



Perspectives in Wolf Conservation

Reading; Writing; Human Dimensions

Time Frame: 1 full class day

Grade: 9-10

Overview

Successful wolf management needs to balance all dimensions. Wildlife managers cannot look solely at the biology. They must consider the social and economic realms as well. In this activity, students will read a couple of articles focused on the social issues surrounding wolf management. They will analyze the articles before writing a newspaper editorial expressing their own viewpoints.

Author: Eric Proctor

Essential Questions

- What factors affect wildlife management decisions?
- How can life events influence people’s attitudes and cause them to change over time?

Objectives

- Define “stakeholder.”
- Identify facts and opinions from a collection of articles related to wolf management.
- Evaluate an author’s argument based on evidence.
- Write a newspaper editorial using evidence to support their opinion.

Arizona Department of Education Standards

Science

- S2.C1.PO3
- S2.C1.PO4
- S3.C1.PO1
- S3.C1.PO3
- S3.C2.PO3
- S3.C2.PO5
- S4.C4.PO4

College and Career Ready – ELA

- 9-10.RST.1
- 9-10.RST.4
- 9-10.WHST.1

National Standards

Next Generation Science

- HS-LS2-7

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

- 1.9.1
- 1.9.3
- 2.1
- 2.4.2

Materials and Resources

- “The Tug-of-War of Conservation” article (one per student)
- “A Patchwork of Perspectives” article (one per student)
- *Perspectives of Wolf Conservation* worksheet (one per student)
- Whiteboard or chalkboard
- Markers or chalk

Teacher Preparation

- Make copies of the two articles and worksheets for each student.

Background Information

In an ideal world, everyone would agree on the best ways to manage and conserve wildlife. In reality, however, it can be hard to separate wildlife management from the politics of the

day. And few wildlife conservation issues elicit more extremes of opinion than the Mexican wolf reintroduction in the southwestern United States.

In general, the citizens of Arizona would like to see wolves returned to the landscape. However, we struggle to balance that desire with the needs of humans. Larry Voyles, director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, says, "We believe that with careful and thoughtful approaches to wolf management, a 'reasonable' number of wolves can viably exist on the landscape within the social, biological, and economic context that is modern Arizona." As Mr. Voyles indicates, if we are to be successful in managing wolves and restoring them to portions of their historic range, then we must look beyond just the science of wolves. We must also consider current social and economic circumstances.

In this lesson, students will explore the social realm of wolf management. They will read two articles that present varying perspectives on wolves in Arizona. They will have the chance to analyze the different viewpoints and to separate fact from opinion. They will place the arguments on different sides of the issue to explore balance. Finally, the students will explain their own viewpoint by writing an editorial to a local newspaper.

Procedures

1. Discuss briefly the history of wolves in Arizona. Indicate that Mexican wolves were historically found in parts of Arizona. However, by the middle of the twentieth century they were gone due to a variety of causes.
2. Explain that the Arizona Game and Fish Department has been working for a number of years on reintroducing wolves to portions of their historic range in the state. But that it has not been easy.
3. Ask students to brainstorm challenges that might be encountered during a

wolf reintroduction program. Write their responses on the board.

4. Inform the students that these challenges they listed can be grouped together into similar categories.
5. As an example of one category, write the word "biological" on the board. Ask students to explain what we might mean by this term as it relates to the discussion. The students should be able to mention that it includes challenges that relate to the biology of wolves and their habitat. Have students identify any challenges that would fit into this category.
6. Ask students to think of additional categories that the other challenges may fit. Write these on the board. They should include "social" and "economic."
7. Have students identify which challenges fit into the different categories.
8. Explain that if wolf reintroduction is to be successful in Arizona, wildlife managers must consider all aspects of the situation, not just the biological.
9. Inform the students that today they will be exploring the social side of wolf management.
10. Hand out the two articles and the accompanying worksheets.
11. Instruct the students to read the first article and answer the questions on the worksheet. When prompted, they should then read the second article and complete the worksheet.
12. Provide students with time to read the articles and complete the worksheet.



Differentiated Instruction

Extensions:

- Have the students contact a local newspaper to see whether they would be willing to publish their editorials.
- Put all the editorials together into a collection. Have students identify which sides of the “tug-of-war” are represented. Have them select one editorial to respond to in a typical “Letter to the Editor” format.

Modifications:

- Use “popcorn” reading and other strategies to read the articles as a class. Students can also work in small groups to complete the worksheet.

Reflection

Use the space below to reflect on the success of the lesson. What worked? What didn't? What changes would you make? These notes can be used to help the next time you teach the lesson. In addition, the Department would appreciate any feedback. Please send your comments to focuswild@azgfd.gov. We'd love to see examples of the student editorials as well!

THE TUG-OF-WAR OF



CONSERVATION

The importance of building social tolerance for Mexican wolves

By Loren Chase, Ph.D.

Few people can get through childhood without playing tug-of-war. We all had our tactics to win: putting the stronger people in back, locking your arms, pulling with your legs, and taking small steps. Such a simple game taught teamwork and showed examples of physics and mechanical advantage. Unfortunately, some mistakenly view Mexican wolf management in Arizona as a game of tug-of-war. This is understandable. In the past, few conservation issues have been more contentious, litigious or complex as Mexican wolf management.





GEORGE ANDREIKO

On one end of the rope, some individuals and organizations are tugging in their direction to have large numbers of Mexican wolves thriving across the entire Southwest. Numbers that are unrealistic in our modern age. Habitat conditions and vast amounts of open space are not what they were historically. These groups are concerned that a viable, self-sustaining population of Mexican wolves will not be established or that the project may be discontinued. That compels them to pull even harder through actions such as filing lawsuits to force changes that match their version of how wolf management should look. However, with human and urban expansion, habitat degradation and diminishing prey base, it is unrealistic to expect wolves to recover to their historic numbers.

At the opposite end of the rope, others are pulling to have the government stop wolf conservation and kill all wolves on sight. People strongly opposed to wolf reintroduction may include those who believe their ability to make a living will be jeopardized, such as the logging industry's inability to access forest products if critical habitat were to be designated for wolves. Agricultural producers fear the loss of livestock through wolf depredation because of the industry's already-thin profit margins. Many within the hunting community are concerned there will be loss of big game, thus reducing their ability to hunt deer or elk.

And in the middle of the rope is the great majority of Arizonans who weakly support or oppose wolf reintroduction and remain largely unaware of the issues that come with wolf management. Most are suburbanites with little connection to nature, or they are recent transplants from states that lack the awe-inspiring ecosystems Arizona offers. Their daily life is impacted very little by the presence or absence of a Mexican wolf, so they do not have a strong opinion in either direction.

Monitoring all of this counterproductive infighting is the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The department is committed to a wolf reintroduction program that will put wolves on the land, but at a level that allows ranching to occur and big game populations to continue at healthy levels. The department supports the concept of "multiple-use" of Arizona's public lands, which includes conserving wildlife and their habitats, livestock production, public recreational activities, hunter opportunity, and recovery of imperiled wildlife species. However, perhaps the most daunting challenge of the department's Mexican wolf management is gaining social acceptance.

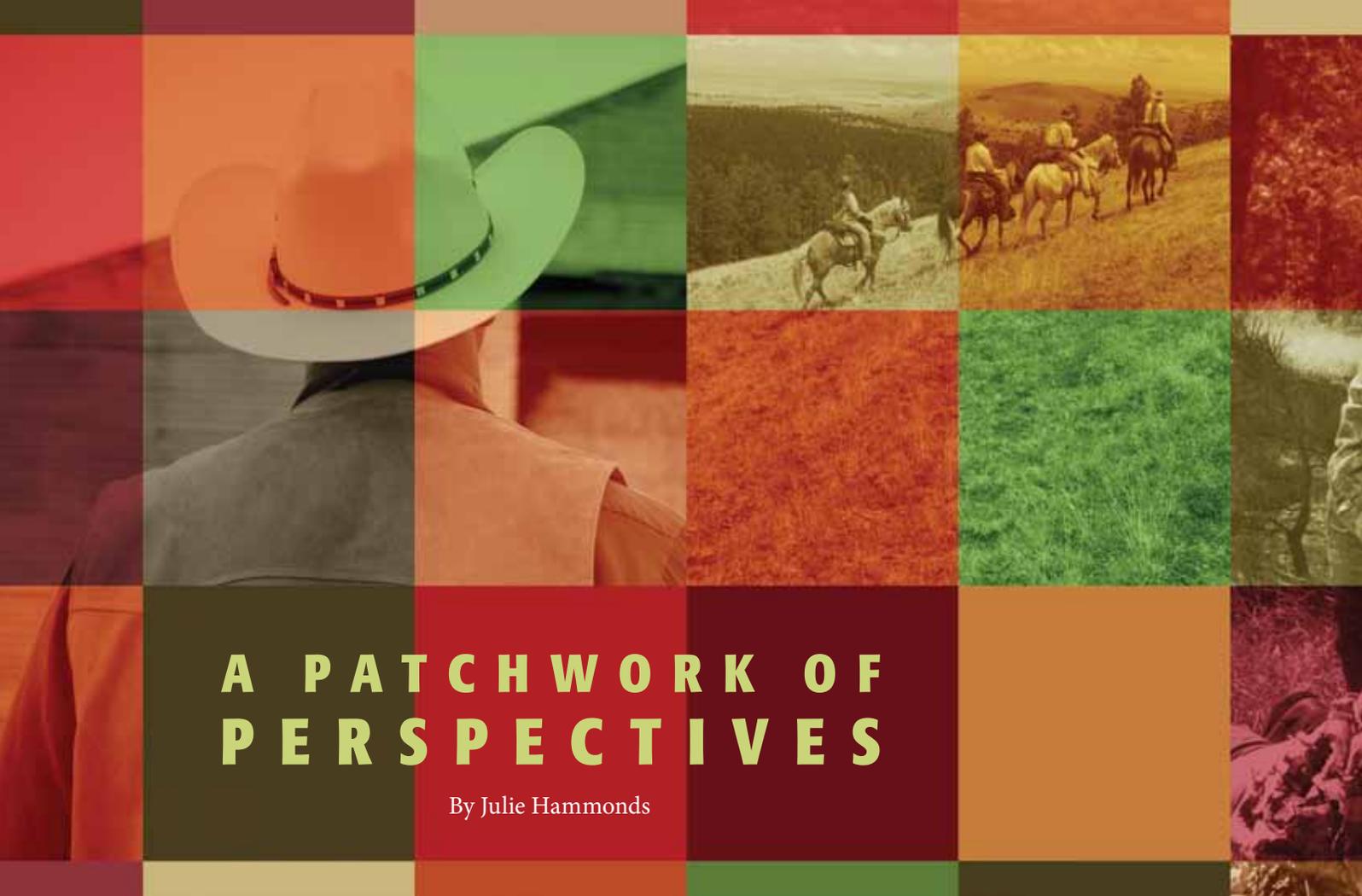
The department is trying to help various

stakeholders at opposing ends of the issue better understand and tolerate the nuances of managing wolves. For example, those who live where wolves occur are most affected by their presence. Therefore, acceptance of the wolf reintroduction project by this group is essential to the success of Mexican wolf conservation. Wolves are likely to reduce local hunting opportunities in some areas, so the acceptance of the wolf management program by this group is also important. Finally, buy-in from wolf advocates is important too because without their support, efforts to gain additional funding for wolves, invest in compensation programs, or other landowner incentives would be diminished.

History has shown that when Arizonans set aside these misleading tug-of-wars and pull together in the same direction, focusing on commonalities, we achieve great conservation successes. One notable success is the ongoing recovery efforts for the California condor. Hunters in Arizona have voluntarily reduced lead available to condors by using non-lead ammunition or by removing gutpiles from the field. The department helps by using Heritage Fund dollars to provide non-lead ammunition at no charge to hunters drawn for a hunt in the condor's core range. Other conservation groups contribute to a raffle for hunters who turn in a gutpile. Each group contributes a little, and everyone benefits, especially the condor. Additionally, Arizona has many other examples of cooperative successes including black-footed ferrets, Chiricahua leopard frogs, Sonoran pronghorn and Apache trout.

The reality is that Mexican wolves are — due to laws created by the citizens of this country — returning in some number to portions of their former, historically-occupied lands. It is imperative that individuals and organizations consider the factual science surrounding wolf management issues, use reason when discussing these volatile issues, and comprehend opposing viewpoints. Each stakeholder must evaluate his or her position and decide if they are going to pull against each other at the extremes of the artificial tug-of-war or work together to seek common ground. However, we invite all to set aside the zero-sum mentality of yesteryear where one team must lose in order for another to win. Because when it comes to Mexican wolf conservation, if we all win a little, nobody loses a lot. 🐾

■ Dr. Loren Chase is the department's human dimensions program manager and leads several statewide and national research studies. He hopes to see a wolf when he is hunting with his grandkids many years from now.



A PATCHWORK OF PERSPECTIVES

By Julie Hammonds

The reintroduction of Mexican wolves to Arizona and New Mexico has affected many people. Their voices are pieced together here like squares in a multi-colored quilt.

Wolf advocate Bobbie Holaday founded Protect Arizona's Wolves and was a key force behind wolf reintroduction.

"We very much need a top predator in the wild," she says. "Unfortunately, when the wolf was destroyed, the coyote moved into that niche. But coyotes couldn't do the job the wolf had done. Wolves keep a healthy population of deer. With the wolf back, deer and elk have to be on the alert and move around. They have more exercise and are healthier.

"Putting the wolf back into its niche was a way of maintaining a healthy balance among the whole ecological system and every species in it. This not

only benefited advocates who wanted to have wolves in the wild, but hunters and those who enjoy taking advantage of all the opportunities in nature.

"We have wolves that were born in the wild now, which we didn't before, and that's what I wanted: wild wolves."

Sportsmen foresee impacts to wild ungulates, particularly elk, and to hunting opportunities.

"Being an elk lover, elk hunter and a conservationist that specializes in elk, the loss of elk is the number one issue to me personally," says Steve Clark, president of the Arizona Elk Society. "The Mexican gray wolf's diet

is 80 percent to 90 percent elk. This could easily affect the wildlife of Arizona unless we keep the wolf population in check." He adds, "Currently we're losing hunting opportunity. Hunters spend money not only on licenses and tags but on food and gas and hotel space and laundry. It all adds up for those small communities."

"Many sportsmen and women are resigned to the fact we have wolves in Arizona," says Jim Unmacht, president of Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation. "We ought to maintain that population in the Blue Range, but not try to recover a species that had only 10 percent of its historical range in our state,



to the detriment of all other species in Arizona. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should work with Mexico to recover the species in Mexico, where 90 percent of its range used to be.”

The re-establishment of a top predator in a landscape that's no longer wild concerns livestock growers.

Rancher Barbara Marks lives in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area and says the reintroduction “pretty much changed life as we knew it.” Wolves have attacked their cattle and working dogs. They have changed grazing locations to minimize conflicts with wolves and, in turn, had to buy supplemental hay for their herds. A range rider

now stays with the cattle constantly during critical times such as calving season.

“Ranchers didn’t want the wolves in the first place,” she says, “and for them to bear most of the financial burden of wolf presence — that’s not fair.” The ranchers are grateful for programs such as one offered by the Mexican Wolf Conservation Fund, which cover some (but not all) of the added operational costs. Patrick Bray of the Arizona Cattle Growers’ Association says, “We roughly estimate it costs \$20 a head more to raise cattle [annually] in the Blue Range than in other parts of Arizona.”

The reservations of two Apache tribes are near the wolf recovery area in Arizona. Each tribe responded differently to the wolf reintroduction.

“From the beginning, the San Carlos Apaches unwaveringly opposed wolves moving out of the recovery area onto their reservation,” recalls Dave Parsons, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s first Mexican wolf recovery coordinator. “A couple traditional San Carlos Apaches were interested in doing a blessing of sorts for the wolves when they were first released from crates into acclimation pens in 1998,” but the tribal council nixed the idea. “As far as I know,

they still feel the same way: They have no intention of hosting wolves on their reservation.”

The White Mountain Apaches also showed interest as the program began, “but it never turned into a request or an agreement at the time, to allow the wolf population to expand onto the reservation.” Later, “there was an agreement forged with the tribe and they do allow wolves to come onto their reservation, at least in some numbers. That continues to this day. We have one tribe participating, one tribe not.” ❁

■ Julie Hammonds is the associate editor of *Arizona Wildlife Views* magazine.



Perspectives in Wolf Conservation

Part 1: Read “The Tug-of-War of Conservation” and then answer the following questions.

1. Write three statements from the article that would be considered facts.

2. How do you know that these statements are facts?

3. Write three statements from the article that would be considered opinions.

4. How do you know that these statements are opinions?

5. Each statement below appears in the article. Explain what is meant by each one, paying close attention to the words in ***bold italics***. Use evidence from the article for support.
 - a. “The department supports the concept of ***multiple-use*** of Arizona’s public lands.”

 - b. “The department is trying to help various ***stakeholders*** at opposing ends of the issue better understand and tolerate the nuances of managing wolves.”

6. Each statement below appears in the article and represents a differing viewpoint associated with wolf reintroduction in Arizona. Identify evidence in the reading that the author uses to support each statement.
 - a. “[S]ome individuals and organizations are tugging in their direction to have large numbers of Mexican wolves thriving across the entire Southwest. Numbers that are unrealistic in our modern age.”

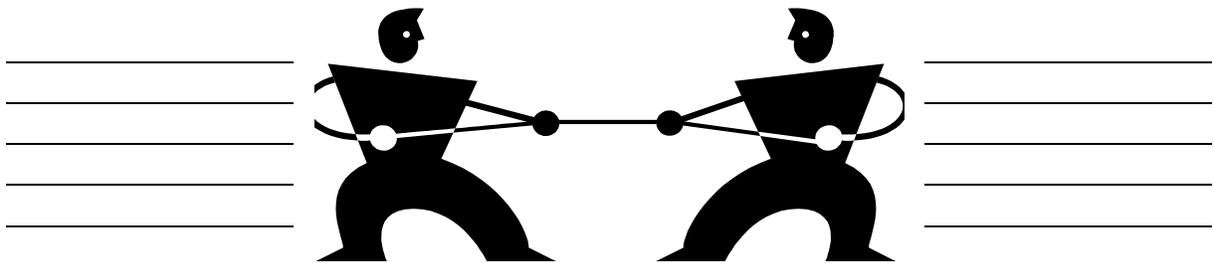
- b. “[O]thers are pulling to have the government stop wolf conservation and kill all wolves on sight. People strongly opposed to wolf reintroduction may include those who believe their ability to make a living will be jeopardized...”
 - c. “[T]he great majority of Arizonans who weakly support or oppose wolf reintroduction and remain largely unaware of the issues that come with wolf management...do not have a strong opinion in either direction.”
 - d. “History has shown that when Arizonans set aside these misleading tug-of-wars and pull together in the same direction, focusing on commonalities, we achieve great conservation successes.”
7. The author uses the analogy of a tug-of-war to highlight the different sides of the wolf reintroduction debate. In your opinion, does the author believe the tug-of-war is good or bad for wolves? How do you know?

Part 2: Read “A Patchwork of Perspectives” and then answer the following questions.

1. Listed below are people and organizations discussed in the article. Identify whether they would likely support or oppose the wolf reintroduction program. Provide evidence from the article to support your conclusion.
- a. Arizona Elk Society
 - b. Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation
 - c. Barbara Marks

- d. Bobbie Holaday
- e. San Carlos Apache Tribe
- f. White Mountain Apache Tribe

2. Of the individuals and groups listed above, with which do you most agree? Why?
3. In the previous article, “The Tug-of-War of Conservation,” the author compares the wolf reintroduction program to the popular childhood game tug-of-war, with the two sides pulling in opposite directions. Place the people or organizations above onto their appropriate sides of the tug-of-war illustrated below.



Part 3: You have been invited by the local newspaper to write an editorial about the wolf reintroduction program. You must choose whether you support or oppose the program. Your editorial must include evidence presented in either “The Tug-of-War of Conservation” or “A Patchwork of Perspectives.” Do your best to convince the readers of your viewpoint.