



# News Release

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

For Release: October 31, 2007

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## **Suggestions for Modifying Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Program Sought** *Public Meetings Scheduled to Solicit Ideas*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has begun a scoping process to gather input on potential modifications to its rule that established a reintroduction program for the Mexican gray wolf. The Service established a nonessential, experimental population of the Mexican gray wolf in 1998, and has introduced more than 90 wolves into Arizona and New Mexico.

“We have been reintroducing wolves into the wild for nine years now and we’ve learned a thing or two,” said Brian Millsap of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “We want to hear from everyone else on what they have learned and what their recommendations are for recovering the Mexican wolf. We’ve set the meetings up to facilitate conversations. The website mirrors the meetings as much as possible so those who can’t be with us can join in on the website at [www.mexicanwolfeis.org](http://www.mexicanwolfeis.org).”

The scoping process will include 12 open-house style meetings. Participants may attend any time during the meeting at their convenience. The meetings will include:

- Informational materials about the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction program
- A continuous overview presentation for participants to watch at their convenience
- One-on-one opportunities to provide information to Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC) representatives and agencies’ staff, and ask them questions about the rule change and EIS process. Questions about the process will be answered, but issues will not be debated.
- Comment cards for participants to submit written comments during the meeting, or during the comment period which ends December 31, 2007

The Monday through Friday sessions will run from 5 to 9 p.m. and Saturday meetings will take place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Participants are welcome any time during those time periods.

Meetings will be held in the following locations. Directions are located at [www.mexicanwolfeis.org](http://www.mexicanwolfeis.org).

- Monday, Nov. 26: Flagstaff, Ariz., Grand Ballroom, Radisson Woodlands Hotel-Flagstaff, 1175 W Route 66, Flagstaff, Ariz. 86001
- Tuesday, Nov. 27: Hon-Dah, Ariz., Multipurpose Room, McNary School, 108 N. Pollack Ave., McNary, Ariz. 85930

- Wednesday, Nov. 28: Alpine, Ariz., Alpine Community Center, Alpine Chamber of Commerce, #12 CR 2052, Alpine, Ariz. 85920
- Thursday, Nov. 29: Grants, N.M., Ballroom, Best Western, 1501 East Santa Fe Ave. Grants, N.M. 87020
- Friday, Nov. 30: Albuquerque, N.M., Special Events Building, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, 2401 12th St. NW, Albuquerque, N.M. 87104
- Saturday, Dec. 1: Socorro, N.M., Macey Conference Center Lobby/Foyer, New Mexico Tech, 801 Leroy Pl, Socorro, N.M. 87801
- Monday, Dec. 3: Alamogordo, N.M., Tays Special Events Center, New Mexico State University, 2400 N Scenic Dr., Alamogordo, N.M. 88310
- Tuesday, Dec. 4: Las Cruces, N.M., Tortugas Ballroom, Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Rd., Las Cruces, N.M. 88011
- Wednesday, Dec. 5: Glenwood, N.M., Glenwood Community Center, Mengas Ln., Glenwood, N.M. 88039
- Thursday, Dec. 6: Safford, Ariz., Open Dining Room at the Activities Center, Eastern Arizona College, 1014 N College Ave., Thatcher, Ariz. 85552
- Friday, Dec. 7: Tucson, Ariz. Student Union Memorial Center (Tucson and Catalina Rooms), University of Arizona, 1303 E. University Blvd, Tucson, Ariz. 85721
- Saturday, Dec. 8: Phoenix, Ariz., Garnet, Emerald, and Sapphire Rms., Glendale Civic Center, 5750 West Glenn Dr., Glendale, Ariz. 85301

Those requiring assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act must contact Charna Lefton, 505-248-6911 or by electronic mail to [Charna\\_Lefton@fws.gov](mailto:Charna_Lefton@fws.gov) at least three days prior to the meeting they plan to attend. Persons who use a telecommunications service for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at (800) 877-8339, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Service published a Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Socio-Economic Assessment for the Proposed Amendment of the Rule Establishing a Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf in Arizona and New Mexico on August 7 in the *Federal Register*. All comments received from then until the end of year will be used to prepare a draft proposed rule, a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a Socio-Economic Assessment. Once drafted, those documents will go through a public review process. A second set of public meetings will then be held in a meeting format where members of the public may stand and deliver their opinions and views.

“Modifying a federal rule starts with finding out what the community thinks,” said Millsap. “This part of the process is called ‘scoping.’ From here we consolidate the comments and advice and come up with different alternatives which will be publicly vetted.”

Through this notice and the public scoping meetings, comments or suggestions are sought from the public, concerned government agencies, tribes, the scientific community, industry, ranchers, landowners and any other interested parties concerning pertinent issues that should be addressed and alternatives that should be analyzed. The Service will take into consideration all comments and any additional information received while developing a draft Environmental Impact Statement. All written comments, including names and addresses, become part of the supporting record and will be made public.

The notice can be found on the web at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/>. Submit written comments directly to the Service’s New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office on or

before Dec. 31, 2007 or at any of the 12 scoping meetings listed above. Send comments to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attn: Wolf Program, New Mexico Ecological Service Field Office, 2105 Osuna NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87113. Written comments may be faxed to (505) 346-2542 or e-mailed to R2FWE\_AL@fws.gov. Guidance on sending comments is in the notice.

The information provided at the scoping meetings, as well as an opportunity to provide written comments, will be available on the Mexican Wolf EIS website, [www.mexicanwolfeis.org](http://www.mexicanwolfeis.org).

Questions regarding the scoping process or development of a proposed rule amending the 1998 10(j) Final Rule should be directed to John Slown at (505) 761-4782.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 97-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 fish, wildlife management offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>