

**Mexican Wolf Adaptive Management Oversight Committee
Interagency Directors Meeting**

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Location: Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico
Date: December 13, 2007
Time: AZ Time: 0800 – 1700
Host: Arizona Game and Fish Department
Participants: AMOC Lead Agencies: AGFD – Duane Shroufe, Steve Ferrell, Terry B. Johnson (AMOC Chair), Jon Cooley, Shannon Barber-Meyer, Dave Cagle (acting AMOC Chair); NMGFD – Dr. Bruce Thompson, Matt Wunder, Renae Held, and Ellen Heilhecker; USDA FS – Don DeLorenzo, Lucia Turner, Cathy Taylor and Wally Murphy; USDA APHIS WS - Jeff Green, Dave Bergman, Allan May, Chris Carrillo, and Sterling Simpson; USFWS – Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, John Morgart, John Slown, John Rogner, Maggie Dwire, and John Oakleaf.

AMOC Signatory Cooperators: New Mexico Department of Agriculture - Bud Starnes; Greenlee County – Hector Ruedas and Kay Gale

1. Opening Comments and Ground Rules

Dave Cagle called the meeting to order at 0805. The attendees introduced themselves.

Dave noted the complex nature of the project and the partnerships that are involved and noted the dedication of the IFT and AMOC members. He highlighted the disparity of commitment across all the involved agencies. Dave also noted the flight contributions made by NMDGF and thanked them for those contributions.

Dave touched on the high turnover in the IFT and workload issues that have made the situation with personnel more complicated.

2. Director Remarks

Duane Shroufe (AGFD) said he was pleased with the last meeting in Alpine and he is interested in seeing progress on budget, work plans, and other key elements that require progress.

Jeff Green (USDA-APHIS WS) thanked WS AMOC members for their work. He noted the agency's mission of protecting public from wildlife impacts, and that they try to do this in the most effective and efficient manner.

Ben Tuggle (USFWS) said he has been looking forward to this meeting – echoed Duane's point that he was pleased with the Alpine meeting. He noted that a few things have pushed themselves to the forefront that require agency attention. Added that this project is one of the most complicated in the nation, and collaboration is really the key to making progress.

Lucia Turner thanked everyone for the commitment they have to the Project. She said the new Regional Forester (Corbin Newman) will be briefed on the Project, given its significance.

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Bruce Thompson (NMDGF) welcomed Terry back. He said that his Department takes the Project very seriously and wants to play an important part in the overall Project. He stressed the importance of the adaptive management process.

3. Cooperator Remarks.

Bud Starnes (NMDA) welcomed the Directors.

Hector Ruedas (GRECO) stated that it was tough for Greenlee County to convince constituents that it is important to be at the table and bring balance to the program. He noted that the County has promoted funding for the project in Washington D.C. He noted that it is underfunded and understaffed and he is concerned about this. The imbalance between AGFD and NMGFD was also noted, as relates to staffing of the Project. Stated concern over recent control actions that restricted the manner in which control actions are deployed in the field. Also noted problems with captive facilities and decision-making that are compromising trust that has been in place to date. Hector stated that he is speaking on behalf of Navajo and Graham counties, in addition to Greenlee County.

4. Priority Issues (listed in order of presentation/discussion, but with the original agenda item number [letter] retained).

C. Translocation Recommendation for 1008 and 1028

Dave Cagle handed out the IFT recommendation and provided a brief summary of the package. He noted that AMOC discussed the recommendation yesterday and that AGFD, NMGFD, and USFWS supported the recommendation. WS and USFS were in support with the condition that necessary coordination takes place with the permittee in order to prevent conflicts with stocking/translocation taking place on top of each other. Dave also noted the need to complete required public notifications/meetings prior to translocation.

Comments/questions were solicited from the Directors.

Jeff Green asked if site would depend on the locations of other packs. Dave said this is correct – the IFT would make sure they are not putting translocated wolves on top of existing packs.

Questions were asked about the facts that were considered in differentiating and prioritizing the Miller Springs location from the Home Creek site. Oakleaf stated that one of the proposed translocated wolves came from the Miller Springs area (generally) and that this wolf had a depredation history in this location. Barber-Meyer added that the Home Creek site has a higher success rate (100%) than Miller Springs (22%). The Saddle and Aspen packs have had problems with the Miller Springs location, as well in terms of how they ultimately dispersed in the area.

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Ben Tuggle asked about the genetics of the translocated pair, and Maggie Dwire summarized (with explanation) that it is very good.

Duane Shroufe asked for a clarification of the recommendation - Home Creek assuming the cattle situation can be worked out; if not, then go to Miller Springs.

Bruce Thompson wanted more clarification on the differences between the two proposed translocation sites – specifically the characteristics of the sites (elevation, size, etc. of the allotments). Oakleaf stated that Miller Springs does not have an active allotment; Home Creek does.

Don DeLorenzo wanted to know if IFT has talked with local Ranger Districts to see if there are options for permittees in moving cattle to different allotments, to accommodate the translocation. Cathy Taylor noted that she was planning on following up with this in AZ. Barber-Meyer noted that **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** would entertain options, if they are available.

Ben Tuggle said these translocations need to be viewed in a manner where we try to maximize success. He is concerned that we cannot ignore the success percentages relating to sites, as that is telling us something about how wolves will react to the situation. He stated his preference, as a result, would go to the Home Creek site – while encouraging that we work with the permittee to ensure avoiding conflicts.

Duane noted that we need to verify the allotment flexibility situation with USFS first, before he is comfortable making a decision on the translocation.

Bruce Thompson reiterated his concern over the “if/or” nature of recommendation (two sites). He would like to have greater clarity and understanding of the details associated with each scenario (the if/or criteria) before he makes a decision.

Duane said that we need to work hard on translocations to move the program forward, but agreed that we need to clarify the ifs, ands, or buts associated with the recommendation, as presented.

Terry Johnson noted the upcoming AMOC conference calls/meetings and asked if AMOC could revisit the recommendation through these channels, and then get with the Directors via conference call to resubmit the recommendation over the next few weeks. Agreed.

Oakleaf said the IFT will not know what wolf utilization of sites will be at the time of translocation, and flexibility between multiple sites is good if we are to do a translocation. Terry noted that we still have the need, regardless, to clarify the allotment questions. The pair has already been joined in captivity and Morgart noted that they do not have room for pups in captivity. This requires a translocation or no-translocation decision as soon as possible.

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Don DeLorenzo asked if the Directors would consider looking at options such as purchasing hay/feed for permittee as a means to help address the conflict and provide relief on the allotment-entry timing. Terry noted that AGFD has provided funds for this with the **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION**, with Shannon Barber-Meyer noting that **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** has expressed appreciation for the support that has been provided to date.

Duane Shroufe supports the translocation concept but wants to know more about the variables associated with the allotment/permittee question. Tuggle, Green, Turner, and Thompson concurred with Duane.

Recommendation Clarification Required:

1. Determine flexibility of sites/allotments from USFS, and options that are available to affected permittees.
2. Clarify the “if/or” scenario between Miller Springs and Home Creek sites (what factors will trigger the choice between these two).

Action Item:

AMOC will discuss the IFT recommendation in its January 9, 2008 conference call.

Lead Agency Director (Shroufe) and USFWS Regional Director will make final decision.

D. Initial Release F836

Duane Shroufe stated that he insists on public meetings/process before any initial release is reviewed or approved by the Directors. Arizona will not agree to a release that has not been vetted with the public appropriately.

Dave Bergman provided an explanation of rationale behind his not supporting the initial release. He explained the conflict with the end-of-year count, noting that this year's effort will be less than last year's and that he believes this release would compromise the count effort. Also believes that this release can wait – no pressing need for release. Jeff Green asked if there were timing concerns with the subject wolf; Oakleaf noted there are breeding issues to consider.

Bruce Thompson noted that the release and count do not seem to be concurrent events and asked for explanation for the perceived conflict between them. Shannon Barber-Meyer noted that with the public notice cycle (30 days minimum) the timing conflict would be a non-issue. IFT field activities are planned to conclude January 24th on the end-of-year count.

Duane asked Dave if we ensure no overlap between release/count if that would satisfy his concerns. Dave said it would.

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Ben Tuggle asked if there is a way that Directors can be briefed on these proposed releases prior to December. He noted concerns relating to the captive breeding program and challenges they are trying to manage through – he suggested reviewing the release/translocation recommendations earlier in the year (summer meetings). He noted that this gives more time to work with constituents and explore solutions to specific conflicts, while also providing necessary guidance to the captive breeding program.

Duane added that the information they receive is really important and that it needs to be as complete as possible before they can make informed decisions. Public input, in particular, is an important and essential element when they review/consider recommendations.

Terry supported the idea of exploring these management actions earlier in the year, but that not all the information would necessarily be in place at that time to make for precise decision-making. AMOC has tried to move the process back before, so a more comprehensive proposal addressing an entire year could be addressed long before December. IFT workloads and availability of information have been obstacles.

Terry explained the various layers that are associated with translocation/release recommendations (public, AMOC, IFT, etc.) and the chronic shortages of resources within the IFT as issues that need to be considered by Directors if we head in that direction. He highlighted the point that the public expects us not to surprise them with management decisions and actions.

Hector stressed the point of having adequate public notice and interaction on these management actions. He highlighted that he feels the program is understaffed and does not have adequate resources to operate effectively.

Duane noted that AGFD needs to make sure they are getting the end-of-year count taken care of as needed and not let the release process interfere with this important activity. Duane gave assurance to Dave Bergman that AGFD will not have releases interfere with end-of-year count.

The group discussed the timing and process associated with public meeting component related to release recommendation.

Lucia Turner noted that she feels the release proposal is premature given the absence of necessary public input to the proposal, in advance of Director discussion/decision.

Ben Tuggle said he feels the count is absolutely important, but that, as planned, he does not feel there are major conflicts with the timing of deploying any release. He asked his staff to make clear if there are resource needs in order to execute activities at the IFT level during this timeframe. He wanted to make sure IFT has the resources to complete the end-of-year count.

Bruce Thompson noted he feels that, knowing that there are necessary steps to follow before a release can take place, we are at a place where some guiding decisions can be made by Directors

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today. Terry Johnson noted his disagreement with this – he explained that the public will interpret that these types of decisions are “predetermined” and that the public processes that follow are really not meaningful. He stated that AMOC and Directors need to be sensitive to these public perceptions as they will widen the trust gap that exists.

Terry also highlighted the problems and trickle down impacts that flow from having IFT staffing at inadequate levels. We run into very real problems in being able to keep up with management activities (e.g. end-of-year counts) that are closely watched and relied upon by the public and cooperators. These issues impact range-wide operation of the project.

Bruce clarified that he feels that he is referring to the concept of the Directors providing support (making a statement) on the concept of the importance of releases, knowing that there are specifics that later need to be discussed and agreed upon before a release can take place.

Lucia Turner stated her discomfort with that proposition, noting the problems that the public will have with the perception of decisions being predetermined.

Ben Tuggle noted that he supports the idea of having a legitimate and defensible public process when it comes to initial releases, but that he also supports the need to integrate initial releases into the program, given population trends.

Action Item: Dave Cagle suggested tabling the recommendation until the AMOC conference call in January, with AMOC members then briefing the Directors on a revised recommendation. To the extent that the recommendation proceeds to Directors, Benjamin and Duane will ultimately be coordinating on the final decision on the matter. Duane stated that he wants to ensure that we use the public meeting process that we have in the past to avoid any surprises or problems. Dave Cagle will side-bar with Duane on specifics of these public meetings, based on feedback that has recently been provided by the public (stemming from recent Alpine translocation meeting). The Directors agreed with this approach/action.

A. IFT Update:

John Oakleaf handed out the 2007 summary and presented a PowerPoint that was presented to AMOC on Wednesday, December 12.

Bruce Thompson asked about the count, noting concern over fixation on a single number. He questioned if there is a more effective way of expressing the count/population without resulting on fixation on a single number – also asked how the IFT arrives at this single number. He sees a disadvantage with the single number.

Ben Tuggle noted that when he joined the Project, he had concerns with the use of ranges on the population. He feels that a number should be generated, based on the best of our abilities to

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generate that number, in order to articulate and evaluate overall progress. He stated that he takes responsibility over current use of a single number, and the shift away from ranges.

Bruce noted that he feels that a single number still has downsides associated with it, given the tendency for people to fixate on that number.

General group discussion proceeded on this matter without any action items.

B. Clarification Memos for SOPs 5.0, 6.0, 11.0 and 13.0

Cathy Taylor provided handouts to the group and proceeded to summarize the content of each of these documents.

SOP 5.0: No questions/comments (minor correction noted, which Cathy will address).

SOP 6.0: No questions/comments.

SOP 11.0:

Ben Tuggle asked about the proposed timeline, noting that he wants AMOC to have full comfort with being able to achieve/maintain compliance with the process – public expectations will demand this. Terry responded that AMOC members discussed the need to have close/timely coordination with Directors when necessary. He noted that he does not believe it is a reasonable timeline but that it is necessary in order to address concerns that will certainly arise from the ranching/livestock community – they expect quick response to incidents. Tuggle said he is most concerned with being able to assimilate information and come to decisions, and having adequate time in each step to facilitate sound decision making – wants to make sure that preceding steps (IFT, AMOC) have the time they need. Without this, it will compromise the Director-level decision making. Dr. Tuggle said he's willing to take the heat on decisions, as long as he knows that AMOC/IFT is getting what they need to process recommendations.

Bruce Thompson said that he supports Dr. Tuggle's point, and pointed out some specific language in the current document that he felt needed to be fixed. Cathy Taylor noted these fixes (cut and paste errors).

Don DeLorenzo stated that having a draft order from AMOC to the Directors is an important step. Also noted that he feels the intent is to honor the decision turnaround timeline (12 hours), but that some flexibility at Directors level may be necessary given the dynamic nature of these events. Dr. Tuggle stated that he feels there needs to be a responsibility and awareness at the Directors level and that it not be totally open-ended, given the potential impacts from additional depredations taking place as they deliberate.

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Motion: Ben Tuggle proposed that the Directors have an additional 18 hours to deliberate at the decision-making level (added to existing 12 hours allocated to AMOC/Directors level). He stated that he feels this will allow AMOC to be de-coupled from the final decision, and allow the Directors to make better informed decisions. **Action Item:** Bruce Thompson concurs with the additional 18-hours, and asked that AMOC submit a written draft order for them to review. Cathy Taylor recorded the revised text back to the group and completed necessary edits to the clarification memo. These clarifications need to be placed in SOP 13, not in SOP 11 (Cathy Taylor will make these changes to existing draft documents).

Directors' decisions will be communicated back through their AMOC members, with the Recovery Coordinator then taking necessary actions relating to removal order execution.

All Directors agreed with these modifications and associated decision-making timelines.

SOP 13.0:

- Terry Johnson clarified that steps 1, 2 and 3 occur with all depredation incidents; but that #4 will only occur with a third depredation incident. Cathy will make changes to clarify this point.
- Bruce Thompson asked the group if they feel the same process is being consistently followed on all depredation incidents and how depredations are assigned through the IFT. Terry pointed out the clarification that was developed in the AMOC meeting (#3 in the clarification memo) and reflected AMOC and IFT input and agreement. Bruce noted his concern with having the determination rest with one person at the IFT – he feels communication of facts needs to flow through the IFT to AMOC and that a joint/collaborative review yields the depredation determination. Terry clarified that the intention of #3 is to have the jurisdictional IFT Leader consult with fellow IFTLs and the FPC before a determination is made, but that someone needs to make the determination. Added that he feels AMOC should not make these calls – needs to happen at the IFT level. Bruce noted that he wants to be aware of what differences of opinion may exist on these determination, which he feels are important for the final decision-making process. He added that he feels the jurisdictional IFT Leader should note cases to AMOC when there is not consensus on determinations, and what issues/circumstances are behind that lack of consensus. He is concerned that if the process is to have the decision rest with one person they run the risk of the IFT not “owning” the decision if there is inherent lack of agreement on final determination. IFT members feel that the decision rests at the IFT level and there is nothing to practically gain by involving additional layers of administration. Bruce restated that he has concerns based on experience where there have been problems on the determination process, and that continuing with having a single individual take on the responsibility the project will continue to have these problems.
- Bruce provided draft language to Dave Cagle/Cathy Taylor that he feels will address his concerns with the document as presently written. Bruce read aloud two phrases that he feels will address his concerns – recorded by Cathy Taylor. Bruce will provide these written changes to Cathy.

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- Bruce's clarifying language was approved by AMOC members from AGFD, NMGFD, USFS, USFWS, USDA-WS.
- FPC highlighted issues with waiting for the Removal Order decision while the carcass is being used by wolves on the ground – in contrast to the IFT's ability to trap on 1st and 2nd depredation issues immediately after the investigators' confirmation of a wolf kill.
- Clarifications #6 and #7 – Terry explained how AMOC developed the proposed language, noting the reference to existing project documents and some of the constraints that are associated with these documents (10j, EIS, etc.).
 - Bruce feels that #6 addresses the clarifications the Directors were seeking, but added that #7 may not be necessary given preceding clarifications (#4). Bruce, therefore, suggested that #7 is not necessary addition to the document.
 - All Directors agreed, based on the understanding that they will be able to see a final draft document before sending off for public comment/review.
 - AMOC Chair will make sure final drafts go out to Directors.
 - Hector Ruedas expressed his views on the changes that are made, and provided general support with what has developed thus far.

E. Permanent Removal Orders

Jeff Green explained that aerial operations are the most effective, efficient and precise methods for executing removals – also the most humane. Jeff asked why we are moving away from this methodology. He also noted the success in Northern Rockies and associated wolf program activities in using these practices. Terry added that AMOC has always tried to be direct and clear in its decision documents and orders. We invite public criticism and frustration if we are not clear and precise with decisions and accompanying direction to IFT. Other points were raised that if removal language is not clear and specific, then it can be open to interpretation.

Jeff Green stated that if use of aircraft is the issue then the Directors need to have that discussion, but he is not comfortable with qualifying ongoing use to a point where it limits effectiveness and efficiency. Allen May and Dave Bergman added that if it takes longer to address a problem then the livestock owner suffers, and it creates a greater drain on resources that the agency allocates to the field activities.

Bruce Thompson asked for clarification on what the problem is – real or theoretical – he wants to know the specific facts. If the removal was completed effectively, then he wants to know what the management issues are going forward.

Concern was expressed about removal of operative words such as “lethal” and “permanent,” as it seems to limit tools available to the IFT when executing orders (e.g. relying on non-lethal means and employing helicopters that are more expensive). Allen May asked if those kinds of responses are a reliable tool going forward – if not, then it will compromise the effectiveness of ongoing control actions.

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Duane Shroufe stated that he is concerned if it establishes precedent for ongoing control actions, which will be difficult for AZ to adopt if that is the case. Bruce Thompson stated that he felt it was case specific and is not intended as a new process that all have to adopt.

Hector Ruedas raised the political problems that are associated with this type of change – both in terms of how dollars are allocated to the project by agencies (NMDGF provides funds for helicopters but not IFT staff) and also how it might compromise ability for IFT to be as effective as possible. Constituents feel that wolf management decisions and actions have become politicized and that this recent control order language reflects this.

Dave Bergman stated that WS personnel were really made uncomfortable with the order – in fear of doing the wrong thing on the ground. Also asked if “permanent” is being removed from orders because it raises many questions about how wolves will be managed thereafter.

Ben Tuggle noted that the language in the PRO is his responsibility, and the decision for the NM PRO was his. His intent was to convey lethal control, but that did not happen ultimately and he apologized for that lack of understanding and clarity on the ground – that was not his intention. He did not have a problem shooting the wolves if necessary on the ground but he is not a proponent of aerial gunning given the accompanying PR complexities/problems. He said it is not entirely off the table from his perspective but that he feels there needs to be case by case flexibility in evaluating use of aerial gunning. He has program interests in mind when making these statements. Tuggle stated that if there is a three strike wolf, we would remove that wolf; and if we remove three strike females they will not return to wild. At the same time, however, he does not like the fact that we have wolves running in circles in pens – it is his management burden but something that is a reality his agency needs to contend with. He acknowledged that it is his responsibility to communicate control orders clearly to the ground; he thought he had done that with the Aspen PRO (OK to go lethal on adult females), but that he also cannot have an automatic default to aerial gunning on every instance. It's available as a tool if circumstances dictate, but he does not want it to be an automatic default for him as a final decision-maker on control actions. Tuggle urged WS and others that they can seek clarification if the clarification is not duly articulated within the control order – “if you are not clear, please ask.”

Jeff Green expressed his appreciation and understanding of Ben's explanation and clarification.

Bruce Thompson said he feels the PRO is being perceived as a “NM” order and that was not the case. Dr. Tuggle agreed with Bruce's statement and noted that the buck stops with him.

Kay Gale urged that Ben Tuggle still needs to be as clear as possible. Otherwise, ranchers and others impacted by depredations will feel that agencies are retreating from responsibilities. Hector asked if the decision was political and Tuggle responded that it was “absolutely not” – he was trying to be sensitive to state concerns that did not come from the Governor. Hector noted that this decision document has caused chaos in AZ, among his constituents. Tuggle asked that Hector call him if there are questions or issues that they can assist with moving forward.

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Bruce added that NMGFD is tasked with supporting and implementing wolf recovery in a way that is sensitive to all interests and issues – that is the direction the Governor has conveyed to them (to the extent that this interaction has taken place).

Dave Cagle said he has concerns that if we compromise effectiveness in executing controls that other wolves can be potentially added to the removal order if depredations continue to take place while ineffective removal actions are being deployed.

G. Less-than-lethal Projectiles – Permitting

John Morgart provided a summary of the proposed program as it relates to expansion under 10j Rule, accompanying permit requirements, and the actual implementation of the program on the ground. He noted that Ben Tuggle has provided necessary authorization/approval of the program (permits) under a test/experimental phase – states have copies of the permit and will need to revise the administrative process required to activate the permits/program.

Morgart added that USFWS will provide paintball equipment/ammo to allow for deployment of these tools to permitted individuals knowing that these specialized items are not readily available. 12-gauge ammo will also be provided but firearms will not.

Terry Johnson noted that AGFD will need to work through the administrative aspects of the program before it can be officially deployed. Documentation and data gathering is a necessary component of the program – also encouraging advance training of individuals/permit holders is really necessary if it is truly to be a proactive management tool. He noted that public will be disappointed to see that rubber bullets may be not available and we need to be prepared to address those complaints. Bruce Thompson agreed.

Ben Tuggle stated that rubber bullets are not totally off the table as an option, but that there are concerns now on their use (lethality) and that we have an opportunity under this approach to determine the effectiveness of this test program. This experimental approach and accompanying data gathering will make future adaptive management decision that much more powerful. Terry Johnson noted that if that is possible, then Arizona will be submitting a research proposal so appropriate employees can test efficacy.

AZ and NM are both willing to move forward with the program. Collaborative development of the program through AMOC at the beginning should provide consistency on the ongoing deployment of the program in both AZ and NM (WMAT now looking at the program).

K. Captive Facility Capacity Issues

Ben Tuggle said USFWS is considering euthanizing wolves in captivity, if it comes to that, but other options are also being explored in an effort to address the captive facility situation. The

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public needs to understand that we cannot continue to hold large numbers of wolves in captivity – not comfortable at all with the humane aspects of this.

Terry asked if Tuggle still stands by his earlier statements about captive facilities issues not having influence on management decisions within the field Project, and he confirmed that this is still the case. Tuggle stated that USFWS does not want to euthanize, but they do have captive facility issues to work through.

J. Bud Starnes – Comments to Directors

Bud noted that the NEPA process has stirred the nest with the public and we don't have a real clear plan that gets us through the next four years – the period between now and when any new 10j rules/directions flow through the NEPA process. He noted that ranchers want relief from losses and they want to be able to protect themselves – can't achieve this until we get enough wolves on the ground. In the meantime we are aggravating both ends of this equation (low wolf numbers and no relief to ranchers). He feels that we have the ability to double wolf populations but it will take necessary allocation of resources. Until we do that, we will be criticized for being ineffective and that the program is an overall waste of resources.

He feels that if we told ranchers/public that we have a four-year window over which we look to add “300” wolves (example) across both states that he feels folks would be shocked, but more receptive and accepting about what is going on with the project, knowing that there will be more flexibility to them on how they can handle wolves. He feels there are too many restrictions being placed on the project that prevent this kind of bold advancement of management actions that will really make a difference for everyone involved. This needs an emphasis and push by the Directors if it is to happen.

Ben Tuggle thanked Bud for sharing his perspective and ideas.

Departing Individuals -- Remarks

With the recent announcement of Duane Shroufe's retirement on March 31, 2008, Terry Johnson thanked Duane Shroufe for his service to the Department and all the support he has provided the wolf program through the years. Duane returned thanks to Terry and the group and encouraged everyone to continue with the adaptive management progress that has been made.

Kay Gale stated that Greenlee County has consciously taken the track of not passing orders or ordinances relating to wolves (e.g. Catron Co.) and has instead tried to promote and advance interdiction programs. She noted that AZ is facing a \$1 billion deficit and agencies and counties will need to face cuts – she encouraged NM and other partners to step up to provide necessary support to the program. She also encouraged the group to be very clear with communications and decision that are produced in the program – clarity and decisiveness is critical to the public.

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Hector echoed Kaye's points and encouraged agency attention on the funding, staffing, and resource allocation issues in the wolf program.

With Duane's early departure for Phoenix, Terry Johnson began acting on his behalf in today's meeting.

F. NEPA Scoping Meetings Report

John Slown provided a summary of the NEPA meetings that were held in AZ and NM. His presentation included a PowerPoint program that was shown at each of the public meetings (general identification of issues and introduction of program elements/approaches). He provided information on how the meetings were conducted and described the level and nature of public participation that occurred at the various meetings. He also summarized the amount and type of comments that have been received to date (emails, letters, etc.).

John noted the contributions of DJ Case in executing the meetings, and the fact that many public participants appreciated how the meetings were structured and framed around major issues – that facilitated public comment. John then explained how comments will be assimilated and analyzed going forward, leading up to USFWS review and processing.

H. NM Concept Statement

Bruce Thompson provided an explanation that this is still a work in process and that he understood it would be distributed to AMOC for discussion (from discussion at summer meeting in Alpine). He offered to answer questions the group might have, but the intent was to implement approaches that would allow the program to move away from depredation-centric activities and into a more proactive/productive population management orientation. He is trying to frame a vision or stage with these ideas and concepts. From NM's perspective, he is looking to these ideas as an interim approach for managing the wolf project in NM – intended to stimulate more tolerance and acceptance of the program.

Dave Cagle asked about funding sources and what the implications would be to the IFT. Bruce responded that he felt it would be fully implemented through IFT and/or AMOC, as needed. He noted that it would likely bring in other branches of NMGFD as well in order to achieve desired outcomes. Dave Cagle also stated concerns about staffing requirements needed to implement the concept, given current shortages at IFT (especially on NM side). Bruce responded to that concern by stating that he views these as an additional set of options that will make time demands across IFT being mitigated/lessened and improve overall productivity of the entire effort (due to the proactive, preventative nature of these management elements).

Terry asked Bruce what his intent/desire is as far as advancing this concept further, noting that there has been limited discussion with AMOC and the public up to this point. Bruce said the original intent was to stimulate discussion and begin a project in NM and allocate resources to it

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– presuming it is deemed viable. He stated that it needs structure for it to be implemented, and stressed that he views AMOC as the group that can provide the best analysis and input into how this structure will evolve. Bruce again stated that he is inviting comment, and that those involved know that the concept is receiving and processing comment (through AMOC).

Bruce reiterated that the overall focus of the concept is to increase acceptance and tolerance of having wolves on the landscape through the adoption of management approaches that effectively address concerns of people that are experiencing impacts from wolves – and that this be done through proactive means (as opposed to current reality of focusing resources and attention to reactive depredation control actions).

Action Item: All AMOC cooperators need to provide their comments to NMDGF by end of January 2008. Terry will receive a revised document from Bruce to initiate this AMOC comment process.

I. AGFD Rabies Protocol

Dave Cagle provided a handout to Directors on draft AGFD rabies protocol, and explained the background and nature of this protocol – mandatory pre-exposure for all AGFD personnel on wolf program. Noted that AMOC has been briefed on this matter.

Bruce asked if AGFD expects this to be in place years from now, noting their own experience of having problems ensuring that all employees consistently complete all required vaccinations.

Terry noted that AGFD experienced similar disease problems with the ferret program, and that Duane stressed that the protocols be strictly administered and adhered to by all personnel. When training is required, it is provided.

L. Draft SOPs – 25.0 (Media Access), 27.0 (Population Monitoring)

Dave Cagle gave the Directors a brief summary of AMOC's review and processing of comments on these SOPs. AMOC will present these to the Directors once they have completed their review and final drafts of the SOPs. Terry clarified the process that AMOC will follow in completing this review over the ensuing month (or so) before sending documents out for public comment.

New: IFT Work Plans:

At Terry's request, Dave Cagle raised the issue of current status of the 2008 IFT Annual Work Plans, noting that AGFD has completed its review and analysis (in the wake of an FLSA incident). He noted that NM and USFWS are working on their contributions to the overall work plan – also waiting for WMAT's input.

John Oakleaf will be working on getting these completed across the IFT.

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Terry explained that IFT work plan has not been merged with the budget – a step that AMOC will address in January 2008 once they receive the synthesized work plan from IFT by end of December 2007.

Ben Tuggle asked that the Directors get a copy of the work plan as soon as it is made available to AMOC.

5. Open Discussion

Press Releases: Bruce asked about media and outreach processes – noting that USFWS news releases tend to be flattering of one party but do not mention others. He wanted to know if comments/inputs are not being received in time, or if there is something else that needs to take place. Terry noted that there is an SOP in place (3.0) that guides these processes and that there are timelines that drive these processes. Bruce said that he is aware, and that there might be cases where they have not responded in prompt fashion, but his point is that we have standards in place that provide due recognition to those who deserve the notation/recognition of their particular contributions to the project. Bruce wants to make sure that there is the ability to ensure that there is due recognition being given through these press releases/media products. Terry noted that there are some cases where others are intentionally excluded so that the “heat” can be diverted to USFWS (or other agencies).

Draft Guidelines for Wolf Tour SUPs: Cathy Taylor handed out the latest version of draft documents relating to this program, and asked that any comments/input be directed to her. She highlighted some of the issues/questions that AMOC has addressed in developing these guidelines. In addition, she noted the rationale for having such a program in place. No comments/questions from Directors.

IFT Staffing Concerns/Issues: Terry Johnson noted that the agencies continue to work through and struggle with IFT personnel matters – turnover, workload, etc. AGFD continues to rely upon TDAs to avoid true vacancies as much as possible, and he asked that USFWS and NMGFD provide similar assistance to the IFT.

Ben Tuggle stated that he relies on requests coming from wolf staff and that he would be flexible to these requests.

Bruce Thompson noted that he is not against the idea, but that he relies upon others in NMGFD to identify and follow up on those needs as they develop.

Both Benjamin and Bruce said they had not been asked by their staff for temporary assistance.

Terry said that was unbelievable, given the problems that led us to fall short on producing a budget-integrated Annual Work Plan (for example). Terry said as AMOC Chair he will

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personally ensure that henceforth the Directors are aware of vacancy issues and make sure that everyone understands how to address these problems when they arise.

6. 2008 Director Priorities for the Project

Terry summarized that Duane feels that adequate staffing and resourcing of the program remain a high priority for the Project.

Jeff Green stated that their contributions remain focused on being productive team players and that the Project remain responsive to the livestock owners.

Ben Tuggle said he continues to focus on building an effective interdiction program and that struggles remain in developing the Foundation aspects of this program. The concept has been floated to **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** and he has made a firm commitment to assisting the wolf program, though they continue to work through specifics relating to the interdiction program. Turner's primary concern is the absence of a Recovery Plan and that is an obstacle that Dr. Tuggle needs to address internally. He wants to ultimately tie these concepts to the 10j moving forward.

Lucia Turner stated that she will make sure the new Regional Forester is aware of the issues. She also complemented the group for the work they have done and the ability they have to discuss contentious issues in an open and productive manner.

Bruce Thompson stated that his one priority is to move forward in a manner where we move away from depredation-focused management to empowering people/public to become more accepting and tolerant of wolves. He is open to looking at personnel/resource issues but he feels the shift he has described needs to take place.

7. Closing Remarks

Terry Johnson thanked Dave Cagle for his leadership over the past few months, also thanked AMOC and IFT members for their work. He said that dates have been established for next year's meetings with Directors and the information will be forthcoming. Terry noted that the new AZ Director will have a steep learning curve regarding the wolf program. He again thanked everyone for well wishes to him over that past few days/weeks.

Bruce Thompson: Learn from experience and be adaptive.

Benjamin Tuggle: Thank you.

The meeting adjourned at 1530.