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Mexican Wolf Draft Revised Recovery Plan Released for Public Comment

Series of public meetings will provide additional opportunities for public review

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released a draft revision to the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan. The plan guides Mexican wolf recovery efforts by the bureau and its partners, with the ultimate goal of removing this wolf subspecies from Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections and returning management to the appropriate states and tribes. The Service is now seeking public input and peer review on the draft revised plan through a public comment period and series of public meetings. The comment period will remain open through August 29, 2017.

The recovery strategy outlined in the plan is to establish two Mexican wolf populations distributed in core areas within the subspecies' historical range in the United States and Mexico. This strategy addresses the threats to the species, including the extinction risk associated with small population size and the loss of genetic diversity. The draft plan provides estimates of the time and resources required to carry out this strategy and the associated measures needed to achieve the plan's goal.

At the time of recovery, the Service expects Mexican wolf populations to be stable or increasing in abundance, well-distributed geographically within their historical range, and genetically diverse.

In the United States, the recovery strategy will focus on the area south of I-40 in Arizona and New Mexico in the area designated as the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area. In Mexico, federal agencies are focusing on the Sierra Madre Occidental Mountains in Sonora, Durango, and Chihuahua.

The current Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan dates back to 1982. In April 2016, the Service signed a Settlement Agreement with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and Defenders of Wildlife to complete a final revised Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan by the end of November 2017.

To ensure that we are able to address public comments and meet the agreed-upon completion date, we will not be extending the comment period beyond the designated time.

To review and comment on the draft revised recovery plan and related documents, visit www.regulations.gov and enter the docket number FWS–R2–ES–2017–0036 in the search bar. Click the “Comment Now” button to submit your comments.

Alternatively you may request documents by mail by writing to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, 2105 Osuna Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113; or by calling: (505) 346–2525. Comments may be mailed or hand delivered to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R4–ES–2017–0036, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803.

The Service will also hold four public meetings to provide an opportunity for citizens to learn about the revised Mexican wolf recovery plan and to provide written comments (oral comments will not be recorded).

The dates and times of these information meetings are as follows:

1. July 18, 2017 (6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.): *Flagstaff*: Northern Arizona University, Prochnow Auditorium, South Knowles Drive, Flagstaff, AZ 86001.
2. July 19, 2017 (6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.): *Pinetop*: Hon-Dah Resort, Casino Banquet Hall, 777 AZ–260, Pinetop, AZ 85935.
3. July 20, 2017 (6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.): *Truth or Consequences*: Ralph Edwards Auditorium, Civic Center, 400 West Fourth, Truth or Consequences, NM 87901.
4. July 22, 2017 (2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.): *Albuquerque*: Crowne Plaza Albuquerque, 1901 University Boulevard NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

The Mexican wolf recovery program is a partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, White Mountain Apache Tribe, USDA Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services, and several participating counties. The Interagency Field Team (IFT) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Mexican wolf population and includes field personnel from several of the partner agencies.

For more information on the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/> or www.azgfd.gov/wolf

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