

DEREK RAPIER
County Administrator
(928) 865-2072

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
P.O. BOX 908
253 5TH STREET
CLIFTON, AZ 85533

DAVID GOMEZ
District 1

RON CAMPBELL
District 2

RICHARD LUNT
District 3

MEETING NOTICE and AGENDA
Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes §38-431, et. seq.
and amendments thereto, the
GREENLEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
also sitting as Board of Directors for
GREENLEE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DISTRICT

and
GREENLEE COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT
hereby gives notice that a

Special Meeting

will be held on Wednesday, June 10, 2020 – 8:00 a.m.

Zoom Video Conferencing. To join the meeting enter the following URL into your browser:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83518899121?pwd=bFdSUFINeXpMTzh4MEpaeGF2UEZpZz09>

Meeting ID: 835 1889 9121
Password: 263378

**Board of Supervisors Meeting Room, 2nd floor Courthouse Annex, 253 5th Street,
Clifton, Arizona**

AGENDA

- 1.) Call to Order
 - A. Pledge of Allegiance
 - B. Call to the Public

- 2.) Derek Rapier, County Administrator
 - A. Discussion/Action – Consideration of Proposed Greenlee County comments regarding the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Notice of intent to prepare a supplement to an environmental impact statement on the Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of Mexican wolf
 - B. Discussion/Action – Consideration of Proposed ECO comments regarding the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Notice of intent to prepare a supplement to an environmental impact statement on the Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of Mexican wolf.

- 3.) Executive Session: A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3), Legal Advice – Legal uses of CARES Act funding under existing federal law, federal and state implementation guidance.
- 4.) Budget Work Session
- 5.) Adjournment

All agenda items are for discussion and/or action as deemed necessary. The Board reserves the right to consider any matter out of order. The Board may retire into Executive Session for any of the purposes that are allowed by law, including but not limited to legal advice and/or personnel matters; as authorized by A.R.S. §38-431.et.seq. Persons with a disability may request accommodation for special assistance by contacting Bianca Figueroa at 928-865-2072 (TDD 928-865-2632). Requests should be made as soon as possible to allow time for arrangement of the accommodation.

**GREENLEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA INFORMATION FORM**



MEETING DATE: June 10, 2020
DEPARTMENT: BOS

REQUESTED BY: Derek Rapier
TELEPHONE #: _____

1. Insert brief description of proposal and requested Board action:

Discussion/Action – Consideration of Proposed Greenlee County comments regarding the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Notice of intent to prepare a supplement to an environmental impact statement on the Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of Mexican wolf

2. Continued from meeting of: _____

Discussed in meeting of: _____

3. Publication requirements:

Does this require publication in the official county newspaper? Yes No
This department to cause publication Clerk of the Board to cause publication

4. Financial Impact:

Expenditure: Is this a budgeted expense? Yes No Project Code #: _____
Fund _____ \$ _____ Actual Not to exceed
Fund _____ \$ _____ Actual Not to exceed
If not budgeted, how will this expense be funded? _____

Grants/Contracts:

Federal State Other _____
CFDA # (Federal grants only) _____ State # _____
Fund _____ \$ _____
Matching funds required? Yes No Fund _____ \$ _____

5. Legal Review: Does this item require County Attorney review and approval as to form and within powers granted under the laws of the State of Arizona to the Greenlee County Board of Supervisors?

Yes No

Date of County Attorney approval: _____

6. Board of Supervisors action taken:

Approved Amended Disapproved Tabled

Original backup documentation must accompany this form!

Supervisor Jason Whiting,
Chair, Navajo County

Supervisor Richard Lunt,
Vice Chair, Greenlee County

Supervisor Tommie Martin,
Past Chair, Gila County



Supervisor Paul David,
Director, Graham County

Supervisor Travis Simshauser,
Director, Apache County

Supervisor Peggy Judd,
Director, Cochise County

Pascal Berlioux, Ph.D. MBA, Executive Director

June 15, 2020

Amy Lueders
Regional Director,
Southwest Region
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of the Interior
500 Gold Ave. SW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Electronic posting at <http://www.regulations.gov> Docket No. FWS-R2-ES-2020-0007

Re: Eastern Arizona Counties comments on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Notice of intent to prepare a supplement to an environmental impact statement on the Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*).

Dear Ms. Lueders:

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization (ECO) consists of six counties located in northern and eastern Arizona along the Mogollon Rim that marks the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau. These six counties are Apache, Cochise, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, and Navajo County.

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization is uniquely affected by the Mexican Wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*) recovery in Arizona and New Mexico, due to the fact that a large portion of the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) is located within the counties of ECO. The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding For Mexican Wolf Recovery and Management and has been an active participant to the revision to the nonessential experimental population of the Mexican Wolf that resulted in the 2015 Rule, and to the revision of the Recovery Plan that resulted in the 2017 First Revision.

Consequently, the Eastern Arizona Counties Organization would like to file the following comments on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Notice of Intent to prepare a supplement to an environmental impact statement on the Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*).

Scope of comments

As stated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS. “the Service”) in the Notice of intent to prepare a supplement to an environmental impact statement on the Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of Mexican wolf (Federal Register / Vol. 85, No. 73 / Wednesday, April 15, 2020), the scope of the comment is limited to issues “concerning specific provisions of the 2015 final rule identified by the District Court of Arizona in the March 31, 2018, Order” (p. 20968).

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization will therefore focus its comments on the four narrow ranges of topics identified by the Service, but because specific provisions of the 2015 final rule identified by the District Court of Arizona in the March 31, 2018, Order were specifically addressed in comments filed by ECO in 2013, such as but not limited to sections addressing **Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan deficiency**, **Mexican Wolf Scientific Peer Review deficiency**, **Scientific deficiencies**, ECO is including by reference its December 16, 2013 comments on the Proposed Revision To the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf. Federal Register / Vol. 78, No. 114 / 35719 / Thursday, June 13, 2013, as filed with the Service.

Narrow range of topic #1 – Essentiality determination for the experimental population of Mexican wolves in the MWEPA

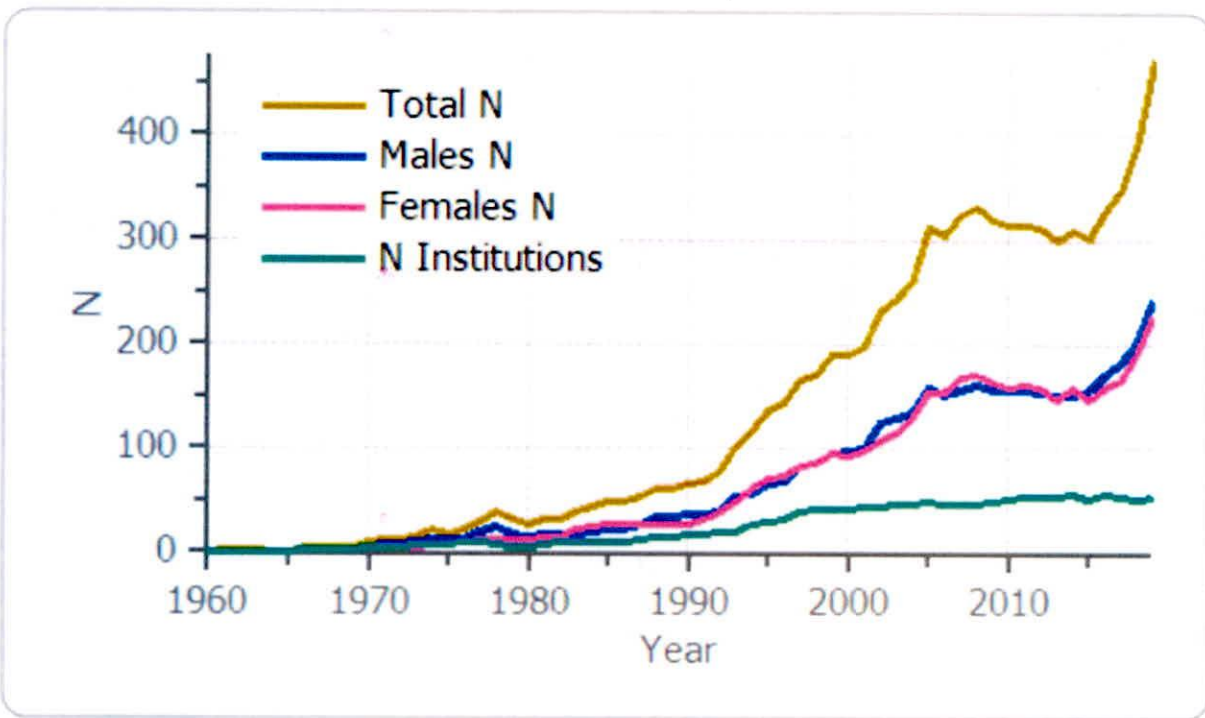
Under Title 50. Wildlife and Fisheries Chapter I. United States Fish And Wildlife Service, Department Of The Interior Subchapter B. Taking, Possession, Transportation, Sale, Purchase, Barter, Exportation, And Importation Of Wildlife And Plants Part 17. Endangered And Threatened Wildlife And Plants Subpart H. Experimental Populations Section 17.80. Definitions, the law states:

(b) The term essential experimental population means an experimental population whose loss would be likely to appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival of the species in the wild. All other experimental populations are to be classified as nonessential.

While the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan was under revision at the time the Service published the final rule to revise the designation and management of the nonessential experimental population on January 16, 2015 (80 FR 2512), and while the scientific information was lacking for it (see ECO December 16, 2013 comments addressing Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan deficiency, Mexican Wolf Scientific Peer Review deficiency, Scientific deficiencies) the situation has changed in the intervening five years.

Specifically, as documented in the *Mexican Wolf, Canis lupus baileyi, International Studbook, 2019* (Greely, 2019) the captive population totaled 417 in June 2019. This 2019 population of 417 represents a 67% increase over the population number considered by the Courts as part of the 2015 administrative record, and this population is now so numerous that most captive animals are actually restricted from breeding in order to maintain the captive population number at a manageable level in the existing holding facilities, which are currently at maximum capacity.

Further, owing to the 67% increase over the last five years of the captive population, the majority of this population consists of young, healthy animals in their reproductive prime; and owing to the retention of genetically uniquely valuable animals in the captive population and the release of genetically redundant less valuable animals, this captive population has better genetics than the MWEPA population.



Census Graph Data Range: 1-Jan-1960 through 15-Jun-2019

Therefore, the potential loss of the wild population located in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA), while it would clearly be a setback to the speed of the recovery of the subspecies, would not be likely to appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival of the species in the wild,

- owing to the captive population robust reproductive rate, that could be exponentially accelerated if the entire population was allowed to breed; and
- owing to the captive population genetic diversity, that is actually higher than those of either wild population in the United States or Mexico.

Additionally, the U.S. population is no longer the only wild population, owing to the growing population of 20 to 30 wolves in the Sierra Madre in Mexico verified by the April 2017 *Mexican wolf habitat suitability analysis in historical range in the Southwestern US and Mexico* (Martinez-Meyer et al. 2017).

In consequence, under 50 CFR § 17.80 (b) the experimental population of Mexican wolves in the MWEPA must remain classified as nonessential.

Narrow range of topic #2 – Align the population objective and release recommendations in the new revised rule with the recovery criteria in the revised recovery plan for the MWEPA

Population Objectives Recommendations

In the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan Deficiency section of its December 16, 2013 comments on the Proposed Revision To the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf, the Eastern Arizona Counties Organization stated:

In the absence of "objective, measurable criteria," among others, to serve as a baseline for judging when and how well a species is recovering, the Eastern Arizona Counties Organization believes that the public is not given the legally required opportunity to comment meaningfully on the Proposed Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf until the USFWS releases the Revised Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan. (P. 14)

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization is including by reference its August 26, 2017 comments on the Mexican Wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*) Draft Recovery Plan, First Revision as filed with the Service.

The Population Viability Model developed for the 2017 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, First Revision, (Miller, 2017) established, using best available science, the quantitative and qualitative genetic recovery criteria to establish a population in the U.S. with at least 320 wolves and another in Mexico with at least 200 wolves to achieve long term recovery, and retention of genetic diversity through the addition of 22 and 37 wolves attaining breeding age in the U.S. and Mexico, respectively.

This information was not available to the Courts in the 2015 administrative record, as it was not to the public until the completion of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, First Revision, in November 2017. The Courts concerns that the population objective and effective migration rate published in the 2015 10(j) rule failed to prevent long-term erosion in the genetic health of the experimental population were addressed in the 2017 Recovery Plan, First Revision.

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization therefore supports aligning the population objective recommendation in the new revised rule with the recovery criteria in the revised recovery plan for the MWEPA.

Release Recommendations

Similarly, the release of genetically valuable captive-bred pups through cross fostering, in addition to reducing the risk of conflicts as experienced with the release of "naïve" adult wolves, have already addressed the Courts concerns in the five intervening years since the 2015 administrative record was provided to the Courts.

Based on 2019 data from the Mexican Wolf Management Team, genetic enrichment of the wild U.S. population has been successfully implemented through cross fostering with 50 pups being cross-fostered since 2015, of which 10 have been documented to reach adulthood, demonstrating a recruitment rate superior to that of the wild pups, and of those, 3 are now breeders in their own pack and have produced a minimum of 17 genetically valuable pups.

From the 32 pups cross-fostered in 2019 and 2020, extrapolating the known rate of at least 35% of the cross-fostered pups reaching breeding age, which represents best available science, it is likely that the wild breeding population will be augmented by an additional 11 highly genetically valuable wolves.

These achievements since 2015 address the Courts concerns as at the current rate of cross foster success, the 2017 Recovery Plan, First Revision population viability analysis criteria for the amount of genetic infusion will be exceeded.

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization therefore supports aligning the population release recommendations in the new revised rule with the recovery criteria in the revised recovery plan for the MWEPA.

Narrow range of topic #3 – Ensure the new revised rule supports population-level genetic health for the Mexican wolf in the MWEPA

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization supports the Service decisions to not consider modification to the allowable:

- Take by livestock guarding dogs on Federal or non-Federal land as specified in the 2015 final rule (§ 17.84(k)(7)(iv)(B) and § 17.84(k)(7)(v)(B), respectively;
- Take, including killing, on non-Federal land by a domestic animal owner or that person's agent of any Mexican wolf that is in the act of biting, killing, or wounding a domestic animal (§ 17.84(k)(7)(iv)(A)).
- Take, including killing, in defense of human life as specified in the 2015 final rule (§ 17.84(k)(7)(i)).

Narrow range of topic #3 – Ensure the new revised rule supports population-level genetic health for the Mexican wolf in the MWEPA is therefore focused on the effect of legal takes on the genetic health for the Mexican wolf in the MWEPA:

1. Take on non-Federal lands in conjunction with a removal action (50 CFR 17.84(k)(7)(iv)(C));
2. Take on Federal land (§ 17.84(k)(7)(v)(A));
3. Take in response to unacceptable impacts to a wild ungulate herd (§ 17.84(k)(7)(vi)).

In the context of long-term conservation and recovery of the Mexican wolf, the social or economic benefits and impacts of recovery form a delicate balance that has, so far, provided a level of social support for the recovery effort, however strained by the recent exponential and so far unexplained increase in depredation.

Considering modifying any of these three allowable forms of take of Mexican wolves to protect the genetic health of the experimental population in the MWEPA and achieve the genetic recovery criterion, must therefore consider maintaining a social consensus that insures that legal takes required to balance benefits and impacts are not replaced with a sharp increase in illegal takes, many of which are lethal and indiscriminate of genetic value.

As recognized by the Courts, "it is clear that in drafting the present Section 10(j) rule, the take provisions are critical to conciliating those opposed to the reintroduction effort, and severing them would be contrary to the agency's intent to draft a rule that furthers the effectiveness of the reintroduction effort." (Center for Biological Diversity v/ Jewell, No. 4:15-cv-00019-JGZ (D. Ariz.)(March 31, 2018, Order)).

The simple facts are that legal removal of wolves from the wild U.S. population have a minimum impact:

- Based on USFWS data, from 2008 to 2020, 16 wolves were removed from the wild population and not returned because of depredation (USFWS). That is an average of 1.2 wolf per year.
- Conversely, from 2012 to 2018, 50 wolves were illegally killed from the wild population because of social resentment for depredation (4 in 2012; 5 in 2013; 7 in 2014; 8 in 2015; 7 in 2016; 6 in 2017; and 13 in 2018. That is an average of 7.1 wolf per year.

While the 1.2 average annual rate of removal of wolves by legal take is factually a number low enough to have no appreciable negative impact on any measure of genetic health in the wild population, the 7.1 average annual rate of removal of wolves by illegal take is certainly high enough, individually and in cumulation, to have a very meaningful impact on all Mexican Wolf population metrics, such as population count and genetic health, but also financial costs and speed of recovery.

Every other consideration fully taken into account, the Eastern Arizona Counties Organization urges the Service to consider the implications on social tolerance of potentially modifying the rules on take on non-Federal lands in conjunction with a removal action (50 CFR 17.84(k)(7)(iv)(C)); take on Federal land (§ 17.84(k)(7)(v)(A)); and take in response to unacceptable impacts to a wild ungulate herd (§ 17.84(k)(7)(vi)).

Narrow range of topic #4 – produce a draft and final supplemental EIS to the 2014 EIS that includes updated data, information, and analyses pertinent to any of the revisions under consideration in the new revised rule

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization acknowledges the intent of the Service to:

- Modify the Purpose and Need;
- Revise in Alternative One (Proposed Action and Preferred Alternative) the population objective and release recommendations;
- Possibly revise in Alternatives One and Two any of the three forms of allowable take discussed above;
- Not revise any of the components of Alternatives Three or Four.

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization is looking forward to updated data in the supplemental EIS at the relevant State or county level for Arizona and New Mexico to analyze the environmental effects of the revisions on the land use, biological resources, economic activity, health and human safety, and environmental justice in the project area.

The Eastern Arizona Counties Organization will provide further comments under on-going scoping as such data becomes available.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Whiting
Eastern Arizona Counties Organization Chair
Navajo County Supervisor

Richard Lunt
Eastern Arizona Counties Organization vice-Chair
Greenlee County Supervisor

Tommie Martin
Eastern Arizona Counties Organization past Chair
Gila County Supervisor

Paul David
Eastern Arizona Counties Organization Director
Graham County Supervisor

Travis Simshauser
Eastern Arizona Counties Organization Director
Apache County Supervisor

Peggy Judd
Eastern Arizona Counties Organization Director
Cochise County Supervisor

Pascal Berlioux, PhD, MBA
Executive Director
Eastern Arizona Counties Organization

GREENLEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA INFORMATION FORM



MEETING DATE: June 10, 2020
DEPARTMENT: BOS

REQUESTED BY: Derek Rapiere
TELEPHONE #: _____

1. Insert brief description of proposal and requested Board action:

Discussion/Action – Consideration of Proposed ECO comments regarding the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Notice of intent to prepare a supplement to an environmental impact statement on the Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of Mexican wolf.

2. Continued from meeting of: _____
Discussed in meeting of: _____

3. Publication requirements:

Does this require publication in the official county newspaper? Yes No
This department to cause publication Clerk of the Board to cause publication

4. Financial Impact:

Expenditure: Is this a budgeted expense? Yes No Project Code #: _____
Fund _____ \$ _____ Actual Not to exceed
Fund _____ \$ _____ Actual Not to exceed
If not budgeted, how will this expense be funded? _____

Grants/Contracts:

Federal State Other _____
CFDA # (Federal grants only) _____ State # _____
Fund _____ \$ _____
Matching funds required? Yes No Fund _____ \$ _____

5. Legal Review: Does this item require County Attorney review and approval as to form and within powers granted under the laws of the State of Arizona to the Greenlee County Board of Supervisors?

Yes No

Date of County Attorney approval: _____

6. Board of Supervisors action taken:

Approved Amended Disapproved Tabled

Original backup documentation must accompany this form!

DEREK D. RAPIER
County Administrator
Clerk of the Board
(928) 865-2072
drapier@greenlee.az.gov
FACSIMILE (928) 865-9332



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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RICHARD LUNT
District 3

June 10, 2020

Amy Lueders
Regional Director,
Southwest Region
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of the Interior
500 Gold Ave. SW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Electronic posting at <http://www.regulations.gov> Docket No. FWS-R2-ES-2020-0007

Re: Greenlee County's comments on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Notice of intent to prepare a supplement to an environmental impact statement on the Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of Mexican wolf.

Dear Ms. Lueders:

Greenlee County, located in Southeastern Arizona, is the State's smallest by population and the state's second smallest county by land mass. Decisions regarding use of federal lands within Greenlee County have an outsized effect on the county as only approximately 6% of the land is privately owned. With respect to the management of endangered species, the effect is multiplied as management actions usually affect public land and private property the same. Greenlee County has been an active participant to the revision to the nonessential experimental population of the Mexican Wolf that resulted in the 2015 Rule, and to the revision of the Recovery Plan that resulted in the 2017 First Revision and expects to continue to be actively involved with the development and implementation of these plans.

Greenlee County is also a member of the Eastern Arizona Counties Organization (ECO) consisting of Apache, Cochise, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, and Navajo Counties. Greenlee County has officially accepted, approved and endorsed comments submitted by ECO as Greenlee County's own comments and incorporates ECO's comments as our own.

Greenlee County submits the following comments on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Notice of Intent to prepare a supplement to an environmental impact statement on the Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of Mexican wolf. These comments are limited in scope to issues "concerning specific provisions of the 2015 final rule identified by the District Court of Arizona in the March 31, 2018, Order" (p.

20968). Although somewhat beyond the scope of the current consideration and scope of these comments, Greenlee County hereby incorporates by reference any previous comments it has submitted as well as previous comments by ECO in which Greenlee County has previously participated.

Essential vs. Nonessential Classification of the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) wolves.

Given the significantly increased number and genetic diversity of Mexican Grey Wolves in captivity which could easily be further increased to address additional genetic diversity and wolf population, there is no need under current conditions, to change the classification of the MWEPA wolves from nonessential to essential. In the highly unlikely event that all wolves in the MWEPA were to disappear, there are more than enough wolves currently in the captive breeding population to replace the MWEPA population. Additionally, these wolves represent a better genetic pool to draw from than those wolves currently in the MWEPA. This fact does not in any way diminish the challenges that the loss of all wild wolves currently in MWEPA would represent; rather it only serves to highlight the success of the captive breeding program that serves as a failsafe to the wolves released or currently living in the wild. However, such a complete loss of all wolves in the MWEPA is a staggeringly unlikely event. Moreover, since the Court's order in 2015, a growing population of wolves has been documented in the Sierra Madre range in Mexico.

Because of these realities, pursuant to 50 CFR § 17.80 (b) the experimental population of Mexican wolves in the MWEPA must remain classified as nonessential.

Alignment of Population and Release Objectives in the New Revised Rule with the Recovery Criteria in the Revised Recovery Plan: Population Objectives and Release Recommendations.

In its 2015 Order, the Court was concerned that the population objective and effective migration rate published in the 2015 10(j) rule failed to prevent long-term erosion in the genetic health of the experimental population. However, these specific concerns were addressed in the 2017 Recovery Plan, First Revision as expressed in the Population Viability Model developed for the revised plan. In short, the information deficit that appears to have guided the Court's 2015 decision, have been addressed in subsequent planning and data used to support that planning process. Greenlee County supports aligning the population objective recommendation in the new revised rule with the recovery criteria in the revised recovery plan for the MWEPA.

The subsequent data referenced above also shines light on release recommendations in that the cross-fostering initiatives have been highly successful in producing genetically viable adult breeding wolves relative to previous attempts to introduce naïve adult wolves. In short, the cross-fostering program is working and achieving better results that releasing captive adults into the MWEPA. Therefore, urges the Service to align release recommendations in the new revised rule with the recovery criteria in the revised recovery plan for the MWEPA.

Ensure that Management Decisions and Practices Support MWEPA Population-Level Genetic Health and Diversity.

Greenlee County is supportive of the Service's decisions to not modify allowable take provisions by livestock guard dogs, by a domestic animal owner or an agent thereof of a wolf in the act of biting, killing, or wounding a domestic animal, or in defense of human life. As such, Greenlee County urges the Service to ensure that the new revised rule supports population-level genetic health for the Mexican wolf in the MWEPA is therefore focused on the effect of legal takes on the genetic health for the Mexican wolf in the MWEPA and more specifically, take on non-federal land in conjunction with removal, take on federal lands and take in response to unacceptable impacts to wild ungulate herds.

From its inception, this recovery program has strived to strike a balance between long-term conservation and recovery of the Mexican wolf and the societal acceptance of the recovery program. While many on both side of the issues are passionate about the wolves continued existence in the wild, should the impacts on those who live in, make a living on, or visit the MWEPA increase to an intolerable level, it will impact the continued viability of a continued successful recovery program. This delicate balance has been challenged by recent dramatic increases in depredation within the MWEPA for which there has not yet been adequate explanation. Without an understanding of what has recently changed, it is impossible to come up with a plan to address the changed behavior and as a result, frustration grows. Lack of insight leading to increased frustration presents a threat to the recovery program. Take tools as set forth above, allow the Service sufficient management flexibility to be able to maintain the delicate balance necessary to achieve recovery success.

The minimal effect on the MWEPA population by allowable take and removal has far less negative effect than illegal take. Additionally, with the successful cross-fostering and the over-abundance of captive breeding wolves as noted above, continuation of legal take does more to ensure success of the reintroduction program than limiting these forms of allowable and acceptable forms of take. Therefore, Greenlee County urges the Service to consider the implications of modifying legal forms of take as posing a real and measurable threat to continued viability of the MWEPA.

The Supplemental EIS Should Include and Utilize Current Data and Analysis in Revising the New Proposed Rule.

All decisions and all decision processes, whether formal institutional decisions or informal individual decisions, must necessarily utilize new, updated and accurate data. It does no good to wolves, the Service, or to people affected by the Service's decisions and decision process to be forced to rely on data that is outdated or inaccurate. Doing so only serves to increase frustration and contention in the recovery process leading to increased litigation and unnecessarily drawn out decision making. Such discord is NOT in the best interest of the Mexican Grey Wolf.

Greenlee County urges the Service to utilize updated, current data in the development of the Supplemental EIS so that the best decisions can be made balancing wolf population genetic diversity, recovery viability, human safety and economic activity among other considerations.

Greenlee County will continue to provide further comments as the process of on-going scoping continues and as new data becomes available.

Sincerely,

Richard Lunt, Chairman
on behalf of the Greenlee County
Board of Supervisors