

**MEXICAN WOLF ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
MEETING WITH THE INTERAGENCY FIELD TEAM**

Location : Tal-Wi-Wi Lodge, Highway 191, north of Alpine, AZ
Date: August 28, 2007
Time: AZ Time: 0800 – 1700
Host: AGFD
Participants: AMOC Lead Agencies: AGFD – Terry B. Johnson (Chair), Jon Cooley, Dan Groebner, Shannon Barber-Meyer, Shawna Nelson, Colby Gardner, Dave Cagle and Mike Godwin; NMGFD – Matt Wunder, Renae Held, Ellen Heilhecker; USDA FS – Cathy Taylor and Wally Murphy; USDA APHIS WS- Dave Bergman; Allan May, Chris Carillo, J. Brad Miller, Sterling Simpson, Keel Price and Mike Kelly; USFWS – John Morgart, Brian Sloan, Jim Ashburner and John Oakleaf; and WMAT – Cynthia Dale; SCAT - Dewey Wesley

AMWG Signatory Cooperators: Greenlee County AZ - Hector Ruedas and Kay Gale; New Mexico Department of Agriculture - Bud Starnes; Jan Porter-Carrejo – Sierra County NM

August 28

A. Welcome, Introductions, Ground Rules, Awards, and Agenda Review

Terry Johnson called the AMOC/IFT meeting to order at 0805 local time. After a brief welcome, awards and introductions, the agenda was followed. John Morgart passed out CD discs covering literature cited in the 5-Year Review to lead agencies and surrogates.

B. Paradise Pack Permanent Removal Order (PRO)

Copies of the Paradise Pack PRO with track changes were passed out. This version has been revised on several occasions to record ongoing incidents and remove livestock permittee name. Shannon Barber-Meyer presented the IFT recommendations. On August 17, an un-collared male was trapped. That animal (M1043) was transferred to Sevilleta and was determined to have previously been associated with the Rim Pack. However, there was no indication of presence of other Rim Pack animals in the depredation area.

The IFT recommended future relocation of M1043, and terminating the PRO if no additional depredations occur and after sheep are removed from the area per normal livestock operations in mid to late September. Given the capture of M1043 during Paradise Pack removal, discussion focused on modifying future PROs to include any wolf captured during a removal operation instead of members from a particular pack. Discussion on implication of M1043 in depredations followed.

WS (Dave Bergman) recommended M1043 not be returned to wild and remove PRO after 45 days (September 2). USFS (Cathy Taylor) seconded the WS recommendation to leave pack

intact and suspend PRO after 45 days. WMAT (Cynthia Dale) also supports WS and USFS. USFWS (John Morgart) wants to collar M1043 and release it after sheep are removed and follow movements, and if the animal joins Paradise pack then lethally remove it. If this is not possible, USFWS endorses the WS recommendation.

AGFD (Terry Johnson) recommends that (if no further depredation incidents occur): M1043 be referenced as a dispersing animal; all six depredation incidents assigned to the Paradise Pack be re-assigned to M1043; M1043 be permanently removed from wild; live-trapping cease immediately; the PRO terminate on September 2, as scheduled; and the Paradise Pack be re-set to zero depredation incidents. M1043 might or might not have been associated with the Paradise Pack, but the available facts and WS and IFT opinion identify it as the most likely depredator. Thus the recommendation is to cease Paradise Pack removal efforts now, and if an additional depredation incident occurs before September 2 start lethal removal of an additional animal and extend the PRO date past when sheep are scheduled to leave the area. Also, the IFT must step up hazing activities since trapping efforts are curtailed.

NMGFD concurred with AGFD.

AMOC Recommendation: All Lead Agencies concurred with the AGFD recommendation.

C. IFT Presence on Depredation Report Investigations in New Mexico

Allan May (NMWS) asked that IFT folks involved with removal efforts and depredation incidents in New Mexico work with NMWS on a professional level. He requests that the IFT have a discussion at future IFT meeting to rebuild trust and respect with NMWS personnel. IFT needs to review its working relationships. The real issue is a trust and respect issue.

Discussion then focused on whether AMOC should participate in the IFT discussions. Final consensus was that the IFT needs to try to handle this issue itself, and involve AMOC only if necessary.

Action Item: The IFT will initiate the internal discussions and then respond to AMOC on how it is handling this issue, with the monthly IFT meeting being a good platform to handle this issue.

D. Change in WS Information in Depredation Reports (the Privacy Act Issue)

Dave Bergman discussed Privacy Act issues and WS operations. According to Federal Law, WS can not provide location or permittee names on private and Tribal Lands. On public lands, WS can give the allotment name and GPS locations. This restriction applies to cooperating agencies.

E. Summaries of AMOC Briefings for Directors on SOPs 5.0, 6.0, 11.0, and 13.0

John Morgart stated he met with Ben Tuggle to discuss SOP revisions. Terry Johnson said Duane Shroufe has been keeping up to date on SOP revisions. Duane asked Terry if he supports SOP

changes, and Terry said he did not support all recommended changes. Terry advised Duane that some cooperators believe SOPs should not be changed now, but should be modified over a longer time period (one to two years) instead of over a rushed two month period. There are legitimate issues to incorporate, but this may not be the best blend of recommendations. Dave Bergman said his supervisor supports recommendations put forward by Dave Bergman and Allan May. WS believes AMOC and the IFT need to follow and abide by SOPs more consistently. We may need to revise MOU. Renae Held said that Bruce Thompson's concerns are with communication and process issues. He may not have many changes from what was recommended. Cathy Taylor spoke with Harv Forsgren (Regional Forester), who reviewed SOPs and documented major changes. Harv's main concerns are that the draft revised SOP 13 is loosening things up, and livestock permittees would be the ones losing. He wanted more of a balance among interested parties. **TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION.**

Hector Ruedas advised that this is clearly adaptive management and there is room for improvement, but why are we changing these SOPs when we spent so much time in developing them? Hector feels that we do not need to change anything at this time. Maybe review one SOP at a time in the future. Bud said his supervisor **and the Governor's Office** do not want to change SOPs now. Some constituents are gearing up for war, and changing the SOPs is not in the best interest. It does not make sense to change process now and maybe go through it again in near future (with NEPA and the 10j). Maybe we should make simple changes to SOP 13 to make life easier, but no big changes. Jan Carrejo thinks the process is too hurried, and it would be better if we followed the current SOPs more closely. SOPs may be changed next year, but do not do it now.

Comment [A1]: Is that right? The Governor's Office? I did not hear it that way.

F. Over-arching Issues for Lead Agency Guidance

Other Director's briefings were discussed. Terry Johnson said Duane is a believer of delegation, and in holding AMOC representatives responsible for dissemination of information to their Director. Duane focused on three areas to bring to the Directors: 1) Concurrence on PROs through AMOC or after AMOC has structured them; 2) Directors must be brought into play when AMOC is unable to agree on substantive issues; and 3) When AMOC sees a need to step outside the SOPs. We all need to play like team players, and share the responsibilities and work appropriately. If we do not have full allocation of resources across the agencies, then AGFD may need to pull out of the partnership and manage its own wolf project on non-Tribal Lands in Arizona. AGFD cannot afford to continue disproportionately underwriting the project. Arizona is investing too many resources into this program.

Dave Bergman asked if we need to re-craft the partnership with separate Arizona and New Mexico programs?

John Morgart said Ben Tuggle has emphasized there is uncertainty in AMOC, consistency of application, wavering of AMOC approach and complete confidence of AMOC as lead tool for Directors. Is there an AMOC variance from the Director approach? Ben wants to make it clear that cooperators need to unify when an unpopular decision is made. AMOC speaks for

cooperating Directors, and they need to stand by AMOC decisions and not have negative decisions reflected at him (USFWS).

Cynthia said John Caid told her that she is now the WMAT AMOC representative, and he trusts her to make the best decisions. He does not like surprises, and was concerned about the recommended changes in SOPs.

Cathy Taylor said the only other thing that came out of Harv's discussion is that he wants to be conferred with on PROs.

Renee said Bruce has trust with AMOC and wants decisions to stay with them. He knows that some issues need to be elevated to Directors' attention. One issue is to make the program more proactive, and get away from the current depredation focus. Use adaptive management approach more when appropriate.

Jan said this group needs to work together and it needs more local involvement. We need better information flow to local communities.

Bud said we have different communication flows, which is unique. NMDA is debating whether to stay in AMOC after these meetings. He will write a white paper to decide whether to stay in AMOC or not.

Hector said there are trust and respect issues for people working a long time together. He belongs in AMOC as a County Board of Supervisors representative. We have to work together to be successful. Greenlee County will stay in AMOC to represent citizens of county who live in wolf recovery area. The number one issue is to work on building trust and making the program positive.

Terry said break up AMOC into three independent programs would be a major failure for the program. We need to keep moving forward, but that means all six Lead Agencies need to be fully on board.

G. SOP 5.0: Initial Wolf Release

Two forms of draft revised SOP 5.0 were passed out. One is with numerous track changes and the other with the track changes incorporated with some comments retained. AMOC reviewed the clean copy version first. Terry Johnson led the discussion. Cathy Taylor had an overall concern about what the substantive changes were, because there were so many editorial changes and hard to tease out significant changes. Terry said that he incorporated all changes, since someone's substantive change is another's editorial change.

Bud said that he can not map the new SOP, but he could map the original version. It is very hard for the layman to understand this version.

Hector asked what the substantive changes are. Terry said the boundary of notification would be changed and the biology of wolves, livestock issues, and human uses would be analyzed to determine what that notification distance would be. This would add some uncertainty, and trust levels are low. The new process would allow for case-specific analysis of the parameters, public input and notification of potentially affected parties.

There are three substantive changes in draft revised SOP 5.0. 1) Increase area of notification to ten from five miles radius from release area with considerations for topography and predicted wolf movements to add to this area. 2) IFT to check with affected District Ranger(s) on NEPA compliance earlier in the initial release review process (the IFT is already doing this informally, but AMOC wants them incorporated into SOP 5.0); and 3) In addition to the normal contacts, the IFT would be required to contact identified livestock industry representatives for Arizona (NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION) and New Mexico (NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION) early in initial release process.

Action Item: AMOC concurred with the proposed changes and Terry Johnson will write a clarification memo to incorporate into future initial release activities.

H. SOP 6.0: Wolf Translocations

John Oakleaf noted that there are situations where there is a need to relocate wolves in the same day they are trapped, and this policy does not allow same day relocations.

Relocation notification must be initiated once the relocation process has begun. The AMOC Chair and his surrogate need to be contacted. Local livestock operators within a specified radius must be contacted. There is also a need to contact Arizona and New Mexico livestock representatives.

There is a need to continue public meetings to identify future relocation sites.

Action Item: AMOC recommends the same changes as in SOP 5.0, and Terry Johnson will write a clarification memo outlining the recommendation.

I. SOP 11.0: Wolf Depredation on Domestic Livestock and Pets

AMOC reviewed the track changes version. In the depredation reports section, discussion was directed at more clarification of section 7. Reports a.ii. Renae (NMGFD) specifically wanted to address legal presence of livestock, confirmation of wolf caused kill and ability to identify offending wolf or wolves.

It was recommended to modify 7. Reports a.ii. by removing "or wolves and what the management response under SOP 13.B should be."

TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION.

Shannon Barber-Meyer (AGFD) recommended clarification of legal livestock presence on tribal and private lands

On 7. Reports c. recommend following language, "Livestock depredated on tribal or private lands shall be presumed to have been legally present, unless the tribe or landowner stipulated otherwise."

WS recommends removal of "possible" from the cause of damage section in the Depredation Report Form.

AMOC agreed without dissent that the verbal report 24-hour turnaround should be changed to 48 hours. The written report needs to be turned in within 14 calendar days and should be consistent with the verbal report, which is unchanged from the current SOP.

Regarding livestock depredation investigations, Dave Bergman (WS) recommends that non-WS IFT members secure the depredation site, and wait for the WS agent to arrive on site so they can do the investigation. If WS cannot make it to the scene while the initial IFT member is there, the carcass should be tarped but care must be taken to preserve other evidence. The IFT member should monitor for any possible radio-collared wolves in the area. WS agents will not make track casts and/or pick up scat. The WS investigator will record the observed evidence on the appropriate Depredation Report Form.

Action item: Terry Johnson will write a clarification memo stating the three additional conditions that must be documented through the IFT investigation and any subsequent recommendation to AMOC: 1) WS confirmation of a wolf kill; 2) IFT identification of lawful presence of livestock; and 3) IFT associates the depredation incident(s) with a particular wolf or wolf pack. An assignment of depredation incidents of a wolf or wolves will be made according to SOP 11.0 and will remain referenced in SOP 13.0. In regard to investigating depredation scenes, WS is the responsible agency. Non-WS IFT members first on the scene should secure the scene and wait for the WS agent to arrive and conduct the investigation. If WS cannot arrive before the IFT member leaves the scene, the animal will be tarped to prevent scavenging. The IFT member will also monitor to detect any radio-collared wolves in the area.

J. SOP 13: Introduction to Control of Mexican Wolves

Terry Johnson asked if there are any fundamental broken aspects that need to be changed through a clarifying memo or revision of SOP 13. Hector's constituents request no change in SOP 13.0. Jan also recommends no change in SOP 13. Bud stated there is a lot of latitude to implement SOP 13.0 and no changes are recommended. John Oakleaf said that current SOP purpose and background statements are not clear. John wanted to bring up recommended IFT 13.0.

Terry recommends expediting the process of issuing a PRO. The current 24-hour requirement is unreasonable, and if process is added it will be even more so.

John Morgart thinks no more process should be added to issuing a PRO. We want PRO issued as quickly as possible, but a 24 hour deadline may not always be realistic. There are some instances where 24 hour restriction is too short and may need more time to inform and receive feedback from higher ups in USFWS.

Terry asked if all Directors are in concurrence with an AMOC PRO, and the lead agency of jurisdiction is in concurrence, do we need to go through more review?

John Oakleaf said trapping can be initiated before a PRO is issued, and the animal can be held until a decision is made. Discussion continued on possible negative issues if trapped animals were recommended for return to wild.

Bud stated there are no cases where we can definitely say we removed the right offending wolf. However, you can affect the wolves' behavior by removing an animal or two, and the research supports this activity.

Terry, there is too much effort to determine which is the offending animal, there is too much emphasis on genetics; remove the first wolf you can regardless of which wolf is caught or killed.

There may be times when euthanasia may be the responsible action.

Shannon said if we have evidence that a pack member is not in the vicinity of depredation sites then that animal should not be removed but we should target the pack members with evidence of depredations.

John Morgart said up north removal of any two members is recommended to change a pack's behavior. If they continue depredating, then remove an additional two animals. If the behavior continues, remove the entire pack. Several folks noted that up north the packs are larger and there are a lot more wolves, which reduces the importance of any given individual wolf.

TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION. The Tribal Council wants as many wolves collared as possible. This activity will provide better population information and will better identify depredators. Dispersing wolves historically have a higher incidence of depredating, and WMAT wants those animals collared prior to dispersing. There was discussion on this WMAT recommendation and the lack of resources need to do the collaring.

Terry asked, if there is a recommendation to collar all wolves or should we stay with current SOP, which says we will try to, but allows us not to? Should we hire additional personnel to collar additional wolves?

John Morgart said if there is an opportunity to trap, the IFT takes advantage of it. John Oakleaf stated that collaring activities are dependent upon number of collared animals in a pack, estimated collar life, pack size, etc.

What is the definition of one depredation incident? How are additional kills handled that are located during a single depredation investigation? If that one initial incident involves three or more animals over a ten day period, do we start removal efforts or is it one depredation? The current SOP addresses these issues.

Terry does not agree that we should always trap and relocate a wolf on its first depredation. There is a lower tolerance to relocating wolves in New Mexico, and it is expected that all wolves will depredate to some degree.

Terry said look at incremental depredation situations. Perhaps on the first depredation there should be no relocation, and the IFT should work with the land management agency and livestock permittee to address husbandry issues and initiate hazing. If those actions occur, on a second depredation we could require trapping, relocating, and monitoring released animal. Discussion on who would accept a second offending animal for release. Perhaps no depredating wolf should be translocated.

John Morgart says USFWS has to do more to advance toward successful recovery. USFWS believes SOP 13 as it has been implemented does not promote recovery. SOP 13 needs to be modified, but USFWS does not know how that should occur. At the first depredation, the IFT might need to step in with the USFS and the permittee to look proactively at how to avoid a second depredation. Consider a quick response by USFS and the permittee, be proactive and aggressive. These actions might include moving livestock. Do not know how best to handle this situation, but possibly put some additional responsibility on USFS and permittee. Wally said there may be opportunities with more flexible livestock rotations, grass banks, etc. Bud said the USFS has an antiquated grazing system in New Mexico, and the USFS needs to update its grazing systems.

Terry said AGFD believes SOP 13 has good aspects and some that need to be considered for revision. As AMOC acknowledged when we wrote the SOPs, over time flaws would be found. There are even obvious flaws in the draft revision document. However, given the fact that we are entering NEPA for a 10-J Rule Change, is the timing right for making any changes? AMOC went to considerable lengths the first time around to ensure multiple opportunities for public discussion and input. Can we do that under the current pressure?

Shannon brought up exceptions for alpha females with pups, but there was no follow up discussion.

Action Item: AMOC recommends a clarifying memo documenting three factors as part of the decision in documenting a depredation incident: 1) identify lawful presence of livestock, 2) confirmation of a wolf kill, and 3) ability to associate depredation to a particular wolf or wolf

pack. AMOC consensus is the term “strike” will from now on be defined as “degradation incident.” AMOC also needs to discuss the current and draft SOP 13s with the Directors before going any further.

J. SOP 13A: Nuisance Wolves

Deferred to tomorrow, as several participants have not read the draft.

K. SOP 13B: Problem Wolves

Deferred to tomorrow, as several participants have not read the draft.

L. SOP 13C: Permanent Removal Orders

Deferred to tomorrow, as several participants have not read the draft.

M. Process for Closure on SOPs 5.0, 6.0, 11.0, and 13.0

John Morgart introduced **NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTION** of D.J. Case, who have been contracted through USFWS to assist on the 10-J rule scoping process. They will run scoping process meetings and collect the public comment. They passed out two handouts: 1) Mexican Wolf Public Involvement Process outlining tasks associated with scoping process, and 2) Federal Register Vol. 72, No. 151 dated August 7, 2007, 50 CFR Part 17. They will provide more information at the Directors meeting on August 29.

N. Roles and Responsibilities

Handout provided for Director’s discussion on Thursday (August 30)

O. Project Funding and Staffing

No handout provided. Terry stated that the NMDGF, WMAT, and WS components of the IFT are significantly underfunded and understaffed. AGFD is at or close to being fully staffed and is fully funded for current staffing levels, but may need at least one additional position. AS AMOC has identified many times, the USFS absolutely needs to place an FTE with the IFT in Alpine Office. John Morgart stated USFWS is convinced that more USFWS resources needed to be committed to program. Terry Johnson commented that if USFWS has available funding, perhaps that should be parsed out to the States and WMAT for staffing, since the reintroduction project is a State-Tribally led project and their employees are paid less (i.e. we’d get more FTEs for the money).

P. Annual Work Plan

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The IFT will present its initial concepts for modifications in the 2008 Annual Work Plan at the October 2007 AMOC meeting. They need to identify current and expected positions, and expected and needed funding. AMC must have a solid final draft for the December Directors Summit. After that, AMOC must work with the IFT to have a true final work plan for the January AMWG meeting.

Q. Miscellaneous

John Oakleaf brought up proposed relocation of F1028 and M1008 in 2008. That proposal should be finalized for discussion at the October AMOC meeting.

Cathy Taylor will have Bobbi Barrera serving as her AMOC surrogate for six weeks in September and October.

R. The meeting adjourned at 1652.

Document MW AMOC Summary Notes for Meeting of 20070828.Public Record.doc

DELIBERATIVE REVIEW DRAFT

