

MEXICAN WOLF ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE SUMMARY NOTES

Location: Morenci Bowling Alley, Morenci Plaza, Morenci, Arizona 85540
Date/Time: October 19, 2006: 0800 – 1700 (AZ Time)
Host: Arizona Game and Fish Department and Greenlee County
Participants: Closed (non-public) meeting for: AMOC Lead Agencies (AGFD, NMDGF, USDA APHIS WS, USDA FS, USDI FWS, and WMAT); AMOC Signatory Cooperators (Greenlee, Sierra, and Navajo counties, and NM Department of Agriculture); and other state, tribal, and/or federal government agencies that wish to participate)

October 19: 0800 – 1700

Opening comments and ground rules by Terry Johnson

Present: Chris Carrillo, Les Owen, Bud Starnes, Alan May for Dave Bergman, Kathy Taylor for Wally Murphy, Hector Reudas, Kay Gale, Steve Titla, John Morgart, John Oakleaf, Shawn Farry, Dan Groebner, Bill Van Pelt, Saleen Richter, Chuck Hayes. No WMAT representation. Shawna Nelson, note taker.

Agenda review/additional agenda items

Covered NEPA and EIS first, then translocation and initial release to have sufficient time to discuss

AMOC-IFT meeting on December 6 and Directors Summit on December 7

December 6, AMOC and IFT meeting in Phoenix

December 7, reconvene with Directors – start at 10am.

Action Item: Make sure every one speaks to their director about this

Following the December 7th meeting at 6:00pm – invited to Terry’s house for BBQ

AMOC and AMWG meeting locations for 2007

All meetings scheduled for Thursday -

Discussion about moving meetings up a day to Wednesday/Thursday. Titla wants the meeting to be instead on Saturday as feels better public access for a Saturday meeting – for blue-collar workers to increase public participation

Action Item: Terry will redo AMOC/AMWG schedule and resend

Discussion of desire to add a second AMOC meeting to have two work days for AMOC - tons of stuff coming up.

Titla felt that AMOC is exclusionary – should give full access to the public and start in the morning – people not energetic in the afternoon and want to get away.

Also wants a table showing who came from where and how long stayed – but this data does not exist.

Discussion on what time to start meetings and on what days and on additional meetings in Albuquerque, Tucson, Phoenix, Las Cruces to increase public participation.

Have a running poll to ask for public thought on NEPA meetings and email in choices – “are you a local resident?” as so not to out vote certain sectors of the public.

Action Item: Start AMOC on first day (Tues or Thurs) from 1pm-5pm; 2nd day 8am-5pm, 3rd day 7am-11am and then reconvene as AMWG @ 12pm-3:30pm

NEPA - Morgart

Planning for proposed 10(j) rule change – will require substantial NEPA – amend original document (10 yr. old) – needs to be updated – or can we get away with an Environmental Impact Statement? - need a full-blown NEPA

USFWS -

- 1- Statement of purpose and need (lead off of the EIS) – what and why doing, rational
- 2- Create a new MOU basically to this is how we agree to cooperate and
- 3- Funding – EIS not going to be cheap – original EIS cost government 0.5million dollars
10-yr ago – need Socioeconomic expanded portion – analysis

At this point – costs are all over – best guess – 2-3 years to complete – 1.2 to 4 billion dollars looking at – what parts are internalized and parts contracted out

Fairly substantial writing needed – living document

MOU – Morgart took the lead in putting together. Need a full stand alone MOU that referenced back to original MOU?

Less than two weeks ago – realization – in reality that it will be a step down for the original MOU rather than a stand alone as would have to go back to directors and get it signed off – so opted for addendum. Have no commitment of funding at this point.

Action Item: Tracy to make final corrections and send to Santiago and to AMOC

EIS addendum – Terry handed out

Voluntary actions by the cooperative agencies.

Titla - clarify wording in first paragraph on addendum – say what you mean. Also, USDA not in Lakeside – change on last page

Timeframes – collective intent to final agreement? – Terry on EIS addendum

Action Item: November 8 comments due back and send to all AMOC members/representatives and then will work on finalizing

Distribution – Terry confirmed that distribution list is accurate – J.Brad's email conflict – cleared up

Action Item: Tracy to send out statement of need – Morgart

Funding –

Dave Hayes to work on - WS guy (ask Alan May) – contribution by WS – available up to 100% if needed.

Steve Robertson – FWS EIS person and Tracy

G&F may request an additional position – Terry – but not close to asking this

FTL not involved significantly in the EIS issue as will take away from their duties.

1 FTE additional hire for EIS possibly – G&F (\$100,000 from FWS to supplement)

Hayes – 0.25 FTE available – above and beyond, may be able to cover meeting facilities

Taylor – couple of alternatives flushed out of internal agencies folk, contracting, like to see.

Johnson – agency not comfortable with contracting out the biological element portion – want agency folks for that.

May to Morgart – how will FWS solicit for socio-economic portion?

Titla - SCAR not happy w/ socioeconomic portion

Johnson – cannot delegate, but can offer a recommendation

Starnes – talked with contractors and was limited in contract with both time and money – did not get a chance to interview those that wanted to.

Morgart – did not have adequate time and money – never have adequate time and money

Hayes – had to split it up rather than put all into one effort – limited what could do

Johnson – lost almost a year as took long time trying to figure out what to do

(Talked about how Socio-Economics played out - with time and money limitations)

EIS – more questions/concerns? – No

When send back comments on MOU – make clear what role you would like your agency to play and what resources would like to offer. SCAR – just for EIS portion, do not to agree with wolves.

Shawn made announcement that he is leaving the Project November 17.

EIS

Discussion of locations for NEPA scoping process meetings – Identified geographical balance of having 4 to 5 towns in each state

Possibilities include: Flagstaff, Tucson, Phoenix, Douglas and/or Sierra Vista, White Mountain somewhere and possibly Page

Hayes - NM: not in Blue Range - Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Taos, Sante Fe, Raton, Taos - how much go that way when not know what the boundary changes might be?

Johnson – distinction of first wave of scoping meetings – Taos, Clovis and Roswell might be reasonable

Hayes – concern with Farmington and Raton as sending message that wolves coming and be prepared – hate to stir up

Johnson – someone at some point someone will have to make a decision and try to reach a decision.

Starnes – Carrizo and Artesia

Johnson – Alamogordo

Part of it comes down to cost as well.

TRC or Las Cruces – not both

Silver City (would cover Glenwood/Reserve)

Action Item: Johnson will send out another query and will have a follow up discussion at the Director's Summit

Statement of purpose and MOU close out.

Tracy will have draft and will work with Terry – internal deliverable documents – no dissemination.

5-Year Review: AMOC draft approaches to the 37 Recommendations, 10j revision, and DEIS development

#14 – established a lead on each – Johnson is lead, only got comment back from Wally, so will only cover Wally and Terry's portion

Sharon's research – review is not complete – timeline for completion is soon and will be on website as PDF. Purpose of review is to help jumpstart the groups – give them a starting project so would not have to do a lot of research

Chuck has #15, #25 and #32

#14 - talk about what's there and have a discussion about where to collapse 4 into 3 - is that OK?

#14 - detailed plan for another reintroduction project – Johnson's idea as lead to have a plan in place

5-Year Review was officially completed 12/31/05

Sharon's research review material handed out.

Groebner – are items prioritized?

Chuck #15 – Systems of evaluation of databases' – Saleen with assistance with Nick's replacement and IFT if possible, by March of 2007

Johnson - HDMS person in Phoenix volunteered to assist

#17 – Wally Murphy (white paper)

Annual population estimations. IFT leads for all, maybe Ballard – assess annually for 5 years, beginning this winter and complete within 5 years. Who – WMAT should be in there as well. We have 5 years available to complete this task. Two issues – affirming that our current method is right and just and two, a second method that is better – so therefore, assess rather quickly if methods used are good

Johnson - Supposed to have roughed out for discussion tomorrow and not prepared to do – no document for the public and not sure how to handle it

Morgart – have John and Shawn make 50 copies. Issue is that will have not have opportunity to talk about as a group.

Lead/process/and dates process – Johnson

#19 – not a white paper

Maintenance – affirmation that IFT and AMOC ongoing process and director involvement and employee compliance w/ SOP's. Who – adaptive management on the hoof – change when necessary – ongoing

#20 – budget information – collective

Comment? 14 million dollars

#23 – Outreach and planning efforts and directing through the annual work plan

Saleen, Krista, Shawn and John developing those components for the work plan and to bring to AMOC as a draft and see what recommendations are, review, approve.

Action Item: have a deadline for draft and deadline for approval

July beginning date, September - Review, October - Approval, in place January 1 – stuck in the current pattern

#24 – white paper on outreach

#25 – Hayes

Update prey abundance distribution. Process by obtaining a presentation by P Krausman and identify contacts from different agencies. Revisit and see if have updated data for all prey in game management units (GMU) - not just the experimental population area. Complete report that describes current elk/deer populations in GMU and write out a procedure on where the information comes from, when available and how information pulled together so that can be repeatable. April 2007 deadline.

Kathy

Wolf related enhancements – develop a 5-yr plan, Forest Service lead to ID habitat improvement projects and potential funding from private landowners. IFT to identify habitat enhancements. Wildlife Managers coming up with a habitat plan in Unit 27 – Groebner. Wade Zarlingo, full time LIPP program person. NRCS partnering program – Morgart Johnson – this will take a lot of fleshing out – no agency for - TJ suggest a talk about funding sources and retrofit.

#30 - staffing needs assessment

G&F Diane Schaffer HR person – to do Desk Audits – interviews with employees, etc.
January – June 30th

#32 – Hayes

Identification of Population Viability Analysis (PVA). Literature review of PVA. May 1, 2007 due date.

#34 – Kathy/Wally - needs more fleshing out – more participation by stakeholders - white paper

#35 – Morgart

Maintain reintroduction / recovery leadership roles – essentially ongoing

#37 – Chuck and Cynthia

Continued obligation requests regarding funding the project. December 31 of 2006? Alan May for a funding request? By Dec 2006?

Substantive changes to be made?

#37 - Johnson – out of sync – July 1 – December 31 (for time to get staffing report needs assessment)

Three recommendations from Wildlife Services –

#12 – Compensation – Alan lead - review and summarize existing compensation programs and provide a summary of those programs and other ideas to a few key wool/cattle in Albuquerque at an upcoming meeting and come to a consensus and what key elements are, and develop a white paper. Final white paper by Feb 1, 2007

Johnson - Renzi will be present at the two private meetings, cattle meetings, and what about the **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** aspect? - need to have the complete game plan

Steve Titla's address email changes – see Terry's emails.

Not convening technical advisory group - working with congressional and industry representatives – have not ruled out participation by anybody at this point – Johnson feels that environmental groups should be a part of the restructuring of the compensation program (opportunity to provide comment – not necessarily to bless or be agreement with)

Have not identified how going to work with Defenders – had asked for information from Defenders and they have provided information to Morgart and he sent it to Bergman.

NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION welcomes working with AMOC.

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Recommendation of compensation – not for help with moving cattle (#12) – wide open - broad based - reflect with cattle growers in December

#21 – WS on trap evaluation

Dr. Knolte and Fall discussions, Best Management Practice (BMP) likely not happen – use existing wolf and coyote data and draft a white paper and analyze and then will suggest a plan to present to next Wildlife Damage conference in April 2007.

#29 – WS on IFT position

Dave lead - draft a PB and associated funding request. – White paper on it - Bud has ideas. NRCS to jointly fund a position across the borders - critical position to fund and fill with a local hire would be good.

Section-6 money to fund this position? What happened to that money? Large philanthropic organizations to donate money? Morgart explored funding thru.

#1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 15 left with to identify process for.

Scoping as early as December – are we still on that path?

Morgart – overly ambitious for date. Terry troubled about it. Exhausted the public's patience.

2007 Wolf Conferences

Defenders of Wildlife in Flagstaff, AZ – not Chico – 24, 25 and 26 of April, with planned field trip to north Kiabab (by Grand Canyon Trust). Wolf tour will be April 27 and 28 - working toward wolf restoration on the North Kiabab. (FYI - G&F will not support another wolf reintroduction project in this state – we do not have the funding and oppose)

SWIN discussion of conference/workshop – heard nothing on or on rough notes from workshop

Morgart – regarding Hon-Dah Workshop not to make into an annual event – not value added - perhaps something at a lower scale every year – Johnson

IWC notes missing – but will have all on a CD

Nelson will forward information on Ed Bangs' Working Group November 28 and 29 in Missoula
- done

September 22-26, 2007, Wildlife Society conference will be in Tucson and in Albuquerque in May.

SOP Handbook updates

Chronic Wasting Disease - NM working on – received all comments from Bill Van Pelt – ready to go (from NMDGF standpoint)

Action Item: Johnson will ship out CWD SOP to all of AMOC one week from tomorrow – wants one reply from each agency.

Media SOP –

Action Item: Nelson to send Johnson the electronic copy of Media SOP Friday night.

Wolf transport SOP – sent out to AMOC

Action Item: Johnson will send out Wolf Transport SOP

IFT letterhead, shirts, and logo

Issues – similarity to Defenders and use of abbreviations for agencies

Agency approval on the logo:

Use for letterhead and magnets for refrigerator.

USFS – no idea

WS – no idea – Bergman said similar to DOW and wouldn't sign off on.

NMDGF – fine

AGFD – fine

USWFS – Ben has no problem with it

WMAT -?

AGFD will buy the shirts – need sizes of shirts.

Send Morgart DOW logo – Nelson (done)

Action Item: Oakleaf will get size information for personnel and volunteers by next IFT meeting

Update on law enforcement issues/activities

LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION REDACTION

IFT updates

Outcomes from cultural training with WMAT

Cultural training w/ WMAT– **TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION** – went well (not about wolves – but rather a presentation used for young people to get in touch with their culture)

Current status of BWWRA population

New Mexico = 30 wolves in NM and 3 breeding pairs with potential for a fourth

Arizona = 21-28 wolves and – two breeding pairs

For a total of: 51-58 wolves

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Depredations, nuisance wolves, and other wolf management issues
Bluestem dispersing – up around Greens Peak area

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Depredations, Etc.

San Mateo Pack depredations = 2 (and is a Breeding Pair)

Nuisance – M973 was removed – can be translocated

M806 – nuisance in Luna, NM – then moved out of the area. (5 miles away)

Depredation incidents -

Saddle Pack = 1

Luna yearling = 1

San Mateo = 2

F923 – yesterday evening, a report that wolf caught in trap - trap may still be one foot – no drag marks – or perhaps person released the wolf from trap. Don't know – Sheep Basin (Reserve area)

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New releases and translocations in 2006 and 2007

Shawn - Couple of edits still needed

Five males in captivity available – proposal to translocate 1008 and 863 into Arizona. Hard-release 873 at Home Creek with Bluestem female possibly if not paired

Two Francisco males removed with the Francisco Pack - IFT recommend not to translocate them. 973 - possibility of translocating – but based on his behavior (associating with dogs), want to hold until can pair – has a good change if paired up and bonded

Forest Service wants to make sure that the District Rangers are in the loop ASAP – Concern of the Home Creek site by DR Rick DaValos – but is five miles south of the Big Lake recreation area – same buffer distance used for towns

Johnson to Hayes about when they would agree to do an experiment in NM – Unknown outcome – and under what conditions? Wolves with wild experience and/or conducting it in June (to coincide with elk calves) – looking at timing and history of the individual – start with a situation were likely to be most successful – rather than several variables with lower success.

Regarding 973 – (we are being) too conservative not to release him (Johnson)

Initial releases –

Edits came in today.

Proposal for initial release is the 2nd pack – the Redstem pack – proposed for last spring with three adults and 7 pups - release at Engineer Springs (preferred) or bear valley

or just release the female pups rather than all seven pups

Meridian released at Middle Mountain – currently not there and the Rim Pack has moved back into the country - so not currently open at this time

IFT Recommendation is to release all 10 – Duane considering 0 – 12 (zero is still on the table)

2nd translocation site at Gila Flat rather than Home Creek

Frank Hayes has concern about the large number (10) of the pack. Initial information gathered by IFT, discussion, AMOC, public meetings – not on number of wolves - just on location.

Ruedas – concern with prey base. Najar re: elk counts in location – don't feel that they are there.

Cow hunt – of 75 tags, only 2 cows came out – big concern. Is this site adequate or appropriate?

Najar and Godwin strongly preferred Engineer Springs

Need specific numbers on prey – to let folks know – give to Hector.

Groebner said that elk counts are published and available to public

Having 14 sites to choose from is a long list - what will make people happy? – nothing.

Information on prey base from hunt recommendations – imbed numbers in the release package

Jon Cooley made us take that info (deer/elk numbers) out of the original document.

Bear Valley – second choice site – lower prey and twice as many livestock year round.

2006 end-of-year count: approach, budget, etc.

Is our approach intact? Have money to do?

January 15-19th planned.

What is our approach to look for uncollareds? – have opportunity to put out bait piles – but

Better to get thru trapping opportunity

Transects not worthwhile, so trying to get as many collared as possible.

Criticism that we only look where know wolves are.

Look for tracks with fixed-wing aircraft if have good snow? – fixed transects?

Warren Ballard is an expert at looking at wolf tracks – training? Thoughts? Value?

Perhaps pair tracks found by aircraft with ground crew or do survey routes

Have plan in place – value added – even if conditions don't occur.

Numbers of wolves are the biggest contentious issue out there

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First step, need repeatable documented plan – Groebner

Guides/Outfitters/FS can give huge amount of information on wolf sightings

Work through the key players – ranchers, etc. – and ask for example of all wolf locations for December - then find out a way to survey those areas - call everyone who might be a source of information – try to make use of their information and get a handle on the numbers of wolves – look at concentration areas.

TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION

There are papers on how to grid and detect animals using trail cameras - VanPelt

Need a flash card for the WMAT trail cam

Helicopter agreements are in place

Final Section 6 money – got AGFD money
\$45k from NMGFD

Contingency plan if bad weather? – can go in February – December not available – John Herbert necessary for capture element.

The G&F pilot and plane are the limitation - Air West is not the limitation

**Get New Mexico's fixed wing – if can - then have a ten-day window.
Need to have a contingency plan for end of year count effort**

Want 5 days of flying (twice the amount of last year)

Money has been allocated

IFT occupancy of Alpine Admin Site and Alpine RD offices

Forest Service absorbing all the costs but need a Special Use permit to formalize it.

Trailers – 3 sites – Forest Service has not assumed financial ability for them. FWS paying rental for those two spaces

Non-Agency Telemetry Statement of Use

If ranchers have money for receivers – we can handle those landowners with cattle issues –

If someone needs one – we will get him or her one – Oakleaf

IFT and Recovery Program Annual Reports for 2006

IFT Annual Operating Plan for 2007, including outreach planning, and needs and possibilities for new releases and translocations

Include Outreach

NMGFD and WMAT agreed to use AGFD as template.

Public Outreach Plan –

Departure point for IFT discussion

IFT element to consider

No measure matrixes – need to add - need comment for IFT and AMOC to wrestle with this - to discuss December 6 – should also be a part of the work plan.

Action Item: AMOC needs draft of annual work plan one week before December 6

Outreach: follow-up on August training and discussion

Notes from **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** – don't have – so nothing specific on this issue.

Bruce Sitko has some ideas of how to stimulate more outreach

Follow up on how and when Bruce plans on that discussion

Miscellaneous

Web page:

PDF on EIS process and an AMOC page

Want to have a page that is password protected so can post things notes from meetings, ideas, draft documents, etc. – don't know if can do.

TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION

Alan Mays email to Johnson –

Unfunded mandates – old directives that are no longer mentioned – now available and money for wolf work at risk. Need language back in there (folks need to help with get back in – through their Congressmen)

Anything older than 3 years – directive – is at risk.

Two documents from Bergman:

AZ Cattle Growers

Questioning of neutrality of SWIN – last two paragraphs.

Bobbie Holliday – if should be discussing predator control on Forest Service land – do not need to be discussing – MOU between Forest Service and Wildlife Services - not wolf-related issue (regarding m-44 use and predator damage in a wilderness)

Back to the 37-recommendations – suggestions?

Terry to crank on – no need for collective session

MOU and where at

Technical group assembled for the 10(j) – not yet discussed – no determination made on that yet.