



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM**

TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW (Time 7:41)

MEXICAN WOLF (HOST ANN HAAS WITH PATRICK VALENTINO)

This transcript was produced from audio provided by FWS Endangered Species Program

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Music plays.)

MS. HAAS: This is Ann Haas with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service talking with Patrick Valentino of the Mexican Wolf Fund. He's a recovery champion for his work to generate funds to promote coexistence between ranchers and the endangered Mexican Wolf. Patrick I understand that you're a real estate and investment attorney. And yet you've taken up the cause of the Mexican Wolf. How did you go from one to the other?

MR. VALENTINO: Well, it really just evolved over time. Back in the 1990s I got very interested in the recovery of wolves in the western states and as I learned more and more I realized how important the recovery of Mexican gray wolves were in the southwestern United States. And the organization that I got involved with was getting involved in the Mexican wolf species survival plan. So it all just kind of took place over a few years.

MS. HAAS: And your organization now is helping ranchers prevent interaction between the Mexican wolf and cattle and sheep. What's working out there?

MR. VALENTINO: Well, two things I think work. One works for the wolves and one works for the people. For the people I think it's the communication and the interaction and showing up and saying you're going to do something. That is more of a social component. Then the second thing that works in the field in the wild is novelty. So when the wolves face a novelty they may not want to cross that line. Like a barrier fladry or range riders as opposed to just seeing elk, deer and then seeing cattle. But seeing something different like people or something

like fladry that makes a difference. But probably what's the most important part of that is that those two components have come together for more of an integrated approach.

A proactive and integrated approach. Back in 2007 it might just be hazing wolves. Wolves come close make loud noises make them go away. Now it's a lot less of that and more of coordinated efforts to move cattle and calving operations during certain times of the year so that if wolves are in the area you can move the cattle away from the wolves or using feed programs and range riders and fladry or some combination of all of that to make a difference. That effort takes all of the stakeholders involved. The agency people, the science people and the ranchers. When we established the fund in 2006 we wanted to be really simple. There's not a lot of complexity to it. It's basically we will raise money and if the agency folks, the people in the field who deal with all of the issues come to us and say hey here are the five things we should fund we're going to try to fund them. Or to the extent we have money. That's really it. We do not try to teach. We're not an advocacy group. We're not trying to put education materials out there. We're keeping it real simple. Because we want the money to come in very clean. It's not about asking a rancher to like wolves or adopt any kind of certain measures. I think that they're appreciative of the cooperation and the fact that we're coming in to try to make an effort.

That it's not just a singular advocacy for wolves. But what it is instead is focusing on is there a problem and if there is a problem how do we fix it?

MS. HAAS: Tell us about fladry and range riders will you?

MR. VALENTINO: Well range riders is putting someone on a horse out on the range near an allotment or wherever you've got livestock to ride in an area where wolves are likely present. By doing that you've got eyes and ears on the ground. You've also got the likelihood that if wolves see a person or a few on horseback that they're not going to want to come in to that area. The fladry is basically it's red strips of cloth that hang from a wire and is spread out along ranch fencing. It could go for a few miles. These flags hang in the wind and they move around. It's the movement that creates this novelty on the landscape for the wolves because it's not something they see out in the wilderness.

It is a very unnatural look to them. Studies found that wolves would not cross that barrier or would be very reluctant to do so.

MS. HAAS: Can you tell us about your fundraising?

MR. VALENTINO: Well, the fundraising is finding people whether it's a grant making institution or an individual or stakeholders who are interested in investing in this process. And understand that we're going out there to address issues, to address problems and solve them. We're going to keep livestock alive and we're

going to keep wolves alive in the process. That's very simple goal. We find that people are very interested in this process because they ask us how are wolves going to survive in the landscape. They read the papers, they read the news and they hear about opposition. And they hear about illegal killings and they want to quickly blame ranchers. What we want to say is what we have to do is find a way for cooperation because wolves can coexist with human activities on the landscape. People like that—they buy in to it.

MS. HAAS: It's a traditional lifestyle issue then too.

MR. VALENTINO: Exactly. I think that's the part that when you get in to it you can extend the understanding and a lot of times people want "the education to go one way". Right. It's someone sitting in their comfortable home saying well those people out there need to understand how important wolves are. Well, maybe it's those people sitting on their couch in the urban areas need to understand that certain ways of life have existed and can coexist with wildlife and do on a daily basis. It's taking a focus on the problem and getting people on both sides of the issue whether you're for wolves or against wolves or you don't care but you have a stake in the process for some reason.

Focus on: "what is the problem how do we solve it?" Everybody is going to agree that the livestock industry is important and the wolf recovery effort is very important. So how do we just deal with where the two conflict? Let's just focus on that.

MS. HAAS: Can you tell us how many Mexican wolves are in the wild now as opposed to in breeding facilities?

MR. VALENTINO: The numbers have gone up in the wild. You know we were kind of hovering around the 50 range and then there was a pretty strong pup count this year. Hopefully we'll have a good increase in the numbers. Think it's good optimism that there are. Let's just say if we had 50 we'll get up to 60 or 65 or something like that. Then in the captive setting there's about 325 or 330 and those are good numbers. We've pretty much met the goals in the captive setting. Obviously have not met the goals with free ranging wolves. Hopefully we can increase our ability our resources to help as the number of Mexican wolves increases. Because it's going to be important to stay with it.

So if we've got three new packs out there next year we're going to want to have the ability to help in those situations if there are issues. And the good news is a lot of times there aren't issues. The Hawk's nest pack for years lived without issue right near cattle. So there's not always issues and that's a good thing.

MS. HAAS: Well, thank you so much. Patrick Valentino of the Mexican Wolf Fund a recovery champion. This is Ann Haas with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.