

Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project

Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project 5-Year Review

*Prepared by the
Mexican Wolf Blue Range
Adaptive Management Oversight
Committee and Interagency
Field Team*



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PREFACE

Mexican wolf reintroduction has been prominent in the American public's eye since long before January 28, 1998, when the first captive-reared wolves were placed in acclimation pens in the Blue Range of east-central Arizona and west-central New Mexico for eventual release to the wild. Nor did controversy end with the first release.

The mass media have been rich with Mexican wolf-related stories for more than 20 years, and references to ongoing controversy run rampant through them. Entire books, and parts of others, have been devoted to the subject; among the more prominent examples are: Brown (1983), Burbank (1990), Grooms (1993), Holaday (2003), Nie (2003), and Robinson (2005). In stark contrast, the definitive book on wolf ecology, L.D Mech's (1970) "The wolf: the ecology, and behavior of an endangered species," includes just a few lines about the Mexican wolf, reflecting a personal communication from B.R. Villa:

In Mexico, the wolf is now restricted to three distinct areas....but the population is still declining and is in danger of extinction (Villa 1968)."

Mech's book makes even less mention of the Mexican wolf's occurrence in the United States, from which it had long since been eradicated as a viable breeding species. But, the final tale is yet to be told, because the journey continues today. Reintroduction is underway, and perhaps recovery might yet be achieved.

Whether reintroduction and recovery should be allowed, and if so where and how, were hotly debated through the 1990s, when reintroduction was formally proposed. They still are. Regardless, the proposal process ended with an affirmative decision pursuant to a Final Environmental Impact Statement (hereafter FEIS; USFWS 1996); a Record of Decision (hereafter ROD; USFWS 1997) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; and finally a nonessential experimental population rule (hereafter Final Rule; USFWS 1998) approved on January 12, 1998, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended.

In keeping with the stated experimental nature of the reintroduction effort, and respectful of the doubts expressed by many, the Final Rule required full evaluations after 3 and 5 years to recommend continuation, modification, or termination of the Reintroduction Project. The 3-Year Review, conducted in 2001, concluded that reintroduction should continue, albeit with important modifications (Paquet et al. 2001; Kelly et al. 2001). However, as we discuss elsewhere in this report (e.g. AMOC Responses to Public Comment Component), for many reasons the 3-Year Review recommendations were not implemented, at least not to the extent that interested parties and stakeholders expected or desired. Regardless of cause, the apparent lack of closure was a significant agency and public concern when the time came for the next review.

5-Year Review

By agreement among the primary cooperating agencies, responsibility for the Reintroduction Project's 5-Year Review fell to the Mexican Wolf Blue Range Adaptive Management Oversight

Committee (AMOC) that oversees the Project on behalf of six Lead Agencies and various formal and informal Cooperator agencies. AMOC Lead Agencies include the following: Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), USDA-Forest Service (USFS), USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services (WS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (hereafter USFWS or Service), and White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT). Formal Cooperator agencies active in the review include the following: Greenlee County (AZ) and the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA). The Project's Interagency Field Team (IFT) also contributed significantly to the review, especially the technical aspects.

AMOC and the IFT conducted the 5-Year Review to comply with the Final Rule, but above and beyond that the intent was to identify and implement improvements in the Project. The Review consists of several primary components: Administrative, Technical, Socioeconomic, and Recommendations. Each is detailed in this report.

Regardless of implementation issues, the 3-Year Review's technical component (i.e. Paquet et al. 2001) and stakeholder component (Kelly et al. 2001) were excellent departure points for the 5-Year Review. Both were rich with information. Unfortunately, conflicts within and among their recommendations were never resolved, so this added complexity to the 5-Year Review.

The Draft Administrative and Technical Components of the 5-Year Review primarily addressed the period of January 1998 through December 31, 2003 (available information for 2004-2005 was also incorporated as it became available, and if was useful to include it. The Administrative and Technical Components were released for public comment in December 2004. Contract glitches with the Socioeconomic Component caused its release to be delayed until April 26, 2005.

The public comment period for the 5-Year Review extended from January 2005 through July 31, 2005. More than 10,000 written comments were received on the Draft Review and related documents, including Standard Operating Procedures and a Proposed Moratorium for the Reintroduction Project. Additional comments were heard at 14 public meetings from January through June 2004. All comments received, whether they were written or verbal, were carefully considered in completing the final report.

AMOC conducted the 5-Year Review on behalf of all agencies cooperating in the Reintroduction Project, but responsibility for its rigor and contents resides solely with AMOC. None of the cooperating agencies constrained the review; in fact, all of them were highly supportive of an objective, comprehensive analysis.

The 5-Year Review serves several primary purposes with regard to the Final Rule and previous reviews of the Reintroduction Project, including evaluating:

1. Questions identified in the 1998 Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (Parsons 1998).
2. Recommendations and suggested modifications from the 3-Year Review technical component (Paquet et al. 2001) and stakeholder component (Kelly et al. 2001).

3. Recommendations from the Arizona-New Mexico independent review of the 3-Year Review that was directed by Congress (AGFD and NMDGF 2002).
4. "Commission Directives" to the State Wildlife Agencies of AZ and NM (Attachment 1).
5. All aspects of the Reintroduction Project from 1998 through 2003.
6. All public comment received during AMWG meetings and written comment periods from January through July 2005.

Review and adaptive management of the Reintroduction Project will not stop with this review. Project cooperators will continue to seek internal and public input regarding Mexican wolf reintroduction to help achieve recovery goals and objectives. The public input sought through this 5-Year Review analysis is an important part of that process.

Wrestling with implementation issues will perhaps be even more important. Thus, we look forward to high levels of engagement in public meetings throughout the Blue Range area in 2006 et seq., as we strive to move forward with this Reintroduction Project, and contribute toward recovery and eventual delisting of the Mexican wolf.

Adaptive Management Oversight Committee
December 31, 2005

**Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project 5-Year Review:
Administrative Component**

by

Adaptive Management Oversight Committee

Arizona Game and Fish Department
New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
U.S.D.A. – APHIS, Wildlife Services
U.S.D.A. Forest Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
White Mountain Apache Tribe

December 31, 2005

ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND TERMS

The following abbreviations, acronyms, and terms have been used to help make this document readable. We regret any inconvenience this creates for readers who do not like this approach.

AGFD	Arizona Game and Fish Department
AMOC	Adaptive Management Oversight Committee
AMWG	Adaptive Management Working Group
APA	Administrative Procedures Act of 1946
AC	Administrative Component
ARC	AMOC Recommendations Component
ARPCC	AMOC Responses to Public Comment Component
AUM	Animal Unit Month
AZ	Arizona
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BRWRA	Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area
CBD	Center for Biological Diversity
CBSG	Conservation Breeding Specialist Group
C/R	Comment/Response entries (611 total)
CV	Current Value
CWD	Chronic Wasting Disease
CY	Calendar Year
DEA	Draft Economic Analysis
Defenders	Defenders of Wildlife
DPS	Distinct Population Segment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentive Program
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAIR	Fort Apache Indian Reservation
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement of 1996 (for proposed reintroduction of Mexican wolves)
Final Rule	Final “nonessential experimental population” or “10(j)” rule of 1998 (for Mexican wolf reintroduction in Arizona and New Mexico)
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease (hoof and mouth disease)
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act of 1966
FR	Federal Register
FTE	Full Time Employee (or Full Time Equivalent)
FY	Fiscal Year
GMU	Game Management Unit
IFT	Interagency Field Team (for the Reintroduction Project; see below)
IMAG	Interagency Management Advisory Group (for the Mexican wolf)
IMPLAN	USFS IMPLAN Model
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWEPA	Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NM	New Mexico
NMDA	New Mexico Department of Agriculture
NMDGF	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
PRIA	Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978
PVA	Population Viability Analysis
ROD	Record of Decision of 1997 for the 1996 FEIS (see above)
SCAR	San Carlos Apache Reservation
SCAT	San Carlos Apache Tribe
SEC	Socioeconomic Component of 5-Year Review
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure for the Reintroduction Project
SSP	Species Survival Plan
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
SWDPS	Southwestern (Gray Wolf) Distinct Population Segment (emphasis on <i>Canis lupus baileyi</i> , the Mexican wolf)
TC	Technical Component of 5-Year Review
TESF	Turner Endangered Species Fund
US or USA	United States of America
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDA-APHIS	USDA-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USFS	USDA Forest Service
WMAT	White Mountain Apache Tribe
WS	USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services
WSMR	White Sands Missile Range
WTP	Willingness-to-Pay
YNP	Yellowstone National Park (and environs)

Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project

5-Year Review: Administrative Component

by

Adaptive Management Oversight Committee

INTRODUCTION

The 5-Year Review Administrative Component evaluates the following: (a) Administrative questions identified in the 1998 Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (Parsons 1998); (b) Organizational recommendations from the 3-Year Review technical component (Paquet et al. 2001) and stakeholder component (Kelly et al. 2001); (c) Recommendations from the AZ-NM independent review of the 3-Year Review that was directed by Congress (AGFD and NMDGF 2002); and (d) “Commission Directives” to the State Wildlife Agencies of AZ and NM following discussion of the States’ independent review (see Attachment 1).

Each question, comment, or recommendation below is accompanied by a Status statement indicating that the task it represents is: (a) Completed; (b) Not completed but being implemented and necessary to complete (followed by an assessment of the task and an estimated completion date), or Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed, or Not completed; no action but necessary to complete; or (c) Not considered necessary to complete or to implement (followed by an assessment of why completion/implementation is not necessary). Each entry or item concludes with a 5-Year Review “Finding.”

5-YEAR REVIEW ISSUES, ASSESSMENTS, AND FINDINGS

A. Administrative questions identified in the Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (Parsons 1998).

A-1. Is effective cooperation occurring with other agencies and the public?

Status: Not completed but being implemented and necessary to complete.

Assessment: Kelly et al. (2001) and AGFD and NMDGF (2002) noted that neither agencies nor the public were satisfied with the level of internal or external cooperation in the Reintroduction Project. In September 2002, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the New Mexico Game Commission directed their respective wildlife agencies to include improved interagency and public cooperation as a focal point of efforts to restructure and improve the Reintroduction Project. After a year of agency and public discussion, AMOC was created in October 2003 to help achieve that objective.

As noted elsewhere in this document (see the AMOC Responses to Public Comment Component), AMOC believes interagency cooperation has vastly improved since 2001 (although

NM and some AZ counties still do not participate) and cooperation with permittees has also improved (but again there is much room for further improvement).

A draft 2005 statewide public survey in AZ and NM (Responsive Management in prep.; 1514 respondents, sampling error $\pm 2.5\%$) indicated a majority of respondents (67%) had heard about Mexican wolf reintroduction. Of the respondents who had heard about it, 73% were somewhat familiar with it. Among all respondents, 62% favored reintroduction and 13% opposed it. Most respondents (up to 83%) were not sufficiently informed about reintroduction to have an opinion on levels of cooperation. Although most did not know how effective or ineffective cooperation is within the Project or between the Project and the public, respondents were more likely to respond they were effective than ineffective, except cooperation with the public. In the latter area, 19% said it is very or somewhat ineffective and 20% said it is very or somewhat effective.

We also note that 25% of respondents in the above-referenced survey said the responsibilities of the cooperating agencies, programs, and counties are now well, or at least adequately, defined, and 68% of those 25% respondents believe those responsibilities are serving the Project's needs.

An area of special concern to the public, as evidenced in comment at AMWG meetings as well as in written comment on the 5-Year Review, is the relatively large number of apparently unlawful wolf mortalities since 1998. From 1998 through 2005, 25 wild Mexican wolves succumbed to gunshots; two of the incidents were resolved (one through a finding of self defense and the other through successful criminal prosecution, but the other 23 investigations remain open. Discussion of specific aspects of active investigations is precluded, but AMOC has itself expressed concern about the need to ensure that all available enforcement resources within the cooperating agencies are used effectively and efficiently in preventing as well as addressing unlawful take of Mexican wolves.

Finding: Clearly, much work remains to be done in regard to improving cooperation with the public (including defining what such "cooperation" entails). Also, existing levels of interagency cooperation need to be maintained and enhanced (e.g. general cooperation as well as law enforcement issues), and additional effort needs to be put into increasing cooperation with counties other than Greenlee County AZ, which is a full and constructive participant in every aspect of the Project. Toward that end:

1. AMOC will maintain and improve administrative and adaptive management processes for the Reintroduction Project to enhance meaningful opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders and interested parties. AMOC efforts will include meeting with the IFT twice each year at the Alpine field office, and offering to meet once each year with the Commission or Board of Supervisors for each County within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA).
2. AMOC will direct Reintroduction Project-related outreach efforts in 2006 through the IFT Annual Work Plan to identify and reach specific target audiences, with emphasis on local communities and cooperating agencies within the BRWRA (>75% of outreach activity) and outside the BRWRA (<25% of outreach activity).

3. AMOC will identify no later than June 30, 2006, in a confidential report to USFWS, any law enforcement actions that might help prevent unlawful take of Mexican wolves or help achieve closure on existing active investigations.

A-2. Are combined agency funds and staff adequate to carry out needed management, monitoring, and research?

Status: Not completed but being implemented and necessary to complete.

Assessment: The 3-Year Review identified a lack of resources essential to carrying out needed management, monitoring, and research. For example: management activities were constrained by insufficient staff to carry them out; annual reports, work plans, incident analyses, and operating procedures were not completed due to higher priorities for existing staff; local residents asserted they could not reach an IFT member when assistance was needed; public outreach languished as staff tried to manage the increasing number of released and free-ranging wolves; vehicles were in short supply, and most that existed were high-mileage disposal trucks close to or beyond their useful lifespan when assigned to the Project; some IFT members worked out of their homes due to lack of office space; the trailer housing the Alpine Field Office was questionable in terms of structural stability; monitoring was limited by availability of flights, which reflected limited air support and lack of funds to ensure that flight time could be increased to more fully meet Project needs; and basic questions about wolf movements and behavior, impacts on native and domestic prey, wolf relationships to total predator load, and all aspects of the human dimensions (sociocultural and economic issues), etc. remained unanswered due to lack of funding.

This does not mean, however, that the Project's budget was inconsequential during this period. In fact, the cooperating agencies estimate (Table 1) that from FY1998 through FY 2004 they spent a combined \$7,543,598 on wolf-related activities, including expenses associated with captive breeding and the over-arching rangewide recovery program, as well as the AZ-NM Reintroduction Project.

When the two State Wildlife Agencies conducted an independent review of the 3-Year Review (see AGFD and NMDGF 2002), the lack of essential resources was still obvious. Thus, both State Wildlife Commissions endorsed a recommendation that USFWS "Restructure the Interagency Field Team response protocols, and enhance staff capacity to ensure immediate response capability to, and resolution of, urgent operational issues, such as depredation incidents."

However, the situation did not improve much over the next two years, as the agencies began to restructure the Project. In fact, by late 2003 the pressures of cutbacks in Federal agency budgets began forcing States to either pick up the increasing funding shortfall or allow further decay in the IFT's ability to carry out its responsibilities. The partners had not begun trying to build an overall IFT budget to jointly expand the pool of available resources by December 31, 2003, the end of the period on which the 5-Year Review is primarily focused. Consequently, the available

resources were not always shared effectively, and Project accomplishments and public and agency acceptance and satisfaction were appreciably hampered.

Staff shortfalls in the Project have also been exacerbated by turnover throughout the Project. Given that the agency budgets for this Project are one-year commitments at best, and often are not fully resolved until well into the Fiscal Year, Project personnel have had an understandable degree of uncertainty as to their employment status. This has induced several IFT employees to leave the Project for more stable positions elsewhere, often with wolf management projects in other states or organizations. Disparities in State and Federal salaries for Field Team members have also contributed to dissatisfaction, and eventual vacancies. Government hiring processes tend to extend vacancy periods, imposing even greater workloads on remaining employees who are already stretched to or beyond their limits.

The situation improved in 2004, as AMOC began to work more effectively as a collaborative effort under the October 2003 Project MOU. Initially that year, progress was again impeded by delayed Congressional approval of the Federal budget (i.e. USFWS did not receive its FY2004 allocation until June 2004; FY2004 began in October 2003), and further cutbacks (excluding salaries) in USFWS wolf budgets. However, in February 2004, under the new MOU, the Lead Agencies began building a joint Annual Work Plan and an overall budget for the year in progress. Unfortunately, available funds were not sufficient to cover full-time equivalent (FTE) needs (a total of 14.25 personnel) identified in the Project's (first joint) Annual Work Plan.

Considerable progress was made in 2004 and 2005 as cooperating agencies brought more resources to bear, despite continued delays and cutbacks at the Congressional level. However, disparities in individual agency contributions continued to result in disparities in IFT resources available to address on-the-ground management issues in AZ vs. NM.

The disparities in FTEs and the budget shortfalls had not been fully resolved as this 5-Year Review was completed. Thus, although the IFT and the cooperating agencies are increasingly working as a team, allocating IFT staff resources to a pressing issue of the day still means that other essential priorities, especially long-term issues and public expectations, are deferred beyond the prescribed response deadline or completion date. The same applies to the agency employees providing administrative oversight for the Project, and conducting the adaptive management program and contributing to this review. Other than most of the USFWS employees directly involved, and all the IFT employees except WS personnel, none of the agency staff are assigned only to the Project. Most have at best a small percentage of their work week available to address Project issues, which continues to cause delays in completing Project-related assignments and shortfalls in carrying out needed management, monitoring, and research.

In addition to staffing funding issues, lack of a governmentally funded and administered program to address livestock depredation losses remains a huge impediment to local acceptance of wild Mexican wolves. Such a program would not eliminate opposition, but it would separate those who are adamantly opposed regardless from those who are opposed at least in part because they bear brunt of the real (i.e. documented) and perceived (i.e. undocumented or speculative) economic impacts of reintroduction.

Insufficient resources have been significant problems to date in this Project, but the issue is even more problematic for the future. The reintroduced population is at a point at which exponential population growth might reasonably be expected. As the number of free-ranging wolves increases, and recovery and delisting are approached, management issues will increase proportionately. If those needs go unmet, public dissatisfaction, especially among local residents who are most affected by the Project, will inevitably sky rocket.

Finding: Significant infusion of funding is essential to sustaining progress toward Project objectives, thus to contributing toward wolf recovery. Toward that end:

1. AMOC will develop, no later than June 30, 2006, a report describing a proposed Federally, State, and/or Tribally-funded incentives program to address known and potential economic impacts of wolf nuisance and livestock depredation behavior on private, public, and Tribal Trust lands. AMOC may convene, if necessary, a technical advisory group of individuals with appropriate expertise to assist with this task. The conservation incentives discussion will consider all relevant livestock depredation issues, including: livestock depredation prevention; livestock depredation response; carcass discovery, monitoring, removal, burial, and/or destruction; and possible adjustment of the Federal grazing (AUM) fee (and any Tribal grazing subsidies) within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) to provide de facto compensation for documented and likely undocumented losses of livestock. The AMOC report shall also include a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness and procedural efficiency of the Defenders of Wildlife wolf depredation compensation fund, and provide recommendations for appropriate improvements.
2. AMOC will advocate creating an IFT position in the Alpine field office to work with cooperators and stakeholders throughout Arizona and New Mexico on proactive measures by which to avoid or minimize wolf nuisance and livestock depredation problems. Note: AMOC as a body will not advocate regulatory changes to address carcass removal or disposal issues.
3. AMOC will collaborate with an appropriate entity to complete an IFT staffing needs assessment no later than June 30, 2007, based on (a) Reintroduction Project experience to date and (b) the Arizona-New Mexico Mexican Wolf Nonessential Experimental Population Rule recommended to USFWS.
4. AMOC will advocate creating sufficient IFT positions in each Lead Agency as appropriate to implement the staffing needs assessment conducted pursuant to Recommendation (30), above. AMOC will also recommend that at least one IFT member from each Lead Agency be stationed in the Alpine field office, to facilitate and enhance interagency communication and cooperation.
5. Concomitant with any recommended MWEPA Rule changes, AMOC recommends that State and Tribal Lead Agencies and non-Federal Cooperators make a contingent-

obligation request for annual Congressional line item allocations sufficient to cover all aspects of AMOC and AMWG participation in NEPA processes and ESA-related rulemaking processes required by such activities, through to the Record of Decision.

6. AMOC recommends that no later than April 30, 2006, AMOC State and Tribal Lead Agencies and non-Federal Cooperators complete and deliver to Congress a funding request that is sufficient to fully staff and equip the Reintroduction Project as of October 1, 2006, at levels commensurate with all on-the-ground responsibilities in all areas of responsibility, including wolf management (including control), enforcement, outreach (including establishing a Mexican wolf education center in Hon-Dah Arizona), citizen participation in adaptive management, Reintroduction Project-related research, and landowner incentives.

- B. Evaluation of the organizational recommendations from the 3-Year Review Paquet Report (Paquet et al. 2001) and Stakeholders Workshop (Kelly et al. 2001).

As noted elsewhere in this report (e.g. AMOC Responses to Public Comment Component), recommendations from the 3-Year Review were not implemented to the extent that many stakeholders desired or expected. This was surprising to some people, because at least some of the recommendations seemed to be potentially valuable tools that, if implemented, might help further Mexican wolf recovery through successful reintroduction. What was not made clear to the public is that although USFWS regularly seeks peer and public review of its work and gives the results serious consideration, implementation is typically discretionary because recommendations must inevitably be balanced by logistical and other considerations, such as workload, staff availability, budget constraints, rulemaking requirements, direct input from key cooperators and local stakeholders, and the need to redefine or strengthen partnerships to support long-term conservation efforts. Moreover, in this case follow-up discussion with the reintroduction effort's primary cooperators was not carried out, thus conflicts among recommendations in the two review components were not resolved. Failure to resolve such conflicts made implementation all the more unlikely, especially for the much more plentiful and sometimes more complex recommendations in the Stakeholder Workshop (Kelly et al. 2001). Even in the 5-Year Review, we were unable to directly address those recommendations (hence they are omitted below) because of the process failures within the 3-Year Review that left Stakeholder consensus on substance, priorities, and completion timeframes unresolved.

3-Year Review Stakeholder Workshop Problem Statements

Participants in the August 2001 Stakeholder Workshop (see Kelly et al. 2001) were divided into six Working Groups, to identify Problem Statements (issues), goals, and actions, and set within-group priorities. The intent was to conclude the Workshop with cross-group vetting and development of overall priorities. However, the Workshop ran so long that most Working Groups did not complete their own work, let alone review the work of other Working Groups. Thus, the Problem Statements provide insight into

discussions within the Stakeholder Workshop, especially regarding the Paquet Report (Paquet et al. 2001) technical component of the 3-Year Review, but they do not represent stakeholder consensus.

Even within the above-described limitations, the Workshop Problem Statements offer useful contrast to the Paquet Report, for two reasons in particular. First, technical shortcomings (e.g. Final Rule issues, science-based concerns about wolf management) in the Reintroduction Project are reaffirmed again and again. The Technical Component of the 5-Year Review will address these issues, so they are not addressed further in the Administrative Component. Second, they resurrect social issues that were lost when the Paquet Report failed to address two of the 3-Year Review issues put forth in the Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (Parsons 1998): (1) Is effective cooperation occurring with other agencies and the public?; and (2) Are combined agency funds and staff adequate to carry out needed management, monitoring, and research? If these two questions had been addressed in the Paquet Report, they might have served well as reminders that feasibility issues must also be addressed when considering management solutions to biologically-based problems, and ultimately on a public lands landscape, feasibility has strong social and economic components.

The Workshop Problem Statements are included below, as excerpts from Kelly et al. (2001), for information purposes. As noted above, technical aspects of the statements are addressed within the Technical Component of this review. Organizational and social aspects of the statements were addressed above, in Section A, covering the two questions from the Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (Parsons 1998), thus they will not be discussed further. The Problem Statements follow, organized by Working Group:

The Wolf Management Working Group identified, in priority order, the following six Problem Statements: (1) Areas for release and establishment of wolves have not always been selected on the basis of biological suitability, cost efficiency, logistical feasibility, wolf management feasibility, and minimized potential for impacts on existing land uses; (2) current post-release wolf management guidelines do not adequately address all relevant issues; (3) effective wolf management is hampered by a lack of information and by questions and concerns about the accuracy of the information on which it is based; (4) no mechanism has been clearly defined by which to monitor, evaluate and modify the Mexican wolf reintroduction program; (5) program staff may lack adequate training to meet the needs of implementing Mexican wolf recovery; and (6) current pre-release management guidelines do not adequately address all relevant issues.

The Data Gathering Working Group crafted seven Problem Statements that were not prioritized. They are listed here in the same order they were listed in the group's report: (1) The Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan lacks current information and needs to be revised; (2) a Population Viability Analysis (PVA) has not been conducted for the wild Mexican Wolf population; (3) the effects of wolf populations on other wild predator and prey species and ecological process are not

understood in the southwestern United States; (4) causes of wolf-human and wolf-livestock conflicts are not sufficiently understood; (5) management actions such as capture and supplemental feeding may negatively effect wolves; (6) current boundaries hinder wolf recovery but may result in more human or wildlife wolf conflicts (7) there is a lack of historical data on wolves.

The Communication and Trust Working Group crafted ten Problem Statements, listed here in priority order: (1) Mechanisms used to communicate are inadequate for stakeholder's satisfaction; (2) information handling and acquisition are not sufficient for good decision making; (3) important decisions are, or appear to be, preordained resulting in stakeholder disenfranchisement; (4) there is a lack of consultation and respect for local expertise which results in missing information, bad decisions, and erosion of local trust and support; (5) there is a lack of specific goals and objectives on how to reach recovery; (6) there is lack of recognition and inclusion of other forms of knowledge in addition to science; (7) changing the rules in the middle of the game, such as direct releases of wolves into the Gila, is premature; (8) anti-government sentiment which has developed from other issues and agencies has contributed to distrust of Wolf Recovery Program; (9) at times, rulemaking does not follow legislation and when it does there is no accountability or consequences; and (10) there is little consistency, permanency, and continuity of agency actors resulting in disrupted trusting relationships and loss of local information. In addition, a plenary presentation by a member of this Working Group focused on the impact of the Mexican wolf recovery and reintroduction on the health of the local communities (see Appendix I of Kelly et al. 2001).

The Human Dimension Working Group crafted five Problem Statements, listed here in priority order: (1) The administrators of the Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Plan need to be accountable for their actions and the actions of the introduced wolves in order to obtain credibility with the public and other agencies; (2) lack of lines of communication, used in a timely manner, between program staff, agency partners and public needs to be improved; (3) there is a conflict between rural and urban values, perceptions and points of view that stresses the Mexican gray wolf program and local residents in many ways; (4) the Mexican Wolf Program will inherently be a political issue; (5) there is lack of access to the program administrators from the local public that results in decisions that do not fully consider local views.

The Economic Issues Working Group crafted three Problem Statements, but did not assign priorities to them. Thus, the three Problem Statements are listed here in the same order they were listed in the Working Group's report: (1) There are actual losses to the individual and local communities due to the introduction of the Mexican Wolf that are not being adequately addressed and will not be addressed until more permanent solutions are found; (2) the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program needs a better consideration of full costs, including an incentive program, control, accountability, and better use of budget, defining and

accepting the financial and legal liabilities of the USFWS and the State entities involved in the project; and (3) the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program may create potential and actual benefits and losses that have not been evaluated, quantified and considered for the proper balance of the program.

The Livestock/Animal Conflict Working Group crafted six Problem Statements, listed here in priority order: (1) Current management techniques have not been optimally effective in reducing livestock/animal conflicts; (2) Economic impacts of wolf recovery on livestock and animal conflicts are unknown; (3) there is insufficient communication between agencies, livestock producers, and the public; (4) effective husbandry practices to decrease livestock-wolf conflicts have not been fully implemented; (5) existing rules and regulations regarding livestock and animal conflicts do not adequately address concerns of private and public land users and government agencies; and (6) impacts of wolves on the ecosystem are not fully understood.

- B-1. Modify the Recovery Team by inviting an appropriate individual other than the Recovery Coordinator to serve as the team leader

Status: Completed.

Assessment: In August 2003, USFWS convened the Southwestern Gray Wolf Distinct Population Segment (SWDPS) Recovery Team (see below) and appointed Peter Siminski to serve as Team Leader. Mr. Siminski has a long-standing history with the Mexican wolf recovery program, dating back to 1983, shortly after five Mexican wolves had been captured in Mexico and transported to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum (ASDM) to establish a captive breeding program. Mr. Siminski, then an ASDM employee, was appointed as the official Mexican wolf studbook keeper and participated in recovery planning coordination of the captive management program.

In 1985, a consortium of holders of captive Mexican wolves (i.e. the Mexican Wolf Captive Management Committee) was established. Through that body, Mr. Siminski has been instrumental in expanding the captive breeding program from the first few initial facilities that held Mexican wolves to currently more than 45 facilities in the United States and Mexico. Mr. Siminski is also credited with establishing management of captive Mexican wolves under the Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan (SSP), a program of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association. He has served as Mexican Wolf SSP Coordinator since 1993. He also served as a member of the original Mexican Wolf Recovery Team since 1985, and of the second iteration of that Team in the 1990s. In 2003, Mr. Siminski was chosen as Team Leader for the newly convened SWDPS Recovery Team because of his vast knowledge of the program, his fair and unbiased approach toward recovery, and strong leadership abilities that would be needed to lead a diverse team with myriad viewpoints.

Finding: AMOC finds that no further action is required on this topic.

B-2. Instruct the modified Recovery Team to revise by June 2002 the 1982 Recovery Plan.

Status: Not completed but being implemented and necessary to complete.

Assessment: USFWS recognizes the importance of revising the 1982 Recovery Plan (USFWS 1982), given the plan (albeit intentionally) lacks recovery (downlisting or delisting) goals or strategies. When the plan was written, only a handful of Mexican wolves existed in captivity and recovery was virtually inconceivable unless the captive program was successful enough to produce enough wolves for reintroduction purposes. Therefore, the plan contained an overall primary objective to conserve and ensure the survival of *Canis lupus baileyi* by maintaining a captive breeding program and re-establish a viable, self-sustaining population of at least 100 Mexican wolves within their historic range. This was not intended to be a recovery objective for delisting purposes, but rather an interim goal given the uncertain progress of the captive propagation program at the time and recognition that a population of 100 wolves does not constitute recovery of the species.

A second Mexican Wolf Recovery Team was convened in the 1990s, in part to assist in preparing NEPA documents associated with possible Mexican wolf reintroduction in the American Southwest. The Team, assisted by a private contractor, prepared a draft revised Recovery Plan but the document was never completed, nor was it subjected to peer review or shared with the public.

Clearly, the 3-Year Review recommendation to revise the 1982 Recovery Plan was appropriate and valid. Revision was long overdue in 2001. However, the recommended completion date of June 2002 was unrealistic. Recovery planning is a lengthy process, especially with respect to recovering a species as complex and controversial as the wolf. A recovery plan requires a thorough evaluation of all relevant information, often necessitating much more time than the one year afforded by the 3-Year Review recommendation. Moreover, as occurred in this case, litigation sometimes has drastic effects on recovery planning.

The following is an overview of circumstances that led to commencement of recovery planning in 2003 and a hiatus in 2005 that precluded completion of a revised Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan in conjunction with the 5-Year Review. Pursuant to the Final Rule, in 2001 USFWS conducted a 3-Year Review of Mexican wolf reintroduction. One of the Review's primary recommendations, in what is commonly referred to as the "Paquet Report" (Paquet et al. 2001) was to revise the 1982 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan so it includes downlisting and delisting goals. However, in June 2001 Congress directed USFWS to obtain an independent review of the 3-Year Review. As a result, USFWS chose to delay implementing the 3-Year Review recommendations, including proceeding with recovery planning, until the independent review had been completed. In late August 2002, at USFWS request, AGFD and NMDGF agreed to conduct the independent review. USFWS chose the two State Wildlife Agencies because of their expertise and their participation and long history with the Mexican wolf program.

The States' independent review was completed in September 2002 (AGFD and NMDGF 2002). The results were presented separately to each State's Commission, which resulted in the following direction to the two agencies:

1. The roles and functions of the Primary Cooperators (AGFD, NMDGF, and the Service) must be restructured to ensure State participation, authorities, and responsibilities as reflected in today's [Commission meeting] discussion.
2. The administrative and adaptive management processes must be restructured to ensure opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders.
3. The Interagency Field Team response protocols must be restructured, and staff capacity must be enhanced, to ensure immediate response capability to, and resolution of, urgent operational issues, such as depredation incidents.
4. Project outreach must be restructured as necessary to address the Commission, Department, and public concerns expressed today.
5. All actions in the Project must be in strict compliance with any applicable, approved special rules, policies, protocols, management plans, and interagency agreements.
6. The Project's review protocols and procedures must be restructured and improved to ensure that the 5-year review is effective and efficient, and an improvement over the 3-Year Review.

Following the States' review, AGFD initiated discussion with USFWS and NMDGF to address the Commissions' guidance. Despite clear direction and USFWS Region 2 Director concurrence with it, considerable effort was required to overcome staff resistance. However, by February 2003, progress was at last being made and additional potential cooperators were brought into the discussion, including USDA-APHIS WS, USFS, WMAT, NMDA, and various counties in AZ and NM. The lengthy process of restructuring the Blue Range reintroduction effort under State and Tribal leadership was culminated in an October 2003 MOU among AGFD, NMDGF, WS, USFS, USFWS, and WMAT as Lead Agencies and NMDA and Greenlee, Navajo, and Sierra counties as Cooperators. The MOU guides the Reintroduction Project through an adaptive management approach to managing the reintroduced wolf population.

Concurrent with the activities outlined above, at a national level USFWS was in the process of reclassifying the gray wolf to remove it from the list of endangered and threatened wildlife throughout portions of the conterminous United States. This rule, which became effective on April 1, 2003, established three Distinct Population Segments (DPS) for the gray wolf, one of which was the Southwestern Gray Wolf DPS. This action did not change the status of Mexican wolves; wolves in the Southwestern DPS retained their previous experimental population or endangered status. However, establishment of the SWDPS required USFWS to achieve recovery at the DPS level (i.e. the DPS would be delisted when recovery is achieved within the DPS), which had important implications for how recovery is achieved in the Southwest. In recognition of this forthcoming rule, USFWS continued to hold off on recovery planning for the Mexican wolf until gray wolf policy at the national level was determined.

Following the final reclassification rule in April 2003 (which established the SWDPS), and at the direction of the Regional Director, USFWS began to convene a new Recovery Team. The Team,

composed of technical and stakeholder sub-groups to address science and social and economic considerations of wolf recovery, was assembled by August 2003.

The Recovery Team consists of a Technical Sub-Group and a Stakeholder Sub-Group. The Technical Sub-Group is a body of scientists who represented expertise in wolf reintroduction and management, population demographics, general wolf biology and behavior, genetics, captive propagation, and research. The Stakeholder Sub-Group includes a variety of interests from local and private sectors representing the livestock and ranching industry, hunters, hunting guides and outfitters, and environmental and conservation organizations, as well as Federal, State, Tribal, and County governments. The Stakeholder Sub-Group provides the opportunity for those directly or indirectly affected by wolf recovery to voice their concerns, and concerns of the constituents they represent, regarding impacts of wolves on resource management, land use, and socioeconomic factors.

Five Recovery Team meetings were held from October 2003 through October 2004. Progress was at last being made toward a revised Recovery Plan. In January 2005, the 2003 reclassification was vacated (see: Defenders of Wildlife v. Norton, 03-1348-JO; National Wildlife Federation v. Norton, 1:03-CV-340, D. VT. 2005). This caused USFWS to revert to the 1978 gray wolf listing, which listed the species (*Canis lupus*) as a whole but continued to recognize valid biological subspecies (e.g. *Canis lupus baileyi*) for purposes of research and conservation.

In response to these rulings, in 2005 USFWS put the SWDPS Recovery Team “on hold” indefinitely; its charge to develop a recovery plan for the SWDPS was no longer valid, because there no longer was a SWDPS. In December 2005, the Department of Interior announced that it would not be filing appeals for either case (see below). This announcement provides impetus for the Southwest Region to reinstate recovery planning, which USFWS will now proceed with in coordination with other wolf management activities.

Note: On December 19, 2005, AMOC was informed that Craig Manson, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, had that day issued a statement on the USFWS decision regarding the U.S. District Court decisions earlier this year striking down the USFWS 2003 reclassification of gray wolf populations. Mr. Manson’s statement was as follows:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will not appeal U.S. District Court decisions earlier this year striking down the Service’s reclassification of gray wolf populations from endangered to threatened for much of the species’ current range in the United States, although we continue to believe the reclassification was both biologically and legally sound. We are exploring options for managing wolf populations that comply with the Courts’ rulings, while recognizing, as the courts did, that the Yellowstone and Great Lakes wolf populations have reached the recovery goals necessary for delisting.

The Department of the Interior plans to issue separate, proposed rules to delist new distinct population segments of gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains and the

Great Lakes as early as possible in 2006. Both proposed rules will have public comment periods lasting 90 days.

In the meantime, gray wolves will continue to be managed as they were prior to the 2003 reclassification. Gray wolves in Minnesota are classified as threatened, as a result of a 1978 reclassification. Gray wolves in the remaining 47 conterminous states and Mexico are endangered, except where they are listed as part of an Experimental Population for reintroduction purposes in the northern Rockies and parts of the Southwest. Citizens with concerns about wolf management should contact the Fish and Wildlife Service or their State wildlife agency for clarification of what actions are currently allowed under the management designation in effect where they live.

In light of Assistant Secretary Manson's statement (above), USFWS Region 2 also affirmed on December 19, 2005 that it would move forward with wolf recovery planning in the Southwest. Meanwhile, after considering all public and cooperator comment during the 5-Year Review, and its own evaluations, AMOC has made various recommendations to USFWS and for AMOC action on issues that it considers necessary to address within the context of the 5-Year Review of the Reintroduction Project and the Final Rule under which the Project operates (see the AMOC Recommendations Component).

Finding: AMOC recommends that USFWS complete a Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan no later than June 30, 2007. Note: AMOC appreciates that this recommended deadline is impractical, but offers it, nonetheless, to strongly underscore that (a) revision is long overdue, and (b) lack of a current Recovery Plan (and overall recovery goal) is negatively affecting the Reintroduction Project in several ways, perhaps most importantly that for a reintroduction project population (management) objective to have meaning and credibility, it must be placed in appropriate context by well-defined rangewide downlisting and delisting (recovery) goals.

B-3. Immediately engage the services of the modified Recovery Team.

Status: Not completed but being implemented and necessary to complete.

Assessment: As noted in B-2 (above), the Recovery Team has been on hold due to litigation that vacated the 2003 reclassification rule. Prior to that ruling, however, USFWS was using the full team in this recommended capacity, due to the body of expertise within both sub-groups of the Team. One such example included inviting the Team's Technical and Stakeholder Sub-Group members to review this 5-Year Review, and to provide feedback regarding reintroduction and overall management of wolves in the BRWRA.

Finding: Given the December 19, 2005 Department of Interior announcement (see above) that it will not appeal the court cases that vacated the 2003 rule, USFWS, in coordination with AMOC, will now determine appropriate and necessary activities for the Recovery Team pertinent to the BRWRA. The Team may be able to provide assistance with at least two AMOC 5-Year Review Recommendations, which are as follows (see the AMOC Recommendations Component for these recommendations in full and for related recommendations):

1. AMOC will determine, on biological/ecological grounds, and conclude in a written report to the USFWS Region 2 Director no later than June 30, 2006, whether (and, if so, the extent to which) the current MWEPA outer boundaries should be expanded within Arizona-New Mexico to enable the Arizona-New Mexico Mexican wolf population to exist within a metapopulation context consistent with Leonard et al. 2005 and Carroll et al. in press. AMOC may convene, if necessary, a technical advisory group of individuals with appropriate expertise to assist with this assessment.
 2. AMOC will develop, no later than June 30, 2006, a report describing a proposed Federally, State, and/or Tribally-funded incentives program to address known and potential economic impacts of wolf nuisance and livestock depredation behavior on private, public, and Tribal Trust lands. AMOC may convene, if necessary, a technical advisory group of individuals with appropriate expertise to assist with this task. The conservation incentives discussion will consider all relevant livestock depredation issues, including: livestock depredation prevention; livestock depredation response; carcass discovery, monitoring, removal, burial, and/or destruction; and possible adjustment of the Federal grazing (AUM) fee (and any Tribal grazing subsidies) within the MWEPA to provide de facto compensation for documented and likely undocumented losses of livestock. The AMOC report shall also include a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness and procedural efficiency of the Defenders of Wildlife wolf depredation compensation fund, and provide recommendations for appropriate improvements.
- B-4. Immediately modify the final rule and develop authority to conduct releases into the Gila National Forest.

Status: Not completed; no action but necessary to complete.

Assessment: The existing Final Rule restricts direct releases of Mexican wolves from captivity to the Primary Recovery Zone (PRZ), in the southern portion of the Apache National Forest, entirely within AZ (Greenlee County). Wolves released into the PRZ are allowed to disperse throughout the entire BRWRA, including the Apache National Forest (AZ) and the Gila National Forest (NM). Additionally, wolves that have previously been free-ranging (wild) may be translocated for management purposes anywhere within the Secondary Recovery Zone (SRZ), which includes the remainder of the BRWRA.

AMOC recognizes there are limitations with the existing rule. The Gila National Forest is approximately 75% of the BRWRA and contains much of the best wolf habitat, due to existence of areas with low or no road densities, good populations of large native ungulates (primarily elk), and few to no permitted livestock. Currently, AMOC is limited to releasing (translocating) wolves that have had previous wild experience into New Mexico. This restricts the pool of available release candidates and limits AMOC's ability to release wolves for management purposes, such as replacement of lost mates or genetic augmentation. The ability to augment the wild population with wolves that are genetically underrepresented is important to increasing the overall fitness of the population, thereby aiding recovery of the species.

Additionally, there is public perception that AMOC is concentrating “problem” wolves in New Mexico, because wolves translocated into the Gila are “problem” wolves that have been removed from the wild for livestock depredations or other such nuisance/problem behavior. However, data indicate that translocated “problem” wolves are *more* likely to succeed, not less likely. In other words, this means wolves are less likely to have to be removed because of problem behavior again after being translocated. The data indicate that relocating the offending problem animal(s) to another area can alter their behavior, thereby rendering them no longer “problem” wolves. Nonetheless, AMOC recognizes the value of being able to directly release wolves without any previous history of problem behavior into New Mexico. Aside from the obvious biological considerations, it could help improve relations and build trust with those most affected by wolf reintroduction.

Clearly, a consistent policy needs to be in place that allows wolves with successful experience in surviving on wild prey (even if that includes limited involvement in depredation situations), and wolves that are more naïve but have no experience with livestock to be candidates for release or translocation throughout the BRWRA. In fact, pairings of wolves that are naïve with those having previous wild experience could lead to establishment of pairs or packs with more of the desired attributes for successful establishment in the wild. As stated above, however, the current rules and policies limit the ability to translocate or release wolves with successful experience with wild prey throughout the recovery area, and limit the availability of wolves with no history of depredation for translocations to the SRZ (e.g. New Mexico).

As early as 1999, USFWS began internally discussing the possibility of modifying the Final Rule.¹ In the short time since they had been released, Mexican wolves had colonized the majority of the PRZ, leaving fewer release sites in which to conduct further releases. Additionally, the Project had experienced several conflicts between wolves and human activities in rural areas, wolf/dog conflicts, and several confirmed depredations. Many illegal wolf shootings had also occurred. Thus, USFWS convened a Mexican wolf program review in January 1999, in which experts strongly recommended modifying the rule to gain authority to release wolves in remote areas (i.e. the Gila National Forest) in the NM portion of the BRWRA, to minimize the conflicts. Based on its experience at that time with managing and monitoring the free-ranging population, the IFT also supported this action.

In September 1999, approval was received from the USFWS Southwest Regional Director at the time to proceed with steps that would allow for releases in the Gila National Forest, including focused outreach, relocation/release site clearances, and revision of the Final Rule, the latter of which would require extensive public comment opportunities (e.g. public scoping, review and comment periods, public meetings and/or hearings) under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Administrative Procedures Act (APA), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

¹ It should also be noted that a potential rule amendment regarding direct releases into New Mexico was foreseen by USFWS and mentioned as a possibility in the FEIS (public comment and response on pages 5-87 – 5-88).

In October 1999, the Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator retired from USFWS, but momentum for proceeding forward with modifying the Final Rule continued. Internal draft Proposed Rule language to allow for direct releases into New Mexico was completed by USFWS in February 2000, and was then to be released to the public through the appropriate NEPA process to solicit public comment. However, it was never released. In April 2000, a new Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator was hired and Project priorities were redirected toward improving the IFT's effectiveness and responses to field issues and conflict situations. This shift put rule change momentum on hold, in order to focus on establishing a system of Recovery Protocols to ensure consistency and quality of data collection, consistency in how IFT personnel respond to field situations, safety of Project personnel and wolves, and to provide mechanisms for project peer review and Project and individual accountability.

In 2001, following drafting of various Recovery Protocols, USFWS began the Project's 3-Year Review pursuant to the Final Rule. With USFWS concurrence and support, an independent team of scientists was contracted by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) to perform the technical portion of the review, which is commonly referred to as the Paquet Report (Paquet et al. 2001). The Paquet Report concluded that the simplest and most important change USFWS could make to enhance recovery would be to modify the Final Rule to allow for initial releases of captive-born (and wild-born if appropriate) Mexican wolves into the Gila National Forest.

Similarly, the "Wolf Management Working Group" of the 3-Year Review's August 2001 Stakeholder Workshop in Show Low, AZ identified (see Kelly et al. 2001) the highest two ranking goals as: (1) to reassess and refine the boundaries for wolf recovery in Arizona and New Mexico; and (2) select better wolf release/management areas within the recovery zones in Arizona and New Mexico. The stakeholders group further indicated that the flexibility to select wolves that have a greater probability of success, and thereby impact landowners and economic interests the least, is in the best interest of the program, both biologically and for those that may be impacted by wolves.

Importantly, both the Paquet Report and the Stakeholders Workshop provided recommendations on strengths and weaknesses of the Reintroduction Project as it was then being implemented. However, some recommendations in the Stakeholders report conflicted with some in the Paquet report or with others in the Stakeholders report. Due to review process design and execution problems, the 3-Review failed to result in an overall set of recommendations from the various components that the primary cooperators (at that time: USFWS, AGFD, NMDGF, and WMAT) agreed to implement. This problem was duly noted in the Stakeholders Workshop Report (Kelly et al. 2001, see minority reports therein) and again in AGFD and NMDGF (2002).

To date, USFWS has not taken action on the Paquet Report recommendation to modify the Final Rule to allow for releases into the Gila National Forest. Shortly after completion of the 3-Year Review, a new Regional Director, H. Dale Hall, was assigned to Region 2. His main priorities for the Mexican wolf recovery program were (1) to restore intended levels of cooperation with State, Tribal, and other interests in reintroduction and recovery planning, and (2) to revise the 1982 Recovery Plan, since the plan does not identify criteria (i.e. how many wolves in how many areas constitutes recovery?) for removing the Mexican wolf from the endangered species list.

Once the 2003 reclassification rule solidified the direction that USFWS would take with respect to wolf recovery (i.e. DPS listings instead of species/subspecies listings), Mr. Hall directed his wolf recovery program staff to revise the Recovery Plan to include downlisting/delisting criteria and describe the larger picture of recovery for the entire SWDPS before considering a rule change for the BRWRA reintroduction effort. Concurrently, he also indicated that in order to revise the rule, USFWS must first have a recommendation from the SWDPS Recovery Team, including both the technical and stakeholder sub-groups, and from AMOC.

However, due to the 2005 court decisions vacating the 2003 reclassification rule, thus putting the SWDPS Recovery Team on hold, Mr. Hall stated in Spring 2005 that in the absence of a functioning Recovery Team, he would look to AMOC and the 5-Year Review for recommendations on changes to the Final Rule. Accordingly, AMOC has made recommendations in the final 5-Year Review for Final Rule changes to address boundary modification concerns (see AMOC Recommendations Component). USFWS will then determine whether and how to proceed with AMOC's recommendations. If and when proposed rule change language regarding authorizing releases into the Gila National Forest is drafted, it will be released to the public pursuant to the APA, ESA, and NEPA to ensure appropriate opportunities for participation and input by the public.

Finding: AMOC proposes combining the current BRWRA Primary and Secondary Recovery Zones, the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR), and/or any other appropriate contiguous areas of suitable wolf habitat into a single expanded Blue Range Wolf Reintroduction Zone (BRWRZ) and allowing initial releases and translocations throughout the BRWRZ in accordance with appropriately amended AMOC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) 5.0: Initial Wolf Releases and 6.0: Wolf Translocations.

B-5. Immediately modify the final rule to allow wolves that are not management problems to establish territories outside the BRWRA.

Status: Not completed; no action but necessary to complete.

Assessment: (Note: Please see B-4 above for additional information regarding rule change modification that is also relevant to this entry). Under the current Final Rule, AMOC is required to capture wolves that establish territories on public land wholly outside the designated wolf recovery areas and return them to the BRWRA or captivity. Additionally, if wolves establish themselves on private or Tribal land outside the BRWRA, AMOC must remove them unless the landowner agrees they may remain.

The 3-Year Review Paquet Report criticizes USFWS for promulgating a rule in which the boundary is so constrained. The report states, "Such regulations are inappropriate for at least 2 reasons: 1) they are nearly impossible to effectively carry out as the wolf population grows because of the difficulties of managing an ever-increasing number of wide-ranging dispersing animals, and 2) they establish a precedent that could be effectively used to argue for the removal of other endangered species inhabiting certain tracts of public or private land (Paquet et al.

2001). They further point out that nowhere else in the United States does USFWS remove wolves simply for being outside a boundary in the absence of a problem.

Although it was the prerogative of the Paquet panel, as an independent reviewer, to make such comments, these opinions are hindsight that was not shaped by the lengthy evaluation and discussions that led to the Final Rule. The criticized constraints were not offered lightly, or without consideration of the problems they might present in the future. USFWS promulgated the Final Rule based on circumstances at the time, including the full range of agency and public comment on the Draft EIS; in the absence of such provisions, USFWS and its primary cooperators believed that reintroduction would likely not have been possible.

The proposed rule change language drafted by USFWS in February 2000 (discussed in B-4, above) did not address allowing wolves that are not a management problem to establish territories outside the BRWRA. At the time the proposed rule change language was drafted, the most important issue viewed as hindering wolf recovery in the Southwest was the inability to release wolves into the Gila National Forest, which makes up of the majority of the BRWRA and contains some of the best wolf habitat. Therefore, the draft primarily addressed modifying the final rule to allow for direct releases of captive-raised wolves into the SRZ (i.e. Gila NF) of the BRWRA. Along with this amendment, USFWS intended to seek suggestions from program cooperators and the public for any other needed rule changes. Because the presence of wolves throughout the entire BRWRA, with all anticipated associated impacts, were analyzed in detail in the FEIS, a rule change considering direct releases into New Mexico would not have required a Supplemental EIS (SEIS). This was because the proposed action of allowing direct releases into the SRZ would not have altered the scope or scale of the impacts, and the actual impacts observed in the BRWRA after two years of wolf releases generally were consistent with what was predicted in the EIS. Therefore, no significant change or new information had been presented that would require a SEIS, and a revision to the rule presumably could have proceeded, in the absence of any new information received during the public comment period.

As the free-ranging wolf population expanded however, a more important issue surfaced that revolved around the BRWRA boundary. As the population grew, dispersing wolves began to travel beyond the BRWRA boundary, sometimes requiring retrieval, as mandated by the Final Rule, even in the absence of problem behavior or conflict situations. As stated in the Paquet Report, this is problematic for several reasons, the most obvious being that it hinders natural dispersal and recolonization of wolves into new areas, thereby slowing recovery. As the number of un-collared wolves increases, it also sets an unrealistic expectation that the IFT will be able to remove wolves that establish outside the BRWRA boundary, when in fact there is no guarantee that even collared wolves can always be captured due to their wide-ranging capabilities. This creates credibility issues with the public, and significant frustration. It also presents serious logistical and staffing concerns, since the IFT must spend considerable time and resources removing otherwise non-problematic wolves, when their time could be spent more productively dealing with more pressing field issues, such as daily monitoring, trapping for un-collared wolves or responding to wolf-livestock conflicts.

To date, as noted in B-4, above, USFWS still has not taken action on the Paquet et al. (2001) recommendation to modify the Final Rule to allow wolves that are not a management problem to establish territories outside the BRWRA. Any proposed rule change language is now separate from the recovery planning process and will come through AMOC as part of this 5-Year Review. Accordingly, AMOC has made recommendations in the final 5-Year Review for Final Rule changes to address boundary modification concerns (see the AMOC Recommendations Component). USFWS will then determine whether and how to proceed with AMOC's recommendations. If and when proposed rule change language regarding authorizing wolves that are not management problems to establish territories outside the BRWRA is drafted, it will be released to the public pursuant to the APA, ESA, FACA, and NEPA to ensure appropriate opportunities for participation and input by the public.

Finding: AMOC will determine, on biological/ecological grounds, and conclude in a written report to the USFWS Region 2 Director no later than June 30, 2006, whether (and, if so, the extent to which) the current MWEPA outer boundaries should be expanded within Arizona-New Mexico to enable the Arizona-New Mexico Mexican wolf population to exist within a metapopulation context consistent with Leonard et al. 2005 and Carroll et al. in press. AMOC may convene, if necessary, a technical advisory group of individuals with appropriate expertise to assist with this assessment. The AMOC assessment will also consider other relevant issues, such as: likelihood of expansion area occupancy by wolves dispersing from northerly states or from Mexico; the merits of extending nonessential experimental population status beyond the current boundaries; and estimated costs associated with managing wolves in an expanded area. The technical advisory group, if convened, shall be chaired by an AMOC representative and shall include no more than 15 other members, each with appropriate scientific expertise. AMOC will advocate that the MWEPA recommendation constructed as a result of its Recommendations allow wolves to disperse from the BRWRZ throughout the MWEPA, subject to management consistent with current Blue Range Reintroduction Project SOPs. Any recommendation to amend the existing Final Rule or to create a new Final Rule would ultimately, if acted on by USFWS, be in full compliance with all applicable APA, ESA, FACA, and NEPA requirements.

B-6. Resist any opportunity to reintroduce Mexican wolves in the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area.

Status: Not completed; being implemented but necessary to complete.

Assessment: As authorized by the Final Rule (USFWS 1998) and Record of Decision (USFWS 1997), USFWS is implementing the "Preferred Alternative" of the FEIS on reintroduction of the Mexican wolf (USFWS 1996). The Preferred Alternative allows wolves to be reintroduced into a portion of the BRWRA, and if feasible and necessary to achieve recovery, White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) would be used as a secondary reintroduction site.

Limiting use of WSMR solely as a secondary site was based on two independent assessments (Bednarz 1989, Green-Hammond 1994) that concluded WSMR by itself could not support a viable population of wolves due to its relatively small size and its isolation from other suitable habitat. This finding was reiterated in the 3-Year Review, noting wolf dispersal would be

hindered by Interstate-25 and poor wolf habitat surrounding WSMR (Paquet et al. 2001). Another more recent habitat modeling analysis (Carroll et. al. in press) came to the same conclusion, stating, “Conversely, an area such as the WSMR, even in the doubtful event that it could support a viable population, would make little contribution to regional recovery goals due to its isolation and small size.” Carroll et al. evaluated WSMR in a regional context, but also summarized habitat quality for WSMR as a stand-alone area for reintroduction. Their results suggest that habitat within WSMR would play little or no role in facilitating reintroduction success.

Finding: AMOC sees no benefit to continuing to hold WSMR up as a possible reintroduction site or primary recovery area. Although wolves might eventually disperse to WSMR, neither the habitat (prey base) nor the management constraints of that site (i.e. national defense and Homeland Security issues) would be conducive to establishing a significant population segment or to contributing toward wolf recovery on a rangewide basis. Thus, AMOC recommends that any amended or new Mexican Wolf Nonessential Experimental Population Rule drafted in conjunction with Recommendations (1) and (2), above, not include WSMR as a Mexican Wolf Recovery Area (i.e. its designation in the current Final Rule) or as a Reintroduction Zone. This would not preclude natural dispersal to WSMR, nor would it require removal of wolves dispersing to WSMR.

B-7. Provide biologists with opportunities to visit other wolf projects to gain training with capturing and handling free-ranging and captive wolves.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: AMOC and the IFT recognize that the highest levels of professionalism, expertise, and ethical standards are required of a workforce in a field as dynamic, broad-based, and closely scrutinized as the Mexican wolf reintroduction effort. AMOC and the IFT include a multitude of agencies that bring to the Project a tremendous diversity in workforce. Each agency represented on the IFT ensures that its own personnel will meet the annual training requirements placed upon them by their own agency, including as a result of consideration of Project needs. The IFT goes even further in ensuring that its members are trained. The IFT currently holds annual training (e.g. immobilization training) that is open to employees of cooperating agencies and held at captive facilities in New Mexico, the Alpine Field Office, and other sites within AZ and NM. Where appropriate, each agency invites other agency personnel to training sessions or to be a trainer at agency meetings. Project staff members have also been detailed to other wolf programs to gain field experience. In addition, and dependent upon funding, AMOC and the IFT will strive to provide additional training opportunities, such as net-gunning wolves in the Rocky Mountains, to increase proficiency and knowledge of IFT members.

Finding: No later than December 15, 2007, AMOC and the IFT will identify training recommendations to build and enhance administrative, project management, supervisory, communication, and technical skills and knowledge as appropriate to each staff member’s job functions within the Reintroduction Project.

- B-8. Station the Field Coordinator in the BRWRA (e.g. in Glenwood or Silver City, New Mexico or Alpine, Arizona) and insist that this person be intimately involved with all aspects of fieldwork (wolf management, public relations, data collection, management, analysis, report preparation, etc.).

Status: Completed.

Assessment: Mexican wolves were first released to the wild in March 1998. At that time, the USFWS Mexican Wolf Field Coordinator position was stationed in the Regional Office in Albuquerque NM. In 1999, USFWS began making plans to station the Field Coordinator in the BRWRA, specifically Glenwood NM. This shift in operations was initiated in order for USFWS to have more presence in local communities affected by wolves. It also gave USFWS the ability to be more responsive to wolf situations in a timely manner as they arose in the field.

From 2000 through May 2001, the Field Coordinator was stationed part-time in Glenwood until her departure from the Mexican wolf recovery program. The Field Coordinator position remained vacant until September 2002, when the current Field Projects Coordinator was hired. The Field Projects Coordinator has been stationed in Alpine AZ, headquarters for the IFT, since being appointed. At this time, USFWS intends to keep the Field Projects Coordinator position stationed in the BRWRA.

As a fully functioning member of the IFT, the Field Projects Coordinator is intimately involved in all aspects of fieldwork, as suggested in the 3-Year Review recommendation. The functions and duties of the Field Coordinator are spelled out in the MOU among the Lead Agencies and other Cooperators as follows:

The Field Coordinator shall:

1. Serve as a member of the IFT and assist the Field Team Leaders in carrying out any field activities necessary to accomplish project goals and objectives.
2. Serve as the communication liaison between the Adaptive Management Oversight Committee and the IFT.
3. Collaborate with the IFT to draft recovery protocols.
4. Assist the Field Team Leaders in drafting Annual Work Plans, Annual Performance Reports, and new or revised project operating procedures.
5. Plan and coordinate, with assistance from the Field Team Leaders, the identification of review of additional release sites for release or translocation of Mexican wolves.

Additional insight on the Field Projects Coordinator can be gleaned from the referenced MOU (see Administrative Component Attachment 2).

Finding: Under current structure, for coordination and communication purposes AMOC believes it is essential for the Field Projects Coordinator to remain stationed in the IFT field office (currently in Alpine AZ). The same logic applies to other agency cooperators, if, as projected,

the IFT expands to meet needs resulting from a growing wolf population. Thus, AMOC recommends that at least one IFT member from each Lead Agency be stationed in the Alpine field office, to facilitate and enhance interagency communication and cooperation.

B-9. Put forth a concerted effort to develop realistic expectations for the Project.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: This recommendation from the Paquet Report identified a need to “constantly remind the public and the media” that “restoration is an imprecise process that is by definition ‘heavy handed.’” It further reflected Paquet et al.’s admonition that USFWS would face (and need to overcome) many “great challenges,” meaning that “intervention will be required, wolves will disappear, and that some animals will die. But just as certainly, meeting the challenges will ensure the restoration of a self-sustaining population of Mexican wolves in the Blue River [sic] Wolf recovery area.”

Clearly, establishing more realistic expectations for the Reintroduction Project was a pressing priority in August 2001, as the 3-Year Review came to a close. The Stakeholders Workshop underscored the Paquet Report admonition about realistic expectations. It seemed evident that to some, the death of any wolf, perhaps even from natural causes, was unacceptable, and especially so for any wolf that died as a direct consequence of human action. Yet, as Paquet et al. (2001) pointed out, mortality was inevitable.

Unrealistic expectations were also evident in regard to human ability to control, or at least modify, wolf behavior. The difficulties of tracking wolves in extremely rugged terrain, from searing summers through snow-bound winters, were too often casually dismissed, as some people questioned why the IFT did not know where every wolf was at every second. And even as these questions were asked, other people or even some of the same people criticized the Project for too much intervention, opining that the wolves should be allowed to adjust to the wild and people would simply need to adjust to them.

Also, IFT response time to “nuisance” and “problem” wolves was often perceived by local residents as inadequate, even as criticisms were constantly lodged about the cost of the Project, which would only be increased if additional resources were allocated to increase responsiveness.

The need for more realistic expectations was reaffirmed a year later, in the State Wildlife Agencies’ September 2002 independent review of the 3-Year Review (AGFD and NMDGF 2002). To better address public expectations for a well-managed reintroduction project that appropriately considered and responded to the public’s expectations, the AZ and NM State Wildlife Commissions requested in September 2002 that USFWS:

1. Restructure the roles and functions of the Primary Cooperators (AGFD, NMDGF, and the Service) to ensure State participation, authorities, and responsibilities.
2. Restructure the administrative and adaptive management processes to ensure opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders.

3. Restructure the Interagency Field Team response protocols, and enhance staff capacity, to ensure immediate response capability to, and resolution of, urgent operational issues, such as depredation incidents.
4. Restructure Project outreach as necessary to address Commission, Department, and public concerns.
5. Ensure that all actions in the Project be in strict compliance with any applicable, approved special rules, policies, protocols, management plans, and interagency agreements.
6. Restructure and improve the Project's review protocols and procedures to ensure that the 5-year review is effective and efficient, and an improvement over the 3-Year Review.

The State Wildlife Commissions and their respective agencies were willing to help USFWS restructure the Project from top to bottom, and work toward successful reintroduction and recovery, but first they needed to know that USFWS was receptive to a more collaborative partnership than the States and the public perceived had existed since the initial wolf releases in 1998. Fortunately, the new leadership in USFWS Region 2 was more than receptive to this concept, as Regional Director H. Dale Hall both embraced and helped structure the necessary changes in organizational philosophy, structure, and function.

By November 2002, Directors of the two State Wildlife Agencies and USFWS Region 2 had agreed upon a course of action to address these concerns in such a way that more realistic expectations would be developed on both sides of the equation: the agencies that manage the Project and the public that is interested in and/or affected by it. Identifying themselves as Primary Cooperators, the three agencies agreed (see Attachment 1, dated November 8, 2002):

The Service is responsible for providing guidance and coordinated information to all interested parties relative to recovery of the Mexican wolf. The States and Tribes are responsible for conducting reintroduction efforts in such a manner that they contribute directly to recovery. Other federal, state, local, and private stakeholders have to some extent shared responsibilities, or at least significant stakes, in these areas. The intent of the current Primary Cooperators is to realign the Recovery and Reintroduction components so they are fully integrated, smoothly coordinated, and effective.

This document begins, but does not complete progress toward achieving the direction that was given to the two State Wildlife Agencies by their respective Commissions in September 2002. The Primary Cooperators will, however, complete this effort before March 31, 2003, through appropriate collaboration with Tribal and other interested parties.

From November 2002 through October 2003, the original Primary Cooperators met frequently, and over time with an increasing number of other State agencies, tribes, and local governments, to discuss a new framework for collaboration to ensure that expectations about the Project were more realistic, and more importantly that they were met. Agencies-only meetings were blended with what evolved into quarterly AMWG public meetings for open discussion of virtually all

aspects of the Project. One of the more frequently voiced criticisms reflected a lack of trust in the agencies managing the Project.

The transition from Federal to State and Tribal implementation lead for the Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project was problematic at times for some Project cooperators, as new roles and responsibilities of agencies were defined and implemented. Uncertainty in how the new structure might affect day-to-day operations and decision-making at the field level prevailed.

Many of these issues remained unresolved as staff-level discussions continued; consequently, interagency meetings from February 2003 through October 2003 covered many of the same issues repeatedly, thus delaying addressing fundamental problems such as insufficient funding and staff required to carry out the needed management, monitoring, and research. It was difficult to reach consensus decisions about such issues, as agency representatives at the negotiating table struggled under the new organizational structure they had been directed to implement. Roles, functions, and authorities were debated repeatedly.

Overcoming the trust issues among Project cooperators required time, persistence, and a spirit of cooperation. Nevertheless, by October 2003, the agencies had crafted an MOU (Attachment 2) as a foundation for adaptive management of the Reintroduction Project. Quarterly meetings of AMOC, which guides the Project, and AMWG, which affords a forum for public participation, thus became the primary mechanism for ongoing discussion and re-discussion of what to expect from the Project, and what the Project might expect from the public. Many of the same questions and concerns came up at virtually every meeting in 2003 and 2004, and they were addressed each time. Over-commitment of limited resources in a partnership effort was finally beginning to give way to a more realistic accounting of what could and would be done, and doing it. That seemed to be a significant step forward in a Project as complex and controversial as wolf reintroduction, and it is a credit to all the agencies and public involved.

As of the time at which this 5-Year Review is being completed, the cooperating agencies are continuing to diligently work to develop more realistic expectations for and by the Project in all sectors. It is, however, a never-ending, difficult task. Few individuals inside and especially outside the agencies are sufficiently attuned to the Project to stay fully abreast of its problems, and its progress. Many other issues and activities draw on their time. Thus, the focus is on constant re-education as well as on education. Information is now flowing better about the Project than ever before. The Project has established a toll-free number (1-888-459-WOLF) whereby the public can call during business hours to report sightings or incidents, or to receive information about the project. A 24-hour radio dispatch (1-800-352-0700; the AGFD Operation Game Thief Hot Line) is also operational to report incidents, depredations, or emergencies after hours. SOPs have been completed for all essential areas of IFT activity, and they are continually revised as new experience and knowledge is brought to bear. Lead Agency Directors meet twice each year with AMOC, the IFT, and Cooperators for Project updates on key issues and activities, and to discuss significant issues of concern. The backlog of uncompleted Annual Reports has been eliminated. AMOC and the IFT now engage in joint annual work planning and budgeting, to ensure that staff resource allocations appropriately match product and service expectations and the available resources. Electronic self-subscription update services at <http://azgfd.gov/signup>

complement information posted on the AGFD wolf website, <http://azgfd.gov/wolf>, and the USFWS Mexican wolf website, <http://mexicanwolf.fws.gov>. Enhanced signage in wolf-occupied areas, brochures, public adaptive management discussions, outreach presentations by the IFT, and countless “one-on-one” field staff conversations with local residents are occurring to ensure that people have opportunities to gain more knowledge about the Project, express their opinions, and form more realistic expectations about it. The same mechanisms of interaction serve to inform the agencies about the public’s expectations, and how they can best be met.

Finding: As stated before, the “concerted effort” necessary to “develop realistic expectations” (within and outside the Reintroduction project) is indeed never-ending, thus this Paquet Report recommendation can only be described as “Being Implemented;” it will never be “Completed.”

B-10. Initiate programs to educate people about wolf behavior.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: Education and public outreach is essential and should be a continual, dynamic, and effective part of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program. Providing sufficient and accurate information on wolves and their behavior is important to all entities involved in this program.

Many strategies have been introduced to provide this information to the public. An interim “Education and Public Outreach Position” was created by USFWS to initially coordinate program goals. It has been superseded by AMOC SOP 3.0: Outreach (available at <http://azgfd.gov/wolf>). AGFD now employs a full-time person on the IFT to meet overall outreach responsibilities for the Project, with emphasis on local education and information (i.e. outreach) efforts. Wolf education boxes have been provided to agencies for public forums; mounts of wolves are on display in various places in the BRWRA, with additional mounts expected in the future. Public outreach presentations have been initiated for schools, communities, and requesting groups. Permanent educational displays are being promoted for various locations. Traveling displays exist but are limited in number at the present; funding is being pursued to develop additional displays. Other educational materials such as brochures and posters have been created and are available from participating agencies. Signs have been developed and posted in wolf areas; additional sign postings are pending. Information has been included in Hunting and Recreation Regulations and made available with permits or hunt tags; presentations have been made at Hunter Safety Courses. Flyers have been made available and passed out to hunters prior to and during hunt seasons. A 24-hour report, information, and emergency phone line and a web-site to sign up for monthly updates are currently in place (see B-9, above). Monthly Project Updates are provided to the public at large via an electronic self-subscription newsletter (*Endangered Species Updates*), at <http://azgfd.gov/signup>, and to certain interested or affected parties who have a specific need for more specific, current information are provided weekly updates after routine monitoring flights, via e-mail, fax, and by local postings. Personal contacts are also made via the phone or by one-on-one discussion with parties reporting wolf sightings or incidents. IFT field activities have been, and will continue to be, conducted to demonstrate wolf monitoring techniques. Wolf issues are discussed and coordinated on a regular basis during AMOC and AMWG meetings, which are held at least quarterly and more often as

necessary. Wolf identification, behavior, and pertinent report information is coordinated for release to local media, including radio stations, television stations, and newspapers, especially prior to hunting seasons. Many Project-related articles have appeared in magazines, as well as professional journals. Partnerships have been established with local businesses and private organizations. Planning and development for educational outreach opportunities are a continuing and expanding part of the recovery program.

The need for public education about measures by which to prevent or at least minimize risks associated with free-ranging animals, whether feral dogs or predatory wildlife, was underscored just as AMOC was completing this 5-Year Review. The event occurred in Canada, and might be highly relevant to the subject of human-wolf interactions in North America. On November 8, the body of 22-year-old Kenton Joel Carnegie, a 3rd-year survey crew intern with an energy exploration company, was found in northern Saskatchewan. Dr. Paul Paquet (personal communication, December 13, 2005) advises AMOC that a final Provincial Coroner's report is expected in January 2006, at which time it also will be made public. However, Dr. Paquet, a wolf expert well known to the Southwest as author of the 3-Year Review "Paquet Report" (Paquet et al. 2001), advises AMOC that preliminary investigation by law enforcement officials, and his own ongoing investigation for the Provincial Coroner, indicate a pack of four wild wolves might have attacked and killed the young man. However, death by wild dogs, with subsequent scavenging by wolves, had not yet been ruled out as this account was being written.

If wolves are proven to have killed Mr. Carnegie, it would be the first documented human death attributed to healthy wild (free ranging) wolves in North America in at least 100 years (see McNay 2002a and 2002b). Canadian experts and officials speculate that several factors might have contributed to the attack. In particular, huge expansion of exploration and mining for oil, gas, precious metals, etc. has resulted in an explosion of "wildcat" dumps (i.e. unregulated dumps), which are well known to attract predators (and wild dogs) and to result in increased risk of negative human-wildlife interactions.

The excerpted article below from the International Wolf Center is the most recent and thorough account available as to what might have occurred. It is included here in the 5-Year Review to ensure that it becomes part of the context for considering the issue of human-wolf interactions.

Regardless of the final outcome of the investigations, the fatal incident and increasing prevalence of habituated wolves and wild dogs in Saskatchewan underscore the need to take precautions in minimizing risks, including: ensuring that garbage dumps (regulated and not) are maintained in such a way that bears, wolves, wild dogs, and mountain lions do not become habituated to them; never feeding free-ranging predators, especially not at arm's-length distances; never providing food to domestic dogs or other domestic animals in such a way that predators might be attracted, and maintaining ready access to deterrent sprays and other protective devices in case of approach closely; etc. AMOC SOP 13.0: Control of Mexican Wolves provides additional information on this subject, as do other public education materials disseminated by the Reintroduction Project.

Finding: Educating people about wolf behavior (and the Reintroduction Project as a whole) is a never-ending process, thus this Paquet Report recommendation can only be described as “Being Implemented;” it will never be “Completed.”

B-11. Require livestock operators on public land to take some responsibility for carcass management/disposal to reduce the likelihood that wolves become habituated to feeding on livestock.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: The 3-Year Review identified an issue concerning livestock carcasses. Simply stated, the concern was that free-ranging Mexican wolves that scavenge on domestic livestock carcasses become habituated, and subsequently deplete domestic livestock. This suspected behavior in turn results in management actions ranging from capture and translocation to permanent removal from the wild, sometimes by lethal control of the offending wolf. Scavenging in this context means that free-ranging wolves encounter a livestock carcass and feed on it. The animal might have died from any of a variety of causes other than attack by wolves.

To put this issue into context, we reviewed the issue as outlined in the 5-Year Review and the findings in both the 3-Year Review Stakeholders Workshop final report and Paquet report.

We conducted a thorough review to evaluate whether a carcass feeding issue does exist, and if so what its magnitude might be. First, we accessed the IFT’s Mexican wolf “Incident Database” for all records of Mexican wolf carcass feeding, depredations, and subsequent management actions. Next, we reviewed information that the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) had previously received under FOIA, to determine whether the IFT Incident Database contained all relevant information on depredations and carcass feeding. In reviewing the CBD data, we found that all carcass feeding and depredation events noted therein were in fact included in the Incident Database. We also examined land management agency (i.e. USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management) regulations and policies to determine if the agencies have policies or other authorities regarding this issue.

Changes between Draft and Final 5 Year Review: The Draft 5-Year Review noted that 91 percent of the wolves involved with carcasses had also been involved with depredations. This “association” has been widely cited by interested parties during the 5-Year Review public comment period. However, further analysis indicates the 91 percent figure (see old Table 2 in the Draft Technical Component) is misleading, in that it was not based on analysis of the chronology of depredations and carcass feeding incidents.

After preliminary internal review and discussion among AMOC and the IFT, we conducted a further review of depredation and carcass involvement data from the Draft 5-Year Review. Our primary focus was the chronology of the depredations and carcass involvement incidents. Three groupings emerged from this analysis: Group One involves 12 wolves that were clearly involved in a depredation incident prior to being seen feeding on a livestock carcass. Group Two involves six wolves that were seen feeding on a carcass that was the direct result of a depredation. Group

Three involves five wolves that fed on a carcass and later depredated livestock. (Please refer to the following Analysis Section).

Summary of Public Comments to the Draft 5 Year Review: AMOC solicited public comment on the Draft 5-Year Review through a variety of venues. Comments concerning the carcass issue can be summarized as follows: those who felt that the section should be removed from the document because it leads to increased conflict and animosity with the livestock industry; those who felt that carcass removal was not at all practical due to problems finding carcasses and the time and expense involved in disposal; those that felt removing carcasses would lead to further depredations; those that felt using the CBD data biased the results; those that felt the agencies should develop and/or enforce policies for carcass removal; and those that felt incentives for livestock owners should be developed to promote voluntary carcass removal. (Please refer to Response to Comments Section).

3-Year Review: Participants in the Stakeholders Workshop were organized into six working groups. One, the “Wolf-Livestock-Animal Conflict Working Group,” identified finding and disposal of livestock carcasses as an “issue,” and further identified lack of implementation of effective husbandry practices to decrease livestock-wolf conflicts as a “problem.” This Working Group called for livestock producers and land management agencies to work together to develop guidelines for detection and disposal of livestock carcasses to reduce wolf-livestock conflicts.

The 3-Year Review’s Paquet Report addressed the livestock carcass issue in a section titled “Has the Livestock Depredation Control Program been Effective” (pages 52-85). The concluding remarks assert that “Similarly, livestock producers using public lands can make a substantive contribution to reducing conflicts with wolves through improved husbandry and better management of carcasses.” The “Overall Conclusions and Recommendations” (pages 67 to 68) include a recommendation that “livestock operators on public land be required to take some responsibility for carcass management/disposal to reduce the likelihood that wolves become habituated to feeding on livestock.”

5-Year Review: Building on the Paquet Report, with additional information from Project experience since 2001 and from public comment on the 5-Year Review, AMOC now offers an analysis of documented Mexican wolf livestock depredations and incidents of livestock carcass feeding. The information in this section was derived from the IFT’s Incident Database and, for purposes of completeness and accuracy, was checked against information the CBD provided to AMOC that it had obtained via Federal FOIA. Table 2 displays information on wolves involved in known depredation incidents from 1998 through 2004: a total of 46 depredation incidents have been recorded; of those, 23 (50%) involved documented cases of wolves feeding on domestic livestock carcasses.

Because this issue involves a suspected link between wolves scavenging on domestic livestock carcasses and subsequent depredation on domestic livestock, Table 2 presents data on wolf activities such as depredations and scavenging on livestock carcasses as well as management actions associated with each type of incident from capture to translocation. The current fate of each wolf (as of 2005) is also included in Table 2.

Of the 46 wolves involved in known depredation incidents through 2004, 16 (35%) were involved in more than one depredation incident. Of these 46 wolves, 20 (43%) were removed from the wild for depredations; 24 (52%) were translocated into New Mexico; 11 (24%) were permanently removed from the wild population; and 19 (41%) died (Table 2; Note: because some wolves were assigned to multiple activity categories, percentages total more than 100). Of the 46 wolves involved in livestock depredations, 9 (20%) are currently in captivity and 8 (17%) remain in the wild (Table 3).

In the Draft 5-Year Review, we reported that 91 percent of the 22 wolves involved in known livestock depredations had fed on livestock carcasses. Between Draft and Final, we took a further look at the data and separated it by the chronology of depredations versus the chronology of confirmed carcass feeding events. As a result of this analysis, our results have changed and the way we are reporting them has changed. In addition, the sample size increased by 1 from 22 to 23 wolves involved with both carcasses and depredations.

By looking at the chronology of the depredation and carcass feeding incidents, three groupings emerged: Group One involves 12 wolves that were clearly involved in a depredation incident prior to being seen feeding on a livestock carcass. Group Two involves six wolves that were seen feeding on a carcass that was the direct result of a depredation. Group Three involves five wolves that fed on a carcass and later depredated livestock. Table 3 reveals that 5 of the 46 wolves (11%) with records of suspected or confirmed depredations had fed on carcasses prior to their documented depredation incident(s).

The 12 wolves in Group One were involved in depredations prior to any documented carcass feeding event. Six wolves in Group Two were seen feeding on a livestock carcass clearly associated with a depredation incident. Only the five wolves in Group Three were known to have fed on a livestock carcass prior to being involved in a depredation incident; this amounts to 11% of all wolves known to have depredated or suspected of depredations in the BRWRA. Table 4 displays the “locations” of the five wolves identified in Group Three.

Federal Land Management Agency Regulations and Policies Concerning Domestic Livestock Carcass Removal: USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management are the two principal federal land management agencies involved in or affected by Mexican wolf reintroduction and recovery. Neither agency has authority by law, regulation, or policy to require a permittee to remove dead livestock, render dead livestock unpalatable, or bury dead livestock on public lands where domestic livestock grazing is authorized. However, if a permittee voluntarily wanted to commit to such actions, both agencies could write such a commitment into the permittee’s grazing permit. Authority for such mutually agreed-upon actions (essentially, self-imposed commitments) stems from (BLM) 43 CFR Chapter II §4130.3-2 (other terms and conditions) and (Forest Service) 36 CFR 222 and Forest Service Handbook 2209.13 §16.11 (Modification After Issuance). These allow each agency to address the issue of requiring the removal of livestock carcasses, rendering dead livestock unpalatable or burying dead livestock through individual grazing lease/permit authorizations or modifications.

State Statutes Pertaining to Carcass Disposal: The carcass disposal issue is also constrained by AZ and NM State Law. The following Statutes have bearing on whether livestock carcasses can be removed from public lands, to reduce risk of wolves or other predators feeding on them.

Arizona (Note: this information was taken from Arizona's on-line Statutes, which are available at <http://www.azleg.state.az.us/ArizonaRevisedStatutes.asp>)

Chapter 11, Article 4, Section 3-1293. Procedure for owner to authorize another person to deal with animals; violation

- A. A person who desires to authorize another person to gather, drive or otherwise handle animals bearing the recorded brand or mark owned by the person granting the authority, or animals of which he is the lawful owner but which bear other brands or marks, shall furnish the other person an authority in writing which lists the brands or marks authorized to be handled, and authorizes the other person to gather, drive or otherwise handle the animals described.
- B. If a person who gives written authority for the purposes provided in subsection A inserts therein any brand or mark of which he is not the lawful owner and an animal bearing such brand or mark is unlawfully taken, gathered, driven or otherwise unlawfully handled by virtue of the written authority by the person to whom the written authority was given the person giving the written authority shall be deemed a principal to the unlawful taking, gathering, driving or handling of such animals.

Chapter 11, Article 4, Section 3-1302. Taking animal without consent of owner; classification

A person who knowingly takes from a range, ranch, farm, corral, yard or stable any livestock and uses it without the consent of the owner or the person having the animal lawfully in charge is guilty of a class 2 misdemeanor.

Chapter 11, Article 4, 3-1308. Evidence of illegal possession of livestock

Upon trial of a person charged with unlawful possession, handling, driving or killing of livestock, the possession under claim of ownership without a written and acknowledged bill of sale, as provided by section 3-1291, is prima facie evidence against the accused that the possession is illegal.

Chapter 11, Article 4, 3-1303. Driving livestock from range without consent of owner; classification

When livestock of a resident of the state is intentionally driven off its range by any person, without consent of the owner, the person is guilty of a class 5 felony.

Chapter 11, Article 4, 3-1307. Unlawfully killing, selling or purchasing livestock of another; classification; civil penalty; exception

- A. A person who knowingly kills or sells livestock of another, the ownership of which is known or unknown, or who knowingly purchases livestock of another, the ownership of which is known or unknown, from a person not having the lawful right to sell or dispose of such animals, is guilty of a class 5 felony.
- B. A person who knowingly attempts to take or does take all or any part of a carcass of any such animal, pursuant to subsection A, for such person's own use, the use of others or for sale is guilty of a class 5 felony.
- C. In addition to any other penalty imposed by this section, a person depriving the owner of the use of his animal or animals under subsection A or B of this section shall be liable to the owner for damages equal to three times the value of such animal or animals.
- D. This section shall not apply to taking up animals under the estray laws.

New Mexico (Note: this information was taken from New Mexico's on-line Statutes, which are available at <http://www.lawsources.com/also/usa.cgi?nm>)

Article 9. Section 77-9-45. Ownership; possession; transportation; seizure; disposition of livestock; refusal of certificate.

If any duly authorized inspector should find any livestock or carcasses in the possession of any person, firm or corporation for use, sale or transporting by any means, and said person, firm or corporation in charge of said livestock or carcasses is not in possession of a bill of sale, duly acknowledged, or cannot furnish other satisfactory proof of lawful ownership or said inspector has good reason to believe that said livestock or carcasses, are stolen, said inspector shall refuse to issue a certificate authorizing the transportation of said livestock or carcasses, and shall seize and take possession of same.

Livestock Industry Perspective in the Southwest: Both the Arizona and New Mexico Cattle Growers Associations are on public record in Mexican Wolf Adaptive Management Work Group meetings as opposing any mandatory removal of dead livestock from public lands.

Finding: Five (11%) of the 46 wolves known to have been involved in a depredation incident had fed on a livestock carcass prior to committing a depredation. Of these five wolves, two remain in the wild, one is "fate unknown," and two have been permanently removed from the wild. This sample size is too small to support even preliminary, let alone definitive, conclusions as to correlations, trends, or "depredation predisposition" resulting from carcass feeding.

Federal land management agencies do not have the authority to require lease/permit holders to remove livestock carcasses from public land. Permittees can voluntarily commit to such actions, and these commitments could be written into their BLM or USFS grazing permit if the permittee

so desired (i.e. perhaps in exchange for incentive payments of some sort?). The livestock industry in the Southwest opposes mandatory removal of livestock carcasses from Federal lands.

In light of the above:

1. AMOC will develop, no later than June 30, 2006, a report describing a proposed Federally, State, and/or Tribally-funded incentives program to address known and potential economic impacts of wolf nuisance and livestock depredation behavior on private, public, and Tribal Trust lands. AMOC may convene, if necessary, a technical advisory group of individuals with appropriate expertise to assist with this task. The conservation incentives discussion will consider all relevant livestock depredation issues, including: livestock depredation prevention; livestock depredation response; carcass discovery, monitoring, removal, burial, and/or destruction; and possible adjustment of the Federal grazing (AUM) fee (and any Tribal grazing subsidies) within the MWEPA to provide de facto compensation for documented and likely undocumented losses of livestock. The AMOC report shall also include a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness and procedural efficiency of the Defenders of Wildlife wolf depredation compensation fund, and provide recommendations for appropriate improvements. Note: (a) The technical advisory group, if convened, shall be chaired by an AMOC representative and include a maximum of 15 other members, each with appropriate expertise. (b) AMOC as a body will not advocate regulatory changes to address carcass removal or disposal issues.
2. AMOC will convene a stakeholders group to assist AMOC in evaluating, and reporting in writing no later than December 31, 2006, social (human and socioeconomic) implications (including estimated annual livestock depredation losses) for any boundary expansions recommended. Note: The stakeholders advisory group will be Co-Chaired by an AMOC representative and an AMWG Cooperator (County) representative, and include a maximum of 50 other members, representing, insofar as is possible, the full spectrum of stakeholders. This group will comply with FACA, if necessary.
3. No later than March 1, 2006, AMOC will convene a science and research advisory group. The group will review, on a continuing basis, current and proposed management practices and recommend research priorities for AMOC to advocate to external entities and the cooperating agencies on all aspects of the Reintroduction Project. Review tasks will include, but not be limited to: overall Reintroduction Project effectiveness, statistically reliable wolf survey and population monitoring techniques, wolf population dynamics (demographics), prey base dynamics, total predator loads, seasonal wolf livestock depredation rates, annual wolf impacts on native ungulate populations, prey base monitoring techniques appropriate to determining when prescribed unacceptable levels of impact on native wild ungulates have been met or exceeded, wolf-related disease occurrence and prevention, seasonal livestock depredation rates, prevention and/or remediation of wolf nuisance and livestock depredation problems, livestock husbandry, wolf-related tourism, socioeconomics, and human dimensions.

4. AMOC will advocate creating an IFT position in the Alpine field office to work with cooperators and stakeholders throughout Arizona and New Mexico on proactive measures by which to avoid or minimize wolf nuisance and livestock depredation problems. Note: AMOC as a body will not advocate regulatory changes to address carcass removal or disposal issues (but see Recommendation [12], above, regarding a process by which AMOC will explore possible mechanisms to address this issue).

B-12. When writing or lecturing about the project, the Service should emphasize a community approach to understanding the wolf reintroduction project and its effect on other species and ecological processes

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: Apparently, Paquet et al. (2001) presumed that only USFWS had a role or stake in guiding and implementing the Reintroduction Project. What caused that presumption is moot. In any event, this recommendation from the Paquet Report and indeed all others apply to all Lead Agencies, not just to USFWS, thus AMOC responds along those broader lines.

This recommendation appears to be based on the Paquet Report's rationale that "Conservation policy is shifting away from the preservation of single species toward preservation and management of interactive networks and large scale ecosystems...." Although the authors did not provide specific references for this statement, their review does discuss changes in entire food webs that can result from disruption of top predator populations (e.g. McLaren and Peterson 1994, Terborgh et al. 1999). The authors also discuss the effects of wolves on prey survival and behavior (e.g. Nelson and Mech 1981, Ballard et al. 1987, Messier 1994), and influences of prey densities on wolf demographics (e.g. Messier 1985, Fuller 1989).

The driving authorities and policy leading to re-establishment of Mexican wolves within the BRWRA were the ESA, the 1982 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, and State and Tribal laws and regulations pertaining to wildlife management and conservation. Although the ESA calls for conservation of ecosystems that support listed species, the majority of its protections and regulations are directed at the single-species (as opposed to ecosystem) level. State and Tribal wildlife agency authorities for management and conservation also focus on individual species, rather than habitats. Even public land management agencies, which have mandates to provide for a multitude of land uses, and extensive authority over wildlife habitat, have specific direction regarding individual wildlife species that may be given special status for management or planning purposes. Therefore, while the statement that "conservation policy is shifting...toward preservation and management of interactive networks" may be reflective of the current academic and even public understanding of the importance of landscape-level factors in conservation of wildlife (particularly large carnivores), it has yet to be manifested in significant changes to the State, Federal, and Tribal legal and policy frameworks that guide Mexican wolf reintroduction.

Despite the lack of a clear ecosystem-level mandate related to Mexican wolf reintroduction, community-level changes remain an interest of many of the involved or affected agencies and stakeholders. Possible impacts to game populations are of strong interest to State Wildlife

Agencies, sportsmen, and those involved in or supported by hunting-related industries. Similarly, questions are frequently raised regarding possible impacts of wolves on industries such as ranching, either through direct or indirect impacts that could result from effects to secondary carnivores (e.g. coyotes), ungulate populations, alternate prey populations, or even primary producers (plants). At this time, little information is available to answer these community-level questions regarding Mexican wolf reintroduction.

AMOC has not attempted to quantify a broad array of ecosystem parameters for the explicit purpose of pre- and post-reintroduction comparisons. Also, because the objective for number of wolves to be established within the BRWRA has yet to be reached, community-level influences of wolves may not yet be detectable. Density of wolves within the 17,752 km² BRWRA is estimated at approximately 3 wolves/1,000 km². This density is at the far lower end of wolf densities where authors such as Ballard et al. (1987) (range of ~3 wolves/1,000 km² after wolf control to ~10 wolves/1,000 km² before control), Parker (1973) (range of 2 wolves/1,000 km² to 28-50 wolves/1,000 km² concentrated on prey winter range), and Hayes et al. (2003) (1.7 wolves/1,000 km² after wolf control and 6.0 wolves/1,000 km² before) evaluated interspecific interactions at multiple wolf densities. In comparison, wolves on Isle Royale have represented the high end of wolf densities found in North America, up to 91/1,000 km², (Peterson and Page 1988), and currently exist at about 50 wolves/1,000 km² in Yellowstone's northern range (Smith et al. 2003).

Although it is expected that populations of ungulate prey, alternate prey, competing predators, and the amount of primary production would be decreased in more arid wolf habitats, such as the Southwest, these parameters have not all been quantified within the BRWRA or within other wolf study areas. Therefore, it is difficult for AMOC to provide unequivocal information at this time regarding any landscape-level changes that might occur through Mexican wolf reintroduction. More time is needed for the wolf population to grow, and for effects to be determined through focused research. Paquet et al. (2001) acknowledged this, stating that wolf reintroduction has influenced the carnivore guild (wolves, bears, coyotes, mountain lions) within the northern Rocky Mountains (where wolves had already approached or surpassed recovery levels), but recommending research within the BRWRA regarding interaction of wolves with other carnivores to inform future Mexican wolf reintroduction project evaluations and adjustments.

Finding: Based on the information above, the recommendation from the 3-Year Review that "When writing or lecturing about the project, the Service should emphasize a community approach to understanding the wolf reintroduction project and its effect on other species and ecological processes" (Paquet et al. 2001) is not considered appropriate at this time. Rather, this recommendation is replaced with a related one that:

When writing or speaking about the Mexican wolf reintroduction project, entities cooperating in Mexican wolf reintroduction should accurately reflect the available current information regarding projected and realized community and ecosystem-level functions involving Mexican wolves in all appropriate outreach materials and Project reports or presentations. Wherever

possible, they should also support studies, monitoring, and analyses to evaluate any community-level changes that might result from Mexican wolf reintroduction.

Specifically:

1. No later than March 1, 2006, AMOC will convene a science and research advisory group. The group will review, on a continuing basis, current and proposed management practices and recommend research priorities for AMOC to advocate to external entities and the cooperating agencies on all aspects of the Reintroduction Project. Review tasks will include, but not be limited to: overall Reintroduction Project effectiveness, statistically reliable wolf survey and population monitoring techniques, wolf population dynamics (demographics), prey base dynamics, total predator loads, seasonal wolf livestock depredation rates, annual wolf impacts on native ungulate populations, prey base monitoring techniques appropriate to determining when prescribed unacceptable levels of impact on native wild ungulates have been met or exceeded, wolf-related disease occurrence and prevention, seasonal livestock depredation rates, prevention and/or remediation of wolf nuisance and livestock depredation problems, livestock husbandry, wolf-related tourism, socioeconomics, and human dimensions.
 2. AMOC will ensure that all Reintroduction Project-related outreach activities emphasize wolf conservation and management as an integrated component of the social (human) as well as the ecological landscape, and provide a balanced, objective perspective on positive and negative aspects of wolves as ecosystem components in a multiple-use landscape of intermingled public, private, and Tribal Trust lands.
- C. Evaluation of the recommendations from the Arizona-New Mexico independent review of the 3-Year Review indicating the status of the recommendations as either: a) completed/being implemented; b) not completed/being implemented but necessary (provide justification for why it has not been completed and estimated time-frame for completion); and c) not considered necessary to complete/implement (include justification).

In October 2001, USFWS completed a review of the first three years of the Mexican wolf reintroduction within the BRWRA. This review was required under the Final Rule for Mexican wolf reintroduction (Parsons 1998, USFWS 1998). The language within this rule directed USFWS to conduct “full evaluations after 3 and 5 years that recommend continuation, modification, or termination of the reintroduction effort.” This direction was also included within the final EIS for Mexican wolf reintroduction (USFWS 1996) and the Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (Parsons 1998).

In June 2001, Congress directed USFWS to conduct an independent assessment of the Reintroduction Project’s 3-Year Review (House of Representatives Report 107-103). In August 2002, USFWS asked AGFD and NMDGF if they would conduct the review, which was due for completion by September 30, 2002. AGFD and NMDGF agreed to jointly conduct the independent assessment. The two agencies completed their evaluation and submitted it to

USFWS Region 2 Director H. Dale Hall in September 2002 (see AGFD and NMDGF 2002). Their report contained a series of recommendations regarding the process and outcomes of the 3-Year Review, including six overarching points that both State Game Commissions directed the respective agency to transmit to USFWS.

In developing the process and content for the Mexican wolf Reintroduction Project's mandated 5-Year Review (USFWS 1996, Parsons 1998, USFWS 1998), the Project's cooperating agencies agreed to revisit the recommendations from the States' evaluation of the 3-Year Review. This would include both the six overarching directives, and more detailed recommendations contained within the states' evaluation. The purpose was to determine if the recommendations were still valid, whether they had been implemented, and any rationale for changes in validity or failure to implement the recommendations. Following are AMOC's assessments of the State Game Commission directives regarding the Reintroduction Project and thus the 3-Year Review:

- C-1. The roles and functions of the Primary Cooperators (AGFD, NMDGF, and the Service) must be restructured to ensure State participation, authorities, and responsibilities as reflected in today's discussion.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: Restructuring of roles and functions has been embodied within the MOU among the cooperating agencies in Mexican wolf management. This agreement was completed and received its initial signatures in November 2003. All the Primary Cooperators had signed the agreement by April 2004. One major task in the restructuring of roles and functions is still outstanding. This is Item #8 under the "Lead Agencies agree to:" portion of the MOU, and reads:

Describe the roles, responsibilities, and processes necessary to address involvement, participation, and duties of the Lead Agencies, Project staff, and recognized committees, work groups, or other managing bodies involved with the Project. These descriptions will be completed within six months of the date of the last initial signature on this Agreement.

Finding: AMOC will make this task a priority action item for completion no later than June 30, 2006.

- C-2. The administrative and adaptive management processes must be restructured to ensure opportunities for and participation by the full spectrum of stakeholders.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: An MOU for collaborative Mexican wolf reintroduction was completed among the six Lead agencies and various Cooperators, establishing AMOC to oversee the Project and promote cooperation, coordination, and communication among interested and affected parties. The MOU also establishes an Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) to provide opportunities for interested publics to help AMOC identify local issues, review and make recommendations regarding Mexican wolf management activities, and evaluate the effectiveness

of ongoing management and communication processes. AMOC meets in closed session at least quarterly in the BRWRA (more often as necessary, with meetings rotating between northern and southern AZ and NM). AMWG meetings are public sessions; they are held on the same temporary and geographic rotation as AMOC meetings. Both have been occurring since February 2003.

Despite the increased frequency and logistical convenience of AMOC and AMWG meetings, participation by some interests has lagged. State, Federal, and Tribal (WMAT) agencies and Greenlee Co. AZ have been consistent, constructive participants. Two Counties signatory to the MOU (Navajo Co. AZ and Sierra Co. NM) have not attended recent meetings. Catron Co. NM participated in developing the MOU, and many Project SOPs, but with a change in County leadership announced in AMOC and AMWG meetings in 2005 that they would not be participating any further for fear of lending credibility to the effort. Various NGOs, primarily livestock owners and growers, have not attended most working AMWG meetings but have attended sessions to provide comment on proposed actions such as a Moratorium on initial releases, SOP 13.0: Control of Mexican Wolves, and the 5-Year Review. NGOs within the conservation community have attended every AMWG meeting, although only one or two have been represented each time. Private (non-affiliated) individuals attend every AMWG meeting, though again no single individual attends each one.

The reasons most often given for non-participation are variable (see AMOC Responses to Public Comment Component). Logistical issues (e.g. travel time and expense), other more pressing issues, lack of prior notice, “too many meetings,” and lack of engagement in discussion and resolution of priorities are among the more frequent reasons given. Many, perhaps even most, public participants in 2004 and 2005 seemed particularly frustrated by how much time AMOC spent establishing procedures for engagement that, ironically, the Project had previously been criticized for failing to establish. Even so, as SOPs and the 5-Year Review came to closure late in 2005, public comment at AMWG meetings began to acknowledge the progress that had been and was being made, and to acknowledge that more attention was now being focused on what needs to be done as opposed to how to work together to identify and address those needs.

Finding: AMOC Lead Agencies and active Cooperators are in complete agreement that constructive engagement of interested and affected parties is essential to Reintroduction Project success, and ultimately to Mexican wolf recovery. Toward that end:

1. AMOC will convene a stakeholders group to assist AMOC in evaluating, and reporting in writing no later than December 31, 2006, social (human and socioeconomic) implications (including estimated annual livestock depredation losses) for any boundary expansions recommended per Recommendation (5), above. Note: The stakeholders advisory group will be Co-Chaired by an AMOC representative and an AMWG Cooperator (County) representative, and include a maximum of 50 other members, representing, insofar as is possible, the full spectrum of stakeholders. This group will comply with FACA, if necessary.

2. No later than December 15, 2006, AMOC will complete a detailed plan for another Reintroduction Project Review. Note: The Reintroduction Project Review will be conducted in 2009-2010 and completed no later than December 31, 2010.
 3. AMOC will make all Reintroduction Project wolf management, outreach, and budget information (redacted as appropriate to protect confidential personal information) available to the public through Annual Reports for the Reintroduction Project, and other publications and outreach materials as appropriate.
 4. AMOC will recommend, through IFT Annual Reports, or a special report updated each year, wolf-related habitat enhancements that can be accomplished through private property incentives programs and Federal, State, Tribal, and County agency planning processes.
 5. AMOC will advocate creating an IFT position in the Alpine field office to work with cooperators and stakeholders throughout Arizona and New Mexico on proactive measures by which to avoid or minimize wolf nuisance and livestock depredation problems. Note: AMOC as a body will not advocate regulatory changes to address carcass removal or disposal issues.
 6. AMOC will maintain and improve administrative and adaptive management processes for the Reintroduction Project to enhance meaningful opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders and interested parties. AMOC efforts will include meeting with the IFT twice each year at the Alpine field office, and offering to meet once each year with the Commission or Board of Supervisors for each County within the BRWRA.
 7. Concomitant with any recommended MWEPA Rule changes, AMOC recommends that State and Tribal Lead Agencies and non-Federal Cooperators make a contingent-obligation request for annual Congressional line item allocations sufficient to cover all aspects of AMOC and AMWG participation in NEPA processes and ESA-related rulemaking processes required by such activities, through to the Record of Decision.
 8. AMOC recommends that no later than April 30, 2006, AMOC State and Tribal Lead Agencies and non-Federal Cooperators complete and deliver to Congress a funding request that is sufficient to fully staff and equip the Reintroduction Project as of October 1, 2006, at levels commensurate with all on-the-ground responsibilities in all areas of responsibility, including wolf management (including control), enforcement, outreach (including establishing a Mexican wolf education center in Hon-Dah Arizona), citizen participation in adaptive management, Reintroduction Project-related research, and landowner incentives.
- C-3. The IFT response protocols must be restructured, and staff capacity enhanced, to ensure immediate response capability to, and resolution of, urgent operational issues, such as depredation incidents.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: SOPs were completed in 2005 for all major IFT activities, through extensive public review during comment periods and discussion in AMWG public meetings. The SOPs are available in downloadable PDF format from <http://azgfd.gov.wolf>. However, existing SOPs will need to be updated as necessary, dysfunctional ones discontinued, and new ones created as the Project evolves.

Overall, capacity for the IFT was not substantially enhanced prior to October 2004. From October 2004 through Spring 2005, enhancement largely consisted of allocating available employees from Lead Agencies to address priority management issues in the field. However, through 2005 IFT staff capacity began to be expanded in more substantial form. Cooperator Public Information Officers began assisting more regularly and more effectively in overall outreach activities. Three FTEs were added to the IFT in 2005, two for AGFD and one for NMDGF. One of the AGFD positions was allocated to IFT outreach responsibilities (see C-4, below); the other two new positions are dedicated to on-the-ground wolf management (the one in NM also will carry IFT Leader responsibilities).

Although much progress has been made, and to a person the IFT is extremely hardworking and productive, through 2005 IFT staff capacity continued to be impacted by within-agency and among-agencies issues, such as:

1. USFWS has consistently fully staffed its committed IFT positions, but, as noted in the Draft 5-Year Review, in 2004 USFWS approved one of its IFT positions to begin graduate studies. Although the thesis project is germane to the Reintroduction Project, graduate study obligations have affected the employee's availability for other Project priorities and the study does rely on IFT resources that might be committed to other priorities if the study were not underway. By and large, though, interns and temporary details of other USFWS (non-Project) staff have probably compensated for any shortfall.
2. Due to base-budget funding constraints, WS is only able to commit 1.25 of a minimum "available" 2.0 FTEs to the Project, when AMOC has assessed the need for WS assistance at 4.0 FTEs dedicated to wolf management purposes, including capture and control as well as depredation investigation.
3. Through 2005, NMDGF allocated 1.0 FTE to all wolf management activities in NM, and IFT staff from other cooperators are frequently required to meet those needs in the periodic absence of the NMDGF employee or to assist the employee in meeting them.
4. USFS has allocated operating expense funds to the IFT, but has not yet responded to an AMOC request for a dedicated USFS communications liaison (minimum 0.5 FTE) within the IFT.

5. As wolf numbers increase on the FAIR, and WMAT is faced with a greater need for information on potential projected wolf impacts on trophy elk hunts, at least another 1.0 FTE and perhaps more will be needed.
6. AGFD has staffed up to meet existing needs in AZ, and to help meet IFT needs throughout the BRWRA, but in the long run will likely not be able to sustain State funding support for these employees.
7. The San Carlos Apache Tribe (SCAT), by Tribal Council choice, is not a Lead Agency or Cooperator in the Reintroduction Project (nor is SCAR included in the BRWRA), but by agreement between SCAT and USFWS Region 2 (Albuquerque NM) IFT resources are used to remove wolves from SCAR as soon as they occur there (regardless of occurrence of depredation issues). These management actions draw on IFT resources (USFWS and WS staff) that would otherwise be available for wolf management on lands that are within the BRWRA.

Finding: SOPs: Although all SOPs identified as essential to the Project were completed in 2005, existing SOPs will need to be updated as necessary, dysfunctional ones discontinued, and new ones created as the Project evolves.

Staff capacity: Given the issues noted above, and the certainty that the BRWRA wolf population will grow with time, IFT staff capacity must be increased in the near term. If the MWEPA were expanded, or dispersal allowed throughout the MWEPA, or initial releases allowed in NM, expansion would be needed even more. Increased effectiveness in planning and evaluation, community outreach, proactive measures to reduce risk of depredation, and response to nuisance and depredation issues are among the more obvious pressing needs.

Therefore:

1. AMOC will maintain all AMOC Reintroduction Project SOPs and continue to require employee compliance with them. Note: herein, “maintain” includes modify, revise, or delete existing SOPs, or add new SOPs, as necessary for purposes of adaptive management.
2. AMOC will advocate creating an IFT position in the Alpine field office to work with cooperators and stakeholders throughout AZ and NM on proactive measures by which to avoid or minimize wolf nuisance and livestock depredation problems. Note: AMOC as a body will not advocate regulatory changes to address carcass removal or disposal issues.
3. AMOC will collaborate with an appropriate entity to complete an IFT staffing needs assessment no later than June 30, 2007, based on (a) Reintroduction Project experience to date and (b) any proposal to amend or replace the current AZ-NM MWEPA.
4. AMOC will advocate creating sufficient IFT positions in each Lead Agency as appropriate to implement the staffing needs assessment conducted pursuant to (2), above.

AMOC will also recommend that at least one IFT member from each Lead Agency be stationed in the Alpine field office, to facilitate and enhance interagency communication and cooperation.

5. Concomitant with any recommended MWEPA Rule changes, AMOC recommends that State and Tribal Lead Agencies and non-Federal Cooperators make a contingent-obligation request for annual Congressional line item allocations sufficient to cover all aspects of AMOC (i.e. including the IFT) and AMWG participation in NEPA processes and ESA-related rulemaking processes required by such activities, through to the Record of Decision.
6. AMOC will recommend that no later than April 30, 2006, AMOC State and Tribal Lead Agencies and non-Federal Cooperators complete and deliver to Congress a funding request that is sufficient to fully staff and equip the Reintroduction Project as of October 1, 2006, at levels commensurate with all on-the-ground responsibilities in all areas of responsibility, including wolf management (including control), enforcement, outreach (including establishing a Mexican wolf education center in Hon-Dah Arizona), citizen participation in adaptive management, Reintroduction Project-related research, and landowner incentives.

C-4. Project outreach must be restructured as necessary to address the Commission, Department, and public concerns expressed here today.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: The approved Project MOU (Attachment 2) establishes and formalizes various means of project-related outreach, including through AMOC and AMWG. The MOU calls for interagency cooperation in developing and reviewing media releases, projects, and other outreach activities. Guidelines for coordinating, developing, and disseminating information for a variety of project-related events have been developed and implemented. An additional outreach component has been the maintenance of a full-time position on the IFT (as an employee of AGFD) that has Project outreach as the primary duties of that position. Moreover, AMOC has approved SOP 3.0: Outreach, to ensure appropriate guidance is given to the IFT and interested parties on performance expectations at the Project and individual employee level. See A-1, A-2, B-4, B-9, B-10, and B-12, above, for additional information regarding outreach.

Finding: Although the basic recommendation for restructuring Project outreach was accomplished in 2004-2005, continual effort will be needed to ensure that progress made to date is sustained, and remaining concerns resolved. Thus:

1. AMOC will direct Reintroduction Project-related outreach efforts in 2006 through the IFT Annual Work Plan to identify and reach specific target audiences, with emphasis on local communities and cooperating agencies within the BRWRA (>75% of outreach activity) and outside the BRWRA (<25% of outreach activity).

2. AMOC will ensure that all Reintroduction Project-related outreach activities emphasize wolf conservation and management as an integrated component of the social (human) as well as the ecological landscape, and provide a balanced, objective perspective on positive and negative aspects of wolves as ecosystem components in a multiple-use landscape of intermingled public, private, and Tribal Trust lands.
 3. AMOC will collaborate with an appropriate entity to complete an IFT staffing needs assessment no later than June 30, 2007, based on (a) Reintroduction Project experience to date and (b) the Arizona-New Mexico Mexican Wolf Nonessential Experimental Population Rule recommended to USFWS.
 4. AMOC will advocate creating sufficient IFT positions in each Lead Agency as appropriate to implement the staffing needs assessment conducted pursuant to (3), above. AMOC will also recommend that at least one IFT member from each Lead Agency be stationed in the Alpine field office, to facilitate and enhance interagency communication and cooperation.
 5. AMOC will maintain and improve administrative and adaptive management processes for the Reintroduction Project to enhance meaningful opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders and interested parties. AMOC efforts will include meeting with the IFT twice each year at the Alpine field office, and offering to meet once each year with the Commission or Board of Supervisors for each County within the BRWRA.
 6. AMOC recommends that no later than April 30, 2006, AMOC State and Tribal Lead Agencies and non-Federal Cooperators complete and deliver to Congress a funding request that is sufficient to fully staff and equip the Reintroduction Project as of October 1, 2006, at levels commensurate with all on-the-ground responsibilities in all areas of responsibility, including wolf management (including control), enforcement, outreach (including establishing a Mexican wolf education center in Hon-Dah Arizona), citizen participation in adaptive management, Reintroduction Project-related research, and landowner incentives.
- C-5. All actions in the wolf project must be in strict compliance with any applicable, approved special rules, policies, protocols, management plans, and interagency agreements.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: All cooperating agencies in the Reintroduction Project obtained detailed legal reviews of the draft MOU prior to signing the agreement. A primary purpose of these legal reviews was to ensure compliance with the laws, regulations, and policies of each of the respective cooperating entities. All Project SOPs are also reviewed while being drafted and before approval to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies. Compliance with applicable rules and mandates is a continuing responsibility of all cooperating agencies in the AMOC. Thus, AMOC will maintain all AMOC Reintroduction Project SOPs and

continue to require employee compliance with them. Note: herein, “maintain” includes modify, revise, or delete existing SOPs, or add new SOPs, as necessary for purposes of adaptive management.

C-6. The Project’s review protocols and procedures must be restructured and improved to ensure that the 5-Year Review is effective and efficient, and an improvement over the 3-Year Review.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: Procedures for conducting the 5-Year Review were developed using input from AMOC Lead Agencies and formal and informal Cooperators. This was a distinct contrast to the 3-Year Review, when the review process was determined by USFWS, although vetted to some extent through the Interagency Management Advisory Group (IMAG). All parties involved in development of the 5-Year Review worked to create a process that would be more effective and efficient than, and an improvement on, the 3-Year Review. A key focus was on providing more opportunities for public comment.

Given that the 5-Year Review will be completed at the end of the eighth year of the Reintroduction Project, albeit due to late formation of AMOC and restructuring of virtually the entire Project, whether it can be considered particularly efficient is moot at best. However, its procedures were agreed upon specifically to improve on aspects of the 3-Year Review, including: (1) assigning AMOC and IFT staff directly involved in administering and implementing the Project to draft the Administrative and Technical components, to make use of their intimate knowledge of Project history and operations and to provide a fresh perspective compared to the 3-Year Review; (2) contracting an independent socioeconomic assessment (a facet absent from the 3-Year Review); and (3) allowing ample time-frames for AMWG discussion and public review of and comments on the draft 5-Year Review report before making findings (recommendations) and finalizing the report.

In particular, AMOC and the IFT allocated considerable time to analyzing and responding to public comment on the draft 5-Year Review, and to editing the document to incorporate suggestions for improvement and to address questions, concerns, and criticisms.

Finding: Strictly from an AMOC perspective, the 5-Year Review has been a substantial improvement over the 3-Year Review from several perspectives: (1) It has been conducted in transparent fashion, in accordance with a reasonably well defined process; (2) AMOC and AMWG meetings throughout the process enabled interested and affected parties who wanted to be well informed about the process to be so informed and ample opportunity to provide comment; (3) Socioeconomic issues were addressed; (4) All recommendations and materials from earlier reviews of the Project and relevant information from all aspects of Project implementation were carefully considered; (5) The 5-Year Review was actually completed, with a thorough discussion among all Lead Agencies and Cooperators, including their Directors, before findings or final recommendations (with completion timeframes as appropriate) were

offered that target specific issues of concern, obstacles to progress, and important areas in which progress to date needs to be sustained.

D. Specific Recommendations from the State Evaluation of the 3-Year Review.

Roles and Functions

D-1. The Mexican Wolf Recovery Program must be restructured to ensure that the two primary components (recovery planning and reintroduction) are managed as collaborative but separate projects.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: The signed MOU describes distinct roles related to recovery and reintroduction for the Lead Agencies. After overcoming various inter-agency issues in 2003 (see B-9, above), increasingly through 2004 and 2005 those distinctions are now being maintained, although constant vigilance is necessary to ensure this. Formation of a new SWDPS Recovery Team in August 2003, with the intent to complete a revised recovery plan by Spring 2006 (see B-2, above), was well coordinated with the overlapping transition to State and Tribal leadership in AMOC for implementing reintroduction activities in AZ and NM. The Recovery Team initially served as a valuable review resource while AMOC and the IFT drafted the 5-Year Review, but this asset was lost when the Team was placed on hiatus in February 2005 (see B-2, above).

Perhaps the key factor in progress on this recommendation was USFWS's hiring of a new Recovery Coordinator in mid-November 2004. The new Coordinator embraced interagency collaboration from the outset, and was consistently able to distinguish between USFWS obligations to leadership of recovery issues and AMOC responsibility for matters pertaining to the Reintroduction Project. This has greatly facilitated efforts to ensure that the two components are managed as collaborative but separate projects.

Finding: The 5-Year Review reaffirms prior conclusions that a Recovery Team, as a means of crafting an updated Recovery Plan and rangewide recovery goals, is essential to articulating and attaining Reintroduction Project population objectives (goals). Nevertheless, AMOC believes it remains important to maintain separation between the two components, to ensure that local interested parties and stakeholders know to whom to look (i.e. AMOC and the IFT) for discussion and resolution of wolf management issues. AMOC is the agreed-upon forum for adaptive management of the Reintroduction Project, and that functionality must be maintained. The Recovery Team needs to be resurrected, to focus on timely completion of an updated Recovery Plan with clear-cut recovery goals that cover but are not restricted to the BRWRA. Both the Technical and Stakeholder Sub-Groups of the Recovery Team could provide valuable support to AMOC in 2006, but the key aspect of AMOC's recommendations in this regard (see the AMOC Recommendations Component) is that the Team would serve in an advisory capacity, not a directive capacity.

D-2. The roles and functions of the Primary Cooperators (AGFD, NMDGF, and the Service) must be restructured to ensure State participation, authorities, and responsibilities as reflected in this report.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment and Finding: See C-1 and C-2 under Commission Directives, above.

D-3. The administrative and adaptive management processes for the Reintroduction Project must be restructured to ensure meaningful opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders and interested parties (see also “Public Participation and Outreach” below).

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment and Finding: See C-1 and C-2 under Commission Directives, above.

D-4. The Service should immediately ask the White Mountain Apache Tribe whether it wishes to become a Primary Cooperator in the overall Reintroduction Project component, or retain such status only on its own Tribal lands.

Status: Completed.

Assessment: Through development of the interagency MOU for the Reintroduction Project, WMAT became a Lead Agency and has been an active participant in all AMOC discussions and decisions regarding Mexican wolf reintroduction. Under the MOU, WMAT has the lead for all activities relating to Mexican wolf reintroduction that occur on WMAT Tribal Trust Lands (i.e. FAIR), and plays a support role as appropriate and feasible off the FAIR.

Finding: WMAT has been a valuable cooperator in the Reintroduction Project. The Project would benefit if SCAT were to voluntarily take on a similar role with regard to the SCAR. However, at this time SCAT remains opposed to wolf reintroduction and declines to become a formal participant in the Reintroduction Project or to allow wolves to disperse to and remain on SCAT.

D-5. The Mexican Wolf Recovery Planning component should be staffed by the Service’s Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator, and centered in Albuquerque. Other elements of this Federally-staffed component should address the captive breeding program, pre-release acclimation husbandry at Sevilleta and other cooperating facilities, program-level outreach, revision of the 1982 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, and coordination of the Mexican wolf recovery planning range-wide, as well as conceptual oversight (not daily supervision) of the reintroduction effort in Arizona and New Mexico.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: USFWS has maintained a Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator (or Acting) since 1992. However, this position was vacant from June 2003, when the former Recovery Coordinator left the program, until mid-November 2004. Although USFWS did assign recovery program personnel to perform in the Recovery Coordinator's capacity during that period of vacancy, not all Recovery Coordinator functions were performed during this time.

USFWS Mexican wolf recovery staff members manage facilities and activities involving acclimation pens at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, assist with other cooperating facilities, establish Recovery Protocols for pre-release husbandry at captive facilities and in on-site acclimation pens, and provide guidance to the AZA Mexican Wolf SSP Program. USFWS Region 2 recovery staff, although not dedicated solely to Mexican wolf recovery, also led range-wide recovery planning and initial revision of the 1982 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan during 2003 and 2004.

USFWS has not hired or maintained staff dedicated to recovery-related outreach functions, due to lack of funding. However, all USFWS personnel assigned to Mexican wolf recovery participate in limited programmatic outreach activities. The only dedicated Mexican wolf outreach staff member is an AGFD IFT employee who performs public outreach for Mexican wolf reintroduction in the BRWRA.

USFWS recovery program staff initially provided limited conceptual oversight of the Reintroduction Project during 2003 and 2004. Conceptual guidance came primarily from the State Wildlife Agencies, though it was vetted with (and approved by) the USFWS Region 2 Director before being implemented through formation of AMOC and AMWG. Since the new USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator was hired in mid-November 2004, however, through him USFWS has increasingly provided the desired blend of conceptual guidance while respecting AMOC and State and Tribal Field Team Leader responsibilities for daily supervision of the IFT and on-the-ground wolf management activities.

Finding: AMOC finds that:

1. USFWS adequately addressed Recovery Program structure issues. As of November 2004, USFWS staff had reinitiated Mexican Wolf recovery planning, and hired a new Recovery Coordinator, who is stationed in Albuquerque.
2. USFWS is adequately addressing captive breeding issues (i.e. facilities and programs), except that Recovery Protocols for pre-release husbandry at captive breeding facilities and in on-site acclimation pens has not been discussed with AMOC. Therefore, no later than June 30, 2006, AMOC will review the USFWS Recovery Protocols for pre-release husbandry at captive breeding facilities and in on-site acclimation pens, and advise USFWS as to whether AMOC believes they are adequate to maximize post-release survival and breeding success.

3. USFWS should allocate sufficient resources to Recovery Program outreach to ensure that the public (particularly interested parties and stakeholders) is adequately aware of progress and impediments thereto.
 4. AMOC recommends completion of a rangewide USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan no later than June 30, 2007. AMOC notes that this will likely not be possible unless the USFWS budget is sufficient to dedicate sufficient staff and resources to fully support the Recovery Team.
 5. AMOC recommends sustaining the current Recovery Coordinator's approach to providing conceptual oversight (i.e. recovery perspective as opposed to daily supervision) of the reintroduction effort in AZ and NM. It facilitates progress, yet gives appropriate deference to the AMOC and State and Tribally-led adaptive management effort.
- D-6. The Recovery Planning component should be responsible for reviewing and approving adaptive management Project implementation protocols and procedures that are developed by the Reintroduction Project component that is outlined below.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: See Item C-3 under Commission Directives, above. The Reintroduction Project MOU draws appropriate distinction between recovery protocols (rangewide protocols that would apply to processes and activities that support any and all wolf reintroduction efforts within the region) and reintroduction procedures (SOPs that apply specifically to the BRWRA Reintroduction Project). All AMOC SOPs developed thus far have been developed in collaboration with USFWS Mexican Recovery Program staff. However, per the MOU, AMOC is the approving body for all AMOC SOPs, except the SOP that identifies the approval process; that one was approved by the AMOC Lead Agency Directors, including the USFWS Region 2 Director, thus delegating their approval authority to AMOC.

Finding: AMOC's existing SOPs were developed and approved appropriately. AMOC will maintain all AMOC Reintroduction Project SOPs and continue to require employee compliance with them. Note: herein, "maintain" includes modify, revise, or delete existing SOPs, or add new SOPs, as necessary for purposes of adaptive management

- D-7. The Reintroduction Project component (in Arizona and New Mexico) must be centered in Alpine, Arizona, and/or elsewhere in the Recovery Area to ensure adequate field presence and outreach to manage released and wild-born wolves effectively, and to minimize real and perceived public conflicts.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: Project field staff members are appropriately distributed in the BRWRA at this time. Most IFT members are stationed in Alpine AZ, working out of an administrative site constructed by AGFD on USFS property in 2005. AMOC Lead Agencies cooperatively fund operational and

maintenance costs for the facility. This central facility helps maximize interaction within the IFT, facilitating communication and teamwork.

As needed, IFT members are sent to outlying locations for temporary duty assignments, typically in conjunction with livestock depredation issues.

Finding: AMOC believes the Reintroduction Project is appropriately centered in Alpine AZ and that recent AGFD contribution of an administrative site provides adequate office space for the IFT at its present capacity. AMOC also believes that the IFT Leaders appropriately deploy staff members to outlying locations as necessary to provide local presence and to address local management issues. IFT coverage is best in Arizona, and sparsest in New Mexico, due to disparities in State Wildlife Agency IFT staffing. See C-3, above, regarding AMOC recommendations on increasing IFT staff capacity and the need for each Lead Agency to assign one of its IFT members to the Alpine administrative site to enhance intra-IFT communication and coordination.

D-8. The IFT Leader must be a state employee, and all elements of the IFT (including biologists and outreach specialists) must report to that Leader. If IFT presence is needed in New Mexico, it must be funded, staffed, structured, and supervised as agreed by the Primary Cooperators, in keeping with the State-lead recommendation above.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: The approved Reintroduction Project MOU states that Field Team Leaders shall be State and Tribal personnel, and the IFT shall act under guidance of the AGFD Field Team Leader on non-tribal lands in AZ, under guidance of the WMAT Field Team Leader on FAIR, and under guidance of the NMDGF Field Team Leader on non-tribal lands in NM.

Finding: Although compliance with this guidance was uneven in 2003 and 2004, it appears to have improved in 2005. Joint annual work planning, monthly IFT meetings, quarterly AMOC meetings, and twice-yearly AMOC Directors Summits seem to have helped improve IFT coordination and cooperation. This progress needs to be sustained, and improved upon.

D-9. The IFT response protocols must be restructured, and staff capacity must be enhanced (and funded) as necessary to ensure immediate (24-hour or less) response capability for, and resolution of, urgent operational issues, such as depredation incidents. Response capability should be reviewed each calendar year to identify appropriate staffing, budget, and response protocol adjustments as reintroduction continues.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment and Finding: See C-3 under Commission Directives, above. See also the AMOC Responses to Public Comment Component for affirmation that IFT response time to depredation incidents is less than 24 hours after the report is received, and improved appreciably from 1998 through 2005.

D-10. All field and other Reintroduction Project protocols, and all management actions in the Project, must always be in strict compliance with any applicable, approved special rules, policies, and protocols, management plans, and interagency agreements.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment and Finding: See C-5 under Commission Directives, above.

D-11. The Reintroduction Project must be adaptively managed by collaboration and consensus among all three Primary Cooperators, with appropriate and meaningful opportunities for participation by stakeholder and other interested parties (see below).

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: The approved MOU has an explicit objective of implementing interagency coordination and cooperation. This coordination involves an expanded set of six Lead Agencies and additional Cooperators. These entities do adaptively manage the Reintroduction Project, with meaningful opportunities for public participation, through AMOC and AMWG. In cases where consensus cannot be reached, management decisions regarding the reintroduction project ultimately lie with the Lead Agency that has jurisdictional authority for wildlife within the geographic area of the management actions (e.g. AGFD for management actions on non-tribal lands in Arizona, NMDGF for management actions in New Mexico, etc.).

Finding: The operational procedure of “jurisdictional leads” (see above) that AMOC uses should be codified as necessary in AMOC’s SOPs and within the descriptions of roles, responsibilities, and processes as described under paragraph 8 of the MOU’s “Lead Agencies agree to:” section. See also the *Finding* for C-1 under Commission Directives, above

D-12. The Reintroduction Project Coordinator position must be restructured and empowered to coordinate the adaptive management process, including identification, planning, review, and approval of future release sites and release protocols for Arizona and/or New Mexico. The Project Leader shall provide a transition between Recovery (Federal) and Reintroduction (State), by reporting to the Recovery Coordinator (Federal) and supervising the Field Team Leader (State).

Status: Not considered necessary to implement.

Assessment: The AGFD, NMDGF, and USFWS Region 2 Directors agreed in discussion on October 31, 2002 and in a November 8, 2002 written summary of that meeting (see Attachment 1) to implement this recommendation. However, the USFWS Region 2 Director changed his mind in February 2003, due to his agency’s previous commitments to the employee in question (i.e. regarding job responsibilities). The AGFD and NMDGF Directors agreed to defer to the USFWS Region 2 Director on this issue. Thus, the approved MOU contains a different description of roles and responsibilities for the Reintroduction Coordinator (renamed as the Field

Projects Coordinator). The MOU states that the USFWS Field Projects Coordinator will serve as communication liaison between AMOC and the IFT; assist with drafting reintroduction procedures, protocols, annual work plans, and annual reports; and plan and coordinate the identification and review of release and translocation sites. Within the IFT, the Field Projects Coordinator thus provides support to the IFT Leaders.

Finding: The State recommendation was superseded by agreement among the AGFD, NMDGF, and USFWS Region 2 Directors. Thus, the roles and responsibilities of the USFWS Field Projects Coordinator should be as described in the signed Reintroduction Project MOU.

D-13. The adaptive management component of the Reintroduction Project must be restructured in collaboration with stakeholders and other interested parties, in accordance with the primary roles and function identified herein. IMAG should be dissolved or restructured to provide a forum open to any and all interested parties. The States prefer that a State-led Conservation Team approach be used to create this forum.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: IMAG has been dissolved, and has been replaced by AMOC, with AMWG as a forum for public participation in adaptive management of the Reintroduction Project. The revised structure is working increasingly effectively, but further improvements are needed (see AMOC Responses to Public Comment Component).

Finding: AMOC will maintain and improve administrative and adaptive management processes for the Reintroduction Project to enhance meaningful opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders and interested parties. AMOC efforts will include meeting with the IFT twice each year at the Alpine field office, and offering to meet once each year with the Commission or Board of Supervisors for each County within the BRWRA.

D-14. With the new adaptive management forum, the Primary Cooperators should use other Cooperators signatory to a Memorandum of Agreement as a sounding board for Project management recommendations that are subsequently approved and implemented by the Primary Cooperators. Consensus should be sought with all formal Cooperators and other interested parties for all decisions, but in the absence of consensus the Primary Cooperators should be jointly responsible and accountable for making the necessary decisions. Signatory cooperator status in this adaptive management forum should be open to any interested governmental and non-governmental agency or organization. Participation by individuals should be without limit, except that voting on recommendations should be restricted to formal Cooperators.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: The recommendation listed above generally describes the means by which Lead Agencies and Cooperators have been operating under the approved MOU. They actually began to function along those lines beginning in February 2003, prior to completion of the MOU. Two

departures from the recommendation as stated above are that (1) in the absence of consensus, Lead Agencies are not jointly (or at least not equally) responsible for management decisions, but primary responsibility rests with the agency that possesses wildlife management authority within the jurisdictional boundaries of that action, and (2) non-governmental entities are not eligible to be signatories to the MOU but can participate in AMWG to assist in adaptively managing Mexican wolf reintroduction. Where the above recommendation differs from the approved MOU, the guidance within the MOU should be followed.

Finding: As noted in D-13, AMOC will maintain and improve administrative and adaptive management processes for the Reintroduction Project to enhance meaningful opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders and interested parties. However, AMOC will continue to recognize agency legal authorities and mandates by: (1) in the absence of consensus, deferring final decisions, after consideration of recommendations from all Lead Agencies, to the Lead Agency with primary responsibility (i.e. wildlife management authority) within the jurisdictional boundaries of that action; and (2) ensuring that governmental and non-governmental entities are not signatory to the MOU are afforded ample opportunity through AMWG meetings to contribute to adaptively managing Mexican wolf reintroduction.

Public Participation and Outreach

D-15. The administrative and adaptive management processes for the Reintroduction Project component must be restructured to ensure meaningful opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders and interested parties (see above).

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment and Finding: See D-2 under Commission Directives, above.

D-16. Reintroduction Project outreach must be restructured and funded as necessary to address the Commission, Department, and public concerns expressed in this report.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment and Finding: See D-4 under Commission Directives, above.

D-17. An outreach specialist must be added to the IFT, to be supervised by the IFT Leader with funding provided through the AGFD-NMDGF-Service Memorandum of Understanding for this Project, to focus entirely on reintroduction issues as opposed to recovery issues.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: Prior to 2005, an AGFD IFT position served a part-time outreach function (40% outreach; 60% field work). This was clearly insufficient to meet Project needs (see AMOC Responses to Public Comment Component). Thus, the Draft 5-Year Review included a recommendation that USFWS provide an outreach specialist for Mexican wolf reintroduction,

because of a perception that a USFWS employee would have greater ability as a Federal employee to move across State and Tribal boundaries when requested. The recommendation also suggested that if additional Project outreach specialists were deemed necessary by individual Lead Agencies or Cooperators, they should be encouraged to support the USFWS specialist. However, the recommendation noted that funding for additional outreach specialists should not be provided through USFWS funds that would otherwise support implementation of Mexican wolf reintroduction by the Lead Agencies.

In 2004 discussions, AMOC noted that a Project outreach specialist, regardless of agency of employment, should be able to serve all cooperating agencies under the MOU without regard for jurisdictional boundaries, so long as individual agency protocols for press releases and media events were respected and the appropriate Lead Agency has final approval over release of such information. It was also clear by that time that USFWS was not in a position to fund an outreach specialist for the Project. It had also become very clear that public dissatisfaction with the Project outreach effort was growing. Thus, in 2005, AGFD responded to AMOC discussion and priorities by increasing its part-time outreach position to full-time Project outreach throughout the BRWRA. In addition, in 2004 cooperating agency Public Information Officers began increasing their support for the Project, primarily in terms of outreach through broader mass media outlets, especially those in Albuquerque NM, Phoenix AZ, and Pinetop-Lakeside AZ.

Finding: IFT staff outreach capacity has been increased to a level believed sufficient to meet Project needs. Ongoing assessment of performance needs to be maintained, and sufficient funds must be allocated to support the effort. Therefore, AMOC will direct Reintroduction Project-related outreach efforts in 2006 through the IFT Annual Work Plan to identify and reach specific target audiences, with emphasis on local communities and cooperating agencies within the BRWRA (>75% of outreach activity) and outside the BRWRA (<25% of outreach activity).

Technical (Biological) Recommendations in the 3-Year Review

D-18. Given the time constraints of this independent review, the States are unable to provide detailed technical recommendations on biological aspects of the Reintroduction Project. However, we wish to affirm that we find scientific merit in the biological recommendations offered in Paquet et al. (2001), and in some of those offered in the Stakeholders Workshop final report.

Status: Comment only; not considered necessary to complete or implement.

Assessment and Finding: This comment did not require further consideration.

D-19. Not later than January 31, 2003, the Primary Cooperators should jointly decide upon which technical recommendations to take through the newly restructured Reintroduction Project adaptive management process, for discussion, refinement, and implementation, and which ones to assign to the Recovery Program to address at that level. We note again that the Reintroduction Project continues to suffer from the Service's failure to revise the

Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, to integrate reintroduction population objectives with appropriate recovery objectives.

Status: Completed.

Assessment: This item was initiated but was not completed within the assigned timeframe. Technical recommendations could not be brought to the Reintroduction Project's newly restructured adaptive management process by January 2003, because the MOU codifying that process was not completed until October 2003. However, the Lead Agencies and Cooperators recognized the value in completing this task, thus they used the 5-Year Review process to complete it.

Finding: The 5-Year Review includes recommendations that AMOC will implement through AMWG and others that could most effectively be pursued with assistance from the Recovery Team. However, only the recommendation regarding completion of a Recovery Plan clearly must be assigned to the Recovery Team (see B-2, above, for additional relevant information).

D-20. Not later than March 31, 2003, the Primary Cooperators must discuss their recommendations with other Cooperators in public session, and develop a draft plan for implementing the recommendations selected. This plan must include timelines and measurable objectives for implementation.

Status: Not completed.

Assessment: See D-19 Assessment, above.

Finding: AMOC's 5-Year Review recommendations (see AMOC Recommendations Component) include, as appropriate timeframes and defined objectives. The recommendations and the implementation process will be discussed at length in AMWG meetings, beginning on January 26, 2006 (Safford AZ) and January 27, 2006 (Silver City NM).

D-21. At least annually thereafter, the Primary Cooperators must present to stakeholders and cooperators an annual report and annual work plan for discussion and comment. These documents would collectively serve as the monitoring and evaluation components needed for adaptive management. The agreed-upon annual work plans must be flexible (adaptive), so changing needs can be met, but must also be followed sufficiently closely to allow effective evaluation and monitoring of project actions in a manner that will provide a solid foundation for subsequent decision-making processes and adaptive management.

Status: Not completed because it is a continuing need that is being addressed.

Assessment: Since 2003, considerable progress has been made in "catching up" on production of Annual Reports. All IFT Annual Reports for 1998-2004 are now posted in downloadable PDF format at <http://azgfd.gov/wolf>. Although Annual Work Plans were not completed in timely

fashion in prior years, the 2006 plan was completed before the Calendar Year (2006) began and will be discussed in AMWG sessions in January 2006.

Finding: AMOC will continue to work toward completing IFT Annual Work Plans in October for the coming Calendar Year, and will make all Reintroduction Project wolf management, outreach, and budget information (redacted as appropriate to protect confidential personal information) available to the public through Annual Reports for the Reintroduction Project published in April of each year, and other publications and outreach materials as appropriate.

Five-Year Review

D-22. The Reintroduction Project's review protocols and procedures must be restructured and improved to ensure that the 5-Year Review is (a) effective and efficient, (b) makes full use of all appropriate material from the 3-Year Review, (c) an improvement over the 3-Year Review, and (d) completed by September 30, 2004.

Status: Completed.

Assessment and Finding: See C-6 under Commission Directives, above.

TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1 (information current as of October 2005). Estimated costs of Mexican wolf conservation by cooperating agencies since initial releases occurred in 1998 in the Arizona-New Mexico Blue Range Reintroduction Project. See footnotes below for information essential to understanding the limitations of the information provided below; the costs reported herein are “best possible” estimates, not exact figures.								
Cost Estimates (= Funds Expended)								
Fiscal Year	AGFD State ²	AGFD Federal ³	NMDGF State ⁴	NMDGF Federal ⁵	USDA FS ⁶	USDA WS ⁷	USFWS ⁸	Total
98	60,632	25,797	0	0	3,000	0	489,700	579,227
99	36,094	100,100	12,250	36,750	10,000	0	581,750	777,043
00	50,896	139,513	17,000	51,000	11,500	0	744,187	1,014,096
01	56,500	168,711	17,000	51,000	13,500	0	936,589	1,243,301
02	53,000	161,277	17,000	51,000	7,000	0	781,223	1,070,502
03	110,000	188,163	17,000	51,000	12,500	150,000	819,977	1,348,643
04	174,357	210,135	20,000	60,000	62,500	150,000	833,790	1,510,786
05 ⁹	279,942	312,246	20,000	60,000	142,500	150,000	1,057,000	2,021,688
06 ¹⁰	291,750	518,250	40,000	120,000	62,500	150,000	1,265,000	2,447,500
Total	1,113,171	1,824,192	160,250	480,750	325,000	600,000	7,509,216	12,012,786

² “AGFD State” includes all AGFD funds other than those received from Federal sources.

³ “AGFD Federal” includes all funds expended by AGFD that were of Federal origin via ESA Section 6, Pittman-Robertson, Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program, State Wildlife Grants, and/or contract with USFWS, USFS, or another Federal agency.

⁴ “NMDGF State” includes all NM funds other than those received from Federal sources.

⁵ “NMDGF Federal” includes all funds expended by NMGFD that were of Federal origin. Prior to FY06, all these were USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Program contract funds received by NMDGF. Beginning in FY06 (estimates), 50% are expected to originate from USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Program contract funds and 50% from State Wildlife Grant funds.

⁶ “USFS” cost figures through 2002 are estimates generated in April 2003 for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (Alpine and Clifton Ranger Districts) and the Gila Nation Forest (Wilderness Ranger District).

⁷ “USDA WS” cost figures represent directed Congressional allocations specifically for wolf work in AZ-NM.

⁸ “USFWS” cost figures are for the Service’s Mexican Wolf Recovery Program only, and include all funds conveyed by contract to USDA WS and WMAT (White Mountain Apache Tribe) for work on the Mexican wolf reintroduction project. USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Program contract funds conveyed to AGFD (all of which are included in the AGFD Federal column in this Table) are as follows: FY98 \$400; FY99 \$88,100; FY00 \$126,513; FY01 \$152,711; FY02 \$146,277; FY03 \$162,623; FY04 \$189,795; FY05 \$0 (zero); and FY06 \$175,000.

⁹ FY05 costs are estimates; the Fiscal Year will not end until June 30 (State) or September 30 (Federal), 2005. The totals will be adjusted when final expenditures for the year have been reported.

¹⁰ FY06 costs are estimates; the Fiscal Year will not end until June 30 (State) or September 30 (Federal), 2006. The totals will be adjusted as changes occur during the year, and again when final expenditures for the year have been reported.

Table 2. Documented depredation incidents and associated wolf activities and management actions (N=46) (Incidents occurred from 1999-2004).

Wolf #	Pack Name	CD	MD	SD	RFD	Carcass	Translocated	Fate as of end of 2005
166	Campbell Blue	X			X	X		Permanently Removed
168	Gavilan	X			X			Permanently Removed
183	Gavilan	X			X	X		Permanently Removed
190	Mule	X			X	X		Permanently Removed
191	Pipestem	X			X	X	X	Dead
208	Pipestem	X		X	X	X	X	Permanently Removed
507	Bluestem	X	X			X		In the Wild
509	Francisco	X		X		X	X	Dead
511	Francisco	X		X		X	X	Captivity
521	Bluestem	X	X			X		In the Wild
555	Gavilan	X						Unknown
562	Pipestem/Luna	X		X	X	X		In the Wild
574	Saddle	X	X		X			Lethally Controlled
582	Gavilan	X	X					Dead
583	Gavilan/Luna	X			X		X	In the wild
584	Gavilan/Gapiwi	X	X		X	X	X	Dead
585	Gavilan	X	X		X			Dead
586	Gavilan	X	X				X	Unknown
592	Campbell B/Sycam	X	X		X	X	X	Lethally Controlled
623	Pipestem	X		X	X			Dead
624	Pipestem/Wild/Gap	X		X		X	X	Unknown
625	Pipestem	X		X	X			Dead
626	Pipestem	X		X	X			Dead
627	Pipestem	X		X			X	Unknown
628	Pipestem	X			X	X	X	Permanently Removed
632	Lupine			X		X	X	Permanently Removed
639	Bluestem	X	X				X	Dead
644	Francisco/Cerro			X				Dead
646	Saddle	X				X		Dead
648	Saddle/Sycamore	X		X	X		X	Captivity
729	Red Rock	X			X	X		Lethal Control
732	Red Rock	X		X			X	In the Wild
754	Bluestem	X					X	Unknown
756	Bluestem	X	X				X	Dead
755	Bluestem	X	X					Unknown
757	Bluestem	X	X					Unknown
758	Bluestem	X	X					Unknown
794	Francisco/Bonito	X						Unknown
796	Cienega/San Mat	X	X			X	X	In the wild
797	Francisco/Saddle	X	X		X	X	X	In the wild
798	Francisco	X		X		X	X	Dead
799	Francisco	X	X		X	X	X	Dead
800	Francisco	X					X	Dead
801	Francisco	X				X	X	Dead
832	Francisco	X		X		X		Unknown
903	San Mateo	X		X				In the Wild
46	Totals	44	16	16	20	23	24	
100	Percentage	96	35	35	43	50	52	

Abbreviations:

- CD = Confirmed depredation
- MD = Multiple depredations
- SD = Suspected depredation
- RFD = Removed for depredation

Note: Carcass = Wolves that have been seen Scavenging on dead livestock

GROUP	Wolf #	Pack Name	Carcass Feeding Date/s	Depredation Date/s	Carcass-feeding Preceded Depredation (Yes/No)
Group One	183	Gavilan	8/15/99	8/11/99, 8/30/99, 9/8/99, 12/26/99, 1/11/00	N
	509	Francisco	3/6/03	8/16/02	N
	511	Francisco	3/6/03, 8/19/03	8/16/02	N
	584	Gavilan/Gapiwi	2/8/00	8/11/99,8/30/99, 9/8/99, 12/26/99, 1/11/00	N
	592	Campbell Blue Sycamore	5/01	4/18/01, 6/3/01	N
	624	Pipestem/Wild/Gapiwi	4/10/03	7/11/99	N
	628	Pipestem	5/11/01, 4/26/02	7/11/99, 6/15/00,5/11/01	N
	632	Lupine	12/27/01, 4/5/02	12/27/01	N
	646	Saddle	7/30/99	7/11/99	N
	798	Francisco	3/7/03, 8/19/03	8/16/02	N
	799	Francisco	3/7/03	8/16/02, 3/9/04, 3/18/04	N
	801	Francisco	3/7/03, 8/11/03	8/16/02	N
	Group Two	190	Mule	5/11/01,4/26/02	5/11/01, 3/23/02, 3/26/02,4/26/02
191		Pipestem	4/4/99, 6/16/99	4/4/99, 6/15/99, 6/22/99, 6/26/99, 7/4/99, 7/11/99	N
208		Pipestem	4/4/99, 6/16/99	4/4/99, 6/15/99, 6/22/99, 6/26/99, 7/4/99, 7/11/99	
507		Bluestem	8/23/02	8/21/02, 9/29/02	N
521		Bluestem	8/23/02	8/21/02, 9/29/02	N
562		Pipestem	4/4/99, 6/16/99	4/4/99, 6/15/99, 6/22/99, 6/26/99, 7/4/99, 7/11/99	N
Group Three	166	Campbell Blue	2/7/01, 3/2/01, 5/01	6/3/01	Y
	729	Red Rock	8/7/03,	3/9/04, 3/18/04	Y
	796	Cienega/ San M	11/17/03	5/1/04	Y
	797	Francisco	3/7/03, 8/25/03, 8/26/03	3/20/04	Y
	832	Francisco	7/21/03	5/1/04	Y

Wolf #	Current "Locations"
166	Permanently Removed
729	Dead-Lethal Control
796	In the Wild
797	In the Wild
832	Unknown

Appendix 1. Commission Directives to Arizona Game and Fish Department and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Summary of Discussions Among the Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Regarding Management of Mexican Wolf Recovery and Reintroduction Efforts

November 8, 2002 (Revised Final)

In separate public sessions during September 2003, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the New Mexico State Game Commission passed motions providing guidance to the two agencies on changes they deemed necessary in Mexican wolf Recovery and Reintroduction, as they pertain to the States of Arizona and New Mexico. The direction was as follows:

1. The roles and functions of the Primary Cooperators (AGFD, NMDGF, Service) must be restructured to ensure State participation, authorities, and responsibilities as reflected in today's [Commission meeting] discussion.
2. The administrative and adaptive management processes must be restructured to ensure opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of stakeholders.
3. The Interagency Field Team response protocols must be restructured, and staff capacity must be enhanced, to ensure immediate response capability to, and resolution of, urgent operational issues, such as depredation incidents.
4. Project outreach must be restructured as necessary to address the Commission, Department, and public concerns expressed today.
5. All actions in the Project must be in strict compliance with any applicable, approved special rules, policies, protocols, management plans, and interagency agreements.
6. The Project's review protocols and procedures must be restructured and improved to ensure that the 5-year review is effective and efficient, and an improvement over the 3-Year Review.

The Arizona Commission also:

1. Required its Department to resolve issues 1, 2, and 3 within 60 days of September 30, 2002, at the Primary Cooperator level, and that the changes and the issues they reflect be taken through the restructured Adaptive Management Process for stakeholder discussion and further refinement.
2. Directed its Department to restructure the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project within 180 days of September 30, 2002, and report back to the Commission on the results of this effort in April 2003.
3. Reserved the right, if these issues are not resolved within the timeframes outlined in the letter, to take further action on the Department's participation in this Project.

The two State agencies met with the Service on October 31, 2002 to discuss how to comply with the Commissions' guidance. They resolved that the Recovery and Reintroduction components would be separated more clearly in future planning and implementation efforts. To achieve this:

Recovery

1. The Service will disband the current MW Recovery Team and assemble a new one to revise the outdated current plan, using:
 - a. The draft “Thiel plan.”
 - b. New information gained through ongoing wolf recovery efforts.
 - c. Information contained in the Service’s 3-year review of the Mexican wolf conservation program.
 - d. Any other available and relevant information.
2. The Service and the States will ensure that the revised Recovery Plan provides specific, measurable objectives for accomplishing downlisting and delisting the Mexican wolf.
3. The Service, with assistance from the States, will identify prospective Recovery Team members from the appropriate stakeholders range-wide and technical experts, with a clear understanding of the dichotomy between the Team’s role (developing a Recovery Plan) and the separate and distinct State-led Reintroduction effort.
4. The Service will focus its Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator (B. Kelly) on guiding and implementing the Recovery Program, thus providing appropriate guidance to the Reintroduction Project (see below).

Reintroduction

1. The Service will focus its Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Coordinator (J. Oakleaf) as the administrative and coordination liaison between the Federal Recovery Coordinator and the State-led Reintroduction Project. The Reintroduction Coordinator will be responsible for:
 - a. Developing and maintaining, in collaboration with the States, protocols and processes by which the Project shall be planned, conducted, and evaluated through the principles of adaptive management. Said protocols and processes must be compatible with any guidance from the Recovery Team as it revises the Recovery Plan (subject to approval by the Service’s Regional Director), and of course must fully comply with applicable Federal and State laws.
 - b. Planning and coordinating identification, review, and approval (subject to State concurrence) of additional release sites in the current Recovery Area.
2. The States shall be responsible for implementing the Reintroduction Project in Arizona and New Mexico, given that:
 - a. Tribal roles and functions in this restructuring have yet to be discussed, let alone resolved, with the Tribes. Tribal authorities will be fully respected by the States in re-defining Reintroduction Project roles and functions of the Primary and any other cooperators.
 - b. The principles of adaptive management shall be used to oversee the Reintroduction Project.
 - i. A representative from each State wildlife agency and the Service’s Reintroduction Coordinator shall be the leads in adaptive management.

- ii. The States, in collaboration with the Reintroduction Coordinator, shall discuss and resolve with current IMAG (Interagency Management Advisory Group) members, and other interested and affected parties, how best to structure and conduct the adaptive management process. The intended objective is to afford any and all responsible interested parties opportunities to constructively and productively participate in the adaptive management process.
 - iii. The Primary Cooperators shall document the revised adaptive management process and construct appropriate guidance documents for it.
 - iv. The Primary Cooperators shall use the Adaptive Management Group as a sounding board for discussions and issues pertaining to the Reintroduction Project, but shall remain responsible for making the necessary decisions for the Project, and/or recommendations to the Recovery Program.
- c. The Reintroduction Project shall be implemented on the ground through a State-led (or Tribal-led, as appropriate to the jurisdictions involved) Field Team approach.
 - i. The Field Team may operate in both States as a single Team, or be split into separate Teams or Sub-Teams as appropriate to ensure the required management and response capability at the local level.
 - ii. The Field Team(s) may operate differently on Tribal lands, subject to pending discussions with Tribal partners.
 - iii. The Field Teams shall be guided by, and report back up through, the Primary Cooperators, represented by their Adaptive Management leads.
 1. A State Field Team Leader shall be responsible for directing the daily activities of the Field Team.
 2. The Field Team shall draft annual Work Plans, Performance Reports, and new or revised operating protocols/procedures that are subject to Primary Cooperator approval, after the Primary Cooperators complete appropriate discussions with the Adaptive Management Group.

Summary

The Service is responsible for providing guidance and coordinated information to all interested parties relative to recovery of the Mexican wolf. The States and Tribes are responsible for conducting reintroduction efforts in such a manner that they contribute directly to recovery. Other federal, state, local, and private stakeholders have to some extent shared responsibilities, or at least significant stakes, in these areas. The intent of the current Primary Cooperators is to realign the Recovery and Reintroduction components so they are fully integrated, smoothly coordinated, and effective.

This document begins, but does not complete progress toward achieving the direction that was given to the two State wildlife agencies by their respective Commissions in September 2002. The Primary Cooperators will, however, complete this effort before March 31, 2003, through appropriate collaboration with Tribal and other interested parties.

Appendix 2. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under which the Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project operates.

Memorandum of Understanding
among the
Arizona Game and Fish Department,
New Mexico Game and Fish Department,
U.S.D.A. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Wildlife Services,
U.S.D.A Forest Service,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
White Mountain Apache Tribe,
Arizona Counties of Graham, Greenlee, and Navajo,
New Mexico Counties of Catron and Sierra,
and the
New Mexico Department of Agriculture

Final (Agency Approval): October 31, 2003

This Memorandum of Understanding (hereafter Agreement) is made and entered into by and among the:

1. Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), as authorized to enter into agreements as the administrative agent of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, i.e. A.R.S. Title 17-231.B.7; and consistent with Cooperative Agreement 1416000291201 - A.G. Contract No. KR90-1847-CIV, between AGFD and the Service for recovery of federally listed endangered species;
2. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), as authorized to enter into agreements by NMAC Section 11-1-1 et seq. and NMSA Section 17-2-42; and consistent with Memorandum of Agreement 1448-00002-95-0800, which delineates a cooperative working relationship for accomplishment of mutual goals in endangered species conservation and recovery; NMDGF's participation in this Agreement is both authorized and limited by New Mexico laws, particularly the New Mexico Wildlife Conservation Act (17-2-37 NMSA through 17-2-46 NMSA 1978); NMDGF can attempt to undertake only those actions within this Agreement that are in compliance with the laws and regulations of the State of New Mexico;
3. U.S.D.A. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (WS), as authorized to enter into agreements, i.e. Animal Damage Control Act of March 2, 1931, as amended (46 Stat. 1468; 7 USC 426-426b and 426c);
4. U.S.D.A Forest Service Southwestern Region (USFS), as authorized under the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528 (note 528-531)), and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1536, 1538-1540);

5. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 2 (Service), as authorized to enter into agreements, i.e. the Endangered Species Act, 1531 USC et seq.;
6. White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT), as authorized to enter into agreements, i.e. Article IV Section 1 of the Tribal Constitution;
7. Graham County (GraCo), Greenlee County (GreCo), and Navajo County (NaCo), as authorized under the State of Arizona, enabling counties to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens, pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes 11-806(B), as well as County laws, including County land-use plans, water and watershed plans, and environmental and natural resource laws and policies, as well as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo;
8. Catron County (CaCo) and Sierra County (SiCo), as authorized under the State of New Mexico, granting powers necessary and proper to provide the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity, and improve the morals, orders, comfort, and convenience of any County or its inhabitants, pursuant to New Mexico Revised Statute 4-7-31 (NMSA 1978), as well as County laws, including County land-use plans, water and watershed plans, and environmental and natural resource laws and policies, as well as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; and
9. New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA), as authorized to enter into agreements in accordance with 76-1-2-F NMSA 1978.

Collectively, all parties to this Agreement are referred to as Signatories.

Collectively, the AGFD, NMDGF, USFS, Service, WMAT, and WS are referred to in this Agreement as Lead Agencies, the agencies with primary regulatory jurisdiction and/or management authority over the Mexican wolf in Arizona and New Mexico. Additional Lead Agencies (i.e. additional Tribal Governments) may be added to this Agreement upon their request, by concurrence from the Signatory Lead Agencies and written amendment to this document.

Collectively, the Counties and NMDA are referred to in this Agreement as Cooperators, which are other State agencies and County governments that have an interest in Mexican wolf management. Additional Cooperators may be added to this Agreement upon their request, by concurrence from the Signatory Lead Agencies and Cooperators and written amendment to this document.

Purpose

The purpose of this Agreement is to establish a framework for adaptively managing the Mexican wolf reintroduction project in and around the BRWRA to contribute toward recovery, including downlisting and delisting.

Objectives

This Agreement is made and entered into by the Signatories to achieve the following objectives:

1. Continue a long-term effort (hereafter referred to as “Project”) to reestablish Mexican wolves in the BRWRA of east-central Arizona and west-central New Mexico, and thus contribute to achieving approved recovery goals.
2. Apply the principles of adaptive management to all aspects of the Project, and provide opportunities for the Signatories and all other interested parties to engage in discussion of (and provide timely, substantive, constructive comment on) Project-related issues and activities.
3. Develop and implement interagency coordination and cooperation protocols, procedures, and schedules for this Agreement.
4. Develop and facilitate implementation of appropriate management, monitoring, evaluation, impact assessment, mitigation, and other Project-related practices.
5. Recognize and respect the separate authorities of the Signatory agencies, and the interests of other governmental entities and other parties.
6. Enhance awareness of the Signatory agencies, other interested (non-signatory) parties (e.g. cities, towns, citizens, and nongovernmental organizations) regarding the Project, and encourage and enhance their participation in the Project.

Witnesseth:

WHEREAS, the Endangered Species Act of 1973 declared the policy of Congress to be that all Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered species and threatened species and shall utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act;

WHEREAS, the AGFD, a State resource agency, has determined that direct participation in reestablishment of the Mexican wolf would be consistent with its current program to reestablish extirpated nongame and endangered wildlife in Arizona, and is essential to representing the State's interest in, and authority for, management of the wildlife resources that are held as a public trust for the people of Arizona;

WHEREAS, the NMDGF, a State resource agency, has determined that direct participation in reestablishment of the Mexican wolf would be consistent with its mandates under the New Mexico Wildlife Conservation Act, and is essential to representing the State's mandates and authorities for management of all protected wildlife resources that are held as a public trust for the people of New Mexico;

WHEREAS, the AGFD and NMDGF, as State wildlife agencies, have policies that recognize it is essential for the success of wildlife programs to recognize, assess, and protect the customs and cultures of peoples and communities affected by wildlife programs.

WHEREAS, the USFS, a Federal land management agency has the responsibility under the National Forest Management Act, of 1982, to provide for the diversity of plant and animal communities and manage fish and wildlife habitat to maintain viable populations and to further the conservation and recovery of Federally listed species under Section 7(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act, 1973 as amended on National Forest Lands;

WHEREAS, the Service, a Federal land management and regulatory agency, is responsible for initiating, conducting, and supporting programs for the recovery of listed populations under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Such programs include those designated to recover the Mexican wolf;

WHEREAS, the Service is responsible for providing guidance and coordinated information to all interested parties relative to recovery of the Mexican wolf; the States and (if they so choose) Tribes are responsible for conducting reintroduction efforts in such a manner that they contribute directly to recovery; and other Federal, State, local, and private Cooperators have to some extent shared responsibilities, or at least significant stakes, in these areas;

WHEREAS, the Service, AGFD, and NMDGF have been cooperating since 1998 under a Memorandum of Understanding to carry out this Project, and that agreement is scheduled to expire in October 2003;

WHEREAS, the Service conducted a 3-year review of the Mexican Wolf Recovery and Reintroduction Program in 2001 that identified areas of potential improvement;

WHEREAS, at the request of the Service, the AGFD and NMDGF conducted an independent review of the Service 3-year review in 2002, and the Lead Agencies have determined it advisable to redefine their relationships and responsibilities, and their relationships with Cooperators and other interested parties, by:

1. Restructuring the roles and functions of the Lead Agencies to ensure appropriate State and Tribal participation, and recognition of State and Tribal authorities and responsibilities as reflected in discussions among the Lead Agencies during and subsequent to the 2002 independent review.
2. Restructuring the Project's administrative and adaptive management processes to ensure opportunities for, and participation by, the full spectrum of Cooperators and other interested parties.
3. Restructuring the Project's Interagency Field Team response protocols, and enhancing staff capacity, to ensure immediate response capability to, and resolution of, urgent operational issues, such as depredation incidents.
4. Restructuring the Project's outreach efforts as necessary to address the concerns expressed by State Wildlife Commissions, State and Tribal Wildlife Agencies, and the public during the aforementioned reviews.

5. Ensuring that all actions in the Project are in strict compliance with any applicable approved special rules, policies, protocols, management plans, and interagency agreements.
6. Restructuring the Project's review protocols and procedures, and improving them to ensure that the Project's 5-year review is effective and efficient, and an improvement over the 3-Year Review.
7. Realigning Recovery and Reintroduction components so they are fully integrated, smoothly coordinated, and effective, through appropriate collaboration with Tribes and other interested parties.

WHEREAS, the WMAT, a Federally-recognized Indian Tribe, has determined that direct participation in reestablishment of the Mexican wolf would be consistent with its current wildlife and resource management programs and plans, and is important to representing the Tribe's interests in, and authority for, management of wildlife resources on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation;

WHEREAS, the WMAT adopted the WMAT Mexican Wolf Management Plan in 2000, and the WMAT and Service have been cooperating under Cooperative Agreements since 2000 to carry out this Project on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation;

WHEREAS, the WS, a Federal program, is responsible for providing Federal leadership and expertise to resolve conflicts between humans and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. Conflicts are resolved in cooperation with Federal, State, and Tribal agencies, individuals, and other public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions;

WHEREAS, Arizona and New Mexico Counties are legally responsible for the protection of health, safety, and welfare of individuals and communities that may be affected by reintroduction and recovery of the Mexican wolf;

WHEREAS, the Arizona Counties are participating in the Mexican wolf recovery and delisting program and this Project under the County authorities to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens, and to manage natural resources within the boundaries of the Counties.

WHEREAS, the New Mexico Counties are participating in the Mexican wolf recovery and delisting program and this Project under the County authorities to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens, and to manage natural resources within the boundaries of the Counties.

WHEREAS, "adaptive management" is a foundation for this Agreement, and means "learning by doing" and using objective analysis and informed opinion to determine the need for, and direction of, changes in relevant policies, procedures, plans, and actions," for purposes of this Agreement "adaptive management" includes public participation, and processes for evaluating

and adjusting the Project to better achieve its objectives, as experience and knowledge are gained through implementation, study, scientific research, and discussion.

WHEREAS, in the interest of enhancing communication, Black's Law Dictionary (7th Edition; ISBN 0314241302) and Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (11th Edition; ISBN 0877798095) shall be the primary references for words used in this Agreement;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the above premises, the Signatories enter into this Agreement to accomplish its purpose and objectives.

The Lead Agencies agree to:

1. Use the principles of adaptive management to manage this Project, and to cooperate, coordinate, and communicate with each other, all Cooperators, and other interested and affected parties to restructure and document the adaptive management framework for this Project.
2. Assign one employee (and one or more alternates) as Lead Participant in an Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (hereafter Committee; one member per Lead Agency) to guide this Project. The Committee Lead Participant from AGFD, NMDGF, or WMAT shall serve as Committee Chair (2-year term, subject to renewal), to establish a non-Federal lead to ensure compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.
3. Afford any and all interested parties substantive opportunities to constructively and productively participate in the Project, through an Adaptive Management Work Group (hereafter Work Group). The Lead Participant from AGFD, NMDGF, or WMAT shall serve as Work Group Chair (2-year term, subject to renewal), to establish a non-Federal lead to ensure compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Work Group shall:
 - a. Meet regularly (at least quarterly – January, April, July, and October) in public session to enhance communication among, and provide for broader participation in the Project by the public, including Lead Agencies and Cooperators (i.e. signatory entities) and other interested parties (i.e. non-signatory participants);
 - b. Review and make recommendations to the Lead Agencies on any management plans (including Annual Work Plans) or operating procedures that pertain specifically to this Project, as opposed to the overall Recovery Program;
 - c. Enhance communication with other interested parties and the public, to keep them informed on the Project;
 - d. Identify (and, as appropriate, address) local issues and concerns;
 - e. Evaluate the effectiveness of management and communication processes each year; and
 - f. Provide a public forum for discussion of issues pertaining to the Project. However, the Lead Agencies shall, by applicable State, Tribal, and Federal law, remain responsible for making necessary decisions for the Project, and any recommendations to the Recovery Coordinator.

4. Provide logistical and other support as necessary for the Committee, Work Group, and Project.
5. Implement, through the Project (subject to guidance by the Service Region 2 Regional Director-approved recovery protocols), the objectives and strategies of the:
 - a. Service Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan;
 - b. Final Environmental Impact Statement on Reintroduction of the Mexican Wolf in the Southwest;
 - c. Mexican Wolf Nonessential Experimental Population Rule (50 CFR 17.84(k));
 - d. AGFD cooperative reintroduction plan for the Mexican wolf in Arizona (NGEWP Technical Report 56);
 - e. 1998 Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (or any subsequent revisions); and
 - f. WMAT Mexican Wolf Management Plan and the Cooperative Agreement between WMAT and the Service for Assistance in Mexican Wolf Monitoring and Management.
6. Maintain one or more State/Tribally-led Interagency Field Teams (hereafter Field Team[s]) to plan, direct, and implement the Project on the ground; and, when appropriate, designate a primary contact (and one or more surrogates) for their agency to interface with the Field Team(s). [Note: Availability of staff is subject to the limitations identified on page 12, Paragraphs 1 and 2].
 - a. Members of the Field Team(s) shall be those agency employees and interns or volunteers who, for the majority of their duties, perform the Project's on-the-ground activities.
 - b. The Field Team(s) shall include the following positions: Field Team Leaders (one per State and Tribal Lead Agency), wildlife biologists/specialists (varying numbers from any Lead Agency or Cooperator), depredation specialists (varying numbers from or certified by Wildlife Services), conservation education/outreach specialists (varying numbers from any State or Tribal Lead Agency); field assistants (varying numbers of seasonal technicians, interns, and volunteers); and such other staff as the Lead Agencies and Cooperators may deem appropriate and necessary.
 - c. The Project-related activities of Field Team members shall be guided and directed by the Field Team Leaders (see next paragraph). However, each employee shall be supervised by their superior in the chain of command within their respective agency.
 - d. Under guidance and direction from the Lead Agencies functioning as the Committee, the Field Team(s):
 - i. Shall be guided by the AGFD Field Team Leader on non-Tribal lands in Arizona, by the WMAT Field Team Leader on WMAT lands in Arizona, and by the NMDGF Field Team Leader in New Mexico.
 - ii. May operate in both States as a single Field Team, or be split into separate Field Teams or Sub-Teams as appropriate to ensure the desired management and response capability at the local level.
 - iii. May operate differently on Tribal lands, subject to direction from the Tribal Field Team Leader(s).

- e. Field Team Leader(s) shall jointly be responsible for:
 - i. Planning, directing, and implementing the daily activities of the Team(s);
 - ii. Drafting Annual Work Plans, Annual Performance Reports, and new or revised Project operating procedures that will be subject to Committee approval (as described in paragraph #8, below), after appropriate discussion with and review by the Work Group. Project procedures must be compatible with any guidance approved by the Service Region 2 Director, and must fully comply with applicable Federal, State, and Tribal laws;
 - iii. Seeking assistance from the Field Projects Coordinator (see below, subsection 3 of "The Service agrees to"), as necessary to conduct its activities;
 - iv. Communicating with the Committee through the Field Projects Coordinator to ensure that issues are brought to the Committee, and reported back to the Field Team(s), in timely fashion; and
 - v. Assisting the Field Projects Coordinator in identifying and reviewing additional areas and sites for release or translocation of Mexican wolves, pursuant to procedures established under paragraph #8, below.
7. Provide facilities, equipment, logistical support, and land access for the Field Team(s) and any other field personnel, under any subsequent and distinct funding documents separate from this Agreement.
8. Describe the roles, responsibilities, and processes necessary to address involvement, participation, and duties of the Lead Agencies, Project staff, and recognized committees, work groups, or other managing bodies involved with the Project. These descriptions will be completed within six months of the date of the last initial signature on this Agreement.
9. Develop and distribute public information and educational materials on the Project.
10. Cooperate in development of all Project-related media releases, media projects, and outreach activities, and ensure that all Lead Agencies have ample opportunity to review and approve such materials before they are released.
11. Cooperate in providing sufficient funding for this Project. The Federal Lead Agencies' intent is to endeavor to use the Congressional budget process to recover and delist the Mexican wolf. The non-Federal Lead Agencies' intent is to seek sufficient Federal funding for Mexican wolf reestablishment and management through direct Congressional allocation, and/or, as appropriate and necessary, other sources that are in addition to Federal funds currently available to AGFD, NMDGF, or WMAT, rather than by reallocation of existing funds. Examples of new sources of funding may include, but are not limited to: Landowner Incentives Program, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, State Wildlife Grants, and any other appropriate sources.

Note: Funds raised by non-Federal parties shall be separate and distinct from the Federal partners. This shall not preclude non-Federal partners from using Federally-originated funds to contribute to their operating budgets. It is understood by all parties that Federal

funds cannot be used to match Federal funds (as in cost-share agreements), unless Congress has specifically authorized an exception.

The Service agrees to:

5. Provide guidance to this Project by:
 - a. Developing appropriate guidance for the Project through a Recovery Plan, recovery protocols, and other recovery guidelines approved by the Regional Director, Region 2.
 - b. Ensuring that the revised Recovery Plan provides specific, measurable objectives for accomplishing downlisting and delisting the gray wolf in the southwestern gray wolf distinct population segment.
 - c. Completing a final draft revision of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan by 2004, and striving to secure approval (i.e. Directors' signature) by 2005.
 - d. Ensuring that any Service Region 2 Regional Director-approved guidelines or protocols pertaining to Mexican wolf recovery are communicated in timely fashion to the Committee to use in providing direction to the Field Team.
6. Continue designating wolves released to repopulate the BRWRA, and their descendants, as a nonessential experimental population, in accordance with Section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.
7. Provide a Mexican Wolf Field Projects Coordinator, who shall:
 - a. Serve as a member of the Field Team(s), and assist the Field Team Leader(s) in carrying out any field activities necessary to accomplish Project goals and objectives.
 - b. Serve as the communication liaison between the Committee and the Field Team(s).
 - c. Collaborate with the Field Team to draft recovery protocols.
 - d. Assist the Field Team Leader(s) as requested in drafting Annual Work Plans, Annual Performance Reports, and new or revised Project operating procedures that will be subject to Committee approval (pursuant to procedures developed under paragraph #8 under "The Lead Agencies agree to"), after appropriate discussion with and review by the Work Group. Project procedures must be compatible with any guidance approved by the Service Region 2 Regional Director, and must fully comply with applicable Federal, State, and Tribal laws.
 - e. Plan and coordinate, with assistance from the Field Team Leader(s), the identification and review of additional areas and sites for release or translocation of Mexican wolves, pursuant to procedures established under paragraph #8 of "The Lead Agencies agree to".
8. Assess Project priorities annually with the Lead Agencies, and, subject to availability, provide supplemental funding to the States, Tribe(s), and WS to support the Project. Funds for WMAT shall require no Tribal match. Funds for States shall be matched by AGFD and/or NMDGF, generally on a ratio of 3:1 (Federal:Non-Federal) or greater,

meaning that the Service shall not require the State (Non-Federal) contribution to exceed 25 percent of total cost, although the States/Cooperators may voluntarily do so.

9. Provide all necessary Service authorizations and permits to all Signatories on a timely basis, as sanctioned under applicable laws.

The AGFD agrees to:

3. Be responsible for implementing the Project in Arizona on non-Tribal lands, and for providing assistance as available (a) on Tribal lands as requested by the appropriate Tribe, and (b) in New Mexico on non-Tribal lands as requested by NMDGF.
4. Maintain on staff: (a) one Field Team Leader(s); (b) one or more conservation-education specialists to assist in Project outreach activities; and (c) additional staff as deemed necessary, pursuant to paragraphs #8 and #11 under “The Lead Agencies agree to”.
5. Provide administrative and other support for the Project.
6. Provide all necessary AGFD authorizations and permits to all Signatories on a timely basis, as sanctioned under applicable laws.

The NMDGF agrees to:

1. Be responsible for implementing the Project in New Mexico on non-Tribal lands, and for providing assistance as available (a) on Tribal lands as requested by the appropriate Tribe, and (b) in Arizona on non-Tribal lands as requested by AGFD.
2. Maintain on staff: (a) one Field Team Leader(s); (b) one or more conservation-education specialists to assist in Project outreach activities; and (c) additional staff as deemed necessary, pursuant to paragraphs # 8 and #11 under “The Lead Agencies agree to”.
3. Provide administrative support for the Project.
4. Facilitate issuance of necessary NMDGF authorizations and permits to all Signatories on a timely basis, as sanctioned under applicable laws.

The USFS agrees to:

1. Assist the Field Team as necessary to ensure timely, effective, and well-coordinated implementation of the Project’s Annual Work Plan.
2. Strive to provide all necessary USFS authorizations and permits to all Signatories on a timely basis, as sanctioned under applicable laws.

The WS agrees to:

1. Provide Federal leadership and expertise to resolve conflicts between humans and wildlife in regard to this Project, in cooperation with Federal, State, and Tribal agencies, individuals, and other public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions.
2. Maintain on staff one or more wildlife depredation specialists to assist in Mexican wolf damage management, primarily livestock depredations.

The WMAT agrees to:

1. Be responsible for, and retain lead authority for, implementing the Project on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.
2. Maintain on staff: (a) a Field Team Leader; (b) one or more conservation education specialists to assist in outreach activities regarding the Project; and (c) additional field staff as deemed necessary.
3. Provide administrative and other support for this Project.
4. Strive to provide all necessary Tribal authorizations and permits to all Signatories on a timely basis, as sanctioned under applicable laws.

The Arizona and New Mexico Counties agree to:

1. Assign an Elected or Appointed Official, or a designee thereof, to participate in the Project's Adaptive Management Work Group.
2. Cooperate, coordinate, and communicate with other interested and affected parties to participate in the Project's Work Group.
3. Enhance communication with other interested parties and the public to keep them informed on the Project and the Recovery Program.
4. Provide logistical and other support as necessary for the Work Group.
5. Coordinate impact assessments and mitigation measures that may occur from reintroduction and recovery of the Mexican wolf, on health, safety, and welfare of the Counties and their residents.

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture agrees to:

1. Assign an Elected or Appointed Official, or a designee thereof, to participate in the Project's Adaptive Management Work Group.

2. Cooperate, coordinate, and communicate with other interested and affected parties to participate in the Project's Work Group.
3. Enhance communication with other interested parties and the public to keep them informed on the Project and the Recovery Program.
4. Provide logistical and other support as necessary for the Work Group.

It is Mutually Agreed and Understood by and among the Lead Agencies and Cooperators (i.e. the Signatories to this Agreement) that:

1. Sufficiency of Resources. The terms of this Agreement are contingent upon sufficient resources being available to the Signatories for the performance of this Agreement. The Lead Agencies will agree to a work plan each year, develop budgets, and, as funding is available from all sources, assess priorities and apply the available funding to those priorities. The decision as to whether sufficient resources are available to each Signatory shall be determined by each Signatory, shall be accepted by all other Signatories, and shall be final. [Note: For NMDGF, "sufficient resources" means appropriated dollars, and NMDGF is not obligated by this Agreement to seek funds from the Legislature.]
2. Non-Fund Obligor Document. Nothing in this Agreement shall obligate the Signatories to obligate or transfer any funds, expend appropriations, or to enter into any contract or other obligations. Specific work projects or activities that involve transfer of funds, Services, or property among the Signatories may require execution of separate agreements or contracts and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated or other funds. Appropriate statutory authority must independently authorize such activities; this Agreement does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.
3. Establishment of Responsibility. This Agreement is non-binding and establishes no duty or obligation on any party; this Agreement is not intended to, and does not create or establish, any substantive or procedural right, benefit, trust responsibility, claim, cause of action enforceable at law, or equity in any administrative or judicial proceeding by a party or non-party against any party or against any employee, officer, agent, or representative of any party.
4. Responsibilities of Parties. The Signatories to this Agreement and their respective agencies and offices will handle their own activities and use their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing the objectives of this Agreement. Each party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner. Employee assignment to the Project is subject to approval by the employing agency.
5. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Any information provided to the Federal Agencies under this instrument may be subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act (5

U.S.C. 552). However, nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to affect the applicability of the exemptions set forth in 5 U.S.C. Section 552 (b).”

6. Participation in Similar Activities. This instrument in no way restricts the Signatories from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals. This Agreement does not modify or supersede other existing agreements between or among any of the Signatories.
7. Commencement/Expiration/Withdrawal. This Agreement takes effect upon the date of the last signature of approval and shall remain in effect for no more than five years from the date of execution, unless renewed, extended, or canceled. This Agreement may be renewed, extended, or amended upon written request by any Signatory, and subsequent written concurrence of the other Signatories. All such actions shall be discussed in a public meeting of the Work Group. Any Signatory may withdraw from this Agreement with a 60-day written notice to the other Signatories, through the Work Group Chair. Withdrawal by one party shall not affect the continued cooperation of the remaining parties under this Agreement. Further:
 - a. In accordance with the laws of the State of Arizona, all parties are hereby put on notice that State of Arizona participation this Agreement is subject to cancellation pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-511.
 - b. In accordance with the laws of the State of New Mexico, this Agreement is subject to approval by the Department of Finance and Administration. If any money has been contributed by the parties to this Agreement, after completion of the Agreement’s purposes any surplus money on hand shall be returned in proportion to the contributions made. No property shall be acquired as the result of the joint exercise of powers under this Agreement.
8. Additional Signatories. This Agreement may be amended at any time to include additional Signatories. An entity requesting inclusion as a Signatory shall submit its request to the Work Group Chair in the form of a document defining its proposed responsibilities pursuant to this Agreement.
 - a. Inclusion of additional Lead Agencies shall be approved by majority voice concurrence of the current Lead Agency signatories present in a Work Group meeting.
 - b. Inclusion of additional Signatories shall be approved by majority voice concurrence of the current Lead Agency and Cooperator signatories present in a Work Group meeting.
 - c. On approval, the new Cooperator must comply with all aspects of the Agreement as it was structured at the time of approval of its request for Cooperator status.
9. Conflict Resolution. Conflicts between or among the Signatories concerning this Agreement that cannot be resolved at the lowest possible level shall be referred to the next higher level, et seq., as necessary, for resolution.

10. Principal Contacts. Appendix A lists the principal implementation and contract administration contacts for this Agreement. Agencies may change their contact(s) by written notification to the Work Group Chair, who shall distribute an updated Appendix A to all Signatories. Principal Contact changes by one Signatory shall not require concurrence by other parties to this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF:

The Signatories hereto have executed the Agreement as of the last written date below.

_____ Duane L. Shroufe, Director Arizona Game and Fish Department	_____ Date
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_____ Bruce C. Thompson, Director New Mexico Department of Game and Fish	_____ Date
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_____ H. Dale Hall, Director, Region 2 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	_____ Date
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_____ Harv Forsgren, Regional Forester USDA Forest Service Southwestern Region	_____ Date
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_____ Michael V. Worthen, Regional Director, Western Region USDA APHIS/Wildlife Services	_____ Date
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_____ Dallas Massey, Sr., Chairman White Mountain Apache Tribe	_____ Date
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_____ Name and Title of Elected Official Catron County, New Mexico	_____ Date
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Name and Title of Elected Official
County of Sierra, New Mexico

Date

Name and Title of Elected Official
Graham County, Arizona

Date

Name and Title of Elected Official
Greenlee County, Arizona

Date

Name and Title of Elected Official
Navajo County, Arizona

Date

I. Miley Gonzalez, Ph.D., Director/Secretary
New Mexico Department of Agriculture

Date

[Other Lead Agencies and Cooperators yet to be inserted]

Appendix A: Primary Contacts for Agreement

Project Contacts are the individuals who represent their agencies in implementing this Agreement. Contract Administration Contacts are the individuals whom Project Contacts consult regarding administrative (contractual) issues related to this Agreement. Project Contacts and Contract Administration Contacts may or may not be the same individual.

Project Contacts:	Phone, FAX, E-Mail:
AGFD Terry B. Johnson	602.789.3507; 602.789.3926; teebeej@gf.state.az.us
NMDGF Chuck Hayes	505.476.8102; 505.476.8128; clhayes@state.nm.us
USDA APHIS WS David L. Bergman	602.870.2081; 602.870.2951; david.l.bergman@aphis.usda.gov
USDA FS Wally J. Murphy	505.842.3195; 505.842.3800; wmurphy@fs.fed.us
USFWS Colleen Buchanan	505.761.4782; 505.346.2542; colleen_buchanan@Service.gov
WMAT John Caid	928.338.4385; 928.338.1712; jcaid@wmat.nsn.us
County Catron	
County Greenlee Hector Ruedas	928.865.2072; 928.865.4417; kgale@co.greenlee.az.us
County Sierra Adam Polley	505.894.6215; 505.894.9548; adam@riolink.com
NMDA Bud Starnes	505.646.8005; 505.646.1540; bstarnes@nmda.nmsu.edu

Contract Administration Contacts:	Phone, FAX, E-Mail:
AGFD Terry B. Johnson	602.789.3507; 602.789.3926; teebeej@gf.state.az.us
NMDGF Tod Stevenson	505.476.9010; 505.476.8124; tstevenson@state.nm.us
USDA APHIS WS	602.870.2081; 602.870.2951; david.l.bergman@aphis.usda.gov
USDA FS Susan McDonnell	505.842.3345; 505.842.3152; smcdonnell@fs.fed.us
USFWS Susan MacMullin	505.248.6671; 505.248.6692; susan_macmullin@Service.gov
WMAT John Caid	928.338.4385; 928.338.1712; jcaid@wmat.nsn.us
County Catron	
County Greenlee Kay Gale	928.865.2072; 928.865.4417; kgale@co.greenlee.az.us
County Sierra	505.894.6215; 505.894.9548; adam@riolink.com
NMDA	505.646.8005; 505.646.1540; bstarnes@nmda.nmsu.edu

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