In The Matter Of:
PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING MEXICAN WOLVES

PUBLIC HEARING
December 3, 2013

Bartelt & Kenyon
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

In Re:
The Proposed Rule, "To remove the gray wolf from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, but to maintain endangered status for the Mexican wolf by listing it as a subspecies; and to revise the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf."

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

HEARING OFFICER: Lesley Travers
OPENING REMARKS: Dr. Benjamin Tuggle
PRESENTER: Sherry Barrett
LOCATION: Hon-Dah Conference Center
777 Highway 260
Pinetop, Arizona
TIME: 6:06 p.m.

REPORTED BY:
Cindy Bachman
(Commencement of public hearing.)

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MS. TRAVERS: Good evening. On behalf of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, I welcome you to this public hearing regarding two proposals: to list the Mexican wolf as an endangered subspecies in the Southwest and to delist the gray wolf in the contiguous U.S.; and to revise the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican wolf.

My name is Lesley Travers. I will be your hearing officer today. My company is Travers Consulting, and I am not affiliated with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I don't represent them. I represent no point of view with respect to the proposal that is the subject of this hearing. My role is to conduct this hearing in an orderly manner, such that we receive your comments accurately into the record.

I would like to recognize the following elected officials.

MS. ALLEN: Sylvia Allen, Navajo County Supervisor, District 3.

MR. WATSON: Gary Watson, Mohave County.

MS. GRIFFIN: Gail Griffin, State Representative, District 14.

MR. SANDLER: Lewis Sandler, but I'm
representing Arizona Senator Burges.

MALE SPEAKER: Is Senator Burges here?

MR. SANDLER: That's all I know. I've got her
statement. She emailed and said she wasn't making it.

MALE SPEAKER: Is Senator Burges in the room?

MS. ALLEN: She is here, but she was in line
trying to pay her dinner ticket. She's coming.

MR. WELLER: Barry Weller, Supervisor,
Apache County.

MR. CAMPBELL: Ron Campbell, Greenlee County

MR. NOEL: I'm Representative Mike Noel from
Southern Utah. I'll represent eight rural counties in
that area.

MR. DETRO: Jim DeTro, Okanogan County
Commissioner.

MR. WHEELER: Terry Wheeler, Mayor of Globe.

MS. TRAVERS: I would also like to recognize
the following representatives from the U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service who are in attendance today:

Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, Southwest Regional
Director, who will represent the Southwest Region and
the Services, Washington D.C. headquarters office; and
Ms. Sherry Barrett, Mexican wolf Recovery Coordinator;
and the many Fish and Wildlife Service officials from
the Southwest Region and Arizona Field Offices and the
U.S. Forest Service that are staffing this hearing tonight.

Also assisting with this hearing are Cindy Bachman, our court reporter from Bartelt and Kenyon Court Reporting.

At this point, I'll turn the floor over to Dr. Benjamin Tuggle and Ms. Sherry Barrett. They will provide opening remarks and give a brief PowerPoint presentation that explains the proposal to list the Mexican wolf as an endangered subspecies in the Southwest and to delist the gray wolf elsewhere and on the proposal to revise the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican wolf.

DR. TUGGLE: Good evening. My name is Benjamin Tuggle, and I'm the regional director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Southwest region. Our region's jurisdiction covers Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma.

I'm here tonight, along with these Service's representatives, to hear testimony and receive comments from the proposals to revise the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican wolf, to delist the gray wolf in the continuous United States, and maintain protection for the Mexican wolf by listing it as an endangered subspecies.
This hearing tonight is the second that we've had scheduled in the Southwest, basically, to listen to your comments on those two proposals and place them on the record.

Public hearings also will be scheduled in Arizona and New Mexico in early 2014 to receive comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement that will address the potential impacts of the proposed revisions of the Nonessential Experimental Population rule.

It is our intent that we take comments on the final determination and results of these proposals that we are proposing. We intend for them to be accurate and effective as possible, and towards that end, we are seeking the best scientific and commercial data available.

We will base our final determination, in part, on the testimony received tonight, as well as the testimony from other hearings and all written comments that we receive.

On behalf of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I want to express my appreciation to the White Mountain Apache Tribe for allowing us to use the seating room here at the Hon-Dah Conference Center. I also want to thank all of you who are in attendance tonight for
making your way here.

We've learned a lot since we first reintroduced wolves into the wild in 1998. And this knowledge has led us to propose the revisions that you're going to hear about tonight.

On June 13, 2013, we published a proposed rule -- proposed revision of the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican wolf for the Mexican wolf Nonessential Experimental Population in Arizona and New Mexico.

The proposed revision includes, one, modification of the geographic boundaries established for the Mexican wolf reintroduced in the 1998 final rule.

Two, modifying a management regulation established in the 1998 final rule, which governs the release, translocation, natural dispersal, and the tape of Mexican wolves.

And, three, clarification of certain definitions and parts of that rule.

As we move forward with our efforts to recover Mexican wolves in Arizona and New Mexico, we will retain the Nonessential Experimental designation for the wild population of Mexican wolves that we currently have on the landscape. This will provide us with the
greatest management capability and flexibility that we will need to recover this species.

Now I would like to turn the floor over to Sherry Barrett, who is the Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator for the Fish and Wildlife Service, who will present a brief PowerPoint presentation on the proposed changes to the Mexican wolf Nonessential Experimental Population.

Thank you and welcome.

MS. BARRETT: Thank you and welcome to everybody. Thank you for coming tonight. I am going to give a brief presentation.

I had a longer presentation during our information meeting this afternoon, but I want to provide as much time as possible for those who want to speak, to be able to provide their testimony.

The history of the ESA protection for the gray wolf overall in the 1960s and '70s several subspecies of gray wolf were listed under the Endangered Species Act in the precursor to the Endangered Species Act, which was promulgated in 1973.

In 1978, those subspecies were consolidated under a single listing of the gray wolf. And in 1978, there were only a few hundred wolves that were existing in the lower 48, and those were in Northeast Minnesota,
Isle Royale, and in Michigan.

In our approach to the gray wolf recovery from
that 1978 rule, we noted that we would implement a
recovery program in three portions of the United
States: in the Western Great Lakes, the Northern Rocky
Mountains, and in the Southwest, where we have the
Mexican wolf.

When we listed those wolves in 1978, there were
only a few hundred, like I said, in Northeast
Minnesota, Isle Royale, Michigan. And today, we have
over 5,000 gray wolves in the lower 48.

The Northern Rocky Mountains area and the
Western Great Lakes, these areas shown in yellow, those
are now delisted. Those are no longer protected under
the Endangered Species Act. And this area in Hatchee
is more appropriately the range of the endangered red
wolf (Canis rufus).

So the areas that we're talking about right now
for delisting are those areas in blue, outside here
(indicating). And then we're proposing to reclassify
the Mexican wolf in the Southwest and then down into
Mexico as an endangered subspecies.

So what are we doing right now? We're looking
at how the Endangered Species Act applies to the gray
wolf into the future and looking to see if there are
any valid, listable entities remaining that need protection of the Endangered Species Act.

And it's important to remember that the Endangered Species Act fairs to make the distinction of species. The criteria for listing under the Endangered Species Act is that it has to be a valid subspecies, species, or a distinct population segment. It has to be endangered extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, and it's also likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future throughout a significant portion of its range.

So our proposal, based on an extensive analysis of that -- and you can find that analysis in the proposed rule on the website -- is to focus our ESA protection for the Mexican wolf by listing that as a subspecies, Canis lupus baileyi, as endangered wherever found; remove the current gray wolf listing from the rest of the United States; and then improve the Experimental Population rule for the Mexican wolf so that we can achieve recovery of that and get towards the delist in process in the future.

So our purpose for the revisions to the 1998 Mexican Wolf Experimental Rule are to enable the establishment of a liable, self-sustaining population that will ultimately contribute to the recovery of the
subspecies.

There are several geographic changes that I'm not going to go through. I went through those in the earlier session. You can find those online.

There are also management changes that we are looking at and also administration clarifications that we've became aware of over 15 years since we had that experimental population rule in place.

So at today's hearing, we have a proposed listing of the Mexican wolf as an endangered subspecies; removing the Endangered Species Act protection for the rest of the gray wolf species; proposed revisions to the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population; and we're here to receive both your oral and written testimony. It's important to note that both the oral and the written testimony have the same weight.

And I'm going to turn the hearing back over to the hearing officer. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, Benjamin and Sherry.

This is a public hearing under Section 4 of the Federal Endangered Species Act. Notice of this public hearing was published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2013, starting on page 64192.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will accept
comments and information on these 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 and information tables. 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, 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 table outside of this auditorium and sign up. When you register, indicate any organization that you are representing in your comments today.

With the exception of elected officials, all oral comment registration cards have been pooled and will be drawn at random. This process was implemented to encourage attendance at this afternoon's information
meeting and to provide for a fair process that allows us to receive oral testimony from as many different perspectives as possible within the allotted time frame.

The following process is designed to maximize efficiency and provide speaking opportunities to as many participants as possible. Periodically throughout this 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 at the front of the auditorium near the microphone. When it is your turn, please begin your presentation by stating your full name, spell it for the record, and indicate if you represent an 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, and 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
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recorded by the reporter to preserve them for the record.

If you are called to speak and choose not to speak or provide short comments, you may not yield your time to another speaker. Because the purpose of this hearing is to receive your comments, the Service will presume 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 should be done
only along the side aisles, no closer to the front than row 4, or along the back of the room.

In the interest of all who chose to provide verbal testimony and to prevent unreasonable disruption during this public hearing, we would like to inform you that Ryan Benson, representing BigGame Forever, and Patrick McDowell from Shake, Rattle, & Troll will be videotaping today's proceedings. If you wish to obtain contact information for these people, please visit the registration desk.

We also have another videographer, Maureen Hackett, Howling for Wolves.

Those that identified themselves as elected officials and State Game and Fish Agency Directors on the 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 your time is up.

I will call five-minute breaks after each hour to allow the court reporter to rest, or as we deem necessary.

I will now call the first group of names, which
are the elected officials and the Game and Fish Agency Directors.


Anyone of you can --

MR. SHEEHAN: I'm first up, so let me know if I did this wrong.

My name is Gregory Sheehan. It's spelled -- do you need the last name spelled and the first?

MS. TRAVERS: Just last.

MR. SHEEHAN: Sheehan, S-h-e-e-h-a-n. I'm the director of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

Our comments today, the State of Utah supports the delisting of the gray wolf (Canis lupus) in the contiguous United States. Once wolves are delisted throughout Utah, its wolf management plan will fully take effect and the species will be managed by the state, as it has managed other large predators, such as the cougar and bear.

We agree that the gray wolf and its constituent subspecies, excluding the Mexican wolf, are not in
danger of extinction throughout all, or a significant
portion, of their respective ranges and are not likely
to become so in the foreseeable future.

The Mexican wolf subspecies listing is,
however, procedurally flawed because the Service has
failed to articulate the reasons or involve the public
in its decision to abandon the DPS listing. The choice
to list it as a subspecies as opposed to a DPS is a
discretionary act subject to NEPA review.

The proposed endangered subspecies listing
protects the wolf anywhere found in the United States.
This prevents states outside of the Mexican wolf's
historic range and the federal government from managing
or controlling dispersing wolves.

Mexican wolves that disperse into Utah and
Colorado will interbreed with northern wolf subspecies,
and their progeny will not contribute to Mexican wolf
recovery. Dispersal and inner degradation of these
hybridized wolves to core Mexican wolf populations in
Arizona and New Mexico will swamp the unique, genetic
features of the subspecies and jeopardize its recovery.

Additionally, the proposed 10(j) area should be
extended south to include all Mexican wolf habitat
within Mexico. By including Mexico in the experimental
population, all Mexican wolves found outside the 10(j)
area will presumptively originate from the experimental population.

This presumption will eliminate the inherent uncertainty and debate in classifying the origin of the Mexican wolf, the purposes of capture and return.

Additionally, we, as the State of Utah, take the position that the Mexican wolf never historically inhabited Utah or Colorado and should not be introduced there at any future time as the expansion occurs.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker, please.

MR. UQUALLA: My name is James Uqualla. I am a member of the Havasupai Tribe from northern Arizona, in the Grand Canyon. I am also representing the essence of the ceremonial list and traditional people within the indigenous tribes throughout the Southwest.

Part of our responsibilities within our journeys is to be able to respect and honor all those that are a part of the living within creation. The four-leggeds are considered to be a very powerful part of the whole.

It is also important for you, and all those that are listening, to remember that the teachings within the indigenous lands was that we are a part of their land. We have been given the privilege to be on
the areas that they are now inhabiting.

But as a result, our stories from time
beginning says that we are also in close relationships
and we tell of stories where we, as the two-leggeds,
also were shape shifters into many of the four-leggeds,
winglets, and all that is of the living.

It is important for us to be able to be in
responsibility of all that is a creation within
Turtle Island. And when situations of this sort arises
and it brings endangerment to our brothers, our
sisters, the four-leggeds, it is important for the
medicine groupies to be able to make voice and say that
this is a part of responsibility for all that is
inhabiting Turtle Island, which is the United States,
and to be able to give us and all that is taught in
these times to be able to work harmoniously.

There are tribal and spiritual laws that do
govern the well-being of the --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

MR. UQUALLA: -- indigenous people.

Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker, please.

MR. DETRO: For the record, I'm Jim, J-i-m, DeTro, D-e-T-r-o, Commissioner from Okanogan County in
the state of Washington.
When I was first elected and engaged in the wolf war in the west, we challenged the ESA on the basis of the verbiage that stated, to reintroduce the species, it had to be an indigenous species to the area.

Our wolf was an 85-pound American gray wolf. That wolf -- or the wolf that was shoved down our throats was a 185-pound Mexican Mackenzie Valley Arctic gray wolf. Our objection was met with the rhetoric; a Wolf is a Wolf is a Wolf is a Wolf.

On that note, I challenge you to be consistent. You cannot now break out a subspecies, the Mexican gray wolf, and give them special protection. A wolf is a wolf.

With that, I'll remind you of the spotted owl. 30 years after the listing of the spotted owl on to the destruction of a multibillion-dollar timber industry. Destroyed custom, culture, and economic stability of communities, families, small businesses, and caused bankruptcies and divorces. All in the name of an owl.

Now we see the junk science that led to the listing has come home to roost. No pun intended. 30 years later, the spotted owl was still in incline by 40 percent. Now the so-called experts say that the fault is in the barn owl. And yet not one
agency, not one tree hugger, not one dingy bird watcher
has come forward to say we were wrong.

Not in my county, the largest in the state,
ninth largest in the nation. My county is bordered on
the north by Canada, bisected by Highway 97, and the
Colville Indian reservation occupies the southeastern
corner of the county.

So if a wolf crosses the line, recognized only
by man at the B.C., where there are 10,000 wolves,
there's a $350 bounty on him.

Come back across the line to Highway 97, on one
side, he's delisted, and on the other side, he's
listed.

Colville Indian reservation that occupies the
southern eastern corner of Okanogan County, there are
nine kill permits. Wolves migrate --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

Next speaker, please.

MS. ALLEN: Good evening. Thank you very much
for holding this hearing. I'm Sylvia Allen, A-l-l-e-n,
Navajo County Supervisor.

Recently, Supreme Court Justice Roberts said
this quote, "The federal government has expanded
dramatically over the past two centuries, but it still
must show that a constitutional brand of power
This saying does not apply to the states because the Constitution is not the source of their power. State governments do not meet the Constitutional Authorization Act. Our cases refer to this general power of governing -- possessed by the states, but not by the federal government -- as the police powers.

The framework does ensure that powers, which in the ordinary course of affairs concern the lives and liberties and properties of the people, were held by governments more local and more accountable than a distant federal bureaucracy.

So I feel this responsibility as an elected official to protect the health, safety, and welfare of my citizens.

The 10(j) rule governing the management of Mexican wolves in Arizona and New Mexico should recognize this constitutional police powers of the states to protect the health, wealthfare, and safety of its citizens.

And I appreciate the language right now that's in the proposed 10(j) rule. It just needs to be stronger, I feel. Specific language allowing citizens, landowners, permittees, or County law enforcement to
take or injure a wolf if the wolf is engaged in
taking, moving, body chasing, stalking, threatening,
or harassing humans, pets, livestock on private land,
their livestock on public lands or reservation lands.
Wolves showing signs of fearless behavior are becoming
desensitized to human encounters and must be removed
permanently.

I feel that when people realize that they have
these rights to protect themselves and their property,
that a lot of this contention of having the wolves out
there will leave.

Now, also Navajo County feel strongly that the
10(j) rule must disclose full social, culture, and
economic costs and impacts on local residents and local
governments. Potentially, in the past, include the
loss of tax revenue, the increased costs due to the
presence of introduced wolves.

Navajo County recently --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

MS. ALLEN: Thank you very much.

MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker, please.

MS. MULHERN: Good evening. My name is
Kimberlee, K-i-m-b-e-r-l-e-e, Mulhern, M-u-l-h-e-r-n.
I'm a consultant to Cochise County, Arizona, and I've
come to this public hearing to read into the record a
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statement regarding the gray wolf proposed rule on behalf of Cochise County, Arizona.

Cochise County strongly supports the proposed rule to remove the gray wolf from the list of endangered and threatened species. In addition, Cochise County supports the delisting of all wolves, including all subspecies, distinct population segments, and other taxonomic or regulatory definitions.

We support State Game & Fish Department management of the Mexican wolf.

The County has strong opposition for obtaining protection for the Mexican wolf by listing it as an endangered into the proposed revisions to the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican wolf.

Due to its location along the U.S./Mexico border, Cochise County is uniquely affected by the proposed revision of the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican wolf because of the proximity to wolves being introduced in Mexico and would be affected by efforts in the nearby Blue Range as well.

The proposed revision threatens our rule of customs, culture, and the continued decline of our native wildlife in southern Arizona.

Elk are not present in Cochise County. The
number of deer, especially mule deer, has been
decreasing in recent years. In addition, Longhorn
antelope herd populations are fragile. Other predators
are moving into urban areas of the county in search of
food. Cochise County does not have the prey base to
support another predator such as the Mexican wolf.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service needs to
return to the base of the premises of the Endangered
Species Act, including the use of the best available
commercial and scientific information.

Although the public may mean well, many
comments of proponents of the wolves are based on
emotion. It is the job of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service to use the best available science and not
emotion.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker, please.

MR. WATSON: Thank you very much. My name is
Gary Watson, supervisor from Mohave County.

In August of 2013, I attended the meeting in
Albuquerque, New Mexico, and asked this question:
From a genetic standpoint, what is the estimated number
of Mexican wolves required for a viable, permanent,
sustainable population?
And since then, I have no answer for that. After talking to several veterinarians and several people at Northern Arizona University in genetics, that number will have to be in the range at a minimum of 2,100 to 2,500 wolves in order for them to be sustainable.

That is also depending on the dispersal area. It also depends on the prey population and movement.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are 36,000 prey. There's elk, deer, and antelope being removed from our prey base each and every year. Thank you very much.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Could you please spell your last name for the record?

MR. WATSON: Watson, W-a-t-s-o-n.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

SENATOR GRIFFIN: Thank you. My name is Gail Griffin. I'm a state senator representing southwestern Arizona, District 14, which includes a large portion of the area that is subject to the new wolf release under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's proposed rule.

Hundreds of people have contacted me in opposition to the new proposed rule. It is with great alarm that I stand here tonight to express my opposition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife proposal to
dramatically expand the Mexican wolf recovery program.

In October, I held a public meeting in Greenlee County and did what no U.S. Fish and Wildlife employee has done for years, I talked to the people in Greenlee County. My seatmates and I sat for three hours as dozens of Greenlee County residents testified about the close encounters they've had with the Mexican wolves, about how they've lost cattle to the Mexican wolves, and how they have lost money and countless hours of time, not to mention mental and the emotional anguish, to these Mexican wolves.

It's easy for you sitting in Albuquerque or Washington, D.C., to look at a map and see northern Greenlee County as an open and wild country where wolves can roam freely.

But there's something Fish and Wildlife is choosing to ignore. There are people there. There are families there. And, yes, there are children there. All of whom are being put at risk for federal government's release of wild predatory animals whose instinct is to kill.

From the beginning, U.S. Fish and Wildlife's wolf recovery system has been fundamentally flawed, as it relied on faulty science, inadequate communication and coordination with the affected stakeholders, and
the misguided premise that puts its interest of
dangerous predators ahead of public interests, as well
as the public safety.

It's difficult to understand why the U.S. Fish
and Wildlife is considering an expansion of the Mexican
wolf when it is clear that it's formed on faulty data
from the beginning.

We urge the Service to withdraw the proposed
rule and follow the rules and regulations. 10(j)
regulation requires the Service to work with the state,
tribal officers, and --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker, please.

MS. GRIFFIN: -- others. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

SENATOR BURGES: Good evening. Senator Judy
Burges, District 22, J-u-d-y, B-u-r-g-e-s.

I'm here before you to express my concern for
reintroduction and expanding the territory of the
Mexican gray wolf into counties in Arizona.

While the reintroduction of a predator species
may be an exciting endeavor, there are intricate risks
to citizens, pets, livestock, ranching business, and
the wildlife, in general. Furthermore, the gray wolf
is known to carry a disease known as zoonotic.
Colorado State University has accomplished multiple lab tests on the wolf and discovered an infection with a dangerous tapeworm. And these worms are carrying hydatid cyst disease, which is transferred to elk and other wildlife by wolf feces. Wolves in Idaho are also showing this disease.

Why should the good citizens of Arizona find themselves in the same serious predicament, which could cost millions of dollars in lost wildlife and domestic livestock, as well as a danger to humans? And then add the tremendous adverse behavior modifications. Surely, each of you has a moral compass that won't allow such a travesty to occur.

Arguments have been distributed as to the wolf and how these predators are benign. But an evaluation written by Pylorus Eist brings to light another side to this kind of predator, that wolves are smart enough to test potential prey, to find weakness, and exploit it. The heinous and hated realm used to describe wolves are little ways for wolves to (inaudible) of opportunity, including citizens.

Retired investigation wildlife biologist, Jim Pierce, researched this behavior and exposed the lie. Wildlife biologists exposed the extortions of evidence to exonerate the wolves, reserve a larger aim
of the fantasies about the gray wolf to remain on the endangered species list.

    MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, Senator Burges.

    Next speaker, please.

    MR. WELLER: Thank you. My name is Barry, B-a-r-r-y, Weller, W-e-l-l-e-r. I am the District 3 supervisor for Apache County, Arizona. I also have been given the permission to speak for Bucky, B-u-c-k-y, Allred, A-l-l-r-e-d, who is the county commissioner in Catron County, New Mexico.

    Director Tuggle, Ms. Barrett, I draw your attention to the fact that Apache County and -- Catron County, New Mexico, and Apache County, Arizona are the two most severely impacted counties of the Mexican gray wolf. I'd like you to listen in that light.

    All of the introductions have been done pretty much in Greenlee County, but in your own published maps by the IFT, Interagency Field Team, shows that all those bins are now parked in Apache County and Catron County. So the impact is in our counties. And I'm asking you to listen in that light.

    Before I go into minimal detail of that, I'd like to draw your attention to a letter, November 13, 2013, written to the Honorable Dan Nash, Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, from over 70
Congressional members of the United States Congress, signed by them.

And I'd like to suggest that you take that as my general comment to say that Apache County fully supports the delisting of the gray wolf. And there's much detail to that, and we agree with all the facts and issues that are associated are in there, so I don't have to go into those details.

This same document suggests that you do not continue with the process of the Mexican wolf until the process is better understood.

They did not go into great detail, but I will bring to the issue I attended the earlier meeting, and there was, obviously, great controversy and polarization of this issue. And some of that comes about to questionable genetics, questionable population target shortfall, questionable litigation limitations, questionable conversations --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

Next speaker.

MR. CAMPBELL: Good evening. My name is Ron Campbell, C-a-m-p-b-e-l-l, Greenlee County supervisor representing District 2, which is home to the Blue Range wolf recovery area.

We want to thank you for scheduling this
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hearing, which provides a forum for the local residents
that are heavily impacted by the program and the
proposals to express their views.

Greenlee County has been on the forefront of
the reintroduction program for the last three decades.
At times, we have been the only county at the table,
and we have stayed active as a member of IMAC, OMAF,
and the MMT, to make sure our residents -- our ranching
community, in particular -- have a voice.

This hearing is conducted so the U.S. Fish and
Wildlife gains comment on their proposals to delist the
gray wolf. It maintains the protections for the
Mexican gray wolf as well, as revisions to the
Nonessential Experimental Population rule for the
Mexican gray wolf.

However, the time frame set by the Service has
been expedited to the point of making it almost
impossible for anyone to be able to gather all the
information so that they can make informed comments.

Along with that, important documents that would
be beneficial have not been made public, such as the
draft recovery plan or a draft Mexican wolf management
plan. Without these documents, it severely limits the
ability to evaluate the proposals.

The approach taken has forced counties,
agencies, tribes, and the public into unacceptably brief comment periods on such critical issues.

We also do not believe that the Service has fully evaluated or disclosed all reasonable listing alternatives to the proposed actions. Until such time, we feel the Service should administratively relist the Mexican gray as experimental to maintain the protection, as they have the authority to do so.

The relist should also state that the wild wolf occurring in Arizona and New Mexico, outside the current Nonessential Experimental Population area, should be considered an unlisted gray wolf.

We also believe that the United States Fish and Wildlife has not adhered to NEPA regulations in their own policies regarding NEPA compliance and forwarding this proposal to revise the 1998 final rule.

We request that the rule be retained without substantial ramifications --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker, please.

MS. BAHR: My name is Sandy Bahr, S-a-n-d-y, B-a-h-r. And I have a letter to read from Representative Chad Campbell. He's the Minority Leader for the Arizona House of Representatives, representing
Legislative District 24.

(Reading) "Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the important issue of true recovery of the Mexican gray wolf in the Southwest.

"It is unfortunate that despite the mandates of the Endangered Species Act, recommendations from scientists, and strong support from the public, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to manage Mexican gray wolves to the detriment of their recovery. That must stop, and true recovery of this endangered animal must begin.

"The Mexican gray wolf is the most genetically unique and most imperiled subspecies of gray wolf in North America, with only three breeding pairs and 75 total wolves in the wild this year.

"Mexican wolves are endangered by inbreeding, which affects their reproduction, as well as by government shooting and trapping and by the restrictive boundaries established currently.

"While I have significant concerns about many of the proposals from U.S. Fish and Wildlife relative to the Mexican gray wolves, I do support the changes in the proposed rule that would expand the area where wolves can roam and allow wolves to be released directly into the Gila National Forest of New Mexico."
and to bring more diverse genes into the population.

"I cannot support the other proposals which will hinder the recovery of this highly endangered animal, however.

"Mexican gray wolves need strong protections that the Endangered Species Act provides, so the designation of Experimental Nonessential should be removed. With so few wolves in the wild with such a strong need to maintain and foster genetic diversity in these wolves, they are absolutely essential.

"Also establishing additional wolf boundaries is also inappropriate.

"As a native Arizonan and someone who has served our state as an elected official and as someone who has spent time enjoying the lands where you can now hear the howling, see the paw print, or on a lucky day, catch a glimpse of a wolf, I urge the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to step up and take full responsibility --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

MS. BAHR: -- to do everything to --"

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Thank you.

Next speaker, please.

MR. VOYLES: I'm Larry Voyles. I'm the director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.
My last name is spelled V-, as in Victor, -o-y-l-e-s.

First, we will be providing in-depth written comment, so these will be abbreviated comments right now.

First of all, I'd like to thank the Fish and Wildlife Service for holding this hearing here in the Mexican wolf recovery area. Our department and commission were deeply troubled by the initial announcement of the public hearings in Washington D.C., Albuquerque, and Sacramento, California, but no week was here.

We were among the first to request those meetings. And I really sincerely want to thank Dr. Tuggle and Sherry Barrett for your role in ensuring that we have hearings within the Mexican wolf recovery area for the people that will be most affected by the Mexican wolf recovery.

The Mexican wolves that exist in the wild today, in total, every one of them, exists in the wild because of a 10(j) rule that was, in fact, the result of a long negotiated effort and agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the affected states and stakeholders, setting forth the rules by which you could balance the needs of the Mexican wolf recovery with those of the people that live on the landscape and
the other natural resources that are affected. 75 wolves on the landscape now. 50 percent increase in the last three years. Virtually all of which are a wild form of wolves. That's far from being a failure. In fact, it's on the road to success. And that's solely due to the use of the 10(j) rule as a mechanism to gain those kinds of public support. Those of us who sat through the meeting earlier, the information session, this is the question from all sides of the aisle. We're very much aware -- painfully aware, if you will, of the --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

Next speaker, please.

MR. VOYLES: Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

MR. WHEELER: Good evening. Can you hear me?

MS. TRAVERS: Yes.

MR. WHEELER: Good evening. My name is Terry Wheeler, T-e-r-r-y, W-h-e-l-e-r. I'm currently the mayor of Globe.

We want to comment on the delisting of the gray wolf, which we agree is appropriate. Both the gray wolf and the Mexican wolf must be delisted as a T&E Species and put under the management of the appropriate State Game and Fish Agencies.
Globe is a city in east central Arizona, the county seat of Gila County. We are a unique little city, founded in the 1870s, mining and ranching, which is very important to our economic base today.

Business diversification, outdoor recreation, tourism, higher education opportunities are some of the additions to our economic structure that are allowing us to move forward.

The expansion of the Mexican wolf population is in Gila County -- and that's Tonto Basin -- will put all of Gila County, including Globe, at full wolf expansion. Wolf expansion will exacerbate livestock and wildlife deprivation, as well as add harm to the health and welfare of our citizens. It will destroy our outdoor recreation and tourism programs that are essential to our economic base and future development.

The sad truth is that the wolves are already here. I ranch north of Globe, and we have seen and followed their tracks while riding on the ranch.

Recently, a wolf was seen in Payson.

Wolves released in Gila County will be in Scottsdale in the real near future, munching down on pink Pomeranians, pampered polo horses, or kids chasing soccer balls.

If you think it can't happen, talk to the
residents of Reserve, New Mexico. Reserve was a bustling, vibrant community until the endangered species put them out of business, the spotted owl and then the wolf. If you don't think it can happen to them, it will happen to the rest of us just as well.

So please for the sake of our people, our families, our towns, our resources --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

MR. WHEELER: -- do not release any more wolves.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

Next speaker, please.

Do we have no more elected officials?

MR. NOEL: Thank you. My name is Mike Noel, N-o-e-l, just like Christmas. Merry Christmas to everybody.

I'm from southern Utah. I represent rural District 73, which contains eight rural counties. It's the largest rural district in the state of Utah. I'm here today because I'm worried about the people in this area down here and the fact that maybe these wolves might end up in my district.

In my district, we've had many, many species listed: the Mexican spotted owl, the Kanab ambersnail,
redfin minnow, the goshawk, the Welsh's milkweed, Utah
prairie dog, the Gunnison Sage-grouse, and the Coral
Pink Sand Dune tiger beetle, which is going to shut
down one of our best parks, down near the Sand Dune
State Park.

Let me just tell you this, and this is for
Dr. Tuggle. I appreciate you being here today. You
had these hearings in Albuquerque, and you had them in
Colorado, in Denver, and you had them in Sacramento and
Washington, D.C. But this is where the impact will be,
right here in this area.

You've already impacted citizens in southern
Utah. You've already impacted them in Arizona.
I'm here to tell you it cost thousands of jobs. People
are upset. People are angry.

I'm a cattleman. These animals will go out,
and they will kill cattle. You've already seen it.
We had a gentleman here that lost thousands and
thousands of dollars. At a thousand bucks a head for a
calf, how much could we pay for it?

You have got a population now in my district
that are very angry with what's going on. They're
angry at the federal government. They're angry at the
Fish and Wildlife Service. Because we want to state --
we want the people of our state to manage the resources
in our state and not someone in D.C. and not someone in
another state.

We want it done here right in our area.
That's what has to happen.

(Audience applause.)

MS. TRAVERS: Okay. We would ask that you not
applause or cheer. Please respect everyone and their
comments, please. The longer you clap and shout and
sing, the shorter amount of time they'll have to
testify. So it's up to you.

MS. MARTIN: My name is Tomi Martin. I'm a
Gila County Board of Supervisor from Payson. I want to
thank you very much for bringing this hearing to us.
It's important to me that you did that, and I very much
appreciate it.

My position isn't, are we going to have a wolf
or not; it is how are we going to have this wolf? And
I would like to weigh in on the impinging rule; we need
it strengthened.

I'd like to see us, in fact, instead of having
the corridor between I-40 and I-10, have it border to
border. It makes no sense to me for a wolf to go
across I-40, and then suddenly, it's an entirely
different situation than it was on the other side of
the road.
And I would like to see us be able to manage that critter, his life, if we don't have a 10(j) rule, whether or not its removed, relocated, or be able to kill it. There are times that that's going to be necessary, I think.

I do not want to see them released in Gila County. I don't want to see them released in Tonto Forest. I think they need to continue to be released where they are. And by the time they get to us, they're more of a wolf than a dog, and I think that's important too.

I'll have people say we have lots of wilderness areas throughout Arizona. We have some postage stamped wilderness areas that, again, if you can walk across in a day, a wolf certainly could.

We had a lot of vacant land, but we're not confident like the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. And that needs to be taken into consideration, as to where we release them and how they react and adapt when they get there.

And that's all I have. Thank you very much.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

We've received all of the elected comments. Now we will go with oral comment registration cards that have been pooled and drawn at random, if Trevor
would hand me the box.

I'm going to grab a handful. We're going to start with these. I'm going to call about ten names, bear with me. So please listen carefully.

Karen Michael, Dasi Bhaktivedanta, James Goughnour, Edwina Vogan, Leland Hogan, Danny Giovale, Dave Freiss, Leslie Johnson, Carey Dobson.

If you people would please step forward and begin testimony in any particular order.

MR. HOGAN: My name is Leland Hogan, L-e-l-a-n-d, H-o-g-a-n. I'm president of the Utah Farm Bureau Federation, and our organization has 29,000 members in Utah. And I also represent policy from the America Farm Bureau Federation that has 6 million members across the United States.

Agriculture and food contributes more than 17 billion to the Utah economy, more than 14 percent of the state's GDP. Agriculture is the foundation for 80,000 jobs and 2.7 billion in wages.

More than 70 percent of Utah's farm-based sales come from the livestock sector, with cattle and calves being the largest contributor.

Cattle and sheep operators are the major contributors to Utah's rural economy and community tax structure. Disruption of the normal behavior of
livestock by wolves has the impact not only by loss of life, but it also affects weight gain and reproduction.

The Utah Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s proposal to remove the gray wolf from the list of threatened and endangered species. However, we do not support the proposal to maintain the endangered status for the Mexican wolf.

There is no provision in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recovery plans that deem Utah as essential to the recovery of either the gray wolf or the Mexican wolf.

Any wolves, either gray wolf or Mexican wolf, that makes its way into Utah should fall under the management of the state of Utah. Thank you very much.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Again, I want to remind you if you do have written comment that you’re reading, if you could provide that to someone back at the registration tables or up front to us, that would be great.

And written comment is just as important as oral comment. Thank you.

MR. GOUGHNOUR: James Goughnour, G-o-u-g-h-n-o-u-r.

Mexican gray wolves were introduced in Arizona
by an act of Congress in 1997. At that time, the law
designated a certain area and a certain number of
wolves, about 100, to be established.

Today we're near that goal with 75 to 85 wild
wolves and a couple of hundred in captivity that could
be released. So logic and the law would say that it's
time to call the program a success and end it.

However, now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
wants to expand the range and have an unlimited number
of wolves. The creation of the new subspecies of
wolves is not supported by scientific data, nor does an
expansion of this program supported by the people who
would most directly be impacted by it.

I also want to refer to this letter from the
U.S. Congress that was signed by 75 house
representatives and senators. And what was unique is a
lot of the people that signed it, like Senator
Oral Hatch from Utah and Michele Bachmann, all have
experience with this. They know where this program is
headed, and they signed that letter.

So I would ask you if you haven't seen that
letter, I have a copy of it here and you can surely
read that.

Let me just take one paragraph from that
letter. (Reading) "The full delisting of the gray wolf
is long overdue. Since wolves were first provided protection under the ESA, uncontrolled and unmanaged growth of wolf populations has resulted in devastating impacts on hunting, ranching, and tragic damages to historically strong elk herds, moose, Big Horn sheep, and mule deer."

This is why we believe it's critical that you reconsider your decision to list the Mexican gray wolf as a subspecies under the ESA, which would have a severe impact to private landowners, including ranches in Arizona and in New Mexico --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

MR. GOUGHNOUR: -- and surrounding states.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker, please.

MS. BHAKTIVEDANTA: Hello. My name is Dasi Bhaktivedanta, D-a-s-i, B-h-a-k-t-i-v-e-d-a-n-t-a.

I feel like the differences that I've heard today are due to some of us hold hands on concentric viewpoints and some of us do not. And so I want --

MS. TRAVERS: Could you speak up just a little bit. Thank you.

MS. BHAKTIVEDANTA: Some of us hold hands on concentric viewpoints, that humans are the center, and some of us do not. Some of us hold the viewpoint that
humans are a part of the greater whole. And I fall in the latter category, but I understand and I have people in my life that I love that hold the other viewpoint. So I just hope that we can find some common ground by not seeing each other as enemies, but as -- you know, talk and hear each other's viewpoints. And I'm honored to have been here today to hear viewpoints from both sides.

My problem is that we're wasting wolves delisted. We've seen wholesale slaughter. So after so much investment in the wolves being brought back from the brink of extinction to when they've been left to the whims of the states, they're just being slaughtered almost for fun in some cases.

And so I think we can do better than that. We can find a way around that.

Human beings, I believe, are not the center of nature; we're a part of a larger picture of life. And it's the human species whose behavior has thrown the balance of nature off. Our actions have caused many species to extinction or to the brink of extinction. When the balance is thrown off, we all suffer, including humanity.

So I think that's all I have to say. I'm very nervous, and I'm sorry. I thank everyone for coming
out here and just showing their support to whatever side they hold dear. And thank you very much.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker, please.

MS. JOHNSON: Hi. My name is Leslie Johnson, L-e-s-l-i-e, J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

My husband owns the Flying H Ranch. We border the White Mountain Apache Indian reservation for 37 miles. It takes us three hours to drive that 37 miles. You never get out of second gear.

But as we're driving along, we do see camps. We do see people. So there are people out there. We are right in the center of where you're proposing to expand your Nonessential Population area. So we are definitely opposed to it.

It takes us 45 days to gather all our cows to brand, vaccinate, and so on. So I don't see where we're going to find wolf kills to be compensated from a compensation program that is basically nonexistent at this point.

We know people that have ranches in the Blue. The wolves put them out of business and that one of them is our game warden now.

I believe that the wolves should be expanded or put wherever their native area is. I have many
historical books that talk about hunting in our area.
There were grizzly bears, mountain lions, regular
bears, coyotes, bobcats. Not one mention of a wolf
anywhere. So our area is not an historical area for
wolves. So they should not be reintroduced there.

To me, the wolf reintroduction in our area is
the same as having a convicted felon who's a murderer
move to your neighborhood, and the government pays for
their housing and food. It's the same thing.

My husband is one of those people who thinks
outside the box. He says why don't they just buy a
ranch, put a fence around it, let the wolves exist
there. Let them breed there. Let them live there. If
somebody wants to go hear them howl, let them camp
there.

Why do they have to put them where we have
families, where we're making our livelihood?

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you.
Next speaker, please.

MR. GIOVALE: Hi. My name is Danny Giovale.
It's G-i-o-v-a-l-e.

I'm from Flagstaff, and I am a business owner.
I don't ranch cattle, but I actually make outdoor
equipment. So I manufacture and design equipment for
people who hike outdoors and go in the back country.
I'm here to share my view that the wolf recovery area should, in fact, be expanded. I-40 is right through Flagstaff. And for us to fill that border for the expansion -- it's very awkward to be right on the border line.

We're enthusiastic, many of us in the outdoor community, to have wolves north of I-40, as well as south of I-40. So I'm falling on that kind of outer cusp here.

It was nice to hear earlier in the informational session that the border seemed more like a potentially temporary thing that more wolves would eventually need to be introduced north of I-40. I heard that in the earlier informational session from Ms. Barrett, and that was encouraging.

So I'm here to encourage that and definitely not having the nonessential specification on the listing. And I believe the best science, from what I've been able to get from the conservation community, does promote wolves for the health of our elk and wildlife in the Flagstaff area.

So I would like to promote that idea, and that's all I have. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.
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MR. DOBSON: Carey Dobson, C-a-r-e-y, D-o-b-s-o-n. I'm a rancher out here in Springerville, in Vernon area.

Dr. Tuggle, it was good to see you again. I came to see you in D.C. in about 2000. 2002 is when we came there, and I've had wolf issues ever since.

This year was very bad and traumatic on our outfit. Two years ago, we sold our sheep outfit. I've been there for four generations with my family, and I have fifth and sixth on the ground. We are still running cattle now, but as you can see, the sheep outfit didn't make it up there. We had a lot of issues on our private and on our public lands.

I'm very proactive. I've worked with a lot of outfits, with the defenders of wildlife. Game and Fish done a lot of good things out there that seemed to work sometimes, but, again, like I said, this year we've had over 12 deprivations confirmed. And that's not all the ones that we found that we didn't -- you know, it was a full-time job for me to do it. I wasn't able to go do all the other stuff. I had to just go ride our permits this year.

Like I said, we didn't get to find them all, but we did have 12 confirmed. And on one outfit, that's pretty good. And that's just the kills. I'm
not talking about the cows that didn't breed back.
There's a lot of issues there. And we need to do a lot
more stuff that -- we're not getting help where we need
help out on our force.

What are SOPs? We don't go by any guidelines.
We have nothing to go by. I mean, if we go back, that
paradise pack, in 2002 to now, has got over 40
confirmed deprivations.

Where are we at? We finally took out one wolf,
and now we're looking at maybe taking out the other
female, which I hope we get done. But it isn't -- I
mean, for 13 years, nothing? These are the issues that
we need to look at.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.
MR. DOBSON: Thank you.
MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.
MR. FREISS: My name is Dave Freiss,
F-r-e-i-s-s. I represent the Utah Cooperative Wildlife
Management Unit Association in Utah.
Utah's program incentivizes private landowners
to take advantage of wildlife populations on their
land. And it is encouraged, active wildlife management
by landowners on private lands.

Our membership owns 2 million deeded private
acres of wildlife rich land in Utah. It consists of
hundreds of ranches and represents hundreds of Utah families.

Our concerns are about rural economies and open spaces. Ranches across the West have started to go away because of the development pressures and failed livestock businesses and agricultural businesses in those economies.

We're worried that population declines in deer and elk, due to wolf predation, would put in jeopardy more farms and ranches in rural communities, potentially damaging those economies irreversibly.

We look to the Fish and Wildlife Agency to take into consideration our concerns and maybe look into other or more in-depth environmental impacts that this massing of wolf population would incur.

We support delisting and having state agencies manage our wildlife populations. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

I'm going to call a few more people to get ready to speak.

Hailey Sherwood, Matt Cronin, Sandy Bahr -- has she already spoken?

MS. BAHR: Yeah, I spoke for the representative.
MS. TRAVERS: Okay.

Wallace Schulthess, Tom Jenny, Ryan Benson,
Byron Bateman, Roxanne George, Kathy Cheetham,
Dorothy Reed-Inman, Jim Parks, Carrie Robbs, and
Carolyn Eppler.

MS. VOGAN: Hi. My name is Edwina Vogan,
V-, like in Victor, o-g-a-n.

I am here as a citizen of Arizona and as a
lover of the land and the wildlife. I was raised in a
rural area of farmers and hunters. Many of the people
in attendance here today depend on the land for their
living or for a part of it. No one wants to destroy
that way of life.

I'm here to speak in favor of the Mexican gray
wolf reintroduction program. However, I am not in
favor of the ruling that increases the likelihood that
more wolves will perish under the proposed rulemaking
if implemented.

There are many disturbing aspects of the new
rule, but I want to speak to what I think needs more
definition and more fair application.

Specifically, I do not support the expansion of
the term "take." Take, as in will be taken on private
lands, that wolves will be taken on state land, that
wolves will be taken on private lands, and that wolves
will be continued as always when livestock are identified -- are not identified with the kills.

I would ask that the rule be reevaluated and that the term "taken" be more defined in the proposed rule to continue the goal of reestablishing the Mexican gray wolf.

The wolf program has been under assault since the program began with the shootings of wolves, with no accountability for any of the killings. A program can't be successful and achieve a minimum of 100 wolves when wolves are targets for those who do not support the program, don't want the rules, and the sole purpose is to subvert and destroy the program.

The expansion of the "take" aspect of the proposed rulemaking is a wrongheaded approach, and I ask that U.S. Fish and Wildlife reevaluate the overall proposed rule that's more fair to the survival of the Mexican gray wolf. Thank you for the opportunity.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MR. JENNEY: I'm Tom Jenney, Arizona Director of Americans for Prosperity.

We believe that protection of our natural resources is a state of economic growth most likely to be achieved under a system of well-specified,
well-protected, and transferable private property
rights in natural resources.

A system of private property rights imposes
market discipline on the users of resources because the
wealth of property owners is at stake if they make bad
decisions. And if property rights are transferable,
owners must not only consider their own values, but
also what others are going to pay.

Finally, private property owners can be held
liable, under the tort system, for uses of resources
that harm other persons for property.

Unfortunately, the federal government has
chosen to place a huge portion of Western lands under
the management of government bureaucrats. No matter
how smart government resource managers may be, they do
not have localized knowledge of the incredibly complex
interaction of ecological systems with global
economies.

And no matter how well-intentioned bureaucrats
may be, they do not have any incentives to efficiently
manage natural resources.

We have seen the failure of federal-forced
management in the disastrous Rodeo-Chediski fire in
2002 and the Walla fire in 2011.

Under the Endangered Species Act, government
bureaucrats have chosen to impose wolf for
reintroduction on Western property owners. The
bureaucrats who implemented this policy and the
environmental activists who support this policy do not
have their own property at stake.

Instead the costs of wolf reintroduction are
borne by taxpayers, by school children cowering in kid
cages, and by ranchers and shepherders and other local
resource users.

Sadly, the bureaucrats and environmentalists
cannot be held liable under the tort system for the
damage they cause to local property owners.

Fish and Wildlife spends millions of dollars
every year on this program, and yet it has almost no
funds to compensate the damage this program causes to
local property owners.

This policy is not efficient. It's not fair,
and it must be changed. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MS. MICHAEL: My name is Karen Michael,
M-i-c-h-a-e-l. My husband and I are second- and
third-generation New Mexicans and current residents of
Arizona. We've lived in the Southwest our entire
lives.
The loco is not just an icon of the Southwest; it's an important component of healthy ecosystems. We like knowing Mexican gray wolves are out there, and we're not the only ones.

According to polls, the vast majority of Arizona and New Mexico residents support the reintroduction of Mexican wolves. The concern is that U.S. Fish and Wildlife may hurt some of the proposals.

I support the proposal for the releases of Mexican wolves throughout the Blue Range wolf recovery area. But U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service needs to replace an outdated 1982 plan with an upgraded, comprehensive recovery plan that is scientifically sound. U.S. Fish and Wildlife needs to think outside its boundary box, especially considering the fact that wolves do not read maps.

The proposed rule to recapture Mexican wolves that stray outside the experimental population area is counterproductive to their recovery and ignores biologists who have determined that the current recovery area doesn't provide enough suitable land, which makes it virtually impossible to establish a self-sustained population.

I would also like to thank the White Mountain Apache Tribe for their support. Thank you.
MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

One second, please. The court reporter needs just a few seconds.

THE COURT REPORTER: Okay. I'm ready.

MS. TRAVERS: All right. Thank you.

MS. REED-INMAN: Dorothy, D-o-r-o-t-h-y, Reed, R-e-e-d, Inman, I-n-m-a-n.

I'm a 26-year resident in the White Mountains and a retired schoolteacher. I've lived in the Rocky Mountains since 1972, and that's what I'm all about. It's just being out in nature. That's where I'm coming from.

The points I want to make right away before I run out of time is that I'd like to see direct releases of Mexican wolves throughout the Blue Range wolf recovery area.

I'd like to see them returned to the Grand Canyon region. I think that they could use some wolves to keep those elk moving because it's getting pretty beat up there. I'd like to see them into southern Utah for the same reason, Northern New Mexico, Southern Colorado.

I think these areas are essential for Mexican wolf recovery. I'd like to see Mexican wolves
designated as essential, and I'd like to see a comprehensive recovery plan, and I'd like to not include an expanded provision for takes.

Now, where am I coming from? I get out in the woods a lot. I'm a hiker, a cross-country skier, a birder. I'm retired; I don't rely on these other industries. I am a homeowner in Pinetop for all these years, so my voice counts too.

And I see, from my research, that wolves can make a positive impact on the environment by keeping ungulates moving. They restore willows and Aspen and create a lot of things, like vegetation, which are really getting beat up in the Southwest here.

The birds come back. The fish are better off. It all fits together. It's all part of nature's plan.

That's all I have to say. Thanks.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MS. CHEATHAM: My name is Kathy Cheatham, C-h-e-a-t-h-a-m.

I feel that the proposal for the Mexican wolves is a noose for the wolves in the ecosystem that, apparently, politicians and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can pretend this will help wolves, but know deep down in their hearts that it won't help wolves at
all, just bring them closer to extinction.

    Trying to save wolves is one thing. But unless
they're allowed to expand their territory naturally
without being trapped and being dragged back from
across that imaginary boundary line that politics
decides and not science, that all they amount to is
token animals.

    Wolves should be allowed to go to the
Grand Canyon and further, and we should be using
methods that work to protect all our animals, wild and
domestic, instead of the attitude that we're not going
to change the way we've done things for decades.

    Some ranches are trying methods that work and
haven't lost any livestock. And that's up in northern
wolf country in Montana and Wyoming. It seems that
some people have local phobia, and they're whipping
themselves and others into a frenzy, building cages for
kids and other nonsense.

    The experimental part makes no sense. They've
been here longer than us. It's a no-brainer. They are
essential.

    Maybe elk wasting disease wouldn't have gotten
a foothold if there had been wolves out there calling
the sickly animals instead of the humans out there
looking for the biggest animals in their prime to
shoot.

These Mexican wolves are doing exactly what God intended them to do, and it should be up to us to learn to live with them. It isn't easy, but we have to change our habits and look at things differently. We're supposed to be stewards of this earth and all the creatures and not their executioners.

We have to release more of the wolves and protect them before that generic window closes. We have to let them go with no boundaries. They are essential, and we have to protect them.

What win would there be for the wolves in the Grand Canyon? For sure it would be a win for the condors and also for the --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Thank you.

(Audience applause.)

MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker. Next speaker.

Please hold your applause.

MR. CRONIN: Hi. I'm Matt Cronin, C-r-o-n-i-n.

I'm at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, research professor of animal genetics.

I think that the genetics issue has been overplayed or overemphasized, first of all, with the reproduction of the wolves you've been talking about being good, and I think it was 95 percent of the
animals are now wild born.

    The measure of fitness is reproduction and survival, so you've got a fit population. And I don't think that inbreeding is an issue at this point. You can always correct it later with introducing Rule 3 of AI.

    Maybe a more important issue is that the Mexican wolves went through a very large bottleneck. They don't represent the original population. They came from a small Canis population.

    Assessing the subspecies is somewhat futile in that respect. However, subspecies, in general, are basically a subjected category. They are not a hard scientifically blank category.

    Recently the (indiscernible) when I was in California (indiscernible) added the wood bison, published in the papers this year, have been shown not to be legitimate subspecies. And this phenomenon of naming species and subspecies has been termed by the broad scientific community as inflation, splitting things into groups with the intent of granting conservation, again.

    The entire scientific community outside of the wildlife is recognizing this. And it's very important that we realize that subspecies as a scientific
category is subjective. It's not definitive. The scientific community agrees on it.

So I suggest you use the entire body of science and the recent discrediting of subspecies that have been listed and reconsider the science.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MR. SCHULTHESS: I'm Wallace Schulthess, S-c-h-u-l-t-h-e-s-s. I'm currently serving as the Utah Cattleman's president. I've had a cattle operation in northern Utah and Wyoming, and I've had personal first-hand experience with wolves.

In 2001, I had 16 head of livestock that were killed by wolves. In today's market, that would be $16,000. In 2001, they were $8,000. Defenders of Wildlife eventually sent a deprivation payment to me for $225. It didn't work then. It needs to be revised, from what I've heard here today. I just wanted to comment on that.

I'm not opposed to the wolf reintroduction. I think that the gray wolf should be delisted nationwide. It's worked in Wyoming. We're not a bunch of vigilantes that go up there and slaughter wolves unexpectedly.

If someone comes into your home, there's a law
that says they can't cross that border. Wolves can't
read signs. They can't obey laws. But they do need to
be taken back and held within those areas.

   My only tie to this area is that I have a
daughter that lives in Clovis, New Mexico. I hear
people when they come from out of town and start giving
their opinions of what should happen in these areas.

   But I do feel that gray wolves should be
delisted and the Mexican wolf recovery program should
go on in the valleys that are set and not expanded to a
great deal, only with the approval of the state of
Arizona and New Mexico. Those people who are elected,
certain people of the state, especially those who are
private landowners. There's a reason that it's called
private land, and we should respect that private land
right.

   If you work on the compensation part of it, if
you work on collaborative effort, you'll find that
ranchers are in favor of protecting any species, but we
need to remain in business, and sometimes the
regulations that are put on by Fish and Wildlife
Service are over restrictive.

   And I can leave those comments with you.

Thank you.

   MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.
Next speaker.

MR. PARKS: Hello. My name is Jim Parks, P-a-r-k-s. I'm president of the Coconino County Farm Bureau & Cattle Growers Association. And I really appreciate the honor of being able to speak to you all.

Thank you very much.

We support the delisting of the gray wolf.

We disagree with the listing of the Mexican wolf.

It's terrible that the wolf has emotions running pretty high on this wolf recovery issue.

The wolf is a beautiful known creature when seen in photographs in its natural habitat, running freely and unencumbered across the snow-covered hillside. It's this free spirit of the wolf that has captivated emotion of many thousands of people across the landscape of imagination in the world of urban and suburban peoples.

The reality of the wolf is an entirely different matter. From the practical side of the issue in rural areas of this country, where rural people actually have to live with the wolf, the wolf is far from romantic as an idol, and as it is viewed by our suburban cousins.

It's pretty easy to be emotional about a dangerous predator when you live in the relative safety
of a city. And a dangerous predator is exactly what the wolf is naturally, genetically, and predisposed to be. The wolf kills to eat, and the wolf also kills for fun, called reflex killing by biologists, killing and wasting as many as three or four others in the herd before each one is eaten.

I received an email recently from my brother, Bruce, who lives in Oregon, where wolves have recovered to the point where they're a real danger to people, livestock, and especially when put in the wildlife.

Bruce works for the Oregon State University on the experimental farm that the university in Union, Oregon. The farm has a small herd of cattle in the summer on a Forest service ranch permit. The cattle are hauled up to the forest from the farm in early spring to summer pasture.

He states: (Reading) "Jim, I think I told you that we lost nine head of cattle to the wolves last summer. They all died at the same time. The wolves chased them, backed them up against the barb wired fence, and then just slaughtered them."

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

MR. PARKS: Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

MR. BATEMAN: My name is Byron Bateman,
B-a-t-e-m-a-n. I'm from North Salt Lake, Utah.

Utah has a multibillion dollar industry with our wildlife, our livestock industry, and our tourist industry. We sit in the middle of both of these wolf programs that are going on.

We watched our neighbors to the north go out of business in the livestock industry. We saw their wildlife herds decimated. Herds of elk reduced from 20,000 down to 1,200 or less.

States that can't sell all of their hunting licenses losing great sums of revenues and jobs because of wolves.

Our job is to protect the people of Utah and the economy of Utah and growth. We want to see that growth throughout the West.

We support the delisting of the gray wolf in the lower 48 contiguous states. We don't think that any wolf should be allowed anywhere outside of this historic range anywhere in the United States.

If there is a Mexican wolf and 90 percent of the original historic range is across the border in Mexico, then that's where your emphasis should be on any kind of recovery, not here in the United States with less than 10 percent of their historic range.

To think that you would allow the wolves to
cross I-40 and come north towards Utah is just unacceptable.

You need to look at what's happened in the last 18 years since wolves have been turned loose in the three states in the north and take that into serious consideration, the economic impact and how many lives you've ruined and stuff with the wolf.

I just ask you that you delist, as I mentioned earlier, the lower 48 contiguous states. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker, please.

MR. BENSON: Hello. My name is Ryan Benson, B-e-n-s-o-n. I am the national director of BigGame Forever.

We have approximately 25,000 members nationwide, and many of those members live in the state of Arizona. We will be submitting written comments from 17 chapters in the state today. We have signatures from 600 chapters on those 17 letters.

There is strong statewide support for ensuring that there are safeguards to protect our wildlife. It would be the cautionary tale that comes from the Northern Rockies is not whether the wolf as a species is good or bad. That's not really the question.

The question is one of management and whether
we should be able to -- whether states and whether
local communities, should be able to protect indigenous
wildlife populations.

For the last hundred years, sportsmen and
livestock producers have been strong components of
multi-species conservation. We understand that we need
to invest in our wildlife populations. Elk, deer, and
other species on the landscape are largely there as a
result of the investment by sportsmen in those
communities.

We feel strongly that this investment needs to
be protected. And the best way to do that is to ensure
the states have management authority to address
unsustainable predation as it arises.

State governments are fully qualified to
responsibly manage wolf populations and to meet the
needs of local communities and wildlife populations.

We also strongly feel -- and this has been
stated repeatedly -- that the mandates of the
Endangered Species Act should not force populations
outside the historic range. This is a dangerous
precedent, both from a legal and biological
perspective.

I will submit the rest of my comments -- my
written comments for the record. Thank you.
MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

Next speaker.

I'm going to call three more while this one comes up: Lonn Tate, Judy Bensinger, and Bonnie Danowski.

MS. EPPLER: Carolyn Eppler, E-p-p-l-e-r.

I support the delisting of the gray wolves and inclusion of the Mexican wolf in that delisting. The reason for that is there are clearly flaws in the analysis that you've done to date. You haven't followed NEPA or ESA ruling by collaborating with our state and local agencies, as well as cooperators.

Further, as you move forward with the analysis to document the importance of delisting and the benefits of delisting, I ask that you consider what the IUCN states in their guidelines.

(Reading) "The introduction should only take place where the habitat and landscape requirements of the species are satisfied and likely to be sustained from the foreseeable future.

"The possibility of natural habitat change since exculpation must be considered. Likewise a change in the legal and political or cultural environment since species exportation must be ascertained and evaluated as a possible constraint."
Had you coordinated with local governments since our findings? You had not done that a few weeks ago. Have you started that yet? This is a question that needs to be answered. The IUCN requires that you do this.

Further, while supporters of predator reintroduction programs believe in the concept of restoring the balance of nature, it is not possible to artificially improve this balance. Ecosystems are in a constant state of change, which has been sped up by various programs, such as your wolf program, in an artificial manner.

Research has demonstrated that wolf pups, even with intense socialization with humans, still show aggressive behavior. How have you considered this fact specific to placing wolves in what many refer to as an urban forest?

With the severe economic problems in our country and state, you should consider the negative impacts to our wildlife as --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MS. SHERWOOD: Hi. My name is Hailey Sherwood, H-a-i-l-e-y, S-h-e-r-w-o-o-d. Thank you for letting me speak.
I'm speaking as a farmer, as a person who has shepherded several hundred head of sheep as well as cattle and horses.

I'm speaking to support the recovery of the Mexican gray wolf species. I think biodiversity is essential to all life, and I think deeming something as artificial because they're being recovered, even though they've only been absent from the area is -- I think that's very subjective.

I think there's a cultural stigma against wolves, and I find there's a lot more predatory threats from mountain lions and from coyotes that I've experienced while I've been a farmer and a shepherder. And this is coming from many years of experience in northern Arizona.

I fully support communities having complete say of what goes on in their communities. I live in Flagstaff right now so maybe I'm not being as directly impacted.

I also support the Fish and Wildlife Service to do much more comprehensive studies about how this will impact the ecosystems in the area of what's considered a traditional homeland, how this will impact the people who are directly in those counties that are having the wolves reintroduced there.
Thank you for letting me speak.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker, please.

MS. BAHR: My name is Sandy Bahr, B-a-h-r, and I'm the chapter director for the Sierra Club, Grand Canyon Chapter.

On behalf of our 30,000 members and supporters in Arizona, I strongly encourage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to expedite actions needed for Mexican wolf recovery. It is time to remove the limits that have hindered the full recovery of these endangered animals from the arbitrary lines on a map to the nonessential designation, and to provide them the protection the Endangered Species Act mandates.

As part of your responsibility under the ESA, it is imperative that you act quickly to allow direct releases of Mexican wolves throughout the Blue Range wolf recovery area. This has been recommended by experts for more than a decade and has a sound basis in science and in the law.

This change is essential to ensure the genetic integrity of the animal, as well as their ultimate recovery.

Sierra Club has never supported the Nonessential Experimental status of these animals, as
the wild population is essential to the recovery of the species. That has become clearer than ever over the last 15 years. The nonessential designation is likely to appreciably reduce the likelihood of recovery of Mexican wolves in the wild.

Sierra Club supports the provision in the proposed rule to allow Mexican wolves to disperse naturally from the Blue Range wolf recovery area and into the Mexican wolf experimental population area and to occupy an area without the requirement of bringing them back.

We also support the proposal to move the southern boundary in Arizona and New Mexico from Highway 10 to the U.S./Mexico border.

The Service proposal to allow wolves to disperse no farther north than I-40 is contrary to recommendations from scientists and the Service's own Mexican wolf recovery team.

We look forward to the day when the Mexican gray wolf is fully recovered throughout its range and is fulfilling its essential ecological role throughout the southwestern landscape. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MS. GEORGE: My name is Roxanne George,
R-o-x-a-n-n-e, G-e-o-r-g-e. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. I also want to thank the White Mountain Apache Tribe for sharing their land with wolves. Their willingness to do that exemplifies good stewardship.

I live in Flagstaff, Arizona. I hike and camp on the lands that are a part of the Blue range wolf recovery area and on lands that are within the expanded area proposed.

Giving 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 as strictly protection for gray wolves.

I, like most Arizonans, welcome the return of Mexican wolves and want to see them thrive. They have been missing for too long. And many of us seem to forget that we do not restore endangered species for their benefit, but for ours. Mexican wolves are a good example of that.

We and our public land stand to benefit tremendously from restoring wolves to their natural role. Our level of economy stands to benefit enormously as well. Wolves have contributed over $35 million a year to the Yellowstone region and could
bring significant new revenues to rural Arizona communities.

Unfortunately, very little in the proposed changes to the rule will move recovery forward. I support expanding the area where wolves can roam and allowing initial releases throughout the Blue Range. But the rest of the proposal, including boundaries under wolf nuisance and loosened restrictions on tape, should be discarded as inconsistent with recovery.

It will be a great tragedy if we lose these important native animals from the wild a second time because you sacrificed your mandates to recover endangered species to political considerations.

Thank you.

(Audience applause.)

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Please hold your applause.

Thank you.

Next speaker.

MS. ROBBS: Hello. My name is Carrie Robbs.

That's R-o-b-b-s.

I'm from Pleasant Valley. And I say this with much emotion that me, along with my parents, have pooled our resources, and we are first-generation ranchers. And I don't know if anybody in this room
quite understands what that means.

   It is hard to be a first-generation rancher.

   This is our very first year. And this program
jeopardizes everything that we have just put in and
everything that we're holding for our family.

   I want to start by saying I do support the
delisting of the gray wolf, and then I also support the
delisting of the Mexican gray wolf.

   Part of the ESA criteria for -- the criteria
for ESA states that it must be a valid subspecies, and
scientists do not agree. It is not agreeable that it
is, indeed, a subspecies. And it's something that
needs to be addressed.

   I also want to say that cattle ranching is not
just about producing meat for people; although, it is a
high-quality protein meal for people, one yearling calf
taken by a wolf would supply over 1,400 people with
that quality protein meal. So if you take into
consideration the 400 cattle already killed on the Blue
Range, that is a quality protein meal for 572,000
people.

   Those are major impacts, and we're not even
talking about the byproducts from those animals. So
you might not eat meat, but I'm sure you drive a car.
I'm sure you utilize things that come in plastics.
I'm sure you drive on roads. All these byproducts are important to our everyday lives, including medications. There are so many things we take into consideration when we talk about the impacts just of cattle ranching, let alone the population as a whole. These areas that you're talking about are highly human populated. They are one of the most popular recreation sites in our state, and they're going to impact --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

I'm going to call some more names.

Jim Warren, L. Eppler, Jerry Grimes, Steve Clark, Mike Hobbs, Dennis Pirch.

Thank you.

MS. BENSINGER: My name is Judy Bensinger, B-e-n-s-i-n-g-e-r.

I would like to voice support for direct releases throughout the Blue Range recovery area. I would also like to voice support for the expansion of the Blue Range recovery area.

I understand the concerns of those who fear human/wolf conflict, but the actual number of human/wolf conflict is extremely low. And if we were to irradiate any species for the potential of human conflict, we would have to get rid of bears, mountain lions, bobcats, a whole bunch of species.
My husband and I live in a rural area in Dewey, Arizona. We live about a mile away from the national forest. We co-exist on a daily basis with mountain lions, coyotes, javelina, all sorts of animals. We use common sense, and we get along just fine. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MR. GRIMES: Good evening. Jerry Grimes, G-r-i-m-e-s.

I'm representing the 30,000 Elks of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of Arizona.

The Elks of Arizona, we support the work of the Arizona Elks Major Projects, which I am the current president of. We are strongly opposed to the release of the Mexican gray wolf into the mountains of Northeast Arizona.

The Arizona Elks sponsor a wilderness youth camp, which is located about 50 miles north of Globe, Arizona, near Young in Arizona. Each summer, over 1,000 children -- which about 25 percent represent disabled individuals, young adults -- stay at the Elks Youth Camp, along with their parents, Scout leaders, and other support personnel.

We are very concerned that the release of the Mexican gray wolf to this area could result in
potential danger to the children who use the Elks' sponsored camp.

On most days at the camp, children come across deer, an occasional elk, and the many other wild animals that are located in that area. These animals could bring the Mexican gray wolf to the Elk property and, in turn, in contact with the city kids who are able to beat the heat of Tucson and the Metropolitan Phoenix area when they stay at the Elks youth camp.

The safety of the children who use the Elks camp should be the first priority of those conducted by the Fish and Game Community. The introduction of the Mexican gray wolf would be, in the opinion of the Arizona Elks, a mistake and a potential threat to the children who use the camp. Thank you very much.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MR. HOBBS: Mike Hobbs, Colfax County, New Mexico. I appreciate this opportunity to talk to you a little bit this afternoon.

Ladies and gentlemen, the ranching community has co-existed, for a time immortal, with heavy loads of predators. We have been able to do this -- we've been able to co-exist because we had the ability to work closely with our state wildlife agencies. We're
not having to try to communicate with you folks that
are so isolated from us in D.C.

We want to work -- we don't want the Mexican
gray wolf to be extinct. That was never our objective.
But we do want our states to have the ultimate
authority and control over the ultimate dispensation of
this program.

We do not like what you're doing. We do not
believe that you are in touch with us. When asked for
specific data, we are referred to some ambiguous
website that works just as well as the Obama Care
website works. And we're getting fed up with it.
We're tired of it.

We want common sense put back in to the rules
and the regulations that you folks promulgate on us,
and we're trying to work within. Please cooperate with
us. We're trying to cooperate with you. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MS. DANOWSKI: Good evening, and thank you.
My name is Bonnie Danowski, D-a-n-o-w-s-k-i, raised on
a farm in Iowa. And I now live in the Phoenix area.

I do not support the Fish and Wildlife
Service's premature delisting of the gray wolf from the
endangered species list and relisting it as a second
subspecies.

Please consider also opening the area north of Interstate 40 to the wolves, their natural habitat crucial to the Mexican gray wolf recovery.

In the last decade, ten animals have gone extinct. I can remember scanning the Arizona skies and missing the bald eagle. I can also remember what a thrill to see this marvelous bird flying once again over the mountains in our beautiful desert.

I think this was only because keeping it on the endangered list gave the eagle time to get reestablished in its native habitats. And now this magnificent creature flies throughout our country.

I think of my granddaughter who already will not see the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, extinct in 1994; the Mexican grizzly, 1964; and the Western black rhinoceros, in 2011.

I hope that the Mexican gray wolf will not be in that category, but I truly fear, backed by many scientific studies, that unless the Mexican gray wolf is kept on the endangered list, we will soon be seeing the last of them.

Time magazine recently had the picture of a deer on the cover with the word "Pest." Until we humans once again learn to respect and honor other
living creatures on our planet, this dying out of species will continue.

Can we really afford to keep upsetting the ecosystem because of shortsightedness and sheer selfishness? It is our choice.

Will my granddaughter learn about the Mexican gray wolf only from a textbook or hiking in our beautiful Arizona mountains? I hope it's through a hike. Thank you.

(Audience applause.)

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

Please hold your applause.

MR. PIRCH: Dennis Pirch, P-, as in penguin, -i-r-c-h, from Payson, Arizona. 42 years of public high school teaching and still in that business, I have a pretty good understanding of the folks in Payson, having educated three generations.

I might add that I had the opportunity to go to a meeting created by the Arizona Game and Fish Department in Shaw Valley, where over 200 Paysonites showed up. And I might add of the 200 that showed up, I think it was overwhelmingly that they were concerned and did not want the reintroduction of the Mexican gray wolf -- or introduction of the Mexican gray wolf into
Now, I do want to make sure that you understand, of the 200-plus that were there, there were two people in support. One was a member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, I believe. Her friend said, "I have no dog in the fight so I won't take a stand."

And the third person was a paid lobbyist from the Sierra Club. So I want to make sure you understand that that was one element and one group that I attended.

There was another meeting that I showed up at that there was about 150 members of the community, a totally different diverse group. They were overwhelmingly against the introduction of the Mexican gray wolf to Gila County, to the Payson area.

I went to a third meeting, where there were about 100. There were a couple that were in favor, but, again, the great majority.

So I think I'm speaking for the folks in Payson and I think I'm speaking for the folks in the Tonto National Forest that are totally surrounded, that we have a question.

And the question is: Do the local folks in the national forest want the wolf? And I have to say the bottom line is no, we do not want it in Payson, nor in
Gila County.

And thank you for your time and thank you for
letting me speak.

(Audience applause.)

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

Please hold your applause.

MR. EPPLER: My name is Larry Eppler, E-p-p-l-e-r, and I support the delisting of the gray wolf. The proposal for the Mexican wolf, however, is flawed, in my opinion.

My request to you is for you to consider site specific issues and concerns of all of the families who have been impacted by the Blue Range wolf program both in Arizona and New Mexico, specifically the social and economic impacts.

I also request that you consider all scientifically validated research, including the fact that the IUCN states the gray wolf species, including the so-called Mexican gray wolf, considers the species stable.

Have you, U.S. Fish and Wildlife specialists, considered the possibility of the wolf killing a defenseless child or other persons by placing or allowing expansion of the wolf into an area that
includes one of the most frequented urban forests in the Southwest, being the Tonto?

The myth of the true wilderness can be easily confirmed simply by reviewing the management of those areas we consider wilderness, such as wildlife refuges or designated wildernesses in the United States.

It has been found through land management that for many sites hands-on management is necessary to create the best sustainable habitat. Review of management access across the natural forest wilderness area and others demonstrates the common use of the exception clause of the wilderness act. This clause allows manipulation of the wilderness to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area.

Have you considered in your proposal that with existing mandates and policy, as well as established ecosystems or established communities, there is already well-established biodiversity and intensively managed systems in the area proposed replacement of the wolves?

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

MR. EPPLER: Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

I'm going to read a few more names. Steve Smith, Bob Brister, Billie Hughes, Kim Crumbo, and Jean Ossorio.
MR. CLARK: My name is Steve Clark, C-l-a-r-k. I'm the executive director of the Arizona Elk Society, also the organizer of a group called Arizona Alliance of Responsible Land Users.

I represent many sportsmen here in Arizona. And up until now, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has long ignored the voice of Arizona sportsmen and women in our state.

Sportsmen are the backbone and primary funders for the reintroduction and growth of most of the consumptive gaming in the United States. We have raised millions of dollars to restore wildlife to the landscape.

As the Service knows, the State of Arizona owns that wildlife, and sportsmen continue to fund the bulk of the management of that wildlife. Arizona does not have the prey base to allow for a future expansion of this program. The lack of quality habitat and current climate conditions will allow the wolves to decimate elk and deer in Arizona. This, in turn, will force the ranching community to shoulder the burden of increased wolf/cow conflicts.

The current balance of wildlife will not support the expansion of the Mexican gray wolf outside the area of the current 10(j) Blue Range wilderness.
recovery area. Expanding this recovery area into an area that is not historic range is irresponsible and destructive to the state of Arizona.

Furthermore, the recovery of the Mexican gray wolf needs to focus on Mexico since 90 percent of the historic range is in Mexico.

Recreational use of the area being considered for the recovery expansion is among the highest in Arizona, which will lead to a high rate of conflicts and likely higher wolf mortality and removal. A fact that it could reduce public support for the effort.

Lead agencies here in the state indicate that adequate funding is needed to carry out the reestablishment project in the Blue Range wolf recovery area. Greatly expanding that area to include areas of the Mogollon Rim and the Coconino National Forest will dilute available funds that, to date, have been limited. This will reduce the likelihood of obtaining the population of wolves. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MR. BRISTER: My name is Bob Brister, B-r-i-s-t-e-r. I came down from Salt Lake City, Utah. I wish I didn't have to do that. I wish we could have held a hearing in Salt Lake and in other parts of the
West, but regardless, I'm here.

We need a robust population of Mexican wolves in the Blue Ridge wolf recovery area. We need to have more direct releases. We need to move wolves out of captivity into the wild population.

We need to allow wolves to migrate back to Utah. Wolves are native to Utah. You heard from Utah politicians earlier; they do not represent Utah public opinion.

Utah public opinion supports wolves. Don't take my word for it, read the State of Utah Wolf Management Plan. It will tell you the statistics in there.

Utah and Colorado need wolf populations in order to keep the metapopulation of wolves genetically healthy and for long-term viability.

As it stands in Utah and in other states in the interior West are in decline because of the lack of predators to keep elk on the move. Wolves will help the landscape in Utah, as well as other Western states.

Please follow the ESA. Please follow the law. Use the best science. Have wolf populations in southern Colorado and southern Utah. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.
MR. SMITH: Good evening. My name is J.F. Smith. I'm a rancher from Gila County. I've been a senior guy here on the res, and I've been here for 35 years.

Two minutes would not be enough time for me to tell you all the field experience that I've had with these wolves, but your program has been a classic federal overreach.

An historic observation would be when (indiscernible) is imposed on the populace, sometimes civil disobedience. I suggest you take your wolves and turn them loose on the Potomac River.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MR. WARREN: Good evening. My name is Jim Warren, W-a-r-r-e-n. I'm here representing the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Arizona chapter thereof.

Thank you very much for hosting this. This is great to get all sides exposed here, and it's important that the feelings of democracy gets to be heard.

The Turkey Federation -- just to let you know our Turkey Federation has over 228,000 members nationwide. It's a big organization. And we have over 1,200 in Arizona, so we carry some impact.
We're not against the listing of the Mexican gray wolf. We're adamantly against the further expansion of packs into the new area. A number of these proposed areas have never, in modern history, held such species, and they should not be introduced now, supposedly to enhance their recovery from an endangered list.

There's a reason the name Mexican is used in describing the species. They originally inhabited Mexico and southern Arizona, not Colorado, not central or northern Arizona or northern New Mexico.

The Service originally established a limited recovery area and a population goal. While our goal has not been formally reached, the territory of the packs have extended well beyond the original areas.

Wolf sightings have been reported in some communities along the Mogollon Rim, far and away from their intended recovery range. We don't need more individual impacts in those areas.

We would remind the Service to consider the probable impact of a greatly expanded recovery territory upon other species. Some under consideration for listing as endangered.

As an example, we are intimately acquainted with -- the Turkey Federation has spent the last 20
years restoring the once extirpated Gould's turkey in southern Arizona. Today people in that part of the state are thrilled to see the majestic bird in mountain ranges.

How long will it be before the Mexican gray wolf develops a taste for Gould's turkey?

You need to recognize the impact of wolf population on ranchers, outdoorsmen, and others. They're protecting school children at bus stops over in Reserve. Is this a zoo in reverse? Do we put citizens in cages —

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

MR. WARREN: -- so animals can run free?

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MR. CRUMBO: My name is Kim Crumbo. That's K-i-m, C-r-u-m-b-o. I wouldn't kid you about that.

I'm a native Utahan, but I've lived for 30 years in northern Arizona, Grand Canyon National Park.

I'm the father of two grown boys now. We had raised them in Grand Canyon, in a small community, in a park with a bunch of wildlife, including coyotes and bobcats and cougars. And we only had a little bit of problems with elk. But they grew up and learned how to live with wildlife constantly in our backyard. And so
I know you can do that.

I support the utilization of the best available science in this whole process. I oppose delisting of the gray wolf nationwide, simply because I'd like to see wolves in some of these states -- Utah, where I live now -- and also because it is supported by the best available sciences that those animals play an important ecological role, as well as to provide quite a bit of wonderful experience and opportunities.

I support the listing of the Mexican wolf as an endangered subspecies, but I oppose the Nonessential Experimental label. I think, at the very least, it should be essential experimental population.

I suggest -- actually, support eliminating the whole concept of the Mexican wolf experimental population area.

I think that wolves should be allowed to inhabit areas that are suitable for their population growth, and certainly the Mexican wolf recovery team of scientists planning subgroups make up a recommendation that you have at least three connected populations of wolves, and those include areas north of the interstate. Those are essential for effective recovery of the Mexican wolf subspecies.

And thank you for allowing us to speak.
MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.
Next speaker.

MS. HUGHES: I'm Billie Hughes, H-u-g-h-e-s.
I'm a second-generation Arizonan; my son, third; my grandson, fourth.

I have come to the White Mountains since the late '40s or early '50s. We lived in Tucson. My father worked for the Arizona International Guard, and his sanity was to be able to come to the wild country and enjoy hunting and fishing and just being outdoors.

I was lucky enough a few years ago to go with my sister and we happened to hit double synetica, not looking for wolves, but we heard them howl. And that was transformation.

My mother and father never heard a wolf howl. My son has not, and my grandson has not. And I hope I don't leave a world for them where there are no wolves howling.

I'm a native of Arizona. I represent the White Mountain Conservation League and Great Old Broads for Wilderness. I border the Forest Service. We have had wolves come close. I've never been lucky enough to see one, but have found signs. I welcome them. I take care of them.

I do not support the delisting of the wolf
nationwide. I do support the essential status, the
protected status, for the Mexican gray wolf. I do not
support limiting their habitat. They need to be able
to move. We need to be able to put these into the
Gila, into all of the different areas and return this
animal to its role in protecting our environment.

Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MS. OSSORIO: Good evening. My name is
Jean Ossorio. That's spelled J-e-a-n, O-s-s-o-r-i-o.

I come to this hearing today having just spent
my 340th and 341st night tent camping in the home range
of the Mexican wolf pack, in this case, the Elkhorn
pack.

In this season, when it's a tradition to
express gratitude, I am deeply thankful that the
Mexican wolf, extinct from this land for over 50 years,
has returned.

Once more loco pups stumble from the mouths of
rocky dens to greet the sun. I've seen half-grown pups
coming through the snowdrifts in secluded meadows.
Older ones learn from their elders how to be wolves,
tracking and killing elk, forming packs, and producing
the next generation of lobos.
All is not well with our lobos, however. Scientists tell us that more releases are necessary to genetically rescue our population in jeopardy from inbreeding depression.

At least two more wild populations, with some genetic exchange between them, are necessary for long-term survival and recovery. The ideal places, they say, are the Grand Canyon region and the Southern Rockies, Northern New Mexico, and Southern Colorado.

This proposed rule would effectively prevent wolves from reaching those areas, against the recommendations of the science panel of the current recovery team.

Please amend the proposal, allowing wolves to move freely across human designated boundary lines. If formal boundaries are needed to define the experimental population area, let them be Interstate 70 on the north and the Mexican border on the south.

Please complete the recovery plan. Complete this EIS and get on with more releases. Thank you.

And thanks to the White Mountain Apache Tribe for hosting this meeting and hosting packs of lobos on their tribal land.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

I'm going to call more speakers. John Tate,
Tom Macnab, Thomas Hulen, Mike Edwards, and Brianna Edwards.

MR. EDWARDS: Hi. My name is Mike Edwards, E-d-w-a-r-d-s.

I'm unmarried, but I've been to school, and I remember my classes. I know Mother Nature keeps a harmony in nature. For thousands and thousands of years, our ecosystem has been healthy. It's only the introduction of humans that have destroyed our ecology and decimated the whole population.

I'm here to support the wolves. I believe they should be released in the wild. I believe the borders should be taken away and let Mother Nature determine where the wolves should roam and habitat.

I understand the ranchers' financial losses because of wolves, and I believe the federal government should reimburse the ranchers for their financial losses so that they don't take it out on the wolves.

Let wolves be in the wild. Let them find where they need to live by themselves. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MR. TATE: My name is John Tate, T-a-t-e. I reside in Heber. I'm a life-long resident of Arizona, board member of the CMLUA, Citizens for
Multiple Land Use and Access.

I have lived in this country and spent time here all my life. My father was a logger, who watched the wildlife. We've enjoyed the wildlife. I'm a sportsman. I hunt. We have a good elk herd. Not so good for the deer.

About 100 years ago, there was no elk in this country. They were killed off by settlers and wolves together. In 1912, my hometown of Winslow replanted those elk. 100 years later, we have one of the finest herds of elk -- not in numbers, but in quality -- in the nation.

I have friends that worked 16 years for a paper company in the Northwest. I have friends all over the Northwest. I talk to them all the time.

Their elk herds are devastated by wolves. Their hunting is devastated. Their economy is shot. We don't want that here. We can't afford that here. Our deer herd is in not so good shape already. We don't need more predators.

We have an old rule for bear. We have an old rule for lion and coyotes. We want control of these dogs turned over to the Arizona Game and Fish. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.
Next speaker.

MS. EDWARDS: Hi. I'm Brianna Edwards.

I'm here today to help save the Mexican gray wolves. And I think they should run free and go wherever they want.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MR. MACNAB: I'm Tom Macnab. That's M-a-c-n-a-b, as in dangnabbit.

Our country has a constitution that recognizes us as free people. And it recognizes our right to defend ourselves. Our right to defend our lives, liberty, and our property.

And I'm going to quote you a thing that was given by the Scottish nobles to the English after the Battle of Bannockburn, where Scotland became an independent nation, won by Robert de Bruce against Edward II.

(Reading) "As long as 100 of us remain alive, we shall never in any way submit to the domination of the English. For it is not for glory we fight, nor for honor or for riches, but for freedom alone, which no good man loses but with his life."

Thank you very much.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.
Next speaker.

MS. TRAVERS: Thomas Hulen.

MR. HULEN: My name is Thomas Hulen, H-u-l-e-n.

I'm a lifelong Arizona resident. I hunt and fish in Arizona, as well as several other Western states.

I do not support the delisting of the gray wolf, and I also believe that the Mexican wolf should be considered essential population. I don't think there's any way that we can say that 75 wolves in the wild with two breeding pairs is anywhere near recovered population. And I question if 100, or even more than that, would represent that.

I do think that we should allow the Mexican wolf to expand its natural range. We have excellent evidence that the range was much greater than what's been proposed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. We actually have good museum specimens that can verify that for us.

I don't think we should be punishing wolves for being successful, and I do think, and do appreciate, the fact that here in the west of the United States, we have millions of acres of public land that's really for the use of all of us and not just a few people that happen to live nearby who make their living from it.

It really belongs to all of us, and we should
covet that land and protect it the best we can, including wildlife, which many people seem not to think that wolves are a part of that wildlife equation.

So thank you very much.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

This hearing is scheduled to end at 8:30 p.m.

However, due to the large number of registered speakers, we will take a two-minute break to determine if we can extend the hearing.

We are off the record.

(A recess was taken from 8:30 p.m. to 8:32 p.m.)

MS. TRAVERS: We will hear from five more speakers. We are on the record.

Stephanie Nichols-Young, Mary Ellen Bitturf, Corwin Hulsey, Gina Edwards, and Mary MacNab.

Next speaker.

Please take your seats and allow the speaker to present. Thank you.

MS. MACNAB: I think one thing that's been overlooked is the fact that the wolves were put on --

MS. TRAVERS: Excuse me. What is your name?

MS. MACNAB: Mary Macnab, M-a-c-n-a-b.

I think one of the things that people are not taking into consideration, a lot of people come up here
and think that it is actually wilderness. But, you
know, our wild and urban interface is in ruins. And
there are communities there. There are economies
there.

And as Dr. David L. Leach -- or is it L. David
Leach -- said in the paper that I read -- he's sort of
considered a grand old being of wolf reintroduction.

He said that -- and it was kind of enlightening
to me. He said that after wolves recover in their
primary recovery area, eventually as their numbers
expand, they'll wander onto agriculture land.

Well, these Mexican wolves for an insight were
put on lands that were entirely agricultural for the
primary recovery. So no wonder there's problems.

And people from the city come up and they do
not see that these are people's lands that they run
their livelihoods on. All they see is wilderness.

And man is essential to certain balances in
nature too. There's a ranch right on the border of
Arizona and New Mexico, and it has a third of the
entire willow fly population. The reservation is on
each side, where the kettle prinsap (phonetic) have
maybe two or three nesting pairs.

It has the densest songbird nesting habitat in
North America. It's got 90 native fish. You know, I
can't think of what else.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, ma'am.

Next speaker, please.

MS. BITTORF: Thank you for allowing me to talk. I'm Mary Ellen Bittorf. It's B-i-t-t-o-r-f.

I'm president of the White Mountain Audubon Society, and I'm the founder of the White Mountain Nature Center. I'm a native Arizonian, and I favor keeping the Mexican gray wolf listed on the Endangered Species Act.

I believe they're very important to us up here, to our economy. We've heard a lot of people talk about how they're not helpful. I know that watching wildlife in Arizona, as a tourist state, is very important, and a lot of people come up here to see the wildlife.

Wolves are part of the wildlife.

At Audubon and the Nature Center, we have programs. And, invariably, any program we have that includes wolves is one of the most popularly attended programs.

I think that I agree with keeping the gray wolf listed. I do not like the smorgasbord of ways that people can legally kill the wolves. I think it would be very difficult for Game and Fish or anybody else to find a way to protect a wolf that's been killed or find
that it was killed illegally. Thank you very much.

    MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

    Next speaker.

    MS. NICHOLS-YOUNG: Good evening. My name is Stephanie Nichols-Young. Sorry, it's a long one.

    N-i-c-h-o-l-s, hyphen, Y-o-u-n-g.

    I'm here representing the Animal Defense League of Arizona. We're a statewide animal protection group with over 5,000 members here in our state.

    First, we do support release of wolves throughout the recovery area. We appreciate that change to the wolf.

    We want to express our support for expanding the recovery area. We support taking the boundary down from I-10 to the border of Mexico. We're concerned about the I-10 -- or going to the I-40. We believe it needs to be further north.

    We think it's incredibly important -- we know the Mexican wolves want to come from the current area and disperse up the Mogollon Rim, and we think it's incredibly important they be allowed to do that. But they need to be able to go north of I-40 because the habitat there at the Grand Canyon region has been studied, and we know it's better habitat.

    We know there's a better prey base. There's
less dense roads. So there's going to be less
conflict. It's incredibly important that we allow that
habitat to be utilized by wolves.

And I want to point out that I say this as
someone whose family owns land on the Mogollon Rim and
has owned that for back a generation.

My husband's family, they fished and hiked and
everything along the Rim. I've gone up and down many
trips, backpacked for days. So we've been out in that
area and understand that we'll be coexisting with
wolves too, and we support it, saying that.

So sorry to digress to the personal comment.

We also want to note that these wolves are
essential that are in the wild. It's incredible to
think that captive wolves were able to go back in the
wild, form packs, learn how to be wild again.

And the knowledge that those wolves have, the
genetic population that they are, is incredibly
important. And there is genetic research to support
that.

I will stop there and say thank you for the
opportunity to speak. Thank you to Fish and Wildlife.
Thank you to the White Mountain Tribe for allowing us
to use their facility.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.
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I'm going to call two more names.

Maureen Hackett and Eva Hernandez.

Next speaker.

MS. EDWARDS: Hi. My name is Gina Edwards, E-d-w-a-r-d-s.

I'm here to support the Mexican gray wolf. I oppose the delisting of the gray wolf across this great nation. Excuse me. I'm a little emotional.

Wolves faced almost being extinct, just like our Bald Eagle and the American buffalo. And so too did the wolves, and now they're coming back.

And to delist the gray wolf, I don't believe in that. I want to have the wolf there, and the Mexican gray wolves especially.

I'd love to see huge populations of the Mexican gray wolf for my daughter's future generations and her grandchildren and her children's grandchildren, to be able to witness in the wild, and especially to go above I-40 into the Grand Canyon. I think it would help the economy up there.

Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker.

MS. HACKETT: Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Maureen Hackett. I came in from
Minnesota, and I founded a group called Howling for Wolves.

I'm here to deliver thousands of signatures supporting the expanded recovery of the Mexican gray wolf and opposing the blanket delisting of the lower 48 wolves.

Our experience in Minnesota has been mostly favorable in terms of attitudes towards wolves, but I think it shows how wolves throughout the United States are at risk under state management. While wolves are our ally and vegetation growth and there are good reasons to keep them on the landscape.

And, in fact, I just wanted to share with some of the hunters that when we had the highest numbers of wolves, we had the highest numbers of white-tail deer. And that was in the early 2000s.

Wolves, you know, have other roles that we're still trying to understand in public health, such as Lyme disease.

But as soon as the wolves in Minnesota were post-delisted, we rushed to a hunt. A hunt ensued, despite a sound wolf management plan that called for a five-year wait.

And in states where the wolves have been delisted, they've been hunted. And a wolf hunt creates
unpredictable results for wolves and for farmers. Even
states like Minnesota are not really prepared for the
potentially increasing depredations caused by these
hunts, possibly due to breaking up packs, randomly
killing well-functioning wolf packs in the wild.

Non-lethal methods have not been given for
support of the farmers in our state. And we need to
come together for that.

We were lucky enough to delay the delisting
long enough to show that our wolf population did not
expand as David Leach had predicted. It was stable
from '98 to 2008 without a hunt, before the delisting.
And then within one year of the delisting, you've
dropped our population to near 1988 levels, 25 percent.

The wolf still faces many, many challenges,
including hate. More than any other species. I will
read you one thing off of a Facebook cite called "Jerry
Kill Wolves Rig."

(Reading) "I shot one out my back door
yesterday. It was still alive after the first shot, so
I bashed it with a baseball bat several times. I got
busy, and it's still out there howling."

This kind of hate doesn't exist --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

MS. HACKETT: -- for other species.
MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker, please.

Next speaker.

MS. HERNANDEZ: Hello. It's been a long night.

Thank you for letting me speak. I'm here to --

MS. TRAVERS: What's your name?

MS. HERNANDEZ: Oh, sorry. Eva Hernandez, H-e-r-n-a-n-d-e-z.

I'm here to oppose the wolf delisting, the gray wolf, in general. It has been proven scientifically and not supported by many scientists that they still need more time to recover. Pack structure is extremely important, and the ecosystem recovery is amazing. Now this is a great example of this.

I'm also here to say that I do not support the delisting -- or taking the delisting of the Mexican gray wolf as a subspecies. And I am in support of possibly doing more research before making any ruling, any sort of recovery plan for them.

The recovery plan was originally done in 1981. That is severely outdated. It really, really needs to be revised and looked at before any kind of new laws can be made.

It is extremely essential for these animals in a healthy ecosystem to be able to disperse and have connectivity between different parks and different
land. They don't, unfortunately, read maps.

The Grand Canyon eco-region is a prime place for them to be able to disperse. A study done by a girl at Ault, they actually looked at the population connectivity in that area. They used GIS and new technology that hasn't been used in the recovery plans before, showing that it is suitable habitat.

So in both those cases, I cannot support delisting, and I definitely would like to see more science with that rather than politics. Thank you.

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

Next speaker. Corwin Hulsey.

Oliver Starr.

MR. STARR: Good evening. My name is Oliver Starr, S-t-a-r-r. I'm the grandson of a well-known Colorado cattleman.

I studied canine anthrology at the University of Colorado and have spent the last 30 years studying and raising wolves. I believe I know and understand these animals in a way few others do. I also grew up in the culture of fear and hatred of wolves that permeates the ranching community.

In spite of this conflicted background, I am opposed to the blanket delisting of gray wolves and strongly in favor of more comprehensive efforts to
recover the Mexican gray wolf.

While there are some valid concerns about wolves, there is no question that wolves are more important to the health of ecosystems than cattle. Wolves belong in the landscape, while cattle are the damaging and evasive species that fouls the water, destroys the range, and out competes natural ungulate populations. Beyond this, much of the land where cattle are grazed belongs not to the ranchers but to we, the people.

Wolves have existed in the dynamic balance with their prey for a millennium. They do not decimate herds, as someone just claimed, but regulate them in harmony with nature. Wolves manage themselves. They do not need to be managed.

Some argue that states are better suited to managing their wolf population. But we have seen how that has worked out for the wolf, and we've seen the photos of the horrors visited upon wolves in every state where management rights have been returned.

This is not management; it is extermination.

The Mexican gray wolf is a unique subspecies that requires ongoing federal protection and expansion of the recovery range and additional releases. Anything less will result in the second extinction at
the hands of man.

These animals are not an experiment. They are an essential component of an ecosystem that evolved before man even set foot in these lands.

Wolves are highly intelligent, social, and mutually interdependent creatures. They work together and care for each other, and they suffer anguish when they lose a member of their families.

In the 30 years I've spent working with wolves, I found them to be more humane than the humans that glorify in snuffing them out.

It will only be through continued and expanded federal protection that the Mexican gray wolf can regain its foothold in suitable territories --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

MR. STARR: -- and exert a crucial role --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

MR. STARR: -- as the most --

MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we appreciate the time and effort you took this evening to present your comments. They have been very informative and will be fully considered in their final decision.

Again, as a reminder, written comments may be
submitted to the staff at the registration table, or
they may be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service by December 17, 2013.

The hearing is closed. I show the time to be
8:45. We are off the record.

(The hearing concluded at 8:45 p.m.)

* * * * *
STATE OF ARIZONA )
    ) ss.
COUNTY OF MARICOPA )

BE IT KNOWN that the foregoing hearing was taken before me, CINDY BACHMAN, Certified Reporter No. 50763, in and for the State of Arizona; that the testimony was taken down by the Voice Writing method and thereafter translated into text via speech recognition under my direction; that the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcript of all proceedings had upon the taking of said hearing, all done to the best of my skill and ability.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am in no way related to any of the parties hereto nor am I in any way interested in the outcome hereof.

DATED at Tempe, Arizona, this 17th day of December, 2013.

_________________________________________
Cindy Bachman, CR
Certified Reporter No. 50763