

Mexican Wolf Management Oversight Committee
Summary Notes
Meeting of April 29, 2003

Participants (Primary Cooperator lead representatives in bold): Arizona Game and Fish Department (**Terry B. Johnson**, Bill Van Pelt, Richard Remington, Dan Groebner, Paul Overy), New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (**Chuck Hayes**), White Mountain Apache Tribe (**Alex Puglisi**), San Carlos Apache Tribe (Stefanie White), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**Colleen Buchanan**, John Oakleaf, Brian Kelly, Joy Nicholopoulos), USDA Forest Service (**Wally Murphy**), and USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (**David Bergman**, Jeff Green, Alan Armistead).

Meeting started at 1300, with introductions and agenda review. Items added to the agenda (time permitting) were wolf ecotourism, release site selection process, role and function, and adaptive management plan. Meeting proceeded with agenda.

Coordination of 2003 wolf releases and process for releasing information to media. Three wolf releases planned for this year: two in New Mexico (Miller Spring and Lily Park), one in Arizona (Maness Peak). A release on the White Mountain Apache Reservation is also under discussion.

The Miller Spring release occurred on April 18, from the acclimation pen in the Gila Wilderness. The female was pregnant at release. The Wilderness Area has no grazing, so there was no permittee to contact.

NEPA process for the Maness Peak release area should be completed in about three weeks. Then the Forest Supervisor will make a decision on the proposed action. The USDA Forest Service has not identified any concerns regarding the Lily Park release site.

Action item: *The Interagency Field Team will inform the permittee in the Maness Peak area that the area is being considered for possible wolf releases. The permittee will also be contacted after the Forest Supervisor makes a decision. Pre- and post-decision permittee contact, in addition to general public process, will be the Project's standard henceforth.*

Media release process -- NMDGF is drafting a news release retraction to clarify errors in the previous release about release site selection and timing. A process is needed for joint news releases; Colleen distributed a recommended process for coordinating news releases. The draft needs review by all Primary Cooperators.

Action item: *NMDGF will coordinate a conference call of the Primary Cooperators' Public Information Officers by May 9, and have an agreed-upon news release process by May 31.*

USDA APHIS Wildlife Service depredation study status update. Although details and funding still need to be resolved, a depredation study could begin as early as mid to late May. Wildlife Services has ordered 230 radio tags for the study. David Bergman distributed a detailed budget of the study. The cost of the study is estimated to be \$259,330 for the first year.

APHIS WS is concerned about funding this project. It has spent \$37,490 on ear tags, and needs assistance from the other cooperators. The immediate need is to cover pre-June 30 expenses. AGFD firmly committed \$25,000 (public and private lands work only) and USFS tentatively committed \$20,000 (equipment and supplies). This would allow the study to start, and allow USFWS time to receive its budget and determine its contribution to the effort. AGFD indicated it would not commit additional funds until USFWS has determined how much it will contribute. AGFD believes USFWS should provide the majority of the funding. NMDGF and WMAT will not contribute funding to this project.

TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION

A break was called at 1430. Upon returning to the meeting, discussion focused on Kelly's interactions with TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION. AMOC had previously agreed that Bergman would be its lead on the study, and he was unaware of Kelly's discussions with TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION. All AMOC member agencies must respect its processes, or we will not build the trust necessary for managing this Project.

Action Item: *Dave Bergman will follow up with Stuart Breck regarding depredation study contact protocol and report back to AMOC.*

Purpose and process of joint Game and Fish Commission meeting on May 16. The May 16 AZ-NM Joint Commission meeting in Safford is open to the public. Admission is free. Seating is on a first come, first served basis. The wolf item is scheduled for Time Certain 2:30 pm (Arizona Time), which means it will begin precisely at 2:30 pm, and will continue until discussion is concluded and action (if any) is taken by the Arizona Commission. The New Mexico Commission will also be in session at this meeting, but may decide to take action there or defer action to a subsequent meeting in New Mexico.

Likely sequence of events at the Commission Meeting:

1. AGFC Chair asks AGFD Director to address the next item (The Wolf).
2. AGFD Director or AGFC Commission Chair asks NMGC to open its concurrent session.
3. AGFD Director asks presenter (Terry Johnson) to make the presentation. It will include progress on the six action items from the Commissions and review of the November 8, 2002 guidance document. The presentation will take 20 to 40 minutes.
4. AGFC and/or NMGC will ask Terry questions. He will answer them and/or ask other AZ or NM wildlife agency employees or agency cooperators to assist him in answering them.
5. When the Commissions have finished their initial discussion, Blue Cards will be read and each speaker from the public will be given time to comment (probably 3 to 5 minutes, depending on how many cards are submitted). The Commissions may or may not ask

questions of each speaker, or of Terry as follow-up to what the speaker says. All speakers address the Commission(s), not each other.

6. AGFC and NMGC will complete their discussion, and ask any remaining questions of Terry or anyone else.
7. AGFC and/or NMGC Chairs will close out the item, or ask for a motion and vote on the motion, and then close out the item.
8. NMGC will adjourn, and AGFC will continue with any unfinished agenda items.

The Commission presentation will focus on AMOC progress in addressing the six action items directed by the AZ and NM Commissions.

1. Review November 8, 2002 document with Commissions to demonstrate how roles and functions of the Primary Cooperators have been restructured to ensure State and Tribal participation, authorities and responsibilities.
2. Describe how the adaptive management process has been restructured to ensure opportunities and participation by the full spectrum of stakeholders. Information on the MWAMWG process will be presented.
3. The six protocols that have been completed by the cooperators will be presented to demonstrate response to depredation issues and staff enhancements.
Action Item: *AMOC members are to report to Terry Johnson by May 9 regarding the filling of vacant positions, news release process, and depredation study.*
4. Describe how the outreach effort has been restructured to address public concerns. Present information on the March and February meetings, press release coordination, incorporation of tasks into annual work plan, and biweekly updates.
5. All actions are in compliance with special rules, policies, protocols, etc.
6. The MWAMWG is in the process of restructuring 5-year review.

For the rest of the AMOC meeting, participants reviewed the draft Memorandum of Understanding. Changes were agreed to by consensus.

The meeting adjourned for dinner at 1930.

The meeting reconvened at 0800 on April 30, to finish reviewing the MOU and to provide direction to the Mexican Wolf Field Projects Coordinator on developing a process for selecting release sites. Discussions ended at 0915, to enable participation in the AMWG Meeting, which began at 0930. Uncovered agenda items were deferred to a subsequent meeting.

Action Item: Terry Johnson will re-draft the MOU based on changes agreed to at this meeting. Early next week, he will re-circulate the draft among AMOC members. Each lead representative is to solicit review within his or her agency, and provide comment to Terry by May 9.