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Subject: Today's Mexican wolf news stories
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FYI...

Albuquerque Journal (Op Ed)

Wolf plan endangers children and our animals

By Marita Noon / Executive Director, Energy Makes America Great Inc.

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Often, the sound of howling, yelping coyotes awakens me. I sit bolt upright in my bed as my sleep-filled brain tries to calculate where my critters are and whether or not they are safe.

In the years that I've lived in the mountains outside of Albuquerque, I've lost three cats and three ducks to coyotes. I know coyotes are natural predators, and if my pets are outside there is a chance they'll fall prey.

Coyotes could be the least of New Mexicans' worries under a new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plan to expand the area for the Mexican grey wolf reintroduction. The plan calls for virtually all of southern New Mexico to become wolf habitat – but wolf advocates at a hearing about the plan, held in Truth or Consequences on Aug. 13, repeatedly expressed their desire to have wolves introduced north of I-40. Others want wolves released in the Grand Canyon and Four Corners areas.

Wolves are master predators – the enemies of coyotes. Wolves attack bigger prey: deer, elk, horses and cattle – but are known to carry off a dog or cat as well. They are not afraid of people and will come right up to a house if they are hungry.

Supporters of the expanded plan plead for people to “open their eyes and hearts to wolves, to remove boundaries.” One claimed: “The big bad wolf isn't so bad after all,” and added: “There's no proof a wolf has ever harmed a human.”

Most opponents of the plan live in areas already impacted by the current wolf reintroduction.

One woman told of growing up on her family's farm. She remembers being able to play by the stream without fear.

But now, with wolves around, it is a different story for her grandchildren. They came to visit one day. They brought their new puppy. As they bounded out of the car toward the house, two wolves emerged from the creek and snatched the puppy as the shocked children helplessly watched.

They are now afraid to go to grandma's house. They have nightmares.

Others told similar stories.

Children waiting for the school bus sit in cages to be protected from wolves. Nine ranches in the current habitat area have been sold due to wolf predation – too many cattle are killed and

ranchers are forced off the land.

Had I been called to speak, I would have addressed the lunacy of the plan.

After huge amounts of effort and resources have been invested to save the sand dune lizard and the lesser prairie chicken in and around the oil patch of southeastern New Mexico, they now want to introduce a master predator that will gobble up the other endangered species? After all, as many proponents pointed out, “wolves don’t have maps.” They don’t stay within the boundaries of the Fish and Wildlife Service plan, they go where the food is.

As I listened to the presenters, I wondered: “Why do they do this?” People and their property need to be protected.

Instead, supporters whined that capturing wolves and moving them away from communities “traumatizes” them. What about the harm to humans; the traumatized children? Does human blood need to be shed to consider that they have been harmed?

Perhaps the answer to “why?” came from one person who opened with this: “I am from New York. I don’t know anything about ranching or wolves.” And then added: “Ranching will be outdated in 10-15 years. We can’t keep eating meat.”

State Sen. Bill Soules, from Las Cruces, supports the new, expanded plan. He said: “I’ve had many people contact me wanting wolves protected. I’ve had no one contact me with the opposing view.”

Calls to our elected officials do matter. Contact yours and tell him/her that you want people protected, that humans shouldn’t be harmed by an expanded wolf reintroduction territory.

People shouldn’t lie awake in fear for their families and property.

Fronteras: The Changing America (NPR regional news program)

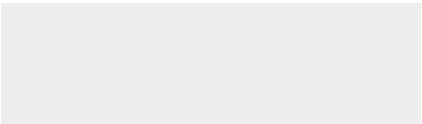
Federal Proposal Seeks To Expand Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Zone

By Mónica Ortiz Uribe
August 19, 2014

Heavy gray clouds rumbled across the sky in Reserve, New Mexico. The village of 300 people sits in the heart of the Gila National Forest against a verdant backdrop of Ponderosa pine.

A yellow bus pulled up to a muddy driveway on a late August afternoon during the first week of school.

Emma Hardy, 11, and her brother bolted from the bus into the rain. They passed a crude wooden shelter with a tin roof and chicken wire windows. They call it the “kid cage.”



Local high schoolers built these shelters in shop class. They showcase a culture of fear embedded in this rural western county.

A



Mónica Ortiz Uribe

A team of volunteers works with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take vital signs on a captive female Mexican gray wolf at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico.

Reserve is inside the boundaries of a federal wolf recovery area. Billboards in town display bloody images of dead calves that claim a wolf was to blame. Residents report wolf sightings weekly.

The Hardy family lives a mile and a half from the forest boundary right off the main road into town. Emma Hardy said she's spotted wolves near their home.

"I saw was a wolf coming and we had our chickens out by the porch and the wolf got the chicken and took off," she said.

In the Southwest, the endangered Mexican gray wolf has not thrived as well as its cousins to the north. Part of the challenge is the wolves' proximity to humans.

To help boost the wolf population, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the agency managing the recovery program, wants to substantially expand the area where they can release new wolves into the wild.

Those who study wolves say the fear factor is overblown. There are no documented cases of wolves injuring or killing a human in the Southwest.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began introducing Mexican gray wolves to a limited area of national forest straddling New Mexico and Arizona 16 years ago. The agency now wants to make the area on which wolves can roam freely 15 times larger.

"We're basically out of space," said Tracy Melbiess with the federal wolf recovery team.

She explained the new proposal this month at public meetings in Arizona and New Mexico. Last year Fish and Wildlife counted 83 wild-born wolves.

"The genetics of the wild population are not as strong and robust as they need to be," Melbiess said.

Heather



Mónica Ortiz Uribe

Heather Hardy (right) and her daughter stand near a wooden shelter meant to protect children from wolves in Reserve, New Mexico.

Weak genetics are a result of inbreeding, which yields fewer pups. To help diversify the gene pool more wolves must be released from the hundreds currently in captivity. More wolves would require expanding the government imposed boundaries to avoid territorial conflicts.

A



Mónica Ortiz Uribe

A group of volunteers prepares to transport three captive Mexican gray wolves from the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge to other facilities.

Thousands of Mexican gray wolves once roamed from central Mexico into the American Southwest before humans nearly killed them off.

"What we really need to do here is simply work on the tolerance and acceptance of the wolf by humans," said Sherry Berrett, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

That won't be easy. The number one killer of wolves is humans. Since the recovery program began 55 wolves have been killed illegally, whether by gunshot, trap or other means.

"The folks that have to live with the wolves, they are the ones that have to change their whole lives to accommodate the wolf," said Jess Carey, who investigates cattle deaths for the Catron County Sheriff's Department.

He disagrees with advocates who say wolves and humans must learn to co-exist.

"Their terminology of co-existence is this: The wolves are gonna kill your cows and you have to live with it. That's co-existence," Carey said.

Last year the Fish and Wildlife Service attributed 28 livestock deaths to wolves. Ranchers are eligible for compensation on a confirmed wolf kill. But they say that's a hard thing to prove. And they argue cattle stressed by wolves lose weight, which reduces their value. Hunters complain too, saying wolves eat up game.

But wolf defenders argue the struggling predator is key to a healthy ecosystem.

"The thing about wolves is they chase animals rather than ambush them as mountain lions do," said researcher Michael Robinson.

Robinson has studied the history of U.S. policy toward

Billboards



Mónica Ortiz Uribe

Billboards warn outsiders about the presence of wolves outside Reserve, New Mexico.

wolves for the past 13 years. He works with the Center for Biological Diversity, a nonprofit advocate for wildlife.

Robinson points to studies that show wolves prevent animals like elk from grazing too long at riverbanks. That allows more trees, like cottonwood and willows to grow. More trees attract more beavers.

"The beaver dams have created a habitat for fish," he said. "(The trees) also provide nesting grounds for migratory birds. So there's a cascading effect."

The new recovery plan aims to help the Mexican gray wolf get off the endangered species list. It also broadens rules that allow the legal killing of wolves that are identified as threat to humans and other animals. The combination is part an ongoing effort to please both sides of a decades-old debate.

<http://www.fronterasdesk.org/content/9752/federal-proposal-seeks-expand-mexican-gray-wolf-recovery-zone>

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