



## Contact

Bruce Sitko, (928) 367-4281  
Public Information Officer, AGFD

## Arizona Game and Fish Department

### NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release  
June 9, 2003

### Wolves Slated for Release in Arizona

PINETOP, Ariz. – A pack of four Mexican wolves will be placed later this week in a temporary holding pen at a remote site near Maness Peak to meet ongoing reintroduction objectives, say Arizona Game and Fish Department officials.

The pack, consisting of an alpha male and female and two of their yearlings, will stay in nylon mesh, low-impact acclimation pens for up to two weeks. If they have not self-released by that time, they will be freed.

The pen site, located approximately 10 miles south of Alpine in the Apache National Forest, will have a one-mile public closure surrounding it, ordered by the U.S. Forest Service, to protect the endangered wolves from disturbance. The closure will remain in effect while the wolves occupy the pen.

"This pack release is part of an interagency program begun in 1998 to reintroduce Mexican wolves to a portion of their historic habitat in southwestern New Mexico and east-central Arizona," says Paul Overy, the department's wolf project field team leader. "A significant feature of this particular pack is that they may be the most genetically diverse group of wolves released to date. They are descended from the Ghost Ranch, McBride and Aragon lineages. None of these wolves have been released before."

Overy says the project is progressing well. "Existing packs are doing well, and new packs are forming. We estimate that there are approximately 40 animals in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico. Five packs in Arizona are demonstrating denning behavior, which is to say that they appear to be raising pups. We continue to learn more from the wolves in the wild, and that helps us manage them better."

Overy noted that the Maness Peak release site was coordinated closely with the public, and approved by the Forest Service, and that he and the Field Team have personally ensured that local residents are aware of the planned release.

The reintroduction of the Mexican gray wolf is a cooperative, multi-agency effort of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, White Mountain Apache Tribe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and USDA Wildlife Services.

-0-

The Arizona Game and Fish Department prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability in its programs and activities. If anyone believes they have been discriminated against in any Game and Fish program or activity, including its employment practices, the individual may file a complaint alleging discrimination directly with the Game and Fish Deputy Director, 2221 W. Greenway Rd., Phx., AZ 85023, (602) 942-3000 or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4040 N. Fairfax Dr., Ste. 130, Arlington, VA 22203. If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the Game and Fish Deputy Director as listed above or by calling TTY at 1-800 367-8939.