



News Release

Public Affairs Office
PO Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103
505/248-6911
505/248-6915 (Fax)

Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas) <http://southwest.fws.gov>

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Contacts: Tom Buckley, 505-248-6455

Mexican Wolf Interdiction Trust Fund Cooperative Agreement Signed

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation signed an agreement establishing the Mexican Wolf Interdiction Trust Fund, a groundbreaking program designed to provide assistance to reduce the impacts of wolf/livestock interactions while increasing tolerance for Mexican wolf recovery efforts in the Southwest. The fund will be administered through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization well-experienced in managing financial contributions for natural resources conservation programs.

“I am confident the Interdiction Program will not only advance wolf conservation by addressing the economic impacts of our Mexican wolf reintroduction efforts; it will also improve and conserve Arizona’s and New Mexico’s unique and important landscape and land use practices,” said Benjamin N. Tuggle, PhD, director of the Service’s Southwest Region. “The program will be managed by local stakeholders who are interested in working with us to ensure fair and just compensation for livestock losses.” According to Tuggle, funds will be available to both compensate for livestock depredations by wolves, and for livestock operators to try new grazing management techniques aimed at reducing future wolf/livestock interactions.

“I have long been a strong and consistent advocate of Mexican wolf recovery in New Mexico, and have supported the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Mexican wolf reintroduction efforts,” said New Mexico’s Governor Bill Richardson. “Establishment of this Interdiction Program will significantly advance efforts for Mexican wolf recovery in the Southwest.”

Some stakeholders are faced with a number of challenges associated with Mexican wolf recovery, such as compensation for livestock losses. “Ranchers have a legitimate reason to be concerned about wolves on their land because wolves can cost them money,” says Jeff Trandahl, Executive Director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. “We think this agreement will help address those concerns, ultimately benefiting both rancher and wolf.”

At the local level, Interdiction Program guidelines would be established by a Stakeholder Council of participating ranchers, as well as sportsmen, designated environmental interest groups and local community members, with oversight by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Stakeholder Council will operate on a consensus model with coordination and technical support from federal, Tribal and state cooperators in the Mexican wolf recovery effort. Their functions will include:

- Establish guidelines for fulfilling compensation requests and managing payment of depredation compensation.
- Facilitate payment and funds disbursement for compensation, interdiction, and incentive programs.

- When appropriate, provide up-front payments for potential livestock losses caused directly by Mexican wolves or by the presence of wolves on private lands.

In addition to providing funds for livestock losses due to wolf depredations, the Interdiction Program will support proactive on-the-ground practices (such as wolf hazing, additional range riders, and pasture rotations) that reduce the potential for depredations, thus simultaneously supporting landscape conservation and improved land use practices in the Southwest.

A primary role of the Stakeholder Council will be to recommend how best to distribute funds between compensation, interdiction and incentives in order to maximize the effectiveness of the program in reducing impacts of wolf conservation on landowners.

The intent is that the fund will be self-sustaining. The principal will primarily be used for investment and to leverage additional funds through voluntary donations. All Interdiction Program activities will be paid for by donations and interest on the principal. Potential donor sources include, but are not limited to:

- Legislated Appropriations
- Private Donors
- Environmental Organizations
- Livestock Associations
- Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Government Agencies
- Hunting Groups

The Governor of New Mexico, members of the New Mexico and Arizona Congressional delegations, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, and the New Mexico and Arizona State Game and Fish agencies support establishing the Mexican wolf interdiction program.

To view the agreement go to our web site: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/index.html>.

Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private funds. NFWF works with individuals, foundations, government agencies, nonprofits, and corporations to identify and fund the nation's most intractable conservation challenges. For more information visit their web site at <http://www.nfwf.org>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.