

## Mexican Wolf Adaptive Management Oversight Committee

### Meeting with the Interagency Field Team

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Location: Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico  
Date: December 11-12, 2007  
Time: AZ Time: 0900 – 1700 on December 11, 0800 - 1700 on December 12  
Host: Arizona Game and Fish Department  
Participants: AMOC Lead Agencies: AGFD – Terry B. Johnson (Chair), Jon Cooley, Shannon Barber-Meyer, Dave Cagle (Acting Chair); NMGFD – Matt Wunder, Renae Held, Ellen Heilhecker; USDA FS – Cathy Taylor and Wally Murphy; USDA APHIS WS – Dave Bergman; Allan May, Chris Carrillo, and Sterling Simpson; and USFWS – John Morgart, Brian Sloan, John Rogner, Maggie Dwire, and John Oakleaf.

AMOC Signatory Cooperators: New Mexico Department of Agriculture - Bud Starnes.

#### December 11, 2007

##### A. Welcome, Introductions, Ground Rules, Awards, and Agenda Review

Dave Cagle called the AMOC/IFT meeting to order at 0905 local time. After a brief welcome and introductions the agenda was followed.

No one from WMAT will be able to attend these meetings (per John Morgart).

Matt Wunder will have to leave the meeting later today to head to a NMDGF Commission meeting scheduled for tomorrow. Therefore, Dave Cagle suggested covering the most important items relating to NMDGF today.

AMOC discussed dates for the 2008 meetings. The agreed on dates are January 29-30 (AMWG January 30, Pinetop Regional Office), April 22-23 (Reserve), July 29-31 (AMWG July 30, Director's Meeting July 31; Clifton Morenci), October 28-29 (Silver City), and December 9-11 (Director's Summit; Phoenix).

**Action Item:** Dave Cagle will contact the Regional Office today to confirm the Pinetop meeting. Terry Johnson will take care of scheduling the meeting rooms in other locations. John Oakleaf said he will be tentative for the April meeting because of the birth of his child.

Renae Held distributed the AMOC Conference call minutes from the November 20, 2007 meeting.

Terry Johnson indicated that Jan Carrejo from Sierra County was still receiving emails at her old email account, which is soon to be defunct. All of us need to convert to her new address. Terry edited the contact lists and gave the new ones to Dave Cagle. Renae also mentioned adding Luis Rios (NMDGF) to the email distribution list. Dave Cagle said he did that. Luis is

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going to try to attend some AMOC meetings, but won't be at all. Renae will remain the NMDGF Surrogate for Matt Wunder.

Dave Cagle indicated that the new IFT technicians will start on Monday for AGFD. Bill Van Pelt is no longer part of the wolf program. He is taking a position relating to prairie dogs and will likely be on contract for AGFD. On March 31, 2008, Duane Shroufe (AGFD Director) will retire. Steve Ferrell (Deputy Director for AGFD) will be attending this meeting in Duane's place. Paperwork for hiring Dan Stark's old USFWS IFT position is in the works. Melissa Woolf will be leaving the Turner Endangered Species Fund as the Ladder Ranch Wolf Facility wolf caretaker. J Brad Miller has resigned from WS and Sterling Simpson is the official replacement as the WS FTL. J Brad has requested to remain a volunteer on the program. Cathy Taylor said that the USFS hopes to have a person in place as a wolf liaison on the IFT starting mid February/early March, working out of Alpine. Deb Bumpus would be the supervisor of this position (she oversees range and wildlife). NMDGF is in the process of hiring a FTL. They have 12 potential candidates. They hope to start the interviews shortly with the hope of hiring by January. Interview panel will be Mark, Renae, 1 Commissioner, 3 other NMDGF personnel, and Laura Schneberger. John Morgart asked if Laura is on the panel why not Michael Robinson? Matt added an environmentalist will also be on the panel.

Terry Johnson handed out his new business card reflecting AGFD's move to the new Phoenix headquarters. Terry learned in September that he had a detached retina as a result of a concussion and he had 3 minor strokes. He kept thinking that he would return – but in early November he was told he has an inoperable blood clot that could be lethal if it broke apart. But in fact it is a congenital deformity – not a blood clot. He still has headaches – but the headaches get worsened by discussions and trying to tackle complex thoughts. Terry said he is struggling with short-term memory and cannot always associate names with faces. Long-term memory is not a problem. Terry is not sure whether he is just working through the struggles of getting through a concussion or whether this is the result of the 3 strokes. Terry is hopeful by January that he will be reasonably fully engaged in everything, including resuming his duties as AMOC Chair. Terry said that the last two weeks he has shown good progress.

**B. Working through the AMOC Conference Call minutes from November 20, 2007.**

Metal outreach signs – Renae Held was asked by Dave Cagle how much money New Mexico could come up with. WMAT was also supposed to come up with money for about 30 signs. Renae said that she was planning to pay for the proportion that would be put up in NM. Renae estimated \$1500-2000 for the signs – they would be opportunistically installed. Renae said they have the money but need to figure out how to make the purchase (paperwork / procedure-wise).

**Action Item:** Dave Cagle will work with AGFD purchasing to see how we can get it done.

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**Action Item:** Maggie Dwire will find out the outcome of a grant proposal by the Mexican Wolf Conservation Fund that includes some purchase money for outreach materials.

**Action Item:** Shannon Barber-Meyer is to contact Shawna Nelson to find out which printer she is thinking of using and the cost estimates.

**Action Item:** John Morgart will contact Liz Slown (external affairs USFWS) to get an update to see if the opening part of the brochure might need to be changed.

Dave Cagle said that AGFD brochures have to go through internal review. Terry Johnson said that Bruce Sitko can call Bob Miles (I & E division) and in a few minutes get approval if he says that it is the same brochure and we're just reissuing it. Morgart said that he can get the process started in USFWS if we want to go through that agency. For now we are going to try to go through AGFD (order approximately 5,000).

Regarding the Reward Poster – The wording and logos have been finalized. The price is “amazingly cheap” according to John Morgart. The USFWS is going to pay for those. A couple hundred of each variety (contact information on some of them are different depending on which state/reservation it is in) will be purchased. John Morgart said that they should be in hand quickly and he will check on that. Matt Wunder said NMDGF may get more money for the rewards. John Morgart said it would not be costly to change the posters – Maggie Dwire said the laminating can be expensive so best to catch the change before that point. Morgart said it was important to get this batch out and then change them later if need be.

**Action Item:** John Morgart will check on receipt of posters.

C. Roles and Responsibilities – Cathy Taylor edited the document.

Population SOP 27. Will get back to that.

Ranger riders – will discuss that tomorrow.

Special Use Permit USFS – will discuss tomorrow.

NMDGF concept statement – will get to that today.

NMDGF flights are going well – just working through some kinks. Matt Wunder said they are trying to get money to fix/replace the plane but isn't sure if that will come through.

Mike Godwin (AGFD) had worked on sculpting the annual work plan to be more realistic to what we can actually achieve and what is important. Monthly maps are going to become quarterly maps and the black and white map is now eliminated. Regular flight updates are still going to occur (e.g. contacting ranchers, sending out weekly locations, etc.).

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Aspen: could be a remaining uncollared pup, but no evidence to conclude this is the case.

Durango: no evidence of the pack remains

Paradise Pack: all depredations assigned to adults. Pack now has a clean slate regarding depredations, pending Oakleaf's official notification/designation. IFT will contact LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION REDACTION [REDACTED] to advise this is the case. Cathy Taylor asked if there is anything IFT can do to deter the pack from continuing to return to LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION REDACTION pastures. Shannon advised that LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION REDACTION is contacted by IFT as a matter of routine. Cathy Taylor also pointed out the Tuggle was to contact LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION REDACTION to explain the previous control action decision, and was not sure if that occurred. Terry noted that IFT should contact LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION REDACTION in an effort to get them looped into IFT updates.

Work Plan: discuss later today. Scoping Meetings also later today.

**Action Item:** Rabies vaccine - Arizona's plan should be provided to Directors to give them a heads-up on what is going on. Cagle will handle this on Thursday.

**D. Less-Than-Lethal-Projectiles Permits**

John Morgart handed out copies of the amended permit. Initially included soft rubber bullets, but solicitor had major issues with the "lethality" of rubber bullets. Paintball approach was preferred as less lethal compromise – proposed permit now built around this method/approach. Can start issuing permits to states based on document as presently worded (cracker shells, beanbags, paintballs).

John Morgart noted that USFWS can/will buy paintball equipment sets to equip the IFT for use under these permits. Dave Cagle expressed concern over effectiveness of rounds and equipment – we need to test them before we purchase large quantities. John also noted that some permittees have already expressed interest in using paintball equipment.

Terry Johnson advised that the USFWS decision does not obviate the need to handle the state permitting and administration processes. Other issues also remain regarding training and IFT administration on issuing equipment. AGFD referred to clarification memo that was submitted with the LTL proposal, which attempted to address these points. Morgart will look again at these points – he recalls that the intent was to provide flexibility through existing language to allow for these processes to be developed and integrated. Terry wants to make sure everything is in place, as there will be protests accompanying the implementation of LTL.

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Terry stated that AGFD does not agree with the USFWS determination that rubber bullets are excluded from LTL, but will go along with the implementation of the program as amended.

Matt Wunder stated that the Projectile Usage section refers to people having documented history of problems (at least twice before they can go to less than lethal) – and asked if this can be modified to be more proactive/flexible. Also need to know when the clock starts in terms of tracking “history” of interactions with wolves.

John Morgart stated that current language is structured in effort to minimize the controversy of the program, knowing that there will be strong opposition on some fronts. Data collection and program monitoring is key to going forward, and will be helpful in determining if the program can be made more flexible.

Terry Johnson noted that states will need to encourage people to go through training far enough in advance to make sure the program does not become too reactive, allowing documented incidents to accumulate (and then trigger their ability to use LTL) before any training is obtained.

Morgart stated USFWS is prepared and willing to provide paintball equipment but not bean bags. States will have to follow up on bean bag ammo, which will require some evaluation of ammo usage (guns that can handle rounds – any limitations?) and issuance process.

Demonstrated History: What is the standard or expectation? John Morgart said that states are best in position to make those determinations based on documented cases. Need to demonstrate need and validity, ultimately, as any activity under USFWS permit is subject to FOIA.

**Action Item:** AGFD will need to revise its document to be consistent with the permit provided by USFWS. So will NMDGF.

#### E. NMGFD – Concept Statement

Bruce and Matt reviewed comments submitted on the proposal, and the handout today is the product of that review. The purpose of this is to highlight issues that will promote greater adaptive management within the program and guide further development of actions that build more flexibility and proactivity into the effort.

Terry raised the point that Dr. Tuggle’s interdiction program has been agreed to by AMOC, and that this should be incorporated into any ongoing adaptive management processes. He also asked about non-federal funds and source of same for NMDGF. SWG was contemplated to be “new” money, but Matt was not certain on source of non-federal funds.

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**Action Item:** John Morgart will share document within USFWS to see if there are concerns with the proposal, as it relates to the projected funding aspects involving federal funds.

Matt and Renae stated that these are ideas designed to stimulate discussion with AMOC – not knowing what might ultimately be assigned to IFT members. Bruce feels some of these ideas need to be considered, and would like AMOC to evaluate potential opportunities.

IFT Outreach – discussion on how this responsibility is handled within the IFT and particularly the IFTL positions (e.g. NMGFD position versus Shawna Nelson’s existing position). Cathy Taylor stated that USFS position is anticipated to perform some outreach with permittees – also stated that until we get more people in IFT it is hard to consistently pursue proactive measures as outlined in concept statement. Vacancies and existing short-staffing make it hard for the IFTLs to assume too much outreach responsibilities – administrative and wolf management responsibilities currently demand bulk of IFTL time.

Wally noted that improving the IFT’s ability to do better in the field (staffing, resources, guidance, etc.) will result in many of the concept ideas being accomplished. NMGFD stated that implementation has not been thoroughly explored – ideas are more directed to stimulate thinking about how what we have done/currently do may be changed (e.g. less administration) to accomplish more in the field with those impacted by wolves. Example: Durango taking couple weeks with no success – manpower drain with bad results – point is that there has to be a better way for everyone.

John Rogner noted that there seems to be minimal expectation of reciprocity from permittees or other interested publics in making some of these ideas become more successful. There is ultimately a limit to what “government” can bring to the project, and that the interested “public” needs to share in some of the ongoing deployment of some of the adaptive management concepts.

Terry Johnson noted that complaints about the administrative “excess” have been raised before, but that no one has really provided clear alternatives, while still providing effective coordination and communication on how the program does business. Broader “buy-in” requires trust and he stated that he feels this does not exist now. John Morgart agreed with the points raised by Terry, noting example of Defenders and the lack of acceptance of its compensation program. Also noted that program has not lacked “high minded ideas” but the lack of clear understanding of how to produce meaningful deployment of ideas.

Matt Wunder stated that he is not convinced that more IFT staff is needed to address current issues, and is looking to new 10j developments/changes as an avenue to improving overall management effectiveness in New Mexico.

Terry Johnson sees even greater complexity if the 10j range expands, as it would require a greater universe of field coverage and outreach. Demands on all cooperating agencies would

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likely increase significantly; more wolves and more depredation/nuisance issues over a greater area. Terry also noted that AGFD is not comfortable waiting for 10j to evaluate management approaches or changes in same. Process and litigation may well push a new 10j back several years.

#### F. NMGFD Elk/Wolf Model

Matt Wunder stated that AZ elk data has been incorporated in NM model to perform range-wide analysis. NM feels this model is relatively accurate in reflecting reality on the ground. Purpose is to allow communication with public on potential impacts of wolves on elk populations. Broader discussions based on range-wide or Gila Wilderness impacts have generated public questions on impacts to specific game management units or areas that are of interest to them, but that the model was not intended to get into that level of detail.

Model does not address 25% impact threshold noted in wolf project EIS. Terry Johnson stressed that he feels both state agencies need to be able to determine the point at which this threshold is triggered so that accompanying/appropriate management actions can be pursued on wolf populations. Terry's point is if the 25% wolf mortality measure stays in the documentation, then the states will be obligated to defend it with the public.

AGFD intends to continue to coordinate with NMGFD on the ongoing improvement/use of this model in the interest of evaluating the relative impact of existing wolf populations upon AZ/NM elk populations.

#### G. SOPs 5.0, 6.0, 11.0 and 13.0

Handouts provided reflect comments received to date. Also provided were copies of email notes from Matt Wunder and Bruce Thompson.

Present to Directors on Thursday for decisions on how to proceed. Any proposed changes also ultimately subject to public review/input.

John Morgart feels AMOC needs to present draft language to Directors that clarifies SOPs, as group feels is necessary. Scoping meeting feedback will not be available for several months, and then will need to be assimilated. Directed to take a hard look at these 4 SOPs and AMOC should provide initial thoughts to them on Thursday. Finalize clarification memos at a minimum.

Shannon noted that she feels that AMOC has not had an opportunity yet to fully evaluate and discuss the comments that have been provided by AMOC. Terry Johnson agreed that AMOC has not yet fully evaluated and that these evaluations on the "substantive change" aspects must be completed within AMOC. Clarification memos are separate and different from review of substantive changes. He suggests that AMOC come to grips with proposed

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changes/comments that have been submitted thus far, and then present to Directors later and discuss public process that follows.

**Action Item:** Clarification memos to Directors on Thursday, and leave substantive changes for further AMOC review/discussion. Present final proposed changes to Directors at later meeting.

SOP 5.0:

Terry Johnson says we need to simplify the clarification language. Also take out modifiers like “legitimate,” etc. Under Rationale, drop sentence that refers to orientation of request because it singles out groups – leave it to agreeing to clarifications and not complicate it beyond that. Okay with leaving factual parts of rationale but avoid leaving out references to specific groups.

- Under Rationale: First sentence of first and second paragraphs removed, and remove all modifiers throughout.

- Simplify opening sentence –

Cathy Taylor captured edits from group on SOP 5.0 and SOP 6.0 (identical changes). SOP 11.0 same introduction as 5.0 and 6.0, specific edits to 3 clarification sentences.

SOP 11:

Matt Wunder asked about the documentation that accompanies a depredation determination by Incident Investigator. He wants to ensure that relevant information is available to Directors when control decisions are being made. IFT recommendation will include information from incident investigator determinations – NMGFD will need to determine if this is sufficient for their Director.

On #3, Terry suggested having the jurisdictional IFTL make the determination if enough evidence exists to assign depredation – this should address need for adequate/additional documentation raised by NMGFD. Morgart feels that entire IFT should be engaged in the assignment of depredations. John Oakleaf noted that this has been problematic in the past if they run into differences of opinion among Leaders. Shannon noted that jurisdictional IFTL having the determination responsibility will provide more ownership in the determination and the accompanying control decisions.

Wally Murphy stated that due diligence with documentation is an issue that requires attention. Also need to have agreement on the process on how IFT uses/assembles this documentation. Terry explained that either needs to be an IFT majority opinion or a

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jurisdictional IFTL determination that drives the depredation assignment process. Wally feels needs to be AMOC agreement on paperwork issue and process.

**Action Item:** Shannon, Renae, and Ellen will put together a template/form for compiling information that is used to make IFT determinations. IFT will incorporate these forms into process of compiling depredation incident determinations (from WS or other Incident investigators – via calls not final depredation incident reports).

Hector Ruedas asked why this is all necessary as it suggests trust issues within IFT. Terry explained and provided examples of how trust issues have surfaced in the past on control action recommendations.

Matt Wunder asked about the 24-hour turnaround requirement and the “rush to judgment” mode that currently seems to exist. Terry explained that this has been discussed in detail in the past and that it largely revolves around avoiding/mitigating the risk of incurring additional depredations (not postponing AMOC/Director review and decisions).

Terry asked the group what they think would be an appropriate timeframe for the IFT to get its recommendation together. From start to finish, currently working under 4-day turnaround. 48 hr for depredation determination, 24 for IFT recommendation, 24 for AMOC and 24 for decision on 3<sup>rd</sup> “strikes.” Provided language to Cathy that captures a 96 hour decision turnaround from time of depredation determination.

Shannon suggested a range with 24 to 72 hours for IFT. Dave Bergman said that ranchers will have major problem with this as they will assume it will become 72 – accordingly does not like having a range. Prefer setting a maximum then using this as a project target.

#4 added:

1. Incident investigator has 48 hours to respond to depredation call and provide verbal report on depredation to IFT Office.
2. Jurisdictional IFTL and FPC have 36 hours to present control recommendation to AMOC Chair. Jurisdictional IFTL or FPC (or designee) will contact AMOC Chair and surrogate upon receiving Incident Investigator Report. During this 36 hour timeframe, IFT will also determine lawful presence.
3. AMOC will have 12 hours to finalize recommendation with Directors and issue a PRO.

SOP 13:

Matt Wunder noted that NMGRFD would like to have SOP 13 clarified with some flexibility that will not demand action on wolves having 3 “strikes” – reserve the right/flexibility to

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evaluate 3 strike cases – full consideration of circumstances. Terry Johnson agreed to construct draft language on SOP 13 for the group to review tomorrow - relating to clarification #1 under SOP 13 on Matt's email.

Clarification #2 previously addressed under SOP 11 clarifications.

Clarification #3 addressed in clarifications presented to AMOC.

Clarification #4 on Matt's email relating to SOP 13 – PRO will be written during 12 hour period that AMOC/Directors are required to issue PRO. Matt Wunder asked for an AMOC recommendation summary as a key document for review by Directors. Terry will provide draft language on this point as well for discussion tomorrow.

#### H. PROs

Allan May summarized, using example of Aspen Pack, the significant departure from PROs that have been issued in the past. Confusing to WS personnel on level of authority (lethal OK or not?) with the language that was used in the Aspen PRO. Feels PROs should be very clear with the execution and intent of PROs and not create confusing, indirect orders.

Morgart explained that instructions were given to avoid using "lethal" in order. Direction came from Wally, who stated that Dr. Tuggle and Bruce Thompson came to agreement that lethal control was OK, but can't use words "lethal" and "permanent" in the PRO.

Morgart stated that, given the processing of this particular PRO through Directors, this is an item that should be discussed with the Directors on Thursday. Need to clarify the manner in which PROs are stated/worded – many AMOC members feel these should be very directly and clearly articulated, otherwise the trust will quickly diminish.

Allan May also pointed out the reference to netting/gunning takes fixed wing off the table for the order. Telling WS how to use their resources and manage the situation, which puts them in a very difficult situation (lead to additional depredations, potentially). This is another issue to raise with the Directors on Thursday.

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**December 12, 2007**

**A. AGFD Rabies Protocol.**

Dave Cagle reviewed the purpose and intent of AGFD's draft protocol, which will be implemented within the wolf program. Will present this protocol to Directors on Thursday, December 13 meeting.

**B. Wolf Tours – Cathy Taylor**

Sent out proposed guidelines for AMOC to review prior to the meeting. Cathy found some USFS memos regarding tours from several years ago – used these as a rough template for putting together the wolf proposal.

Commercial Tours: There is concern over involving IFT in private tours/businesses under any approved tour program. Terry Johnson noted that some AGFD WMs/Biologists will engage with fishing groups to provide educational talks during special events.

Cathy read the existing language in the proposal that relates to IFT involvement with tour groups. Shannon brought up potential work load issues with IFT if they are integrated into tours. Terry noted that limitations can be established in the protocol (e.g. 15 minutes/tour) which can be further conditioned upon staff availability (not a guarantee). Commercial tours would not be accommodated under the proposal, which would be strictly limited to educational tours. Terry asked how we would draw a clear and manageable distinction between commercial and educational tours. Some educational tours are money-makers.

Group also identified potential problem of immediate work priorities preventing IFT from being able to reasonably honor commitments that may have been made months earlier with tour groups.

Group raised questions/concerns over the use of telemetry as a part of organized tours. Universities, for one, have extensive telemetry experience and equipment available to them. Group also discussed the use of forest closures around den sites and the need/effectiveness of closures in managing public activity. Also questioned the need of limitations on howling during tours, or need for seasonal restrictions/closures under permitting system.

Ellen noted that, in her experience, wolves seem to have higher affinity to rendezvous sites and that they can be more important consideration than other areas frequented by wolves.

Cathy Taylor read through the existing language, with the group discussing proposed changes to the proposal. Cathy incorporated and read back language that will be integrated into an updated draft proposal. With all the provisions, limitations and restrictions outlined in the proposal, the group discussed the need to have a rationale supporting each of these

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elements and the overall framework of the permitting program – need to be prepared to address obvious questions that will be raised over why the program is the way it is.

Cathy stated that, according to AGFD's Dan Groebner (personal conversation), Prescott College has advised that they have a forest permit for a tour during April 2008, a period which would be in conflict under the existing permit language.

**Action Item:** Have IFT biologists provide input on recommended restrictions that are designed to provide reasonable protection to wolves, or otherwise mitigate wolf management issues. USFS will solicit input from guides/outfitters. Review at final proposal language later today after IFT incorporates draft language.

**Action Item:** April 2008 tour – Cathy Taylor will contact and advise the College of the potential of the permit being modified, based on whatever is finalized in the final draft permit.

#### C. NEPA Scoping

John Slown updated the group on the outcome of public meetings in AZ and NM. Said that the Albuquerque, NM meeting had the highest attendance and was the most active in terms of public “emotion” and feedback on the project. Good turnouts in Alamogordo, Las Cruces, and Flagstaff (Glenwood also had good turnout considering size of community). DJ Case is now consolidating written comments and working on grouping by category as much as possible – completing an analysis of all comments.

Next step is to complete analysis of comments to organize into major categories, and then frame alternatives around these major issues. This analysis will be shared with AMOC once completed, but will not be available in time for the January 2008 meeting.

Morgart thanked all who were involved in helping with the meetings. He stated that both sides of the issue/public were well represented and the meetings should generate useful input.

The group agreed to run the Open House video when providing an update to the Directors at tomorrow's meeting.

#### D. IFT Update

John Oakleaf provided the 2007 project summary handouts to the group and gave a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted information outlined on the handout. The presentation also summarized status/location of packs in AZ and NM. The group discussed various questions relating to information provided in the update. AMOC agreed that the Directors should be provided the presentation at tomorrow's meeting.

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E. 1008/1028 Translocation Recommendation

Shannon Barber-Meyer provided a summary of the IFT recommendations. 1028 was removed from Alpine, AZ – was injured at capture, and later treated by a vet and put into captivity. Paired with 1008 in captivity and proposed for release at Home Creek in AZ. Shannon reviewed rationale for this site, as outlined in the recommendation (handout).

Questions asked about the public meeting in Alpine. Shannon said that **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** was the only person that raised concerns/comments specific to the proposed translocation, stating concerns about potential impacts to the associated cattle allotment (wolves/cattle being in the area at the same time). Shannon stated that this would be the case for all of the potential sites reviewed by the IFT. Shannon said that a total of 4 people showed up to the Alpine meeting, and that the majority of other comments were much more general, framed in the context of opposition to the wolf project.

**Action Item:** Shannon agreed to change the wording in order to respond to Terry Johnson's question regarding the genetics information outlined in the recommendation.

Question: how many more translocations are planned for 2008? Shannon said this is the only translocation for now – only pair available at this time. Also stated that release proposal is presently in place for AZ, but this is the only translocation proposal at this time.

Additional question on why more translocations are not being considered. IFT response was that the only option would really involve releasing naïve pups sometime during 2008.

Question was also raised about potential of bringing successful AZ wild wolves into captivity, paired and then translocated back into wild. IFT response was that captive facilities cannot presently accommodate this, and that the notion of handling “successful” established wolves in this way would run counter to the idea of establishing wild packs, and would not be recommended - too risky and counterproductive (Shannon). Better to promote dispersion of wild wolves/ populations.

Maggie Dwire stated that captive facility is completely full at this time – Aspen filled up all remaining space. Ladder and Sevilleta are not currently in a position to accommodate any field activities that will involve bringing wolves into captivity from wild. She stated that they have reviewed management alternatives internally (USFWS) on managing captive facilities under these current conditions. Alternatives discussed have included euthanizing captive wolves, building more pens, implementing lethal control orders only, etc. – no formal decisions or direction at this time.

Dave Cagle solicited motion from AMOC on the proposed translocation, as recommended by IFT – Home Creek location spring (April/May 2008).

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**Discussion:** Cathy Taylor stated that **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** cattle will come in after that (May 16). WS noted desire to have the wolves have time to adapt to area (prey base) before cattle are cycled into the allotment. Also noted the need to use more soft release mechanisms to promote quicker access to the area. Translocation is targeted to coincide as closely as possible to whelping, so dates will run up against **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** planned entry date.

Consensus among AMOC on the recommended translocation – by vote of members (USFWS, AGFD, NMGFD, USFS, USDA-WS).

- Cathy Taylor will check to see if alternative dates or pastures can be provided to **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** in order to avoid overlapping with translocation – coordinate as needed with **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** and District.
- IFT will notify surrounding permittees of the translocation (**NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION**, etc.), according to usual procedures.
- Greenlee County and WS would like every prudent effort being taken to address concerns raised by **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** (minimize impacts to cattle operation).
- Carry forward to Directors tomorrow. If Directors do not approve Home Creek recommendation, then propose Miller Springs as alternative translocation site.

#### F. Initial Releases IFT Recommendation – 2008

Dave Cagle handed out a recommendation for group to read. Dave will need to change the reference to “IFT population goals” – should be “project” instead of “IFT.”

Dave Bergman asked about timing of the proposed release. IFT responded that this release is recommended to take place immediately (within established public notification requirements – 30 days minimum). Also asked if public meetings have been held and response was no (waiting for approval before meetings scheduled/held). Shannon stated that people who attended the last Alpine translocation meeting (4 people) expressed the view that they would prefer no further meetings (tired of these public meetings), as they are opposed to the program and their comments/input are not being addressed through accompanying decisions.

Point also raised questions about how IFT determines location of public meetings. Need to consider the people that will be impacted the most by the proposed site when scheduling location of the meetings.

Kay Gale stated that she feels that Alternative 2 is best based on concerns that were raised earlier by IFT about the time/staff demands associated with initial releases. Shannon responded with clarification to this earlier statement that those comments were associated in relation to initial release of an entire pack, where this recommendation is tied to an individual wolf (not as demanding as an entire pack). AGFD also clarified that new technicians start

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next week and staffing shortages will not be a factor at the time this release is planned. Greenlee County emphasized they want to ensure that IFT staffing is adequate and prepared to address any problems that may stem from the proposed release.

Dave Bergman asked what target release date would be – if mid January, would this timing conflict with end-of-year count activity. John Oakleaf responded that it would be a manageable situation given existing timelines and schedules. Group also discussed status of breeding pairs and ongoing efforts to determine end of year population count.

Morgart stated support for moving forward with the IFT release, as recommended by IFT. Cathy Taylor also voiced support for the proposal. No questions from New Mexico.

Dave Cagle called for a vote on Alternative 1. NMDGF, USFS, USFWS, and AGFD supported Alternative 1 recommendation from IFT – Home Creek release of one wolf in January 2008. Release will take place after all applicable public notifications have been completed.

- Wildlife Services voted against, based on concern over IFT having the ability to handle the release and having the time to go through the public meeting/notice process – feel like rushing the action. Also concerned about not knowing what the end-of-year number and ability of IFT to get that information given staff shortages/issues that IFT has been contending with (this year's count not having resources that last year's count had) – current efforts should be focused on getting end-of-year count and not on working through initial releases at the expense of end-of-year counts.
- Wildlife Services voted in favor of Alternative 2 – no initial releases.

Dave Cagle raised the point of what AMOC's response will be to potential question from Directors on why NM is not being considered for translocations. Maggie Dwire responded that available wolves are not sexually mature and, thus, limit options.

Bud Starnes raised questions about what is being done within USFWS to address the capacity/management problem the captive facility is now working under. He feels the USFWS should be making decisions and taking management actions in an expeditious manner to fix this problem – extended group discussion on this point. Bud stressed the point that the agencies need to be decisive and clear about how these management issues are being addressed, otherwise we risk losing credibility with the public through time. This can create a negative drain on the success of the overall reintroduction project.

Starnes suggested that a subcommittee should be established to develop recommendations on addressing the management problems associated with the captive facility and the shift in philosophy in having wolf management decisions being influenced by captive facility issues.

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Morgart suggested that this point be raised with Directors in December 13 meeting. Dave Cagle said he will add to tomorrow's agenda.

#### J. Media Access to Field Project

Morgart explained that the SOP had input from all the agency PIO-type folks – only one comment received, from AGFD PIO.

Dave Bergman proposed that SOP go out after NEPA scoping is completed (end of December) – allow two weeks for public comment and then review at next AMOC meeting in January 2008. AMOC will need to approve a draft SOP at this meeting.

Terry raised concern that the public will be expecting a 30-day comment period on the SOP. Discussion that this would then result in AMOC review being postponed to April 2008 meeting.

AMOC consensus: After Director review/approval of draft SOP 25.0 (Thursday meeting after agreed-upon changes being made by Cathy Taylor),

1. Send out Director-approved draft SOP 25.0 during first week of January 2008 for public comment;
2. Put SOP 25.0 on agenda for January AMOC/AMWG meeting for final review and comment;
3. AMOC approve/finalize at February 2008 conference call, based on due consideration/review of all public comment submitted on the SOP 25.0.

#### K. Population Monitoring of Mexican Wolves SOP 27.0

Question: How does the proposed methodology compare with the current methodology?  
Answer: IFT response was that it is comparable – consistent with existing approaches.

Another question was raised regarding the language under “End-of-Winter Population Minimum Count” on confidence intervals. Shannon responded that this language was included based on previous AMOC direction to make/clarify determinations on this point. Dave Cagle captured comments on proposed edits to this section of the SOP.

Also need to clarify language relating to wolf mortalities during game hunting seasons – current language implies that hunters are causing the mortalities. AMOC feels this language should be modified so this inference is not conveyed through the SOP. Agreed to change to “natural or human caused mortality” in this section of the SOP.

**Action Item:** Dave Cagle will incorporate edits into draft SOP and will provide copies to AMOC for final review.

- January 15-February 15 – put out for public comment (same schedule as SOP 25).

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- Terry noted that the SOP should note the people/experts that have reviewed and commented on this SOP. John Oakleaf will get revised draft from Cagle next week and John Oakleaf will check with the reviewers to get their agreement on noting their contributions to the SOP.

#### L. SOP 27.0 – Monitoring Mexican Wolf Populations

Will be handled in the same way as the review process for SOP 25 after Oakleaf confirms it is okay to use the names of the reviewers in the document along with a disclaimer that indicates the reviewers are not responsible for the final content.

#### M. Budget Summary

Terry's address needs to be changed on the budget summary. Bergman also found an error on note 6 – Gila Nation. Terry also found an error re: fiscal year 07 contact numbers. Terry will fix the errors.

#### N. 2008 Annual Work Plan (IFT)

Dave Cagle explained the work completed by Shannon and Mike Godwin (AGFD TDA) in reviewing the IFT work plan to evaluate completeness and accuracy of work plan. An additional column was added to the AGFD working version to identify areas where additional resources would be needed in order for the IFT to be able to address the work plan element.

As presently exist, AGFD version of work plan is completed but other agency elements have not been incorporated. Terry raised point that we will not be able to review complete work plan with Directors tomorrow if that is the case. Presently lacking overall IFT view of work plan priorities and needs due to lack of involvement from all IFT members. Terry said this is inexcusable, given the priority assigned to the task by the Directors in August.

Oakleaf noted that the "revised" template, based on update AGFD completed, was sent out to IFT Leaders with request for their separate work plans. **TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION**. Oakleaf apologized for not getting the job done.

Terry stated it was not Oakleaf's responsibility to do all the work himself. The underlying issue here is once again a shortage of staff resources in the IFT and unilateral decisions by agencies to reset agreed-upon priorities and change agreed-upon formats. Agencies are not providing temporary assistance when their IFT staff members are on leave, fully obligated, or diverted to other activities. We needed this FTE allocation table so we could affirm whether or not such shortages exist, given all the priorities that exist, before the Directors will act on this issue. When are we going to get it done?

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Morgart noted that we will need to explain to Directors why we don't have a comprehensive work plan to present/discuss with them. USFWS does not have their work plan. Oakleaf said he has AZ and NM plans on his computer and can build a USFWS work plan for tomorrow's meeting, based on these templates (Morgart will assist).

Terry stated that he wants to make sure the staff work is completed and done well before discussing the product with the Directors – we will not be able to have the critical discussion on what the needs/shortages are, which is what the Directors must have. Throwing something together tonight precludes the opportunity for AMOC review and revision, and would result in the Directors doing the staff work that we should be doing.

Terry stated that AMOC needs to advise Directors tomorrow on how we have handled this, and what we propose to address/finalize the work plan. Also must resolve the issue of incorporating and consolidating budgets.

**Action Item:** IFT will complete a consolidated work plan for submittal to AMOC by December 31, 2007. John Oakleaf will coordinate with IFTLs to complete the work plan by deadline, using the standard work plan format (delete the one column that was added under AGFD's recent version). AMOC will review and discuss at next AMOC conference call (January 9, 2007). Oakleaf will coordinate with IFTLs in establishing/ranking work plan priorities.

#### O. Roles and Responsibilities

Dave Cagle provided a handout reflecting all agency/cooperator edits and comments submitted to date.

Question asked on how/if the R&R document is tied to the MOU. Terry asked if anyone that provided comments is comfortable that they are consistent with the MOU – point is that it must be consistent with the MOU.

**Action Item:** AMOC has until the end of December 2007 to review and provide comments to Terry Johnson.

- Terry will go through the final draft to verify consistency with the MOU.
- The final product will be placed on the January 2008 AMOC meeting agenda for final review/approval.
- AMOC members/cooperators need to verify that their comments or proposed edits are consistent with the MOU, before sending on to Terry.

#### P. Other Action Items:

**Action Item:** Clarification memos for all four SOPs (5.0, 6.0, 11.0, 13.0) will be reviewed with the Directors at the December 13 meeting. Once approved, Terry Johnson will then

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work with Bruce Sitko to post final versions and distribute final revised copies of SOPs to AMOC/IFT, as appropriate.

Cathy Taylor recorded corrections to final draft of all SOPs, as noted by the group in reviewing the provided handouts. Revised copies will be reviewed with Directors at December 13 meeting.

John Morgart provided a handout having proposed language to address the comment from Bruce Thompson relating to SOP 13 (comments #1 and #4 discussed in Wednesday's AMOC meeting). John reviewed the proposed language with the group, noting that it is extensive but necessary given the nature of the issue.

On the response to SOP 13 #1, Terry will provide draft language to Morgart, who will work with Cathy to incorporate edits into the SOP 13 clarification memo that will be presented to Directors at December 13 meeting.

On the response to SOP 13 #4, Morgart will incorporate edits, provided by the group stemming from meeting review/discussion, into the draft and will coordinate with Cathy to produce final draft for presentation to Directors at December 13 meeting.

IFT Depredation Incident Checklist (draft) was handed out for review/discussion. Dave Bergman stated that WS does not provide estimated weights.

#### **Action Items:**

- IFT will change name of document to "IFT Checklist for Assigning Depredation Incidents (confirmed wolf kills)," so the purpose and use of this form are clearly understood by all who see it.
- Other modifications noted by IFT and AMOC members will be incorporated into the final version. Cathy will produce updated draft for review by Directors at December 13 meeting. Will be provided to Directors with clarification memos.
- Group agreed that the jurisdictional IFT Leader will complete these forms via direct conversation/coordination with the incident investigator, and that the jurisdictional IFTL will also sign the form upon completion.

Group discussion over the present form requiring input from various IFT members on the depredation assignments – specifically as it relates to recording opinions/positions from various IFT members that may reveal disagreements over the final determination of assigning depredation incidents. Group expressed concern that these will become public documents and that would reflect disagreement among IFT members over how "strikes" are being assigned. IFT responded that those public records already exist through emails and other documents (e.g. recommendations to AMOC) that are produced in response to depredation incidents that require control-action recommendations.

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Group agreed that the jurisdictional IFTL will complete these forms via conversation and coordination with the Incident Investigator, and that the jurisdictional IFTL will also sign the form upon completion.

Range Rider Proposal

Dave Cagle feels the proposal needs more work and clarification before it's ready for AMOC review. Asked if AMOC wanted to review at January AMOC meeting – no strong response either way.

Terry pointed out that reference to “DOW” should be changed to “Defenders,” and that we be consistent on that point in documents. Terry also strongly urged that AMOC members discuss the idea/proposal with their Directors before AMOC reviews again. Specific attention needs to be given to administrative and funding issues associated with this concept.

**Action Item:** AMOC members to review and discuss with their Directors. Updated proposal will be placed on January 2008 AMOC meeting agenda.

USFS Special use Permit (Ecotourism Relating to Wolves)

Terry Johnson questioned whether, if these kinds of activities are “harmful” during the denning season, they should be allowed during the rendezvous season. Where are the data showing impacts?

IFT provided details on the start/stop dates or seasonal restrictions, provided by IFT members present at the meeting, that are recommended to be incorporated into the SUP. Primary concern of IFT (Ellen) is risk of habituating wolves to people that may frequent rendezvous site as a part of tour activity. Best approach to addressing this risk, though not perfect, is to incorporate seasonal restrictions during periods when wolves (especially pups) will be most active around these sites.

AZ archery hunts typically begin late August, which may serve as a convenient timeframe that the SUP seasonal restrictions can incorporate to achieve consistency/convenience as it relates to other recreational activities tied to hunting.

Cathy Taylor read aloud the revised language that she has incorporated into the draft SUP document. Group provided revisions/edits as she proceeded through the entire draft document.

AMOC unanimously agreed that AMOC members discuss the proposal with their Directors, if they have not already done so. AMOC members will then report findings/comments from these Director discussions at the January 2008 AMOC meeting.

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Scat Analysis Study

Morgart provided a handout on the study for general FYI. No discussion.

Q. December 13th Directors Meeting Agenda

Dave Cagle recorded edits to the draft agenda.

Need to provide updated handouts and presentations, as discussed during today's meeting.

SOP 25 and 27 will not be presented to Directors – AMOC members will follow up with their Directors when they address the other items that have been so noted during today's discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.