

Mexican Wolf Interagency Directors Meeting
Final: Summary Notes
(This was not a Public Meeting)

Date/Time: 8 am to 1:30 pm, December 17, 2004

Location: USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services, 8836 North 23rd Avenue, Suite B-2, Phoenix AZ
85021

Purpose: Provide an opportunity for state, federal, and tribal leaders to meet with the members of the Interagency Field Team and government members of AMOC and AMWG to exchange views and discuss issues pertaining to Mexican wolf reintroduction in Arizona-New Mexico, including working relationships, communication, decision-making, and responsibilities relative to the reintroduction effort in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area and the relationship this effort has to overall wolf recovery.

Invited Participants: See list at end of document.

Attendees:

AMOC:	AGFD: Terry Johnson, Bill Van Pelt; NMDGF: Chuck Hayes, Lisa Kirkpatrick; USFS: Wally Murphy; USFWS: Colleen Buchanan, John Morgart; WS: David Bergman, Alex Lara
AMWG	<u>Counties:</u> Greenlee: Hector Ruedas, Kay Gale; <u>Agencies:</u> NMDA: Bud Starnes; <u>Tribes:</u> SCAT: Steve Titla
IFT:	AGFD: Dan Groebner, Shawna Nelson, Shawn Farry; NMDGF: Nick Smith; TESH: Melissa Woolf; USFWS: John Oakleaf, Dan Stark; WMAT: Krista Beazely, Deon Hinton; WS: J. Brad Miller, Richard Grabbe
AGFD:	Duane Shroufe, Jon Cooley, Deb O'Neill
NMDGF:	Bruce Thompson, Jennifer Montoya
USDA FS:	Harv Forsgren, Don DeLorenzo
USDA WS:	Mike Worthen, Keel Price, Chris Carillo
USFWS:	Dale Hall, Larry Bell, Susan MacMullin, Doug McKenna, Maggie Dwire, Victoria Fox

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions. David Bergman handled the welcome, meeting logistics, and the around-the-room introductions. Terry Johnson (AMOC/AMWG Chair) advised that Hector Ruedas is in town today, but cannot be present here due to the onset of illness last night (Kay Gale will keep in touch with Hector through the meeting via cell phone). Johnson also thanked all cooperators for their efforts and for attendance today.
2. Opening Remarks by Lead Agency Directors. Each Lead Agency Director present congratulated AMOC, AMWG Cooperators, and the IFT for the progress made since the

previous Directors meeting, on September 1. SOPs have been needed for a long time, and they will serve the Project and the public very well.

3. Opening Remarks by AMWG Cooperators. Steve Titla reminded all present of the need to communicate with and provide funding to SCAT for wolf management. That will help build trust that is missing now. Bud Starnes reminded all present that the only way wolf recovery and reintroduction will work is for ranchers to be compensated for the economic impacts of wolves – ranchers do not think the Defenders of Wildlife compensation program works because ranchers prefer not to work with Defenders, the burden of proof is disproportionate on the rancher, and there is an un-quantified level of unaccounted loss (in part due to topography, difficulty of access, etc.). [Note: WMAT pointed out afterward that, in contrast to the perspective above, its experience with the Defenders compensation program has been positive.]
4. Miscellaneous:
 - a. Hand-outs (no discussion): Three-tiered Framework; 2002 AZ-NM-USFWS Guidance; 2003 MOU; Adaptive Management Description. Johnson advised that copies of these “foundational” documents have been provided previously several times in hard copy and electronic format to all present, but additional copies are available today if needed for any reason.
 - b. Review of AMOC Standard Operating Procedures. Johnson introduced the subject and summarized the development process, acknowledging the hard work by AMOC and IFT members. AMWG Cooperators were afforded opportunities to comment on the various drafts, and AMOC consensus has already been achieved on all SOPs except SOP 2 (approval reserved for the Lead Agency Directors) and SOP 13 (which is still being drafted, by mutual agreement within AMOC).
 - i. SOP 0.0 – Table of Contents. Discussion: Terry Johnson noted inclusion of the list of abbreviations and the related “key contacts” information. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
 - ii. SOP 1.0 – Purpose and Content of SOPS. Discussion: Continue to work toward elimination of redundancy among the SOPs, except where redundancy is needed. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
 - iii. SOP 2.0 – Writing and Approving SOPs. Discussion: Clarify that anyone can suggest a new or revision of an existing SOP, including Agency Directors. Also, clarify that AMOC is responsible for ensuring communication with all interested and affected parties on SOPs, and for ensuring that copies of SOPs are available as needed. With these changes, the Directors approved SOP 2.0.
 - iv. SOP 3.0 – Outreach Presentations. Discussion: Continue developing this SOP to ensure it is clear that: the Project is fully committed to comprehensive, effective outreach; guidelines are helpful but whatever needs to be done to ensure effective outreach will be done; other Project

documents complement and support this SOP. Also, merge the news release “matrix” into the Appendixes. Larry Bell and Victoria Fox will work with AMOC and the IFT to refine the Project’s Outreach Plan over the next 60 days. Larry and Victoria will also explore whether the Southwest Strategies outreach committee can assist in some way. No other questions, comments, or concerns.

- v. SOP 4.0 – Monthly Project Update. Discussion: The Project needs to ensure that hard copy and/or direct contact needs of critical customers (i.e. those without Internet access) are met as fully as possible. Both States need to ensure that the mass media (e.g. radio) are being used effectively to deliver Project news. The IFT will add the Blue Post Office to the list of outlets receiving the Project’s Monthly Update. Terry Johnson will add the USFWS website to the Background section of the SOP. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
- vi. SOP 5.0 – Initial Wolf Releases. Discussion: Dale Hall wanted to know that everyone is on the same page with “genetics” (i.e. that every wolf released is expendable). All agreed. Harv Forsgren asked that this understanding be made more explicit in this SOP. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
- vii. SOP 6.0 – Wolf Translocations. Discussion: No questions, comments, or concerns.
- viii. SOP 7.0 – Temporary Closures for Wolves. Discussion: Bruce Thompson questioned whether recent events were considered in developing this SOP. Terry Johnson assured him they were (e.g. Aspen Pack), and the drafts were modified as appropriate to reflect what we learned from the events. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
- ix. SOP 8.0 – Supplemental Feeding and Monitoring. Discussion: Dale Hall asked what the normal period is for wolves to use supplemental food. John Oakleaf said it is about two months. Dan Groebner added that some initial releases have started killing native prey within two weeks. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
- x. SOP 9.0 – Road Kill Salvage. Add as an Appendix AGFD’s new form on road kill salvage. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
- xi. SOP 10.0 – Incident Reporting by Other Agencies. Discussion: This SOP might serve well as an Appendix to the Outreach Plan. Ensure that phone numbers are in concert with the Key Contacts list. Bruce Thompson asked how this SOP squares with reaching the ranching community. Bud Starnes replied it works well for now. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
- xii. SOP 11.0 – Depredation of Domestic Livestock and Pets. Discussion: Jennifer Montoya asked whether this SOP had been used to address the recent hunting dog issue in New Mexico. Colleen Buchanan and Larry Bell said it was not used; that issue was dealt with on the fly. No other questions, comments, or concerns.

- xiii. SOP 12.0 – Mortality and Injury Response. Discussion: No questions, comments, or concerns.
- xiv. SOP 13.0 – Control of Mexican Wolves. Discussion:
 - 1. John Morgart advised that AMOC needs to discuss this SOP at least once more, and the USFWS Solicitor should probably be asked to review the final draft to ensure that authority has been appropriately delegated (or retained).
 - 2. Terms such as “nuisance,” “control,” and “take” should be defined in the Background section.
 - 3. Is the process sufficiently clear? Does it make sense? Is genetic importance addressed well enough?
 - a. Directors: We want to recognize individual importance in terms of genetics, but if it comes down to it, every “10j” wolf is expendable and lethal control is appropriate when necessary. It’s OK to put forth a little extra effort on trapping, but take the wolf out if necessary.
 - b. Terry Johnson: Genetic importance should be identified when the animal is first released. We will revise SOP 5.0 to ensure that it complements SOP 13.0 on this issue.
 - 4. This SOP would have helped us reach a decision on 574 faster.
 - 5. Terry Johnson: AMOC needs to discuss whether the incidents of one wolf are rolled up to the entire pack. The SOP as crafted does not adequately address that aspect, nor does it adequately address chronic vs. nuisance problems.
 - 6. Duane Shroufe: The term “a little more effort” is problematic. We must have clear thresholds and timeframes. Be specific.
 - 7. Harv Forsgren: This SOP has high potential to be driven by differing values – thus the need for clear “thresholds” or criteria that trigger control actions. We need to limit the potential for personal interpretation. The Directors need to review this SOP again after AMOC revises it, and SOP 5.0 must also clearly acknowledge the genetics/lethal take issue.
 - 8. Genetically important wolves should always be collared.
 - 9. This SOP cannot be ambiguous. Spell it out.
 - 10. Chuck Hayes: This could be either too loose or too restrictive, depending on specific circumstances. If the trigger for moving to the next level is simply a length of time, we might not sufficiently case-specific “extenuating” circumstances (i.e. 14 days could pass without weather allowing trapping on any or all of those days). Alternatively, perhaps something happens that causes us to want to move to the next level sooner than the maximum number of days allowed. Decisions on when to change on-the-ground actions should reflect wolf behavior/responses, not just a pre-determined timeframe.

11. Bruce Thompson: The purpose of this SOP is to reduce conflicts on the ground, and to make decisions at the lowest possible level. [All present agreed with that statement]. Why have a day limit? Make decisions based on circumstances, including social tolerance such as when a landowner accepts a wolf's presence. Let the IFT manage and follow guidelines until there is a trigger to get AMOC involved.
12. It's difficult to inject flexibility without triggering inconsistency and disagreement.
13. Dan Groebner: We might need to integrate other considerations, such as chronic situations becoming an unacceptable drain on IFT resources.
14. Harv Forsgren: Although I recognize there are differences among communities, I am uncomfortable with including subjective consideration of social tolerance in control decisions.
15. Bruce Thompson: This SOP is intended to provide for timely resolution. Deal with wolf actions as opposed to time. That's how you incorporate the social aspect.
16. Larry Bell: We have to react to what the wolves are doing.
17. Terry Johnson: AMOC has tried to build in flexibility for the IFT in the early stages – nuisance and 1st or 2nd depredation problem wolves. Much of today's discussion is focused on the post-3rd depredation aspect. This is where we must be very clear about what we will do, when, and why, and we must then be timely and aggressive in our actions. We must live up to our commitment to manage individual wolves and packs as necessary for the good of the population, or we will never have credibility with the public.
18. Bruce Thompson: AMOC needs to look at the nuisance thresholds again. Invoking rates (e.g. >3 times in 7 days) will weaken this SOP. We need discrete numbers (e.g. 3 incidents) if we are going to invoke numerical standards.
19. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
- xv. SOP 14.0 – Trap Preparation and Use. Discussion: Dale Hall remarked that this one is Wildlife Service's call; if they are OK with it then USFWS is OK with it. Mike Worthen and David Bergman said Wildlife Services is OK with it. Concerns on earlier drafts have been resolved. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
- xvi. SOP 15.0 – Helicopter Capture and Aerial Gunning. Discussion: Harv Forsgren, Don DeLorenzo, and Wally Murphy – USFS needs to be in the contact loop when coordinating on air traffic. Landing in "wilderness" is not an instantaneous approval situation. Murphy will get change language to Terry Johnson by December 22. The changes will also address BLM wilderness. Overall, the need to communicate here is the same as for SOP

- 3.0 – all appropriate agencies and other entities (e.g. private landowners) must be covered. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
- xvii. SOP 16.0 – Howling Surveys. Discussion: No questions, comments, or concerns.
 - xviii. SOP 17.0 – Ground Telemetry. Discussion: Is land usage addressed here? No. Mike Worthen asked whether there is a standard for the number of wolves collared in each pack? Collars make it much easier for Wildlife Services to handle problem situations. John Oakleaf replied there is no standard. Dale Hall asked whether the Project needs an interim standard before the Recovery Plan is completed. Dan Groebner said the collaring issue is addressed in the Annual Work Plan. Oakleaf said the IFT tries to ensure that each pack has at least two collared wolves, but that is sometimes difficult to maintain. Un-collared packs form occasionally. Terry Johnson said the IFT will ponder this over the next few weeks, and bring a proposed standard to AMOC at the January 27 meeting. Meanwhile, Johnson will integrate reference of the Annual Work Plan into this SOP. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
 - xix. SOP 18.0 – Aerial Telemetry. Discussion: USFS raised the same issues as on SOP 15.0. Terry Johnson will make the same changes as for SOP 15.0, incorporate language addressing openings of hunt seasons in both States (and on WMAT lands), and vet the final SOP with the AGFD Pilot. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
 - xx. SOP 19.0 – Intensive Winter Wolf Monitoring and Ungulate Mortality Collection. Discussion: Harv Forsgren said this SOP is partially redundant to other SOPs, and that is not consistent with our preferred approach. Bruce Thompson asked, and in reply was advised that the standard UTM Datum for the Project is Zone 12 NAD 27 (although the far western portion of the BRWRA is in Zone 13). Terry Johnson will make the relevant changes. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
 - xxi. SOP 20.0 – Requirements for Pharmaceutical Storage, Handling, and Record Keeping. Discussion: Strict compliance is essential and mandatory – by law, there is zero tolerance for non-compliance. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
 - xxii. SOP 21.0 – Handling, Immobilizing, and Processing Live Mexican Wolves. Discussion: Same compliance comments as for SOP 20.0. Duane Shroufe advised it is essential that all employees (especially but not only the IFT) understand that risks are not to be taken in this area. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
 - xxiii. SOP 22.0 – Chemical Darting. Discussion: Same compliance comments as for SOP 20.0. No other questions, comments, or concerns.
 - xxiv. SOP 23.0 – Blood Collection, Handling, and Storage. Same compliance comments as for SOP 20.0. No other questions, comments, or concerns.

- c. AMOC Compensation Program Analysis. David Bergman, as Subcommittee Chair, noted that Federal law precludes the Federal agencies from initiating development of legislation, so the Counties have been carrying the ball on this task. He asked Bud Starnes to bring everyone up to speed.
 - i. Bud replied that the Counties in AZ and NM have been discussing the need for improved compensation with congressional staff. The concept is to develop something that would tie into existing programs. A key (but unidentified) Congressman has asked whether the Directors or AMOC would testify on behalf of such a package.
 - ii. Terry Johnson said that AMOC intent had been for the Subcommittee to put together concepts and provide them by December 1, so the Directors would not be caught cold. They cannot agree with or endorse something they have not seen.
 - iii. Bruce Thompson asked what the Counties and ranchers would provide in return for compensation? More wolf tolerance?
 - iv. Bud Starnes said they would accept the program if compensation were addressed satisfactorily.
 - v. Harv Forsgren, Mike Worthen, and Dale Hall said that on legislation, endorsement is at the Secretary or the Department level, and strict protocols guide how to solicit and provide that. But, it all starts with a better understanding of what is on the table, so a written description of what is being considered is essential. Even with that, it would take a while to clear advisory participation or endorsement through the appropriate channels.
 - vi. Terry Johnson asked that the Subcommittee draft something in writing for discussion at the January AMOC meeting.
 - vii. Bruce Thompson noted that an adequate compensation program would certainly help if the 10j boundaries are to be changed.
- d. Update on Five-Year Review and NM Game Commission Direction
 - i. Colleen Buchanan advised that the Five-Year Review documents were distributed recently, on or ahead of schedule. The public comment period runs through March 15. AMWG will meet four times in January to provide opportunities for the public to ask questions about the review, so they can be better informed on what they might want to comment about. The meetings will be in Truth or Consequences NM (January 26, 6-9 pm), Glenwood NM (January 27, 6-9 pm), Alpine AZ (January 28, 6-9 pm), and Phoenix AZ (January 29, 6-9 pm).
 - ii. The NM Game Commission discussed the Project this month, as scheduled, and looks forward to further discussion as the Recovery Plan is drafted, the Five-Year Review is completed, and adaptive management of the Project continues to develop.

- e. Update on Recovery Team/Plan. The Team is meeting regularly. Progress is being made on defining recovery, outlining public participation elements, and developing a draft for release to the public perhaps as early as next Summer.
- f. Update on 2005 Budgets, Work Plans. Terry Johnson advised that work on these subjects is much needed. The October discussion dates slipped, as attention was focused on developing the SOPs and the Five-Year Review. AMOC and the IFT will pick these up again for the January meeting, and complete them then or at worst by or at the April meeting.
- g. Discussion of Possible IFT Field Office Relocation. Wally Murphy provided cost and availability information on USFS site evaluations (Luna and Alpine), and IFT recommendations for office space. Harv Forsgren said USFS could handle most if not all the site preparation costs, and perhaps even much of the cost of moving available modular building to the site. However, help is needed for purchasing modular units or in identifying suitable surplus units. Terry Johnson said the estimated cost of a new modular is \$150,000 to \$200,000, and that any modular used must meet the appropriate snow-loading standard. Dale Hall will look into availability of modulars in Florida that USFWS Refuges have used post-hurricanes.
- h. Update on 2004 Annual Reports: IFT and Recovery Program.
 - i. John Oakleaf affirmed that the IFT will have the 2004 Annual Report completed by February 15, as scheduled,
 - ii. No comment was offered (at least none was noted) as to when USFWS will complete the 2004 Recovery Program Annual Report, portions of which are excerpted from the IFT Annual Report.
- i. Update on Role and Function Statement. Terry Johnson advised that AMOC work on this document has been backburnered in deference to focusing on the SOPs and the Five-Year Review. AMOC will pick this up again at the January meeting, and complete it by or at the April meeting.
- j. Review of Communication and Adaptive Management: are they working better?
 - i. All Directors present agreed that communication and adaptive management are working better (“keep it up”), and more progress is needed to smooth out the remaining rough spots.
 - ii. The Directors agreed that a mid-summer meeting is desired, and they would prefer it to be in the High Country so they can see wolf habitat and on-the-ground management. Terry Johnson suggested a camp-out meeting somewhere like AGFD’s PS Ranch property. All present agreed. AMOC will discuss this at its January meeting, and make the necessary arrangements for an August meeting.

- k. Dates and Locations of Upcoming AMOC/AMWG Meetings. Terry Johnson reviewed dates and locations through October 2005. The details are included in the final Summary Notes for the October 2004 AMOC and AMWG meetings.
5. Open Q&A and Discussion.
 - a. Terry Johnson advised the Directors of the January 22, 2005 AGFD Commission Awards Banquet, at which County and Tribal Project partners will be recognized for their effort to represent their constituencies in wolf reintroduction. Johnson will email details on the event to all present today.
 - b. Dan Groebner advised that AGFD's I&E Staff are looking for photos of the Project (field, meetings, people) to use in a presentation at the Awards Ceremony, in addition to the logos that Terry Johnson already provided to I&E. If anyone has anything along these lines, please send them to Dan.
 - c. No other questions, comments, or further discussion.
 6. Closing Remarks by Lead Agency Directors and AMWG Cooperators.
 - a. All present agreed that they had provided their closing remarks already.
 - b. After the changes outlined above are made, and with inclusion of something indicating all these SOPs are subject to change as result of public comment or further review within AMOC and the IFT, SOPs 0.0 through 12.0 and 14.0 through 23.0 are ready to release to the public.
 - c. As for SOP 13.0:
 - i. By December 31, the Directors, acting through their AMOC representative, will provide any additional comment to John Morgart.
 - ii. AMOC will then try to reach resolution on SOP 13.0 in a January 5 (1:30 pm) conference call, and follow up with their Directors as necessary to complete SOP 13.0 before the January 26-29 AMWG meetings.
 - d. With that, everyone was thanked for attending, and the meeting was adjourned.

Invited Participants:

AMOC: AGFD: Terry Johnson, Bill Van Pelt; NMDGF: Chuck Hayes, Lisa Kirkpatrick; USFS: Wally Murphy, Bobbi Barrera; USFWS: Colleen Buchanan, John Morgart; WMAT: John Caid, Cynthia Dale; WS: David Bergman, Alex Lara, Alan May

AMWG Counties: Catron: Lena Shellhorn, Alex Thal, Linda Cooke; Graham: Mark Herrington; Grant: Henry Torres; Greenlee: Hector Ruedas, Kay

Gale; Navajo: Pete Shumway, JR DeSpain; Sierra: Adam Polley;
Agencies: NMDA: Bud Starnes; Tribes: SCAT: Steve Titla, Harold
Nofchissey, Stefanie White; ZUNA: Tony Povilitis
IFT: AGFD: Dan Groebner, Shawna Nelson, Shawn Farry; NMDGF: Nick
Smith; SCAT: Tianna Thompson; TESH: Melissa Woolf; USFWS:
John Oakleaf, Dan Stark; WMAT: Krista Beazely, Deon Hinton; WS:
J Brad Miller, Richard Grabbe

AGFD: Duane Shroufe, Jon Cooley, Deb O'Neill
NMDGF: Bruce Thompson, Tod Stevenson, Jennifer Montoya
SCAT: Honorable Kathleen Wesley-Kitcheyan
USDA FS: Harv Forsgren, Don DeLorenzo
USDA WS: Mike Worthen, Jeff Green, Keel Price
USFWS: Dale Hall, Larry Bell, Bryan Arroyo, Joy Nicholopoulos, Susan
MacMullin, Jim Ashburner, Maggie Dwire, Victoria Fox
WMAT: Honorable Dallas Massey, Sr.; Sylvia Cates