

MEXICAN WOLF ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Draft Summary Notes for Conference Call of May 20, 2008
Note: This is ~~not~~ a Public Document

Location: Conference Call
Date/Time: May 20, 2008: 1330 – 1700 (AZ Time)
Host: Arizona Game and Fish Department
Participants: AGFD: Terry B. Johnson (AMOC Chair), Dave Cagle; EACOC: Larry Stevenson;
GRECO: Hector Ruedas, Kay Gale; NMDGF: Matt Wunder; USDA-APHIS WS:
Dave Bergman; USFS: Cathy Taylor; USFWS: John Oakleaf, John Slown,
Maggie Dwire; WMAT: Cynthia Dale

Terry Johnson opened the meeting at 1330 AZ Time.

1. Status of AMOC Chair

Terry noted that earlier today he sent an email to AMOC and the cooperating agencies summarizing the Lead Agencies Directors' decision on the AMOC Chair, per their discussion in a May 19 conference call (see Appendix 1). In short, the Directors affirmed that Terry is the AMOC Chair and they directed AMOC to develop a leadership transition plan for discussion in the July 2008 AMOC-Directors meeting. The need for a leadership transition plan became evident to the Directors after Terry's health issues last fall and winter.

Action Item: Terry will schedule another AMOC conference call so the cooperators can begin working on the leadership transition plan.

2. USFWS representation in AMOC

USFWS confirmed yesterday that when John Morgart transfers on June 1 to another Region 2 position (Research and Ecosystems Coordinator), John Oakleaf will continue indefinitely as USFWS AMOC representative. Wally Murphy will be Oakleaf's first surrogate. Maggie Dwire (newly appointed as MW Assistant Recovery Coordinator) and John Slown will continue to provide support for Oakleaf and Murphy on Reintroduction Project issues.

3. Updates on Reintroduction Project contact information

Terry noted that in preparation for today's call he sent current versions of the SOP 0.C Project Contacts list, AMOC contacts list, and Directors contact list to all cooperators.

Action Item: Any changes on the three lists referenced above must be sent to Terry Johnson by close-of-business on May 31, so he can send out revised copies the next week.

4. Summary Notes for April 22-23 AMOC meeting

Terry reminded all that he distributed draft Summary Notes for the April 22-23 meeting on May 20. Cooperator comment is due by close-of-business on May 31. The notes are 35 pages long. He said most cooperator representatives apparently do not have time to read and edit documents that long, since only Morgart and Taylor have consistently provided comment on

shorter drafts from previous meetings. Terry thanked Dave Bergman for reviewing the April 22-23 draft, and submitting comment to Terry earlier today.

Action Item: Cooperator comment on the draft AMCO Summary Notes for the April 22-23 meeting is due to Terry by close-of-business on May 31, so he can send out the final version the next week.

5. Update on NEPA Scoping Summary

John Slown said there is little news since he sent the draft scoping report from DJ Case & Associates to AMOC cooperators for comment by May 16. John said only Cathy Taylor and Dave Cagle submitted comment.

John would like to post the final report on the Project Web site. Terry asked John to send it to him in PDF format, so he can distribute it to the cooperators and so Bruce Sitko can post it on the Project Web site.

John wants to hold a meeting after June 13 to brief AMOC cooperators that have signed the NEPA Addendum to the 2003 MOU establishing AMOC, and counties that are requesting a separate MOU with USFWS for the 10j NEPA process. Nine counties in AZ and NM have requested cooperator status under the MOU Addendum. Another 20 or so have requested a separate agreement with USFWS. Terry reminded John that he needs the Addendum letters so AMOC can act on those request.

Action Item: John Slown will send copies of the county Addendum cooperator status request letters to Terry Johnson, so Terry can schedule AMOC acceptance of the counties.

John Slown said we need a good facilitator to run the anticipated NEPA process meetings. Terry Johnson recommended DJ Case & Associates, since they are familiar with Mexican wolf scoping. However, Slown said USFWS would need to contract this out and, given that DJ Case & Associates handled the recent scoping meetings, USFWS might want someone more likely to be perceived by the public as neutral. Slown said activities for the NEPA meetings include whittling down the 36 identified issues, developing alternatives, and identifying potential impacts.

Further discussion indicated confusion as to whether the NEPA “working” meetings will be convened by USFWS or by AMOC. All agreed that (in accordance with NEPA, APA [Administrative Procedures Act], and the MOU Addendum), USFWS is the Action Agency, any NEPA process meetings must be separate from the regular AMOC and AMWG meetings, and AMOC and any other cooperators can advise and offer recommendations to USFWS, but USFWS is the decision-maker in the NEPA process. Discussion continued on APA relevance, and NEPA meeting format. Slown said he is looking at holding the June NEPA meeting after the 13th, when Wally Murphy returns from leave. Terry requested that John submit potential June meeting dates so they can be forwarded to AMOC membership (i.e. the current Addendum cooperators).

Action Item: John Slown will submit potential June meeting dates to Terry by May 31. Terry will forward those potential dates to AMOC members, who will comment back to Slown.

6. USFS resources for NEPA Scoping

Cathy said she looked into this request from USFWS, and found it confusing. The request originated from Wally Murphy's comments in the April 22-23 AMOC meeting. However, Don DeLorenzo (USFS) says he had already spoken with Wally and USFS is expecting USFWS to provide more specific information on requests for cooperator support for the EIS process. John Slown said he will ask Wally Murphy what is expected of each AMOC agency to fulfill the EIS process. Terry Johnson asked if that could be done in time for discussion with all cooperators in a June NEPA meeting, if one occurs. John said it could be.

Action Item: John Slown will find out what support each cooperator is expected to provide for the EIS/NEPA process, and discuss this at the June cooperators meeting, if one occurs.

7. USFS update on SUP guidelines

Cathy Taylor said she met with staff from the Apache-Sitgreaves and Gila national forests after the April 22-23 AMOC meeting, but they did not have time to discuss this topic. Cathy will send AMOC's SUP comment draft to the A/S and Gila Special Use personnel, for their consideration.

Action Item: Cathy Taylor will update AMOC on this issue at the July meeting.

8. 2007 Reintroduction Project Annual Report

John Oakleaf said there are still formatting errors to correct. He also said the stated livestock depredation rates per 100 wolves have not been corrected yet to exclude domestic sheep, so they can be compared to the 1996 FEIS (which only used cattle). John will make the corrections and changes, and re-submit a final version to Terry Johnson.

Dave Bergman commented: 1) Why is the Discussion section after the Summary section? John Oakleaf said he would change the order to resolve this. 2) There is a need to better identify how the public can access *Endangered Species Updates*. Oakleaf said that has already been addressed in the report. 3) Recommend removing the APHIS National Research Center depredation study personnel from the list of Project personnel, since they are not part of the Reintroduction Project. Oakleaf said he would do that.

Cathy Taylor asked why depredation by other animals did not include mountain lions. John Oakleaf said the IFT included all the depredation information the IFT generated; perhaps the depredations USFS is asking about were documented by the study team referenced above. Those depredations were not supposed to be included in the IFT report, because they were discovered by the study team (not the IFT), through use of methodologies differing from those used within the Reintroduction Project.

Action Item: By May 23, John Oakleaf will send edited copy of the revised draft Annual Report to Terry Johnson for final review, dissemination to all cooperating agencies, and posting on the Project Web site.

9. IFT revision of proposal for temporary holding facility

Cynthia Dale said WMAT is still reviewing potential sites on the FAIR. Selection of a site would require Tribal Council review. Terry recommended that the IFT note in its draft proposal that WMAT is working on potential sites, and send the proposal to AMOC for discussion up through the Lead Agency Directors, while advising them that WMAT is still working on its component. All agreed.

Action Items: John Oakleaf will work with the IFTLs to complete the facility proposal by June 30, including a reference to WMAT's ongoing work on its portion, and send it to Terry Johnson for dissemination to AMOC cooperators for discussion with their chain-of-command up through their Director.

10. NMDGF support for weekly monitoring flights in FY09

Matt Wunder said NMDGF has \$47,000 in its FY2009 budget (beginning July 1, 2008) for helicopter and fixed-wing flight support for the Project. Last year's end-of-year count cost about \$47,000 in helicopter time alone. Matt has spoken with the Mexican Wolf Conservation Fund, which might be willing to enter into a cost share agreement on this issue.

Action Item: By May 31, Dave Cagle and Bill Van Pelt will report to Terry Johnson what the projected FY2009 costs are for fixed-wing support for the Project, and how much money is available in AGFD's FY2009 Project funds for helicopter and fixed-wing flight support.

Action Item: On June 2, Terry Johnson will advise AMOC what the projected FY2009 costs are for fixed-wing and helicopter support for the Project, and how much money is available from AGFD and NMDGF.

Action Item: By June 30, AMOC will decide whether the available funds are sufficient for helicopter and fixed-wing flight support for FY2009. If the funds are not sufficient, AMOC must determine how to try to resolve the shortfall (e.g. cut back flights, cut back area of coverage, secure additional funding).

11. NMDGF range rider program

Matt Wunder said NMDGF is finalizing contract wording for hiring range riders in NM. Terry Johnson noted that AGFD's draft contracts are not considered public documents. Only the final contract is available to the public.

Action Item: When the NMDGF range rider contract information becomes available to the public, Matt Wunder will forward it to Terry Johnson for dissemination to AMOC cooperators.

12. Reintroduction Project FTE issues

Terry Johnson noted that only Cathy Taylor provided comment on the FTE issue by the most recent deadline. Terry thinks we are at an impasse, because there is a significant difference of opinion among the agencies on how much FTE time each agency needs to accomplish the annual work plan activities, even though a few activities have been dropped (i.e. the winter prey study) or combined. Also, per agenda item 10, the costs of weekly aerial monitoring and the end-of-year count will be updated soon, which will enable AMOC to reevaluate those activities with updated FY2009 NMDGF and AGFD budget information. Terry suggested that we separate the IFT FTE need discussion and finalize the text-only component of the Annual Work Plan. We can then discuss any FTE need issues with the Directors before and during the July meeting. All six Lead Agencies agreed to this approach.

Action Item: John Oakleaf will update the IFT FTE table and send it to Terry Johnson by May 31 for dissemination to AMOC cooperators.

Action Item: John Oakleaf will work with the IFTLs to finalize the 2008 Annual Work Plan and send it to Terry Johnson by May 31 for dissemination to AMOC cooperators.

13. Approved Clarification Memos for SOPs 5.0 and 6.0

Terry Johnson said the purpose of this item was to note that these Clarification Memos had been approved, and to ask whether they had been distributed to the entire IFT. John Oakleaf said both were distributed to the entire IFT, and both were discussed at the May IFT meeting.

14. Approved SOPs 25 and 27

Terry Johnson said the purpose of this item was to note that these new SOPs had been approved, and to ask whether they had been distributed to the entire IFT. John Oakleaf said both were distributed to the entire IFT, and both were discussed at the May IFT meeting.

15. Draft Clarification Memos for SOPs 11.0 and 13.0

Terry Johnson noted that per the April 22-23 AMOC meeting, and previous discussion among AMOC and the Lead Agency Directors, he opened these two draft Clarification Memos for public comment. However, in yesterday's conference call among the Directors, NMDGF Director Thompson asked why the public should be allowed to comment on SOP modifications. Matt Wunder said Thompson had expressed that concern to him previously. Terry said he addressed the issue in the May 19 conference call as follows: When AMOC was established, we all committed to providing public comment periods on all Project SOPs and thus far we have done so. Our intent was to make AMOC process as transparent (open to the public) as possible. We reminded the Directors of that process component several times from August 2007 through April 2008, while the Clarification Memos were being developed. In the May 19 conference call, none of the other Directors shared NMDGF Director

Thompson's concern, but Terry believes that AMOC should address the issue again in its July meeting with the Directors.

Action Item: Terry Johnson will schedule the issue of "public comment periods" for Project SOPs and Clarification Memos for discussion in the July meeting with the Directors.

16. 2008 and 2009 AMOC and AMWG meeting logistics

Action Item: By June 15, Matt Wunder and Cynthia Dale will provide Terry Johnson with accommodation and room availability for the 2009 AMOC meetings scheduled for NM and FAIR, respectively.

Action Item: By June 15, Terry Johnson will confirm with Steve Titla whether Steve has confirmed accommodation and room availability for the 2009 AMOC meeting scheduled for the SCAT Apache Gold Casino and Conference Center.

17. April 7 depredation incident summary

Terry Johnson noted that he and the IFT revised the incident summary to clarify a couple of things after the April 22-23 AMOC meeting, and Bruce Sitko has re-posted it to the Project Web site.

18. Initial releases and translocations

Terry Johnson said AMOC needs to discuss three separate IFT packages regarding initial releases and relocations.

Terry started with the recommended New Mexico translocation to McKenna Park. Terry said he had many comments, but he would like to speak last because they are mostly editorial in nature and none of them would change the IFT recommendation or affect AMOC's discussion. Cathy Taylor asked if there needs to be a New Mexico public meeting regarding this proposed translocation. Matt Wunder said the site was vetted publicly when it was approved and he has not planned additional public meetings. However, there will be public notification of the translocation, per SOP 6.0. According to John Oakleaf, the translocation is planned for about June 10, but the specific date would depend on availability of the contract packer and other logistical factors. In response to Dave Bergman's inquiry, Cathy Taylor said two off-duty USFS employees who attended a December 3 public meeting in Alpine AZ on this translocation (at the time it was proposed for Home Creek AZ) should be referenced in the meeting summary as private citizens. Terry Johnson said the recommendation in the draft notes for that meeting to drop all future public meetings for translocations was inappropriate. Terry said such an action would be contrary to AGFD's commitment under SOP 6.0 to public process for this Project. Since the two individuals responsible for the notes for that meeting are no longer AGFD employees, Terry will make the decision to drop the recommendation.

Translocation

Terry Johnson said the translocation document has been revised several times since it was created in September 2007. However, as changes were made, the entire package was never corrected to address concerns expressed by AMOC or the Directors or to update the rest of the document along with the final (current) IFT preferred alternative (McKenna Park). Although Terry, speaking for AGFD, supports the IFT recommendation of translocation in NM, the document needs to be corrected and the IFT needs to become more rigorous in editing its own documents. He offered to send John Oakleaf his marked-up copy for that purpose. John agreed to review and incorporate the edits.

Terry then asked each cooperator to comment on the IFT recommendation: Greenlee County, USFS, USFWS, WS, WMAT, AGFD, and NMDGF all said they favor the IFT recommendation. Terry also noted that NMDGF Director Thompson has the jurisdictional lead for this proposed translocation, so he and USFWS Region 2 Director Tuggle will make the final decision after considering input from the other four Lead Agency Directors.

Action Item: John Oakleaf will work with the IFT and Terry Johnson to re-edit the IFT translocation proposal and forward it to Terry by May 22 for dissemination to AMOC on May 23.

Action Item: Each Lead Agency AMOC Representative will brief their Director on the AMOC recommendation, and ask them to respond to NMDGF Director Thompson as soon as possible, but no later than May 29, so the translocation, if approved, could occur as early as June 10.

Initial Releases

Terry Johnson advised that per discussion with AGFD Director Voyles and USFWS Region 2 Director Tuggle this morning, AGFD and USFWS do not support an initial release at Engineer Springs AZ in June. Both Directors affirmed that they want to see an overall initial release and translocation plan for 2008 and 2009 before making any more decisions. WS, USFS, and NMDGF concurred with deferral further discussion of initial releases and translocations to the July meeting, so the IFT can have time to integrate previous comment and put forth a more cohesive draft. Cathy Taylor also recommended not considering sites that have a depredation ranking greater than six. AGFD, NMDGF, WMAT, and WS concurred with Taylor's USFS recommendation.

Action Item: AMOC comments on the IFT's draft (overall) initial release and translocation document are due to John Oakleaf by May 31.

Action Item: The IFT will revise the draft overall document to cover the period of mid-September 2008 – December 31, 2009, and will submit it to Terry Johnson by June 30 for dissemination to AMOC.

Action Item: In July, all AMOC Lead Agency Representatives and/or their Surrogates will review the IFT's draft 2008-2009 initial release and translocation document, brief their Director on it, and come to the July meeting with the Directors prepared to discuss it.

19. Agenda items for July Directors Summit

Terry Johnson noted that, as usual, the first and second days of the Summit will be for AMOC to meet with the IFT and the third day will be for AMOC and the IFT to meet with the Directors. Kay Gale asked for an indication of how many motel rooms are needed in Morenci, and each agency present provided that information.

Action Item: All AMOC cooperators and John Oakleaf (as IFT Liaison to AMOC) must send their "Directors Summit" agenda items to Terry Johnson by June 30.

20. Other business

Matt Wunder said the Western Watershed Group, a non-governmental organization and party to recent wolf-related litigation, has requested all AMOC minutes [Summary Notes] that NMDGF has participated in since 2003. Under advice from counsel, NMDGF will probably comply with the request. Terry Johnson asked that NMDGF send AMOC affirmation that they will be providing the requested information.

Action Item: As soon as he has it, Matt Wunder will provide AMOC with information on NMDGF's decision on the Western Watershed Group's request for AMOC Summary Notes from 2003 to date.

Matt Wunder said Linda Walsh, Associate Professor of Language at a NM college, recently emailed NMDGF and USFWS requesting comment on a draft critique of the public comment component of the Project's 5-Year Review. Matt asked whether other AMOC agencies had received such a request, and all present indicated they had not. No further action was requested or taken

21. Adjournment

Terry Johnson adjourned the conference call at 1530 AZ Time.

Appendix 1.

Terry Johnson

From: Terry Johnson
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2008 9:39 AM
To: AGFD Terry B Johnson; FS Cathy A Taylor; FWS John Oakleaf; NMDGF Matthew Wunder; USDA-APHIS WS David L Bergman; WMAT Cynthia Dale; AGFD Dave Cagle; AGFD Jon Cooley; FS Bobbi L Barrera; FWS Wally J Murphy; NMDGF Renae Held; USDA-APHIS WS Alan May; WMAT Krista Beazley; ECO/EECO Larry Stephenson; GRAHCO Mark Herrington; GRAHCO Terry L Cooper; GRECO Hector Ruedas; GRECO Kay Gale; NACO Jerry Brownlow; NACO JR DeSpain; NMDA Bud Starnes; NMDA Les Owen; SiCo Jan Carrejo
Cc: AGFD Mike Sumner; NMDGF Kenneth Mills; AGFD Bill Van Pelt; AGFD Bruce Sitko; AGFD Dan Groebner; AGFD Eric Gardner; AGFD Mike Godwin; FS Don G DeLorenzo; FWS Bernard Lujan; FWS Brian Millsap; FWS Bryan Arroyo; FWS Charna Lefton; FWS Doug McKenna; FWS Elizabeth Slown PIO; FWS James Ashburner; FWS Jason Riley; FWS John Morgart; FWS John Slown; FWS Maggie Dwire; FWS Steven L Spangle; NMDGF Luis Rios; USDA-APHIS WS Chris D Carrillo; SCAT Harold Nofchissey; SCAT Steve Titla
Subject: Mexican Wolf: AMOC Chair

Hi!

The AMOC Lead Agency Directors held a conference call on May 19, from Noon to 1 pm AZ Time. All agencies except WMAT were represented. Server problems are significantly impeding flow of information to and from WMAT, and all Project cooperators are advised to use phones and faxes to transmit essential communications to WMAT, until further notice.

The discussion resulted in consensus on three issues:

- (1) Terry Johnson is retained as AMOC Chair (not Acting Chair) for the current term;
- (2) AMOC is directed to develop a leadership transition plan that provides the Chair with more administrative support and prepares the NMDGF and/or WMAT Lead Agency AMOC Representatives to become AMOC Chair on down the road, in the event that such a transition occurs. NMDGF Thompson asserted this was the intent of his April 12 email to the Directors, and he never intended that Terry Johnson be replaced as Chair immediately or that WMAT not be afforded its rightful opportunity to consideration for AMOC leadership; and
- (3) the agenda for the July 2008 Directors Summit will include discussion of leadership and leadership transitioning in AMOC, and the respective roles and functions of the Directors, AMOC, and (time permitting) other components of the Reintroduction Project.

If we are unable to cover this ground in today's AMOC conference call, I will schedule another call for that purpose.

This summary above is in my own words, and sent at the request of the Directors. I did sit in on the conference call yesterday, and I believe that I have captured its essence accurately. However, I encourage all AMOC participants to vet this with their Director and to apprise me of any errors of omission or commission, so I can disseminate an appropriate correction. Thanks.

Thx, Terry

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