care about the Mexican wolf, I think it would be helpful for them to meet one in person. Leyton Cougar, director of the Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary in New Mexico, has offered to do education outreach with a live Mexican wolf. I think this would contribute to the success of the Wolf Recovery Program. Education needs to counter ignorance, superstition, and misinformation about the Mexican wolf.

Also, the number one cause of wolf deaths in the Wolf Recovery Program has been due to management under the Adaptive Management Oversight Committee. The Committee's approach has been called "killing their way to wolf recovery." Standard Operating Procedure 13, established by the Adaptive Management Oversight Committee, requires the killing or permanent removal of any wolf that is determined to have killed three head of livestock within a year, regardless of circumstances. For example, on May 6, 2006, a male wolf came across the carcass of a bull that had died of a disease. The wolf fed on the carcass and later preyed on live cattle. On June 18 he was shot by agency personnel; and his mate was shot on July 6, without having preyed on livestock in the intervening period. The female was especially valuable to the wild population because she possessed genes from all three founding lineages. Governor Richardson called for a moratorium on the use of Standard Operating Procedure 13 in 2007 to no avail. The current rule allows excessive wolf removal (defined as "take" in the ESA) that is precluding achievement to the reintroduction objective of 100+ wolves in the BRWRA population. A revised rule must allow less "take" of wolves.

Another problem of the Wolf Recovery Program is over-management. Recently, I visited a black-tailed prairie dog town on a field trip to Armendaris Ranch. Tom Harper, leader

of the trip, commented that the prairie dog towns that were doing the best were the ones not being monitored by the research scientists. For example, Wolf 511 died of heat exhaustion while her wolf pups were being rounded up for physical examinations and vaccinations. Such situations are continuing problems to be solved when humans try to help animals survive.

Finally, I would like to address some specific issues for discussion for the National Environmental Policy Act Scoping Process from the Fish and Wildlife Service website. First, should wolves that roam outside the boundaries of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area be allowed to establish territories outside those boundaries? Currently, wolves found outside the boundaries are removed and re-released inside the recovery area. I agree with biologists and conservationists who are critical of the present policy. The trauma of capture, combined with separation from the pack, can cause a wolf severe distress. Michael Robinson carnivore conservation coordinator for the Center for Biological Diversity, estimates that more than 30 wolves have died as a direct result of capture by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Twenty of those deaths have been confirmed. Numerous wolf pups have died due to the stress of recapture, or following the recapture of their parents.

Second, should the limited provisions for private individuals to harass wolves engaged in nuisance behavior or depredation be expanded to allow other forms of harassment? Currently individuals are not allowed to harass wolves in such a manner as to even potentially result in bodily injury or death to the wolf. I support nonlethal methods of postponing and limiting lethal "control" by the proper authorities. I suggest that the Fish and Wildlife Service teach ranchers how to harass wolves with noisemakers, rubber bullets, and cracker shells (gun-launched firecrackers). The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is also experimenting with electric fencing and "fladry" (an ancient method devised in Europe in which red flags are hung from ropes). Because wolves fear things they haven't seen before, they'll avoid fladry for as long as 45 days. Also in Montana, the Bozeman-based Predator Conservation Alliance - in partnership with the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group, the Turner Endangered Species Fund, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U. S. Forest Service - trains and hires horse riders to stay with livestock 24 hours a day and run off approaching wolves.

Third, should injuries to or killing of domestic dogs be added to the list of depredation incidents allowing the removal or "take" of the wolf? In my opinion, people who visit or live in undeveloped, rural, and/or wild places in New Mexico need to take common sense precautions with their pets. Predators native to New Mexico, such as bobcats, coyotes, and wolves, are a threat to pets who are allowed to run free. Keeping pets safe from harm is the responsibility of pet owners. Also, I would like to comment that permanent removal of a wolf from the wild has the same effect on the wild population as killing.

Fourth, should livestock operators on public lands be required to take some responsibility for carcass management and disposal to reduce the likelihood that wolves become habituated to feed on livestock? Also, should wolves that feed on non-wolf killed

carcasses and later kill livestock be excluded from being charged with depredation incidents? First, I would like to quote Kate Trainor's article entitled "Return of the Big, Bad Wolf" in the January 11-17, 2007 issue of Alibi: "A peer-reviewed study of Mexican wolf scats in the Blue Range revealed that only 4.2 percent of the wolves' diet was composed of cattle, some of which were probably carcasses that were scavenged. The study found that wolves relied on elk and other large prey (like deer) for the majority of their diet." That said, I do think that ranchers who graze their livestock on public land have a responsibility for carcass management and disposal. I think that management of a wolf who kills livestock needs to be decided on a case by case basis and take into consideration all of the circumstances surrounding the case.

Thank you for this opportunity to give my input on the Wolf Recovery Program. As an advocate for the Mexican wolf, I have tried to speak for wolves who cannot speak for themselves. Speaking for myself, I ask, "Can't we just get along - with each other and with wolves? When we humans save a species from extinction we benefit not only the species saved, but ourselves, our children, and the whole planet. Reverence for all life enriches the human spirit. A well-managed and successful Wolf Recovery Program is within our grasp. I believe it is well worth the effort.

Since writing the above, I attended the scoping open house in Socorro on December 1. As a result of that information session, I am adding the following comments to my letter -

I am asking that wolves be allowed to expand their territory. In the revised rule, there should be no exclusion of geographic areas from potential occupation by wolves.

Please expand the area for initial releases to anywhere within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. A rule change that allows new releases throughout the BRWRA would give agency managers much needed management tools for assuring the viability and self-sustainability of the BRWRA population of Mexican gray wolves.

Please resolve livestock-wolf conflicts in ways that keep wolves in the wild and achieve progress towards reintroduction objectives. A revised rule must require owners of livestock using the public land to clean up dead stock before wolves find and scavenge on them.

The Recovery Plan is out of date; it has not been amended for 25 years and does not include objectives for full recovery of Mexican gray wolves. The Fish and Wildlife Service is attempting to change the rule before recovery has even been defined for Mexican gray wolves. The FWS need to revise the recovery plan before or concurrent with this rule change so that rule changes do not preclude future recovery actions.

A viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 wolves is a minimum objective for the BRWRA population of wolves. Recovery has yet to be defined through revision of the recovery plan. No maximum should be set for the number of wolves in the wild through this rule change.

And, finally, this rule change should not include any provisions that would limit in any way future options for recovery of Mexican gray wolves anywhere outside the current boundaries of the BRWRA.

Sincerely,

Mary Joan Kilgen Truesdell
Mary Joan Kilgen Truesdell
Box 185
Socorro, NM 87801-0185s

RECEIVED

DEC 26 2007

12-20-07

Dear Sir, USFWS-NMESFO

I would say that if the ranchers
don't have enough land to
raise their cattle then they should
not be in the business.
Public land belongs to all of
us, and they are depriving
future generations of knowing
& seeing the Mexican grey
wolf. Once these predators are
destroyed they will be gone forever.
I would like these predators
back in the wild where they
belong. Please don't consider
what the ranchers want.
They had many years of using
this public land. Times are
changing. The ranchers will
find something else to exploit.
My friend of the ranchers &
everything will be ok!

Sincerely
Kicky Hoagdon

113 8335

PHOENIX AZ 85009
PM
20 DEC
2001

Hayedorn
10302 Desert Rock
Sun City Az 85351

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
ATTN: Wolf Program Ecological Service
New Mexico
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque NM 87113

-20-07

hankers
ed to
they should

all of
wing
society
ey
re are
forever
bes
they
victor

... years of using
this public land. Times are
changing. The hankers will
find something else to exploit.
Not said of the hankers &
every thing will be ok!

Sincerely
Vicky Hayedorn

23 December 2007

RECEIVED
DEC 26 2007
USFWS-NMESFO

Brian Millsap, State Adm.
USFWS
NM Ecol. Serv. Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albq, NM 87113

RE: Mexican Gray Wolf
NEPA Scoping

Sir:

The enclosed article says it all better than I could say it.

Ranchers do not own the West: And I am sick to death of their piss-poor livestock husbandry.

The same holds true for the wild mustangs who have a right to a few acres of land.

We the people want
wolves
bears
mustangs
on our public lands!

-2-

Listen to the people! Not
special interest groups!

J.A. Strom
2713 Sierra Dr. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110-2943

P.S. I do not eat their damn
diseased livestock!

Doris Vician

From: "Doris Vician" <wrdnvician@msn.com>
To: <r2fw_e_al@fws.gov>
Cc: <wrdnvician@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, December 24, 2007 2:09 PM
Subject: Aftn: Mexican Wolf NEPA Scoping

To all concerned, I attended the meeting here in Albuquerque and found it interesting and informative. However, I can't agree with ranchers and residents in and around the Gila that the "big bad wolves are out to devour our people". Yes, if wolves are baited by dead cows or branding cows near their areas they maybe attracted to cows instead of other wild things that are their usual prey. Make the ranchers responsible for getting rid of their dead animals on public lands. Cows/cattle have fouled streams and killed off vegetation that is necessary to these lands. Perhaps the ranchers and cattlemen should have to pay for the reseedling with native plants on the lands their cattle graze. The American public has subsidized ranchers for far too long and now we are not only subsidizing mom and pop operations but large corporations. The ABQ Journal had an interesting editorial concerning this issue on Dec. 23rd. I don't know how to do attachments but I hope someone else sends it to you. It suggests that if Fish and Wildlife can't handle the problem of disappearing wolves perhaps you could get some help from the FBI to help catch the wolf abductors and/or killers. Let's all try to work together for the benefit of all creatures!!! Thanks, Doris Vician 708 Guadalupe Ct. NW Albuquerque, NM 87114 505-514-1018

12/24/2007

Attn: Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping

December 25th, 2007
RECEIVED
DEC 27 2007
USFWS-NMESFO

Dear Mr. John Slown,

I am an 89-year old who is passionate about the reintroduction of Mexican gray wolves. In my life I have seen the near-extinction of this species and have been thrilled with the current reintroduction in to the Blue Range and Gila Wilderness. I do believe that there are a number of improvements to the recovery plan which should be considered. I believe that the recovery effort must expand significantly to protect this wonderful species. Improvements include an increase in the wild population size to more than 100 individuals and increased protection of the current wild population. It is my hope that this letter will convince you to give wolves every chance to exist free of human threats.

Sincerely, Densie Chiarrapa



P.O. Box 4991
Albuquerque, NM 87119-4997

December 25th, 2007

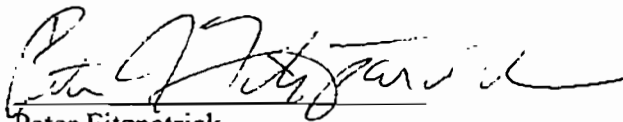
Attn: Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping

I believe that a number of revisions are needed to the current Mexican gray wolf recovery plan.

First, the Mexican gray wolf must be allowed to expand its range. As almost any wildlife biologist would recognize there is a serious discrepancy between the minimum population of 100 individuals and the current area of the Blue Range/Gila recovery area. This must be remedied by allowing the Mexican wolf population to inhabit new areas.

In addition to this expansion of range, the long-term survival of the Mexican wolf depends upon a much larger population than is currently mandated. 100 individuals do have the necessary diversity to withstand short-term pressures but a larger population will be needed to ensure long-term survival. Without necessary changes to ensure a larger population the Mexican wolf recovery effort will be forced to perpetually release wolves from captive populations. Allowing a long-term minimum viable population of a few hundred individuals will preclude many future expenses of the recovery project.

It is absolutely critical that the Mexican gray wolf be given every chance to recover from the brink of extinction. Recovery should focus on introducing and promoting the largest population possible. Even though certain members of our society, specifically ranchers, may disagree with this assessment there is no reason that a democracy such as ours should cater to the few rather than the many.



Peter Fitzpatrick
5027 Midnight Vista Ave NW
Albuquerque, NM 87114

RECEIVED
DEC 27 2007
USFWS-NMESFC

The Rewilding Institute

POB 13768, Albuquerque, NM 87192 • TRI@rewilding.org / www.rewilding.org

December 26, 2007

John Slown
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113
R2FWE_AL@fws.gov

RECEIVED
DEC 27 2007
USFWS-NMESFO

Re: Scoping Comments pursuant to Federal Register Vol. 72, No. 151, Pages 44065-44069: *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Notice of Scoping Meetings and Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Socio-Economic Assessment for the Proposed Amendment of the Rule Establishing a Nonessential Experimental Population of the Arizona and New Mexico Population of the Gray Wolf ("Mexican Gray Wolf")*.

Dear Mr. Slown:

The Rewilding Institute (TRI) welcomes the opportunity to submit scoping comments on the above referenced proposal to revise the ESA section 10(j) rule that established and governs the management of the nonessential experimental population of Mexican wolves in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. TRI is a conservation think tank dedicated to the restoration and conservation of biological diversity, ecological processes, and biological evolution at effective landscape and continental scales. We recognize the essential role of large carnivores in regulating ecosystems, promoting biological diversity, and maintaining ecosystem health; we support Mexican wolf restoration at ecologically effective population densities and distributions.

These comments have been endorsed by prominent scientists and conservation organizations listed below.

Introduction

The Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*), a recognized subspecies of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) (Young and Goldman 1944; Garcia-Moreno et al. 1996; Nowak 1995), was first listed as an endangered subspecies under provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 U.S.C. §§ 1531 *et seq.*, in 1976. See 41 Fed. Reg. 17736. In 1978, pursuant to Section 4 of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. § 1533, the gray wolf species was listed as endangered in North America south of Canada, except in Minnesota where it was listed as threatened. See 43 Fed. Reg. 9607. The 1978 listing rule remains in effect today; and, in it, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) "offer[s] the firmest assurance that it will continue to

recognize valid biological subspecies for purposes of its research and conservation programs.” As firm evidence of this commitment, the USFWS developed and approved a *Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan* in 1982; and, in 1998, pursuant to Section 10(j) of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. §1539(j), authorized the establishment of an “experimental, non-essential” (ENE) population of the “Mexican gray wolf” in Arizona and New Mexico. See 63 Fed. Reg. 1752. Establishment of a population of Mexican gray wolves in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA) was initiated in 1998 and continues to this day.

We take issue with the taxonomic nomenclature used in the title of the document currently under review (72 Fed. Reg. 44065). The current population of wolves extant in Arizona and New Mexico is a population of the Mexican gray wolf subspecies of the gray wolf. See 63 Fed. Reg. 1752. Thus, the title of this document should be changed to the “Proposed Amendment of the Rule Establishing a Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Gray Wolf in Arizona and New Mexico.” The USFWS cannot arbitrarily change the taxonomic basis of the current final rule (63 Fed. Reg. 1752) that is under consideration for amendment.

Authorized “Take” of Mexican Wolves under the Existing Rule

Due to the ENE status of the Mexican gray wolf, USFWS has altered the “take” prohibitions found in Section 9 of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. § 1538(a)(1), as they apply to this subspecies. These modifications to the take prohibitions are set forth in the Section 10(j) rule, 50 C.F.R. § 17.84(k) for the BRWRA population of Mexican gray wolves. This rule has very few absolute provisions that provide immediate, non-discretionary authorization for taking (*i.e.*, killing, harming, harassing, or permanently removing) Mexican wolves from the established ENE population in the BRWRA. Specifically, these are:

Section (k)(3)(i): Unavoidable and unintentional take pursuant to an otherwise legal activity anywhere within the experimental population area.

Section (k)(3)(ii): Opportunistic, noninjurious harassment of Mexican wolves within 500 yards of people, buildings, facilities, pets, and livestock anywhere within the experimental population area.

Section (k)(3)(iii): Unavoidable or unintentional take resulting from an action authorized by a federal agency anywhere within the experimental population area, provided such agencies are otherwise in compliance with sections 7(a)(1&4) of the ESA.

Section (k)(3)(v and vi): Take by livestock owners or their agents of any wolf actually “engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock” on private and tribal reservation land.

Section (k)(3)(viii): Take of Mexican wolves by livestock guarding dogs when used in the traditional manner to protect livestock anywhere within the experimental population area.

Section (k)(3)(x): Take of any suspected wolf hybrid or feral dog by the USFWS or its authorized agent anywhere within the experimental population area.

Section (k)(3)(xii): Take of Mexican wolves in self defense or defense of the lives of other humans anywhere.

Section (k)(9)(iii); Section (k)(10); Section (k)(11): Take by the USFWS or its authorized agent of Mexican wolves found outside the BRWRA.

We are aware of only one Mexican wolf that has been lethally taken by a private person in a manner interpreted to be legal under these non-discretionary take provisions; he was killed in alleged self defense and reported as required by the rule. Ten additional wolves have been killed by vehicle strikes but not reported. Had they been reported, these takings would have been legal under the rule. Thus, these provisions have caused only 11 wolves to be removed from the wild BRWRA population by non-governmental persons in the nearly 10-year history of its existence. Many additional Mexican wolves have died or have been seriously injured as a result of authorized agency capture or lethal take efforts under 50 C.F.R. § 17.84(k)(3)(iii), (k)(9)(iii), (k)(10), and (k)(11). The adverse effects of wolf removals by the agencies are addressed below.

We request that take provisions currently authorized by Section 17.84(k)(9)(iii), (k)(10), and (k)(11) be eliminated from any revised rule for reasons set forth later in these comments. Furthermore, we request that any revised rule not directly authorize take in excess of that allowed by the other sections listed above.

The current rule authorizes the USFWS to prescribe additional circumstances for taking Mexican wolves within a USFWS-approved “management plan, special management measure, or permit.” 50 C.F.R. § 17.84(k)(3)(ix). This discretionary authority to prescribe additional take was included in the rule to give the USFWS and its cooperators added “management flexibility” to mitigate conflicts that might occur following the return of Mexican wolves to the BRWRA. A number of such approved measures termed “Standard Operating Procedures” (SOPs) are currently in effect.

ESA § 10(j)(2)(A) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to release experimental populations of endangered and threatened species only “if the Secretary determines that such release will further the conservation of such species.” The ESA further defines “conservation” as “the use of all methods and procedures which are necessary to bring any endangered species ... to a point at which the measures provided pursuant to this Act are no longer necessary,” or in other words, to a point at which the species has been recovered and thus removed from the ESA list of endangered and threatened species. 16 U.S.C. § 1532(3). Importantly, the ESA’s definition of “species” includes any subspecies. *Id.*, at § 1532(16).

Section 17.84(k)(2) of the current rule presents a “finding” that the reintroduction authorized by the rule will “further the conservation of the Mexican wolf subspecies and the gray wolf species.” This finding followed a determination that the provisions of the

rule were sufficiently protective to ensure progress toward eventual recovery of the Mexican wolf.

Page 2-16 of the Final EIS clarifies that the USFWS will use the “greatest degree of management flexibility” granted through discretionary rule provisions to mitigate potential impacts of the BRWRA Mexican wolf reintroduction project to achieve “the least impact on private activity consistent with wolf recovery” (emphasis added).

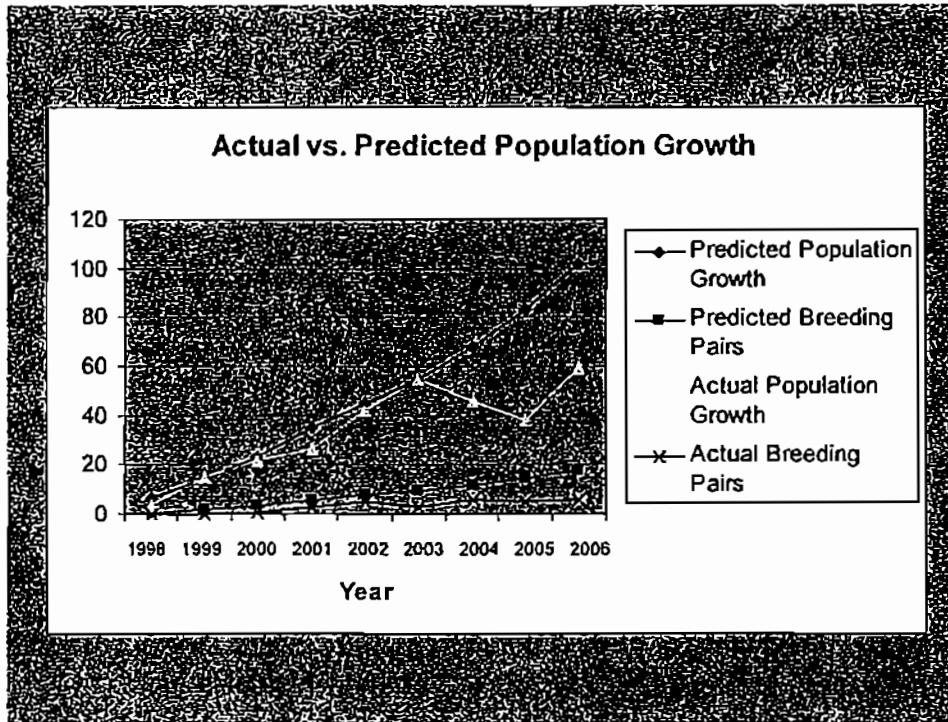
Thus, the ESA and the documents authorizing the establishment of an ENE population of Mexican gray wolves within the BRWRA clearly require that authorized take of Mexican wolves from the BRWRA population shall not preclude progress toward recovery of the subspecies.

BRWRA Mexican Gray Wolf Reintroduction Project Objective

The primary objective of the BRWRA reintroduction project is to establish a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 Mexican gray wolves in the wild. This objective is set forth in the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and is consistent with the 1982 Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Plan, 1998 Record of Decision and Final Rule. At page 2-5, the EIS further establishes the chronological objective of achieving the 100-wolf population level by “about the year 2005.” Because the reintroduction project commenced one year later than planned, this goal becomes effectively “about the year 2006.” The population growth model in the EIS also predicted that a population of 102 wolves (achieved at the end of 2006) would include 18 breeding pairs. The established timeline has run its course, and we now have the opportunity to assess progress toward the established reintroduction objective using actual results. There are three key components to the reintroduction objective—numerical (100+ wolves); viability; and self-sustainability.

Analysis of Progress Toward Recovery under Existing Rule

Numerical Population Objective. In its 2006 Annual Report (the most recent program assessment), the USFWS estimated the wild population at 59 wolves with 7 breeding pairs. The chart below compares actual versus predicted growth for the BRWRA Mexican wolf population.



According to project data, the population has grown by only an estimated 4 wolves in the past three years and is currently 41% short of the minimum objective of “at least 100 wolves.” The actual number of breeding pairs lags the expected number by 11 breeding pairs (7 vs. 18).

To date in 2007, 28 Mexican wolves have gone missing, been killed, or been removed from the wild population. Nineteen of these removals were ordered by USFWS and conducted by the Interagency Field Team. Only 8 pups are currently confirmed in the wild population. When next the official count is made in January 2008, a population decline in both wolf numbers and breeding pairs appears certain.

According to the existing rule a “breeding pair” is defined as “an adult male and an adult female wolf that have produced at least two pups during the previous breeding season that survived until December 31 of the year of their birth.” Data presented in monthly project reports suggest that only 3 breeding pairs will be documented at the end of 2007. The management objective for 2007 as stated in the 2006 Annual Report is to increase the population by 10% (~6 wolves) or increase the number of breeding pairs by one breeding pair (from 7 to 8). Monthly project updates through November cause us to conclude that neither of these objectives will be met. Rather, it now appears that the population will decline by about 20 wolves and 4 breeding pairs.

Clearly, the USFWS has failed to meet the numerical objective of at least 100 wolves by about the end of 2006, and there is no evidence to suggest that the current population is on a growth trajectory to reach that goal in the foreseeable future.

Population Viability. Since numerical population objectives for full recovery of the Mexican gray wolf have not been established for lack of a revised recovery plan, this analysis will be limited to the genetic viability of the existing wild population in the BRWRA. All Mexican wolves derive from one or more of three certified pure lineages of Mexican wolves—McBride, Ghost Ranch, and Aragon—each of which is individually inbred. A recent analysis by Fredrickson et al. (2007) concludes that cross-lineage wolves (those with ancestry from two or more lineages) exhibited superior fitness compared to single-lineage Mexican wolves, especially McBride wolves which they describe as having “low fitness” in the wild. Of wolves with known ancestry in the BRWRA population, more are of pure McBride lineage than of any other lineage. Fredrickson et al. (2007) found that “in the wild population, 52% more pups were observed among packs producing cross-lineage pups than those producing pure McBride lineage pups.”

Each of the three lineages has “substantial numbers” of unique alleles (gene forms) which create “large heterotic effects” (improved fitness in offspring of cross-lineage matings). According to Fredrickson and colleagues, proper genetic management of the wild BRWRA population of Mexican wolves through carefully planned mixing of genes from the three lineages can result in a “genetic rescue” of the wild population.

A genetically rescued population of Mexican wolves would have increased reproductive success and survival, greater overall genetic diversity, and an increased capability to evolve and adapt to their natural environment through the process of natural selection. Such increased evolutionary potential is termed “genetic restoration” and Fredrickson et al. conclude that Mexican wolves have the genetic potential to “establish vigorous wild populations.”

The USFWS and its cooperators have promulgated no formal management procedures or guidelines for improving or maximizing the genetic integrity and viability of the BRWRA population of Mexican wolves. In fact, management actions to date have been antithetical to genetic fitness. SOP 13, which sets criteria for removing wolves that engage in livestock depredation, does not consider the genetic value or reproductive status of wolves targeted for lethal control or permanent removal. The most egregious example of this “tunnel vision” management was the killing of Saddle Pack alpha male AM574 who was a genetically irreplaceable McBride x Aragon lineage Mexican wolf considered to be the sixth most genetically valuable Mexican wolf in the combined wild and captive population of over 350 wolves (see e-mail memorandum from Colleen Buchanan to Susan MacMullin dated 4/06/2004 at 2:06 PM).

This is not the only incident where genetic considerations were ignored. In fact, in late 2007, the USFWS removed all 6 members of the genetically valuable Aspen pack (a bi-lineage alpha male and a tri-lineage adult female).

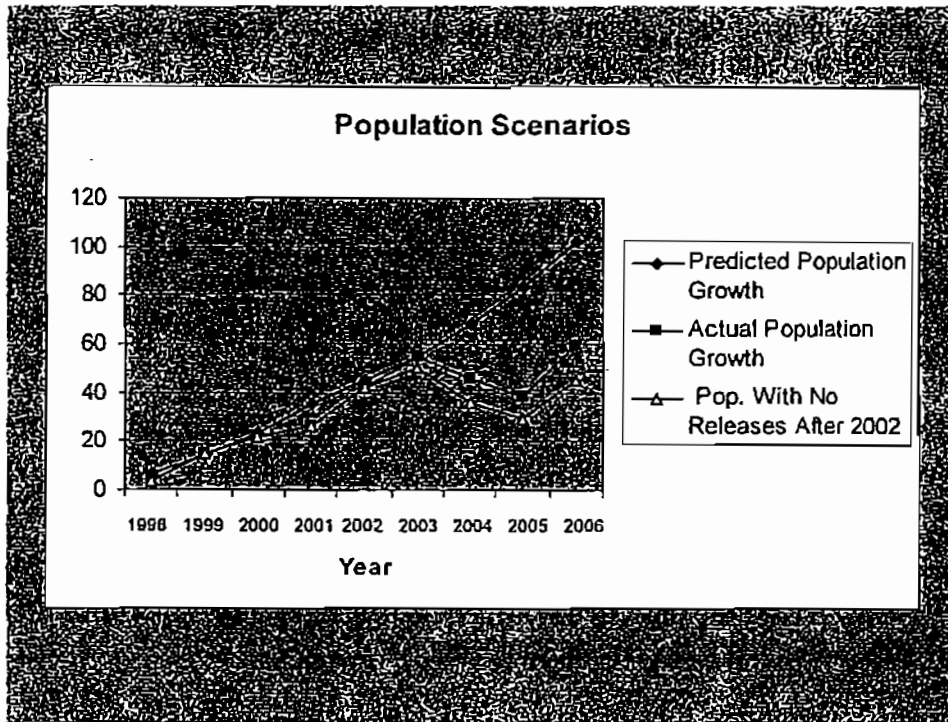
We are aware of no example of a management decision to allow a genetically important Mexican wolf to remain in the wild when current procedures otherwise call for its lethal control or permanent removal. Even if genetically important pups are left in the wild, the

removal of one or more of their parents, adult pack members, or yearling pack members will diminish their probability of survival.

Population Self-Sustainability. A “self-sustainable” population is a population that perpetuates its continued existence through successful reproduction and survival such that new recruits to the population equal or exceed losses from various sources of mortality or permanent removal by wolf managers. This objective applies to the BRWRA population of Mexican wolves after it reaches the 100+ wolf population objective. Until then, recruitment to the population must exceed mortality plus permanent removals to achieve incremental population growth.

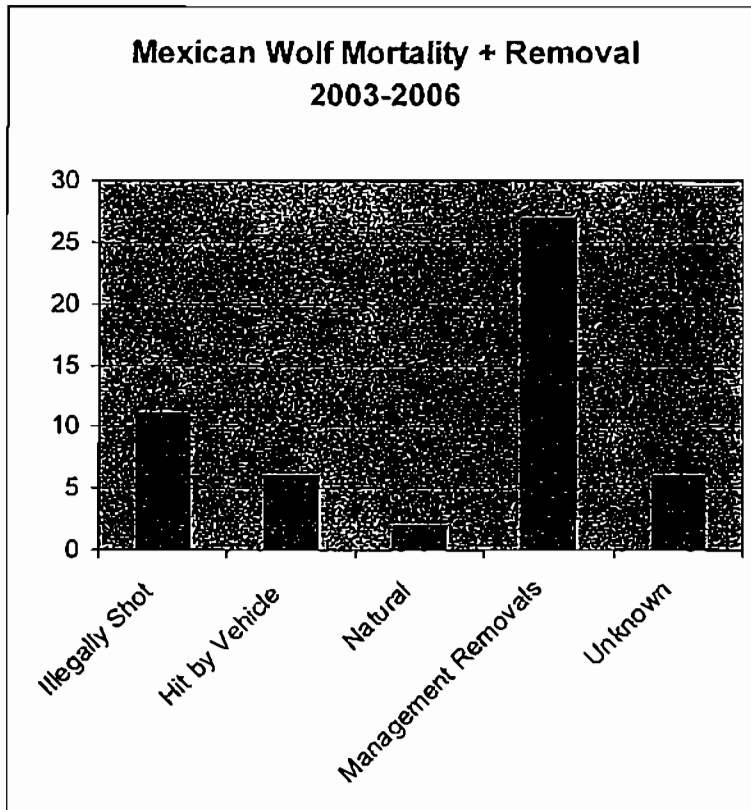
The population growth model used in the EIS to predict a plausible population growth scenario and establish a reasonable timeline for achieving the 100+ wolf objective included an assumption that releases of new wolves would no longer be necessary after the year 2002. The EIS predicted that about 66 wolves would be released from 1998 through 2002 and that natural reproduction and survival in the wild would continue to grow the population until the objective was met. In actual practice, 99 captive Mexican wolves have been released from 1998 through 2006.

Parsons and Ossorio (2007; and attached as part of these comments) conducted an analysis of project data through 2006 entitled: *Mexican Wolf Reintroduction: Put and Take Wolf Recovery?* The purpose of this analysis was to examine the effect of management control on population growth and the extent to which continued wolf releases might be masking these effects. We presented our results at the 2007 North American Wolf Conference (oral presentation) and at the 2007 annual meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists (poster presentation). As part of this analysis, we followed the known fates of wolves released after 2002 and the fates of their known wild-born offspring and excluded these wolves from the population. The chart below shows how the wild population might have fared absent these continued releases.



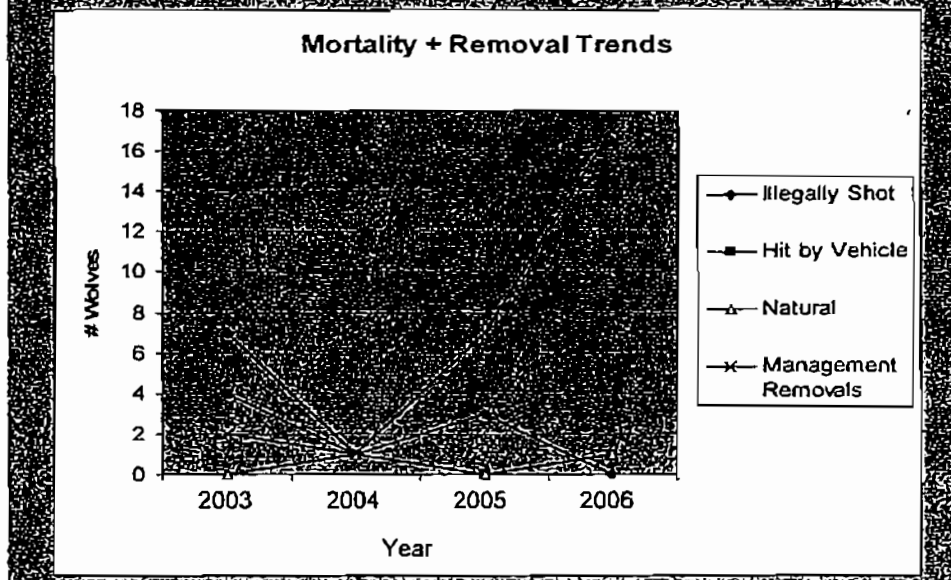
We showed that, absent continued releases, the population would have peaked at an estimated 50 wolves at the end of 2003 and declined to an estimated 45 wolves at the end of 2006. We concluded that the agency-reported population increase of an estimated 17 wolves over the past 4 years was mostly “release subsidized,” and that mortality plus permanent removals had exceeded natural recruitment. Permanent removal of Mexican wolves by agency managers has the same effect on the wild population as mortalities from all causes (legal or illegal), including lethal control of wolves by the managing agencies.

The following chart shows the sources of mortality of wild Mexican wolves over the past 4 years.



Management removals accounted for 52% of all documented mortality and permanent removals over the past 4 years; and illegal killing accounted for an additional 21%. Agency managers have little or no control over the other causes; and all causes except management removals have declined or remained low over the past 4 years (see chart below). Management removals have increased dramatically over the past two years, coinciding with implementation of SOP 13.

"As the Reintroduction Project moves forward, we expect removal rates for causes other than boundaries to stabilize or decrease." AMOC 5-Year Review



In 2006, nearly 90% of all management removals and lethal control were in response to livestock depredation and were carried out under the terms of SOP 13. Parsons and Ossorio (2007) concluded that the wild population of Mexican wolves was “take limited,” due primarily to excessive permanent removals and lethal control by the agencies. Most of this take is pursuant to SOP 13. It is important to note that SOP 13 is a discretionary management measure, which is allowed *but not mandated* by the existing rule.

We conclude that the wild BRWRA population of Mexican gray wolves is not self-sustainable under current implementation of the existing rule.

Rule Revision Recommendations. The USFWS has demonstrated that it cannot be trusted with the level of discretionary management authority granted by the current rule. Having failed to meet all three components of the established reintroduction objective—a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 Mexican gray wolves in the BRWRA by about the year 2006—the USFWS has clearly failed to achieve the “conservation” mandate of ESA § 10(j)(2)(A). By logical extension, the USFWS is now in ongoing violation of the ESA.

To bring the USFWS back into compliance with federal law, any revision to the rule must contain absolute requirements for demonstrated forward progress toward meeting the reintroduction objective. We consider a minimum standard for such progress to be an average population increase of at least 15% per year and an annual increase of at least two breeding pairs. This is well within the reproductive capacity of Mexican gray wolves, especially if properly managed, and would cause the reintroduction objective to

be reached in four more years. (Note: This could also be accomplished under provisions of the existing rule.)

Any revision to the rule must contain absolute requirements for achieving a high standard of genetic viability in the reintroduced population. This standard should be established by recognized experts on Mexican wolf genetics in consultation with the Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan committee of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. This body actively manages the genetic and demographic integrity of the captive population of Mexican wolves and makes recommendations for release candidates.

Any revision to the rule must contain absolute thresholds for self-sustainability of the wild population through natural reproduction and survival in the wild that cannot be overridden by discretionary management measures (such as is currently the case with SOP 13) or masked by supplemental releases.

Three-Year Review Recommendations

In 2001, a mandatory 3-year review of the project was conducted by a panel of non-agency wolf experts led by internationally recognized wolf ecologist Dr. Paul Paquet (Paquet et al. 2001). Crucial findings from the technical component of the 3-year review include the following:

- Frequent recaptures and re-releases may be interfering with pack formation and establishment and maintenance of home ranges.
- Survival and recruitment rates are far too low to ensure population growth and persistence. Without dramatic improvement in these vital rates, the population will fall short of predictions for upcoming years—a prediction that has come true.
- Livestock are omnipresent in the BRWRA and interactions with wolves are unavoidable. Livestock producers using public lands can make a substantive contribution to reducing conflicts with wolves through improved husbandry and better management of carcasses.
- The small size of the primary recovery zone and the restriction of wolves to the small BRWRA are hindering recovery of a self-sustaining and viable population of Mexican wolves. Dispersal of wolves outside the recovery area boundaries is required if the regional population is to be viable.
- Individual wolves have shown some indication of dispersing outside the recovery area. This is to be expected and required if the regional population is to be viable.
- Adaptive management is the appropriate operational paradigm. Many wildlife restoration projects are unsuccessful because of a failure to accommodate new information. (In other words, the failure to appropriately apply an adaptive management process.)

Rule Revision Recommendations. Based on the findings of the three-year review we make the following requests:

Revise the rule to include authority to conduct initial releases of captive wolves anywhere within the BRWRA. This authority will be critical to managing the future genetic and demographic integrity of the wild population.

Eliminate all restrictions to wolf dispersal and movements. Such restrictions are potential impediments to yet to be defined recovery goals and necessary conservation actions. Occupation of areas beyond the BRWRA will be required to achieve full recovery of Mexican wolves. Natural dispersal may be the most effective means of establishing Mexican wolves in new areas and will be critical for wolf movements among core populations. Such movements will be essential to the maintenance of viability within a recovered metapopulation of Mexican wolves. No other gray wolf recovery program has such restrictions on wolf movements.

Require livestock operators on public land to remove, bury, or render inedible carcasses of dead livestock to reduce the likelihood that wolves become habituated to feeding on livestock. It cannot be disputed that wolves are attracted to, and will feed on, dead livestock. This often places wolves in close proximity of living stock. It also cannot be disputed that some wolves that have first scavenged dead livestock have subsequently preyed upon livestock. Given that the BRWRA population of Mexican wolves has failed to attain the reintroduction objective, it is imperative that all measures to reduce potential conflicts between wolf recovery and livestock production (the greatest cause of wolf removals) be considered in a revised rule.

Five-Year Review Recommendations

On December 31, 2005 the Mexican Wolf Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC) issued the internally-conducted 5-Year Review of the BRWRA Reintroduction Project. This review presented 37 recommendations for modifying the BRWRA reintroduction project, all of which were accepted by the USFWS as part of a formal decision to continue the project with modifications. The 5-Year Review document states that "all actions undertaken pursuant to these Recommendations and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) referenced therein shall be in full compliance with the ... Endangered Species Act, as amended." Recommendations 4 through 14 relate specifically to a revision of the existing ESA § 10(j) rule for the BRWRA population of Mexican gray wolves.

4. AMOC recommends that any amended or new Mexican Wolf Nonessential Experimental Population Rule drafted in conjunction with Recommendations (1) and (2), above, not include White Sands Missile Range as a Mexican Wolf Recovery Area (i.e. its designation in the current Final Rule) or as a Reintroduction Zone.

We agree that White Sands Missile Range is not suitable as a "reintroduction" zone. We disagree that it should be specifically excluded as a Mexican wolf "recovery" zone. We believe and recommend that there be no recovery boundaries or exclusions and that Mexican wolves be allowed to colonize areas of their own choosing. White Sands Missile Range may be an important "stepping stone" habitat for wolves dispersing to

other suitable habitats. One major advantage of White Sands Missile Range is that wolves would be highly protected there.

5. AMOC will determine, on biological/ecological grounds, and conclude in a written report to the USFWS Region 2 Director no later than June 30, 2006, whether (and, if so, the extent to which) the current MWEPA outer boundaries should be expanded within Arizona-New Mexico to enable the Arizona-New Mexico Mexican wolf population to exist within a metapopulation context consistent with Leonard et al. 2005 and Carroll et al. in press. AMOC may convene, if necessary, a technical advisory group of individuals with appropriate expertise to assist with this assessment. Note:

- a. The AMOC assessment will also consider other relevant issues, such as: likelihood of expansion area occupancy by wolves dispersing from northerly states or from Mexico; the merits of extending nonessential experimental population status beyond the current boundaries; and estimated costs associated with managing wolves in an expanded area.*
- b. The technical advisory group, if convened, shall be chaired by an AMOC representative and shall include no more than 15 other members, each with appropriate scientific expertise.*
- c. AMOC will advocate that the MWEPA recommendation constructed under Recommendations (1) and (2), above, allow wolves to disperse from the BRWRZ (see Recommendation [7], below) throughout the MWEPA, subject to management consistent with current Blue Range Reintroduction Project SOPs.*
- d. Any recommendation to amend the existing Final Rule or to create a new Final Rule would ultimately, if acted on by USFWS, be in full compliance with all applicable APA, ESA, FACA, and NEPA requirements.*

We believe that the priority decision AMOC and USFWS should be addressing is whether or not to rescind the requirement that wolves establishing territories wholly outside the recovery area boundary must be removed, rather than whether or not to expand the experimental population area boundary. Management under current SOPs has not only failed to achieve the BRWRA reintroduction objective, but has also failed to conserve Mexican wolves as required by the ESA. Results to date support our request that restrictions to wolf dispersal from, and occupancy of habitats outside, the BRWRA should be removed and that the reintroduced population should be reclassified as either a fully protected endangered species in its own right or as “experimental, essential” in order to make adequate progress toward recovery as mandated by the ESA. An expansion of the experimental population area is not necessary to enable an expanded Mexican wolf metapopulation throughout its historic range. What appears to be clearly needed is the removal of restrictions to wolf movements and occupancy of areas outside the BRWRA and increased protection of the reintroduced population—actions clearly supported by information presented in the technical component of the 5-Year Review.

6. AMOC will propose, within the context of Recommendation (5), above, that the MWEPA population (management) objective be to establish and maintain a total of at least 100 wolves.

Note: The Reintroduction Project's population (management) objective is not a recovery goal for delisting the Mexican wolf from the list of threatened and endangered species; an updated recovery goal covering the Blue Range has not yet been determined by a Recovery Team. A population (management) objective of at least 100 wolves is, however, consistent with the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan (USFWS 1982), Final Environmental Impact Statement (USFWS 1996), and Record of Decision for Mexican wolf reintroduction within the BRWRA of the MWEPA (USFWS 1997).

This recommendation is completely outside the management purview of the AMOC and we request that this recommendation be eliminated and its content not be considered within the context of the rule revision process and related National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The objective of at least 100 wolves has been clearly established and approved in other project documents. The objective applies to the currently defined Mexican Wolf Blue Range Recovery Area, not the experimental population area (MWEPA), and not to any future expanded experimental population area. This -- recommendation has the potential to preclude or obfuscate future recovery recommendations and decisions which are the purview of a Recovery Team and the USFWS, not the AMOC.

7. AMOC will propose, within the context of Recommendation (5), above, combining the current BRWRA Primary and Secondary Recovery Zones, the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, and/or any other appropriate contiguous areas of suitable wolf habitat into a single expanded Blue Range Wolf Reintroduction Zone (BRWRZ) and allowing initial releases and translocations throughout the BRWRZ in accordance with appropriately amended AMOC SOPs 5.0: Initial Wolf Releases and 6.0: Wolf Translocations.

We agree that initial releases and translocations should be allowed anywhere within the BRWRA, and we support similar measures on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation and on any other Tribal or private lands whose owners elect to participate in Mexican wolf recovery. However, we cannot agree to an expansion of the geographic scope of the BRWRA without a concomitant increase in the numerical objective, which as stated above is outside the purview of the AMOC. The AMOC's job is to find a way to establish a viable, self-sustaining population of Mexican gray wolves within the currently defined BRWRA. This was determined to be a feasible objective in the EIS and related decision documents, and no evidence has been presented that this has now been determined to be an impossible task. A related point of clarification is that, while Mexican wolf reintroduction and recovery efforts on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation are an important contribution to the eventual full recovery of the Mexican gray wolf, success there, or anywhere else outside the defined BRWRA, should not "count" toward the 100+ objective for the BRWRA. Just as the White Mountain Apache Tribe elected to participate, they could subsequently elect to end their participation anytime they choose.

8. *AMOC will propose, within the context of Recommendation (5), above, prohibiting initial releases outside the new BRWRZ, except as necessary to allow latitude for any new Tribal "Statement of Relationship" based agreements with USFWS within the MWEPA that might allow initial releases on Tribal Trust Lands.*

The AMOC should limit its involvement to the current reintroduction project, and it is not the appropriate administrative body to issue prohibitions on releases outside the BRWRA or an expanded BRWRZ. Recovery planning is the appropriate process for determining the need and scope of future reintroductions, and the recovery planning process is outside the purview of the AMOC. We request that this recommendation from the Five-Year Review not be considered in the rule revision process.

9. *AMOC will propose, within the context of Recommendation (5), above, that wolves occurring within the MWEPA (but outside the re-defined BRWRZ) that must be relocated to address nuisance or livestock depredation issues (per AMOC SOP 13.0: Control of Mexican Wolves), may be translocated anywhere within the MWEPA except into the BRWRZ. Conversely, AMOC will also propose, within the context of Recommendation (5), above, that wolves occurring within the BRWRZ that must be relocated to address nuisance or livestock depredation issues (per SOP 13.0) may only be translocated to other areas within the BRWRZ. Regardless, all translocations must be carried out in accordance with AMOC SOP 6.0: Wolf Translocations.*

The logic behind this recommendation is not evident from its content. It is antithetical to the adaptive management process and specifically to enhancing genetic vigor through relocations based on genetic characteristics and pack composition. It reaches a decision without any discussion or justification. We request that it be eliminated and not considered in this rule revision process.

10. *AMOC will propose, within the context of Recommendations (5) and (6), above, that States and Tribes be authorized to issue permits, in accordance with an appropriately revised AMOC SOP 13.0: Control of Mexican Wolves, to private individuals and/or their delegated representative(s) to use authorized non-lethal means (e.g. cracker shells, rubber bullets) to harass wolves engaged in nuisance behavior or livestock depredation, or which are attacking domestic pets on private, public, or Tribal Trust lands, and to take (i.e. permanent removal by authorized lethal means) wolves in the act of attacking domestic dogs on private or Tribal Trust lands.*

TRI can support the issuance of permits for the non-lethal and non-injurious harassment of Mexican wolves engaged in nuisance behavior or attacking livestock or pets. We cannot support, nor does the 5-year technical review and subsequent project data support, the issuance of permits to kill Mexican wolves in the act of attacking dogs. We believe this is another glaring example of the disregard of the adaptive management process. The technical component of the 5-year review and the Parsons-Ossorio "put and take" analysis clearly show that more wolves need to survive in order to make progress toward the reintroduction population goal. As demonstrated above, but for continued new releases, the BRWRA population would be declining; and, incredibly, the AMOC is

recommending measures that will further reduce the survival of wolves. An additional problem with allowing the take of wolves attacking dogs is the creation of an opportunity for “baiting” wolves into a fight with dogs for the purpose of legally shooting them. This would greatly frustrate law enforcement investigations to determine the legality of wolf killings by private individuals.

11. AMOC will propose, within the context of Recommendations (5) and (6), above, that, when the MWEPA population (management) objective estimate on December 31 for two sequential years is 125 wolves or more, in each immediately subsequent year the States of Arizona and New Mexico and any Tribal AMOC Cooperators may:

- a. Take (i.e. permanently remove by any authorized means) as many wolves as necessary, above a MWEPA baseline of 125 wolves, to resolve documented wolf nuisance and livestock depredation incidents, consistent with AMOC SOP 13.0: Control of Mexican Wolves;*
- b. Issue State or Tribal permits to private individuals to take (i.e. permanently remove by any authorized means) as many wolves as necessary, above a MWEPA minimum baseline of 125 wolves, to resolve documented wolf nuisance and livestock depredation incidents, consistent with AMOC SOP 13.0: Control of Mexican Wolves;*
- c. Take (i.e. permanently remove by any authorized means) as many wolves as necessary, above a minimum baseline of 125 wolves, to resolve local unacceptable impacts on native ungulate populations.*

Note: Unacceptable impacts” will be defined in AMOC’s recommended Mexican Wolf Nonessential Experimental Population Rule (see Recommendations [1] and [2], above).

We strongly disagree with Recommendation #11, in which the AMOC recommends what would amount to a cap of 125 wolves in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA). The MWEPA is substantially larger than the BRWRA, which has an established objective of “at least” 100 wolves, with no stated cap. And AMOC is exploring the idea of expanding the MWEPA boundaries to some unspecified extent. Theoretical analyses based on the estimated prey biomass of the existing BRWRA suggest that it, alone, could support 213-468 wolves. See 5-Year Review, at TC-18. Expanding a reintroduction goal that can and should be met within the BRWRA to the much larger MWEPA is inappropriate and not supported by the ESA or any authorized project document. Recommendations regarding population size fall clearly within the purview of the Recovery Team, not AMOC. Furthermore, a population of 125 Mexican wolves would most likely have an effective population (N_e) size of <50 wolves. Conservation biologists would agree that an effective population this small would have a high probability of extinction (*i.e.*, not be viable over the long term) and would not be an appropriate recovery goal. Allowing this magnitude of take above and beyond the population cap effectively sets the recovery threshold at 125 individuals for some yet-to-

be-defined geographic area that may be substantially larger than the current MWEPA. We emphatically reiterate that this type of unilateral, de facto recovery planning is inappropriate for the AMOC.

In light of the gross inappropriateness of Recommendation #11 on policy, procedural, and scientific grounds, we formally request that the USFWS reject this recommendation from the AMOC and that it receive no consideration in the rule revision process.

12. AMOC will develop, no later than June 30, 2006, a report describing a proposed Federally, State, and/or Tribally-funded incentives program to address known and potential economic impacts of wolf nuisance and livestock depredation behavior on private, public, and Tribal Trust lands. AMOC may convene, if necessary, a technical advisory group of individuals with appropriate expertise to assist with this task. The conservation incentives discussion will consider all relevant livestock depredation issues, including: livestock depredation prevention; livestock depredation response; carcass discovery, monitoring, removal, burial, and/or destruction; and possible adjustment of the Federal grazing (AUM) fee (and any Tribal grazing subsidies) within the MWEPA to provide de facto compensation for documented and likely undocumented losses of livestock. The AMOC report shall also include a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness and procedural efficiency of the Defenders of Wildlife wolf depredation compensation fund, and provide recommendations for appropriate improvements.

*Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project 5-Year Review December 31, 2005
ARC-6*

Note:

a. The technical advisory group, if convened, shall be chaired by an AMOC representative and include a maximum of 15 other members, each with appropriate expertise.

b. AMOC as a body will not advocate regulatory changes to address carcass removal or disposal issues (but see Recommendation [12], above, regarding a process by which AMOC will explore possible mechanisms to address this issue).

AMOC's unwillingness to advocate regulatory changes to address carcass removal or disposal is yet another example of failure to use the discretion delegated to it to adaptively manage to promote recovery of the subspecies and should not preclude such consideration in this rule revision process. Addressing the issue of carcass management has the potential to increase survival of Mexican wolves in the BRWRA.

13. AMOC will convene a stakeholders group to assist AMOC in evaluating, and reporting in writing no later than December 31, 2006, social (human and socioeconomic) implications (including estimated annual livestock depredation losses) for any boundary expansions recommended per Recommendation (5), above.

Note: The stakeholders advisory group will be Co-Chaired by an AMOC representative and an AMWG Cooperator (County) representative, and include a maximum of 50 other

members, representing, insofar as is possible, the full spectrum of stakeholders. This group will comply with FACA, if necessary.

TRI requests that this recommendation be eliminated. We believe that stakeholder groups can be effective when tasks are explicitly and narrowly defined and program goals are universally accepted by participating stakeholders. However, we have observed that stakeholder processes used within the context of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program have not worked well, resulting in no meaningful progress and unacceptable delays in implementing important management actions or policy changes. We believe that this is due in large part to the strong, and mostly irreconcilable, clash of values that exists among stakeholder participants. Additionally, we believe this recommendation is inappropriate because the task it proposes to delegate to a stakeholder group will be undertaken as part of the NEPA review of the proposed rule revision.

14. No later than December 15, 2006, AMOC will complete a detailed plan for another Reintroduction Project Review.

Note: The Reintroduction Project Review will be conducted in 2009-2010 and completed no later than December 31, 2010.

This recommendation should be eliminated. A properly conducted, science-informed adaptive management process with a robust monitoring component should eliminate the need for additional formal project reviews (Borman et al. 1999). Existing annual reports should provide pertinent and adequate information for guiding the adaptive management process. The three- and five-year reviews conducted to date have been excessively lengthy in terms of time, excessively costly in terms of financial and staff resources, and generally unproductive in terms of adopted recommendations that will serve to improve the success of the program. No such additional project reviews beyond the annual reports should be required in a revised rule.

The Five-Year Review Recommendations Violate NEPA

Throughout all of the 5-year review recommendations we note a pre-decisional assumption that a revised rule will continue the previous designation of the BRWRA Mexican gray wolf population as a “nonessential experimental” population. We have demonstrated that this designation has not contributed to the conservation of the Mexican wolf by failing to achieve established objectives. This a priori declaration is a violation of NEPA which requires the evaluation of a full range of reasonable alternatives prior to a final decision. See 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14; see also *Van Abbema v. Fornell*, 807 F.2d 633, 638 (7th Cir.1986) (holding that because alternatives analysis is not subordinate to desires of the project proponent, reasonable alternatives should be identified by reference to a project’s general purpose, not the proponent’s narrow objective).

The Recovery Plan Problem

ESA § 4(f)(1) mandates that the Secretary “shall develop and implement...‘recovery plans’ for the conservation and survival of endangered species....” The Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan was approved and adopted in 1982. USFWS policy requires that recovery plans be reviewed every five years and updated or revised if they are out of date or not in compliance with the ESA. The Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan (USFWS 1982) has never been updated or revised, despite the fact that it fails to comport with the ESA in two important ways. First, the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan does not contain “objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination...that the species be removed from the list.” 16 U.S.C. § 1533(f)(2)(B)(ii). Second, the Recovery Plan does not contain a detailed scheme for fully recovering Mexican wolves throughout all or a significant portion of their historic range, *i.e.*, an actual plan for delisting the subspecies. See id., at §§ 1532(6) and (20).

The current Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, which has been in effect in its original form for 25 years, is in critical need of revision. Recovery teams include a body of scientific experts who review and consider the best available scientific information and make science-based recommendations to the FWS as to recovery requirements for the species. The USFWS initiated a recovery plan revision process in October 2003, but suspended that effort in January 2005. The original reasons offered by USFWS, if ever supportive of the hiatus, lost all logic and effect in December 2005, when the USFWS determined that it would not appeal the judiciary’s rejection of the USFWS proposed distinct population segments in the 2003 downlisting rule for the gray wolf. The FWS has shown no intent to reinstate the recovery planning process for the critically endangered Mexican wolf.

The current rule for the BRWRA ENE population of Mexican wolves has been in effect for nearly 10 years and the process to revise it will likely take at least 2 additional years. We must assume that a revised rule would have a similar life span of a decade or more. We also must assume that a revised recovery plan will be approved very early in the existence of a revised rule for the BRWRA Mexican wolf population. No changes to the existing rule that would constrain future recovery options or decisions, including its geographic scope outside the currently defined BRWRA, should be made. Above, we identify recommendations from the 5-Year Review that would have such constraining or adverse effects on future recovery planning. Rule changes that would not be appropriate prior to a revised and approved recovery plan would include:

- Any changes to the existing experimental population area boundary, unless the change is to eliminate or reduce the size of the experimental population area.
- Any designated or de facto numerical cap or any take authorizations which could have the effect of a numerical cap on the number of wolves in the wild population.
- Any exclusion of geographic areas from potential occupation by wolves.

- Any non-discretionary provisions for taking Mexican wolves in that portion of the experimental population area that lies outside the boundaries of the BRWRA, except for the protection of human life.

Given that adequate protection and discretionary authority exists under provisions of the existing rule to accomplish the established objective of 100+ wolves for the currently authorized BRWRA Mexican gray wolf reintroduction project, we question the wisdom of going forward with this rule revision process prior to the completion and approval of a revised recovery plan for Mexican gray wolf recovery. If the same time and staff effort were redirected to recovery planning, a recovery plan could be developed and approved in the same or less time than will be expended on this rule revision process. If a rule revision is then deemed necessary, it could address the specific recommendations of the new recovery plan.

We request that this rule revision process not be completed until a new recovery plan has been approved, and that recovery planning be immediately reinitiated.

One potentially negative effect of delaying a comprehensive rule revision is a further delay of “direct release” options for genetic enhancement of Mexican wolves in the New Mexico portion of the BRWRA. Therefore, TRI supports a limited rule revision that can be expedited to allow such direct releases for population genetics management purposes until a recovery plan and comprehensive revised rule are approved.

The Forest Service Problem

The Gila and Apache National Forests comprise 95% of the BRWRA. The failure of the BRWRA reintroduction project to meet the objective of establishing a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 Mexican wolves by about the end of 2006 has been caused primarily by conflicts between wolf population restoration and livestock production on the same public lands. It is not the conflict itself that is the problem, but rather it is the management and policy responses by the USFWS- and the lack thereof from the Forest Service- that have resulted in unsustainable levels of lethal control and permanent removals of Mexican wolves.

Mexican wolves have borne the burden of conflict resolution through being killed or permanently removed. To date, 58 Mexican wolves have been permanently removed from the BRWRA for conflicts with cattle. Indeed, more wolves have been removed for such conflicts than for any other reason.

Cattle grazing in and around the BRWRA is ubiquitous, making wolf-livestock conflicts to some extent inevitable. Still, the Forest Service has done nothing to reduce such conflicts, but is instead has engaged in a policy of willful blindness to wolves. Notwithstanding its affirmative legal obligations, the Forest Service has implemented no conservation programs or policies to reduce wolf-livestock conflicts, it has neglected to impose any requirements of proactivity or sound animal husbandry on its grazing permittees, it refuses to consider wolves in any of its environmental analyses, and it has

been nothing short of apathetic in its charge to increase survival and persistence of Mexican wolves in the wild population.

Specifically, the Forest Service has interpreted the Mexican wolf's ENE classification in such a manner as to absolve it of any legal obligation to consider the conservation and recovery of this subspecies- or potential harms to this subspecies- in its management and policy decisions. Rather, in its now signature scapegoating and egregious over application of ESA § 10(j), the Forest Service routinely dismisses its legal obligation to consider wolves by simply quoting the wolf's ENE status.

As the USFWS is well aware, this ENE status lowers protections for Mexican wolves in three very important ways: it precludes a designation of critical habitat; it exempts defense of property from the ESA § 9 prohibitions in certain, highly detailed circumstances; and it turns an otherwise searching ESA § 7(a)(2) consultation process into a rubberstamped intra-agency "conference," from which a finding of substantive jeopardy is literally impossible. What the USFWS also knows- or should know- is that the Mexican wolf's ENE status has no bearing on the Forest Service's duties to robustly consider potentially significant impacts to wolves in its NEPA analyses for grazing decisions; nor does the ENE status relieve the Forest Service of its ESA § 7(a)(1) duty to utilize all of its resources in furtherance of the conservation of this subspecies.

In an attempt to justify its total dismissal of wolves, the Forest Service often cites to the definition for "disturbance causing land use activity" in the current Section 10(j) rule. Of course, this definition applies specifically to activities within a 1-mile radius of release pens, active dens, and rendezvous sites. The definition excludes legally permitted livestock grazing, use of water sources by livestock, and livestock drives if no reasonable alternative route or timing exists. The Forest Service has interpreted this very limited exclusion from this definition to be an admission by the USFWS that livestock grazing has no adverse impact on Mexican wolf reintroduction anywhere within the BRWRA. Much to our dismay, we have seen unofficial writings by USFWS personnel agreeing with this misguided interpretation.

The Forest Service fields assertions that it is violating ESA § 7(a)(1) by way of cursory reference to its participation on the Mexican Wolf Adaptive Management Oversight Committee. Simply having membership on a decision making body whose decisions are precluding recovery of the Mexican gray wolf cannot substitute for a federal agency's affirmative obligation under the ESA to "utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act by carrying out programs for the conservation of endangered species and threatened species listed pursuant to...this Act." Just like it does not somehow relieve the Forest Service's NEPA duties, Section 10(j) of the ESA does not override Section 7(a)(1).

When we met with Forest Service regional officials to discuss why they were not doing more to conserve the Mexican wolf, their response was that USFWS has not asked them to. This is a pathetic example of bureaucratic avoidance of responsibility by both agencies.

Reclassifying the Mexican gray wolf subspecies to either endangered in its own right, and thus fully protected under the ESA apart from *Canis lupus*, or as “experimental, essential” would cause the Forest Service to formally consult with the USFWS on its proposed actions. Restoring the consultation requirement for this population would also cause the USFWS to evaluate how the actions of other federal agencies may be impacting the Mexican wolf, and to issue formal biological opinions as to those impacts. Furthermore, we are confident that essentially “uplisting” this population would also at least tempt the Forest Service to adequately consider the Mexican wolf in its NEPA analyses, and may likewise spark a shift within Forest Service policies to prioritize endangered species protection and conservation over forage production for domestic livestock.

We believe such reclassification is necessary for conserving and recovering Mexican gray wolves in the BRWRA as is required by the ESA.

The Wild BRWRA Population is “Essential”

While the details of a revised recovery plan are not available, it is clearly understood by the USFWS and the scientific and conservation communities from basic conservation biology principles and from partially finished recovery planning efforts that recovery of the Mexican gray wolf will require the establishment of at least three or more viable, self-sustaining “core” populations, which are interconnected with habitats that provide safe passage for wolves to move freely among the core populations. By “recovery” we mean the restoration of Mexican wolves to all or a significant portion of their historic range, as well as the removal of any and all threats to the wolf’s continued existence, such that the wild population no longer meets the definition of a threatened or endangered species under the ESA.

An analysis of five potential reintroduction areas presented in the final EIS found the BRWRA to be the most suitable site capable of meeting the objective of establishing a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 Mexican gray wolves within the probable historic range of the subspecies. Subsequent analyses by independent scientists published in peer-reviewed journals have identified the BRWRA as one of the most important areas available for Mexican wolf restoration. A recent analysis of areas suitable for wolf recovery in the western United States by Carroll et al. (2006) confirms the high importance of the BRWRA to recovery of the Mexican wolf in the Southwest.

Given that the BRWRA is arguably the best place to initiate Mexican wolf recovery in the Southwest and that restoration of a viable, self-sustaining population of Mexican wolves in the BRWRA is arguably a critically essential component to any future recovery plan for the Mexican gray wolf, the USFWS can no longer justify an ENE classification for the BRWRA population.

In 1998 the USFWS justified the determination that the BRWRA population of Mexican gray wolves is nonessential to the continued existence of the subspecies on the basis that

the genetic integrity of the subspecies is being protected in the captive population. In promulgating the existing rule, the USFWS concluded that “even if the entire experimental population died, this would not appreciably reduce the prospects for future survival of the subspecies in the wild. That is, the captive population could produce more surplus wolves and future reintroductions still would be feasible if the reasons for the initial failure are understood.” While such a conclusion may have been justified in 1998 and for a short time thereafter, it cannot be justified in perpetuity or as a safe harbor for mismanaging and excessively removing wolves in the wild. The USFWS also asserted that “Releasing captive-raised Mexican wolves furthers the objective of the *Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan*”; and that “This reintroduction will establish a wild population of at least 100 Mexican wolves and reduce the potential effects of keeping them in captivity in perpetuity. If captive Mexican wolves are not reintroduced to the wild within a reasonable period of time, genetic, physical, or behavioral changes resulting from prolonged captivity could diminish their prospects for recovery” (underlining added).

Thus, the USFWS admits that the establishment of a population of at least 100+ Mexican gray wolves in the BRWRA within a reasonable period is necessary to further recovery objectives, that the captive population cannot be relied upon as an extinction safeguard indefinitely, and that future reintroductions would be feasible if the reasons for the initial failure are understood. After two formal program reviews, ongoing annual progress reviews, and the analysis by Parsons and Ossorio (2007), the reasons for failure of the BRWRA reintroduction to reach the 100+ wolf objective by about the end of 2006 are clearly understood and have been elucidated above within these comments.

A recently published review of research by Frankham (2007) entitled *Genetic Adaptation to Captivity in Species Conservation Programs* raises new concerns about genetic deterioration in captive populations. The process of evolution causes animals to adapt to their environment. Frankham, citing several peer-reviewed studies, states that “Characteristics selected for under captive conditions are overwhelmingly disadvantageous in the natural environment,” and that these adverse evolutionary changes “jeopardize the ability of captive populations to reproduce and survive when returned to the wild.” He advises that “genetic adaptation to captivity should be minimized for populations likely to be used for reintroduction,” and that the most effective way to minimize genetic adaptation to captivity is to “minimize the number of generations in captivity” and return the species to the wild “as rapidly as possible.” Mexican wolves have been bred in captivity for approximately 30-45 years (10-15 generations) or possibly longer (records of the establishment of the Aragon Lineage are not available), depending upon the lineage. This research reconfirms the USFWS’s cautionary concern in the current rule about prolonged captivity cited above.

Endangered species recovery takes place in the wild, not in captivity. There is absolutely no legal or biological basis for asserting that a captive breeding program alone satisfies the mandate of the ESA. Clearly, the existing BRWRA population or any future wild population of Mexican gray wolves can no longer be considered “nonessential” to the continued existence of the subspecies until full recovery under the ESA has been

achieved. If there ever is a case to be made for the first ever designated “essential” experimental population under Section 10(j) of the ESA, this is it.

A “Conservation Alternative”

We request that the USFWS include and fully evaluate, as required by NEPA, a “Conservation Alternative” to the existing rule for the BRWRA population of Mexican gray wolves. The primary objectives of this alternative are to “conserve” Mexican gray wolves in the legal sense as this term is defined in the Endangered Species Act, to achieve the stated objective of the BRWRA reintroduction project of establishing a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 wolves within the area currently delineated as the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area in no more than four years, and to foster eventual full recovery of Mexican wolves within a significant portion of their historic range. This alternative shall include the following requirements or prohibitions:

- Reclassification of the BRWRA population of Mexican gray wolves as either endangered in their own right, and thus fully protected under the ESA separately and distinctly from *Canis lupus*, or as “experimental, essential” under Section 10(j) of the ESA.
- A primary overriding goal of achieving the current, but partial, recovery objective of establishing a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 Mexican gray wolves within the current geographic scope of the BRWRA (exclusive of the FAIR and any other permissive expansions), with no upper limit on the future number of Mexican wolves within the BRWRA or any larger geographic area.
- No restrictions on the movements, dispersal, or establishment of territories by Mexican wolves outside the boundaries of the BRWRA.
- If reclassified as “experimental, essential,” an absolute limitation on taking of Mexican wolves from all causes (legal, illegal, and agency management actions)—except for the immediate defense of humans—such that the BRWRA population increases annually by at least 15% numerically and by at least 2 breeding pairs (per the existing Federal Register definition of breeding pairs) based on the official end-of-year population count until the 100+ wolf objective has been met. Provisions should be included to allow and require the USFWS to immediately reduce authorized take for all subsequent years following years when this conservation goal has not been met.
- A provision for maximizing the genetic integrity of the BRWRA population.
- A provision exempting wolves that have fed on any carcass (or portion of a carcass) of livestock that died of a non-wolf cause from being killed or removed for livestock protection purposes; and a prohibition on the taking of wolves in the vicinity of attractants, including livestock carcasses, unless such attractants are specifically being used in an authorized take operation.
- A provision calling on the Forest Service to execute its ESA § 7(a)(1) duties for the Mexican gray wolf by adopting and implementing conservation programs or policies that serve to better avoid wolf-livestock conflicts, and thus promote the conservation and recovery of the BRWRA population.

- No provisions that would preclude or impede any conceivable proposal or action to achieve future recovery goals/objectives in any geographic area outside the current boundaries of the BRWRA. This specifically includes a prohibition on any expansion of the existing geographic scope of the experimental population area.
- A requirement for the USFWS to complete recovery planning for the Mexican gray wolf as expeditiously as possible if such a plan has not been approved and implemented prior to promulgation of a revised “experimental, essential” population rule or reclassification of the BRWRA population as endangered with full ESA protection.
- A provision that would allow future recovery objectives to override any provisions in a revised rule authorizing the take of Mexican wolves (other than for the immediate defense of humans) both within and outside the BRWRA, but within the experimental population area. This would require the granting of discretionary authority to the USFWS to reduce (but not increase) authorized take prescribed in a revised rule to accomplish future recovery objectives.

All relevant analyses, comments, requests, and recommendations presented within this entire document are hereby incorporated into this proposal for a Conservation Alternative.

This alternative would bring the USFWS into compliance with the conservation and recovery requirements of the ESA and expedite successful completion of the BRWRA Mexican gray wolf reintroduction project in about 4 additional years (if implemented expeditiously). It would cause the USFWS to return to its legally mandated mission of recovering the Mexican gray wolf as required by the ESA, and to abandon a failed practice of unsustainable wolf control.

Definitions in the Current Rule

Should the USFWS propose to issue a revised Section 10(j) rule, we offer the following comments on definitions within the current rule. Our lack of comment on an existing definition indicates our concurrence with (or ambivalence to) that definition and a recommendation that it be carried forward to a revised rule.

Breeding pair. We specifically request that this definition be retained unchanged in any subsequent rule.

Disturbance causing land use activity. We request elimination of this definition. The Forest Service has used this definition inappropriately to avoid its legal responsibility for conserving Mexican wolves through grazing-related management actions and policy decisions. The revised rule should grant USFWS full management discretion in consultation with the U.S. Forest Service to close areas and restrict activities around release pens, dens, and rendezvous sites as may be necessary to conserve Mexican wolves and ensure their release success, reproductive success, and survival in the wild.

Impact on game populations in ways which may inhibit further wolf recovery. This definition, and the rule provision it relates to, should be eliminated from any revised rule. Given the failure of the current program to reach the wolf population objective being caused by excessive management-related taking of wolves, this provision is inappropriate so long as the Mexican wolf remains listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA. If appropriate at all, such a provision belongs in state management plans following the delisting of the Mexican wolf.

Primary Recovery Zone. In a revised rule that allows wolf releases anywhere within the BRWRA, there will be no need to subdivide the area into zones with different rules. Thus, this definition should be eliminated.

Problem Wolves. We believe this definition does not belong in the formal rule. Such determinations should be made through the adaptive management process consistent with current circumstances and consistent with progress toward achieving the reintroduction objective.

Secondary Recovery Zone. In a revised rule that allows wolf releases anywhere within the BRWRA, there will be no need to subdivide the area into zones with different rules. Thus, this definition should be eliminated.

Comments on Provisions of the Existing Rule (50 C.F.R. § 17.84(k))

Below we offer comments on specific sections of the existing rule. The omission of a section implies our concurrence with (or ambivalence to) that section as presently written. These comments apply specifically to the scenario of an alternative that addresses a rule revision under the current Section 10(j) classification of “experimental, non-essential,” which as noted elsewhere in these comments we believe is no longer justified or appropriate for the BRWRA population of Mexican gray wolves.

§ 17.84(k)(1): We oppose the continuation of a non-essential experimental classification for this population of Mexican gray wolves. Justification for this opposition is presented within these official comments.

§ 17.84(k)(3)(iii): We request that this provision be deleted. Agencies should assume their full responsibilities under the ESA regardless of the classification of the BRWRA population of Mexican wolves.

§ 17.84(k)(3)(vii): We request that this provision be deleted, as it authorizes additional taking of wolves prior to achievement of the reintroduction objective. Current levels of take are already precluding progress toward the objective.

§ 17.84(k)(3)(ix): We request that all but the first sentence of this provision be deleted. The following provision should be added: Take authorized under this provision shall not preclude an annual increase in the BRWRA Mexican gray wolf population of at least 15% in numbers and at least two additional breeding pairs until the reintroduction

objective of a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 wolves has been met within the currently defined boundaries of the BRWRA. Thereafter, take authorized by this provision shall not preclude any objective established within a revised and approved Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan or any other recovery plan by any name that establishes objectives for recovering gray wolves in a geographic region that includes the BRWRA and/or the MWEPA.

§ 17.84(k)(3)(xiii)(8): We request this provision be reworded as follows: On public lands, the Service and cooperating agencies may restrict human access and any or all land uses as necessary to protect Mexican gray wolves within a 1-mile radius of release pens, dens, and rendezvous sites for whatever duration of time is determined to be necessary to assure the wolves' protection.

§ 17.84(k)(3)(xiii)(10): We request that this provision be deleted in its entirety.

§ 17.84(k)(3)(xiii)(11): We request that this provision be deleted in its entirety. If retained, we request this provision be modified such that it does not preclude any objective established by a future recovery plan.

§ 17.84(k)(3)(xiii)(12): We request this provision be modified such that it does not preclude any objective established by a future recovery plan.

§ 17.84(k)(3)(xiii)(13): We request this provision be deleted. There is no further need for mandated reviews of the BRWRA reintroduction project. Annual assessments, as are currently conducted, combined with a legitimate science-based adaptive management process should lead to management decisions that foster progress toward the reintroduction objective.

§ 17.84(k)(3)(xiii)(14): We request this provision be deleted. The USFWS should establish a classification that is appropriate for protecting and conserving Mexican gray wolves in the BRWRA population. We believe that classification should be either endangered in their own right, and thus fully protected under the ESA separately and distinctly from *Canis lupus*, or as an "experimental, essential" population under Section 10(j).

The Rewilding Institute appreciates this opportunity to participate in this most important program to recover the critically endangered Mexican gray wolf.

Sincerely,

David R. Parsons
Carnivore Conservation Biologist

These comments are endorsed by:

Dr. Paul Paquet
Faculty of Environmental Design
University of Calgary
Principal author of: *Mexican Wolf Recovery: Three-Year Program Review and Assessment*

Dr. Michael Soulé
Professor Emeritus
Department of Environmental Studies
University of California, Santa Cruz

Dr. Philip Hedrick
Ullman Professor of Conservation Biology
Arizona State University

Dr. Richard Fredrickson
Missoula, MT

Dr. Joseph A. Cook
Professor of Biology and Curator of Mammals
University of New Mexico

Dr. Lu Carbyn
Adjunct Professor
Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Department of Renewable Resources, University of Alberta
and
Research Scientist Emeritus
Department of Environment, Government of Canada
Canadian Wildlife Service

Dr. Brian Miller
Executive Director
Wind River Ranch Foundation
New Mexico

Dr. Barbara L. Dugelby
Latin America Program Director
Round River Conservation Studies

Dr. David S. Maehr
Professor (Conservation Biology)
Department of Forestry
University of Kentucky

Dr. Thomas Rooney
Assistant Professor
Department of Biological Sciences
Wright State University

Dr. Tony Povilitis
Dr. C. Dustin Becker
Life Net
Bozeman, MT

Dr. Paul Beier
Conservation Biology & Wildlife Ecology
Northern Arizona University

Dr. Malcolm R. MacPherson
Retired Scientist
Santa Fe, NM

Mexican Wolf SSP Management Group

Dr. Susan Lyndaker Lindsey
Executive Director/CEO
Wild Canid Survival and Research Center

Melissa Hailey, Esq.
Forest Guardians

Jeff Williamson
President
Arizona Zoological Society

Margo McKnight
Executive Director
Wildlands Project

Phil Carter
President
UNM Wilderness Alliance

Dr. Melissa Savage
Director
The Four Corners Institute

Greta Anderson
Arizona Director
Western Watersheds Project

Michael Robinson
Conservation Advocate
Center for Biological Diversity

Daniel Patterson
Ecologist & SW Director
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility

Kim Crumbo
Conservation Director
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council

Stephanie Nichols-Young
President
Animal Defense League of Arizona

Jean C. Ossorio
Peter M. Ossorio
Las Cruces, NM

Jon Klingel
Wildlife Biologist
Santa Fe, NM

References Cited.

Bormann, B.T., J.R. Martin, F.H. Wagner, G. Wood, J. Alegria, P.G. Cunningham, M.H. Brookes, P. Friesema, J. Berg, and J. Henshaw. 1999. Adaptive management. Pages 505-534 in: N.C. Johnson, A.J. Malk, W. Sexton, and R. Szaro (eds.) Ecological Stewardship: A common reference for ecosystem management. Elsevier, Amsterdam.

Carroll, C, MK Phillips, CA Lopez-Gonzalez, and NH Schumaker. 2006. Defining recovery goals and strategies for endangered species: the wolf as a case study. *BioScience* 56(1):1-13.

Frankham, R. 2007. Genetic adaptation to captivity in species conservation programs. *Molecular Ecology: OnlineEarly Articles Published* article online: 2-Aug-2007 doi: 10.1111/j.1365-294X.2007.03399.x

Fredrickson, RJ, P Siminski, M Woolf, and PW Hedrick. 2007. Genetic rescue and inbreeding depression in Mexican wolves. *Proceeding of the Royal Society B* 274:2365-2371.

Garcia-Moreno, J, MD Matocq, MS Roy, E Geffen, and RK Wayne. 1996. Relationships and genetic purity of the endangered Mexican wolf based on analysis of microsatellite loci. *Conservation Biology* 10:376-389.

Nowak, RM. 1995. Another look at wolf taxonomy. Pages 375-397 in LN Carbyn, SH Fritts, and DR Seip, eds., *Ecology and Conservation of Wolves in a Changing World*. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute.

Paquet, PC, JA Vucetich, MK Phillips, and LM Vucetich. 2001. *Mexican Wolf Recovery: Three-Year Program Review and Assessment*. Prepared by the IUCN Conservation Breeding Specialist Group for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM.

Parsons, DR and JC Ossorio. *Mexican Wolf Reintroduction: Put and Take Wolf Recovery?* Oral presentation at 19th Annual North American Wolf Conference, Flagstaff, AZ; and poster presentation at 87th Annual Meeting of American Society of Mammalogists, Albuquerque, NM.

Young, SP and EA Goldman. 1944. *The Wolves of North America*. Washington, D.C.: American Wildlife Institute.

Attachment

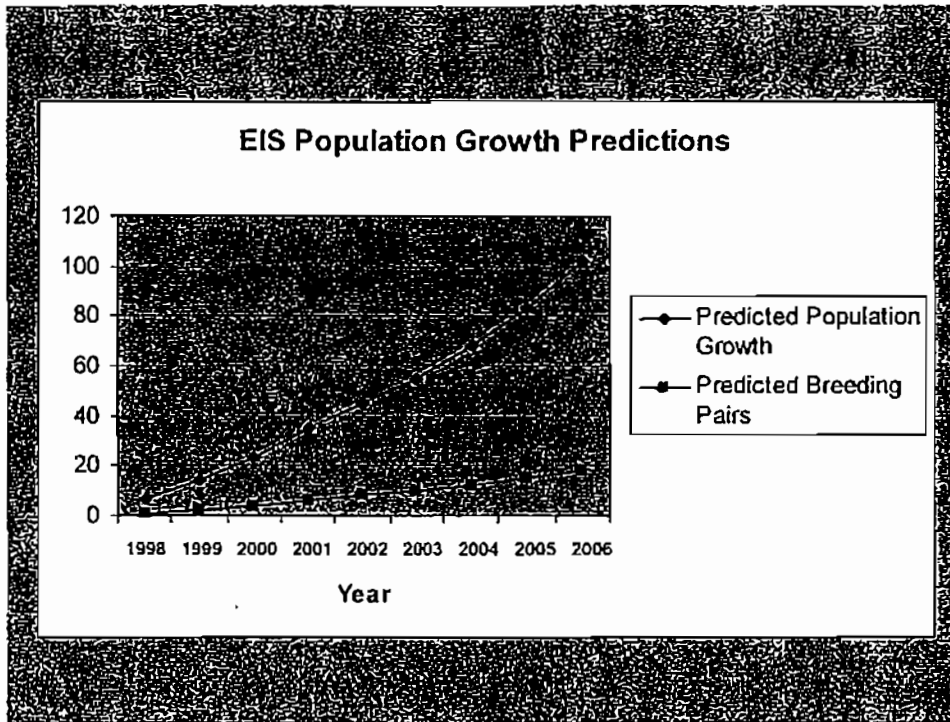
Mexican Wolf Reintroduction: Put and Take Wolf Recovery?
19th Annual North American Wolf Conference
Flagstaff, Arizona
April 24-26, 2007
David R. Parsons and Jean C. Ossorio

1. Hawk's Nest Release Photo

Releases of captive reared Mexican wolves into Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area began in 1998 and have continued through 2006.

The Blue Range reintroduction objective is to establish a population of at least 100 wolves

2. Chart of EIS Predictions.



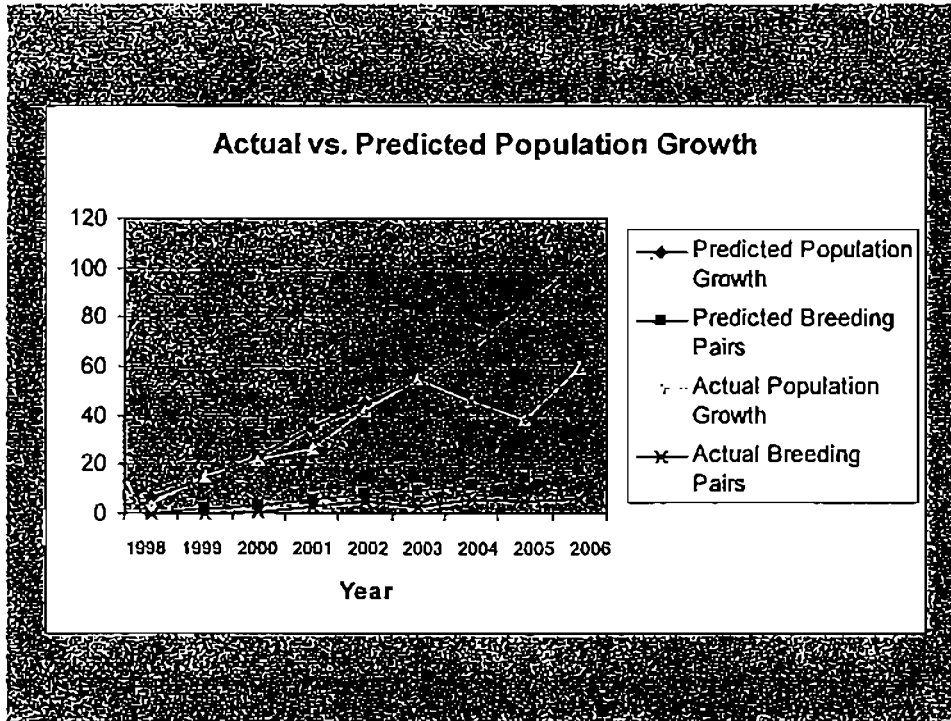
Predictions were made in the EIS that by the ninth year following initial releases (end of 2006) there would be:

102 wolves
18 breeding pairs

A "Breeding Pair" is an adult male and an adult female wolf that have produced at least two pups during the previous breeding season that survived until December 31 of the their birth year.

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Predicted Releases	15	15	15	15	6	0	0	0	0
Predicted Population Growth	7	14	23	35	45	55	68	83	102
Predicted Breeding Pairs	1	2	4	6	8	10	12	15	18
Actual Releases	13	21	16	15	9	8	10	3	4
Actual Population Growth	4	15	22	26	42	55	46	38	59
Actual Breeding Pairs	0	0	1	3	5	3	6	5	6
Pop: No Releases After 2002	4	15	22	26	42	50	36	29	45

3. Chart Comparing Predicted and Actual Population Status.



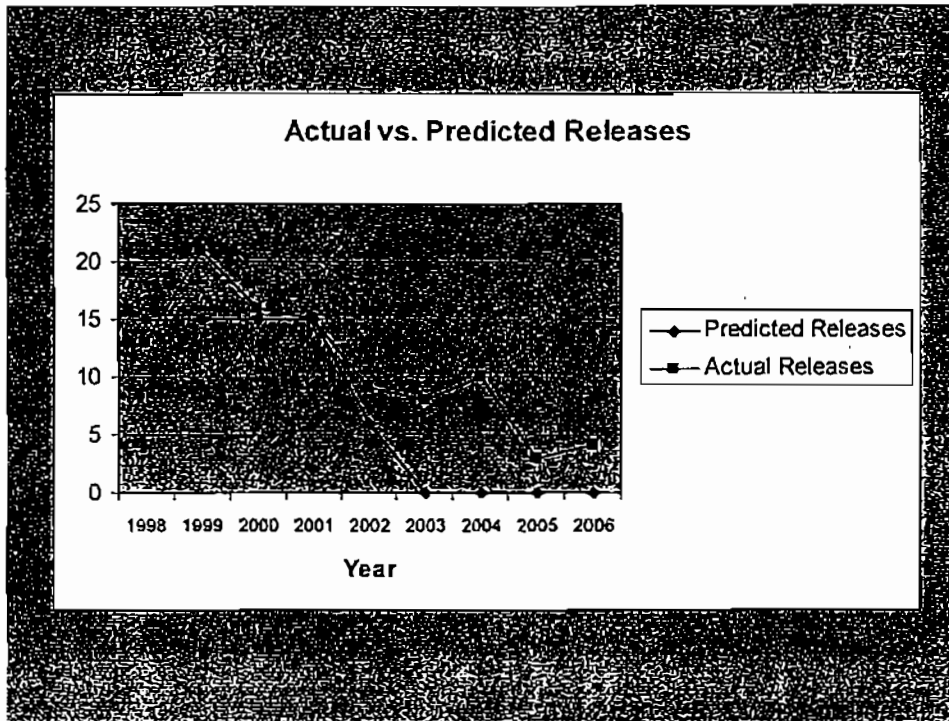
Actual population status at end of 2006:

59 wolves

6 breeding pairs - using strict interpretation of breeding pairs

Note: One of these breeding pairs has been eliminated by a lethal control action in 2007.

4. Chart Showing Actual and Predicted Releases.

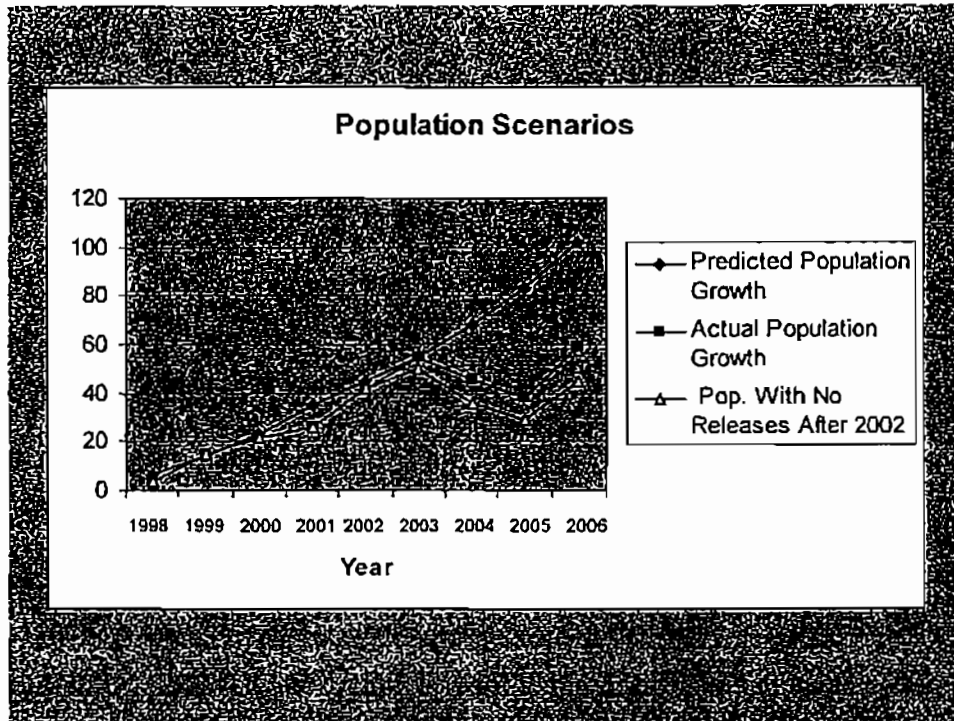


The EIS predicted that about 66 wolves would need to be released from 1998 through 2002 to reach a point where the wild population would be capable of increasing with no further supplementation.

Actual releases have totaled 99 wolves (we count wild-conceived, captive-born wolves as new releases) and have occurred every year of the project, to date.

Data on population and breeding pair trends do not support a conclusion that the population will steadily increase to 100 wolves without further supplementation.

5. Chart Showing Population Trend had Releases Ended in 2002.



Under actual conditions with releases continuing through 2006, the population increased steadily to an estimated 55 wolves at the end of 2003, declined in 2004 and 2005 to a mean estimate of 38 wolves, then increased in 2006 to an estimated 59 wolves. The estimated population has grown by only 4 wolves over the past 3 years.

Since today's population is not significantly different from the population at the end of 2003, we thought it would be an informative exercise to construct a hypothetical population trend as if new releases ceased after 2002, as was initially expected. This allows the analysis of 4 years of actual project performance under a no-release scenario with a starting population very similar to the predicted population at the end of 2002 (42 vs. 45). By the end of 2002, 74 wolves had been released (vs. 66 predicted).

We tracked the fates of individual new-release wolves and their wild-born offspring from 2003-2006. Since the fates of only "known" wolves can be determined, our data represent a minimum estimate of the number of wolves in the current population deriving from new releases over the past 4 years.

Had no releases occurred after 2002, the current estimated population would be no more than 45 wolves. We made no attempt to estimate the number of breeding pairs.

The difference of 14 wolves comprises 8 post-2002 new releases and 6 wild-born offspring of these wolves.

6. Release Photo

What can we conclude about the “put” side of our “put and take” assertion?

7. Bullet Chart with “Put” results.

- >Actual releases (99) exceed predicted releases (66) by 150%.
- >Wolves released after 2002 and their offspring comprise 24% of the 2006 population.
- >Absent continued releases, the population would have increased by no more than 3 wolves (42 to 45) since the end of 2002.
- >The release of 25 new wolves during 2003-2006 accounted for 82% (14 of 17 wolves) of the population increase over this 4-year period.
- >The population increase since 2002 is heavily “release subsidized”

8. Photo of Dead Wolf

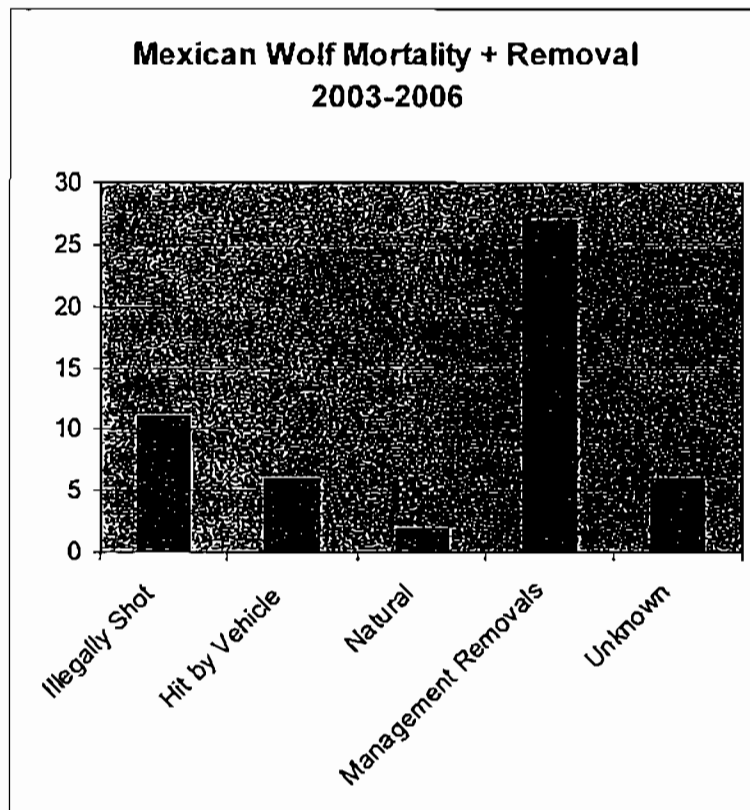
Now let’s evaluate the “take” side of the equation. We have limited this analysis to the years 2003-2006 to reflect contemporary data and trends.

Mexican Wolf Mortality + Removal

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	% Total
Cause of Death/Removal:						
Illegally Shot	7	1	3	0	11	21.0%
Hit by Vehicle	4	1	0	1	6	11.5%
Natural	0	1	0	1	2	4.0%
Management Removals*	2	1	7	17	27	52.0%
Unknown	1	1	1	3	6	11.5%
Total	14	5	11	22	52	100.0%

* Includes: Lethal control, management removals, and capture-related mortalities.

9. Bar Chart of Mortality and Removal Factors



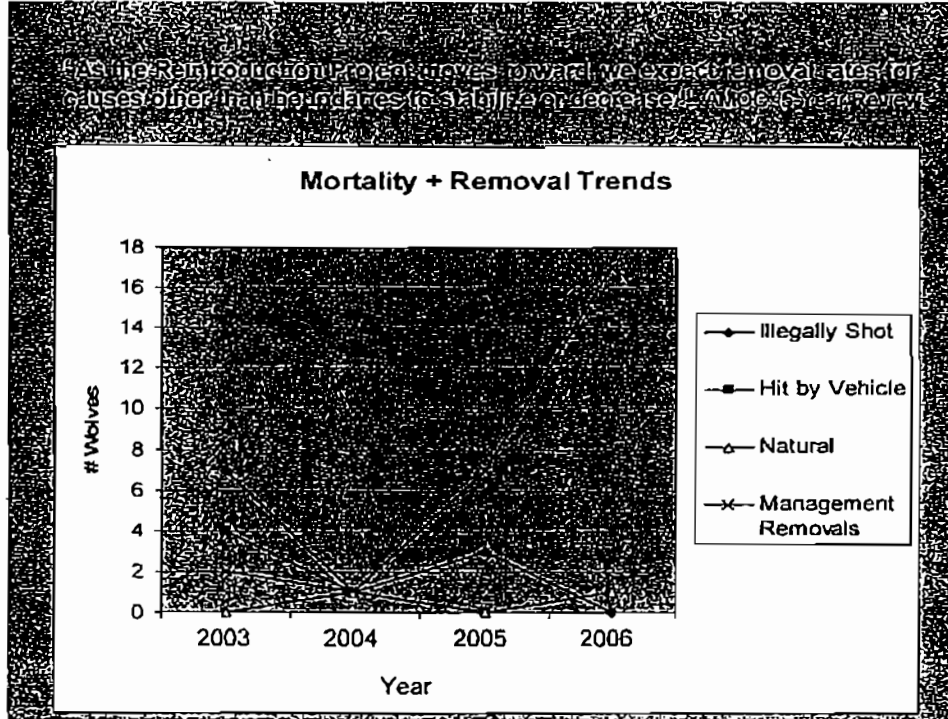
Note: Our total for management removals is substantially lower than the number reported by the FWS in Table 6 on their website (27 vs. 61). We report only permanent removals not reflected in the end of year counts. If a removed wolf is later returned to the wild, we did not count it as a removal. Our analysis is limited to wolves with known fates. We have not accounted for missing wolves that fall in the category of “lost to follow-up”, because their fates cannot be known.

Management-related removals account for 52% of all known mortalities and permanent removals over the last four years.

Illegally shot wolves account for an additional 21%

Thus, nearly 3/4ths of all known-fate failures for the past 4 years were caused by either management removals or illegal killing. The “good news” in these data is that these are causes that the managing agencies have the capability to address and reduce. Little can be done to reduce vehicular, natural, and unknown mortalities.

10. Mortality + Removal Trend Chart

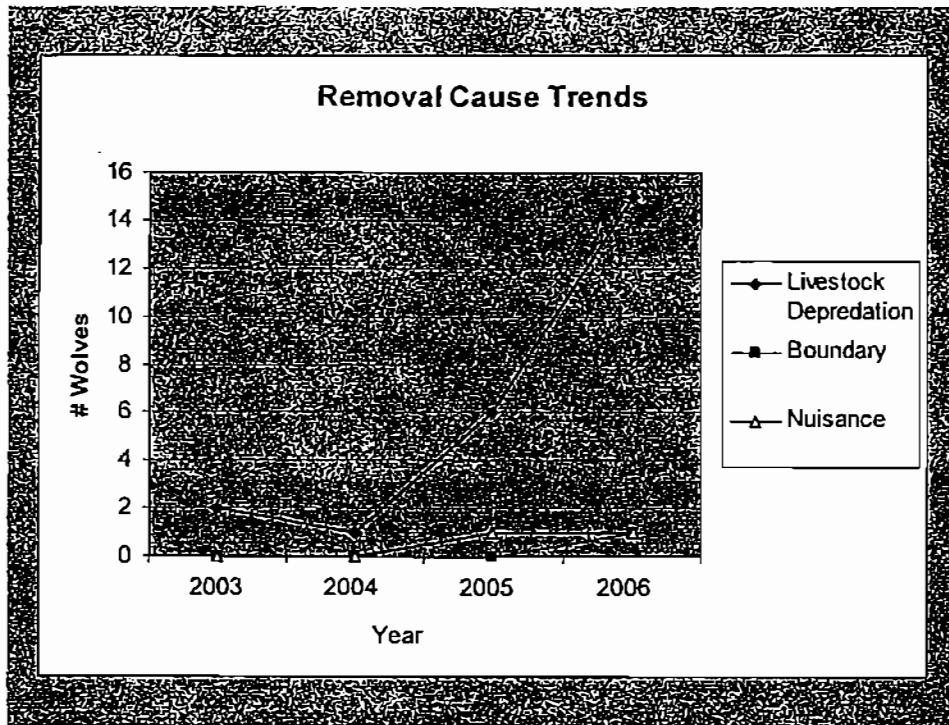


Of particular concern to us are the trends of mortality and permanent removal causes over the past four years.

While illegal shootings, vehicle strikes, and natural mortalities have declined or remained low for the past four years, management related take has soared.

Quote from Five Year Review: “As the Reintroduction Project moves forward, we expect removal rates for causes other than boundaries to stabilize or decrease.” This expectation could be true if the majority of management removals were of wolves that crossed the boundary.

11. Removal Cause Trend Chart



A breakdown of the specific causes of permanent removals reveals good news and bad news. The good news is that removals for boundary infractions and nuisance behavior have resulted in the permanent removal of only three wolves in the past four years, and one of these was returned to the wild in 2007.

But the bad news is that removals for livestock depredations are rising steeply, accounting for the permanent removal of 24 wolves from 2003-2006—nearly 90% of all removals.

Of note here is that the AMOC began implementing SOP 13 in 2005. This procedure requires the removal of all wolves that accumulate 3 livestock depredations in the span of a year.

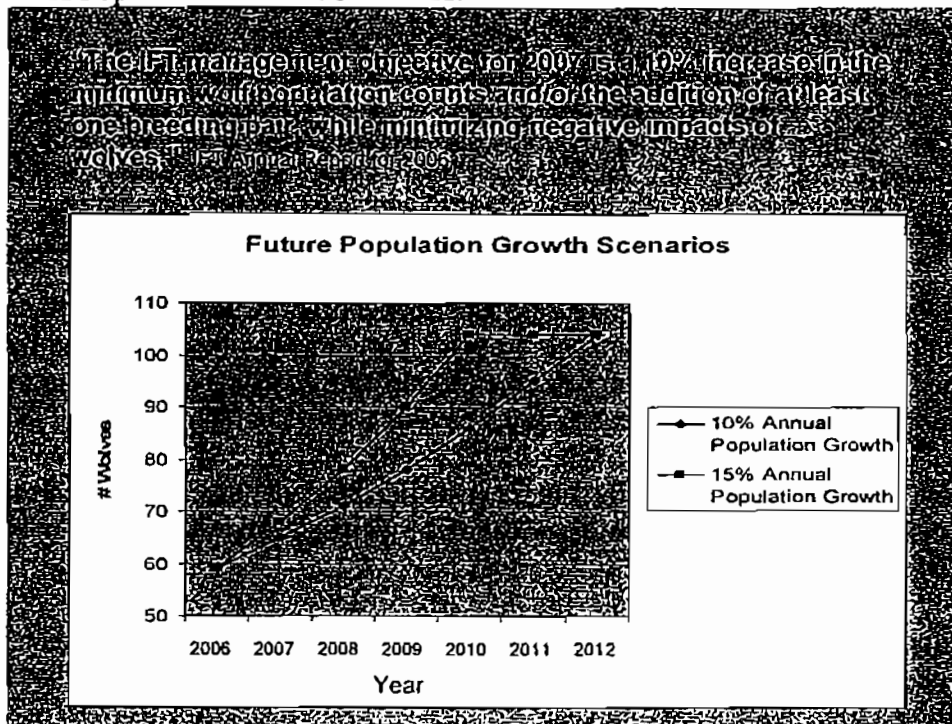
Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	% Total
Cause of Management Removals:						
Livestock Depredation	2	1	6	15	24	88.9%
Boundary	0	0	0	1	1	3.7%
Nuisance	0	0	1	1	2	7.4%
Total	2	1	7	17	27	100.0%

12. Bullet Slide of “Take” Results:

- Recruitment during 2003-2006 = 88-93 wild-born pups + 25 new-release wolves = **113-118**.
- Known off-take = 25 mortalities + 27 permanent management removals.
- Net result = population increase of 17 wolves—an **average increase of 4 wolves per year**.
- Management-related, agency-authorized “take” accounted for over half of documented mortalities and permanent removals during this period.
- Population growth is **“take limited”**.

The information we have presented should be used to guide AMOC through the adaptive management process in new directions that will result in steady population growth and reintroduction project success.

13. Chart of Population Growth Scenarios.



Quote from the 2006 Annual Report: “The IFT management objective for 2007 is a 10% increase in the minimum wolf population counts and/or the addition of at least one breeding pair, while minimizing negative impacts of wolves.”

We looked at two future growth scenarios (10% and 15% annually) to determine the remaining time required to meet the reintroduction project objective. Ignoring the “and/or” caveat, under the IFT’s modest 10% objective for 2007, if carried forward to succeeding years, it would take 6 more years to achieve the 100-wolf population objective. A 15% annual increase would reach the objective in 4 years.

14. Closing Recommendations

>We recommend that the AMOC adopt an objective, henceforth, of at least a 15% annual population increase, obtained substantially through wild reproduction, until the 100-wolf objective has been met, which would occur in no more than four years.

>The need for new releases should be phased out by the end of 2007, except for special circumstances, such as genetic augmentation.

>The most fruitful avenues for exploring policy and procedural changes should relate to the causes of management-related take, especially livestock depredation, and illegal killing. Twenty-three Mexican wolves have been shot and only one person has been apprehended and charged.

>Seemingly endless process promoted by the AMOC must be replaced by swift and decisive actions that cause more wolves to survive, persist, and thrive in the BRWRA.

>The currently conceptual livestock-wolf conflict interdiction program needs to be implemented yesterday. The primary emphasis of this program should be the preservation of wolves in the wild.

>State and Federal agencies represented on the AMOC should fully embrace and support a program for voluntary grazing allotment retirement within the BRWRA.

>The U.S. Forest Service must recognize and embrace its ESA mandate to carry out programs “for the conservation of” endangered Mexican wolves. The Gila National Forest’s recent proposal to increase the allotted AUMs on the T Bar Allotment (a depredation hotspot) by 148% is wrongheaded policy. The USFS must actively explore ways through policy changes and grazing permit conditions to reduce livestock-wolf conflicts.

>The NEPA process for revising the existing rule should include an alternative that considers reclassification of the reintroduced population as either “essential experimental” under section 10(j) or “endangered” with the full protection of the ESA. This is fully supported by the evidence that the current “non-essential, experimental” designation has not sufficiently led to the ESA requirement for “conservation” of the species.

>SOP 13 must be revised to achieve new population growth objectives and to bring it into compliance with the “conservation” requirement of section 10(j) of the ESA. In its present form SOP 13 could preclude recovery of Mexican wolves indefinitely, because it contains no threshold provisions based on population numbers or trends (i.e., measures of progress toward recovery) which would trigger a reduction or cessation of agency-authorized taking of Mexican wolves.

>State and Federal agencies represented on the AMOC should support and advocate for road closures within the BRWRA in the ongoing travel management planning process being undertaken by the U.S. Forest Service.

>Law enforcement activities should be thoroughly reviewed for ways to increase apprehensions and convictions of wolf killers.

-----END-----

The UPS Store #210
7200 Montgomery NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
505.888.9577 Tel
505.888.8997 Fax
M-F 8.30-6 SAT 10-5

RECEIVED

DEC 26 2007

USFWS-NMESFO



Fax Cover

The UPS Store™

John Slown
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
NM Ecological Services Field office

To: 2105 Osuna N.E.

Fax #: (505) 346-2542

Albuquerque, Nm 87113-1001

Date: 12-27-07

of Pages (including cover sheet): 3

Linda Young
From: 2929 Indiana St. N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87110-3425

Phone #: (505) 884-8687

Subject: ATTENTION: Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping

New Name.
New Low UPS® Rates.
Same Helpful Services.

If you are not the intended recipient, do not disclose, copy, distribute or use this information. If you received this transmission in error, please call immediately to arrange return of the documents at no cost to you.

2929 Indiana St. N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87110-3425
December 26, 2007

John Slown
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service / New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87113-1001

ATTENTION: MEXICAN GRAY WOLF NEPA SCOPING

Dear Mr. Slown:

As a New Mexico resident for 45 years, I am writing to voice both my support of the Mexican Gray Wolf Reintroduction Program and my deep concern over its current status. Public opinion, generally, supports wolf recovery in our area, but given present management practices, how can this succeed? The program, as a whole, is becoming increasingly bogged down in a confusion that is self destructive. The wolf population is declining steadily and because of the artificial and frequently politically motivated constraints currently in place restricting their movements and behavior, these animals have literally been set up to fail. They are too often being treated like vermin and the attitude of the USFWS appears largely uncaring. This, as well as the fact that Mexican wolves have even been allowed to reach near extinction, reflects very poorly on the Service.

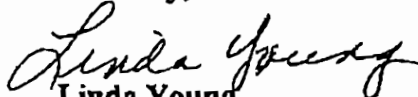
For one thing, the designated recovery area is too restrictive. Wild wolves historically held a wide ranging and ecologically valuable place in the natural order of the Southwest. The area now set aside for them sets up arbitrary human boundaries that prohibit them from flourishing. They are tracked, removed, relocated, and too often killed when they "cross the line." Depending on your point of view, the killing may provide a quick and permanent fix for the moment but accomplishes nothing constructive in the long term. The removals and relocations destroy whatever pack structure and cohesion have occurred and create enormous stress for the animals; again this is counterproductive to recovery. These wolves must have the chance, and the space, to establish themselves as Nature intended, to be allowed to breed and develop a viable gene pool, and to evolve their natural social structure, if they are to have any chance at survival. The wild born pups should become the forebears of a future healthy wild population but they are not currently being given any fair chance to do that.

The present clash between ranchers and wolves, in my opinion, is the most critical hindrance to success. Yes, ranchers are rightly concerned for the safety of their stock, but wolves account for only a very small percentage of stock losses. And yes, this group wields considerable political, i.e. monetary clout, i.e. votes. But by whose authority have they been given what they appear to consider a "Right" to so negatively compromise the wolf recovery program? Certainly no one group of individuals who, viewed within the context of the Southwest population as a whole represent a minority of its inhabitants, should be allowed to dictate a course of action that could well lead to the extinction of a species. Instead of trying to placate them at every turn and pandering to their habit of falling back on fear tactics and

emotional rhetoric to attempt to garner public support for wolf eradication, why are they not being required to take on some responsibility for how they control the wanderings of their stock on public lands and for disposing of, or rendering inedible, carcasses that otherwise attract wolves and set them on a course of preying on other stock? And when wolf kills do occur why are they not taking advantage of reimbursement programs such as the one offered by Defenders of Wildlife?

I urge the USFWS to fairly weigh all sides of the Mexican Wolf issue, to seek the valuable opinions of biologists and environmentalists, to allow the wolves to disperse beyond the restricted area they are now confined to, and to update management and monitoring practices in this program to give these animals a real chance for survival by seeking workable ways for them and humans to co-exist in the Southwest. They are absolutely endangered and should be protected as such. The current precarious and fragile state of our wolf population screams for renewed efforts to fine tune the recovery program. In the long run this area will benefit greatly from their survival and growth. Their disappearance will only serve, once more, to point to human ignorance and cruel disregard for the environment we all rightfully share.

Sincerely,



Linda Young

LSYoung@comcast.net

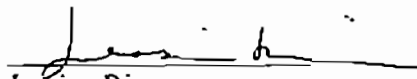
(505) 884-8687

December 26th, 2007

Attn: Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping

Revisions to the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction plan should include a cessation to the killing of the current wolves, expansion of the wild population to new habitat and a large increase in the minimum population under the plan. The expansion of range should allow wolf packs to find new territory. I have very little doubt that this modification will also allow the population of the Mexican gray wolf to reach a much higher level than the current goal of 100 individuals. The USFWS should also focus less upon destructive management and should take steps to preserve the current population in the wild.

Overall, the Mexican gray wolf should be allowed to repopulate its former ranges as much as possible. This opportunity should be facilitated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service but should focus on a future where Mexican wolves do not need any human management to live wild and free.



Jessica Rimmer
124 Harvard SE Apt #6
Albuquerque, NM 87106

RECEIVED
DEC 27 2007
USFWS-NMESFO

December 26th, 2007

Attn: Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping

I am writing in support of a number of revisions to the current Mexican wolf reintroduction project in the Blue Range.

RECEIVED
DEC. 27 2007
USFWS-NMESFO

- Wolves should be allowed to expand their territory beyond the current Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA).
- Initial releases should be allowed anywhere in the BRWRA.
- The wild population should larger then 100 individuals.

Each of these revisions to the original recovery plan will ensure that the Mexican wolf achieves a minimum viable population free from long-term management. The implementation of these goals will also allow the USFWS to fulfill its obligation under law and clevate the reputation of the agency among both conservationists and ranchers.

Susan Fitzpatrick

Susan Fitzpatrick
5027 Midnight Vista Ave NW
Albuquerque, NM 87114



Wolves belong in New Mexico Help Us Save the Wolf!

Supported by:
Center for Biological Diversity
Defenders of Wildlife
Forest Guardians
Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
Sierra Club-Rio Grande Chapter
Southwest Environmental Center
Wildlands Project

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ALBUQUERQUE, NM
PERMIT NO. 426

New Mexico
Wilderness Alliance
P.O. Box 25464
Albuquerque, NM 87125

Handwritten: #107

Handwritten: WILLIAM F STAMM
Ruth Stamm
313 Hermosa Dr SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108-2613



Handwritten: 12-2-07

Handwritten: Please see newspaper clipping, do what's right Ecologically. Thank you

CHICKAMAUGA AND CHATTANOOGA
FORT OGLETHORPE, GEORGIA

James Walker's 13' x 30' painting of the Battle of Lookout Mountain, November 24, 1863 was commissioned by the Federal commander in that battle, Major General Joseph Hooker. The central portion of the painting shows Hooker on his white horse receiving a report from his chief of artillery, Major John A. Reynolds

CHI-CD5 NPS photo
© Eastern National

Printed by Consolidated Drake Press



Base steps implementation of 50113. Base resembles the recovery team, Base continue reestablishment. Base pursue those who are killing the Mexican Wolf. Base make the workers (understand by us) deal with E. and great removing wolves.

Sincerely, Frank F. Reiner
116 - [unclear] 63109

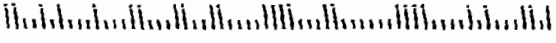
*Fish & Wildlife Service
Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordination
N. M. Ecological Services
Field Office
2100 Youngs Road, N1
Albuquerque, NM
7113*

RECEIVED
DEC 27 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

9 159920 361201
ISBN 0-915992-33-3

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - SPACE RESERVED FOR U.S. POST OFFICE USE ONLY



December 27, 2007

Brian Millsap
State Administrator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87133

RECEIVED

DEC 31 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

Fax (505)346-2542

Email: NMESFO@usfws.gov

RE: Notice of Scoping Meetings and intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Socio-Economic Assessment for the Proposed Amendment of the Rule Experimental population of the Arizona and New Mexico Population of Gray Wolf ("Mexican Gray Wolf").

Dear Mr. Millsap:

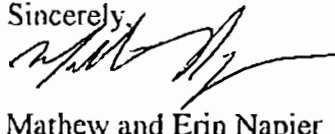
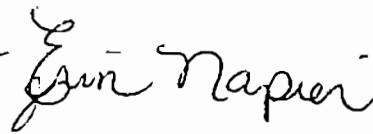
We would like to comment on the above referenced scoping process. As residents of New Mexico, as parents who enjoy taking their family into the forest and as runners who enjoy running in the forest and open space, I am writing to express the following concerns I have with these proposed amendments.

- The issue of human safety must be addressed. We have read of many accounts where wolves have harmed adults and/or children. We greatly fear for the safety of our children and pets when we are camping, hiking or out running. Wolves that stay around homes and communities threatening children, harming pets and killing livestock should not be allowed to remain in the program and should be dealt with immediately.
- The continue feeding of wolves by U>S> Fish and Wildlife Service and Game and Fish personnel should not be allowed to persist. Although it may alleviate a short term problem, it in turn only creates a bigger and longer problem with habituation.
- The current method of determining depredation does not adequately capture the true amount of harm and cost being done.
- Depredation on domestic pets on private, public or Tribal lands needs to be adequately addressed and effective remedies need to be available to protect private individuals.
- Depredation on domestic pets on private, public or Tribal lands needs to be adequately addressed and effective remedies need to be available to protect private individuals.
- A compensation and interdiction program managed by livestock producers themselves needs to be created to address the real cost of the losses individuals are experiencing.

- Boundaries should not be expanded until this program can show some type of success nor should it be considered at this time.
- Carcass removal by livestock operations is not a realistic option, nor can its effects be proven at this time.
- The removal of problem wolves through lethal means needs to remain an option.
- Diseases carried by wolves that are harmful to humans and domestic livestock need to be addressed.
- Research needs to be done on wolves by land grant universities that are unbiased and have the resources to do so.

Thank you in advance for your attention. We look forward to an EIS that addresses the real concerns, true costs and negative impacts to those rural communities that are within the program boundaries.

Sincerely,

Mathew and Erin Napier

11705 Corona Ave, NE
Albuquerque, Nm, 87122
(505) 798-9489

MARY BEATH

28 December 2007

Brian Millsap, State Administrator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
NM Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

RECEIVED

DEC 28 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

RE: Mexican Wolf Reintroduction

Dear Mr. Millsap,

I am writing to express my hope that the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction in New Mexico will not only continue, but that the program will be improved. A viable population of wolves will benefit the entire ecosystem, an outcome that has been clearly demonstrated in the northern Rockies with the successful reintroduction of the gray wolf.

To allow the fear and the hostility to the federal government of a few to derail this program would be a failure of your agency's responsibility to the people of New Mexico and to the land.

My understanding is that opposition to Mexican wolves is much greater in New Mexico than in Arizona, a fact that indicates the source lies in political attitudes and possibly misinformation or misunderstanding, rather than in rational arguments and sound science. I've been told that one of the main loci of hostility is a ranch on the northeast corner of the Gila NF, and that cow carcasses are left out apparently on purpose to lure wolves and cause them to develop a taste for domestic meat. Adding an effective enforcement provision to the new plan seems to me to be absolutely necessary for the program to work. One or two more rangers, at minimum, should be a priority. I think it's also a good idea to require ranchers grazing on public land to be proactive in mitigating the loss of their stock to wolves. Funds should be available to the ranchers so that they're not required to foot the bill (or the entire bill) themselves. This might go some distance in reducing their hostility to the program.

Opposition from ranchers, as you well know, is and has been the single most important issue in this program. I hope you (collectively) will have the fortitude and wisdom to address this issue in an effective way. Have you, for example, tried to enlist the assistance of the El Malpais Group, ranchers in southwestern NM who recognize the validity of ecological principles in their operations? Making rational arguments will only go so far, and using personal relationships among the ranching community seem possibly more effective.

1407 DEL RIO ROAD SW

ALBUQUERQUE NM 87105

505-242-7221

mbeath@usfws.gov

In addition to the above, I'd like to add my voice to arguments and suggestions you've heard before:

- Include a "conservation alternative" that changes the wolves' status from experimental non-essential to fully endangered, since they are likely the most endangered mammal in North America.
- Include the option of releasing wolves directly into New Mexico.
- Stop killing and removing wolves. Corrective action should primarily address the behavior of humans.
- Allow wolves to roam outside the Blue Range Recovery Area into nearby suitable habitat.
- A target population of 100 wolves in the wild seems a reasonable goal, but no maximum population numbers should be set.
- Include a provision in the recovery plan that does not set limits on future recovery options.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the wolves.

Sincerely,



Mary Beath



New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association

2231 RIO GRANDE BLVD., N.W. • ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87104

P.O. BOX 7517 • ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87194

TELEPHONE (505) 247-0584 • FAX (505) 842-1766 • E-MAIL NMCGA@RT66.COM

December 28, 2007

RECEIVED

DEC 31 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

Mr. Brian Millsap, State Administrator
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

RE: Notice of Scoping Meetings and intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Socio-Economic Assessment for the Proposed Amendment of the Rule Establishing a Nonessential Experimental Population of the Arizona and New Mexico Population of Gray Wolf ("Mexican Gray Wolf").

Dear Mr. Millsap:

On behalf of the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association (NMCGA), representing members in all 33 of our state's counties as well as some 14 other states, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above captioned action.

It is well known that the NMCGA has opposed the Mexican Wolf reintroduction program from its onset, including engaging in litigation against the program. However, the program does exist and is having tremendous impact on our members. With that in mind, we submit the following comments in the spirit of cooperation and in an attempt to lessen the burden on members currently facing wolves and members who may be facing wolves in their area in the future.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the analysis of alternatives is the core of the document. According to the courts, an agency must consider alternatives, even if they are not within the agency's jurisdiction or are not authorized by enabling legislation. Thus, as required by such case law, one legal and reasonable option to this process should be the termination of the program. **NMCGA requests that termination be analyzed as a viable alternative.**

Issues Related to the Scope of the NEP

(a) Current management stipulations that require wolves that establish home ranges outside the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA) to be removed and re-released into the BRWRA or taken into captivity. This stipulation stemmed from the intention in the 1998 NEP final rule that wolves would not be reestablished throughout the entire Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA), but only within the BRWRA, which is a sub area of the MWEPA. However, analysis indicates that removals for boundary violations due to wolves dispersing or establishing territories outside the BRWRA are not conducive to achieving the reintroduction project objective of "reestablishing a viable, self-sustaining population of at least

100 Mexican (gray) wolves" (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1982, p. 23). In other words, change in this aspect of the 1998 NEP final rule would provide the Service with the authority to allow wolves to establish territories outside the boundaries of the BRWRA.

Other than the "paltry data" mentioned in the 3-Year Review of the program, what evidence is there that the goal of at least 100 wolves has not been achieved? According to members who are living with wolves, the population of 100 Mexican Wolves has been met if not exceeded. Given the lack of ability to track and verify un-collared wolves, it is impossible to determine how many wolves are really on the ground. How will this change in an expanded reintroduction area?

It is highly likely that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and its' partner agencies have failed to take into consideration that there are many offspring that have survived and are not collared in the MWEPA. How are un-collared offspring accounted for within the program? How many pups have been born in the "wild" since 1998? What is the present status of each of those individuals? We believe that many have survived and a better accounting of these wolves needs to be addressed.

What is the prey base outside of the BRWRA to support wolf populations? Sources within the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMDGF) indicate that New Mexico's largest wildlife prey base for predators lies within the Gila National Forest. What will wolves released or venturing outside the Gila rely upon for food sources? What are the deer and elk populations in the full expanse of the recovery area? What will be the impacts on livestock production in any expanded area?

In the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) deer were envisioned as the primary food source. Has that assumption been documented and verified in the wolf reintroduction program in either the 3- or 5-year review? What impacts have the reintroduced wolves had on deer and elk populations in the BRWRA and how will that translate in an expanded reintroduction area? While the NMDGF has recently undertaken elk surveys to determine what impacts the wolves might be having on elk, the director admits that there is only one year of work and no long term or repeatable data on which to base any reasonable assumptions or decisions. **[Attachment A / Thompson Letter To The Editor 11.07]**

What impacts have the reintroduced wolves had on other wildlife including turkeys, rodents, birds or any other major prey base within the BRWRA? What impacts have they had on other predators such as coyotes, mountain lions and bears? Are there wildlife interactions that impact other endangered species in the region including the Mexican spotted owl that also requires a prey base to survive?

In the FEIS depredation of livestock was assumed to be minimal. In actuality, there has been tremendous impact to the individual ranching operations in the reintroduction area. What data has the FWS or its partners accumulated on impacts to livestock, including not only death loss, but additional management costs, loss of opportunity and other costs ranchers are suffering?

Research on the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS issued by the FWS in 1996 indicates that the assumptions of prey availability of both wild and domestic ungulates based on other regions resulted in discrepancies between estimated livestock losses and what should be expected in the BRWRA. **[Attachment B / Maceina Analysis 7.99]**

What are the physiological affects of dealing with the stress of depredating wolves? What are the psychological effects of the reintroduction of the Mexican Wolf? Research indicates that children in the current reintroduction area are exhibiting behaviors/symptoms that constitute the major symptoms involved in the diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. **[Attachment C / Martin 1999]** How will these effects be mitigated in the existing reintroduction area and/or an expanded area?

Livestock producers outside the current reintroduction area are strongly opposed to boundary expansion fearing the carnage they have seen their fellow producers suffer within that area. However, there is little fairness in forcing those who are attempting to maintain livestock operations or live within the current reintroduction area to continue to suffer losses at the same or enhanced level. How will you better deal with these problems? What additional budgetary needs are associated with better management of an existing or expanded program? Where will these funds come from?

The program has failed within the current reintroduction area, as evidenced by the number of wolves that have been repeatedly recaptured, lethally removed and not survived for various other reasons. Animals have been hit by motor vehicles, shot (perhaps mistakenly during hunting seasons) and harmed by other wildlife. Apparently none of these eventualities were examined in the initial EIS. They should be considered in the current analysis.

There have been tremendous financial impacts on local families, communities and governments. How will expanding the boundary address any of these issues?

An additional concern in expanding the area is the increased workload (depredation investigation/removal) on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) without appropriate budget offset. WS personnel are already being pulled from other WS predator management programs throughout the state to address wolf problems. Those efforts are often funded at least partially by local residents and governments who are now not receiving the services they are funding as a direct result of the wolf program. The wolf program must absorb the full cost of the program.

Wolves over a larger landscape will limit WS and private applicator use of M-44s and the Livestock Protection Collar creating increased coyote predation. This could easily put remaining sheep producers in the state out of business. In areas where wolf presence is confirmed, WS will end up having to check coyote traps on a daily basis, effectively limiting the amount of equipment they could have out at any one time. There will likely be additional non-wolf livestock predation that they can not effectively deal with. What actions will be taken to offset these problems?

Until there is an effective compensation/interdiction/incentive program administered locally, there should not be any expansion of the recovery area.

(b) Current management stipulations allow for initial Mexican gray wolf releases from captivity only into the primary recovery zone of the BRWRA. Management experience has demonstrated that this stipulation in the 1998 NEPA final rule sets impractical limits on available release sites and wolves that can be released into the secondary recovery zone, limits the Mexican Gray Wolf Reintroduction Project's (Project) ability to address genetic issues, and results in a misperception that the secondary recovery zone is composed largely of "problem" animals that have been translocated to the secondary zone after management removal due to livestock depredation events. In other words, a change in this aspect of the 1998 NEP final rule would possibly provide the Service the authority to release Mexican gray wolves from the captive breeding population into New Mexico.

There is no "misperception that the secondary recovery zone is composed largely of 'problem' animals." The FWS's own news release on March 21, 2000 states: "An EA of the translocation of previously released Mexican gray wolves within the BRWRA for management purposes was completed February 10, 2000." What are the "management purposes" for which wolves have been translocated? While livestock depredation is most certainly not the only "management" issue involved, nuisance behavior such as habituation around communities, schools and homes as well as depredation on pets and domestic animals appear to be the only other "management" purposes that have been utilized in translocation.

Translocations or releases of known problem wolves (habituated or those with any history of livestock predation) should not be allowed. The captive wolf population is huge. Why are there additional problems being created by releasing known problem animals? There is a current bottleneck in the holding pens at Sevilletta National Wildlife Refuge and Ladder Ranch, at least partially because there are several animals that cannot be re-released due to habitual livestock depredation. It is our understanding that FWS is attempting to use a reversible vasectomy technique to attempt to create space. They should either find space in a captive breeding facility (all already full) or euthanize these animals. If not they will impact decisions regarding future removals because there is nowhere to put "bad wolves". There is also no known way to turn "bad wolves" into "good wolves." Another alternative would be to use these animals to research rabies vaccination programs that are much needed within the program.

However, releasing "fresh" or inexperienced wolves may not be a solution either. The wolves released in Arizona initially were fresh or inexperienced, yet were translocated to New Mexico for "management purposes." What were the management purposes? Are management agencies habituating these animals to humans by continued feeding of road-killed animals, carnivore logs (made mostly of horse meat) or by trapping and handling in human settings then transporting them in camper shelled vehicles that cannot help but permeate human scent? The affect of these management techniques must be analyzed in the overall context of wolf behavior.

If genetics are to be a reason for translocation, then all the genetic information available should be included in the upcoming EIS including but not limited to: *Pedigree Analysis Of Captive Population Of Mexican Wolf*, Phillip S. Miller, Arizona State University, 1994 Correspondence, Roy McBride / Dave Parsons 1997. **[Attachments D & E]**

Could it be that this inbred, captive population of wolves is simply not genetically stable enough to survive in the "wild?"

These wolves have demonstrated the propensity to mate with dogs, which has resulted in the need to destroy at least two (2) sets of pups. How will this issue be addressed in the future?

(c) The definition of the White Sands Missile Range, which is within the MWEPA, as the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area. However, the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area is not of sufficient size nor does it have sufficient prey density to function as an independent recovery area.

The issue here is obvious. NMCGA whole-heartedly agrees if there is no prey base and the area is not sufficient in size, there should not be any releases done. The size of WSMR would never contain the wolves nor is there enough of a prey base to keep them within the boundaries of WSMR. However we firmly believe that the same logic needs to be applied recovery area-wide.

d) Limited provisions for private individuals to "harass" wolves engaged in nuisance behavior or livestock depredation, or which are attacking domestic pets on private, public, or Tribal lands. Current provisions in the 1998 NEP final rule allow for "opportunistic, noninjurious harassment" of wolves by private individuals; that is, individuals are not allowed to harass wolves in such a manner as to even potentially result in bodily injury or death of a Mexican gray wolf. Management experience in the BRWRA, as well as the Northern Rocky Mountain DPS gray wolf recovery program, suggests that a variety of harassment methods could provide an effective deterrent to problem Mexican gray wolf behavior, as well as increasing public acceptance of Mexican gray wolf recovery. All possible alternatives and remedies need to be explored.

Amendment of the of the 10(J) rule must include the authority to harass Mexican wolves for the purposes of scaring them away from people, buildings, facilities, pets and livestock. Specific language is needed to state a person may kill or injure a wolf if threatened by a wolf or in defense of another who is threatened, and may, kill a wolf that is not responding to harassment and is

consistently in populated areas frequented by people and showing signs of being desensitized to human encounters.

The amendment should also include the harassing or humanely dispatching of wolves by the FWS or other federal, tribal or state agencies when wolves exhibit fearless behavior or become habituated to humans and pose a demonstrable threat to human safety. This provision should include providing a federal take permit for local county law enforcement personnel to allow them to lethally take a wolf for immediate protection of human safety. NMCGA reiterates that the agencies must stop habituating these animals to humans via their own management practices.

The FEIS must include mitigation of the false and misleading information that has been issued as "public education" during scoping meetings including the power point presentation and the contents of posters that contain faulty information on wolf removals, livestock, and depredations. For example, one poster indicated that upon petition, livestock depredations are paid for by the Defenders of Wildlife (DOW). The reality is that the level of confirmation for DOW payment is so high that a relatively few head of livestock have been compensated for. Additionally the DOW demands wolf acceptance as part of the price of compensation. A compensation program with strings attached is not a compensation program. If the government wants wolves, then the government should pay the compensation.

NMCGA believes that more intensive and widespread data should be collected on wolf diet using scat studies throughout the recovery area rather than a single point and time that leads to incorrect conclusions that wolves' diets mostly consist of elk (75%) as noted on a pie chart in the scoping and educational posters. This study is out of date and far too small to legitimately make this claim. There is also reason to believe that this data was collected in areas where livestock were not present during the analysis. Any NEPA analysis should provide for better information collection in a new rule.

Another misconception that is prevalent in information distributed by "environmental" groups is that wolves have never been documented killing anyone in North America. This is a dangerous falsehood that is misleading the public and must be corrected. Wolves have been documented all over the world killing and eating people (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fatal_wolf_attacks). North America has its own documented cases. The recent killing of Kenton Carnegie and in many old news reports (see http://www.aws.vcn.com/wolf_attacks_on_humans.html) demonstrated that wolves can and will kill humans in North America.

The practice of utilizing helicopters and planes to dispense with depredating wolves must NOT be eliminated. This country is too large and rugged to lose this ability to address or capture problem wolves. Elimination of these tools would hamper any ability for rapid and effective wolf removal. The longer a depredating wolf is allowed to remain on the ground, the more damage it is allowed to do. A major reason ranchers in the recovery area feel so helpless in the face of the Mexican wolf program is the inability of federal and state management agencies to quickly and effectively address depredating animals. Elimination of aerial tools will only make matters worse.

An amended 10(J) rule must include implementation of a federally funded pilot program aimed at compensation and interdiction to be run by ranching interests who are the experts in the field of livestock depredation causes and interdictions needs to be established.

Takings implications and assessments must be included in rulemaking and management planning in order to determine the scope of compensation necessary for private property owners for depredation and losses caused by the program. In addition to losses for livestock, compensation must be provided for the loss of pets.

(e) Current provisions in the 1998 NEP final rule that do not allow for "take" of wolves in the act of attacking domestic dogs on private or Tribal Trust lands. However, domestic dog

injuries and mortalities have occurred within the BRWRA due to interactions between wolves and dogs, primarily near people's homes. Lack of take authority in instances where take may have been warranted has resulted in substantial negative impacts on some local residents and visitors to the BRWRA.

Livestock owners or their agents must be allowed to "take" (including kill or injure) any wolf engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock on federally administered lands (see change in definitions below) anywhere within the Mexican wolf experimental population area, including within the designated wolf recovery areas.

(f) Among other issues, the need to clarify definitions of: "breeding pair," "depredation incident," and "thresholds for permanent removal." In addition, there is a need to identify other possible impediments to establishing wolves, such as the livestock carcass management and disposal issue identified in the 3-year review of the project (Paquet et al. 2001, p. 69). The authors of this report recommended that the Service "require livestock operators on public land to take some responsibility for carcass management/disposal to reduce the likelihood that wolves become habituated to feeding on livestock." In other words, if a new final rule is promulgated that incorporates this recommendation from the 3-year review, it may result in redefining "nuisance wolves" and "problem wolves" so as to exclude animals that scavenge on the carcasses of livestock that died of non-wolf causes.

There is a need for better definitions in the new rule, management plans and any Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that may result from a new rule, including:

BREEDING PAIR: an adult male and an adult female that are firmly mated and have the potential to breed and raise a litter of pups in the upcoming breeding season

ACTIVE PACK: two (2) or more wolves that are attached to each other and exhibit pack behavioral characteristics.

DEPREDATION: the confirmed killing or wounding of a domestic animal by one (1) or more wolves.

INCIDENT: the killing or wounding of a domestic animal by one (1) or more wolves.

ENGAGED IN THE ACT OF KILLING, WOUNDING OR BITING LIVESTOCK: to be engaged in the act of grasping, biting, attacking, wounding, or feeding upon livestock that are alive or were alive within the past 24 hours.

LIVESTOCK: any animal routinely contributing to the ability of a small businessman to earn a livelihood including but not limited to cattle, horses, goats, burros, llamas, chickens, stock dogs, guard dogs, hunting dogs and other domestic animal to which value is attached and the loss of which would prove to be a financial hardship and result in the takings of private property (pursuant to the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution). We would also like to include any pets; dogs, cats, riding horses, etc. to this definition.

PUBLIC LAND: lands available for dispersion into private ownership under general land laws to which no claim or rights of others has attached.

FEDERAL LAND: lands in which the United States retains a proprietary interest and prior claims and rights are attached.

TAKE: to harm, hunt, shoot, wound or kill.

UNAVOIDABLE OR UNINTENTIONAL TAKE: take which occurs despite reasonable care and is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, and is not done with purpose. Taking a wolf by trapping will be considered unavoidable or unintentional if the wolf is released and the capture is reported within 24 hours. Taking a wolf will be considered unavoidable or unintentional if the wolf is taken during a legal hunting activity, is non-negligent and is reported within 24 hours.

LEGALLY PRESENT LIVESTOCK: should be defined as livestock occurring where the owner has beneficial use of water rights.

Definitions from the current rule that do not warrant change or addition include the following: Occupied Mexican Wolf Range, Opportunistic, Non-injurious harassment, Primary recovery zone, Problem wolves, Rendezvous site, Secondary recovery zone, Wolf recovery area. Specifically, the

definition of problem wolf should not be gerrymandered to change the guidance associated with management of problem behavior.

Full investigation into the efficacy of livestock carcass removal, including the increased cost to livestock operations and the environmental consequences of blowing up carcasses to air, land and water, must be conducted. If livestock carcass removal is to be considered, then the removal of carcasses, both wild and domestic, killed by wolves and the cost associated with that must be determined. The FWS's own Ed Bangs has been widely quoted as saying "*The idea that wolves eat a dead cow, think beef tastes great, then start attacking cattle is mythology. As eating carrion and killing prey is two totally different wolf behaviors. Wolves often scavenge all they can. Normal range practice out here makes it nearly impossible to find and bury [or blow up for human safety concerns as they do for G. bears issues and livestock carcasses along trails] every carcass so livestock carcass disposal is within 'normal' and traditional livestock husbandry practices, feeding on livestock carcasses is a very different thing than attacking livestock- one doesn't necessarily lead to the other.*

(g) The issues addressed in this scoping process include issues addressed in a petition for Rulemaking dated March 29, 2004 provided to the Service by the Center for Biological Diversity. This Notice, and the subsequent public notice and comment period, will provide the public an opportunity to comment on the issues provided in the Center for Biological Diversity's Petition for Rulemaking.

Why was petition for rulemaking filed by the NMCGA, NMFLC, NMWGI, NMFLB, GLGA, and ACGA filed in May 2006 not considered as a part of this scoping process, if other petitions such as the one mentioned above were made a part of the scoping? The petition is attached and all parts are hereby submitted as scoping issues. **[Attachment F]**

Issues Related to Evaluation of the Environmental Impacts

We are seeking comments on the identification of direct, indirect, beneficial, and adverse effects that might be caused by amendment of the 1998 NEP final rule that established the current NEP of Mexican gray wolf. You may wish to consider the following issues when providing comments:

(a) Impacts on floodplains, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically sensitive areas;

The effects of wolves on watersheds spread of disease on domestic and wild animal populations needs to be addressed. Many diseases need to be taken into consideration. Rabies is currently the utmost concern in the reintroduction area. Given the incidence of grey fox rabies in Catron County, we would like to know the vaccination status of the released wolves. It is our understanding that there are no licensed vaccines approved for use in wolves, so it is not legal to vaccinate wolves with rabies vaccine in New Mexico. Are wolves being vaccinated? If so, how does this comply with state law? If not, what risk is posed to the wild and domestic animal populations as well as humans?

There are several zoonotic diseases of concern, especially those that are shed in feces and urine. Some of these zoonotics would be sarcocystosis, echinococcus, ascariasis, cysticercosis and neospora caninum. These are parasites passed in feces that can cause disease in both humans and livestock. Neospora causes abortion in cattle and wolves have been shown to be an intermediate host to this parasite. Other viral and bacterial diseases of concern would be distemper, adenovirus, brucellosis and leptospira. Leptospirosis and brucellosis are both a concern for humans and livestock. Some of these parasites and diseases can be transmitted to pets then on to their owners. How does USFWS intend to address these concerns?

How has the introduction of the wolf impacted the migration of elk within the recovery area? Has it improved riparian areas as documented in Yellowstone? Or, has it harmed them?

(b) Impacts on park lands and cultural or historic resources;

Livestock production has been the foundation of New Mexico's tri-ethnic culture for over 400 years. How is the wolf program changing that culture? What can and will be done to mitigate these changes?

NMCGA requests a full disclosure of social, cultural and economic impacts on rural residents and local governments to include the loss of tax revenue and increased government operation costs due to presence of introduced wolves. We ask that a specific economic analysis on ranches that are being harmed be conducted and that individual rancher and the individual county level economic impact be evaluated. That the cumulative impacts wolf reintroduction and recovery should be analyzed using local, county developed information on jobs, poverty and economics. Analysis that is national or regional in scope fails to depict the real impacts of wolf reintroduction.

NMCGA believes that livestock production in the release and recovery area must not be negatively affected by this program.

(c) Impacts on human health and safety;

There must be improvement in wolf monitoring and honest communication to insure that residents in the release and recovery areas are informed when wolves are in close proximity. Ranchers have been willing to work with the wolf program and move livestock when wolves are in the area. However, program managers have refused to provide timely information to allow that movement before depredation occurs. This does nothing to aide the wolves or the program and does great harm to the relationship between livestock owners and wildlife management agencies. There is a definite need to facilitate documentation of predation on livestock as well.

The 10(J) rule should clearly document, through appropriate mapping that families and small businesses reside in current and potential wolf habitat. The general public has been misinformed on this count resulting in the misconception that wolves are roaming free in vast areas of uninhabited, unroaded areas. That could not be further from the truth.

There must be an analysis of wolf occupancy of lands where domestic livestock are present, where families and children reside, and where domestic animals may contract a parasite or disease and spread it to humans or where wolves may directly deposit infectious material near residences needs to be conducted.

Catron County is currently building cages to provide safety for youngsters at bus stops where children wait for school buses or their parents. **[Attachment G / Declaration of Loren Cushman 12.07]** Why is the federal government not addressing these safety needs? Why is the federal government not providing funding for these shelters?

Also see Attachment C.

(d) Impacts on air, soil, and water;

An analysis of problems associated with epizootic disease carried by wolves and potentially carried in wolf feces needs to be done. The potential affects of these diseases on people, domestic animals including pets, working dogs, and other wildlife should be evaluated in the new EIS.

How has the reintroduction of wolves negatively impacted family ranches, putting them out of business and forcing them to subdivide their private property affecting the air, soil, and water in wolf recovery area? How do more roads needed for subdivisions impact air, soil and water quality in the region and the state?

As previously mentioned, what will be the impacts of blowing up carcasses, if that is a selected alternative?

(e) Impacts on prime agricultural lands;

Other than the obvious effect of wolves depredating on livestock, NMCGA would also like to know how wolves are affecting grazing patterns for livestock and wildlife. Are elk migration patterns being altered creating new or additional impacts on agricultural lands within and outside the boundary areas? NMCGA believes this to be an integral part of wolf management and must be addressed in the FEIS.

We are also extremely concerned about the impacts on WS resources and funding that is already affecting individuals across the state. The fact that they are not being fully funded to participate in the wolf program is causing hardship in other counties that are not presently in wolf country due to the fact that WS is required to pull resources and staff to deal with wolf depredations in something approaching a timely manner. There is a desperate need to fully fund WS for wolf program needs.

How is or will the subdivision of private land now associated with ranching operations affecting agriculture lands in the wolf recovery areas? How is the loss of the tax base generated by the livestock industry impacting county services like road maintenance that in turn impacts agricultural lands?

(f) Impacts to other species of wildlife, including other endangered or threatened species;

See *Issues Related to the Scope of the NEP (a)*

Additionally NMCGA is concerned with the animal cruelty aspects of the Mexican wolf reintroduction program. New Mexico has fairly stringent animal cruelty laws. **[Attachment H]** If a domestic pet owner were to release an animal in the "wild" without food, water, and shelter they would face criminal penalties under New Mexico state law. These wolves have been raised in zoos and breeding facilities for well over 30 years and have lost the ability to survive in the wild. They have been habituated to humans and associate humans with a means of food in those facilities and, because of management practices, in the wild as well. NMCGA requests that New Mexico Statutes be reviewed and assurance be provided that there is no violation.

(g) Disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low income populations;

We firmly believe that this program is having a disproportionately high and adverse impact on minority's and low income populations within the Mexican wolf recovery area.

More than 50 percent of New Mexico's population is minority, either Indian or Hispanic as documented at <http://www.city-data.com/states/New-Mexico-Ethnic-groups.html>

All US cities

New Mexico bigger cities, New Mexico smaller cities, New Mexico small cities

New Mexico detailed state guide

New Mexico - Ethnic groups

New Mexico has two large minorities: Indians and Hispanics. In 2000, the estimated American Indian population was 173,483 (9.5% of the total population—the 2nd-highest percentage of any state). Part of Arizona's great Navaho reservation extends across the border into New Mexico. New Mexico's Navaho population was recorded as 67,397 in 2000. There are 2 Apache reservations, 19 Pueblo villages (including one for the Zia in Sandoval County), and lands allotted

to other tribes. Altogether, Indian lands cover 8,152,895 acres (3,299,477 hectares), 10.5% of New Mexico's area (2nd only to Arizona in proportion of Indian lands). In 2000 the Zuni lands had a population of 7,758, and the Acoma reservation had 2,802 residents.

The Hispanic population is an old one, descending from Spanish-speaking peoples who lived there before the territory was annexed by the US. In 2000, Hispanics and Latinos (including a small number of immigrants from modern Mexico) numbered 765,386 or 42.1% of the total state population.

As of 2000, an estimated 19,255 Asians, 1,503 Pacific Islanders, and 34,343 black Americans lived in the state.

In Catron County, the county most impacted by wolves at the present time, there is a disproportionate number of residents with income below the poverty level as documented at http://www.city-data.com/county/Catron_County-NM.html

County population in 2005: 3,409 (all rural)
County owner-occupied houses and condos: 1,273
Renter-occupied apartments: 311
% of renters here: ██████████ 20%
State: ██████████ 30%
Land area: 6928 sq. mi.
Water area: 1.2 sq. mi.
Population density: 0 people per square mile : (very low).

Residents with income below the poverty level in 1999:
This county: ██████████ 24.5%
Whole state: ██████████ 18.4%

Residents with income below 50% of the poverty level in 1999:
This county: ██████████ 9.5%
Whole state: ██████████ 7.8%

Industries providing employment: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (19.8%), Educational, health and social services (17.2%), Construction (14.5%).

Type of workers:

- Private wage or salary: 51%
- Government: 28%
- Self-employed, not incorporated: 20%
- Unpaid family work: 2%

Catron County, New Mexico business data: stores, dealers, real estate agents, wholesalers, restaurants...

Races in Catron County, New Mexico:

- White Non-Hispanic (75.8%)
- Hispanic (19.2%)
- Other race (5.4%)
- American Indian (3.7%)
- Two or more races (3.6%)

(Total can be greater than 100% because Hispanics could be counted in other races)

Median resident age: ██████████ 47.8 years
New Mexico median age: ██████████ 34.6 years

Males: 1,812 ██████████ (51.1%)
Females: 1,731 ██████████ (48.9%)

Average wage per job in 2003: \$23,322
County population in 2003: 3,453
Jobs in 2003: 683

Total labor force in 2004: 1,441
Unemployment rate in 2004: 7.5%

Average household size:
Catron County: ██████████ 2.2 people
New Mexico: ██████████ 2.6 people

Estimated median household income in 2005: \$26,243 (\$23,892 in 2000)
This county ██████████ \$26,243
New Mexico: ██████████ \$37,492

Estimated median house/condo value in 2005: \$108,784
Catron County ██████████ \$108,784
New Mexico: ██████████ \$125,500

Median monthly rent in 2000: \$392
Institutionalized population: 9
Median monthly costs for houses with a mortgage in Catron County in 2000: \$646

How many ranchers have been put out of business due to the reintroduction of Mexican wolves? How many ranches have changed hands as a result of the program? How many head of livestock current run in the reintroduction area? How many were there at the onset of this program?

What authority does the Mexican wolf program have to release predators that may impact sovereign nations including the large number of Indian nations and pueblos in New Mexico?

(h) Any other potential or socioeconomic effects;

Livestock kills as a result of wolf management rather than grazing cycles must be properly analyzed. Currently program managers and "environmental" groups are using subjective and speculative information to shift blame for increased depredation problems. An example of this is the claim made in the scoping "education" posters that a year-round grazing causes more livestock depredation. Where is the scientific proof of this statement?

We would like to stress that the FWS needs to commit to maintain the 10(J) status of the Mexican wolf program and add common sense approaches to managing problem wolves that are causing an economic burden on livestock producers, small businesses and families in the MWEPA. SOP 13 needs to be retained and improved upon to help mitigate problem wolves. Arbitrarily assigning a strike to one wolf in a pack is not addressing the very real and serious depredation problem. If a pack of wolves is involved in a depredation they all are becoming habituated. To arbitrarily pick one of them as the culprit does nothing to help the program. Given the over population problems in breeding facilities there is no excuse in trying to keep problem wolves on the ground. There is an adequate supply of them to release that are not habituated livestock killers.

Improved lethal and non-lethal control techniques needs to be established to help facilitate an improved program for wolf recovery.

(i) Any potential conflicts with other Federal, State, local, or Tribal environmental laws or requirements.

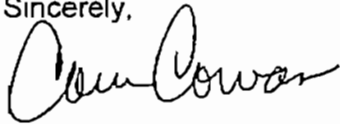
Has the FWS consulted with any of the Indian Tribes within the MWEPA? It is our understanding that there has been no interaction between the Navajo people and the FWS. Consultation with the tribes need to take place including but not limited to; Navajo Nation (including Alamo, Ramah, and Tohajiilee), Laguna Pueblo, Acoma Pueblo, Mescalero Apaches, Isleta Pueblo, Zuni Pueblo, Sandia Pueblo, San Felipe Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, Zia Pueblo, Jemez, Cochiti Pueblo, Santo Domingo Pueblo, and Tesuque Pueblo.

Additional Issues:

- It appears, from the outside at least, that the NMDGF and the FWS are duplicating efforts in terms of program development and addressing critical needs. The NMDGF is soliciting comments on a Concept Statement **[Attachment II]**. Many of these concepts are unacceptable to NMCGA members thus jeopardizing efforts by the FWS to cooperate with livestock owners.
- NMCGA is deeply concerned with the advocacy by pro-wolf groups that was allowed at the Albuquerque scoping meeting. Although FWS officials stated otherwise at the onset of the meeting, one gentleman was allowed to participate in the meeting wearing a banner on his stomach (a photo is available if necessary). Little Red Riding Hood and Wolf characters were allowed to parade around the room. If these were supposed to be meetings to gather issues to be addressed in an EIS, why were these theatrics allowed to proceed?
- Why is the address of those commenting made public? Is this in conflict with the Privacy Act? Does this not pose a security risk for those who oppose the program? There is already a web site selling wearing apparel and writing materials advocating shooting cows (<http://www.cafepress.com/latenitegrafix/2808375>).

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide input into this scoping process. We look forward to your responses to our questions and suggestions as well as participation in the EIS process.

Sincerely,



Caren Cowan
Executive Director

cc: Governor Bill Richardson
Senator Pete V. Domenici
Senator Jeff Bingaman
Congressman Tom Udall
Congressman Steve Pearce
Congresswoman Heather Wilson
New Mexico Legislature



NEW MEXICO WOOL GROWERS, INC.

Sustainable Agriculture Protecting The Environment & All Its Creatures

December 28, 2007

RECEIVED

DEC 31 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

Mr. Brian Millsap, State Administrator
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

RE: Notice of Scoping Meetings and intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Socio-Economic Assessment for the Proposed Amendment of the Rule Establishing a Nonessential Experimental Population of the Arizona and New Mexico Population of Gray Wolf ("Mexican Gray Wolf").

Dear Mr. Millsap:

On behalf of the New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc. (NMWGI), the state's oldest livestock trade organization with more than a century of advocacy for the sheep industry, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above captioned action.

It is well known that the NMWGI has opposed the Mexican Wolf reintroduction program from its onset, including engaging in litigation against the program. However, the program does exist and is having tremendous impact on our members. With that in mind, we submit the following comments in the spirit of cooperation and in an attempt to lessen the burden on members currently facing wolves and members who may be facing wolves in their area in the future.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the analysis of alternatives is the core of the document. According to the courts, an agency must consider alternatives, even if they are not within the agency's jurisdiction or are not authorized by enabling legislation. Thus, as required by such case law, one legal and reasonable option to this process should be the termination of the program. **NMWGI requests that termination be analyzed as a viable alternative.**

Issues Related to the Scope of the NEP

(a) Current management stipulations that require wolves that establish home ranges outside the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA) to be removed and re-released into the BRWRA or taken into captivity. This stipulation stemmed from the intention in the 1998 NEP final rule that wolves would not be reestablished throughout the entire Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA), but only within the BRWRA, which is a sub area of the MWEPA. However, analysis indicates that removals for boundary violations due to wolves dispersing or establishing territories outside the BRWRA are not conducive to achieving the reintroduction project objective of "reestablishing a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 Mexican (gray) wolves" (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1982, p. 23). In other words, change in this aspect of the 1998 NEP final rule would provide the Service with the authority to allow wolves to establish territories outside the boundaries of the BRWRA.

Other than the “paltry data” mentioned in the 3-Year Review of the program, what evidence is there that the goal of at least 100 wolves has not been achieved? According to members who are living with wolves, the population of 100 Mexican Wolves has been met if not exceeded. Given the lack of ability to track and verify un-collared wolves, it is impossible to determine how many wolves are really on the ground. How will this change in an expanded reintroduction area?

It is highly likely that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and its’ partner agencies have failed to take into consideration that there are many offspring that have survived and are not collared in the MWEPA. How are un-collared offspring accounted for within the program? How many pups have been born in the “wild” since 1998? What is the present status of each of those individuals? We believe that many have survived and a better accounting of these wolves needs to be addressed.

What is the prey base outside of the BRWRA to support wolf populations? Sources within the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMDGF) indicate that New Mexico’s largest wildlife prey base for predators lies within the Gila National Forest. What will wolves released or venturing outside the Gila rely upon for food sources? What are the deer and elk populations in the full expanse of the recovery area? What will be the impacts on livestock production in any expanded area?

In the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) deer were envisioned as the primary food source. Has that assumption been documented and verified in the wolf reintroduction program in either the 3- or 5-year review? What impacts have the reintroduced wolves had on deer and elk populations in the BRWRA and how will that translate in an expanded reintroduction area? While the NMDGF has recently undertaken elk surveys to determine what impacts the wolves might be having on elk, the director admits that there is only one year of work and no long term or repeatable data on which to base any reasonable assumptions or decisions.

What impacts have the reintroduced wolves had on other wildlife including turkeys, rodents, birds or any other major prey base within the BRWRA? What impacts have they had on other predators such as coyotes, mountain lions and bears? Are there wildlife interactions that impact other endangered species in the region including the Mexican spotted owl that also requires a prey base to survive?

In the FEIS depredation of livestock was assumed to be minimal. In actuality, there has been tremendous impact to the individual ranching operations in the reintroduction area. What data has the FWS or its partners accumulated on impacts to livestock, including not only death loss, but additional management costs, loss of opportunity and other costs ranchers are suffering?

Research on the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS issued by the FWS in 1996 indicates that the assumptions of prey availability of both wild and domestic ungulates based on other regions resulted in discrepancies between estimated livestock losses and what should be expected in the BRWRA.

What are the physiological affects of dealing with the stress of depredating wolves? What are the psychological effects of the reintroduction of the Mexican Wolf? Research indicates that children in the current reintroduction area are exhibiting behaviors/symptoms that constitute the major symptoms involved in the diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. How will these effects be mitigated in the existing reintroduction area and/or an expanded area?

Livestock producers outside the current reintroduction area are strongly opposed to boundary expansion fearing the carnage they have seen their fellow producers suffer within that area. However, there is little fairness in forcing those who are attempting to maintain livestock operations or live within the current reintroduction area to continue to suffer losses at the same or enhanced level. How will you better deal with these problems? What additional budgetary needs are associated with better management of an existing or expanded program? Where will these funds come from?

The program has failed within the current reintroduction area, as evidenced by the number of wolves that have been repeatedly recaptured, lethally removed and not survived for various other reasons. Animals have been hit by motor vehicles, shot (perhaps mistakenly during hunting seasons) and harmed by other wildlife. Apparently none of these eventualities were examined in the initial EIS. They should be considered in the current analysis.

There have been tremendous financial impacts on local families, communities and governments. How will expanding the boundary address any of these issues?

An additional concern in expanding the area is the increased workload (depredation investigation/removal) on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) without appropriate budget offset. WS personnel are already being pulled from other WS predator management programs throughout the state to address wolf problems. Those efforts are often funded at least partially by local residents and governments who are now not receiving the services they are funding as a direct result of the wolf program. The wolf program must absorb the full cost of the program.

Wolves over a larger landscape will limit WS and private applicator use of M-44s and the Livestock Protection Collar creating increased coyote predation. This could easily put remaining sheep producers in the state out of business. In areas where wolf presence is confirmed, WS will end up having to check coyote traps on a daily basis, effectively limiting the amount of equipment they could have out at any one time. There will likely be additional non-wolf livestock predation that they can not effectively deal with. What actions will be taken to offset these problems?

Until there is an effective compensation/interdiction/incentive program administered locally, there should not be any expansion of the recovery area.

(b) Current management stipulations allow for initial Mexican gray wolf releases from captivity only into the primary recovery zone of the BRWRA. Management experience has demonstrated that this stipulation in the 1998 NEPA final rule sets impractical limits on available release sites and wolves that can be released into the secondary recovery zone, limits the Mexican Gray Wolf Reintroduction Project's (Project) ability to address genetic issues, and results in a misperception that the secondary recovery zone is composed largely of "problem" animals that have been translocated to the secondary zone after management removal due to livestock depredation events. In other words, a change in this aspect of the 1998 NEP final rule would possibly provide the Service the authority to release Mexican gray wolves from the captive breeding population into New Mexico.

There is no "misperception that the secondary recovery zone is composed largely of 'problem' animals." The FWS's own news release on March 21, 2000 states: "An EA of the translocation of previously released Mexican gray wolves within the BRWRA for management purposes was completed February 10, 2000." What are the "management purposes" for which wolves have been translocated? While livestock depredation is most certainly not the only "management" issue involved, nuisance behavior such as habituation around communities, schools and homes as well as depredation on pets and domestic animals appear to be the only other "management" purposes that have been utilized in translocation.

Translocations or releases of known problem wolves (habituated or those with any history of livestock depredation) should not be allowed. The captive wolf population is huge. Why are there additional problems being created by releasing known problem animals? There is a current bottleneck in the holding pens at Sevilletta National Wildlife Refuge and Ladder Ranch, at least partially because there are several animals that cannot be re-released due to habitual livestock depredation. It is our understanding that FWS is attempting to use a reversible vasectomy technique to attempt to create space. They should either find space in a captive breeding facility (all already full) or euthanize these animals. If not they will impact decisions regarding future removals because there is nowhere to put "bad wolves". There is also no known way to turn "bad wolves" into

“good wolves.” Another alternative would be to use these animals to research rabies vaccination programs that are much needed within the program.

However, releasing “fresh” or inexperienced wolves may not be a solution either. The wolves released in Arizona initially were fresh or inexperienced, yet were translocated to New Mexico for “management purposes.” What were the management purposes? Are management agencies habituating these animals to humans by continued feeding of road-killed animals, carnivore logs (made mostly of horse meat) or by trapping and handling in human settings then transporting them in camper shelled vehicles that cannot help but permeate human scent? The affect of these management techniques must be analyzed in the overall context of wolf behavior.

If genetics are to be a reason for translocation, then all the genetic information available should be included in the upcoming EIS including but not limited to: *Pedigree Analysis Of Captive Population Of Mexican Wolf*, Phillip S. Miller, Arizona State University, 1994 Correspondence, Roy McBride / Dave Parsons 1997.

Could it be that this inbred, captive population of wolves is simply not genetically stable enough to survive in the “wild?”

These wolves have demonstrated the propensity to mate with dogs, which has resulted in the need to destroy at least two (2) sets of pups. How will this issue be addressed in the future?

(c) *The definition of the White Sands Missile Range, which is within the MWEPA, as the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area. However, the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area is not of sufficient size nor does it have sufficient prey density to function as an independent recovery area.*

The issue here is obvious. NMWGI whole-heartedly agrees if there is no prey base and the area is not sufficient in size, there should not be any releases done. The size of WSMR would never contain the wolves nor is there enough of a prey base to keep them within the boundaries of WSMR. However we firmly believe that the same logic needs to be applied recovery area-wide.

d) *Limited provisions for private individuals to “harass” wolves engaged in nuisance behavior or livestock depredation, or which are attacking domestic pets on private, public, or Tribal lands. Current provisions in the 1998 NEP final rule allow for “opportunistic, noninjurious harassment” of wolves by private individuals; that is, individuals are not allowed to harass wolves in such a manner as to even potentially result in bodily injury or death of a Mexican gray wolf. Management experience in the BRWRA, as well as the Northern Rocky Mountain DPS gray wolf recovery program, suggests that a variety of harassment methods could provide an effective deterrent to problem Mexican gray wolf behavior, as well as increasing public acceptance of Mexican gray wolf recovery. All possible alternatives and remedies need to be explored.*

Amendment of the of the 10(J) rule must include the authority to harass Mexican wolves for the purposes of scaring them away from people, buildings, facilities, pets and livestock. Specific language is needed to state a person may kill or injure a wolf if threatened by a wolf or in defense of another who is threatened, and may, kill a wolf that is not responding to harassment and is consistently in populated areas frequented by people and showing signs of being desensitized to human encounters.

The amendment should also include the harassing or humanely dispatching of wolves by the FWS or other federal, tribal or state agencies when wolves exhibit fearless behavior or become habituated to humans and pose a demonstrable threat to human safety. This provision should include providing a federal take permit for local county law enforcement personnel to allow them to lethally take a wolf for immediate protection of human safety. NMWGI reiterates that the agencies must stop habituating these animals to humans via their own management practices.

The FEIS must include mitigation of the false and misleading information that has been issued as “public education” during scoping meetings including the power point presentation and the contents of posters that contain faulty information on wolf removals, livestock, and depredations. For example, one poster indicated that upon petition, livestock depredations are paid for by the Defenders of Wildlife (DOW). The reality is that the level of confirmation for DOW payment is so high that a relatively few head of livestock have been compensated for. Additionally the DOW demands wolf acceptance as part of the price of compensation. A compensation program with strings attached is not a compensation program. If the government wants wolves, then the government should pay the compensation.

NMWGI believes that more intensive and widespread data should be collected on wolf diet using scat studies throughout the recovery area rather than a single point and time that leads to incorrect conclusions that wolves’ diets mostly consist of elk (75%) as noted on a pie chart in the scoping and educational posters. This study is out of date and far too small to legitimately make this claim. There is also reason to believe that this data was collected in areas where livestock were not present during the analysis. Any NEPA analysis should provide for better information collection in a new rule.

Another misconception that is prevalent in information distributed by “environmental” groups is that wolves have never been documented killing anyone in North America. This is a dangerous falsehood that is misleading the public and must be corrected. Wolves have been documented all over the world killing and eating people (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fatal_wolf_attacks). North America has its own documented cases. The recent killing of Kenton Carnegie and in many old news reports (see http://www.aws.vcn.com/wolf_attacks_on_humans.html) demonstrated that wolves can and will kill humans in North America.

The practice of utilizing helicopters and planes to dispense with depredating wolves must NOT be eliminated. This country is too large and rugged to lose this ability to address or capture problem wolves. Elimination of these tools would hamper any ability for rapid and effective wolf removal. The longer a depredating wolf is allowed to remain on the ground, the more damage it is allowed to do. A major reason ranchers in the recovery area feel so helpless in the face of the Mexican wolf program is the inability of federal and state management agencies to quickly and effectively address depredating animals. Elimination of aerial tools will only make matters worse.

An amended 10(J) rule must include implementation of a federally funded pilot program aimed at compensation and interdiction to be run by ranching interests who are the experts in the field of livestock depredation causes and interdictions needs to be established.

Takings implications and assessments must be included in rulemaking and management planning in order to determine the scope of compensation necessary for private property owners for depredation and losses caused by the program. In addition to losses for livestock, compensation must be provided for the loss of pets.

(e) Current provisions in the 1998 NEP final rule that do not allow for “take” of wolves in the act of attacking domestic dogs on private or Tribal Trust lands. However, domestic dog injuries and mortalities have occurred within the BRWRA due to interactions between wolves and dogs, primarily near people’s homes. Lack of take authority in instances where take may have been warranted has resulted in substantial negative impacts on some local residents and visitors to the BRWRA.

Livestock owners or their agents must be allowed to “take” (including kill or injure) any wolf engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock on federally administered lands (see change in definitions below) anywhere within the Mexican wolf experimental population area, including within the designated wolf recovery areas.

(f) *Among other issues, the need to clarify definitions of: “breeding pair,” “depredation incident,” and “thresholds for permanent removal.” In addition, there is a need to identify other possible impediments to establishing wolves, such as the livestock carcass management and disposal issue identified in the 3-year review of the project (Paquet et al. 2001, p. 69). The authors of this report recommended that the Service “require livestock operators on public land to take some responsibility for carcass management/disposal to reduce the likelihood that wolves become habituated to feeding on livestock.” In other words, if a new final rule is promulgated that incorporates this recommendation from the 3-year review, it may result in redefining “nuisance wolves” and “problem wolves” so as to exclude animals that scavenge on the carcasses of livestock that died of non-wolf causes.*

There is a need for better definitions in the new rule, management plans and any Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that may result from a new rule, including:

BREEDING PAIR: an adult male and an adult female that are firmly mated and have the potential to breed and raise a litter of pups in the upcoming breeding season

ACTIVE PACK: two (2) or more wolves that are attached to each other and exhibit pack behavioral characteristics.

DEPREDATION: the confirmed killing or wounding of a domestic animal by one (1) or more wolves.

INCIDENT: the killing or wounding of a domestic animal by one (1) or more wolves.

ENGAGED IN THE ACT OF KILLING, WOUNDING OR BITING LIVESTOCK: to be engaged in the act of grasping, biting, attacking, wounding, or feeding upon livestock that are alive or were alive within the past 24 hours.

LIVESTOCK: any animal routinely contributing to the ability of a small businessman to earn a livelihood including but not limited to cattle, horses, goats, burros, llamas, chickens, stock dogs, guard dogs, hunting dogs and other domestic animal to which value is attached and the loss of which would prove to be a financial hardship and result in the takings of private property (pursuant to the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution). We would also like to include any pets; dogs, cats, riding horses, etc. to this definition.

PUBLIC LAND: lands available for dispersion into private ownership under general land laws to which no claim or rights of others has attached.

FEDERAL LAND: lands in which the United States retains a proprietary interest and prior claims and rights are attached.

TAKE: to harm, hunt, shoot, wound or kill.

UNAVOIDABLE OR UNINTENTIONAL TAKE: take which occurs despite reasonable care and is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, and is not done with purpose. Taking a wolf by trapping will be considered unavoidable or unintentional if the wolf is released and the capture is reported within 24 hours. Taking a wolf will be considered unavoidable or unintentional if the wolf is taken during a legal hunting activity, is non-negligent and is reported within 24 hours.

LEGALLY PRESENT LIVESTOCK: should be defined as livestock occurring where the owner has beneficial use of water rights.

Definitions from the current rule that do not warrant change or addition include the following: Occupied Mexican Wolf Range, Opportunistic, Non-injurious harassment. Primary recovery zone, Problem wolves, Rendezvous site, Secondary recovery zone, Wolf recovery area. Specifically, the definition of problem wolf should not be gerrymandered to change the guidance associated with management of problem behavior.

Full investigation into the efficacy of livestock carcass removal, including the increased cost to livestock operations and the environmental consequences of blowing up carcasses to air, land and water, must be conducted. If livestock carcass removal is to be considered, then the removal of carcasses, both wild and domestic, killed by wolves and the cost associated with that must be determined. The FWS’s own Ed Bangs has been widely quoted as saying “*The idea that wolves eat a dead cow, think beef tastes great, then start attacking cattle is mythology. As eating carrion and killing prey is two totally different wolf behaviors. Wolves often scavenge all they can. Normal range practice out here makes it nearly impossible to find and bury [or*

blow up for human safety concerns as they do for G. bears issues and livestock carcasses along trails] every carcass so livestock carcass disposal is within 'normal' and traditional livestock husbandry practices, feeding on livestock carcasses is a very different thing than attacking livestock- one doesn't necessarily lead to the other.

(g) The issues addressed in this scoping process include issues addressed in a petition for Rulemaking dated March 29, 2004 provided to the Service by the Center for Biological Diversity. This Notice, and the subsequent public notice and comment period, will provide the public an opportunity to comment on the issues provided in the Center for Biological Diversity's Petition for Rulemaking.

Why was petition for rulemaking filed by the NMWGI, NMFLC, NMWGI, NMFLB, GLGA, and ACGA filed in May 2006 not considered as a part of this scoping process, if other petitions such as the one mentioned above were made a part of the scoping? The petition is attached and all parts are hereby submitted as scoping issues.

Issues Related to Evaluation of the Environmental Impacts

We are seeking comments on the identification of direct, indirect, beneficial, and adverse effects that might be caused by amendment of the 1998 NEP final rule that established the current NEP of Mexican gray wolf. You may wish to consider the following issues when providing comments:

(a) Impacts on floodplains, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically sensitive areas;

The effects of wolves on watersheds spread of disease on domestic and wild animal populations needs to be addressed. Many diseases need to be taken into consideration. Rabies is currently the utmost concern in the reintroduction area. Given the incidence of grey fox rabies in Catron County, we would like to know the vaccination status of the released wolves. It is our understanding that there are no licensed vaccines approved for use in wolves, so it is not legal to vaccinate wolves with rabies vaccine in New Mexico. Are wolves being vaccinated? If so, how does this comply with state law? If not, what risk is posed to the wild and domestic animal populations as well as humans?

There are several zoonotic diseases of concern, especially those that are shed in feces and urine. Some of these zoonotics would be sarcocystosis, echinococcus, ascariasis, cysticercosis and neospora caninum. These are parasites passed in feces that can cause disease in both humans and livestock. Neospora causes abortion in cattle and wolves have been shown to be an intermediate host to this parasite. Other viral and bacterial diseases of concern would be distemper, adenovirus, brucellosis and leptospira. Leptospirosis and brucellosis are both a concern for humans and livestock. Some of these parasites and diseases can be transmitted to pets then on to their owners. How does USFWS intend to address these concerns?

How has the introduction of the wolf impacted the migration of elk within the recovery area? Has it improved riparian areas as documented in Yellowstone? Or, has it harmed them?

(b) Impacts on park lands and cultural or historic resources;

Livestock production has been the foundation of New Mexico's tri-ethnic culture for over 400 years. How is the wolf program changing that culture? What can and will be done to mitigate these changes?

NMWGI requests a full disclosure of social, cultural and economic impacts on rural residents and local governments to include the loss of tax revenue and increased government operation costs due to presence of introduced wolves. We ask that a specific economic analysis on ranches that are being harmed be conducted and that individual rancher and the individual county level economic impact be evaluated. That the cumulative impacts wolf reintroduction and recovery should be analyzed using local, county developed information on

jobs, poverty and economics. Analysis that is national or regional in scope fails to depict the real impacts of wolf reintroduction.

NMWGI believes that livestock production in the release and recovery area must not be negatively affected by this program.

(c) Impacts on human health and safety;

There must be improvement in wolf monitoring and honest communication to insure that residents in the release and recovery areas are informed when wolves are in close proximity. Ranchers have been willing to work with the wolf program and move livestock when wolves are in the area. However, program managers have refused to provide timely information to allow that movement before depredation occurs. This does nothing to aide the wolves or the program and does great harm to the relationship between livestock owners and wildlife management agencies. There is a definite need to facilitate documentation of predation on livestock as well.

The 10(J) rule should clearly document, through appropriate mapping that families and small businesses reside in current and potential wolf habitat. The general public has been misinformed on this count resulting in the misconception that wolves are roaming free in vast areas of uninhabited, unroaded areas. That could not be further from the truth.

There must be an analysis of wolf occupancy of lands where domestic livestock are present, where families and children reside, and where domestic animals may contract a parasite or disease and spread it to humans or where wolves may directly deposit infectious material near residences needs to be conducted.

Catron County is currently building cages to provide safety for youngsters at bus stops where children wait for school buses or their parents. Why is the federal government not addressing these safety needs? Why is the federal government not providing funding for these shelters?

(d) Impacts on air, soil, and water;

An analysis of problems associated with epizootic disease carried by wolves and potentially carried in wolf feces needs to be done. The potential affects of these diseases on people, domestic animals including pets, working dogs, and other wildlife should be evaluated in the new EIS.

How has the reintroduction of wolves negatively impacted family ranches, putting them out of business and forcing them to subdivide their private property affecting the air, soil, and water in wolf recovery area? How do more roads needed for subdivisions impact air, soil and water quality in the region and the state?

As previously mentioned, what will be the impacts of blowing up carcasses, if that is a selected alternative?

(e) Impacts on prime agricultural lands;

Other than the obvious effect of wolves depredating on livestock, NMWGI would also like to know how wolves are affecting grazing patterns for livestock and wildlife. Are elk migration patterns being altered creating new or additional impacts on agricultural lands within and outside the boundary areas? NMWGI believes this to be an integral part of wolf management and must be addressed in the FEIS.

We are also extremely concerned about the impacts on WS resources and funding that is already affecting individuals across the state. The fact that they are not being fully funded to participate in the wolf program is causing hardship in other counties that are not presently in wolf country due to the fact that WS is required to

pull resources and staff to deal with wolf depredations in something approaching a timely manner. There is a desperate need to fully fund WS for wolf program needs.

How is or will the subdivision of private land now associated with ranching operations affecting agriculture lands in the wolf recovery areas? How is the loss of the tax base generated by the livestock industry impacting county services like road maintenance that in turn impacts agricultural lands?

(f) Impacts to other species of wildlife, including other endangered or threatened species;

See *Issues Related to the Scope of the NEP (a)*

Additionally NMWGI is concerned with the animal cruelty aspects of the Mexican wolf reintroduction program. New Mexico has fairly stringent animal cruelty laws. If a domestic pet owner were to release an animal in the "wild" without food, water, and shelter they would face criminal penalties under New Mexico state law. These wolves have been raised in zoos and breeding facilities for well over 30 years and have lost the ability to survive in the wild. They have been habituated to humans and associate humans with a means of food in those facilities and, because of management practices, in the wild as well. NMWGI requests that New Mexico Statutes be reviewed and assurance be provided that there is no violation.

(g) Disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low income populations;

We firmly believe that this program is having a disproportionately high and adverse impact on minority's and low income populations within the Mexican wolf recovery area.

More than 50 percent of New Mexico's population is minority, either Indian or Hispanic as documented at <http://www.city-data.com/states/New-Mexico-Ethnic-groups.html>

All US cities

New Mexico bigger cities, New Mexico smaller cities, New Mexico small cities

New Mexico detailed state guide

New Mexico - Ethnic groups

New Mexico has two large minorities: Indians and Hispanics. In 2000, the estimated American Indian population was 173,483 (9.5% of the total population—the 2nd-highest percentage of any state). Part of Arizona's great Navaho reservation extends across the border into New Mexico. New Mexico's Navaho population was recorded as 67,397 in 2000. There are 2 Apache reservations, 19 Pueblo villages (including one for the Zia in Sandoval County), and lands allotted to other tribes. Altogether, Indian lands cover 8,152,895 acres (3,299,477 hectares), 10.5% of New Mexico's area (2nd only to Arizona in proportion of Indian lands). In 2000 the Zuni lands had a population of 7,758, and the Acoma reservation had 2,802 residents.

The Hispanic population is an old one, descending from Spanish-speaking peoples who lived there before the territory was annexed by the US. In 2000, Hispanics and Latinos (including a small number of immigrants from modern Mexico) numbered 765,386 or 42.1% of the total state population.

As of 2000, an estimated 19,255 Asians, 1,503 Pacific Islanders, and 34,343 black Americans lived in the state.

In Catron County, the county most impacted by wolves at the present time, there is a disproportionate number of residents with income below the poverty level as documented at http://www.city-data.com/countv/Catron_County-NM.html

County population in 2005: 3,409 (all rural)
County owner-occupied houses and condos: 1,273
Renter-occupied apartments: 311
% of renters here: ██████████ 20%
State: ██████████ 30%
Land area: 6928 sq. mi.
Water area: 1.2 sq. mi.
Population density: 0 people per square mile: (very low).

Residents with income below the poverty level in 1999:
This county: ██████████ 24.5%
Whole state: ██████████ 18.4%

Residents with income below 50% of the poverty level in 1999:
This county: ██████████ 9.5%
Whole state: ██████████ 7.8%

Industries providing employment: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (19.8%), Educational, health and social services (17.2%), Construction (14.5%).

Type of workers:

- Private wage or salary: 51%
- Government: 28%
- Self-employed, not incorporated: 20%
- Unpaid family work: 2%

Catron County, New Mexico business data: stores, dealers, real estate agents, wholesalers, restaurants...

Races in Catron County, New Mexico:

- White Non-Hispanic (75.8%)
- Hispanic (19.2%)
- Other race (5.4%)
- American Indian (3.7%)
- Two or more races (3.6%)

(Total can be greater than 100% because Hispanics could be counted in other races)

Median resident age: ██████████ 47.8 years
New Mexico median age: ██████████ 34.6 years

Males: 1,812 ██████████ (51.1%)
Females: 1,731 ██████████ (48.9%)
Average wage per job in 2003: \$23,322
County population in 2003: 3,453
Jobs in 2003: 683

Total labor force in 2004: 1,441
Unemployment rate in 2004: 7.5%

Average household size:

Catron County: ██████████ 2.2 people

New Mexico: ██████████ 2.6 people

Estimated median household income in 2005: \$26,243 (\$23,892 in 2000)

This county ██████████ \$26,243

New Mexico: ██████████ \$37,492

Estimated median house/condo value in 2005: \$108,784

Catron County ██████████ \$108,784

New Mexico: ██████████ \$125,500

Median montly rent in 2000: \$392

Institutionalized population: 9

Median monthly costs for houses with a mortgage in Catron County in 2000: \$646

How many ranchers have been put out of business due to the reintroduction of Mexican wolves? How many ranches have changed hands as a result of the program? How many head of livestock current run in the reintroduction area? How many were there at the onset of this program?

What authority does the Mexican wolf program have to release predators that may impact sovereign nations including the large number of Indian nations and pueblos in New Mexico?

It is worth mentioning that sheepherders of any race are definitely a minority in New Mexico and that they are Anglo, Indian and Hispanic.

(h) Any other potential or socioeconomic effects;

Livestock kills as a result of wolf management rather than grazing cycles must be properly analyzed. Currently program managers and "environmental" groups are using subjective and speculative information to shift blame for increased depredation problems. An example of this is the claim made in the scoping "education" posters that a year-round grazing causes more livestock depredation. Where is the scientific proof of this statement?

We would like to stress that the FWS needs to commit to maintain the 10(J) status of the Mexican wolf program and add common sense approaches to managing problem wolves that are causing an economic burden on livestock producers, small businesses and families in the MWEPA. SOP 13 needs to be retained and improved upon to help mitigate problem wolves. Arbitrarily assigning a strike to one wolf in a pack is not addressing the very real and serious depredation problem. If a pack of wolves is involved in a depredation they all are becoming habituated. To arbitrarily pick one of them as the culprit does nothing to help the program. Given the over population problems in breeding facilities there is no excuse in trying to keep problem wolves on the ground. There is an adequate supply of them to release that are not habituated livestock killers.

Improved lethal and non-lethal control techniques needs to be established to help facilitate an improved program for wolf recovery.

(i) Any potential conflicts with other Federal, State, local, or Tribal environmental laws or requirements.

Has the FWS consulted with any of the Indian Tribes within the MWEPA? It is our understanding that there has been no interaction between the Navajo people and the FWS. Consultation with the tribes need to take place including but not limited to: Navajo Nation (including Alamo, Ramah, and Tohajiilee), Laguna Pueblo, Acoma

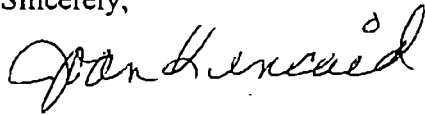
Pueblo, Mescalero Apaches, Isleta Pueblo, Zuni Pueblo, Sandia Pueblo, San Felipe Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, Zia Pueblo, Jemez, Cochiti Pueblo, Santo Domingo Pueblo, and Tesuque Pueblo.

Additional Issues:

- It appears, from the outside at least, that the NMDGF and the FWS are duplicating efforts in terms of program development and addressing critical needs. The NMDGF is soliciting comments on a Concept Statement. Many of these concepts are unacceptable to NMWGI members thus jeopardizing efforts by the FWS to cooperate with livestock owners.
- NMWGI is deeply concerned with the advocacy by pro-wolf groups that was allowed at the Albuquerque scoping meeting. Although FWS officials stated otherwise at the onset of the meeting, one gentleman was allowed to participate in the meeting wearing a banner on his stomach (a photo is available if necessary). Little Red Riding Hood and Wolf characters were allowed to parade around the room. If these were supposed to be meetings to gather issues to be addressed in an EIS, why were these theatrics allowed to proceed?
- Why is the address of those commenting made public? Is this in conflict with the Privacy Act? Does this not pose a security risk for those who oppose the program? There is already a web site selling wearing apparel and writing materials advocating shooting cows (<http://www.cafepress.com/latenitegrafix/2808375>).

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide input into this scoping process. We look forward to your responses to our questions and suggestions as well as participation in the EIS process.

Sincerely,



Joan Kincaid
President

cc: Governor Bill Richardson
Senator Pete V. Domenici
Senator Jeff Bingaman
Congressman Tom Udall
Congressman Steve Pearce
Congresswoman Heather Wilson
New Mexico Legislature

RECEIVED

DEC 29 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

December 29, 2007

Mexican Gray Wolf NEPA Scoping Officials:

I am in support of ANY PLAN that will encourage the success of Mexican Wolf reintroduction. I am saddened and frustrated that the program, thus far, has been limited in its successes and way too numerous in its failures. At this point, a wolf brought back into captivity, or worse, killed, is a blow to the establishment of a healthy, viable population of wild wolves. That public lands ranchers are killing these animals and continuing to use and abuse our public lands is outrageous. It makes me want to deny them the privilege of their grazing rights permanently! They should be required to provide better protection for their livestock as well as getting rid of carcasses in a timely fashion so wolves will be less inclined to go for the easy pickings.

I support increasing the options for wolf releases so that releases can be done in the most biologically sound areas, not the politically designated areas. Also, if wolves venture out of the recovery area, they should not automatically be captured. Instead, they should be able to establish their ranges in conjunction with resource availability rather than human-imposed artificial boundaries. Mexican wolves should not be considered to be experimental, non-essential, but should be considered as experimental, essential in keeping with their extremely endangered status. Getting to a minimum population of 100 wild wolves seems to be an insurmountable task at this point. We need to do what is required to facilitate their success in the wild and it is imperative we do this soon.

I would like to think that in my lifetime I may be able to hear or even see a Mexican Gray wolf in the wild and know that the years of injustice are over and they are allowed to simply exist. Please do what you can to make this happen. Thank you.



Susan K. Larsen, DVM
112 Carlito NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico
87107-6012

RECEIVED

DEC 31 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

Attn: Mexican Grey Wolf NEPA Scoping
Kristy Calderon
5405 Mountain RD NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110

Dear Mr. Millsap,

I'm writing you in hope that a beautiful species will be given a chance to revive itself in our beautiful state. As you know, the Mexican wolf is protected by the Endangered Species Act and is being reintroduced to the wild of the southwest. Under the current reintroduction program, I feel that the Mexican Wolf population is given little chance to bloom and multiply to a healthy number. We need to provide a larger recovery area to support healthy expansion and pack creation. There needs to be an addition rule that requires ranchers to remove livestock carcasses from public lands so wolves aren't attracted to live cattle nearby. The 1998 rules just aren't providing a long-term future for the Mexican wolf, so changes need to be made so that recovery is a definite result. Please protect this creature for other generations, for the state of New Mexico. Thanks for your time!

Sincerely,

With hope of a better tomorrow,
Kristy Calderon

Verne

From: "Verne" <riverne@newmexico.com>
To: "Willa R. Huser" <WRHuser@newmexico.com>
Sent: Monday, December 31, 2007 11:38 AM
Subject: wolf

RECEIVED

DEC 31 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

John Slown--I want Mexican wolves returned to New Mexico. They are an integral part of the state's ecosystem; they belong here and deserve to be protected from radical ranchers. I vote for a full reinstatement of the Mexican wolf in New Mexico and prosecution of anyone who violates regulations designed to protect the wolves.

I own property in Jackson Hole, WY, where I lived for many years. During my sojourn in Jackson Hole, I got to know Adolph Murie, author of *Wolves of Mt. McKinley*; Frank Craighead, who studied the grizzly bear for many years in the Yellowstone National Park back country; and John Turner, former Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

I spent many hours with these three eminent wildlife biologists, talking about wolf recovery. All three of them favored the return of wolves to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Their in-depth studies and informed opinions have convinced me that the Mexican wolf belongs in New Mexico.

Wolves from the Yellowstone wolf recovery program have expanded their range into Jackson Hole, where they are vital to the ecological balance of the area, keeping bison, elk, and deer populations from overgrazing their range. **No one** in Jackson Hole, WY, where my two young grand daughters (8-1/2 and 10 years old) live, buys into the scare tactics of Catron County ranchers.

If New Mexico ranchers in wolf-recovery areas, often overgrazed by domestic livestock, are concerned about losing livestock to wolf predation, perhaps their cattle and sheep should be removed from public lands. Those lands belong to all of us, not to the anti-government holders of grazing permits.

Verne Huser, 7106 Coors Tr. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120
riverne@newmexico.com



12/31/2007

Willa

From: "Willa Huser" <wrhuser@newmexico.com>
To: <john_slown@fws.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 31, 2007 11:32 AM
Subject: Attn:Mexican Grey Wolf NEPA Scoping

Dear Mr. Slown:

I have just read the article on Page 20 of the Winter 2007 issue of New Mexico Wild newsletter. It is not clear to me whether the 1998 guidelines established in accordance with the Endangered Species Act were presented and agreed upon as permanent or just a first step in the wolf recovery program. Because at that time it would not have been possible to guess how the reintroduction program would fare through the years, it would have been misleading to have the parties involved in the plan agree with the understanding that the decision was indeed permanent, while now attempting to restructure the agreement. I do hope that all involved were aware of the need for later restructuring, as would only be fair.

That said, I want to strongly urge the continuation of the wolf reintroduction program, for all of the very valid reasons in the "Fighting for Sanity" article by Wes Leonard, which have also been presented by everyone else who supports this absolutely vital decision on behalf of our wilderness and its beautiful original inhabitants, the Mexican grey wolves of this state. While I quickly moved past my amusement about the idea of building wolf-proof bus stops for children (who in fact are in no danger from wolves but are often at grave risk in their own homes), I am not past feeling outrage that vigilante-mentality individuals feel free to take it upon themselves to illegally ruin this program for reasons of greed and avaricious self-interest.

Despite the dreamlike attitude of those such as Congressman Pierce, there is actually no such thing in our ever-more-connected-and-crowded planet as "far too much public land" to hand over to private interests. The privilege of "grazing rights" is outdated to an absurd degree. Ranchers should never have been able to obtain such privilege and influence at public expense, and it is more than high time to address this as the real, underlying issue. Until then, every legal action to protect and enlarge the range of the Mexican grey wolf must be undertaken with great determination and energy, not only because most New Mexico citizens support the idea, but more importantly, because it is the right thing to do for the wolves, for our state, and for our world.

One last thought: I am sure that much thought was put into the use of the word "final" regarding the new proposed approach to the wolf recovery program. I can think of some good reasons to use the word, but might it not also make more difficult any future adjustments needed as the program continues to develop?

Sincerely, Willa Huser, Ph. D (family therapist), 7106 Coors Trail N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87120-2779

wrhuser@newmexico.com



12/31/2007

RECEIVED 1

DEC 31 2007

Mr. Sloan:

USFWS-NMESFO

I attended the scoping meeting in Albuquerque, Nov 30, 2007. I want to thank you for the format of the meeting. I felt it was run professionally, with a great opportunity for information gathering from many different angles. By giving the attendees a format with which to provide input individually, I believe you will see ownership of the solution within a greater population. I feel this is an ideal method with which to revise the controversial 10(j) law.

It is obvious to all that there is a greatly polarized, adversarial relationship surrounding the wolf recovery project. What I would suggest below are possible ways to decrease the antipathy and show support for some of the concerns of the public. Please excuse my lack of knowledge of terms.

Simplify the Law: I gathered at the meeting that there is a formidable layering of regulations within the law which hobbles quick and clean efforts to manage. This effects response time and ability to work with ranchers having a problem. So, I would suggest thinning the bureaucracy and allowing problems to be dealt with simply, according to a pre-set formula, by employees of different agencies. Yes, they would have to file reports, but they wouldn't have to jump through hoops to respond to and take care of a situation.

Protection/Aversion: I believe the public should be better educated about wolf behavior, which would include information on how to cause and maintain fear of humans and how to protect oneself. The public needs to be able to use stronger methods to defend themselves. One should be able to hit a wolf with a rock or object, or carry some sort of nonlethal weapon- sling-shot, pellet gun, etc. This would give residents a sense of support and legalize what they might already be doing. I would suggest that the public should be encouraged to carry a pepper spray, this in itself may cause a sense of safety.

Restructuring Incremental Goals: I also picked up from the meeting that goals at this time are not clear and are cumbersome to work toward. I feel that a program with increments, and clear goals at each level should be formulated. Each incremental level would work toward moving into the next level once that goal is met. If all parties knew exactly what was expected of them at every step of the process, knowing how each stage would move along toward each definable goal, people could be able to deal with what is expected of them. If an increment isn't met, or isn't working, the project would revert to an earlier level, and a preset system would kick in to get the project back on track.

Support for Ranchers: Hopefully, with a new federal administration, more money will be freed up for environmental issues. In that case, I'd like to see an ability to study how much a rancher within the study area might lose to wolf predation, and a method to pay them that 10-15% off the top, so they may feel supported and could be encouraged to use it to help the recovery project and also protect their livelihood.

I learned at this meeting that part of the frustration of the ranchers is having to attend meetings, saying the same things and being told the same things. No wonder they would

This was
e-mailed 12-31-07
7:55 pm
Be

want to sell their land to ranchette developers, which is the very thing the project doesn't need. If every step of the process was defined, and everyone knew the goal, I think you'd find the simplification would help the public buy in.

Widen the Recovery Area: As far as the Mexican Wolf reintroduction, I am so sorry that we are dealing with such a small area. The problems are almost pre-given due to the limits. I read a few months ago about an idea to open wolf recovery to its original range over Arizona and New Mexico.

I initially thought that would be impossible, but after this meeting, I'm thinking it would be a good thing to aim for. If packs were introduced to BLM and other public lands, small groups could have their individual territories and become sustainable over a wide area. Yes, there would be interface and losses-- both to the wolves and the ranchers. And yes, packs would be split and would have to reform, but that is not an unnatural activity anyway.

I understand there is widespread distribution of wolves in the Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan area. There are complaints in that area as there are here, but it seems that there would be an understanding of their existence in some ways, as the population has been there for some time.

Redefinition of Terms/Goals: Considering some other situations, I see problems in definitions. I don't know if the 10(j) law applies to other species, but there is obviously a problem with the present grizzly situation. Residents believe it is time for grizzly hunting, but they are told it isn't clear whether the population is sustainable as yet. If the population has and is still increasing, perhaps this could be considered as acceptable sustainability. Also, there is concern about the wolves in the WI, MN, MI area becoming hybridized. I would believe that this needs to be considered. If the population becomes settled, can the good work of many biologists working toward genetic purity be turned away from, as the wolves may choose to mate other close breeds.

I would just like to say that I support the wolf recovery efforts. I believe we should try to rectify what damage we humans have done to this world. There will probably never be a fully peaceful coexistence regarding the wolf in that we are working with predators and the ancient and ongoing myths that surround them. But, though many parties would like to deny it, we are working toward a natural state, and the human culture is now part of it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Betty Gendron
12120 Apache NE
Albuquerque, NM 87112
Dec 31, 2007

How to Submit Comments

Written comments accompanied by name and address will become part of the formal record of the scoping process. While you may provide your ideas verbally during the meeting, we want to make sure your input is formally captured in your own words. You may submit written comments in three ways:

- Fill out the comment portion of this brochure and leave it in the drop box
- Take the brochure with you and return it by mail
- Provide comments via e-mail. For your convenience, you can do that here at the computer station, or visit www.mexicanwolfjeis.org
- Faxed comments may be sent to (505) 346-2542

Please note, in order to be considered part of the formal record, your comments must include your name and address. Comments may be submitted through December 31, 2007.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments:

I support the Mexican
Gray Wolf project
where necessary. They are an
essential part of the ecosystem
and deserve a systematic
recovery program like other
endangered species.

Thank you,
Hanna Fots

Name: Hanna Fots, RMD

Street: 5120 4th St. NW

City, State, Zip: Albuquerque, NM
87107

Tape closed with address on outside, and
add a stamp.

DO NOT STAPLE
Thank you for your input!

RECEIVED

DEC 9 1 2007

USFWS-NMESFO

Brian Millsap
State Administrator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Fax (505) 346-2542
Email: R2FWE_AL@fws.gov

RE: Notice of Scoping Meetings and intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Socio-Economic Assessment for the Proposed Amendment of the Rule Establishing a Nonessential Experimental Population of the Arizona and New Mexico Population of Gray Wolf ("Mexican Gray Wolf").

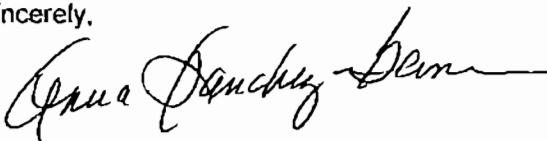
Dear Mr. Millsap:

I would like to comment on the above referenced scoping process. As a resident of New Mexico, I am writing to express the following concerns I have with these proposed amendments.

- The issue of human safety must be addressed. Wolves that stay around homes and communities threatening children, harming pets and killing livestock should not be allowed to remain in the program and must be dealt with immediately.
- The continued feeding of wolves by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Game and Fish personnel should not be allowed to persist. Although it may alleviate a short term problem, it in turn only creates a longer term problem with habituation.
- The current method of determining depredation does not adequately capture the true amount of harm and cost being done.
- Depredation on domestic pets on private, public or Tribal lands needs to be adequately addressed and effective remedies need to be available to protect private individuals.
- A compensation and interdiction program managed by livestock producers themselves needs to be created to address the real cost of the losses private individuals are experiencing.
- Boundaries should not be expanded until this program can show some type of success nor should it be considered at this time.
- Carcass removal by livestock operations is not a realistic option, nor can its affects be proven at this time.
- The removal of problem wolves through lethal means needs to remain an option.
- Diseases carried by wolves that are harmful to humans and domestic livestock needs to be addressed.
- Research needs to be done on wolves by land grant universities that are unbiased and have the resources to do so.

Thank you in advance for your attention. We look forward to an EIS that addresses the real concerns, true costs and negative impacts to those rural communities that are within the program boundaries.

Sincerely,



Anna Sanchez-Dem
P.O. Box 25682
Albany, NM 87125

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Southwest Regional Office
500 Gold Avenue SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear People:

I am writing to add my opinions to those of many New Mexicans who want to see the Mexican wolf return to the Gila Wilderness.

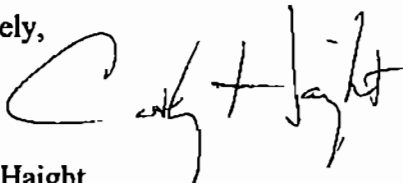
Please take into account the suggestions of such groups as the American Society of Mammalogists, the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Rewilding Institute.

To comply with the Endangered Species Act and aid recovery of the Blue Range population, I urge you to discontinue wolf eradication under SOP 13. I also believe that livestock owners should remove or render inedible livestock carcasses.

This past summer I had the privilege of seeing two of the Yellowstone wolves running free in the Lamar Valley in Wyoming. Working together, we can bring our wolves back to the Gila, with all the accompanying benefits to the ecosystem.

Thank you for supporting the Mexican wolf recovery.

Sincerely,



Cathy Haight
1045 Red Oaks Loop NE
Albuquerque, NM 87122
(505)856-1805

RECEIVED
DEC 13 2007

How to Submit Comments

Written comments accompanied by name and address will become part of the formal record of the scoping process. While you may provide your ideas verbally during the meeting, we want to make sure your input is formally captured in your own words.

You may submit written comments in three ways:

- Fill out the comment portion of this brochure and leave it in the drop box
- Take the brochure with you and return it by mail
- Provide comments via e-mail. For your convenience, you can do that here at the computer station, or visit www.mexicanwolfs.org
- Faxed comments may be sent to (505) 346-2542

Please note: In order to be considered part of the formal record, your comments must include your name and address. Comments may be submitted through December 31, 2007.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments:

I really think we should do more ~~of~~ research on the Mexican Gray wolves, so ranchers will understand how important they are to the environment. I have always wanted to see a gray wolf in the woods and not a bunch of cows. I will try to spread the word about the gray wolf population decreasing, and hopefully you will get more letters soon.

Name: Matthew Scott Day
11009
Street: Bellamah AVE NE

City, State, Zip: Albuquerque,
New Mexico, 87112

Tape closed with address on outside, and add a stamp.

DO NOT STAPLE
Thank you for your input!

How to Submit Comments

Written comments accompanied by name and address will become part of the formal record of the scoping process. While you may provide your ideas verbally during the meeting, we want to make sure your input is formally captured in your own words. You may submit written comments in three ways:

- Fill out the comment portion of this brochure and leave it in the drop box
- Take the brochure with you and return it by mail
- Provide comments via e-mail. For your convenience, you can do that here at the computer station, or visit www.mexicanwolfeis.org
- Faxed comments may be sent to (505) 346-2542

Please note: In order to be considered part of the formal record, your comments must include your name and address. Comments may be submitted through December 31, 2007.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments:

Please listen to the biologists. Please reintroduce in areas that are as protected as possible to prevent problems with ranchers. Thank you

Sarah Geizer

Name: Sarah Geizer

Street: 6104 Buffalo Grass NE

Albuquerque, NM

City, State, Zip: 87117

Tape closed with address on outside, and add a stamp.

DO NOT STAPLE
Thank you for your input!

How to Submit Comments

Written comments accompanied by name and address will become part of the formal record of the scoping process. While you may provide your ideas verbally during the meeting, we want to make sure your input is formally captured in your own words.

You may submit written comments in three ways:

- Fill out the comment portion of this brochure and leave it in the drop box
- Take the brochure with you and return it by mail
- Provide comments via e-mail. For your convenience, you can do that here at the computer station, or visit www.mexicanwolfeis.org
- Faxed comments may be sent to (505) 346-2542

Please note: In order to be considered part of the formal record, your comments must include your name and address. Comments may be submitted through December 31, 2007.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments:

~~Re~~ My husband and I are very concerned about the extinction of cordons. They are a vital part of Mother's Nature's Scheme.

- Please Reevaluate
Lives that depend on
- ② Stop killing and removing wolves
 - ③ Revisit Recovery plan
 - ④ Expand # of wolves in wild
 - ⑤ Keep future Recovery Options open.

Thank you.

John and Mike
Mendenhall

Name: Mike and John
RUFCKHAUS
Street: 6419 Chaco Ridge
NE

City, State, Zip: Albany NM
87111

Tape closed with address on outside, and add a stamp.

DO NOT STAPLE
Thank you for your input!

How to Submit Comments

Written comments accompanied by name and address will become part of the formal record of the scoping process. While you may provide your ideas verbally during the meeting, we want to make sure your input is formally captured in your own words. You may submit written comments in three ways:

- Fill out the comment portion of this brochure and leave it in the drop box
- Take the brochure with you and return it by mail
- Provide comments via e-mail. For your convenience, you can do that here at the computer station, or visit www.mexicanwolfels.org
- Faxed comments may be sent to (505) 346-2542

Please note: In order to be considered part of the formal record, your comments must include your name and address. Comments may be submitted through December 31, 2007.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments:

I feel strongly about restoring a self-sustaining Mexican gray wolf population is important. This will help restore a more balanced ecosystem allowing other species to recover as well. In order to do this the wolf needs predator protection, a known to be released into appropriate territories cover less stamps removed criteria, placing some of the responsibility on the rancher using public land to make they're fallow livestock methods to help with future precipitation

All the policies governing wolf population need to be reviewed frequently on the environment/population & circumstances warrant. This is not an impossible task. Let's make it work!

Name: FRAN MERRITT

Street: 133 Juniper Hill Rd

Albuquerque NM

City, State, Zip: 87122

Tape closed with address on outside, and add a stamp.

DO NOT STAPLE
Thank you for your input!