

Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project

Adaptive Management Oversight Committee

Standard Operating Procedure

Title: Monthly Project Updates

Number: 4.0

File Name: MW SOP 04.Monthly Project Updates.Final.20050430.doc

Purpose: This SOP provides specific steps intended to ensure timely and accurate dissemination of approved Project information to interested parties and stakeholders. It supersedes relevant sections of the 1998 Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (USFWS 1998), and therefore represents, in part, the “Service Approved Management Plan” referenced in the Mexican Wolf Final Rule (50 CFR 17.84(k)).

Exceptions: None. Per SOP 2.0, AMOC must approve any exceptions to this SOP.

Background: Once each month, a narrative summary of Project activities is developed and distributed to specific target audiences. The update includes information on wolf activities, management activities, communication and coordination, outreach activities, personnel, and law enforcement news. A list of people and organizations that have asked to receive the update via email is maintained electronically, and can be updated as needed. Interested parties can also sign up to receive the monthly update through the AGFD website at <http://azgfd.gov> and the USFWS website at <http://mexicanwolf.fws.gov>. The IFT drafts the update, and then sends it to the Lead Agencies for input before the final version is distributed. The update addresses the entire Project, serves as part of the administrative record, is a public record, and is scrutinized very closely. Thus, it is vital at all stages that care is taken in both preparation and review of this document.

Procedures:

1. Preparing the Draft Update:
 - a. The IFT writes the first draft during the last week of the month.
 - i. Open the “Update Template” in C:/ALLDATA/Word/Final Updates (see Appendix A).
 - ii. Review printouts of “Weekly Journals” on clipboard at the Alpine Field Office for information of interest. Include all reported wolf sightings.
 - iii. Review “Observation Reports” for possible inclusion into the Draft Update.
 - iv. Review office calendar for possible information.
 - v. Include dates when events occurred (e.g. depredations, nuisance complaints, wolf captures, observations).
 - vi. Do not use campgrounds and other human-occupancy areas (e.g. ranches) as references for wolf locations.
 - vii. Do not name WS personnel or identify individual WS cooperators.
 - viii. For depredation information, do not name ranches or provide specific location information beyond (if appropriate) County and State/Reservation.
 - ix. For dates and numbers, do not use “March 2nd” rather use “March 2.”
 - x. After finishing the draft, use “Save As” in month-day-year.doc format.
 - xi. Print out the draft and review it *carefully* for tense agreements and typing errors.

2. Reviewing the Draft Update:
 - a. Have an IFT Leader or the Field Projects Coordinator review the Draft Update.
 - b. Make changes as necessary.
 - c. File the Update Draft and comments in “Update” file (file cabinet in Field Office).
3. Sending out the Draft Update:
 - a. By the second day of the following month, send out the draft as an attachment to “Wolf Update Draft” (Primary Cooperators) under “Groups” in the Lotus address book.
 - b. Type “Draft Wolf Update” and date in the subject line.
 - c. Type “Please return your comments by (time) on (date), Thank you.” (Provide a minimum of two full days for response time).
4. Finalizing the Draft Update:
 - a. The IFT incorporates comments from cooperators and completes the final Update.
 - b. Save all comments received in the file “Update Comments” folder in the “Update” file.
 - c. Check with an IFT Leader or the Field Projects Coordinator on questionable comments.
5. Sending out and distributing the final Update:
 - a. In Lotus Notes, create a “New Memo” and type “Wolf Update” in the “bcc:” field (this will automatically send it to the entire electronic update list – approximately 150 recipients, without revealing members on the list to others). You must enter an e-mail address, e.g. USFWS Field Projects Coordinator, in the “To:” field, or “bcc:” will not work. *Note:* to add someone to the Wolf Update list, open “Wolf Update” under “Groups” in the Address Book in Lotus Notes, enter email address, save, and close.
 - b. Type “Wolf Update” and reporting period date in subject line.
 - c. Type, “Attached is the (date of reporting period) Wolf Update” in the body of the email.
 - d. Attach the final Update and send.
 - e. Then, print a copy of the Final Update and fax it to the list in Appendix B.
 - f. Make 11 photocopies.
 - g. 2-hole punch the original and put on the “Update” clipboard in the Field Office.
 - h. Make individual contacts to distribute the field update in accordance with Appendix B.
 - i. File Check List (Appendix B) in Update File.
6. Repeat the process again each month!

Approvals:

The Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Adaptive Management Oversight Committee approved this SOP on November 18, 2004.

References:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1998. 1998 Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Appendix A.

Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update February 1 - 29, 2004

This is a summary of the Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project in Arizona and New Mexico. Additional information can be obtained by calling (928) 339-4329 or toll free at 1-888-459-WOLF, or by visiting the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's web site at <http://mexicanwolf.fws.gov>. Past updates may also be viewed on this website or interested parties may sign up to receive the update electronically by visiting <http://azgfd.gov>. This update is public property and can be used for any purpose. Please distribute as you see fit. The Reintroduction Project is a multi-agency cooperative effort among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services (USDA-WS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT) on the Ft. Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR), the San Carlos Apache Tribe (SCAT) on the San Carlos Apache Reservation (SCAR), and other supporting organizations including the Turner Endangered Species Fund (TESF) and Defenders of Wildlife (DOW).

Please report any wolf sightings, incidents of take or harassment of wolves, or suspected livestock depredations to: (928) 339-4329 or toll free at (888)-459-WOLF, or the Arizona Game and Fish Department's 24-Hour Dispatch (Operation Game Thief) at (800) 352-0700.

Numbering System: Mexican wolves are given an identification number recorded in an official studbook that tracks the history of all known Mexican wolves. Capital letters (M = Male, F = Female) preceding the number indicate adult animals 18 months or older. Lower case letters (m = male, f = female) indicate sub-adults (younger than 18 months) or pups. The capital letter "A" preceding the letter and number indicate alpha wolves.

Definitions:

For the purpose of this report, a "wolf pack" is defined as two or more wolves, one being collared, which maintains an established territory and are proven breeders. In the event that one of the two alpha wolves die, the pack status or name is retained by the remaining alpha wolf, regardless of pack size. A "group" of wolves is defined as two or more wolves that travel together.

CURRENT POPULATION STATUS

As of the end of February, the population consisted of 21 wolves with radio collars in nine packs, three groups, and four single wolves.

Arizona: Hawks Nest Pack (AF486, AM619), Cienega Pack (AF487) traveling with another uncollared wolf, Bluestem Pack (AF521, AM507), Saddle Pack (AM574, F797), M798 (traveling with an uncollared wolf), F858 (traveling with an uncollared wolf); and Bonito Creek Pack (AM794) and, Hon-Dah Pack (AM578), both located on the FAIR. **New Mexico:** Luna Pack (AF562, AM583), Gapiwi Pack (AF624), Francisco AF511 (traveling with an uncollared wolf), and pair F799 and M729.

New Mexico: There are four lone wolves: M795, and M859 in Arizona; and M832 (traveling with another wolf), and M796 in New Mexico. Based on other field data (sightings, tracks, howling etc.), there are approximately 10-15 additional wolves, not including pups born last year, distributed among the groups, as well as wolves traveling separately from known groups.

MONITORING

Field efforts continue to focus on monitoring wolf activity throughout the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, as well as on both the SCAR and the FAIR in Arizona.

The following is a brief status of wolf activities:

Arizona:

On February 5, M859 was hazed from the residential area of Nutrioso. He headed southeast and on February 17, project personnel observed him with two uncollared wolves in the vicinity of Escudilla Mountain. He was later located west of Alpine, and has since moved north out of the area.

The Bluestem Pack has been located in their traditional home range, which also includes portions of the FAIR, and recently was located just south of the Black River on SCAR.

F797 has been traveling with the Saddle Pack AM574 throughout the February breeding season. The group has primarily been located on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest; however, recently they have been located inside the SCAR border.

M795 was located on SCAR and in the Bear Wallow Wilderness in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.

M798 was located on FAIR and then in the northern portion of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area and is presumed to still be traveling with an uncollared wolf.

F858 has been located in Hawk's Nest traditional home range, along the Mogollon Rim, and on the FAIR.

New Mexico:

During February, M796 was located in the vicinity of the San Mateo Mountains on the Cibola National Forest.

On February 6, F799 and another collared wolf (presumed to be M729, whose collar is not functioning), were located north of the Gila Wilderness in the Reserve Ranger District.

On February 6, M832 was located with Gapiwi AF624. However, AF624 could not be located during aerial flights on February 11, 17, and 25 despite search attempts. On February 11, M832 was observed with a possibly collared wolf.

On February 10, during an aerial telemetry flight, project personnel observed AF511 with another wolf chasing a cow elk. Personnel hiked into the area and evidence of a chase and attack was observed, but no confirmation of a kill was documented and AF511 was no longer in the area.

On February 17, project personnel observed the Luna Pack pair feeding on an elk carcass.

Observation reports of wolves from the public are important as many of the wolves are currently dispersing. Please call the toll free number listed above to report wolf sightings.

INCIDENTS

On February 10, WS personnel investigated a report of a wolf incident with a dog near Nutrioso, AZ. It was determined that it was probable that the dog was bitten by M859 as he was in the area at the time and the bites were consistent with a wolf attack.

On February 26, WS personnel investigated a report of a cattle depredation in the northern portion of the Gila Forest, NM. It was determined that the cow died of non-predatory causes.

MORTALITIES

Nothing new to report.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

At last summer's SSP meeting, it was determined that M648 at Sevilleta was a high priority wolf for semen collection. On February 6, M648 was captured and Cheri Asa and Karen Bauman collected his semen for banking. He was also given his annual exam.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On February 4, Dan Groebner gave a wolf biology presentation to 42 Blue Ridge Pre-schoolers in Pinetop, AZ.

On February 5-7, Rich Bard gave a project update at the 37th Joint Annual Meeting of the Arizona and New Mexico Chapters of The Wildlife Society in Safford, Arizona. Approximately 150 attended the presentation.

On February 12, John Oakleaf gave a presentation to approximately 40 people at the FWS Regional Office in Albuquerque, NM.

On February 19, Melissa Woolf gave a presentation to approximately 30 people at Elephant Butte State Park in NM.

On February 19-22, Bruce Sitko and Dan Groebner manned a wolf information booth at the 2004 International Sportsman's Expo in Phoenix, AZ. Approximately 2,000 people visited the booth.

On February 24, Melissa Woolf gave a presentation to 20 kids at the Hot Springs High School Biology Club in NM.

On February 26, Maggie Dwire gave a project presentation to 35 members of the Sierra Club at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge.

On February 26, the Interagency Field Team met to discuss the 2003 Annual Report, the five-year review, and other logistical issues.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Janet Reed, USFWS volunteer, left the project this month. Thanks Janet for your hard work!

REWARDS OFFERED

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is offering a reward of up to \$10,000 for information leading to the conviction of the individual or individuals responsible for the shooting deaths of Mexican gray wolves. An additional \$10,000 is being offered by Defenders of Wildlife, and \$5,000 is being offered by the Center for Biological Diversity.

Individuals with information they believe may be helpful are urged to call one of the following agencies: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service special agents in Mesa, AZ, at (480) 967-7900, Pinetop, AZ, at (928) 367-5689, or Albuquerque, NM, at (505) 346-7828; the White Mountain Apache Tribe at (928) 338-1023 or (928) 338-4385; Arizona Game and Fish Department Operation Game Thief at 1-800-352-0700; or New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Operation Game Thief at 1-800-432-4263.

Killing a Mexican gray wolf is a violation of the federal Endangered Species Act, and can invoke criminal penalties of up to \$25,000 and/or six (6) months in jail or a civil penalty of up to \$25,000.

Appendix B.

Update Check List for Month of:	Date/Initials
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Hand Deliver by Alpine Staff: (make 12 copies)

- Alpine Wolf Office (2 hole punch and post original in office)
- Alpine Country Store
- Alpine Library (tack on entry bulletin board)
- Alpine Post Office (ask for key to glass case)
- Alpine Tackle Shop
- Blue Post Office
- Eagar Post Office (get “date” stamped, then tack on bulletin board)
- Nutrioso Post Office (tack on bulletin board)
- Springerville Library (give to staff person)
- Springerville Post Office (get “date” stamped, then tack on bulletin board)

Hand Deliver, FAX, E-Mail or Other Delivery

- USFS District Ranger Offices throughout the BRWRA
- County Government (main) offices throughout the BRWRA

Individual Fax:

The IFT maintains a list of private individuals who have requested that the Monthly Updates be sent to them. Any individual who wants to be added to that list should contact the IFT at the Alpine Field Office and provide fax and voice phone numbers.