

Colorado Gray Wolf 10(j) Rulemaking EIS US Fish and Wildlife Service

State Coordination Meeting Notes

May 15, 2023
8:30 – 9:30 am MST
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Nicole Alt	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Scott Becker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Kurt Broderdorp	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Matt Hogan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Amy Lueders	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Anna Munoz	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Brady McGee	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jacob Mesler	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Liisa Niva	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jonna Polk	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Clay Crowder	Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD)
Ty Gray	Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD)
Jeff Davis	Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Reid DeWalt	Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Brian Dreher	Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Eric Odell	Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Stewart Liley	New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMDGF)
Kim Hersey	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Jessica Forbes	WSP
Lori Fox	WSP
Margaret Stover	WSP

Introductions

The Service called the meeting to order, and the group conducted introductions.

State Plan/CPW Updates

CPW shared that the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan had been unanimously approved by the commission. The commission also unanimously passed an approval of the 10(j) process to reaffirm the importance of having a 10(j) rule in place. CPW will send out the approval to the group. CPW noted that there has been press attention with concerns about a

lack of wolf source populations, but they explained that some of the news was not entirely factual and that CPW has made progress on coordinating wolf source populations.

CPW also shared that bills have been passed on not moving forward with the state reintroduction without the 10(j) rule in place. The governor may veto the bill. The Service asked if the legislature had enough time and enough votes to override the veto. CPW said they were not sure, but that it seems as though this would be the last opportunity for the bill to pass since the legislature will go out of session.

CPW sent a memo about their commitment to accept wolves back into Colorado as long as they are on the state's threatened and endangered list. The next steps of decision-making would be triggered after wolves are delisted from the state's threatened and endangered list. The Service asked if CPW could clarify if they would accept wolves back that are born in Colorado. CPW said they would clarify the language so that any wolf that comes from Colorado would be accepted back.

Proposed Rule and DEIS

The Service shared that they are working through the comments on the DEIS and proposed rule. They have binned the comments into categories, are working on comment responses, and are narrowing down the key points from the comments. The Service received 2,500 comments that were not exact form letter duplicates. The Service said that they anticipate focusing on making updates to the EIS and proposed rule based on the comments they received. After the FEIS and rule are complete, the next steps are preparing the ROD, the 10(a)1(A) agreement, and then the process of signing the ROD and sending the rule to the Federal Register. The rule would go into effect 30 days after submission to the Federal Register.

NMDGF asked when they would hear from the Service about edits to the rule and EIS based on the language they provided. The Service said they are focused on responding to comments and that they will share a more defined timeline soon.

The Service also noted that they are considering and responding to comments from Tribes and that they will make sure any language included in the rule will not undermine the Mexican wolf 10(j) rule.

Draft Agreement

NMDGF, AZGFD, and UDWR shared that they have adjusted the draft agreement based on the previous meeting and have updated the purpose of the agreement to include contributing to the success of Colorado's wolf recovery and to prevent impacts to Mexican wolves. The next steps are for CPW to continue reviewing and adding language to the agreement. NMDGF, AZGFD, and UDWR also plan to share the agreement with Service Regions 2 and 6 for their feedback. They will also have a legal review of the agreement. CPW shared that they plan to complete their comments on the agreement by the end of the week (5/19). Their attorneys general are reviewing the agreement this week as well.

The group planned to keep the meeting scheduled for the following Monday (5/22) and CPW will notify the group if their review of the agreement takes longer than anticipated.

Service Personnel Update

Nicole Alt shared that she is taking another position with the Service, starting in three weeks. Liisa Niva will be taking her place in the interim and the Service is working to ensure a smooth transition.