

# **Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Adaptive Management Oversight Committee Standard Operating Procedure**

**Title:** Writing and Approving SOPs

**Number:** 2.0

**File:** MW SOP 02.Writing and Approving SOPs.Final.20050430.doc

**Purpose:** The purpose of this SOP is to establish the process for developing and approving SOPs for the Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project.

**Exceptions:** AMOC must approve any exceptions to Project SOPs, except SOP 2.0, for which the Directors of the Lead Agencies must approve exceptions.

**Background:** Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among cooperating agencies (Appendix A), AMOC has been delegated authority to develop and approve SOPs that guide Project cooperators, and especially the IFT that works on the ground with agencies, landowners, the public, and the wolves. In accordance with that MOU, Project SOPs must conform to (a) applicable state, federal, or tribal laws or regulations, and (b) Recovery Guidelines, Protocols, or other directives issued or approved by the Regional Director, Southwest Region, USFWS. Project SOPs are discussed in at least one AMWG public meeting before AMOC approval, to ensure substantive opportunities for public comment.

AMOC bears the primary burden of communication with regard to development, approval, and awareness of Project SOPs. AMOC shall collectively and individually ensure that Lead Agency Directors, the IFT, AMWG Cooperators, and the public are appropriately afforded opportunities to participate in developing and/or commenting on SOPs.

AMOC shall also ensure that copies of SOPs and any supporting documents are available as necessary to ensure they serve the intended purpose of guiding employees working in or cooperating with the Project and informing the public about the guidelines under which the Project operates.

## **Procedures:**

1. Drafting or revising an SOP:
  - a. Drafting a new SOP or revising an existing SOP may be initiated by the IFT, or by AMOC request in response to comment from within or outside the Project, including but not limited to the IFT (collectively or an individual member), AMOC (collectively, an individual member, or a Lead Agency Director), AMWG Cooperator, or member of the public.
  - b. The three IFT Leaders (AGFD, NMDGF, and WMAT), in collaboration with the Field Projects Coordinator, jointly designate a Lead Author, typically an IFT member, to gather relevant information and develop a new or revise an existing SOP.

2. IFT review:
  - a. The Lead Author requests comment from the other IFT members; revises the SOP as appropriate; and integrates comment from other IFT members. Discussion within the IFT should occur to ensure that differences of opinion are resolved amicably, to the maximum extent possible.
  - b. The IFT communication liaison to AMOC (i.e. the Field Projects Coordinator) conveys the draft SOP, and information on any dissenting opinions within the IFT, to AMOC.
3. AMOC review:
  - a. Initial review -- each member of AMOC acting independently of the others:
    - i. Reviews the draft SOP;
    - ii. Vets the draft SOP within their agency to ensure appropriate concurrence; and
    - iii. Sends comment and requests for clarifications to the IFT (via the Field Projects Coordinator; with a cc: to the other Lead Agency representatives) to convey to the Lead Author, who revises the document as appropriate, in consultation with the IFT.
    - iv. When the IFT has concluded its revision, the Field Projects Coordinator conveys the draft SOP, and information on any dissenting opinion within the IFT, to AMOC.
  - b. Second review – AMOC acting in unison:
    - i. AMOC discusses the final draft SOP in an AMOC meeting;
    - ii. AMOC, after sufficient agreement is reached, discusses the final draft SOP in an AMWG public meeting;
    - iii. AMOC, if necessary after AMWG discussion, submits direction for changes through the Field Projects Coordinator to the Lead Author, who makes the appropriate changes in collaboration with the IFT Leaders before the Field Projects Coordinator returns the final draft SOP to AMOC for approval;
    - iv. AMOC, if AMWG discussion results in no changes, schedules consideration of approval of the final draft SOP as written.
4. Approval:
  - a. AMOC approves SOPs by:
    - i. Vote in an AMOC meeting;
    - ii. Conference call; or
    - iii. Email.
  - b. Only Lead Agencies vote, but concurrence by Cooperators will be sought before voting.
5. Dissemination:
  - a. After AMOC has approved an SOP, the AMOC Chair distributes it to the Lead Agencies, Cooperators, and IFT.
6. Lead Agency non-concurrence: As stated in the MOU among the Cooperators, “Conflicts between or among the Signatories concerning this Agreement that cannot be resolved at the lowest possible level shall be referred to the next higher level, et seq., as necessary, for resolution.”

**Approvals:**

The Directors of the six Lead Agencies participating in the Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project, under auspices of a Memorandum of Understanding among the Lead Agencies and with other agency Cooperators, approved this SOP on December 17, 2004.

**References:** None