

Mexican Wolf Interagency Directors Meeting Summary Notes

Date/Time: 9:30 am to 3:00 pm, December 7, 2006

Location: USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services, Phoenix AZ

Invited Participants: See list on next page

Purpose: Provide an opportunity for invited 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.

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Opening Remarks by Lead Agency Directors
Critical year for the project – to stabilize (minimize rhetoric)
Bill Richardson, NM Game Commission, supportive
Recognize how much progress has been made over the last several years – communication and collaboration issues – need to overcome.
3. Opening Remarks by AMWG Cooperators
Hector – thanks for opportunity to participate
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4. Review of 2006 AMOC Activities and Issues
 - a. 5-Year Review
FWS accepted review and AMOC is working on recommendations with varying degrees of progress
 - b. Quarterly Meetings
Committed to having them – met objectives and carried out meetings in recovery area. Reasonably well attended by the public.
 - c. SOPs: Old and New
List handed out. Two additional SOP's (24.0 and 25.0) and review of 9.0, 21 and 13 will be looked at as well and a new 26.
Schedule for modifying SOP's? – Game plan provided at the January meeting
What was the nature of discussion for 13.0 and 21.0? SOP 13.0 – changes philosophical in nature; 21.0 - ID the need of personnel using IV/training and information captured on forms

Outreach attracted attention in terms of annual work plan, measurements of achievements (planning and execution)

d. August Workshop

Compliments – happy attended – broad and objective – focused on SW wolf. Not to be held annually (resource limitations) - subject to comment and direction.
Productive workshop the following day.

e. Location Dissemination Guideline

Provided location information to Catron County and it ended up on the web for the public causing great consternation. Various approaches were discussed on how to deliver it to those who need vs. those who want. Email, web, etc.

Chuck provided a synopsis: AMOC asked IFT to produce product – did with three levels of information. Suggestion to combine levels 2 and 3 and post on the website and question of how specific the info provided will be. Trial period.

Director Comments:

(Ben) Concern about how folks use the info. Need to be sensitive on how much info give to ranchers and to do it “right” – and for “hybrid” package and put on web.

(Bruce) Breeds mistrust – not want info restricted - make info reasonable and accessible. Do not set artificial timeline (i.e., 1 year).

Don –

“Duane” (Terry) – need to know (i.e., dead cow issue) vs. info to satisfy desire – do not see the benefit of setting “hurdles” – we create a trust issue where it need not be. Create criteria that would cause us to reconsider our position. (ID the trigger and if arise, will go back to doing that which is conserving the animal)

(Dave) – more interaction with those affected on the ground. Not like to see “hoops” going through

(Krista) – yes – put info on the web site.

Groebner – if combine levels 2 and 3 – some folks may want to be reclassified as level one

Ben – a wolf going through property = level 1 – to take away some mistrust.

Bruce – really “2” groups – propose a process to determine what kinds of needs (application) vs. explicit – real-time geography (real time/real space)

Chuck – need support for if get a threshold and information needs to be taken back – difficult situation – be prepared for. We are trying to prevent the misconception that we know where every wolf is located – if in BRWRA, can encounter a wolf.

Equals to 0.5 person/year for making flight contacts. – Morgart.

Must be very careful on how present/lay the change out – Ben

Be consistent about what doing – this is an Adaptive Management situation – learn and adjust.

Don – support what was said. Face-to-face time most important – more than location information
Conceptual guidance – different quality of outreach
Application – if person has use for that information – focus on what trying to accomplish
Level 2 should be with 1
Terry – time is of the essence – there needs to be communication about changing level of location info.

5. Review of 2006 IFT Activities and Issues

a. Staffing and Support

Has increased in 2006. AZ fully staffed at 5.5, NM added 1.2, **TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION**
WS – need 4.0
FS – need liaison – liaison to ranchers
WMAT needs more help
AZ and NM have one vacant position each.
(Need person with focus on trapping/collaring – Morgart – highest shortfall)

b. Initial Releases and Translocations

Initial releases – Meridian – female later found dead.
Translocations – NM 2 translocations: Nantac pair at North Seco – involved in 4 confirmed depredations and 2-3 probable, were removed.
Three animals, Granite pack, separated, male involved in 2 depredations (859) and 924 in 1 depredation, then together another depredation. 923 moving around, reported to have been in a trap – but unable to determine if was in the trap. Now moved into AZ.
AZ – male translocation next week.
i. Approved and conducted
ii.
iii. Availability of sites
Have buffers, prey availability, impacts to recreation and other aspects to develop criteria. Issue of using sites that are jammed.

Proposal for an initial release to occur this winter – waiting for AMOC recommendation. Ranging from 0-10 and two sites.
Pairing/timing - need direction by January 1 whether to leave wolves together to breed or not to breed “that is the question”.

c. Control Actions and Prevention Measures

21 in 2005
18 in 2006 – 5 lethal (highest in any given year – as a consequence of SOP 13), 4 non-lethal, 3 permanent removals, 6 pups removed.

Of the 18 removed – Hon-Dah (10 wolves), Nantac (2), Granite (2) and 4 single males

Fladry purchased and used as well as RAG boxes, hazing, cracker shells (1 person throughout the year for Meridian, 923 and 973).

Receivers to landowners – 9 out (2 prepared to go out) – 8 of those receivers bought this year (have 15 total available)

(Alan May would like more for WS personnel in NM)

4 Kh range-receiver?? – Bruce

Use TR4 model for ranchers – \$800-900 range

d. End-of-Year Population Estimate

Howling, visuals, track surveys,

53 +-4 (49-58)

~29 in NM, 24 in AZ

Numbers are flexible until the end-of-year count.

Have 8-days of helicopter flying and one day of training planned

Looking into credible sightings.

Breeding Pairs (BP's)

Currently, have 10 groups out; 4 are likely BP's at this stage (Male/Female and 2 surviving pups through December 31)

4 packs have the potential, but more pups need to be documented.

2 packs do not have BP potential

(35-49 was 2005 number, ~25% growth from last year – Johnson)

In October, discussed to invite the public with their wolf information info to help focus on ground/flight searches (?) – what is the status of this? Oakleaf got list from Jess Carey and went through and nailed down areas to focus effort.

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Use Wildlife Manager's or other personnel to help with wolf-count

What is the best way to count/conduct counts of large predators? – Morgart.

What we are doing is the standard approach.

People need to know the effort we are putting into the count effort. - Groebner

Can't afford to talk about number of wolves we "think" are out there – Ben

Duane is not satisfied with effort last year or the preparation for this year – enlist the Public! (Look to ranchers and consider their information)

e. Outreach Efforts and Accomplishments – Shawna presentation – and suggestions from AMOC and other representatives.

6. 2007 Priorities

- a. AMOC Quarterly Meetings – to rotate meetings in location and latitude (2 on Thurs, Fri, Sat); (2 on Wed, Thurs, Friday) Jan, Apr, July, October and will

collect actual data to see if working and extended the time of the meeting on the government side.

- b. Directors Summits (Summer and December) – Hannagan Meadow Lodge/or NM surrogate on Aug 21, 22, 23 (conflict w/ NMDGF) or 28, 29, 30 (Bruce OK); and December 11, 12, 13
Discussion of dates and the need for two meetings.

December – somewhere in Albuquerque
August Meeting – Hannagan

- c. April Wolf Conference in Flagstaff
DOW – AGFD unwilling to be a sponsor in part with discussion of northern AZ reintroduction efforts – but staff will submit abstracts for presentation. (same for other AMOC representatives) **TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION**
- d. SOP 13.0: Need for changes?
Two aspects – the IFT identified, through SOP 2.0, to surface suggestions for revision – On the table: to leave a female with pups in the population after a third depredation.
Second aspect – translating SOP 13 into common language

How many were removed under 13? – 18, more than zero implies that it is not working/ open to adjustment. (Bruce)

Hector – SOP 13 working – concern about changing – leave it alone, at least for this year.

Premature to have public dialogue on 13 (Duane and Terry). Duane – if a wolf incurs a 3rd, needs to be removed. Another consideration: softening to be looked at on the removal of a female with pups in exchange for reduction in releases of naive wolves?

Bit the bullet – why doing this/considering this change? – don't have enough information to make this change at this time. Needs to be flushed out a bit more – need a compelling reason to deviate from this.

(Ben) – get info and feedback.

Work on some type of depredation prevention for ranchers – Hector

Focus on wild-born wolves doing better than naive (if true) – investment in the future.

Needs to be based on data and research – and decision will be more readily accepted.

SOP 13 needs changes, but no answer to what and when.

Fundamental disconnect with the public – but when we cannot explain why we make a management decision, it erodes our credibility. Brainstorm ambiguity – most folks don't understand how it works. Need legitimate reasons for making management decisions.

What would be done and why it would be done (what SOP 13 tries to do) “SOP 13 for Dummies”

- e. 5 YR Recommendations Pertaining to 10j Rule
 - i. NEPA/EIS for 10j Rule
 - 1. MOU Addendum
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 - 2. Statement of Purpose and Need
AMOC received direction from FWS last July to move forward with proposal and associated EIS
About revising 10j for a specific purpose – (the old EIS was not the vanguard of success)
 - ii. Scoping process, meeting dates and locations
AMOC dealing with numbers and locations (and dates)
Came up with 6 locations in Arizona: Alpine, Flagstaff, Hon-Dah, Safford, Phoenix, and Tucson and 5 in locations in New Mexico: Alamogordo, Glenwood, Socorro, Grants and Sante Fe
 - iii. Funding and Staff Resource Commitment
Intent to keep IFT free from NEPA / EIS revision. \$129,000 within the Service. Dave and WS offered assistance. Dave Hayes involvement. Steve Robertson, USFWS, no Tracy M. (leaving the Service) – AGFD concerns: additional \$100k/year until final draft to supplement existing budget. Getting the budget – not wanting to start and then founder / or not getting started soon enough.
 - f. The Rest of the 37 Recommendations
 - g. Project/IFT Budget
 - h. Annual Reports for 2006
 - i. Annual Work Plan for 2007 (including possible releases and translocations)
7. Interdiction, Incentives, and Compensation (Ben)
Concept – need to give a try, another tool in box. Economic impact that the wolf is having on ranchers.
Staunch advocate of ranchers on the landscape.
Proposal – an endowment fund (funded by annual interest), develop a local board to make the decision, entirely voluntary; not federally run or funded.

Need to understand limitations of program – what is and what is not for by-in

Came up in 1987 – first discussion

Terry - Missing: requires some proof of loss – what about a program that does not require proof (and decrease AUM costs?) proposed in early '90's

Differential compensation – some ranchers get hit harder – might increase social tolerance for wolves.

8. Status of Recovery Team/Plan

FWS needs a recovery plan – need to work through what the plan represents – lots of people think the plan is theirs (but it is Ben's) and ideas of what should be in it and not. Will be reflective of the management action – we don't know what recovery represents (Ben's view) – need a critical dialogue about what and what not it should be. First part of next year, internally then will open up externally.

9. Open Q&A and Discussion

10. Closing Remarks by Lead Agency Directors and AMWG Cooperators

Don – asked AMOC to help with effective dialogue.

Ben – advocates for what we need and to be articulate

Bruce – wants to be an effective partner and believes meetings are worthwhile. *“Begin with the end in sight” – Stephen Covey*

Invited Participants:

AMOC: AGFD: Terry Johnson, Bill Van Pelt; NMDGF: Chuck Hayes, Lisa Kirkpatrick; USFS: Cathy Taylor; USFWS: John Morgart; WMAT: John Caid, Cynthia Dale; WS: Dave Bergman, Alan May

AMWG Counties: Greenlee: Hector Ruedas, Kay Gale; Navajo: Pete Shumway, JR DeSpain; Sierra: Jan Carrejo; Agencies: NMDA: Bud Starnes, Les Owen; Tribes: SCAT: Steve Titla, Harold Nofchissey, Anna Tryfonas

IFT: AGFD: Dan Groebner, Shawna Nelson, Janess Vartanian, Laura Kelly, Colby Gardner; NMDGF: Saleen Richter; SCAT: Tianna Thompson; TESH: Melissa Woolf; USFWS: John Oakleaf, Dan Stark; WMAT: Krista Beazley, Deon Hinton, Travis Clarkson, Ivan Kasey, Wilbert Dale; WS: J Brad Miller, Richard Grabbe

AGFD: Duane Shroufe, Jon Cooley, Dave Cagle

NMDGF: Bruce Thompson, Tod Stevenson

USDA FS: Harv Forsgren, Don DeLorenzo

USDA WS: Jeff Green, Keel Price

USFWS: Ben Tuggle, Brian Millsap, Wally Murphy, Steve Spangle, Jim Ashburner, Maggie Dwire

Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project
Directors Summit
December 7, 2006
Page 8 of 8

WMAT: Honorable Ronnie Lupe

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