***Proactive Management Activities***

The IFT, working with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), used proactive management to assist in reducing wolf-livestock conflicts in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area. The Reintroduction Project and NGOs spent approximately $128,375 on proactive management activities affecting an estimated 8 grazing allotments in Arizona and 11 in New Mexico. The IFT, agency contract employees, and NGO contract employees spent approximately 12,640 hours implementing proactive management activities during 2016.

In addition, the Mexican Wolf/Livestock Council distributed $83,300 in 2016 to 32 applicants in Arizona (12) and New Mexico (20) to partially offset increased management costs (conflict avoidance) and other uncompensated cost (e.g., undetected kills, reduction of livestock weight gain/reproductive rates) to livestock producers in areas occupied by wolves during 2015 for the payment for wolf presence program.

The agencies and NGOs purchased hay and supplements during the calving season for two ranchers in Arizona and New Mexico to help prevent depredation of livestock. Project personnel met with U.S. Forest Service District Rangers, biologists and range staff to discuss livestock management options during the wolf denning season. The IFT coordinated with the Alpine, Clifton, Springerville, Quemado, Wilderness, and Reserve Ranger Districts and stakeholders in Arizona and New Mexico to address potential conflicts between livestock and wolves. In several of these cases, livestock were scheduled to graze in or near pastures where wolves were denning. In pursuing efforts to reduce interactions between livestock and denning wolves, the Districts and ranchers changed pasture rotations and moved livestock into alternate pastures during the denning season, where possible. The suggested livestock movements were voluntary for the ranchers.

During 2016, the Reintroduction Project and NGOs contracted 16 range riders (7 in Arizona, and 9 in New Mexico) to assist 14 stakeholders (5 in Arizona, 9 in New Mexico) in monitoring wolves in proximity to cattle. Range riders monitored approximately 19 allotments within 14 wolf pack home ranges, one single wolf and one uncollared/failed collar group of wolves. Range riders provided additional oversight of livestock and hazing of wolves when they were among or in close proximity to livestock. Twelve confirmed depredation incidents and one probable depredation occurred on monitored allotments while ranger riders were under contract. However, 12 out of 13 of these incidents where associated with uncollared or failed collared wolves. Range riders and project personal have difficulty effectively preventing depredations from uncollared wolves because hazing and moving cattle are ineffective if wolf locations are unknown.

The IFT issued radio telemetry equipment to stakeholders (10 in Arizona, 13 in New Mexico) in areas where wolf-livestock conflicts were prevalent. Most of these equipment loans were in association with range riders. The IFT trained stakeholders to use the telemetry equipment to monitor wolves in the vicinity of cattle or residences, and instructed them on non-injurious hazing techniques.

Diversionary food caches are utilized to reduce potential conflicts between wolves and

livestock, primarily in areas where depredations have occurred in the past. Diversionary food caches were established for seven packs during 2016. In New Mexico, diversionary food caches were established to reduce depredations within the territories of Iron Creek, Luna, Prieto, and San Mateo packs. In Arizona diversionary food caches were established within the territories of Bluestem, Diamond/Poll Knoll pair, and Hoodoo packs. In addition, the supplemental food caches established for Elk Horn, Panther Creek and Sheepherder's Baseball Park, in association with cross-fostering events in these packs, served the additional purpose of preventing depredations in the area.