WOLF PUBLIC HEARING

6:00 p.m.
November 20, 2013
Embassy Suites Hotel
1000 Woodward Place
Albuquerque, New Mexico

TRATTEL COURT REPORTING & VIDEOGRAPHY
DEBORAH TRATTEL, COURT REPORTER #153
505-830-0600
## OFFICIALS PRESENT:

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<td>1. OFFICIALS PRESENT:</td>
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<td>2. Mr. Tom Buckley</td>
<td>3. Mariana Padilla, representing Congresswoman</td>
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<td>Southwest Region</td>
<td>5. Alex Eubanks representing Senator Martin</td>
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<td>P.O. Box 1306</td>
<td>6. Heinrich.</td>
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<td>Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103</td>
<td>7. Van J. Bucky Allred, the Catron -- a Catron</td>
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<td>Assistant Director for Ecological Services</td>
<td>10. And Tink Jackson, Loony [sic] Luna County</td>
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<td>9. Ms. Michelle Shaughnessy</td>
<td>11. commissioner. That was not a Freudian slip.</td>
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<td>Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services</td>
<td>12. I would also like to recognize the following</td>
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<td>10. Mr. Mike Jimenez</td>
<td>13. representatives from the U.S. Fish &amp; Wildlife Service</td>
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<td>Northern Rocky Mountains Wolf Management and Science Coordinator</td>
<td>14. who are in attendance today.</td>
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<td>Jackson, Wyoming</td>
<td>15. Mr. Gary Frazer, an assistant director for</td>
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<td>16. Ms. Sherry Barrett</td>
<td>16. Ecological Services, who will represent the Services in</td>
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<td>18. Ms. Michelle Shaughnessy, Assistant Regional</td>
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<td>19. Director for Ecological Services, who will represent the</td>
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<td>20. Southwest region.</td>
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<td>21. Mr. Mike Jimenez, Northern Rocky Mountains Wolf</td>
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<td>22. Management and Science Coordinator from Jackson,</td>
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<td>24. Ms. Sherry Barrett, Mexican Wolf Recovery</td>
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<td>And I'd also like to acknowledge the many Fish</td>
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<td>&amp; Wildlife Service officials from the Southwest Region</td>
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2 (Pages 2 to 5)
In 1978, we consolidated that and listed Canis lupus as an experimental subspecies in the Southwest, and to delist the gray wolf elsewhere.

So just to kind of -- from start to finish after all this, we went from very few wolves, northern Minnesota, a little bit of Michigan, to over 5,000 wolves in the lower 48 states.  And with that, I'd like to go on describe where we're going from here.

We use the term recovery.  Recovery is securing the -- so recovery is looking at securing the species from the threat of extinction for now or for the foreseeable future.  And it's important also to remember that there's no set formula of one way of achieving that recovery. Some species might need an expansion of range or its distribution, other species might need to have specific threats dealt with, some species might need a combination of that.  But it's all based -- whatever it is, it's based on the biological needs of the species, and not some percentage of its historic range or suitable habitat.  If you look at the history of how we've protected wolves under the Endangered Species Act, in the 1960s and in the 1970s, we listed numerous subspecies of gray wolves.  In 1978, we consolidated that and listed Canis lupus as a species in the lower 48 and Mexico, as endangered, with the exception of Minnesota, where there was still a small population of wolves and that was listed as threatened.

So at the time, if you look at the blue, there were no wolves in that area and the only wolf population that was in 1978 was a small remnant population in Minnesota and, again, a little bit in Michigan.  So our approach was to set up gray wolf recovery programs in three regions of the state -- of the country.  In the western Great Lakes, in the northern Rocky Mountains, and in the Southwest.  And these programs worked very well.  This is -- the orange is where there's occupied, the yellow is where it was eventually delisted, and the growth curve over time.  So you can see how populations grew very quickly.

So in the western Great Lakes, those recovery goals that we set were met in the late 1990s.  And by 2011, we delisted a recovered population of over 3,600 wolves in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

In the northern Rockies, the same thing; we had wolves coming from Canada in 1995 and 96, and we reintroduced wolves into Yellowstone and central Idaho.  In 2012, we delisted a recovery population of over 1,600 wolves in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho and wolves are continuing to expand into Washington and Oregon.

In the Southwest, we see it as a work in progress.  We have not yet achieved recovery goals.  And currently, there's about 75 wolves in the wild with another approximately 300 wolves in captivity.

So if you look at the current range -- and again, the yellow is where it's delisted.  And inside that orange area is where they actually occupy the wolf habitat.  Today you can see that we dramatically expanded the range of over 5,000 wolves in the lower 48 in the western Great Lakes and in the northern Rocky Mountains, and those population have been delisted because they've recovered.

So in the western Great Lakes, in the northern Rocky Mountains, and currently, there's about 75 wolves in the wild with another approximately 300 wolves in captivity.

In 1978, we consolidated that and listed Canis lupus as an experimental subspecies in the Southwest, and to delist the gray wolf elsewhere.

The second proposed rule is to revise the rules under which the Mexican wolf experimental population is managed.  I want to emphasize that these are both proposed rules.  We appreciate everyone coming out tonight.  We look forward to your comments.  We take your comments, whether they are presented orally or in writing, equally seriously.  We very much appreciate you contributing to our review process and informing us as we move forward to a final decision.

So as Mike said, we've been successfully recovering gray wolves and populations in the western Great Lakes, northern Rocky Mountains and have delisted those.  So the question before us was what now?

What do we do now in terms of how should the Endangered Species Act apply to gray wolves in the future?  Are there valid entities subject that are eligible for protection under the Endangered Species Act that still need protection of the ESA?  In starting, we need to describe what is in fact an entity that is eligible to be protected under the Endangered Species Act.  First, it must be a valid taxonomic species like the gray wolf, Canis lupus or a subspecies like the Mexican wolf, Canis lupus baileyi, or a distinct segment like the wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains.

It also needs to be in danger of extinction now throughout all or a significant portion of its current range.

Mr. Frazier:  Thank you, Mike.  Good evening, everyone.  Tonight, we're here to take comment on two proposed rules.  We appreciate everyone coming out and contributing to our review process and informing us as we move forward to a final decision.

So in the western Great Lakes, in the northern Rocky Mountains, and currently, there's about 75 wolves in the wild with another approximately 300 wolves in captivity.

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range, or we can consider it to be likely to be endangered in the foreseeable future.

So in putting together our proposed rule, we took a step-wise approach in determining whether any entities of the gray wolf warrant continued protection under the Endangered Species Act. The first step -- the first step was to evaluate the current gray wolf listing, which is essentially that area in lower 48 states and Mexico except for those two areas where we recovered and delisted wolves.

And we essentially concluded that that current listing is not a valid species or subspecies or distinct population segment. It includes portions that we now consider to be -- to have listed in error. For instance, in the Southeast US, we now recognize that that's an area where red wolves, a different species, existed, and it was not part of the range of the gray wolf.

This area that's shown in blue on this figure also does not reasonably represent the range of the one population of wolves that we still do have in the lower 48. That's the Mexican wolf in the Southwest. So because of this, we are proposing to delist this entity, It's currently on the list of threatened and endangered species.

I think we need to remove this from the list. Let me look at whether there are any other entities that warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act. We first looked at the gray wolf species range-wide. And when I say range-wide, I mean in Canada, Alaska, Asia, Europe, certain polar distribution. And we found no evidence to suggest that the gray wolf is in danger of extinction within their entire range. So the listing was considered not to be warranted.

Then we looked at these subspecies of wolves, recognized subspecies of wolves that existed within the lower 48 states and Mexico. There are three. Nubilus, talus and baileyi. We concluded that two of those are not at risk of extinction. But that baileyi, the Mexican wolf of the Southwest, is in danger of extinction and does warrant listing as a subspecies.

The fourth step was to look at whether there are any other distinct population segments. Here we looked at whether the wolves that exist in the Pacific Northwest, outside of the delisted northern Rocky Mountain population, the wolves in western Washington and Oregon, would constitute a segment.

We concluded that they don't constitute a population right now. They haven't reproduced successfully for enough years to constitute a population. But even if they did, they're not discrete, they're not distinct from the wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains. So we did not consider them to be a valid and distinct population segment.

So that informed how we got to our proposal. And our proposal is to list the Mexican wolf as a threatened species.

And then also, the next step is to improve the Experimental Population Rule that governs how the experimental population of the Mexican wolves in the Southwest is managed. For that, I'm going to turn it over to Sherry Barrett.

MS. BARRETT: Good evening. I'm going to focus on the proposals as they relate to the Mexican wolf here in the Southwest. I'm going to talk first to reiterate what Gary has already said, that we are looking at a proposed rule that would reclassify the Mexican wolf as an endangered subspecies, Canis lupus baileyi, which as an endangered gray wolf.

The history of the Mexican wolf is that it certainly ranged across the southwestern US and a lot of Mexico, down to about Oaxaca, Mexico. In the early 1970s, the wolf was considered extirpated from the United States. In 1980, it was extirpated from Mexico.
We also have three prerelease facilities that are larger facilities that the wolves go into before they're released into the wild, so that they have minimal human contact and we can precondition them for the releases.

In 1998, we designated the nonessential experimental population area for the Mexican wolf. This is what it looks like today. And it's this gray area right here (indicating). It extends between I-40 to the north and I-10, Interstate 10 to the south, and all the way from California to Texas. It does include a very small sliver of Texas here.

And again, so this is what it looks like today, as of 1998. We also, inside there, have a recovery area, the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. That's where all the wolves exist today. They're not allowed to roam outside of that area, which consists of the Apache National Forest in Arizona and the Gila National Forest in New Mexico.

We also have right here the Fort Apache Reservation, which manages wolves under an MOU (audience member coughing). Right now, the wolves can only be released from captivity into this part of the Apache National Forest, which is about 16 percent of that overall recovery area.

Our current wild population consists of a minimum of 75 wolves in the wild. There's 14 packs. And as of January of last year, that's the count for the previous year. 97 percent of those wolves that we counted in the wild were wild born.

And that's important because that means that our wolves that we started from the captive population are behaving as wolves in the wild. They're forming packs, they're forming and having pups in the wild and reproducing.

In 2011, Mexico began reintroducing wolves into the wild. As you remember, I said that they also were eliminated in Mexico. And they are continuing to do so. These are some of the areas where they have been looking at releasing wolves.

They have their own Endangered Species Act in Mexico. The Mexican wolf is listed as endangered in Mexico under their act. They also have their own recovery plan for wolves in Mexico. So they're releasing under their own authorities. The proposed revisions to the 1988 Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Rule, we're proposing those revisions to enable us to establish a viable self-sustaining population of wolves that can contribute to recovery into the future.

There's about 20 proposed revisions. They are geographic, management and administrative changes. I'm going to talk about some of the key geographic changes. The first one is that in the 1998 rule, wolves can be released from captivity in only 16 percent of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. And again, that's that crosshatched area that I talked about. And the proposed rule we're looking at allowing release of wolves throughout that whole recovery area. So that would be throughout the Gila and the Apache National Forest.

At this point, we're not allowed to disperse outside of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. If they leave this area, this darker gray, and go into this lighter gray, we have to capture them and return them.

In the proposed rule, we are proposing to allow wolves to disperse outside of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area into this larger Mexican wolf experimental population area, the light gray.

Two other proposals that we're considering are right now, like I said, the Blue Range Recovery Area consists of the Gila and Apache National Forest. We're considering that we could expand that to include the Jicarrelles National Forest, and three districts of the Cibola National Forest. Excuse me, three districts of the Tonto National Forest in Arizona, as well as the Magdalena District of the Cibola National Forest in New Mexico. Those would be areas where the wolf could then be released from captivity as well.

And then we're also considering whether or not to move the southern boundary, which currently is at Interstate 10, looking at whether we should move that down to the international border with Mexico. As you can see, these changes that we're proposing align with the forest and habitat, again, in which wolves exist. They don't exist in desert areas. They are a higher elevation forest animal.

So, the public process that we're looking at, again, the comment period for these proposed rules that we're talking about today ends December 17. We'll reopen the comment period when we prepare and have a draft Environmental Impact Statement. And then that's going to analyze the effects of these revisions to the proposed rule.

The Environmental Impact Statement doesn't address the listing, the delisting or the reclassification of the wolf. It is focused only on the revisions to the experimental population area.
The US Fish & Wildlife Service will accept comments and information on those proposals postmarked on or before December 17, 2013. You may submit comments in writing to us today. Written comments may be submitted to the staff at the registration table. They may be submitted electronically or mailed as a hard copy.

After review and consideration of your comments and all other information gathered during this and other previous comment periods, the Service will make a final determination.

The purpose of this hearing is to receive your comments on this proposal, these proposals, both oral and written. Comments on all aspects of the proposal are very important and will be carefully considered. Because of the importance of your comments, it is necessary that we follow certain procedures during this public hearing.

If you want to present oral comments at this hearing, please go to the registration tables outside of this auditorium and sign up. When you register, indicate the organization that you’re representing in your comments today.

The following process is designed to maximize efficiency and provide speaking opportunities to as many participants as possible. Periodically, throughout the hearing, I will call groups of names for those registered to provide oral comments. When your name is called, please come forward and take a seat in the reserve section of the front row right in front of us here, the center. That will be near the microphone.

When it is your turn, please -- please begin your presentation by stating your full name, spell it for the record, and indicate if you represent a specific organization. If you are reading your comments, please take care to read them slowly enough for the court reporter to understand.

Also, if possible, the reporter would appreciate a copy of the comments you read. You can deposit them in the box near the microphone. Please return to your original seats in the auditorium after you speak.

This is an informal hearing and therefore, you will not be questioned in connection with your comments. Your comments or questions are being recorded by the court reporter to preserve them for the record. If you are called to speak and choose not to speak or provide short remarks, you may not yield your time to another speaker.

Because the purpose of this hearing is to receive your comments, the Service will assume any questions are for the record.

The Service's formal response to questions and issues raised during the comment period, including at this hearing, will be published in the final rule. The Service will not respond to questions at this hearing.

Please keep in mind that the reporter will not record any statements from the audience or any statements which are made to the audience. Comments must be made directly into the microphone, facing the front of the room.

I ask that you treat each speaker with respect and refrain from making comments from the audience. Questions, comments, applause, jeers, or demonstrations from the audience will not be allowed. I appreciate everyone's cooperation in minimizing distractions.

Out of respect for the speakers, I ask that you please refrain from photographing individuals as they present their comments. Videotaping will likely be occurring during this hearing. Videotaping should be done only along the side aisles of the room, no closer to the front than row 4, or along the back of the room. No video cameras or other cameras are allowed in the center aisle or in the front of the room.

If you have any concerns about being videotaped, you can ask one of our staff members at the videotaping section of the front row right in front of us, near the microphone.

Those that identify themselves as elected officials on their registration cards will be our first speakers and will be given two minutes each. Members of the public will follow with two-minute slots for the remainder of the hour. Because of the number of people expected to speak, strict adherence to time limits is necessary by all speakers. I will let you know when time is up.

I will call a break approximately each hour or so to allow our court reporter to rest a bit. And I just want to comment that this is how many comments we have, and requests to speak so far (indicating). I'm questioning whether we'll even be able to get through all of these. So that's why we're having this two-minute time limit tonight. I know it's not satisfactory, but it's the best we can do to try to allow most people to speak.

If you choose not to present all comments here today, or in addition to your oral comments, you may have them deposited at the registration tables, and we have the names and some information on the various individuals who are registered to provide oral comments. When your name is called, please come forward and take a seat in the reserve section of the front row right in front of us here, the center. That will be near the microphone.

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Information on how to submit comments outside
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tables. Additionally, at the registration tables, there
are blank comment forms on which you can write your
comments. Comment forms may be deposited in the
collection boxes or left at the registration tables or
mailed to the address on the form before the deadline of
December 17.
Written comments will be given the same
consideration as oral comments presented here. At this
point, I'm going to call the names of our first
speakers. Peter Ossorio, Mary Huntzinger, Robert Corn,
Brant Van Dyke, Crystal Diamond, Van J. "Bucky" Allred,
and Tink Jackson.
If you would take your seat up to the front
here, and our first speaker can approach the microphone,
Mr. Peter Ossorio. Thank you.
MR. OSSORIO: Mr. Director, I'm speaking for
Jeff Steinborn, District 35, vice chair of National
Energy and Resources. I want to express my strong
support for the Mexican wolf and the federal government
taking a robust approach to ensure the recovery of the
species. Too long, efforts to recover the wolf have
been held back by ideology and some political leaders'
attempt to sow fear and misinformation about this
animal.
As a result, population numbers for the wolf
have stagnated and failed to achieve levels necessary
for their sustainable survival. I urge the Fish &
Wildlife Service to implement a robust recovery program
of the Mexican wolf, and reject new restrictions
currently under consideration that would place further
constraints on the recovery.
Of greatest concern is the relaxation of rules
that would allow additional killing of wolves when
population numbers reach a hundred. There is no
scientific basis for this being a sustainable and
genetically robust number. If more wolves are allowed
killed on this threshold or are not allowed to go beyond
it, they'll likely go extinct.
The actual numbers supported by the best
available science is on the order of 750 wolves and
three distinct subpopulations. Furthermore, the
proposed rule must not include expanded provisions for
take of these animals. Science-based program reviews
have shown, and the Service has acknowledged, that the
killing of permanent removal of wolves by agency
managers to resolve conflicts has been a major cause of
failing to meet the reintroduction objective.
Regrettably, the proposed rule changes offer
additional opportunities for removing wolves. I believe
it's essential that the Service tighten restriction for
take, not loosen them. Please know that a majority of
New Mexicans want an ecologically rich Land of
Enchantment and share the belief that wolves belong.
Thank you.
MR. BUCKLEY: Mark Huntzinger.
MR. CORN: Good evening. Thank you for the
opportunity to appear and testify. My name is Robert
Corn, C-O-R-N, from Chaves County, that's C-H-A-V-E-S.
Not Z, like some people like to put it -- commissioner
from Chaves County.
I have a letter that was sent to Daniel Lack on
November 17. Dear Mr. Ashe, the United States Fish &
Wildlife Service has proposed to delist the gray wolf
under a nonessential experimentation -- experimental
population area for the Mexican gray wolf.
Chaves County insists that there must be a
public hearing and coordination of the actual allotted
area. Chaves County is aware that the existing science
does not support this huge expansion of the population
habitat to the entire southern half of New Mexico.
There has been no coordination with Chaves
County and obviously no opportunity for affected persons
to attend the meeting in the southern half of the state.
It is clear that the National Environmental Policy Acts'
intent is to have multiple public input in and from the
areas affected by the rule making.
Considering the public meeting outside the
affected area violates the spirit and intent of the
National Environmental Policy Act. The southern half of
New Mexico encompasses 68,580 square miles and contains
high mountains, plains, mountains and deserts.
There are multiple types of habitats that may
or may not be acceptable to the Mexican wolf. The
effects of introducing wolf population in southern New
Mexico will have a major impact on ranching, farming and
oil and gas production and recreation. When any of
those areas are adversely affected, it will cause
detrimental economic effects on the entire population of
southern New Mexico.
From 2007, scoping was for a small care area in
western New Mexico and eastern Arizona. US Fish &
Wildlife has not done any new scoping to justify the
additional area covering the southern half of New
Mexico.
MR. BUCKLEY: Mr. Corn, thank you very much.
MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, sir. Next speaker.

MR. ALLRED: I'm Commissioner Van Allred from Catron County. Last name is A-L-L-R-E-D. First name is Van, V-A-N. I'm known as Bucky. It's a nickname.

Catron County has been in this (audience member coughing) in the Blue River Recovery program I'm assuming for quite some time. Over those years, we've seen the reintroducory program become a threat to our safety, welfare and health of our citizens. There's a redundancy of failure in the program.

It's devastating and destroying a large part of our economic base, wildlife and livestock. Livestock is the highest mill levy rate in our county. We feel like the agency has failed to communicate with us and keep us aware of your programs. And we stand, the other supervisors, myself, and a large majority of the citizens of Catron County, the biggest majority, oppose this program.

And just wanted to thank you once again for allowing me to talk. And what I've said here is very negative to the wolf program, but I want -- I hope that you all will continue to communicate with us and make us aware of what you're doing in our county.

And also want to let you know that in no way do we relinquish. We want to see the (audience member)

Thank you very much.

MR. CORN: I understand. One more quick question. On meeting July 11, 2013 in Portales --

MR. BUCKLEY: Mr. Corn, please. We've got a lot of people that are ready to speak. You can leave your comments, sir, and we'll consider them in full.

Thank you.

Mark Huntzinger.

MR. HUNTZINGER: I'm a county manager for Sierra County, New Mexico. Thank you for hosting this public meeting. The county has responsibility under state law for the health, safety and welfare of its citizens.

The proposal to allow the dispersal of Mexican wolves into the Mexican wolf experimental population area directly affects the safety and welfare of the citizens and the visitors to our county. As such, the county is opposed to this proposal. Some background.

The Blue Range Recovery Area extends into the western portion of Sierra County in the Gila National Forest. We have an immediate interest as the Mexican wolf population is in and has been in our county.

The Mexican wolf experimental population area encompasses approximately one half of the State of New Mexico. And I'm an elected supervisor on the Lea Soil, Water and Conservation District board of supervisors. I apologize. I don't have a prepared statement.

And the reason I'm here is I've looked at the nonessential experiment areas. It has been expanded to southeastern New Mexico. The Lea Soil and Water Conservation District is actively involved, at the present time, in protecting the prairie chicken and sand dune lizard. These are also endangered species, and it's our goal to see those populations expand. And our concern is if you have gray wolves in that area, we've just opened a smorgasbord for the prairie chicken and sand dune lizard.

And if you're not from New Mexico, you might not understand, but I think the majority of education dollars generated for the State of New Mexico -- and I was a teacher for 31 years -- comes from oil and gas. And if the prairie chicken and sand dune lizard is eaten by the wolf, then those oil and gas companies are removed from those areas.

How do we educate our children in New Mexico?

A huge concern for me and the community I live in. So I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today.

Thank you very much.

Your time is up. We'd like to allow other people the opportunity.

MR. CORN: I understand. One more quick question. On meeting July 11, 2013 in Portales --

MR. BUCKLEY: Mr. Corn, please. We've got a lot of people that are ready to speak. You can leave your comments, sir, and we'll consider them in full.

Thank you.

Mark Huntzinger.

MR. HUNTZINGER: I'm a county manager for Sierra County, New Mexico. Thank you for hosting this public meeting. The county has responsibility under state law for the health, safety and welfare of its citizens.

The proposal to allow the dispersal of Mexican wolves into the Mexican wolf experimental population area directly affects the safety and welfare of the citizens and the visitors to our county. As such, the county is opposed to this proposal. Some background.

The Blue Range Recovery Area extends into the western portion of Sierra County in the Gila National Forest. We have an immediate interest as the Mexican wolf population is in and has been in our county.

The Mexican wolf experimental population area encompasses approximately one half of the State of New Mexico. And I'm an elected supervisor on the Lea Soil, Water and Conservation District board of supervisors. I apologize. I don't have a prepared statement.

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How do we educate our children in New Mexico?

A huge concern for me and the community I live in. So I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today.

Thank you very much.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Huntzinger. Next.

MR. ALLRED: I'm Commissioner Van Allred from Catron County. Last name is A-L-L-R-E-D. First name is Van, V-A-N. I'm known as Bucky. It's a nickname.

Catron County has been in this (audience member coughing) in the Blue River Recovery program I'm assuming for quite some time. Over those years, we've seen the reintroducory program become a threat to our safety, welfare and health of our citizens. There's a redundancy of failure in the program.

It's devastating and destroying a large part of our economic base, wildlife and livestock. Livestock is the highest mill levy rate in our county. We feel like the agency has failed to communicate with us and keep us aware of your programs. And we stand, the other commissioners, myself, and a large majority of the citizens of Catron County, the biggest majority, oppose this program.

And just wanted to thank you once again for allowing me to talk. And what I've said here is very negative to the wolf program, but I want -- I hope that you all will continue to communicate with us and make us aware of what you're doing in our county.

And also want to let you know that in no way do we relinquish. We want to see the (audience member)

Thank you very much.

8 (Pages 26 to 29)

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Mr. Buckley: Thank you, Mr. Jackson. Two more. Crystal Diamond, Tink Jackson, Jerry Ortiz y Pino, who is a State Senate District 12. MS. DIAMOND: Good evening. My name is Crystal, Crystal Diamond. I sit on the board of supervisors for the Sierra Soil and Water Conservation District. New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation districts were recently denied cooperating agency status by US Fish & Wildlife in a letter signed by Benjamin Tuggle. As a division of state government with supervisors elected by all eligible registered voters within district boundaries, this denial is a clear violation of the law, as it does not comply with NEPA. The high frequency of disturbing human encounters is a great public safety concern and the devastating impact on the overall economy of our county can no longer be ignored. We request that the voice of locally elected officials be heard, and cooperating agency status quickly granted to New Mexico soil and water conservation districts and officials.

We look forward to contributing and assisting with the Mexican gray wolf program in the near future. Thank you.

Mr. Buckley: Thank you, Mr. Jackson. Next speaker, please. Ms. Diamond: Good evening. My name is Crystal Diamond. I sit on the board of supervisors for the Sierra Soil and Water Conservation District. And anyway, I really would appreciate it if you could submit these comments; we have submitted a proposed alternative. We have submitted comments, numerous, numerous comments; we have submitted a proposed alternative. We will continue to work with your agency to ensure that our citizens are not disproportionately affected by this program. We believe the recovery can be done. We believe the recovery requires real science, it requires honest review, and it requires a multiple-zone approach to management that has clear milestones that are set upon a completed recovery plan that has known and defined goals. I'll submit the rest of our comments in writing.

Mr. Buckley: Thank you, Ms. Diamond. I'd like to also invite up -- one second, sir -- the following speakers. Barbara Bacon, Jack Field, Seidman -- I apologize if I'm mispronouncing. Seidman. Karen Vardaman. Ruth Rudner, Ty Bays, Kim Chesser, Dave Parsons, Andres Aragon, and William Wiley. Please, if you would, find a seat up front. And I invite the speaker now to introduce himself, and if you would spell your names when you come up to the microphone. Thank you.

Mr. Jackson: My name is Tink, T-I-N-K, Jackson, J-A-C-K-S-O-N. I'm the chairman of the Luna County Endangered Species Committee. I'm also speaking on behalf of Hidalgo County in tonight's meeting. Both Luna and all the counties have signed on as cooperative agencies. We are forced to do this because this rule has now expanded into our areas. We're small rural counties that are faced with limited budgets and minimal resources. We are counties that believe that the people in the county have a right to decide what happens in their county. We believe in private property rights. We believe that we have the same right to protect our property from four legged predators as urban property owners have to protect their property from the two-legged predators that you deal with.

We believe in the constitution of this great nation and of the State of New Mexico. We believe no law or act of Congress can change the rights that we are guaranteed under either. We believe local economies are not subject to federal debate. We don't expect Washington to fix our problems, nor do we expect you to try to control our private industries. We have submitted comments, numerous, numerous comments; we have submitted a proposed alternative. We will continue to work with your agency to ensure that our citizens are not disproportionately affected by this program. We believe the recovery can be done. We believe the recovery requires real science, it requires honest review, and it requires a multiple-zone approach to management that has clear milestones that are set upon a completed recovery plan that has known and defined goals. I'll submit the rest of our comments in writing.
Republicans for Environmental Protection are in talks. I'm a philanthropist. Mexico, near Silver City. I'm a supervisor there. you try to balance different interests, you start making price. We are now -- gotten out of that area. You guys have done a fair job you for holding this hearing. think it's a real travesty that you are not considering all would listen to the people that are living with science at the forefront. I urge you to make that the one. I would simply urge you to make your decision based on science, not based on any attempt at balancing interests. That's for politicians. That's what we struggle with.

As an elected official, I know you have a very difficult decision, that your role is a very difficult one. I should simply urge you to make your decision based on science, not based on any attempt at balancing interests. That's for politicians. That's what we struggle with.

You, I think, need to make your decisions based on biology, on environmental science, on the best understanding possible of how an ecosystem works and of the wolf's role in that ecosystem as a totality. And if you try to balance different interests, you start making decisions that lead to an overall failure of the total system.

And let me give you one example. My impression is that this program of the reintroduction has been hampered from the beginning by a lack of firm commitment to the original vision. As long as there's criticism, Fish & Wildlife backs off and tries to find some way of making everybody happy; the ranchers, the farmers, the local officials and the environmentalists.

I think the important thing is that you commit to that vision, move ahead with a firm vision, and keep science at the forefront. I urge you to make that the hallmark of your decision-making. Thank you very much for holding this hearing.

MR. BUCKLEY: Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm going to ask you to hold down the clapping. You're taking up time of the speakers and somebody is going to not have an opportunity to speak. Thank you.

MR. WILEY: My name is William A. Wiley. I'm president of the New Mexico Republicans for Environmental Protection. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in front of this panel. I am a hunter and a fisherman. I've been turkey hunting seven times; turkeys five, me two. I'm a decorated Vet and I'm a philanthropist.

And I come before you to ask that you consider the Mexican gray wolf as an essential species, and expand their range, as you have already asked, and allow ranchers to retire their grazing rights for a fair price. We are now --

APPLAUSE.

MR. BUCKLEY: Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm going to give you one more warning. If I have to clear this room, I promise you, I'll do it. I do not want to hear outbursts of clapping, applause, screaming, yelling, or anything else. Show respect for this gentleman and anybody else that comes up here to speak, please. Thank you.

MR. WILEY: Yes. I asked -- we are now -- Republicans for Environmental Protection are in talks with more than three ranchers about doing grass-fed, predator-tolerant beef in an economical way, and also talking to them about ecotours.

The importance of the wolf, as science has shown up in Yellowstone, has increased the viability of prey animals, and they are now found to increase the stream quality in the Gila Wilderness.

I will end with a story. My great, great uncle was a Buffalo hunter. He would go out -- and this was in the 1870s -- shoot a buffalo, take the hump off and the tongue, and leave the rest to rot. I don't want my grandchildren to think of that of me. Thank you.
the species. I can tell you that I support the
delisting of the gray wolf, although you've got me a
little confused about this. You want us to consider
whether or not to delist the gray wolf that you've
already delisted. I don't know.
Delist the gray wolf. Do not expand the
Mexican wolf boundary. Do not change the status of the
Mexican wolf. This program has been a complete failure.
I don't think expanding it is going to do anything.
I want you to consider my constitutional
rights. I have no rights in protecting my property, and
if you're going to reconsider this whole effort, I think
you need to open this up and consider everything again.
Thank you.
MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Bays. Next speaker, please. Spell your name.
California Wolf Center's more than 12,000 members and
supporters included here in the Southwest.
We do support the proposal to relist the
Mexican gray wolf as a separate subspecies and allow
additional releases of wolves throughout the entire Blue
Range Wolf Recovery Area. However, we do have some
concerns about several other changes that do not best
serve wolves.
The Service's own recovery team has produced
science that indicates that Mexican gray wolves require
a minimum of three core populations of at least 750
wolves that are allowed to disperse. This will not be
possible if wolves that leave the area are then
relocated back inside the boundary.
Furthermore, this boundary excludes some of the
best remaining habitat that Mexican wolves critically
need, including the Grand Canyon region, northern New
Mexico and southern Colorado.
As part of the Mexican wolf species survival
plan, the California Wolf Center has directly supported
the introduction of Mexican gray wolves into the wild.
Our 12,000 members and supporters as well as thousands
of visitors who come every year to our facility have
celebrated the success stories of our wolves, including
those released, and continually express their support
for wolf recovery.
Every day they thank us and implore us to
continue our work of wolf recovery, a testament to the
genuine care and interest the public has towards this
species.
We urge the Fish & Wildlife Service to complete
a comprehensive recovery plan to expand the area in
which Mexican gray wolves are allowed to roam, to
release more captive wolves into the wild to increase
genetic diversity, and to take advantage of billing
partners in the program basic survival plan, as a
California Wolf Center.
Mexican gray wolves are essential. They are an
essential part of the Southwest ecosystem that has been
missing for too long. To us, through our center and
visitors, it has been clear that Americans do want these
wolves back. Thank you.
MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Vardaman.
MS. SEIDMAN: My name is Anna Seidman. That's A-N-N-A, S-E-I-D-M-A-N. I'm director of litigation for
Safari Club International. Safari Club generally
opposes the proposed modification to the rule governing
the Mexican wolf nonessential experimental population.
We are very concerned that the proposed changes
will undermine the social tolerance of those who must,
on a daily basis, deal with the impact of wolves on
their lives and their livelihoods. While Safari Club
acknowledges the success achieved by the Service, the
states, and the public in the recovery of the wolves of
a lower 48, we are mindful of the cost of that effort,
including years of litigation, a prolonged listing well
past achievement of recovery goals, and even
Congressional intervention.
We caution the Service not to create a scenario
in the Southwest that will force stakeholders, the state
and the federal government to endure a similar loss of
control and waste of valuable resources. Safari Club
encourages the Service to devise a rule that gives the
affected states full management authority over the wolf
population as soon as it meets recovery goals rather
than after the population is delisted.
We also advocate greater management authority
for the states to deal with the impact of wolves, the
wolves have on wild ungulate populations upon which the
hunting community and local communities rely for
recreation.
We thank you for this opportunity to comment
and will provide much more detailed comments in written
form. For the moment, suffice it to say that we believe
that the Service has a great deal more work to do, and
that work must be done in coordination and agreement
with the hunters, ranchers and the state management
authorities before the rule will achieve compliance with
Congress's intent for the management of experimental
populations. Thank you.
MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Seidman. The
next speaker, please.

11 (Pages 38 to 41)
November 20, 2013

Public Hearing

Page 42

MS. BACON: My name is Barbara Bacon. B-A-C-O-N. And the first thing I want to say is that I think we are all stakeholders here. You don't have to be a rancher, you don't have to be in the oil and gas industry, you don't have to be a public official. Those of us who live in the states involved -- and I live here in Albuquerque, New Mexico -- we are all stakeholders. I am here today to speak in support of Mexican gray wolves. While I do agree with some aspects of the plan, I am concerned that some of the changes that the Fish & Wildlife Service are proposing are not going to promote full wolf recovery for the Mexican gray wolves. And I am asking Fish & Wildlife Service to act in the best interests of full Mexican gray wolf recovery.

Wolves cannot read maps, and I think one of the -- and I agree that the -- that this program has had problems over the years, but one of the reasons I believe that there have been problems is that the wolves are confined to far too small an area, and as a result, they are going to come into conflict with people. They need a wider range to roam to be sustainable and to be able to formulate packs. I also think that 100 wolves is not enough for sustainability. I would ask --

(Lights out in room.)

Page 43

MS. BACON: Oh, great. Now I can't see. I would ask that the Mexican gray wolves be allowed to return to the Grand Canyon region, including northern Arizona and southern Utah, and also to northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. I do not agree with confining wolves --

MR. BUCKLEY: Folks in the back, please watch where you're leaning. That might be the answer.

MS. BACON: I do not agree with confining wolves south of Interstate 40. Again, they cannot read maps. I do agree with the concept of extending the southern boundary all the way to the Mexican border. That makes sense if there is going to be more in Mexico. I have more to say, but thank you for my time.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Bacon. Appreciate that.

Next speaker, please.

MR. FIELD: For the record, Jack Field, F-I-E-L-D. I'm the executive vice president of the Washington Cattlemen's Association. The Washington Cattlemen's Association is in strong support of the Service's proposal to delist the gray wolf Canis lupus in the lower 48.

We applaud your ability to read the Act and come to the same determination that we did, that the wolves in the western two-thirds of Washington do not meet the discreteness factors for a separate EPS. We would also think that into the future they still will not, because we don't have any -- as you look in the Act, you can't use an arbitrary political, man-made boundary to delineate a species.

We don't have anything to segregate the wolves that are naturally recolonizing from the NRN into the western two-thirds. We would strongly support the delisting efforts in that regard. As well as in Washington State, we currently have a split status where the eastern one-third is federally listed, the western two-thirds is federally -- or excuse me, federally listed. The eastern third is federally delisted, and we're unable to utilize our state management and recovery plan throughout our state.

So as a result, we're unable to provide the maximum level of protections that our state plan would provide to the wolf, as well as the management control measures needed to all stakeholders throughout the state.

So we would urge your quick adoption of the rules to allow for equitable treatment of all stakeholders throughout Washington State. In Washington State, it's absolutely essential, and I think nationwide, if we're going to have a successful recovery of wolves, regardless of where we are on the issue, that we have stakeholder involvement and we maintain public support.

The only way we have any opportunity to maintain public support is if we have local decisions made. Federal delisting allows state plans, local involvement to lead the way and allow the federal government to step back and allow local stakeholders who are far closer and better tied to the land to make the decisions needed.

I applaud the Service's proposal, hope you listen to the folks here with the issues that they're raising. But again, thank you for the proposal to delist the lower 48.

Please again, act as quickly as possible. This is something that is having massive economic impacts, and we applaud you and thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak tonight.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Field.

MR. ARAGON: My name is Andres Aragon, A-N-D-R-E-S, Aragon, representing Mora-San Miguel Farm and Livestock Bureau. Also Mexican and Spanish land grants.

First of all, one of the changes is proposing...
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<tr>
<td>to change state land status as public land. Black's Law</td>
<td>I also oppose delisting those wolves considered</td>
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<td>Dictionary defines public land as inappropriate lands.</td>
<td>recovered, but whose populations are currently being</td>
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<td>All the state land in New Mexico is already appropriated for use.</td>
<td>decimated by so-called hunters in Montana, Idaho and</td>
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<td>I would like -- also like to go on record that</td>
<td>Wyoming, where wolves are the victims of increasingly</td>
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<td>we support the delisting of the gray wolf and oppose the</td>
<td>hostile anti-wolf politics, or perhaps more accurately,</td>
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<td>revisions to nonessential experimental population of the</td>
<td>wolves have become the scapegoats for increasingly</td>
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<td>Mexican wolf. I also oppose implementation of the plans</td>
<td>hostile anti-everything in politics. Thank you.</td>
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<td>for the Mexican wolf for areas in Arizona and Mexico</td>
<td>MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Rudner. Next</td>
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<td>outside or external to the Mexican wolf experimental</td>
<td>speaker, please.</td>
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<td>population area.</td>
<td>MR. PARSONS: Thank you. My name is Dave</td>
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<td>Also, when the Federal Register came out in</td>
<td>Parsons, P-A-R-S-O-N-S. I'm representing two</td>
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<td>June, we requested public hearings in Las Vegas, New Mexico</td>
<td>organizations, the Rewilding Institute and another</td>
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<td>Miguel County requests and the requests of the Farm Bureau.</td>
<td>organization called Project Coyote.</td>
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<td>As for the Spanish and Mexican land grants, we</td>
<td>The Blue Range population of Mexican gray wolves is the only wild population for this highly</td>
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<td>also are recognized by statute and by constitution in</td>
<td>endangered gray wolf subspecies. The Blue Range</td>
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<td>New Mexico as a subdivision of the state, and we have</td>
<td>population has failed to meet the initial objective of</td>
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<td>not been asked to the table for any of the meetings or</td>
<td>the 100 wolves by the year 2006.</td>
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<td>any concerns.</td>
<td>This is not the fault of the wolves, or the</td>
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<td>Also, the Mexican and Spanish land grants have</td>
<td>quality of the habitat, it is the sole responsibility of</td>
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<td>minority population and indigenous populations, and you</td>
<td>the decision makers and managers who prioritized wolf</td>
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<td>can see that you need to do some better outreach just by</td>
<td>removal over wolf recovery to resolve conflicts between</td>
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<td>the people that, you know, more than 50 percent in New</td>
<td>wolf recovery and livestock grazing primarily on our</td>
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<td>Mexico are Hispanic. The counties up in the northern</td>
<td>public land.</td>
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<td>part, 80, 85 percent, 70 percent Hispanic, and we have</td>
<td>The proposed rule revision will make matters</td>
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<td>not been contacted for this purpose. And again, thank you for the</td>
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<td>opportunity.</td>
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<td>MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Aragon. I'd like to call forward Mr.</td>
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<td>Nathan Small. You can speak here.</td>
<td>You will be the third one up. Thank you.</td>
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<td>You will be the third one up. Thank you.</td>
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<td>MS. RUDNER: My name is Ruth Rudner.</td>
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<td>R-U-D-N-E-R. As an (inaudible word) writer, I wrote a series of</td>
<td>The main objective of this new proposed rule is to establish a population of at least 100 wolves in the wild. That's the same objective as the existing</td>
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<td>articles for the Wall Street Journal about the restoration of</td>
<td>proposed rule. Incredibly, the Fish &amp; Wildlife Service admits in writing in this proposed rule that a population of 100 wolves would still be in “danger of extinction.” And I have quotes around danger of extinction.</td>
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<td>wolves to Yellowstone. More recently, I've been writing about</td>
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<td>Mexican wolves. My comments are based on spending serious time in</td>
<td>The team of scientists appointed by the Fish &amp; Wildlife Service has recommended the following criteria for full recovery of the Mexican gray wolves. That is the establishment of at least three interconnected core populations of at least 200 wolves each and an overall population of at least 750 wolves distributed among those three core populations.</td>
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<td>wolf country and caring deeply about this animal vital to the health</td>
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<td>of the ecosystems with which it evolved.</td>
<td>MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Parsons.</td>
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<td>I support direct release of Mexican wolves throughout the Blue Range</td>
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<td>Recovery Area, but it is also essential to allow them to disperse</td>
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<td>north of I-40, so they have a chance to re-enter historic wolf</td>
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<td>territory in the Grand Canyon region.</td>
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<td>On the subject of essential, the Service should designate the Mexican</td>
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<td>gray wolf as essential. Calling it nonessential ignores science. It</td>
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<td>ignores the truth that every component of an ecosystem is essential to</td>
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<td>that ecosystem's health.</td>
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WOLF PUBLIC HEARING
Public Hearing
November 20, 2013

Page 50

1 MR. PARSONS: Thank you.
2 MR. BUCKLEY: Next speaker.
3 MR. SMALL: Good evening, Mr. Frazer,
4 Ms. Shaughnessy and Mr. Buckley. My name is Nathan
5 Small. I serve on the Las Cruces City Council in
6 southern New Mexico. I apologize for being late. It
7 was raining on the way up.
8 I speak first as an elected official. I do
9 believe that recovery is a goal that will be beneficial
10 for both the folks that I represent and also for the
11 State of New Mexico. Obviously, this needs to be done
12 with careful consideration, but I agree with Senator
13 Ortiz y Pino that the primary consideration you all are
14 looking at is scientific.
15 It also seems pretty clear that having direct
16 release into the area, the Blue Range Recovery Area, is
17 quite important, and doesn't give us the worst of the
18 worst, but it allows for direct release.
19 North of I-40, I think also seems to make sense
20 to me, giving the best possible chance for recovery.
21 You know, I've been very fortunate to take two hunting
22 trips into the Gila. Both were do it yourself. One was
23 where my wife, then fiancee -- she did marry me -- and
24 my brother and I, we all went in in spring. We got
25 snowed on. We took horses in.

Page 51

1 We didn't hear wolves, but it was something
2 that would be -- I think immeasurably add to any
3 experience in that country. We also went in in the fall
4 and it was just sunny, no snow, no rain. We were
5 fortunate to harvest a turkey that time. I had folks
6 from Ohio who came with us, and their sense that there
7 could be wolves in this country certainly added to their
8 experience.
9 Certainly, speaking as a hunter and someone who
10 is born and raised here in New Mexico, it seems to me
11 that the focus more on habitat in creating the best
12 possible habitat for wildlife, which wolves, as a
13 integral part of the ecosystem can be very important and
14 helpful to, is something that we should take as our goal
15 and not seek to scapegoat any one species for not having
16 the responsibility and care for the entire environment.
17 Thank you all very much for your time, and I
18 look forward to seeing you again.
19 MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Small. Ladies and
20 Gentlemen, we're going to take five minutes here in just
21 a second.
22 (Recess taken from 7:09 to 7:16 p.m.)
23 MR. BUCKLEY: Spell your name.
24 MR. OSSORIO: Peter Ossorio, O-S-S-O-R-I-O.
25 There are three ways that the Service and its rule

Page 52

1 violates the law. First, ignoring the public. This is
2 a charade, because the Service has already made up its
3 mind about the final rule. It's cut a side deal,
4 promising to capture any wolf which steps outside the
5 experimental population area.
6 Second, ignoring your own scientists and
7 thereby preventing wolves from going into places like
8 Grand Canyon and southern Colorado. Specifically,
9 you're ignoring the recommendations that say that real
10 recovery will require not the hundred wolves specified
11 in your rule, but the three populations totaling 750,
12 which brings us to the third violation.
13 You've ignored Congress. It's not me but
14 Congress which says that for the Service to designate
15 this experimental population as nonessential means that
16 you can actually say with a straight face that the total
17 elimination of that population would not be likely to
18 appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival of the
19 species in the wild.
20 We now have a track record from the Service,
21 seven years past your initial small target of a hundred
22 wolves, not there. And yet, you're going to say that
23 tomorrow, if you let poachers poison, trap, shoot, club
24 every last lobo and her pups, that this would not be at
25 least likely to appreciably reduce the likelihood of

Page 53

1 survival of the Mexican wolf in the wild?
2 Please. Tell truth to power, as several
3 speakers have said, follow the science and the law.
4 Don't slow walk our lobos to extinction. Thank you.
5 MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Ossorio. I'd like
6 to just remind people to not read your comments too
7 fast. Mr. Ossorio didn't. And I'd also like to
8 acknowledge the presence of Mr. Eric Layer, who is a
9 representative of Congressman Steve Pearce.
10 Next speaker, please.
11 MR. MONTGOMERY: I'm Wally Montgomery,
13 I have many concerns about the Mexican gray wolf
14 management proposal. However, I will address only three
15 of them.
16 First, adhering to the outdated prime objective
17 of only 100 Mexican wolves in the wild is a recipe that
18 will threaten their recovery and survival. It ignores
19 the latest best science compiled in a draft report by a
20 team of scientists two years ago, calling for three
21 populations of wolves in three areas across Arizona, New
22 Mexico and southern Colorado, with at least 200 wolves
23 in each area, and a total minimum amongst all three of
24 750 wolves.
25 The prime objective should not be just about

14 (Pages 50 to 53)

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northern cousins, the ability for Mexican wolves to
establish additional populations and to move among
populations is essential to their genetic diversity and
recovery.

And third, especially objectionable are the
proposed options being considered pertaining to the
taking or killing of wolves. The options are one-sided,
placing the whole blame for wolf-livestock conflicts on
the lobos. Federal and nonprofit assistance for
non-lethal measures to prevent such conflicts is
available to livestock owners.

Many, perhaps most, don't implement these
measures or even basic commonsense deterrents, such as
removing dead livestock that lure wolves and invite
depredation. Without the cooperation of livestock
owners in implementing nonlethal measures --

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Montgomery. Next
speaker, please.

MS. HUGHES: My name is Debbie Hughes. I'm the
executive director for the New Mexico Association of
Conservation Districts, or NMACD. NMACD works for the
soil and water conservation districts in New Mexico that
work directly with land owners to put conservation on
the ground. They are very involved in habitat
improvement for all species of wildlife as well as
livestock.

The soil and water conservation Districts
believe that more positive recovery can be granted
through cooperative conservation on private, state and
federal lands. This should be done -- this should not
be done at the expense of one species over another. The
soil and water conservation districts do have special
expertise that is recognized in other states and by
other federal agencies.

The US Fish & Wildlife Service has violated the
NEPA process by denying cooperating agency status to 17
of the soil and water conservation districts in New
Mexico that are local political subdivisions of state
government and have requested to be cooperating
agencies.

numbers. The integrity of the family group is vital to
establishing and maintaining a healthy wolf population.
Wolves need and depend on each other to survive in the
wild.

Secondly, some of the last best places for
wolves are in northern Arizona, northern New Mexico,
southern Utah and southern Colorado. To aid their long-
term recovery, all boundaries that restrict dispersion
should be removed. Like the wolves in Yellowstone,
lobos can't understand political boundaries. Like their
northern cousins, the ability for Mexican wolves to
deped the whole blame for wolf-livestock conflicts on
the lobos. Federal and nonprofit assistance for
non-lethal measures to prevent such conflicts is
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Mexico that are local political subdivisions of state
government and have requested to be cooperating
agencies.

number was 1,300. That means since the recovery effort
started over four decades ago, this tiny pup was the
1,300 Mexican wolf to be born.

Knowing that when our center started there were
only five Mexican wolves in the wild, 1,300 is a
remarkable accomplishment. Unfortunately, the wild does
not reflect this accomplishment, and after several
decades of trying to save the most endangered wolf in
the world, recovery has reached only 75 wolves in the
wild. This is unsustainable for many reasons.

I am here to talk to you about why it is
unsustainable from the captive breeding perspective.
The captive breeding program, although highly effective,
does not exist in a vacuum. It is not a continuous or
permanent solution for the recovery of an endangered
species.

Limited enclosure space at facilities
throughout the United States and Mexico and consistently
being at maximum population capacity for several years
has impaired the captive breeding program. With no new
releases in the wild in over five years, this forces us
to allow only a few pairs to breed annually for fear
that we will have too many puppies and nowhere to put
them.

Too many puppies. Whoever thought that would...
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Page 58</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. The time, effort and resources that the Service has poured into ineffectual and even detrimental political foot dragging could and should be used for developing and implementing a real recovery plan for these endangered and iconic wolves.</td>
<td>1. And you know which parts I'm talking about.</td>
<td>1. I want to take up in detail the issue of best available science. I have four subpoints.</td>
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<td>2. Here is the part that's the most puzzling and disturbing. The Service ignores the vast most current science, the work of its own recovery team, and instead continues to chase after outdated, 31-year-old first step goal of 100 wolves. Even while the Service itself admits such a population will be quote, &quot;in danger of extinction.&quot;</td>
<td>2. The current recovery team's work tells us that lobos will need free wild populations with dispersal among them, and that the habitats capable of supporting these populations, as you heard before, are in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, in the Grand Canyon region and in the southern Rockies.</td>
<td>2. A, 100 wolves in the wild are too few. Best available science recommends three populations of at least 200 wolves each.</td>
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<td>3. So why -- this is my question, when it knows what must be done, why would the Service be wasting time that the wolves don't have. Why would it not listen to the majority of people in the Southwest and fulfill its stewardship responsibility to these endangered animals and save them from extinction. Wolves don't understand these policies and neither do we. Thank you.</td>
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<td>3. B, especially given the lack of genetic diversity, wild wolves need multiple interconnected protective zones. There are suitable sites other than the Mexican wolf experimental population area, but under the proposed rule, wolves would be returned to the single area.</td>
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<td>4. Here is the part that's the most puzzling and disturbing. The Service ignores the vast most current science, the work of its own recovery team, and instead continues to chase after outdated, 31-year-old first step goal of 100 wolves. Even while the Service itself admits such a population will be quote, &quot;in danger of extinction.&quot;</td>
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<td>4. C, successful reintroduction requires a certain amount of speed. Prolonged captivity can result in many types of changes that diminish animals' ability to thrive in the wild. Scientists tell us this deserves much more attention than that is getting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. But also, reduced breeding in captivity will ultimately a reflection of irresponsible management.</td>
<td>5. So why -- this is my question, when it knows what must be done, why would the Service be wasting time that the wolves don't have. Why would it not listen to the majority of people in the Southwest and fulfill its stewardship responsibility to these endangered animals and save them from extinction. Wolves don't understand these policies and neither do we. Thank you.</td>
<td>5. D, wolves are vital to ecosystem health. As you know, they are predators. Areas with too few wolves have too many ungulates and too many coyotes. That puts hares and rabbits at risk. It's not a system that can self-correct without wolves. That's what we know.</td>
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<td>6. The Endangered Wolf Center supports the recognition of the Mexican gray wolf as a distinct subspecies and list it as endangered and expanding its territory.</td>
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<td>6. There is so much we don't. Thank you.</td>
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<td>7. Mostly, they, and we, can't figure out why the Service would make changes to the management plan that either do almost nothing for the recovery of the Mexican wolf, or which actually make recovery harder.</td>
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<td>11. MS. CARRILLO: Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Nancy Carrillo. I am simply a concerned citizen. I am here to speak about the Mexican gray wolf. Although there are aspects of this proposed revision I appreciate, I have a four great reservations.</td>
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MR. KENNEY: I am Bill Kenney, K-E-N-N-E-Y. I have a really good record when it comes to American wildlife. As a citizen of North America, I implore you to take more than needed.

State wildlife agencies have a strong history in New Mexico. I am the regional director for New Mexico for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation supports removing the gray wolf from the list of endangered and threatened wildlife as proposed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

Recently, Rocky Mountains and the western Great Lakes has exceeded all goals and expectations. Wolves are no longer in danger of extinction, and it is time for wolf management to be turned over to the state and the respective wildlife management agencies.

State wildlife agencies have a strong history of wildlife restoration dating back to the early 1900s, and will do an excellent job of managing the species going forward. No state wildlife agency has ever managed a big game species into extinction, and they have a really good record when it comes to American wildlife.

It should be up to each individual state agency, not the federal government, to determine whether allowing wolves within their borders. Some believe that the wolves should be returned to their entire native range, but yet, many others species such as elk are not allowed to do that in this great country.

In regard to the Mexican wolves, future management should be turned over to the state wildlife agencies. Thank you very much.

MR. ROBINSON: I'm Michael Robinson, born and lower pup survival rates among those that are born.

Overlooking the cultural importance of wolves the scoping process is overlooking.

These animals are seen as sacred to First Nation peoples across the continent. It doesn't take much research, time, or people who will find -- who will tell you how they credit the wolf with teaching tribes the importance of family values and to never hunt or take more than needed.

Having wolves is a livelihood of many tribes, As far as I have researched, you have not considered the cultural value of wolves to people without financial assets. As a citizen of North America, I implore you to look beyond the short-term profit of killing wolves and look into long-term ecosystem health and welfare.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Minch. Appreciate it. Next speaker, please. And like to call a few other people to come up to the front. Those speakers here would move over. John Diamond, Caren Cowan, Rex Wilson, Robert Greene. I apologize. George Stapleton, Isabelle Rudolph, Brad Christmas, Kevin Bixby, Donald Jones and Roxane George. Please come to the front.

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In regard to the Mexican wolves, future management should be turned over to the state wildlife agencies. Thank you very much.
I'm Robert Greene, and I'm from Santa Fe, New Mexico. Mexico as well as the roughly 25,000 resident and wildlife management should take into consideration the Mexican gray wolf.

To make it impossible for our state to manage wolf population until unglulate herds are depredated to 50 percent.

And also, it makes no sense to keep them from the Sky Islands where the Mexican wolf evolved in what Leopold called species the desert wolf, in the desert country down there.

It's good that the Service would allow them into the proposal to leave the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area and set up territories. It makes no sense to bound them by Interstate 40 and keep them from the southern Rocky Mountains and the Grand Canyon ecosystems where scientists have said they need to be.

And also, it makes no sense to keep them from the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. Millions of acres literally that do not currently have wolves and that have excellent habitat for wolves and a healthy prey base for wolves.

The second is to allow them to disperse freely. Wolves, as people have pointed out, cannot read lines on maps drawn by politicians. They are the essence of animals. Or let me restate that. They are animals that need large areas to roam and to have interconnected populations.

It's important not to open up opportunities for more killing of wolves. I note that the Service today, tomorrow and the next day is removing two more wolves from the wild while you have only released into the wild one wolf, a single wolf in the last five years from the captive breeding pool. That is unconscionable and it is contributing to the genetic crisis. Thank you very much.

I'll just list the names of some of them. I don't know if the rules allow that. I don't know. Do they? Okay. Ms. Rudner, Mr. Parsons, Mr. Montgomery, and Ms. Mossotti, Ms. Minch and Mr. Robinson. Thank you.

I'm the executive director for the New Mexico Council of Outfitters and Guides. We are a nonprofit organization that represents the interests of the 1,500 outfitters and guides in the State of New Mexico as well as the roughly 25,000 resident and nonresident hunters who choose to contract with an outfitter in New Mexico.

Our industry spends literally thousands of hours in the back country each year and understands the importance of a healthy predator-prey dynamic in the wild. We also understand that in a world of human authority, that dynamic needs to be managed in order to maintain balance.

Our main concern with the changes proposed to the Endangered Species Act and the Mexican wolf recovery is that this situation will turn into another gray wolf debacle. The gray wolf recovery met and exceeded sustainable predator numbers in 2002.

I'm Kerrie Romero, K-E-R-R-I-E, the executive director for the New Mexico Council of Outfitters and Guides. We are a nonprofit organization that represents the interests of the 1,500 outfitters and guides in the State of New Mexico as well as the roughly 25,000 resident and nonresident hunters who choose to contract with an outfitter in New Mexico.

There have been a number of really good speakers here that I agree with. I think in the interest of time, I'll just list the names of some of them. I don't know if the rules allow that. I don't know. Do they? Okay. Ms. Rudner, Mr. Parsons, Mr. Montgomery, and Ms. Mossotti, Ms. Minch and Mr. Robinson. Thank you.

I came here to speak a little bit of what I'm on. We actually had a conversation, a good one.

MR. GREENE: Good evening. My name is Robert Greene, G-R-E-N-E. I'm from Santa Fe, New Mexico.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Romero. Next speaker, please.

MR. STAPLETON: Thank you very much. My name is George Stapleton. I came here to speak a little bit of what I'm on. We actually had a conversation, a good one.

I am a pro-wolf supporter. I am confused by all of this. It doesn't make sense. Everyone here knows all the arguments. What I don't understand is why polarization doesn't allow for a moderate look at what's going on. I mean, I kind of can't help but feel -- I stood in line with a couple of guys on the opposite side of this whole issue of what I'm on. We actually had a conversation, a good one.

Mr. Buckley, what is the polarization that is creating this? Is it the government? Is it the

Mr. Buckley, what is the polarization that is creating this? Is it the government? Is it the
weren't here when the decision was made to extirpate the
This experiment has gone on for way too long. It has
MR. BIXBY: My name is Kevin Bixby. I'm the
under New Mexico law for animal cruelty. It's time to
you is there are people that will devote their time,
energy, resources and life to help you with this
within yards of too many wolves too many times. Before
the part of the Mexican wolf rule to release directly in
New Mexico makes more sense. At least we don't start
The ecosystem is not what it was 50 years ago. We
weren't here when the decision was made to extirpate the
wolves. But trying to force them back in is not working
for anybody, least of all of them.
We were really proud in 1998 when we stopped
wolves from being released directly into New Mexico. We
soon learned that Fish & Wildlife Service had a way
around that, and within months, they were releasing
wolves that were nuisance wolves.
With that in mind and in hindsight, perhaps
the Mexican wolf rule to release directly in
New Mexico makes more sense. At least we don't start
out with some else's problem.
The breadth of what you're talking about doing
for wolf recovery is impossible. If you talk to the New
Mexico Game and Fish, there are not predator populations
of the public. But don't ever forget that we are New
Mexico, and you're the federal government. You want us
to work with you, you need to work with us. Thank you.
MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Stapleton. Next
speaker, please.
MR. DIAMOND: Good evening. My name is John
Diamond, J-O-H-N, D-I-A-M-O-N-D. As a hunter, I could
address the devastating impacts the Mexican gray wolf
has had on the wildlife population. As a rancher, I
could address the devastating impacts the Mexican gray
wolf has had on livestock profitability.
But my greatest concern is the public safety of
my four- and five-year old daughters who have come
within yards of too many wolves too many times. Before
changing the rule, I ask the Fish & Wildlife Service to
enforce public safety by ending this nonessential
experiment. Thank you.
MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Diamond.
MS. COWAN: My name is Caren, C-A-R-E-N.
I'm speaking tonight on behalf of the New
Mexico Wolf Growers Association. The association, we
support the delisting of the northern 48, but we'd like
to see the Mexican wolf included in that population.
This experiment has gone on for way too long. It has
been a failure, and most of all a failure for the
wolves.
If I treated my dog the way these wolves are
treated and turned loose without feed, I would be liable
under New Mexico law for animal cruelty. It's time to
take a step back and take a look and try to work with
the people on the ground.
With all due respect to the people who work for
the Fish & Wildlife Service and the Forest Service on
the ground, there is no trust. We've been told too many
times things that didn't come true. And "We're working
on it" is simply not an answer anymore.
We've heard a lot tonight about the wild. The
wild is not wild. It's where our families live. It's
where we make a living. It's where we live every day.
The ecosystem is not what it was 50 years ago. We
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19 (Pages 70 to 73)
November 20, 2013

Page 74

We urge you to either expand the boundaries of the Mexican wolf experimental population area all the way down to Mexico and up to I-70, or eliminate the idea of capturing and retrieving wolves that leave the experimental population area.

As others have mentioned, the best available science, the scientists on the Fish & Wildlife Service’s own recovery team have recommended a metapopulation of 750 wolves distributed over three core areas, two of which are not within the New Mexico experimental population area.

Finally, we urge you to keep that little sliver of Texas in the experimental population area. Not only would that allow for the re-establishment of wolves in Guadalupe National Park, but it would make our members in Texas thrilled to have Texas as one of the states that hosts Mexican wolves. Thank you.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Bixby. Next, please.

MR. WILSON: Good evening. My name is Rex Wilson, W-I-L-S-O-N. I am an ecosystem manager in Lincoln County, New Mexico. I’m also the president of the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association and our membership is made up of ecosystem managers in New Mexico, all 33 counties as well as 19 other states.

The New Mexico Cattle Growers Association supports the delisting of all wolves. We all know that there is ample scientific evidence for delisting of the northern and eastern wolves. When it comes to the so-called Mexican wolves, they are released in the wild of Arizona and New Mexico as an experimental nonessential population.

After 15 years, it is clear -- let me repeat -- it is clear that the experiment has failed. These animals have not had the genetic capacity to reproduce in numbers that even come close to the goals of the program.

The US Fish & Wildlife Service has been unable to even develop a modern recovery plan after numerous attempts. The current recovery team hasn’t even met in well over a year. If the Mexican wolf were to remain listed, the regulatory changes that are proposed now are at best premature without a recovery plan.

The wolves have been unable to take hold in the highest prey-based densities of New Mexico. The contemplated expanded area takes a failed program into territory where it is again doomed to fail. There is not enough wildlife in New Mexico to allow for the growth of the wolves. These animals will be forced to prey on our pets and our livestock, perhaps worse.

Page 75

United States return to science-based policies starting by reinstating all gray wolves in the United States’ endangered species list including Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho and Montana. Institute the original plan to release the lobo (Canis lupus baileyi) in the Grand Canyon in southern Colorado.

Let permit lobos to travel outside of their release sites to the other three sites including (inaudible), and change the status of the lobo to essential rather than nonessential status. I submitted about 2-3,000 words of written, so I will finish now. Thank you very much.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you Mr. Jones. Next speaker, please.

MS. GEORGE: Thank you. My name is Roxane, R-O-X-A-N-E, George, G-E-O-R-G-E. Getting critically endangered Mexican gray wolves Endangered Species Act protection in their own right is long overdue and I strongly support that proposal. But not in the context of stripping protections for gray wolves.

I strongly support science-based changes to the Mexican wolf rule that will further the lobos recovery, but as others have said, very little in that rule will actually do that.

We, in our public lands, stand to benefit.

Page 76

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Wilson. Thank you for your comments. I want to call a few more people up.

Thank you. Go ahead, sir.

MR. JONES: My name is Donald Jones, J-O-N-E-S. I've heard a lot of discussion about science-based decision-making, and I find that curious, because the Department Manual 305, Chapter 3, Integrity of Scientific and Scholarly Activities, makes it a requirement that the US Fish & Wildlife, and all departments of the Department of the Interior follow the best available science.

Now, there is another qualification in Section 3.1.A. It says other factors that inform decision-making may include economic, budget, institutional, social, cultural, legal and environmental considerations. I hope the statement means that these factors may require consideration in the best manner of executing the best science available, because if it means that science can be ignored or set aside for commercial or other special interests, then science is not the primary driver in management of American ecosystems and 305 DM3 is a hollow document with no practical effect.

You know as well as I that ignoring science has negative consequences. Therefore, I request that the

Page 77

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20 (Pages 74 to 77)

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November 20, 2013

Wolf Public Hearing
Public Hearing

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Page 78

1. tremendously from restoring wolves to their essential
2. natural role, and I support expanding the area where
3. wolves can roam and allowing initial releases throughout
4. the Blue Range. But the rest of the proposal should be
5. discarded as inconsistent with recovery.
6. The lobo is essential on many levels. It will
7. be a great tragedy if these important native animals go
8. extinct in the wild a second time because some are
9. unwilling to share public lands with native wildlife and
10. those responsible for their recovery play politics with
11. their future. Thank you.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. George. Next speaker, please.

MS. RODOLPHI: Good evening. My name is
12. Isabelle R-O-D-O-L-P-H-I. I'm a citizen of the United
13. States of America, and I'm here to speak for future
14. generations. Thank you, Ms. Mossotti. And I love
15. nature, and I love the wild, so that I support the
16. preservation of the wild, and when we take over so much
17. land, as our population expands.
18. And I support the full recovery of the Mexican
19. wolf and the gray wolf. It is the most endangered
20. mammal in North America. I oppose delisting because
21. delisting of the gray wolf would be detrimental for the
22. survival of this animal and species, as it is still

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Page 79

Page 80

1. -- well, the group formerly known as the Mexican
2. Livestock Interdiction, now called the Co-existence
3. Council, which was renamed by members of the council.
4. We work together to find solutions for
5. wolf-livestock conflicts. There are numerous concerns I
6. have with the proposed rule, but you can see our summary
7. of those concerns in both our comments on the draft of
8. our impact statement and the proposed rule.
9. I want to focus on just one component which I
10. think is a fatal flaw, and I'll try to explain my
11. rationale. In our written comments, please consider
12. both the legal and scientific reasons why experimental
13. essential is the appropriate classification for wolves
14. at this point in time. But on a more practical matter,
15. I think the essential designation could be extremely
16. valuable in fostering greater cooperation and
17. coordination between the agencies.
18. In support, remember that recovery takes place
19. in the wild, not in captivity. Essential designation is
20. not only important to further the conservation of
21. Mexican gray wolves in the wild, but it can also
22. increase the much needed communication and coordination
23. between agencies which share the responsibility of the
24. recovery of Mexican gray wolves.
25. Many of the agencies in the region, including

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Page 81

Page 80

1. most of the forest organizations, are included in the
2. proposed rule are completely oblivious to the needs of
3. the Mexican wolf conservation. Because they did not
4. have a recovery plan to refer to, all of the regional
5. forests with a nexus to wolf recovery are nearing
6. completion of their forest management plans, which will
7. lock them into a 20-year paradigm without the benefits
8. of having a recovery plan to guide them.
9. Without such provisions, they'll be less likely
10. to exercise the flexibility needed to prevent conflicts
11. between local livestock and other land uses.
12. Consultations that would follow from an essential
13. designation would benefit ranchers because it would help
14. implement quick and creative solutions such as
15. community --
16. MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Miller.
17. Appreciate your comment.
18. Next, please.
19. MS. SWEATT: Yes, hi, my name is Deborah,
21. call me sweet, but my name is really Sweatt.
22. I strongly believe in the preservation of the
23. wolf. Many hunters believe that listing or relisting
24. the wolf will seriously reduce or eliminate elk as a
25. viable game species. Wolves, elk and native man

21 (Pages 78 to 81)

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co-existed in North America for many thousands of years. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation in 2010 stated "Prior to the European colonization of North America, there were an estimated 10 million elk on the continent. The arrival of immigrants began to radically change this balance with eradication of both elk and wolves in inhabited areas."

William Clark of Lewis and Clark, wrote, quote, "At one point along the Yellowstone River existed an incredible abundance of elk, bison and wolves, in such numbers that he figured no one would ever believe him."

These statements evidenced that left alone, elk and wolves will reach and retain large balanced population levels. Unfortunately, we live in a changed world that is out of natural balance. The natural world is so interconnected that we cannot totally understand the long-term implications of species eradication. I can think of many instances when man has tried to outsmart nature, only to find out after the fact that even small changes can be devastating to a natural world.

We need to have more scientific data concerning exactly what numbers of individuals represent balanced relationships. We have made major advances with scientific inquiries like the Yellowstone Wolf Project, Item 19 would allow taking Mexican wolves for killing, wounding or biting pets on private or tribal land. This prohibition is frankly an open invitation to baiting wolves with bound puppies.

Item 20 would provide for the issuance of permits to allow livestock owners or other agents to kill or injure any Mexican wolf that is present on private or tribal land under specified conditions.

The potential for abuse of this provision is so interconnected that we cannot totally understand the long-term implications of species eradication.

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Appreciate that.

Next speaker, please.

Ms. OSSORIO: Good evening, Director Frazer and the rest of the panel. My name is Jean Ossorio. J-E-A-N, O-S-S-O-R-I-O. I have spent 330 nights camping in a tent in occupied Mexican gray wolf home ranges. I've seen a total of 43 lobos in the wild. Every encounter with this rarest of all wolves is frankly electrifying. Imagine four Francisco pups playing in the snow while their parents walk sedately across Double Cienega in 2000.

An uncollared saddle pack wolf pausing for a drink from university tank in 2006. Four Paradise wolves crossing Forest Road 117 southeast of Greens Peak in 2007. Too many of these wolves and their offspring have been removed to captivity, their wild experience and precious genetic inheritance squandered under Draconian removal policies of the past.

Two of the items on which the Service is currently requesting comments would not only take us backwards, but would make recovery even less likely. Item 19 would allow taking Mexican wolves for killing, wounding or biting pets on private or tribal land. This prohibition is frankly an open invitation to baiting wolves with bound puppies.

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Mr. Buckley: Thank you, Ms. Ossorio.

Ms. LOWE: My name is Rosemary Lowe, R-O-S-E-M-A-R-Y, L-O-W-E. I think it's evident tonight to most of us who care about what is happening to the wild that the line has been drawn. And the line is you're either on the side of the natural world and what is happening to it, or you're not.

And I think that the Fish & Wildlife need to take control of this. It is not going to be allowed to be left up to the states. We see what's happening in Washington State. The wolves are being decimated up there. And the Mexican wolf, hey, many of us have been around to know for a couple of decades that this is not working.

The reason the gray wolf in Yellowstone is working is because of something that is missing at Yellowstone. And that is the destructive livestock industry. That is why those wolves are doing so well.

Now, down in the Apache National Forest, what do we have down there? We have cattle everywhere, and sheep. The livestock industry, which has been subsidized for decades upon decades have gotten a free ride, and then they have wildlife services of which wildlife services is a part of your program. That is the most infamous and barbaric of agencies, a federal agency which largely works for the livestock industry.

So in order for this to work, I think that the greatest experiment that has taken place since the 1800s, since the late 1800s, on our public lands needs...
November 20, 2013
The very best available science and not political
This program if wolves are to succeed. Thank you.
Wildlife Services was caught in the act of killing a
Ernest Torrez, Randell Major and Tink Jackson.
The proposed change to the Mexican wolf rule
would reward this behavior by adding language to clarify
that Wildlife Service's personnel will not be in
violation of the Endangered Species Act or this rule for
any taking of a Mexican wolf. This is exactly the
opposite direction in which the wolf program needs to be
going.
USDA Wildlife Services needs to be removed
entirely from the Mexican wolf program. Presentation at
the beginning mentioned the anti-predator campaign.
This was largely carried out by USDA Wildlife Services
and its predecessor agency, Predator and Rodent Control,
which was set up to kill wolves, coyotes and other
predators, along with prairie dogs and other such
dangerous creatures on behalf of the livestock industry.
USDA Wildlife Services should be removed
from this program if wolves are to succeed. Thank you.
MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Bedner. The group
now is John Snyder, Laura Schneberger, Tallan Melton,
From many people have said here tonight, wolves
are not privy to political boundaries, they don't
understand maps, and they're going to go where the best
habitat for them is. And many of those areas would be
-- they would be unable to go to those areas if you
limit their boundaries.
I would just finally like to urge U.S. Fish &
Wildlife Service to be implementing changes that reflect
the very best available science and not political
pressure. Thank you.
MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Snyder. We're
going to have one more speaker. Then we're going to
take a five-minute break, and then we'll resume with the
folks that are waiting now in queue.
MS. HALL: Hello. My name is Monique Hall,
and I would like to say that I support the
full recovery and protection of
Mexican wolves into the entirety of the Blue Range Wolf
Recovery Area. I think that's a step that's been needed
for a long time. Unfortunately, you -- I don't support,
that may otherwise open any loosening of restrictions to
remove wolves from the wild. It's absolutely contrary
to the goal of re-establishing the species. We need
more wolves in the wild, not the ability to remove them
more often.
I would also like to say that I support the
allowing of changing the border to the US-Mexico border.
This is an important step. It can allow connectivity
between different populations. But I would urge the
Mexican wolf. The agent, described by his employer as a
predator, along with prairie dogs and other such
dangerous creatures on behalf of the livestock industry.
MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Lowe. Appreciate
that. Next speaker, please.
Brad Christmas, if you're in the room. Followed by
Ernest Torrez, Randell Major and Tink Jackson.
Mr. Snyder, S-N-Y-D-E-R. I'm coming from Santa Teresa, New
Mexico this evening. And I would just like to say that
I think that the proposed rule changes are taking a
couple of steps forward and many steps back.
I absolutely support the direct releases of
Mexican wolves into the entirety of the Blue Range Wolf
Recovery Area. I think that's a step that's been needed
for a long time. Unfortunately, you -- I don't support,
that may otherwise open any loosening of restrictions to
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limit their boundaries.
I would just finally like to urge U.S. Fish &
Wildlife Service to be eliminating all boundaries to
the wolves' movement.
As many people have said here tonight, wolves
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MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Bedner. The group
now is John Snyder, Laura Schneberger, Tallan Melton,
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<th>Page 90</th>
<th>Page 92</th>
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<td>family makes its livelihood off of. I want to say that we also represent other stakeholders in the Gila who are impacted by Mexican wolves. Our association, our little livestock association has dwindled by membership in no small part due to the Mexican wolf expansion and the lack of appropriate mitigation techniques by the Fish &amp; Wildlife Service to massive depredation, massive weight loss and other problems with our kids and our families. We are disproportionately burdened by this program. We support the delisting of the -- of all gray wolves, including the Mexican gray wolves. We do not believe that the limited gene pool of this wolf allows for a recovery. A recovery, a scientific recovery is up to 2,000 animals. They cannot breed that many animals and have an expanded gene pool. You are going to have to do genetic recovery using some other animal. What is the limit on how far this goes? I want to also say that the will of the majority does not violate the rights of the minority in this country. Our communities deserve equal protection under the law. Our communities have low income, high minority. We cannot compete with this kind of media and -- we can't compete. We're here tonight trying to make our living and come here. These people are being paid releasing Mexican wolfs will soon be increased, but you also have to remember you can increase the zone, but if you don't increase the number of releases, it's not going to do any good. So I do think we should have more releases in the future as well. I'm personally tired of going to zoos, wolf sanctuaries and the like and reading on the little plaque that despite extensive recovery efforts, the Mexican great wolf remains critically endangered. It's getting kind of old, unfortunately. I do think this proposed revision is a good small first step towards full recovery of the Mexican gray wolf, but there are several other midway steps that need to be eliminated, I think, such as keeping the goal of a hundred gray wolves. There are a lot of other changes that I think would be good. I don't have time to dwell on them, but my other pro wolfers have already given you a good summary of how I feel. So thank you. MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Melton. MR. MAJOR: Good evening. My name is Randell Major, R-A-N-D-E-L-L, M-A-J-O-R. You pronounced it correctly. T-A-L-L-A-N, M-E-L-T-O-N. T-O-R-R-E-Z. I raise cattle and horses near La Jara, New Mexico. I'm the commissioner for the La Jara Socorro and Catron County. When the government implemented this wolf program, I don't believe they knew how it would hurt the local communities and citizens. Besides the rancher, I also am a ranch broker. I personally felt the negative impact on the economy that the very presence of these wolves have created. Many times when I was driving out there taking potential buyers, ranch buyers and even residential buyers, once they find out that the property that they are interested in is in the wolf recovery area, the fear of putting -- okay. They were interested in the wolf recovery area for fear of putting their livestock in potential danger or being stuck with a property that they can't sell. This is just another example of what the wolf recovery has done by losing local dollars from county and gross receipts taxes on property exchange. The old saying holds true: &quot;Give an inch and they'll take a mile.&quot; The present wolf situation being highly expensive is not enough. Now they want to expand the wolf program, expanding the strain on its local citizens. Please delist the wolf and do not expand. Thank you. MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Major. MR. TORREZ: My name is Ernest R. Torrez, T-O-R-R-E-Z. I raise cattle and horses near La Jara, New Mexico. I'm the commissioner for the La Jara</td>
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<td>to be here. MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you very much, Ms. Schneberger. Appreciate your comments. MR. MELTON: Hello, my name is Tallan Melton. You pronounced it correctly. T-A-L-L-A-N, M-E-L-T-O-N. I'm just a concerned citizen, no organization. I do support the full recovery of the New Mexico gray wolf. The Mexican gray wolf is currently listed as experimental and nonessential, despite being limited to just one single isolated population. Now, I ask you this. If the Mexican wolf subspecies is limited to only one population, how is that one population considered nonessential? If they disappear, then won't they be gone? I request that the nonessential labeling of the Mexican gray wolf be changed to essential for this reason. Perhaps they were considered in the past nonessential for the survival of the gray wolf species as a whole, encompassing all the wolves in the United States, but if they're soon to be labeled under the Endangered Species Act separate from the gray wolf, then I do think they should be considered essential. In addition, every captive wolf is just as essential to the whole population as the ones in the wild. I am pleased that the expansion zone for</td>
<td>how it would hurt the local communities and citizens. Besides the rancher, I also am a ranch broker. I personally felt the negative impact on the economy that the very presence of these wolves have created. Many times when I was driving out there taking potential buyers, ranch buyers and even residential buyers, once they find out that the property that they are interested in is in the wolf recovery area, the fear of putting -- okay. They were interested in the wolf recovery area for fear of putting their livestock in potential danger or being stuck with a property that they can't sell. This is just another example of what the wolf recovery has done by losing local dollars from county and gross receipts taxes on property exchange. The old saying holds true: &quot;Give an inch and they'll take a mile.&quot; The present wolf situation being highly expensive is not enough. Now they want to expand the wolf program, expanding the strain on its local citizens. Please delist the wolf and do not expand. Thank you. MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Major. MR. TORREZ: My name is Ernest R. Torrez, T-O-R-R-E-Z. I raise cattle and horses near La Jara, New Mexico. I'm the commissioner for the La Jara</td>
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24 (Pages 90 to 93)

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<td>1. Community Ditch Association. It’s about water rights.</td>
<td>1. More foliage helps to cleanse water resources,</td>
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<td>2. I'm a native New Mexican. I'm opposed to the existence of any wolf in my state. My ancestors</td>
<td>2. which benefits all. The people of the Southwest need healthy land. We need to let the wolf do</td>
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<td>were combatants in the Mexican-American war. The gringos beat us. We lost.</td>
<td>his job in the ecosystem by bringing balance.</td>
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<td>3. We were allowed the choice. We could move back across the new southern borders, go back to</td>
<td>4. US Fish &amp; Wildlife Service's archaic plan drafted in 1982 of needing only a hundred Mexican</td>
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<td>Mexico, or we can stay here and the government would recognize our property rights. The treaty of</td>
<td>gray wolves in the wild to call the species recovered is not based on any sound science. Nor</td>
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<td>Guadalupe Hidalgo allowed us property rights, inviolate.</td>
<td>have they been unable to achieve that in even 15 years with only 75 wolves are in the wild today.</td>
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<td>5. We have property rights. We’re solid on that.</td>
<td>6. I agree with the portion of the plan that gives the Mexican gray wolf full protection. However,</td>
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<td>6. My property rights, my family's property rights are solid and secure. So you need to</td>
<td>nature evolves, so the Service's plan must evolve. The health of the Southwestern landscape</td>
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<td>determine what's got bigger medicine, your Endangered Species Act or my treaty rights. You need</td>
<td>depends on it.</td>
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<td>us if you’re going to expand this wolf program. You need the beaners. You need us.</td>
<td>8. MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you.</td>
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<td>7. These wolves aren't going to make it out there,</td>
<td>9. MS. NICHOLS: Do not let the fierce green fire go out.</td>
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<td>because we're going to shoot them, I'm going to shoot them if they are on my property. So help</td>
<td>10. Mr. BUCKLEY: Thank you. Next speaker.</td>
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<td>us help you.</td>
<td>11. MS. TOIVONEN: Hi. My name is Lauren</td>
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<td>you.</td>
<td>and also as a volunteer coordinator of a canine conservation organization, the future of the gray</td>
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<td>9. Mr. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Torrez.</td>
<td>wolf and the Mexican gray wolf is a part of my profession.</td>
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<td>10. MS. NICHOLS: Good evening. My name is Karen Nichols, K-A-R-E-N-N-I-C-H-O-L-S. I want to speak for</td>
<td>11. The gray wolf should not be delisted from the</td>
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<td>11. the wolf. The American Southwest is a uniquely beautiful land with a rich and long history.</td>
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<td>12. Its people are strong and resilient. Aldo Leopold chose to write about this land more than</td>
<td>13. Endangered Species Act and here's why. Since being listed under the Endangered Species Act,</td>
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<td>70 years ago.</td>
<td>the gray wolf has rebounded to an estimated 5,400 individuals in the lower 48 states.</td>
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<td>13. He spoke of the vital relationship the mountain has with the Mexican gray wolf. His own</td>
<td>14. They are just starting to recover, but the population is not yet completely sustainable, nor do</td>
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<td>personal perspective changed after he had a shot a wolf and watched the fierce green fire die in</td>
<td>these wolves occupy even close to a majority of the historic range, including my state of Missouri,</td>
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<tr>
<td>her eyes. He then wrote, &quot;Since then, I have lived to see state after state extirpate its wolves.</td>
<td>among many others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have watched the face of many a newly wolf-less mountain, and seen the south-facing</td>
<td>15. When federal protection is lost to the wolves, their care falls into states' hands who has a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slopes wrinkle with a maze of new deer trails. I have seen every edible bush and seedling</td>
<td>history of destructive management practices. Decades of recovery efforts of the species are at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>browsed to the height of a saddle horn.</td>
<td>very high risk of having been in vain if management is given to the states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain</td>
<td>16. Wolves are an integral part of the love of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>live in mortal fear of its deer,” unquote.</td>
<td>17. The Yellowstone ecosystem is a perfect example of what happens when a keystone species like the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The mountain knows the value of the wolf in the ecosystem. The deer and the elk populations</td>
<td>gray wolf is returned to its native habitat. Once barren land, the park now flourishes. Without</td>
</tr>
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<td>are directly competing with the rancher for resources to feed its herds. Left unchallenged, wild</td>
<td>wolves and other keystone species, are land will end up like any other land that's been stripped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ungulates can decimate the foliage in one area before moving on. Hunters can only take</td>
<td>by the arrogance and willful ignorance of its inhabitants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual deer out of the herd. The wolf will make the whole herd move around, thus allowing</td>
<td>18. As many of us already logically know, wolves are not a menace to society. They do not cause a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better resources for the rancher.</td>
<td>reason to be terrified, and they occupied this land long before</td>
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25 (Pages 94 to 97)
**Page 98**

1. We did. We need to live harmoniously with wildlife on the land that we share, and we also have the responsibility to protect and take care of those who need our help, no matter what species they may be. This is why it is imperative that the gray wolf remain on the Endangered Species Act. Please base your decision on sound science because myself and many Missourians want to welcome the wolf back to their habitat. Thank you.

**Page 100**

1. That focuses on free markets, private property rights, and on behalf of the taxpayer.

2. We are opposed to expansion of the Mexican gray wolf program and support delisting of all gray wolves. Gray wolves are not in danger of extinction, they never have been. There are tens of thousands of gray wolves all across Canada, Alaska and Asia, so there’s no danger of extinction.

3. This idea that we have to take certain ecosystems back to a bygone era is just unrealistic. I live in the state of California. We used to have a very thriving grizzly bear population in California, tens of thousands, including the San Gabriel Mountains of Los Angeles. We have a grizzly bear on our state flag; we have a grizzly bear on our state seal. There are no grizzly bears in California.

**Page 99**

1. As a predator, they’re very hard on livestock, and they’re very hard on wildlife populations. These political objectives. The State of Wisconsin proposed to be able to put female dogs that are in heat, staked out to draw in wolves to just shoot them. That’s not wildlife management.

2. I was taught wildlife management at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where a founder of wildlife ecology, Aldo Leopold, started the program of field and wildlife ecology. So it’s unfathomable to be taught that that type of activity is okay. To allow aerial shooting, lethal poisons, snares, going nearly year-round; that is not wildlife management.

3. Please use scientific, sound scientific premises in your decision-making. I understand the pressures that wildlife agencies people are under, and especially U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. I have many, many friends that work for your agency. But if you fall back and you rely on science, let the politician, let the legislators dictate poor policy. You, as individuals of a great agency, should use science.

**Page 101**

1. Decisions should be made by local communities and states, not the federal government. So we support the program that you are proposing to delist the wolves, and thank you very much for your time.

2. MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Spady. Next speaker.

3. MR. HENDERSON: Thank you for the opportunity to speak my name is Colin Henderson, C-O-L-I-N, H-E-N-D-E-R-S-O-N. My wife and I have a 300-acre sheep ranch just north of the New Mexico border in La Jara, Colorado. We’ve been raising Navajo sheep for the last 18 years. We had two ewes wounded and one sheep killed last week, either by dogs or coyotes, so we understand the difficulty that ranchers have in having predators. But we have to live with them.

4. But we both support the expansion of the Mexican wolf into a greater area for its range, because we believe that that’s necessary for genetics and good science seems to point to that. We think that the artificial barrier of I-40 is probably not, in the long run, going to be an effective way to manage the wolf, and allowing the wolf to go up to the areas of the southern Colorado and San Juan wilderness, which is right near where we live in the San Luis Valley, and also in the Grand Canyon area, ultimately would probably
We ask that you consider that in your deliberations and we thank you for your time.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you Mr. Henderson. Next speaker, please.

MS. GODFREY: Good evening. My name is Elizabeth Godfrey, G-O-D-F-R-E-Y. I'd like to go back to the mission of the Fish & Wildlife Service, which is to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

One of the objectives of the Fish & Wildlife Service is to develop and apply an environmental stewardship ethic for our society based on ecological principles, scientific knowledge of Fish & Wildlife, and a sense of moral responsibility.

Keeping wolves on the Endangered Species List and by adding, expanding the area for the Mexican gray wolves. By using those ecological principles and scientific knowledge conserves and restores wildlife habitat, which is one of the functions of the Fish & Wildlife Service, while delisting will lead to the total degradation of those habitats to the detriment of all other species living in there from the elk and the deer to the smallest fish in the streams, and will create a de facto open season on the gray wolf.

The gray wolf -- sorry. The gray wolf population is stable right at the moment, but any delisting will continue the downward slope which you showed on one of your slides, as beginning because the states cannot and will not regulate the wolves for the maximum benefit of the wolves and the people. Thank you very much.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Godfrey. Next speaker, please.

MR. CAVEN: Hello. My name is Andrew Caven, C-A-V-E-N. I've been living in New Mexico since 2010. I'm just here as a concerned citizen, but I am a natural research scientist. I have a master's in wildlife ecology, moved down here for work in that field, but I'm someone who can kind of understand a variety of perspectives.

I grew up in northern Minnesota where there are also wolves. Between Minnesota and South Dakota, my uncle, Caven Lure, for some of the hunters and fishermen out here, is famous for making good lure for hunting in northern Minnesota, and trapping.

My point is that -- every ones made great points. One thing I want to say is that it's very important to be clear. I think one issue U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service had is just being very clear with a variety of constituents involving as many people as possible.

And I think that all this talk about going north at interstate boundaries, we just need to be very clear about ecology. One thing is that a lot of large carnivores don't like to cross interstates or populated areas. The grizzly bears in Yellowstone are the most inbred grizzly bears in North America and have serious genetic issues with a population of about 600. All the different talk, 750, a thousand, whatever is going do with wolves, seriously needs to consider wolf dynamics and also look south.

I noticed one of the places that they're considering releasing in Mexico is across from Big Ben. I've been there. There's no fence yet. And it's very easy to cross the river. And that's very unpopulated territory.

And that may be an area that's hard to connect with these northern populations. But I think it's very important to not just look politically where to release, but ecologically. I think the plan has serious flaws in that regard.

So, I urge you to keep thinking creatively. And it's also very seriously necessary to release wolves on the Mexican side, but also involve as many people as possible. Be very frank with people about the goals the agency and so forth. Thank you have much for your time.

MR. BUCKLEY: Next speaker, please.

MS. NONIES: Hello, sirs, ma'am: My name is Leilani Nonies, N-O-N-I-E-S. I am a grad student with the University of New Mexico, and I'm also the co-founder of the Albuquerque Environmental Action Coalition. It's a group that is not funded and it is nonprofit. So I am here of my own accord.

I'd like to start off by staying in 1993, I moved here to New Mexico, and I was already a little environmentalist child. And I did not see the lobo at the Rio Grande zoo for years. I looked for him years and years and years and seeing that sign that said they were endangered.

The first time I saw a lobo was at a wolf sanctuary in Colorado, of all places that's not even supposed to supposedly have gray wolves. I support the expansion of the suggestion that you guys have there. I think it is necessary.

Wolves don't have -- they have the boundaries that they know. They don't understand our boundaries. And to have this little area, and to take them out of there and put them back in captivity because they wander...
Mr. Buckley: Thank you, Ms. Baumgartel. My name is Jess Carey, C-A-R-E-Y.

I'm the Catron County wildlife investigator. I want to thank you, Mr. Frazer, and panel for having an opportunity to speak here. First of all, I think that the new plans for expansion into the Mexican wolf experimental population area doesn't afford the people that live up there around south I-40 the opportunity to know what's really coming to their community. Especially the minority rural areas.

Since April of 2006, I've been investigating wolf livestock-wolf human interactions. Of 317 complaints received, 196 of those were wolf related. Of the 121 nonwolf related, 75 of those were unknown.

Consisted of livestock not being found in time, or necropsy, advanced decomposition, etc. Of the 46 remaining, death injuries were attributed to lightning, motor vehicle, natural, bear, lion, coyotes and dogs. 88 of those incidents were on private property. 108 were on nonprivate property.

Wolves must be present in ecologically significant numbers in order to heal the land. With only 75 individuals and three breeding pairs, the Mexican wolf has yet to establish itself in numbers sufficient to benefit ecosystems.

The recovery of the Mexican gray wolf and southwestern ecosystems is a totally worthwhile goal. Wolves belong in the Southwest if we have the will to do that by taking it out, it destroys the habitat.

I think we've heard some sentiments here tonight that it shows that the threat of hate and violence still runs too strong to delist these animals. I do support the increasing of range for the Mexican gray wolf. But the structural conflicts with cattle raising – cattle grazing have to be resolved. Grazing areas within critical recovery areas should be permanently retired from livestock use to mitigate conflicts.

Releasing wolves into the prime habitat at the Gila National Forest appears to be a critical step in recovery. When conflicts do occur, nonlethal methods should be the primary approach to resolution. The Mexican wolf gene pool is precariously limited and cannot be further compromised without threatening the survival of the species.

Arbitrary boundaries for wolf recovery are strongly discouraged by the science. I agree with some of the sentiments that have been expressed here that biological reality has to be the driving force in wolf recovery.

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It. Thank you.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Fox. Next speaker, please.

MS. RANDALL: Hello. My name is Kitty Randall. K-I-T-T-Y, R-A-N-D-A-L-L, here speaking mostly for myself. Although I would like to believe that perhaps I also speak for Gaia, which for those who don't know is the planet we live on.

Wolves and other large predators are a key part of a healthy ecosystem. And human survival depends on a healthy ecosystem. Neither wolves, nor humans, nor any other animal exists in a vacuum. All are interdependent.

The fact is, that we don't know how fragile the web of life and the planetary ecosystem is. We just don't know. We don't know how much human damage it can take, how many species we can drive to extinction before everything collapses and we have nothing to eat or breathe or drink.

I do not support the delisting of northern gray wolves. We've already seen in some states what happens. Immediately, they become fair game for all hunters, and state agencies have not prevented this. We should redouble our efforts to expand the habitat and population of the Mexican gray wolf. They should be listed as essential, given a wider range, and the target numbers should be raised well above 100.

We have heard the folks who are concerned about loss of livestock. The average nationwide is about one out of 500. We've heard people concerned about property rights and local control and state rights, and even constitutional issues. And these are all important.

But do you know what? Preserving a healthy environment trumps all of that, because future generations depend on our environment for survival. I would rather give my grandchildren an intact and healthy planet than some property with nothing left alive on it. Thank you.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Randall, very much.

MS. KAMINSKI: Nancy Kaminski, K-A-M-I-N-S-K-I. I'm here tonight representing the Southwestern Mexico Audubon Society. New Mexico's oldest chapter of the Audubon Society. And I would just like to state that I believe direct releases into New Mexico is a real positive advantage for the wolves. It opens up the best of the habitat.

I live just south of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. And wolves dispersing there or being translocated there have not survived because they're just weren't enough wolves. The last wolf was a female, desperately searching for a male, and was shot before she found one. A lot of wolves are shot here. Nobody's ever been prosecuted, nobody has ever gone to jail for any of them. Over 30 of them have been shot.

So, direct releases, absolutely. Part of the reason for that is that we're getting these trans-locations, some of them hard releases. And hard releases are incredibly hard on the animal. You want to talk hard, that's hard. They usually disrupt the entire pack if the pack is dropped hard. And they certainly are not positive for the individual wolves dropped hard.

Boundaries, get rid of the boundaries. Let them go. Let them go all the way to Mexico. We have wolves in Mexico now. The genetic viability would only improve with both direct releases and them having boundaries all the way to Mexico. Expand boundaries.

Make them fully endangered. 400 wolves on the planet. That's pretty essential. I think that's very essential. They should be fully endangered, fully protected, no take whatsoever. As I said, plenty of them already been shot illegally. Takes by our own government. Absolutely absurd. Please protect them as much as you can. Thank you.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Kaminski.

MS. OLAJOS: My name is Marcy, M-A-R-C-Y, O-L-A-J-O-S. I represent the Center for Biological Diversity and Great (inaudible) for wilderness.

Today we are hearing impassioned opinions regarding the wolf introduction. I feel impassioned about the subject and hope that the US Fish & Wildlife Service will make a decision to release the Mexican gray wolf directly into New Mexico, helping to ensure a healthier biodiversity into the American Southwest.

Right now, I just wanted to state some facts. According to the USDA report of 2011, cattle and calf losses from predators and nonpredator causes in the US totaled 3.9 million head during 2010, excluding Alaska. This represents 4.3 percent of the 93 million cattle and calves in the US at the beginning of 2010.

Cattle and calf losses from animal predators totaled nearly 220,000 head during 2010. This represented 5.5 percent of the total deaths from all causes. Coyotes and dogs caused the majority of cattle and calf predator losses, about 53 percent and 9.9 percent respectively. Nationwide, the losses from wolves is about 1 percent.

The wolf does not understand the boundary lines that we set. If we are going to have a healthy planet we live on, it. Thank you.
November 20, 2013

Gila Wolf Recovery Area. We celebrate our wild successful, and some of the proposals you're making will coloration and their gait. As soon as they saw me, they please stop insisting on it.

I'm a wildlife enthusiast and 23 years ago, our national forest boundary. Contrary to current conventional wisdom, we need to humble ourselves before nature or by nature or for nature. We want wolves to be

We need to humble ourselves before nature before we destroy ourselves. Thank you.

Also, when are we going to stop living our lives simply by how cattle owners and livestock owners want us to live it? As soon as the last wolf is shot, they're going to complain that their cattle are fighting for grazing land from elk. Then they'll want all the elk dead, until every last species is destroyed.

We're about to do it again. We stand here as this one, if it were to disappear could never be replaced. To call them nonessential makes no sense. So I'm seeing of hunters with their trophy, their slaughter trophies.

I could tell they were not coyotes by their coloration and their gait. As soon as they saw me, they took off running. It was not a frightening experience.

I'm disgusted that we stand here tonight say that gray wolves aren't in danger. They are clearly not seeing the same pictures as we are.

Recent studies suggest the sustainable mortality rate in the lower 48 states now remain. Why the rush to take them off the Endangered Species List and immediately hunt them, done by stealth in Montana and Idaho, in 2011 and Wyoming in 2012?

Your delisting proposal says wolf populations are remarkably resilient as long food supply... Habitat and regulation of human-caused mortality...are adequate compensation for mortality rates of 17 to 48 percent.

I'm a volunteer wildlife chair for the Rio Grande chapter of the Sierra Club, but I'm also here speaking on behalf of myself.

I'm also disgusted that we stand here tonight.

One of their references Creel and Rotella, state, "For wolves, it's widely argued that human offtake has little effect on total mortality rates, so that a harvest of 28-50 percent per year can be sustained. Contrary to current conventional wisdom, there was a strong association between human offtake and total mortality rates across 21 North American wolf populations. Population declined as human offtake increased, even at low rates of offtake."

Then came the real heart center for me in your proposal. You said when populations --

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Ravenwolf. Next speaker, please. We're almost at the end tonight.

MS. MIRABEL: Alexandra M-I-R-A-B-A-L. Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen: I'd like to start out by quoting Rachel Carson. "Man is a part of nature. And his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself."

I'm disgusted that we stand here tonight debating the fate of a species we drove to near extinction with our arrogance, ignorance, greed and fear. And we're about to do it again. We stand here acting like we're gods, like we're the only ones here that matter. And the more we destroy our planet, the more it's going to affect us. I'm also disgusted that people here tonight say that gray wolves aren't in danger. They are clearly not seeing the same pictures as we are.

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November 20, 2013

Public Hearing

Page 118

1. probably be completely protected by the Endangered Species Act.
2. Finally, regarding delisting, we've seen what delisting looks like in the states that have it, and it is ugly. You turn states – you turn management over to the states, and what that means is wolves get killed.
3. And often that killing is incredibly brutal. You don’t let wolves bare the brunt of human greed, human fear, and human –
4. MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Ms. Ray, very much.

Page 119

1. this species was in trouble, having gone from several billion now to numbers that even they could see was critical.
2. They passed a law, and it was too late. By 1900, the last passenger pigeon in the wild died. And we all know the story of Martha the passenger pigeon named after Washington's wife, died in a Cincinnati zoo in 1914.
3. And the reason I go back to this is that when we say we have enough wolves, the gray wolf in the Rockies and in Great Lakes, that is a mistake. Because we never know, based on the next part of what the plan is, to turn it over to the states to make decisions. We know that that spell the end of the gray wolf.

Page 120

1. captive-to-wild release events. And these animals really need to be designated as essential. It really rings true on so many levels.
2. But right now, being designated as a nonessential experimental population suggests that if the wild population is lost, it's not going to impact the recovery of the rare species. And recovery cannot take place in captivity alone. And I think that's really important.
3. I'm also here as an individual and a mother. I was lucky enough to camp with my daughter, my six-year-old daughter, who is on her iPad back there right now in the lobo recovery area in Arizona over the summer.

Page 121

1. MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you very much, Ms. Howell.
2. Ladies and Gentlemen: We’ve come to the end of the evening. I know there’s a lot of people that have signed up to speak, and I apologize that we haven’t been able to get to all of you tonight.
3. It was just an overwhelming number for the time that we had here this evening. I would encourage you to submit your comments to us in writing or electronically. The instructions are on our wolf website. And we have perhaps a few more sheets in the back.

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IN RE: Wolf Public Hearing

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither employed by nor related to nor contracted with (unless excepted by the rules) any of the parties or attorneys in this case, and that I have no interest whatsoever in the final disposition of this case in any court.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page 129</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Dictionary

- **Dictionary**: 46:2
- **die**: 95:8
- **died**: 119:5,7
- **different**: 10:16
- **disagreed**: 96:6
- **difficulty**: 29:23
- **different**: 11:18
- **diminished**: 110:18
- **direct**: 34:14,14
- **disregarded**: 104:8
- **disturbing**: 32:5
- **districts**: 9:15
- **drawn**: 58:9
- **distilling**: 26:15
- **economical**: 53:19
- **die**: 95:8
- **died**: 119:5,7
- **disagreed**: 96:6
- **difficulty**: 29:23
- **diminished**: 110:18
- **direct**: 34:14,14
- **disregarded**: 104:8
- **disturbing**: 32:5
- **districts**: 9:15
- **drawn**: 58:9
- **distilling**: 26:15
- **economical**: 53:19

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November 20, 2013

Page 138

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partners 40:4
108:20
parts 59:1
Paso 89:5
passed 119:4
passenger 118:17
119:5
Patricia 86:8
Pauquette 65:19
pausing 83:18
pay 94:20, 20, 21
Peak 83:20
Pearce 53:9
people 21:11, 23
24:14 26:1, 6
31:20 34:1 42:20
46:25 53:6 59:23
60:4 63:5, 11, 17
66:6 69:12, 13, 14
70:3, 7, 8, 16 72:1
72:2 76:2 87:3
90:25 95:2 96:2
98:12, 23 99:15
102:11 103:7
104:2 105:1, 2, 2
106:4 107:12
111:5 116:7
121:5
peoples 62:25 63:4
percent 14:25
15:5 16:6 46:25
47:2, 2 62:21
68:11 113:15, 19
113:21, 22, 23
114:18 115:3, 10
percentage 6:17
perfect 97:16
period 17:14, 16
20:6
Periodically 19:4
periods 18:13
Perkins 56:20
permanent 23:25
57:15
permanently 109:4
Permit 77:7
permits 84:9
perplexed 58:20
persecution 108:18
person 96:21
119:23
personal 95:6
personally 92:6
93:3
personnel 88:9
persons 25:2
perspective 57:12
95:7
perspectives 103:17
pertaining 54:16
Peter 22:15, 20
51:24
pets 75:25 84:5
Petter 3:18
philanthropist 35:23
photographing 20:20
pictures 116:8
pigeon 119:5, 6
pigeons 118:17
Pino 30:3 34:7, 8
50:13 106:19
place 1:6 23:10
33:16 79:18
80:18 85:24
114:14 119:25
120:8
places 52:7 54:5
104:14 105:18
placing 54:18
plains 25:11
plan 13:6 14:1
15:20 32:18
39:13, 25 40:4
42:10 44:16, 18
49:3, 4 58:23
59:5 60:15, 17, 23
73:16 75:14, 18
77:4 81:4, 8
84:20 89:6, 9
96:5, 11, 13
104:22 117:15
119:12
planet 110:8
111:12 112:19
116:5
planetary 110:15
plans 45:7 46:8
81:6 107:11
plates 102:10
plaque 92:8
play 78:10
playing 83:15
please 5:10 18:23
19:7, 10, 10, 13, 18
20:9, 20 24:6
26:5 31:7 32:22
36:10 37:2, 2
38:16 41:25 43:7
43:17 45:16 48:9
53:2, 10 55:3
56:13 58:12 60:9
61:24 63:16, 21
65:2 67:5 68:21
70:25 73:7 74:19
77:14 78:13
79:14 80:11
81:18 83:8 86:7
87:22 89:17
93:20 98:6, 10
99:13, 22 102:5
103:10 105:4
106:13 107:6
108:12 110:3
112:23 114:1, 4
115:19 116:19
117:21 118:11
pleased 91:25
plenty 112:21
poachers 52:23
point 5:12 13:14
13:16 16:12
22:14 33:18
68:12 80:14 82:9
98:17 101:19
103:23
pointed 66:6
points 98:13, 15
103:24 119:22
poison 52:23
poisonings 99:10
polar 11:6
polarization 69:19
69:24
policies 60:1 77:1
83:25
policy 25:4, 9
99:19
political 23:2 44:5
54:10 55:23 59:3
62:10 87:4, 11
99:1
politically 104:21
politician 99:18
politicians 34:17
66:7
politics 48:5, 7
78:10
pool 67:1 90:13, 16
109:10
poor 99:19
populated 27:8
100:18 104:7
population 3:7
5:20 6:25 7:3, 4
7:17, 22 8:10, 25
10:13, 21 11:18
11:21, 24 12:1, 4
12:10, 11 13:4, 11
13:12, 21, 25 14:8
15:2, 8, 23, 25
16:19 17:23 23:5
23:14 24:20, 24
25:14, 18 26:16
26:23, 24 27:9, 10
40:14 41:8, 9
46:7, 11, 23 48:14
48:15, 17 49:9, 9
49:11, 15, 23 52:5
52:15, 17 54:2
56:19 57:19 58:4
59:12 60:19 61:9
62:4, 13 68:10, 18
71:4, 18 73:23
74:2, 5, 11, 13
75:7 78:20 82:14
89:12, 13 91:10
91:12, 13, 24 97:6
100:12 102:1
103:3 104:10
107:12 110:25
115:14 117:19
120:5, 6
populations 7:14
8:15 9:9 28:11
39:4 41:12, 23
46:23 48:2 49:22
49:24 52:11
53:21 54:12, 13
59:15, 17 61:4
66:10 68:6, 12
72:25 79:5 86:25
95:19 100:25
104:20 108:21
114:23 115:1, 14
115:17
porch 117:3
Portales 26:4 33:6
portion 9:25
26:21 96:11
portions 10:13
positive 55:13
111:20 111:12
possess 68:6
possible 19:4, 16
33:16 34:21 39:6
Spanish 45:23
46:17,22
speak 19:20,25.25
21:12,18.23 26:6
28:24 35:16,20
36:10 38:18 42:8
45:19 47:6 50:8
60:5,11,12 62:2
62:3 69:7,15
78:16 79:14
92:23 94:25
101:8 107:10
110:7 121:6
speaker 20:1,14
22:19 29:1 31:8
32:22 37:2 38:16
41:25 43:17 48:9
50:2 53:10 55:3
58:12 60:3 61:24
63:16 65:2 67:5
68:21 69:5 70:25
73:7 77:14 78:13
79:22 83:8 86:7
87:14 89:17
96:18 98:10
99:22 101:6
102:5 103:10
105:4 106:13
107:6 108:12
110:3 114:4
115:19 118:11
118:15 119:19
speakers 20:19
21:9,13 22:15
31:3 35:15 53:3
63:17 68:24
speaking 19:3
22:21 31:13 51:9
71:15 110:5
116:23
special 55:17
56:10 76:20
specialist 88:4
species 5:25 6:3,8

spring 50:24
squared 83:24
square 25:10
St 56:17 96:20
stable 103:3
staff 18:8 21:3
22:2
staffing 5:2
staggers 84:13
stagnated 23:6
staked 99:2
stakeholder 45:3
stakeholders 41:3
42:3,7 44:20,24
45:9 89:22 90:2
stand 29:15 77:25
115:25 116:3
standard 89:13
Stapleton 63:19
69:6 70:24
start 8:12 34:23
72:21 105:11
115:21
started 15:8 57:2
57:4 99:7
starting 9:17 18:3
33:5 77:1 97:5
state 3:18 7:7 25:3
26:13,25 27:19
28:17 30:4,12
32:3 34:7,10,10
41:3,20 44:11,15
44:16,18,21,24
44:25 45:7 46:1
46:3,19 50:11
55:14,23 62:14
62:24 64:8,10,13
64:17,24 67:11
68:9,13 85:7
94:3 95:9,10
97:8 98:23 99:1
99:24 100:11,14
100:15 106:2
110:23 111:6,18
113:11 115:8
118:20,23,25
stated 82:2
statement 17:17
17:20 28:4 76:16
80:8
statements 20:10
20:11 33:1 82:12
states 3:2 10:9
11:12 12:25
13:23 24:17
40:22 41:7,11
42:6 55:18 56:6
57:18 74:16,25
77:1,2 78:16
85:6 91:20 97:4
97:11,14 98:22
100:22 101:2
103:6 108:19,19
110:21 114:19
118:4,5,6,21
119:13,16
stating 19:11
status 30:10,21
37:9 38:7 44:11
46:1 55:21 77:9
77:10
statute 46:18
stay 94:8
staying 105:11
steal 114:21
steinborn 3:19
22:22
stenographic 122:9
step 10:6,7 11:17
12:9 45:9 59:11
71:25 86:15,24
92:12 109:7
step-wise 10:4
stepped 117:3
steps 52:4 86:12
86:12 92:13
Steve 53:9

stewardship 59:24
102:14
stood 69:21
stop 116:11
117:21
stopped 72:14
83:5
stories 39:17
story 36:21 119:6
straight 52:16
strain 93:19
stream 36:20
streams 79:6
102:25
Street 47:10
strict 21:12
stripped 97:21
stripping 77:20
strong 22:23
43:21 64:10 95:3
108:24 115:12
strongly 44:9
77:19,21 81:22
109:14
structural 109:1
struggle 34:18
struggling 79:1
stuck 93:12
student 89:4
105:6
studies 62:23
115:4
study 83:4
subdivision 46:19
subdivisions 55:23
subject 9:14 32:6
47:21 73:4
108:17 113:7
submit 18:6 22:1
22:4 32:19
121:10
submitted 18:8,9
22:2 32:9,10

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<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6:00</strong></td>
<td>1:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>600</strong></td>
<td>104:10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>64192</strong></td>
<td>18:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>68,580</strong></td>
<td>25:10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7:09</strong></td>
<td>51:22</td>
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<td><strong>7:16</strong></td>
<td>51:22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td>47:2 95:4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>70s</strong></td>
<td>13:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td>8:2 15:3 57:9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65:11 96:9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>107:19 109:20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>750</strong></td>
<td>23:20 39:4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>49:23 52:11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53:24 74:9</td>
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<td>104:11</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
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<td><strong>8:07</strong></td>
<td>87:24</td>
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<td><strong>8:12</strong></td>
<td>87:24</td>
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<td><strong>80</strong></td>
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<td><strong>85</strong></td>
<td>47:2</td>
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<td><strong>87103</strong></td>
<td>2:5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>88</strong></td>
<td>107:24</td>
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<td><strong>9</strong></td>
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<td><strong>9.9</strong></td>
<td>113:21</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9:06</strong></td>
<td>121:17</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>93</strong></td>
<td>113:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td>7:20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>97</strong></td>
<td>15:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>