

In The Matter Of:
Mexican Wolf Hearing

August 11, 2014

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

In Re: The Proposed Rule, "To remove the gray wolf from the list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, but to maintain endangered status for the Mexican wolf by listing it as a subspecies; and to revise the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf."

Monday, August 11, 2014

HEARING OFFICER: Lesley Travers

REPRESENTATIVES: Joy Nicholopoulos
Sherry Barrett
Tracy Melbihess

LOCATION: Hon-Dah Conference Center
777 Highway 260
Pinetop, Arizona

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

REPORTED BY:

Vicki Champion
Certified Reporter No. 50534

1 (Commencement of public hearing.)

2 * * * * *

3 MS. TRAVERS: Good evening. On behalf of the
4 United States Fish and Wildlife Service, I welcome you to
5 this public hearing regarding the proposal to revise the
6 Nonessential Experimental Population Rule for the Mexican
7 wolf and to seek comment on the accompanying draft
8 Environmental Impact Statement.

9 My name is Lesley Travers. I will be your hearing
10 officer today. My company is Travers Consulting, and I am
11 not affiliated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I
12 don't represent them. I represent no point of view with
13 respect to the proposal that is the subject of this hearing.
14 My role is to conduct this hearing in an orderly manner, such
15 that we receive your comments accurately into the record.

16 I would also like to recognize the following
17 representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who
18 are in attendance today. Joy Nicholopoulos, Deputy Southwest
19 Regional Director, who will represent the Southwest Region;
20 Ms. Sherry Barrett, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mexican
21 Wolf Recovery Coordinator; and Ms. Tracy Melbihess, Mexican
22 Wolf Listing, Recovery, and NEPA Coordinator, and the many
23 Fish and Wildlife Service officials from the Southwest Region
24 and Arizona Field Offices, Arizona Game and Fish Department,
25 and the U.S. Forest Service that are staffing the hearing

1 today.

2 At this point, I will turn the floor over to Joy
3 Nicholopoulos and then Tracy Melbihess will give a brief
4 presentation.

5 MS. NICHOLPOULOS: Good evening. My name is Joy
6 Nicholopoulos. I am the Deputy Regional Director of the U.S.
7 Fish and Wildlife Service's Southwest Region. Our Region's
8 jurisdictional area covers Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and
9 Oklahoma.

10 I am here tonight, along with other Service
11 representatives, to hear testimony and receive comments for
12 the proposals to revise the Nonessential Experimental
13 Population of the Mexican wolf, as well as comments on the
14 accompanying draft Environmental Impact Statement.

15 This hearing tonight is the fourth that we have
16 scheduled in the Southwest to listen to your comments on two
17 proposed rule revisions (the first published in June 2013 and
18 the current version published in July 2014).

19 It is our intent that any final determination
20 resulting from these proposed changes to the Mexican Wolf
21 Experimental Population Rule be as accurate and effective as
22 possible, and towards that end, we seek the best scientific
23 and commercial data available.

24 We will base a final determination, in part, on
25 testimony tonight, received from you all and your written

1 comments. On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I
2 want to express my appreciation to the White Mountain Apache
3 Tribe for hosting us and for providing security services and
4 allowing us to use the meeting room here at the Hon-Dah
5 Conference Center.

6 I also want to thank each of you in attendance
7 tonight for taking time away from your personal lives to be
8 here.

9 As we move forward with our efforts to recover
10 Mexican wolves in Arizona and Mexico, we will retain the
11 experimental nonessential designation of the wild population
12 of Mexican wolves in order to maintain the management and
13 flexibility needed to recover the species.

14 I want to recognize Sherry Barrett to my left. She
15 is the Mexican wolf Recovery Coordinator of the U.S. Fish and
16 Wildlife Service, and now I'm going to turn it over to Tracy
17 Melbiess to my right, who will have a brief PowerPoint
18 presentation.

19 MS. MELBIHESS: Good evening, everyone. For folks
20 who were here this afternoon, you have about 15 minutes of
21 quiet time, because you have already heard what I'm going to
22 say, but the Fish and Wildlife Service has been engaged in
23 efforts to conserve and recover the Mexican wolf for over
24 four decades now. This began in the 1970s with the
25 extrication of the Mexican wolf subspecies of the gray wolf,

1 in the wild.

2 At that time, our national captive breeding program
3 was established with facilities in Mexico, in the United
4 States, to save the Mexican wolf from extinction and also by
5 breeding those wolves and their offspring to provide wolves
6 for reintroduction into the wild at a later date. The
7 Mexican Wolf was presented with the Endangered Species Act in
8 the mid-1970s, which stimulated the development of a recovery
9 plan, which we finalized in 1982.

10 Then in 1998, this was the days in which we began
11 reintroducing wolves to the wild in Arizona and New Mexico as
12 an experimental population. Then, meanwhile, a few years
13 ago, in 2011, Mexico also began reintroducing the Mexican
14 wolf to the wild. And Mexico has its own federal endangered
15 species law and it's own recovery program for the Mexican
16 wolf with its own reintroduction areas designated, and so the
17 two programs are coordinated and communicate. They are two
18 separate reintroduction and recovery efforts pursuant to our
19 federal law in the United States as well as their federal law
20 in Mexico.

21 So I have hit just the highlights of -- in 1998,
22 when we designated the experimental population, we published
23 a final rule, and this was the document that described where
24 we would put wolves on the landscape and how we would manage
25 them. So we are seeing a map of New Mexico and Arizona.

1 The experimental population area went from I-40,
2 across both states to I-10, the southern ends of both states.
3 Within this area, we designated a Blue Range Wolf Recovery
4 Area, which was the Gila National Forest in New Mexico and
5 the Apache National Forest in Arizona.

6 Within, then, this Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, we
7 designated the primary and secondary recovery zones with
8 management regulations for each, the primary recovery zone
9 being for initial releases and the secondary recovery zone
10 being areas where the wolves could disperse.

11 So, today, wolves occupy the Blue Range Wolf
12 Recovery Area, as well as here on the Fort Apache Indian
13 Reservation. Another important provision of that rule is
14 that wolves are not allowed to disperse outside of the Blue
15 Range Wolf Recovery Area.

16 So, now, 16 years later, as of our most recent
17 end-of-the-year population count, we have a minimum
18 population of about 83 wolves and 14 packs, and the
19 management of the wolves on the ground has grown into a
20 partnership effort with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
21 Arizona Game and Fish Department, Forest Service, The White
22 Mountain Apache Tribe, and Wildlife Services.

23 And between all of our agencies, we have learned a
24 lot about the reintroduction of the Mexican wolf, both in
25 terms of the biology of the Mexican wolf and what the

1 population needs to persist as well as the impacts that it
2 can have on the local communities and local people that are
3 coexisting with the wolf, as well as just simply the clarity
4 of our regulations that we established in 1998 and the
5 efficacy of our partnerships.

6 So back in about 2007, we started a scoping effort
7 with a handful of public meetings to talk to the public about
8 ways that we can improve our reintroduction project. And in
9 2013, last year, we published a proposed rule and a Notice of
10 Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. So
11 these were two different documents that have kind of come
12 together in our process.

13 The proposed rule would modify the regulations that
14 we established for our management of Mexican wolves back in
15 1998, and the Environmental Impact Statement is our analysis
16 of what impacts these proposed changes would have. And so,
17 at that time, we had a public comment period, and we received
18 over 7,000 public comments, and we have also been joined by
19 27 cooperating agencies, which have included federal, state,
20 county, and tribal entities.

21 And so with all these folks, we have developed a new
22 proposed rule, which is what came out two weeks ago, as a
23 revised proposed rule and the Draft Environmental Impact
24 Statement. So, then, this revised proposed rule would revise
25 the management regulations that we established in 1998 and

1 our Draft Environmental Impact Statement discusses the
2 impacts of the proposal in the fact sheet.

3 So the essence of what we are trying to do is to
4 further the conservation of the Mexican wolf by improving the
5 effectiveness of our reintroduction project, so what we want
6 to do is continue with the effort that has been established
7 in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, but improve it in a
8 number of ways.

9 So there are three main components to the action
10 that we are proposing. One is that we recognize the need to
11 modify the geographic boundaries that we have established for
12 Mexican wolves from I-40 down to the international border.
13 We also recognize the need to modify our management
14 regulations related to where we release wolves and how we
15 manage them once they are on the landscape.

16 We also recognize that we need the proper tools in
17 place to manage wolves that may disperse outside of the
18 experimental population area, and that would be a
19 10(a)(1)(B) permit under the Endangered Species Act.

20 And so the reasons for these various components are
21 several. One is, that as I mentioned earlier, we recognize
22 several things about the biological status of the population.
23 And first is that it is still rather small, and we recognize
24 that in order to persist, the population needs to grow in
25 number and spacial -- spacial size. We also recognize that

1 the genetic material that is represented in the captive
2 population is -- in the wild population is fairly limited
3 compared with the captive population.

4 The captive population is very rigorously managed to
5 maintain Mexican wolf genetic material, and we have been --
6 have that material represented in the wild when we conduct
7 initial release.

8 We also recognize the need to modify our geography,
9 because of Mexico's reintroduction program. And some of
10 their reintroduction sites are within about 100 miles of the
11 U.S./Mexico border, and because of wolves' ability to
12 disperse we would like to ensure that we can manage any
13 wolves that would disperse over the border from Mexico into
14 the United States as part of our experimental population.

15 So a couple of issues that came up during the public
16 comments period last year and that there has been some
17 confusion about it, because they are related to what we are
18 doing, yet they are also a bit outside the scope of what we
19 are doing, and those are issues related to recovery planning
20 and the essential or nonessential status of the experimental
21 population.

22 The recovery planning, as many of you know, is
23 something that is a requirement most of the time after the
24 Endangered Species Act that we write a recovery plan that
25 establishes a vision for recovery of the species. What it

1 needs in order for its status to be improved so that we can
2 remove the protections of the Endangered Species Act
3 eventually. So that is a very big picture planning process,
4 and under that have been many different conservation
5 activities contributing to recoveries, so this nonessential
6 experiment for population is a component of recovery.

7 We are doing it as part of our effort to conserve
8 and recover the Mexican wolf, but it is not all the recovery.
9 It is one component of our recovery program.

10 Then the second issue related to essential and
11 nonessential status, this is something, a term under the
12 Endangered Species Act, where when we designate an
13 experimental population and have the flexibilities that come
14 with that, we can specify whether that population would be
15 essential or nonessential.

16 Now, both of those designations contribute to the
17 conservation and recovery of the species. There is no
18 difference between them in that regard. Where the difference
19 comes into play is that an essential designation would mean
20 when you place those animals on the landscape, those animals
21 are essential to the survival of the species, and because we
22 have the captive program of Mexican wolves that have about
23 300 wolves in it, we know that that captive population
24 provides security against ultimate extinction.

25 So as we reintroduce these wolves to the wild, if

1 the wolf population in the wild were to die, we would still
2 not be faced with the extinction of the Mexican wolf, because
3 of the captive program. So that designation of nonessential
4 was something that we determined in 1998 when we began the
5 reintroduction, and that is not something that we are
6 re-analyzing at this time.

7 So our proposed action is essentially Alternative 1
8 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We then learned
9 of a few other alternative ways that we could achieve our
10 purposes as well as a no-action alternative. So essentially
11 what we are doing is analyzing four different alternatives.

12 Alternative 1 -- I will spend some time on this
13 map -- would be an alternative of a proposed action that
14 would be an experimental population area going from I-40 all
15 the way down to the international border, and this would
16 establish three different management zones.

17 In Zone 1, which is very difficult to see on here,
18 but it's the existing Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. The
19 Gila National Forest, the Apache National Forest, as well as
20 some additional national forest lands. The Magdalena Ranger
21 District of the Cibola in New Mexico as well as the
22 Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona and Free Ranger
23 Districts of the Tonto National Forest in Arizona.

24 And in the Zone 1, that would be our area for
25 initial release of wolves. Initial release is, again, our

1 wolves from captivity that are released into the wild, and
2 this is a significant expansion from the area that we can
3 conduct initial releases in today under the 1998 rules, and
4 that area in the primary recovery zone is actually only about
5 16 percent of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. So we would
6 be opening up the entire Blue Range as well as adding
7 additional areas, and again, the purpose of doing that would
8 be to enable us to conduct more initial releases or more
9 releases of wolves from captivity to improve the genetic
10 composition of the wild population.

11 And then in Zone 2, which is most of this area here
12 up until the crosshatches, that would be an area where wolves
13 could disperse into from Zone 1. There are some wolves
14 already in Zone 2 here on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation,
15 and we would manage them.

16 Wolves would be able to disperse into Zone 3, the
17 crosshatched area, but we expect that due to lower suitable
18 habitat in these areas, we wouldn't get much wolf occupancy
19 in these areas, and we would want the flexibility to manage
20 them under the experimental population rule. Now, this green
21 and blue area here, this is our designation -- or sorry.
22 It's not our designation, but it is our depiction of where we
23 think suitable habitat exists. So those are the green and
24 blue areas.

25 Then in addition for Alternative 1, if wolves

1 disperse outside of the experimental population area, we
2 would utilize a tool under a different part of the Endangered
3 Species Act that is essentially a permit that would allow us
4 to capture those wolves and bring them back into the
5 experimental population area.

6 And the rationale for doing that, again, is we are
7 trying to improve the genetic composition of this population
8 and we are also trying to increase its size. And so wolves
9 that are scattering out into the landscape are not helping us
10 in the short term achieve that purpose, and so we would
11 capture them and bring them back into our experimental
12 population area.

13 And Alternative 1 is our preferred alternative,
14 because we think that it both maximizes our ability to
15 improve the conservation and recovery of the Mexican wolf as
16 well as adding some flexibility related to take provisions
17 that I will discuss.

18 So one of the areas where we have modified take
19 provisions to try to broaden take authority is in relation to
20 Mexican wolves that are in the act of attacking livestock.
21 So right now, on federal land, we have a stipulation that
22 there needs to be six breeding pairs of Mexican wolves in the
23 population before we would grant a permit to a livestock
24 owner to take a wolf in the act of attacking livestock.

25 And we are proposing to eliminate that stipulation

1 and offer those permits at our discretion. That would
2 increase our flexibility both in considering the status of
3 the Mexican wolf population as well as the site specific
4 circumstances that that livestock owner is dealing with.

5 And then on nonfederal land, we would also broaden
6 the provision, whereas right now a livestock owner on
7 nonfederal land, which would include state land, private
8 land, and tribal land, can take the wolf in the act of
9 attacking livestock. We would broaden that to also include
10 dogs, and so that creates a new term of domestic animals,
11 which includes livestock and dogs.

12 We would also broaden take authorities on nonfederal
13 land by having the potential to issue permits that would help
14 us complete a removal action. This would be in the
15 circumstance where a livestock owner or domestic animal owner
16 had already dealt with a deprivation, and we were trying to
17 remove the wolf and we issued a permit for assistance in
18 completing that removal action.

19 We are also looking at modifying our take provisions
20 related to unacceptable ungulate impacts, and so what we are
21 proposing is that the state wildlife agencies, who are in
22 charge of establishing ungulate management and monitoring
23 objectives, would, in the case of Mexican wolf predation that
24 was causing a decline in an ungulate herd, would come to us
25 with the data that describes that situation. It would be

1 subjected to peer review and public review, and then the
2 service would make a decision about whether and how to remove
3 wolves in order to address that situation.

4 Then there are take provisions that exist now that
5 exist in Alternative 1 and are actually used throughout all
6 the other alternatives, too, so I will just mention them
7 briefly, and that is that you can always take a wolf in
8 defense of human life, your life or the life of someone
9 traveling with you.

10 You can also always opportunistically harass a
11 Mexican wolf, so that would be a situation of a chance
12 encounter with a Mexican wolf where you could make loud
13 noises, yell at it, throw things at it, with the intention to
14 scare it away from the area.

15 We also have the ability to issue permits for
16 intentional harassment, and so these would be situations
17 where we have documented wolf presence in an area and would
18 allow for someone to be permitted to take additional actions
19 such as shooting rubber bullets and other things, again, to
20 get the wolf to leave the area.

21 So Alternative 2 is very similar to Alternative 1.
22 It mimicks all of it, except that Zone 1 would be smaller.
23 It would include the entire Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area or
24 the Apache International Forest, but it would not include the
25 new area on the Cibola, the Tonto, and the Sitgreaves. And

1 so this allows us to analyze the difference from our proposed
2 action of an alternative where we would not have the ability
3 to conduct as many initial releases. It would still be a
4 situation where we could conduct more than at the current
5 time, but not as many as Alternative 1, and again, because of
6 the importance of improving the genetic condition of the
7 population, that was kind of the rationale behind this
8 alternative.

9 Then Alternative 3 also mimicks Alternative 1 with
10 the geography and everything else. However, the difference
11 here is that those modified take provisions related to taking
12 a wolf in the act of attacking livestock would not be
13 changed. They would remain the same as they are in the
14 current time. Again, this is a way for us to look at what
15 the impacts are to broadening the take authority a little bit
16 and increasing the flexibility.

17 And then the No-Action Alternative is a continuation
18 of the situation as it is today.

19 So in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, we
20 have assessed our proposed action on a number of different
21 resource areas, including land use, wildlife, three sectors
22 of economic activity, including livestock production, hunting
23 and tourism, human safety, environmental justice, and then
24 cumulative impacts.

25 And what we have found is that we do not expect our

1 action to have impacts at a regional level or a state level,
2 but we do recognize that there could be localized impacts.
3 For example, for elk, we do not think that implementing the
4 proposed action would result in a regional decline in native
5 ungulates, but we do recognize that there could be localized
6 area where predation pressure is heavier, and we would be
7 proposing to mitigate that through the ability, as I already
8 discussed, for states to bring the information to us and go
9 through the public review and peer review process.

10 Then we also recognize our proposed action would not
11 have a regional or state level impact on any economic
12 sectors, but specific to ranching and livestock production,
13 we do recognize that depredations can have significant
14 impacts on individual ranchers, and so we do see the
15 potential for localized impacts in that economic sector.

16 We did not find any adversely impacted groups of
17 consigs throughout our environmental justice analysis or
18 other impacts.

19 So as everybody here knows, we are now in the middle
20 of the public comment period that will end on September 23rd.
21 This is a 60-day public comment period. All of the comments
22 today, whether they are written or oral, will be included in
23 the record, and we will consider those comments to develop a
24 final environmental impact statement and a final rule.

25 So this information, you have it in a couple of

1 other places, so I won't pause too long on it, but if you
2 don't speak tonight or put written comments in the comment
3 box, you have the ability to provide written comments through
4 both of these methods. This is in the draft rule, and we
5 have also got it written on some of the handouts you have
6 gotten tonight.

7 So just a quick timeline for us, we are right about
8 here in our process having just developed the Draft
9 Environmental Impact Statement and the Draft Rule. We will
10 be finalizing this process by about January of 2015.

11 And so then just, I guess, a parting thought is we
12 are looking forward to hearing from you tonight. It's to try
13 to recognize the intention behind what we are doing, which is
14 that our program is about conservation and the recovery of
15 the Mexican wolf, and we are trying to make modifications
16 that will further the conservation of the Mexican wolf.

17 However, we are trying to do it in a reasonable,
18 balanced way that demonstrates responsiveness to the people
19 who are impacted, whether that be through nuisance situations
20 or depredation situations. So we look forward to hearing
21 from you, and that's it for me. Thank you.

22 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, Tracy, Joy, and Sherry.

23 This is a public hearing under Section 10 of the
24 Federal Endangered Species Act. Notice of this public
25 hearing was published in the Federal Register on July 25,

1 2014, starting on page 43358.

2 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will accept
3 comments and information on these proposals postmarked on or
4 before September 23, 2014. You may submit comments in
5 writing. Written comments may be submitted to the staff at
6 the registration and information tables and may be submitted
7 electronically or mailed as a hard copy.

8 After review and consideration of your comments and
9 all other information gathered during this and other previous
10 comment periods, the Service will make a final determination.

11 The purpose of this hearing is to receive your
12 comments on proposal and the accompanying Draft Environmental
13 Impact Statement both oral and written. Comments on all
14 aspects of the proposal are very important and will be
15 carefully considered. Because of the importance of your
16 comments, it is necessary we follow certain procedures during
17 this public hearing.

18 If you want to present oral comments at this
19 hearing, please go to the registration table outside of this
20 auditorium and sign up. When you have registered, indicate
21 any organization that you are representing for your comments
22 today. All oral comment registration cards have been pulled
23 and will be drawn at random. I have the first 22. I will
24 put these others back in the box. My hope tonight is that I
25 can get through all of you, so I will take no breaks so

1 hopefully we can do that. We will see.

2 So you'll each have two minutes, and I would
3 appreciate it when it is your turn to begin your presentation
4 by stating your full name, spell it, and indicate if you
5 represent an organization. I would appreciate a copy of the
6 comments that you read. There is a box up here that you can
7 deposit them in.

8 This is an informal hearing and, therefore, you will
9 not be questioned in connection with your comments. Your
10 comments or questions are being recorded. If you are called
11 to speak and choose not to speak, you may not yield your time
12 to another presenter or speaker. Because the purpose of this
13 hearing is to receive your comments, the Service will presume
14 any questions are for the record.

15 I ask that you treat each speaker with respect and
16 refrain from making comments from the audience. Questions,
17 comments, applause, jeers, or demonstrations from the
18 audience will not be allowed, and they just take up precious
19 time. I appreciate everyone's cooperation in minimizing
20 distractions. Out of respect for the speakers, I ask you
21 refrain from photographing individuals as they present their
22 comments, and videotaping is currently being done by
23 Dean Cannon representing Gray Area: Wolves in the Southwest.
24 And if you wish to obtain contact information from
25 Mr. Cannon, please visit the registration desk.

1 You will all be given two minutes, and I will let
2 you know when the time is up. I will now call the first
3 10 speakers, so if you will just come up and be ready.

4 Penny Pew, Larry Boeschling, Nick Hecker, Dale Volz,
5 Ron Campbell, Marianne Connors, Barbara Cain, Ralph Hess,
6 Mike Sheffer, Giovanna Santoro, and Sylvia -- Supervisor
7 Sylvia Allen.

8 MS. PEW: Good evening. My name is Penny Pew,
9 P-E-N-N-Y, P-E-W, and I am Congressman Gosar's District
10 Director and Intergovernmental Affairs Liason. Unfortunately,
11 Congressman Gosar is not able to be here tonight in person,
12 but he sends his warm regards, and he asked that I would
13 attend and make sure that I make these comments on the Draft
14 Environmental Impact Statement for the Mexican Wolf to be
15 included in the official record at this forum.

16 I will now read the Congressman's remarks: "Thank
17 you all for taking the time to attend this important hearing.
18 Your feedback and input are absolutely critical in moving
19 forward. I would like to begin my comments by saying that it
20 is inexcusable that the Arizona Cooperative Alternative was
21 not one of the options included with the release of the Draft
22 Environmental Impact Statement we are commenting on today.

23 This alternative was developed by 28 different
24 cooperating agencies and stakeholder groups. While I do not
25 support everything included in the Arizona Cooperative

1 Alternative, I was encouraged that the proposal was developed
2 based on actual science and from the local stakeholders. A
3 significant amount of time and effort was put forth by
4 concerned citizens in our local community, and it is shameful
5 that the Fish and Wildlife Service prevented this alternative
6 from being considered and ignored this option.

7 I would encourage the Fish and Wildlife Service to
8 carefully consider all the comments provided here today, and
9 my hope is that it is just not a formality where comments
10 will be disregarded in the same manner as the agency pursues
11 on overreaching rule that will have lasting impacts on our
12 citizens and towns.

13 Gray wolves were first placed on the endangered
14 species list in 1974. Since that time, the population of the
15 wolf has increased significantly and is currently found in
16 46 countries throughout the world. U.S. Fish and Wildlife
17 Service has recognized that the Gray wolf is no longer in
18 danger and issued a proposed rule in June of 2013 to delist
19 the Gray wolf. The International Union for Conservation
20 Nature --

21 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Thank you. You may leave
22 the rest of your comments. Next speaker, please.

23 MR. BOESCHLING: I'm Larry Boeschling,
24 B-O-E-S-C-H-L-I-N-G. I live in a remote area of the Tonto
25 National Forest, and we have had wolves on our area, and I

1 understand they are supposed to be relocated. We had a
2 gentleman that was in the process of doing this, and then all
3 of a sudden, I contacted his cell phone, and he had been
4 relocated someplace else, and the recovery effort seemed to
5 have been put on hold.

6 This last weekend we had some family out, and they
7 heard that we had had some wolves in the area, and now their
8 mothers and their 10-year-old children were afraid to go out
9 in the forest and do their hiking and backpacking like they
10 normally do.

11 This being said, I'm very opposed to any further
12 expansion of the wolf recovery agreement. Thank you.

13 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

14 MR. CAMPBELL: Good evening. My name is Ron
15 Campbell, C-A-M-P-B-E-L-L, Greenlee County Supervisor for
16 District 2. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to
17 present these comments.

18 However, with the publication of the draft EIS and
19 proposed rule on July 25th and this hearing scheduled for
20 August 11th, it once again provides precious little time for
21 the public and agencies to produce substansive comments.
22 Reading, reviewing, and understanding a 460-page-plus
23 document as well as over 800 footnotes in the last two weeks
24 in order to write comments seems to be ridiculous.

25 As you are aware, Greenlee County has been at a

1 forefront and ground zero of the wolf reintroduction program
2 for the past three decades. Everyone here knows that we have
3 been at the table to make sure that the voice of the Greenlee
4 County residents, and in particular our ranching community,
5 was heard. We have been consistently -- consistent with our
6 view of the program. We have worked with the Service at
7 every level to make sure that they have never misunderstood
8 our position.

9 When the Service intentionally published their --
10 initially published their intent last summer, a number of
11 groups, including the Arizona Cattle Growers, Eastern Arizona
12 County Sportsman's Groups, and the Arizona Game and Fish
13 Commission worked to produce an alternative that could be
14 broadly supported in making a substantial contribution to the
15 recovery of the Mexican Gray Wolf while providing reasonable
16 and very defined methods of managing wolves.

17 In our very preliminary review, it is evident that
18 the Service ignored this broadly supported plan. This
19 definitely proves the point that the Service had no intention
20 of considering any alternative other than the one they
21 presented last year as the preferred one.

22 Greenlee County requests that the Service consider
23 at a minimum extending the comment period by at least
24 90 days. We also request that the Service conduct a real
25 review of the alternative presented as well as a consistency

1 review as requested by the counties.

2 When the first wolves were released 15 years ago,
3 Greenlee County warned the Service at the time that they had
4 not addressed the social and economic component of the
5 project.

6 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. If you could leave those
7 comments, I'd appreciate it, sir. Next speaker, please.

8 MS. CAIN: I'm Barbara Ann Cain, C-A-I-N, and I'm a
9 member of Sierra Club and Defenders of Wildlife. I am also
10 an educator for 27 years, and I taught environmental
11 education. One important activity that we had was the web of
12 life, how important it was that we had predators as well as
13 prey animals to have a healthy environment. That may sound
14 quite simplistic, but we need those animals here. They were
15 here before the first rancher ever arrived, and we need them
16 again.

17 And I support your first choice of expanding their
18 area to see that more people have a top predator in their
19 bio. Thank you.

20 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

21 MS. CONNORS: My name is Marianne Connors. It's
22 spelled M-A-R-I-A-N-N-E, last name, C-O-N-N-O-R-S. My
23 educational and professional background is in archeology,
24 sociobiology, and animal behavior. My general comment on the
25 subject is that the health of any natural system is dependent

1 on the health of its parts. To lose or cause loss of any of
2 these parts has historically resulted in unforeseen,
3 unintended, and detrimental consequences to the common good.

4 There is sufficient science to suggest that the
5 eradication of the Mexican Gray Wolf in the last century is
6 an example of this. The purpose for the reintroduction of
7 the Mexican Gray Wolf was a restoration of the natural
8 balance in areas where the species was eradicated.

9 The maintenance of an ecologically functioning
10 population requires several things: An adequate gene pool,
11 sufficient genetic diversity within that pool, connections
12 between populations to promote genetic mixing, and access to
13 appropriate habitat to support viable populations.

14 Managing these genetic requirements often may
15 suggest elimination of politically-based boundaries, which
16 currently limit the wolves' access to suitable habitat, and
17 the expansion of release in roaming areas to allow wolf
18 release in areas outside the current limited area.

19 Finally, captive populations are not a guarantee
20 against extinction. Any species adapts to the conditions of
21 its habitat. Captive adapted wolves over time will become
22 less fit for release in a natural habitat. Returning balance
23 to ecological systems is difficult to do it piecemeal, and
24 politically, the way the process stands at present, defeats
25 the intent of the restoration program. Thank you.

1 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

2 MR. HESS: Good evening. My name is Ralph Hess.
3 I'm from Yavapai County Arizona. I have already submitted
4 some written comments, so I'm not going to reiterate what I
5 submitted in the written comments, but I'd like to make a
6 couple of comments regarding the information we received
7 earlier this afternoon and presented at the beginning of
8 today's hearing.

9 You have outlined four proposed alternatives.
10 Alternative One is the proposed action that you are calling
11 the Preferred Alternative. The second alternative has a
12 small initial release area. The third alternative is --
13 appears to me to be the same as the Preferred Alternative
14 except without the expansion of the take provisions, and
15 that's the one I want to try to focus.

16 From what the information that was provided to us
17 during this afternoon's session, none of these alternatives
18 have any significant impact upon native wild prey or
19 livestock. So none of the alternatives are going to have any
20 environmental impact or any significant environmental impact.

21 Alternative Three appears to be the one that is
22 going to provide the best alternative for a successful
23 recovery from among the four. So I would suggest to you and
24 urge you to consider rather than using Alternative One as the
25 preferred, use Alternative Three as the preferred, since

1 neither of them are going to have any significant
2 environmental impact, and Alternative Three is going to
3 provide a better opportunity for success. Thank you.

4 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

5 GIOVANNA SANTORO: I am Giovanna Santoro.
6 G-I-O-V-A-N-N-A, last name Santoro, S-A-N-T-O-R-O. I
7 represent no agency. I speak for myself. This is the first
8 time I have ever publically spoken on any issue.

9 I stand for the conservation and recovery of wolves,
10 the Mexican Mexican wolf and for dispersal over a wider
11 range. I believe we should use science not politics in the
12 recovery of the Mexican wolf. I believe that hunting any
13 species to extinction is wrong on so many levels, and we have
14 an opportunity to right this wrong, and I applaud all the
15 governmental and nongovernmental organizations for their
16 efforts to this end.

17 Wolves have been established irrefutably by science
18 to have a positive influence known as the Trophic Cascade
19 upon the environment. In actuality, deer and elk herds have
20 benefited as well as the landscape upon the reintroduction of
21 wolves. I support a recovery alternative. Wolves are
22 essential, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should
23 designate them as such. Wolves should be given more room to
24 roam, not less. Wolves cannot read maps.

25 I am not for the expansion of taking loopholes,

1 however, I am for compensation and incentivizing ranchers for
2 live wolves. Captive population is not a hedge against
3 extinction. Prolonged captivity leads to successive
4 generations less fit for life in the wild. Wolves are
5 managed, so should be livestock and pets.

6 Please move forward with the reintroduction in a
7 manner that fosters coexistence between ranchers and wolves.
8 Extinction is forever. Leave a legacy for future
9 generations.

10 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

11 MS. ALLEN: Sylvia Allen, S-Y-L-V-I-A, A-L-L-E-N,
12 Navajo County Supervisor.

13 I take exception with the comment that 27
14 cooperating agencies helped develop this plan. Navajo County
15 was one of those cooperating agencies along with many Arizona
16 counties and New Mexico counties, and none of our suggestions
17 got into this plan.

18 One part that I think is very critical is the fact
19 that the service refuses to state a number in the recovery
20 plan. It is very important. We just can't start throwing
21 the wolves out there, more and more wolves. There is data,
22 scientific studies, that talk about what this eco system can
23 support, and we need to work towards that.

24 The Arizona Cooperating Agencies alternative used
25 quite a bit of science to talk about their number of 300 in

1 Arizona. Barry Weller, supervisor of Apache County, in his
2 alternative, he had studies that talked about three wolves
3 per every 1,000 elk. It is important that we understand
4 where we are going with this and that we understand that we
5 have very fragile economies in our rural areas. And we
6 depend on recreation dollars, and our elk and deer herds are
7 critical to those dollars.

8 The only alternative that I can support is the
9 No-Action Alternative No. 4 until we really do use proper
10 science in deciding what we can support up here for both the
11 human population, our economies, the elk, and the wolves, and
12 our wildlife. Thank you.

13 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

14 MIKE SHEFFER: My name is Mike Sheffer,
15 S-H-E-F-F-E-R, and I am a member of Sierra Club.

16 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on
17 this important subject, to the successful survival of the
18 Mexican Gray Wolf.

19 I believe wolves benefit the environment by
20 maintaing a balance with other animals, such as elk, which
21 have been shown to cause damage to the environment in the
22 absence of predators. I would also like to see the wolves
23 classified as essential, because over time captive-bred
24 wolves may lose their ability to survive in the wild.

25 I also think that the EIS should attempt to identify

1 a long-term solution. The science and best practices are
2 there. Let's use them. Changes can still be made if there
3 is new information that warrants it.

4 Regarding the situation of wolf takes, I think this
5 needs to be clarified more with less reliance on case-by-case
6 situation. I'd also like to see the inclusion of areas north
7 of Interstate 40, such as the Grand Canyon area, Northwestern
8 New Mexico, and Southwestern Colorado, which have desirable
9 wolf environments. In all likelihood, the wolves will find
10 their way into these areas anyway.

11 And, lastly, I would hope that there is adequate
12 staffing and funding for this elaborate project, and if there
13 isn't, I would hope our elected officials will make it so.
14 Thank you.

15 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

16 I'm going to read the next 10 names. Dale Volz.

17 MR. VOLZ: I'm Dale. I relinquish my time. Thank
18 you.

19 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Thank you for letting me
20 know.

21 Karen Michael, Pat Headington, Kathleen Cheatham,
22 Elena Farr, Brianna Edwards, Robert Teel, Sherry Sherbo, Brad
23 Mead, Scott Dieringer, and Drew Kerr.

24 Go ahead. Someone start.

25 PAT HEADINGTON: Thank you. My name is Pat

1 Headington. The last name is H-E-A-D-I-N-G-T-O-N. I'm here
2 tonight participating as a member of the Yuma Valley Rod and
3 Gun Club, the Sportsmen's Constituent Group.

4 The first thing I'd like to address is the process.
5 I believe this process, as it is proposed currently, is out
6 of sync. The service seems to be taking a pro-ready aim
7 approach for wolf management. We need to identify a goal so
8 that the state voters can debate this issue, digest this
9 issue, and respond to it. We need to know what recovery
10 looks like.

11 Secondly, it's essential to build and grow this
12 program in the border. Mexico possesses 90 percent of the
13 historic range for the Mexican Gray Wolf as previously
14 published in documents recognized by the Service. There is
15 no chance of substantial recovery of the Mexican Gray Wolf
16 without including Mexico. It cannot happen. We cannot
17 expect the citizens of the United States, Arizona, and
18 New Mexico, to shoulder the recovery burden all on their own.

19 The alternative plan proposed by the Arizona Game
20 and Fish Department and the stakeholder groups was not
21 elicited in the group of options, and for that reason, it's
22 imperative, I believe, that the Service go back and review
23 those options and bring it forward as one of the stakeholder
24 -- as one of the alternatives.

25 Lastly, on behalf of the Yuma Valley Rod and Gun

1 Club Sportsmen's Constituent Group and myself, I offer our
2 support with the Stakeholder Arizona Game and Fish
3 Alternative as presented to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
4 Service and certainly have to ask this question at the end:
5 Why was it not included in the plan to begin with?

6 The agency stakeholder proposal offers a balanced,
7 responsible approach to the recovery of the Mexican wolf.
8 Thank you.

9 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker. Next
10 speaker.

11 MS. EDWARDS: Hi. I'm Brianna -- I'm Brianna
12 Edwards, B-R-I-A-N-N-A, last name, E-D-W-A-R-D-S, and I'm
13 eight years old.

14 I love all wildlife, especially wolves. I'm here
15 today to say let the wolves run free, and I'm counting on you
16 to protect them for me when I have my own children and for
17 all future generations. Thank you.

18 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

19 MS. MICHAEL: She's a hard act to follow, I think.
20 My name is Karen Michael, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, and I live in the
21 Phoenix area. I'm on the board and volunteer with Animal
22 Defense League of Arizona, which is a state-wide animal
23 protection organization. I'm speaking on behalf of myself
24 and thousands of members and supporters throughout Arizona.

25 On a personal note, my husband and I are third and

1 second generation New Mexicans and have lived in the
2 southwest our entire lives. We graduated from UNM where the
3 lobo has been the team mascot since 1920.

4 The Animal Defense League of Arizona supports the
5 proposal to expand the direct release area for Mexican
6 Wolves, which has been recommended for scientists for over a
7 decade. However, we strongly oppose the proposed expanded
8 provisions for killing and permanent removal of these
9 endangered animals. According to peer-reviewed scientific
10 studies, Mexican Wolves cannot recover unless humans reduce
11 the numbers that they kill.

12 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service needs to factor in
13 the impact of human-caused mortality and tighten the take
14 restrictions instead of loosening them. In particular, ADLA
15 opposes the proposal to grant New Mexico and Arizona Game and
16 Fish Agencies authority to request trapping or shooting of
17 Mexican Wolves for alleged unacceptable impacts on ungulates
18 that are natural wolf prey animals.

19 As a recent Arizona Republic editorial asks, "What
20 are the wolves supposed to do? Call out for pizza?" This
21 provision would be extremely detrimental in Arizona where the
22 Game and Fish Commission views predators as competition for
23 trophy animals rather than as a crucial component of healthy
24 ecosystems.

25 In fact, wolves make herds stronger and healthier.

1 Rather than acknowledging this basic fact, the Commission
2 Department drew up their own alternative rule proposal with
3 the help of hunters, trappers, and livestock interests, which
4 would increase killing of wolves and transfer management from
5 U.S. Game and Fish and Wildlife -- from U.S. Fish and
6 Wildlife Service to the State. Do we really want Arizona's
7 Game and Fish Commission and Department to determine what
8 constitutes unacceptable impacts on big game animals? They
9 have a vested interest, because big game tags are a source of
10 funding for the agency and key --

11 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

12 MS. MICHAEL: -- constituent groups --

13 THE PANEL: Thank you.

14 MS. MICHAEL: Thank you.

15 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker, please.

16 MS. CHEATHAM: Hi. My name is Kathleen Cheatham,
17 and I represent myself.

18 I have read the new proposal. It sounds great until
19 you comprehend exactly what it says. Putting limits and
20 boundaries on where a wild animal can go is ludicrous.
21 Native wildlife should be limited to areas that Mother Nature
22 allocates, not politics. Their status needs to be changed to
23 essential.

24 There is now overwhelming proof that wolves help the
25 ecosystem. That proof is Yellowstone. Hunters kill trophy

1 animals. Wolves usually take out the old, lame, or sick, and
2 maybe chronic wasting disease wouldn't be such an issue if
3 wolves were around at the beginning.

4 Allowing more killing will certainly doom them.
5 These animals come from seven individuals. Every one you
6 kill takes away a genetic diversity that is crucial for their
7 survival, or is that the plan? This is an animal God created
8 to live and kill a specific way for it's food, and that's
9 exactly what it does. Each and every animal on this planet
10 has as much right to be here as you and I.

11 We are supposedly the highly intelligent ones. Why
12 can't we use the tools we have to coexist? This fight is not
13 just about wolves. The real plan is to gut the ESA, and you
14 can follow the money trail to the Koch brothers and the
15 politicians they have fought off with their millions.

16 USDA Wildlife Services should be disbanded and take
17 the budget they use to kill native wildlife, \$2 million in
18 2013, and give it to ranchers and others for use on nonlethal
19 methods of coexisting with predators. This animal is just
20 trying to survive and feed its family like you and me.

21 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

22 ROBERT TEEL: Robert Teel, R-O-B-E-R-T, T-E-E-L,
23 from Apache County, representing myself as a rural American
24 citizen.

25 I disagree with the reintroduction of the wolf

1 totally. The only option that I would recommend would be 4,
2 since there is not a 5, that will do away with the whole
3 program. The reason is is because these wolves that are
4 being reintroduced are nothing but a hybrid wolf, and their
5 gene has already been contaminated. I do not have enough
6 time to go over that orally. It will be in my written
7 comments coming in.

8 However, my greatest concern is all the
9 misinformation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Arizona Game
10 and Fish, the extreme environmental groups, Center for
11 Biodiversity, Guardians of the Forest, and other extreme
12 environmental groups. They paint a picture of the rural
13 groups as some kind of terrorism.

14 I am tired of being terrorized by these groups, and
15 I expect the U.S. Fish and Wildlife to show leadership in
16 stopping this terrorist of rural America by these extreme
17 environmental groups.

18 I have -- it's kind of hard to read right here. I
19 don't have good lighting. This is an excerpt from a
20 newspaper article from Lincoln, New Mexico, where a rancher
21 was trying to survive under the Endangered Species Act and
22 was being put out of business. Zane Walley is a writer from
23 Lincoln, New Mexico. "This article was hard, damn hard, to
24 write. He admits, It was kind of like peeling a rotten onion
25 layer by layer. The outside didn't look real good, but with

1 each layer" --

2 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir. Thank you. Next
3 speaker.

4 MR. DIERINGER: Scott Dieringer, D-I-E-R-I-N-G-E-R,
5 and I'm with the Mohave Livestock Association and ranch over
6 there.

7 In '99, when they turned the wolves loose, we were
8 on the -- down here on the Coronado Trail on some ranches, in
9 the Clifton Ranger District, Apache Sitgreaves Forest. They
10 turned three packs of wolves out within seven miles of our
11 headquarters.

12 And in February of that year, we bought an
13 additional 40 cows, put them in the corner pasture, and they
14 were either -- had calves at their side or were in the third
15 trimester of pregnancy. And when we gathered these cows in
16 June, we had lost 21 calves, and there was very few lying
17 there bare right in that area. We were riding all the time.

18 And we took a biologist and Alan Armistead from the
19 Animal Plant and Health Inspections Animal Services to a
20 fresh wolf kill in April. And there was a fresh snow on the
21 ground, nothing but wolf tracks, and cow and calf tracks.
22 And you could see where the calf had drug and the wolves had
23 killed it, and I put it in a tree and took them to the kill,
24 and we skinned it, and the bite marks and the blood under the
25 hide and everything, and they said it wasn't enough proof

1 and -- to verify a wolf kill.

2 So I asked them, "What was it then?"

3 They said, "Well, it could've been eagles." And
4 then after that, they camped a man on U.S. Fish and Wildlife
5 right outside of our gate off the deeded land 24 hours a day.
6 We had absolutely no privacy. And I probably don't have time
7 to do the rest of it, but you get the idea.

8 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir. Next speaker, please.

9 MR. MEAD: My name is Brad Mead, M-E-A-D. I'm a
10 fifth native to Arizona, Yavapai County. You know, I'm
11 opposed to this. I've lived my life with the cows. I've
12 done it my whole life, and you guys are throwing stuff down
13 our throat that we -- you know, that we don't like, and it's
14 a wrong thing to do.

15 You guys are lying to us. You guys are dumb talking
16 on everything, and that's a wrong thing to do. Another thing
17 is I wouldn't have found this out, this meeting out, if I
18 didn't go to Payson last week and got a newspaper. You guys
19 don't put this stuff out there so the whole public can see.
20 You guys just hide stuff.

21 And then, you know, you people talk about wanting to
22 save these damned wolves. Well, have you guys ever been down
23 there in Apache Creek and that and reserve and seen the
24 little old cages that the kids got to sit in, because the
25 wolves are out there -- waiting for a bus. The bus driver

1 has got to honk for the parents to come. You are scaring the
2 shit out of these kids. It's bologna. I'm opposed to this
3 damned thing.

4 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker. Please hold
5 your applause. We lose time.

6 MS. FARR: He's a tough act to follow.

7 My name is Elena Maria Farr. E-L-E-N-A, M-A-R-I-A,
8 F-A-R-R.

9 I'm the daughter of a Spanish rancher who was on
10 Spanish land established in the state of New Mexico in the
11 1500s. Some of the -- one of the earlier commenters said
12 something about the wolves were here long before we were.
13 Well, that's true, but a lot of the things we have
14 established here are good and beneficial to everyone in
15 society, and we hate to see it disappear just as much as some
16 of you would hate to see the wolves disappear.

17 I'm married to a rancher whose parents established
18 their ranch in 1904 and have struggled hard in that
19 over-hundred-year span to be good stewards of the land. So
20 that's my only affiliation, and I'm not accustomed to public
21 speaking, so I wrote a short comment down.

22 Right now, America is still one of the strongest
23 nations on earth with the safest, most affordable and readily
24 available food supply. Some of you may be able to shop at
25 Whole Foods for your organic, unicorn safe, pixie-dust

1 sprinkled vegan groceries, but most of us just eat meat,
2 eggs, dairy products, and veggies that we either raised
3 ourselves or went and bought at our local grocery stores,
4 because that's what we can afford.

5 With every regulation or restriction that is imposed
6 on agricultural industries, the cost of production increases,
7 and with every supposed endangered/protected/essential
8 species introduced, more small producers are made to --

9 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Thank you.

10 Next speaker, please.

11 MR. KERR: My name is Drew Kerr, D-R-E-W, K-E-R-R.

12 I'm the Carnivor Avocate for WildEarth Guardians --

13 (Interruption.)

14 MR. KERR: My name is Drew Kerr, D-R-E-W, K-E-R-R.

15 I'm the Carnivore Advocate for WildEarth Guardians.

16 We work to protect and restore wildlife, wild
17 places, wild rivers, and the health of the American West. We
18 are glad the Service is finally taking steps to improve the
19 recovery effort for North America's most critically
20 endangered mammal. Having invested in this process for many
21 years, we are pleased to see the Service begin to take its
22 own scientists and outside experts more seriously in planning
23 and managing the species recovery. That said, the proposed
24 revised rule does not go nearly far enough and fails outright
25 in several ways.

1 First, as you have long known, expansion of the
2 Mexican Wolves' range is a necessity. Revising the BRWRA
3 into the MWEPA and multi-zonal reintroduction and recovery
4 area is a significant first step. The revised recovery area
5 should allow the wolf to reoccupy its historic range and all
6 suitable habitat including the Grand Canyon region and the
7 San Juan and Southern Rocky Mountains.

8 You've recognized the existing recovery area is
9 insufficient to meet even your modest reintroduction goals.
10 Listen to the science and recognize the proposed revisions
11 are not nearly enough.

12 Second, we strongly oppose the Service's proposal to
13 liberalize and expand both the government's and private
14 citizen's ability to kill wolves. Human-caused mortality is
15 already the leading threat to the reintroduced wild
16 population both from illegal poaching and permitted lethal
17 control. Allowing more killing in the name of acceptance is
18 illogical and will not work. The Service must redouble its
19 efforts to protect the struggling wild population, not solely
20 through accelerated reintroductions, but by safeguarding
21 wolves in the wild.

22 Third, and relatedly, we strongly oppose the
23 Service's proposal to give Arizona and New Mexico State
24 Agencies and USDA APHIS Wildlife Services greater authority
25 over an indemnity for removing or killing Mexican wolves.

1 These entities have shown the wolves' enmity from the
2 beginning of the recovery effort. We are deeply concerned
3 that the State and Wildlife Service will take this expanded
4 license as an invitation to accelerate and expand lethal
5 control.

6 If the Service is serious about recovering Mexican
7 Wolves, a native of the Southwest, they will not leave the
8 species fate to the easily manipulated and artificially
9 inflated population goals for non-native game species.

10 We also oppose leaving depredation determination in
11 the hands of the Wildlife Service, an unaccountable rogue
12 bureaucracy with a history of relying on shoddy and outdated
13 science and methodologies. That's my time.

14 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Thank you.

15 I'm going call 10 more speakers. Sherry Sherbo,
16 Deborah DeWolfe, Therese Hicks, Paul Decker, Ryan Seis, Steve
17 Clark, Rosalind Switzer, Ken Kovach, Warren Tyrrell, Jim
18 Staffnik, and Peter Ossorio.

19 MS. TRAVERS: All right.

20 (Interruption.)

21 MS. TRAVERS: Nobody is sleeping tonight.

22 MR. SEIS: My name is Ryan Seis, R-Y-A-N, S-E-I-S.

23 I'm just a cowboy, but it's what I've grown to love.

24 I come to this country 17 years ago, and what worries me the
25 most is being put out of work or being put out of a job by

1 these animals. I know that maybe someday, when their
2 population is under control, it might happen. I'm not sure
3 if that's going to happen, but it's going to be a problem
4 sooner or later.

5 I don't think wolves are going to be the ones that
6 people need to worry about. It's going to be the people that
7 people need to worry about.

8 That's pretty much all I want to say. It's just
9 going to be a problem, and I oppose it. Thank you.

10 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

11 MS. DeWOLFE: My name is Deborah DeWolfe, last name
12 D-E, capital, W-O-L-F-E, and I am here to read a letter from
13 the Mormon Environmental Stewardship Alliance.

14 MS. TRAVERS: Speak up just a little bit, please.
15 Thank you.

16 MS. DeWOLFE: We, the members of the Executive
17 Leadership Committee of the Mormon Environmental Stewardship
18 Alliance, known as MESA, are urging you to reconsider
19 allowing Mexican wolves to freely colonize the greater Grand
20 Canyon eco-region including parts of Southern Utah and
21 Colorado without hinderance or without federal protection
22 under the Endangered Species Act.

23 MESA is a young, but quickly growing 501(c)4
24 organization whose members and supporters take our
25 conservation and stewardship responsibilities very seriously.

1 We aim to do what we can to restore and maintain a vibrant
2 Earth that can sustain a flourishing population of human
3 beings and other species. We regard it as a religious and
4 moral duty to do what we can to prevent the extinction of
5 species under our watch and to promote the recovery of
6 threatened and endangered species.

7 We are aware that the Mexican Gray Wolf is a
8 threatened subspecies of the Gray Wolf with living members
9 being descended from just seven wild individuals and that
10 without the establishment of an additional protected
11 population, it cannot be deemed to recover and will
12 remain close to extinction.

13 We are also aware that the Fish and Wildlife Service
14 has itself publicly stated that, therefore, we will not -- we
15 do not understand why the Service does not go ahead and do
16 what it acknowledges to be necessary.

17 We know that the morphological and genetic studies
18 indicate that the Mexican Gray Wolves range as far as
19 Southern Utah and Colorado historically and --

20 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Thank you. Next speaker.

21 MR. DECKER: My name is Paul Decker, P-A-U-L,
22 D-E-C-K-E-R. I live in Catron County, New Mexico. I manage
23 the Deadman Ranch out in Collins Park, and I just want to
24 share some of the things I have seen firsthand, some of my
25 own experiences. I'm part of the affected public.

1 Up there in Collins Park, we have no less than six
2 wolf packs up there. What the Forest Service -- not the
3 Forest Service, but the Fish and Wildlife Service, what I've
4 been able to get off the internet and find out what their
5 compensation fund is, what they pay for a year's depredation
6 on me let alone the rest of these ranches. The wolves,
7 people say, you know, they kill the sick and the weak. Well,
8 you know what? I have a problem with that.

9 On December 2, 2013, they came down and ran a good
10 horse, one of my best horses, through a gate not 100 feet
11 from my house, broke a leg off him. I had to shoot that
12 horse. Then there was a three-day period before anybody got
13 back to me on the phone to see what had happened.

14 Well, they said, "It's kind of late to come and
15 check things."

16 I said, "Yeah, it is, because I done buried the
17 horse, and you wouldn't have been able to find the track
18 anyway, because the ground is frozen."

19 Then EIS is talking about expanding the wolf
20 territory. There has been plenty. You know what? We have
21 got enough wolves, and we need to do something about the
22 problems that we do have, not create any more. We have got
23 cages, as was addressed earlier, that our kids have to sit in
24 waiting for the school bus to keep from getting ate by
25 wolves. If you got to worry about your kids getting eaten by

1 something, that's something you don't need to have around.

2 Anyway, I just appreciate the time. You guys have a
3 good evening.

4 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

5 Please hold your applause.

6 MS. HICKS: Thank you. My name is Therese Griffin
7 Hicks.

8 I'm a Gila County cattle rancher. We have been in
9 ranching since 1905 as a family rancher. I'm also president
10 of the Gila County Cowgirls Association, and I'm vice chair
11 for Arizona Cattle Growers for Federal Lands. As you know,
12 Gila County Cattle Growers takes in the Tonto National Forest
13 and you plan to reintroduce wolves in Tonto Basin, Payson,
14 and Pleasant Valley, so I have some serious interest here and
15 two particular points I'd like to focus on.

16 One of them is the reintroduction and recovery plans
17 for Mexico. This has been brought up a few different times.
18 My question is, what is your hurry? You have 300 that you
19 know of at least in captivity with capture sites in 56 areas
20 between the U.S. and Mexico, and you have agreements with
21 Mexico to manage these sites. So why don't you work on
22 expanding your relations with Mexico and get them to come
23 back to the table with agreements for reintroduction, as
24 well. I understand it's a problem, and they poison them.
25 Thank you.

1 Okay. The other point is, as Sierra Club said just
2 a minute ago, I agreed with them that we need to see the
3 funding. It's a money thing. How are you going to pay for
4 the expansion? The Coexistence Council is almost out of
5 money. I think no more rules for two things until Mexico is
6 fully engaged to 90 percent and until they are fully
7 federally funded.

8 We are at 30 seconds here. Okay. I want to know
9 how you plan to do that realistically without relying on the
10 Coexistence Council, and it needs to address adequately
11 economic compensation to livestock producers including weight
12 loss, decreased rebreeding, which is a big issue, as well,
13 and depredation loss is probably the simplest thing you will
14 have to deal with.

15 My statement to you is show me the money before you
16 show me more wolves. Thank you.

17 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

18 MR. OSSORIO: I'm Peter Ossorio, O-S-S-O-R-I-O.
19 It's not Irish, but that's how it's pronounced. Dona Ana
20 County Commissioner Wayne Hancock asked me to state that he
21 supports a modified Alternative 3 and retaining present
22 limitations on removing and killing wolves until the number
23 of breeding pairs is 10 and the wild population is at least
24 200.

25 Now, your proposed rule does help the hard-working

1 IFT, and it provides relief to the people closest to the
2 current release and disbursal areas by providing more room
3 and other opportunities, but otherwise, it's a slap in the
4 face to two groups.

5 First are those livestock owners who are honest, law
6 abiding, may or may not think reintroducing wolves is a good
7 thing, but are concerned about competition and their bottom
8 line.

9 When I was privileged to command five different
10 artillery units in Vietnam and the cold war, I tried to make
11 rules that rewarded people for doing the right thing.
12 Allowing anyone to kill a wolf going after a staked-out pound
13 puppy only serves to tempt the honest majority and rewards
14 the worst in human behavior.

15 Secondly, you are insulting 52 captive breeding
16 facilities operating with little or no federal money whose
17 hundreds of dedicated workers and thousands of volunteers
18 work all hours rearing genetically valuable wolves,
19 developing techniques like cross-fostering. These people
20 have been at it since before the current pathetic recovery
21 plan was written on a typewriter in 1982. They deserve
22 better than to pull pups from their mothers to give them a
23 chance in the wild only to see them used for target practice
24 by an agent supposedly shooting coyotes.

25 When you look in the mirror, you may see Solomon

1 reconciling opposing claimants, but I don't know how whoever
2 put Alternative 1 forward --

3 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir. Thank you. Next
4 speaker, please.

5 MS. SWITZER: Hello. My name is Rosalind Switzer,
6 S-W-I-T-Z-E-R, and I live in rural Arizona. As an avid
7 wildlife watcher, parts of the draft proposal alarm me. It
8 leaves the goal of recovery of the Mexican wolf population in
9 jeopardy. The current population is not viable. I support
10 the expansion of the release area as proposed in their
11 Option 3 as the beginning of a wolf recovery plan.

12 Additional core population should be pursued.
13 Arbitrary political boundaries must be abandoned and wolves
14 allowed to roam to find suitable habitat. Most upsetting to
15 me are the additional rules for killing, trapping, and
16 removal of these wolves. They need a reduction in
17 human-caused mortality and removal, not an increase.

18 The population stagnated between 2003 and 2009 due
19 to increased take. There are not adequate safeguards in the
20 draft proposal to address a repeat of the scenario. The
21 Mexican Gray Wolf has an inherent right to exist in the wild.
22 Thank you.

23 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

24 MR. STAFFNIK: My name is Jim Staffnik,
25 S-T-A-F-F-N-I-K, from Apache County, Arizona. I'm a school

1 psychologist by trade and have been practicing in the schools
2 for approximately 30 years.

3 I became interested in the wolf reintroduction
4 project when I heard the children were experiencing
5 psychological trauma associated with the reintroduction of
6 wolves.

7 To date, I know of only two anecdotal or clinical
8 studies that have been conducted that addressed the
9 psychological impact of the presence of wolves on children.
10 In 2007, Julia Martin, M.D., interviewed ranching families
11 and their children to help determine the psychological
12 effects of the wolf program on children.

13 She identified, quote, "Serious psychological
14 problems being manifested by children living in the wolf
15 reintroduction areas." Those issues included, but were not
16 limited to, increased startle responses, children's belief
17 that they are helpless to control or stop events occurring
18 around them, sleep disturbances, and an increase in
19 nightmares.

20 Dr. James Thal conducted an exploratory clinical
21 study of approximately 35 individuals and found similar
22 results. My wife, after an encounter with a wolf, had -- she
23 became hypervigilant, had bouts of sadness over the loss of
24 our two alpacas that they killed, sometimes had trouble
25 sleeping, and had recurring thoughts related to the killings.

1 The wolf reintroduction program violates the
2 principle of subsidy. The principle of subsidy directs that
3 human events are best handled at the lowest possible level
4 closest to the individuals effected by the decisions made.
5 In the case of wolf reintroduction, the decision-makers are
6 least affected by their decisions.

7 In this case, the precautionary principles needs to
8 be implemented and the wolf reintroduction program stopped
9 until the effect on children is fully assessed. Thank you.

10 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

11 MR. CLARK: My name is Steve Clark, C-L-A-R-K. I'm
12 with the Arizona Elk Society and the Arizona Alliance for
13 Responsible Land Users. The Arizona Elk Society is
14 disappointed in the draft EIS and 10(j) Rule. In the EIS
15 rules, it states that in carrying out the program authorized
16 by this act, the secretary shall cooperate to the maximum
17 extent practical with the states. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife
18 Service has refused to work to the maximum ability with the
19 State.

20 After many months of collaboration with other land
21 users, cattle growers, counties, and others, we signed onto a
22 cooperative alternative that was presented to the U.S. Fish
23 and Wildlife Service for inclusion in the draft EIS.
24 Hundreds of groups and agencies came together to support this
25 effort contributing to the recovery of Mexican gray wolves.

1 Thousands of the public socially supported the
2 presented alternative that in recent past did not support
3 this program at all. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4 ignored the cooperative alternative and will, in effect, lose
5 the support from most of the effected public in this issue.

6 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to
7 ignore the fact that 90 percent of the historic habitat for
8 these wolves is in Mexico and the wildlife economies of our
9 states should not have to be destroyed to shoulder the burden
10 of full recovery.

11 The draft EIS contains some very vague wording that
12 we feel will open the door for further controversy and
13 litigation. One of that is if Arizona and New Mexico
14 determines that Mexican wolf predation is having an
15 unacceptable impact on wild ungulate herd. You need to
16 define what "unacceptable" is. The herds are already
17 stressed by drought and lack of quality habitat. We can't
18 afford to lose many more elk or deer.

19 In closing, we are very disappointed in the actions
20 of the Service and feel that you need to go back to the
21 drawing board and include the effected stakeholders and
22 cooperating agencies in meaningful discussion to bring the
23 ideas and alternatives that created the social tolerance of
24 these stakeholders into your plan. Thank you.

25 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Sherry Sherbo, Ken Kovach,

1 Warren Tyrrell.

2 I'm going to call the next 10 names. Jean Myers,
3 Bill Chamberlain, Karen Nichols, Jean Ossorio, David Lash,
4 Mary Ellen Bittorf, Tony Klumker, Bob Brister, Sheila
5 Brushus, and Houston Davis.

6 Next speaker, please.

7 MS. MYERS: My name is Jean Meyers, J-E-A-N,
8 M-Y-E-R-S. Wolves, like other predators, are vital to the
9 ecosystem. The wolves in Arizona and New Mexico are
10 essential to the recovery of the Mexican gray wolf
11 population. In order to thrive, they will need a much larger
12 habitat and access to other populations of wolves with whom
13 they can exchange genetic material.

14 The proposed rule changed to allow them to move
15 south all the way to the Mexican border and north to I-40 is
16 a wonderful first step, but they will also need room to roam
17 north to Utah and Colorado.

18 Wolves don't understand boundaries and they can't
19 behave naturally if they are subjected to such unjust
20 penalties as being captured when they roam beyond the
21 boundaries or even killed if they are suspected of killing
22 livestock.

23 Wolves are so afraid of being seen by humans that
24 sightings are very rare. Therefore, if a rancher is
25 concerned about his or her livestock, a simple solution would

1 be to make their presence known on a regular basis when
2 riding fences, tending, or feeding.

3 Also, the Fish and Wildlife Service should require
4 ranchers to remove carcasses that die of non-wolf causes so
5 that wolves are not drawn to live cattle.

6 Wolves are responsible for less than 1 percent of
7 livestock losses, anyway, and ranchers are compensated for
8 lost livestock. We need to tighten restrictions for take of
9 Mexican wolves, not loosen them. Certainly, an endangered
10 species is entitled to great protection at least until the
11 population rebounds.

12 Wolf recovery and the restoration of natural balance
13 require that we have populations of wolves in suitable areas
14 that connect throughout the southwest. When that happens,
15 elk and deer herds will be healthier leading to healthier
16 growth of grasses and trees, which provide habitat for small
17 animals. Every part of the ecosystem matters to the health
18 of our planet.

19 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker, please.
20 Please hold your applause.

21 MS. NICHOLS: My name is Karen Nichols,
22 N-I-C-H-O-L-S. I'm the education assistant at the Endangered
23 Wolf Center.

24 In 1971, the Endangered Wolf Center in St. Louis was
25 established by Dr. Marlin Perkins to save endangered species,

1 focusing on the Mexican Wolf The Captive Breeding Program,
2 although highly effective, does not exist in a vacuum. It is
3 not a continuous or permanent solution for the recovery of an
4 endangered species.

5 Being at maximum population capacity for several
6 years in the United States and Mexico has hindered the
7 captive breeding program. With only one new release into the
8 wild in the last five years, this forces us to only allow a
9 few pairs to breed annually, and so no new genes are
10 introduced into the wild, thus harming an already severely
11 bottlenecked population. Reduced breeding in captivity will
12 also mean the loss of vital genetic information. This is
13 irresponsible management.

14 Our center supports the expansion of recovery area
15 for the Mexican Wolf in a proposal by the Service and feels
16 that Alternative 3 is the best option of the proposal.
17 However, maintaining the designation of nonessential is
18 relying on an older captive population that does not have
19 room to expand.

20 The Endangered Wolf Center wants to support the
21 Service in meeting its recovery goals, but we are at a
22 critical juncture now and we need a Service that uses the
23 best science available to make this decision. We need a
24 Service that understands that without remediating the release
25 side of the recovery effort, the current captive breeding

1 program is unsustainable.

2 We need a Service that is willing to listen to the
3 overwhelming concensus of biologists engaged in the recovery
4 effort, and we need a Service that will protect the health of
5 these ecosystems by opening up enough protected wild space
6 for this wolf to truly recover itself. Thank you.

7 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

8 MS. OSSORIO: Thank you. My name is Jean Ossorio.
9 Last night I spent my 375th night camping in a tent in
10 Mexican Wolf home ranges since 1998. When I was about 9 or
11 10, my task and preparation for our family camping trips from
12 Missouri to the Southwest was to study road maps, calculate
13 mileages, and figure out the logical places to spend the
14 night on our way to our destinations in national forests and
15 national parks. It was a challenging task for an elementary
16 student, but if I hadn't known our proposed destinations, it
17 would have been impossible.

18 Unfortunately, the Fish and Wildlife Service is
19 attempting to accomplish essentially the same task in the
20 proposed rule and Environmenal Impact Statement. Without an
21 updated recovery plan to identify the ultimate destination,
22 planning the appropriate waypoints on the road to the goal is
23 nearly impossible.

24 The only intelligent way to address the problem is
25 to make sure that the Service adopts a rule that does not

1 contain provisions that send the reintroduction project off
2 on a detour resulting in wasted time, effort, and
3 expenditures.

4 The final rule should be crafted in a way that does
5 not preclude movement of wolves to areas that are likely to
6 be the sites of additional populations as proposed by the
7 science subgroup of the 2010 Recovery Team. Adopting a rule
8 that will require revision in order to establish natural
9 connectivity between the Blue Range population
10 and populations to the north is senseless.

11 I urge the Service to move the northern boundary of
12 the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area from Interstate
13 Highway 40 to Interstate Highway 70 and to remove the catch
14 and release provision from the adoption -- the adopted
15 alternative.

16 Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I will
17 expand on these comments in writing. Thanks.

18 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. We need to take just a
19 brief moment.

20 (Interruption.)

21 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

22 MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Bill Chamberlain of U.S. Wolf
23 Refuge proposing to modify the 10(j) rule before a recovery
24 plan is finalized and before the Environmental Impact
25 Statement has been completed is like putting the cart before

1 the horse. Under no circumstances should any modifications
2 to the 10(j) rule be made at this point. After establishing
3 all the necessary wolf strategy management plan, the next
4 step should be the completion of the recovery plan, which
5 will require an Environmental Impact Statement. If any of
6 these steps necessitate the modification of the 10(j) rule,
7 it can be done at this time and only if any of these acts
8 require it.

9 Keeping the expanded area south of I-40 prevents the
10 natural migration of areas suitable habitat north of I-40
11 especially in the area of the Grand Canyon. It is obvious
12 that this decision was based on the fact that Utah has
13 expressed that they do not want wolves. It is unfortunate
14 that the wolf recovery has become a state's rights issue and
15 not a biological issue. States should not be given the right
16 or the authority to determine how natural resources that
17 transcend state boundaries should be managed.

18 Natural resources, such as wildlife, forestry,
19 habitat preservation, water rights must be administered by
20 the Federal government, not the states. If the policies and
21 procedures regarding these issues are to be regionalized, the
22 boundaries of these regions should be biological borders, not
23 state lines.

24 And, finally, I must implore you to terminate all
25 relations and all interaction with USDA's Wildlife Services.

1 Their actions taken on behalf of the U.S. Wildlife are once
2 again become completely much more efficiently and much more
3 effectively within your own agencies. Their transparency and
4 deplorable actions are ones that should not be in your best
5 interest. Thank you.

6 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

7 Please hold your applause. We want to try to get
8 through these.

9 MS. BRUSHES: My name is Sheila Brushes,
10 S-H-E-I-L-A, B-R-U-S-H-E-S, and I would be like to read a
11 poem:

12 "When the first snow fall of winter runs
13 fleet-footed across the mountains, the frost will turn my
14 coat to glistening diamonds as I sing my songs to the dying
15 moon.

16 I am lobo. I am essential.

17 Some say that I am a nuisance, a killer, or worse,
18 but I say to you truly that I am a magical creature. I make
19 the aspen and the willow flourish. I make the grasses grow
20 tall and the currents run strong. I even make rivers change
21 their course.

22 I am lobo, and I am essential.

23 For the Master has handed down his great commandment
24 to the fathers of men, that you shall protect and cherish His
25 astounding creation that gives you all things, even life

1 itself, and neither harm nor destroy it, for by killing
2 Nature, you kill God.

3 And now that the future is upon you, come down upon
4 you like fire from heaven, let it not be that the children of
5 men, the commandment breakers, shall wander these bleak and
6 lifeless hills, hungry and alone, and whisper mournfully
7 amongst themselves, 'the lords of nature, the wolves, once
8 lived here.'"

9 Thank you.

10 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

11 MS. BITTORF: Hi. I'm Mary Ellen Bittorf. I'm
12 president of the White Mountain Audubon Society, and I'm the
13 person who started or founded the White Mountain Wildlife
14 Nature Center. I also served for five years on the Pinetop
15 Lakeside Town Council.

16 I appreciate your being here and appreciate the time
17 to talk. I feel like the wolf is an important part of the
18 White Mountains and an important part of Arizona. On
19 August 16, the Nature Center, as part of their Nature
20 Discovery Series, will have a program about wolves. We have
21 done this every year for several years, and this is always
22 one of the most popular programs we have. It gives people a
23 chance to learn a lot about how real wolves really live.

24 And so I know that for those to say that wolves will
25 take away the population, cause people to move away from

1 towns where wolves are, I don't believe that's true, and I
2 think that Pinetop Lakeside is an example of that.

3 I have a very real problem with the extermination or
4 killing of wolves, and the fact that it seems that instead of
5 making it harder for people to do that, it's becoming easier,
6 and I don't think that's a very good thing for the wolves. I
7 don't think that's a good thing for wildlife in general.

8 I would like to see you really think about this, and
9 also, I would like to know, since the wolf has been
10 reintroduced in Arizona, has there been one single person
11 prosecuted for killing a wolf for any reason? Thank you.

12 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

13 MR. BRISTER: My name is Bob Brister. I'm an
14 organizer for WildEarth Guardians, a regional conservation
15 organization focusing on protecting and restoring the
16 wildlife, wild places, and wild rivers in the American
17 West.

18 I came here from Salt Lake City, Utah to speak in
19 favor of expanding the range where Mexican wolves can recover
20 their population to include Southern Utah. According to the
21 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Scientific Panel, at least
22 three interconnected core populations of Mexican wolves are
23 required to ensure their long-term survival and genetic
24 health. One of the core populations should be in the Grand
25 Canyon region, which includes Southern Utah.

1 According to polling data cited in the State of
2 Utah's Wolf Management Plan, which can be found on the Utah
3 Division of Wildlife Resources website, a majority of Utahans
4 have a favorable opinion of wolves and believe wolves belong
5 in Utah. Over the last four years, I have collected
6 thousands of postcards from Utahans in favor of protection
7 for wolves and have mailed them to various public officials.

8 I urge you to remove your arbitrary I-40 northern
9 boundary for the Mexican Wolf Recovery Area. This is
10 strictly a political boundary that has no role in legitimate
11 reintroduction population management. There is no legally or
12 justifiable reason to remove wolves that migrate north of
13 I-40 seeking out their historic habitat.

14 The Mexican Wolf Recovery has been infected with
15 politics from the beginning. It is long overdue that the
16 Fish and Wildlife Service follows the ESA and develop a
17 scientifically sound Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan that includes
18 all of the species' historic range and leaves politics
19 behind. Thank you.

20 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

21 MR. KLUMKER: Tom Klumker, K-L-U-M-K-E-R. I
22 represent the outfitting industry, in both New Mexico and
23 Arizona. I live amongst the wolves in the Gila wilderness
24 and the Blue Range wilderness. I have been involved with the
25 wolf from the get-go and before. My great granddaddy was

1 with Teddy Roosevelt in Yampa, Colorado of 1899. I have come
2 from a long line of hardworking people that's made their
3 living off the land.

4 This whole movement -- and although the Fish and
5 Wildlife Services require by the Endangered Species Act to do
6 what you are trying to do, it's not about the wolf. It's not
7 about the spotted owl. It's not about the frog -- all the
8 other things that they are using to put us off the land.
9 It's a movement by WildEarth Guardians, the Biological
10 Diversity Center, to rid the national resource users -- they
11 don't want any consumptive users.

12 This is new religion. These guys worship the
13 creation, not the creator. They want their ranchers and the
14 hunters, loggers, and the miners, and we are next, and your
15 movement is just furthering and furthering their cause. I'm
16 sorry to say, I sent a bunch of petitions to Sherry earlier
17 from our area.

18 We are the people at ground zero that are being
19 affected. My grandson and my daughter were face to face with
20 the reserve. They are damned sure we get help or have our
21 cages, but there is a reason. She could have shot that wolf,
22 and she had a gun, but no. She had two more boys up the
23 road. She went back to get a camera and pretty quick she
24 jumped in her pickup and run up to the other two boys, and
25 the psychologist this year --

1 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir. Next speaker, please.

2 MR. LASH: My name is David Lash. David is
3 D-A-V-I-D, and Lash, L-A-S-H. I'm a wildlife artist. I have
4 lived in Arizona forever. I have grandchildren and two
5 daughters and a stepdaughter, and I taught for 27 years in
6 public schools. I got to tell you, it's parents that put
7 devils inside kids' heads. We need to be very careful what
8 we say to our children.

9 Our forefathers had the vision to set aside public
10 lands for the enjoyment of all. Thankfully, we live in a
11 democracy where we can enjoy one-person-one-vote, and we all
12 benefit from tax dollars. The lions' share of Fish and
13 Wildlife Service and Arizona Game and Fish expenses are paid
14 for by the American taxpayer. In Arizona, our game and fish
15 receives three federal dollars for every dollar spent for
16 hunting and fishing licenses, an element of the North
17 American model.

18 Across the nation, hunting and angling is declining.
19 Society is changing. There are fewer young people who want
20 to pick up a gun or a bow or a fishing rod and engage in
21 consuming wildlife.

22 An ever-increasing number of people are recreating
23 by hiking, traveling, mountain biking, skiing, wildlife, back
24 packing, camping, bird watching, bouldering, camping,
25 kayaking, rafting, and climbing, real money for the State of

1 Arizona.

2 When our agency is entrusted with the care of our
3 native animals and broaden their view to engage, really
4 engage, the majority, the nonconsumptive public, there are
5 many of us here who are waiting to assist with our support
6 and money. We are waiting for politics to get out of the
7 decision making process. We are waiting for science-based
8 decisions that favor ecological health over economic health
9 of special notice groups.

10 Ecological health includes hunting, angling,
11 ranching. I'm so sick of this us and them.

12 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker, please. Thank you.

13 Okay. I'm going to call 10 more names: Laurie
14 Snider, Terry Morris, Alicyn Gitlin, Roberta Moore, Craig
15 Miller, Felicia French, Dorothy Reed-Iumar, Gina Edwards,
16 Greta Anderson.

17 Go ahead. Next speaker. Thank you.

18 MS. SNIDER: Thank you. My name is Laurie Snider,
19 L-A-U-R-I-E, S-N-I-D-E-R. I'm a resident of Nutrioso,
20 Arizona in the heart of wolf country.

21 MS. TRAVERS: Speak up just a little. Thank you.

22 MS. SNIDER: I'm here to talk about political
23 decisions and science. You know the science. You have
24 gotten the science over and over and over again, and then
25 special interest groups get really loud, and you make

1 political decisions. You know that wolves don't know
2 political boundaries. They don't know that US-40 is the top
3 end of their limits. You know that if you put a gun in the
4 hand of a rancher who has had problems with wolves, he is not
5 going to check the genetics on that animal.

6 Now, I'm a grandmother, too, and I want to know, do
7 I have to tell my children and my grandchildren that the
8 wolves were lost, because of political decisions? I hope
9 not. Please reconsider this insane thing.

10 Alternative 3 is a good start, but it's not enough.
11 You cannot increase the takes. We are losing too many
12 animals in a very limited gene pool already to human takes.
13 You cannot allow for increasing human takings. You have to
14 allow these animals to live in their natural environment.

15 Thank you for taking my comments.

16 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

17 GINA EDWARDS: Hi. My name is Gina Edwards,
18 E-D-W-A-R-D-S. I'm here to read for Oliver Star tonight. He
19 states, "I'm a third generation Coloradan. My grandfather
20 owned one of the largest cattle companies in Colorado. I
21 grew up around horses, cattle, and cowboys, but unlike my
22 granddad, I didn't take the wolves' bad reputation at face
23 value. Instead, I have devoted my life to studying, raising,
24 and advocating for wolves.

25 In the past 12 months, I have been to seven states

1 and three countries to study wolves, including spending
2 several days in Northern Arizona and New Mexico. The rim of
3 the Grand Canyon is literally teeming with elk, yet the
4 proposed Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Plan includes boundaries
5 that put this entire ecosystem out of reach of the animals it
6 requires most: wolves.

7 Worse, expecting wolves to comprehend and respect
8 some boundary established by humans is as ridiculous as
9 expecting a goldfish to understand an iPhone. And while more
10 releases are one of the plans' few positives, doing so
11 without increasing protections for wolves will simply result
12 in more dead wolves, not wolf recovery.

13 The proposals loosening restrictions related to the
14 killing of wolves gives nearly free reign to anyone that
15 wants to shoot a wolf. All you need is a plausible excuse.

16 There are only 83 Mexican wolves on the landscape,
17 and only 3 animals stand between recovery and extinction
18 under these conditions. Each wolf is not merely essential.
19 It's priceless.

20 U.S. Fish and Wildlife needs to get serious about
21 Mexican gray wolf recovery and develop a current recovery
22 plan based upon the best available science. Expand the
23 recovery area to include all suitable habitat north of I-40.

24 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker. Next
25 speaker.

1 MS. GITLIN: Hi. Alicyn Gitlin, G-I-T-L-I-N. Thank
2 you for hearing my comments. I am here to encourage you to
3 extend the recovery area north of I-40. Public lands belong
4 to all of us and wolves are part of our American legacy. Our
5 national heritage should include a full suite of native
6 wildlife, and we all should have the right to hear a wolf
7 howl on our public land.

8 Their survival or recovery depends on having terrain
9 to roam and their ability to create metapopulations, to
10 increase their genetic diversity and their resilience to
11 disease and natural disasters. A captive population is not a
12 metapopulation.

13 Scientific models, including the one that you showed
14 in your Alternative 3, repeatedly showed the Grand Canyon
15 region to be excellent habitat for wolves, and there is high
16 likelihood that wolves would try to disperse there. We
17 should do everything we can to encourage recovery, including
18 allowing them to colonize the Grand Canyon area.

19 We should not waste tax payer dollars rounding up
20 and relocating wolves trying to naturally disperse. People
21 want to see wildlife, including wolves, at the Grand Canyon,
22 and livestock conflict will not be a concern in the Grand
23 Canyon National Park. We owe it to our citizens and to
24 future generations. American wildlands, our public lands,
25 complete with a full suite of wildlife should be our national

1 heritage.

2 Please allow wolves to disperse north of I-40 and
3 allow them to establish a metapopulation in the Grand Canyon
4 region. Thank you.

5 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker. Please hold
6 your applause. Thank you.

7 MS. FRENCH: Felicia French, F-R-E-N-C-H. I'm a
8 retired army colonel with 32 years of service. My last
9 assignment was in Afghanistan. I make this statement only
10 because the perception out there is that people who speak out
11 for protection of our wildlife environment are liberal,
12 draft-dodging, environmental terrorist hippies or something
13 to that effect.

14 My military deployments have taken me to many
15 developing countries where I saw firsthand what happens when
16 you put profit for few over the people and the planet.
17 Unbridled destruction and extermination of the Earth and its
18 inhabitants is not healthy growth any more than a malignant
19 tumor.

20 What makes this country great is its diversity in
21 all forms. We need to make a policy that is beneficial to
22 all, not just the few with the loudest voices and largest
23 wallets. Some do not have voices, such as animals, and other
24 groups of people. Therefore, we have a moral obligation to
25 protect and defend them, and not that it matters, but my

1 family been here since the 1880s, about five generations'
2 worth, and have backpacked all over the territory.

3 I have gone backpacking all over the state,
4 thousands of days' worth of it, and never once has my
5 daughter or any of my family members ever felt threatened by
6 any animal, let alone a wolf.

7 I understand fear. Believe me. I have been afraid
8 many times in my life, but we can't just try to wipe out a
9 species. Extinct means extinct. It means we will never get
10 it back -- just out of fear. Thank you.

11 MS. MOORE: My name is Vicki Moore, M-O-O-R-E, and
12 I'm from Green Valley, Arizona, and I'm talking about the
13 urban wolf interface, but to backtrack, I have reviewed many
14 Draft Environmental Impact Statements. I have looked at many
15 EPA rules and procedures, and I am requesting that there be
16 an extension, a 90-day extension, because the bottom line of
17 these documents is fact checking them, and you can't fact
18 check a document in 60 days and look at the references and
19 see where the references -- there are references. I'm asking
20 for a 90-day extension so we can look into things.

21 Back to the rural interface. Everybody seems to be
22 worrying that there is a million people south of the
23 Mogollon Rim. So my question in the Wolf Recovery Plan is
24 what is the wolf urban interface going to do to recovery,
25 specifically the Sky Islands. It is no longer the

1 10,000-acre ranch. They are going to farmettes. They are
2 going to 40 acres. They are going to two and a halves. This
3 is all over South and South Central Arizona.

4 So when the wolves come up from Mexico and they hit
5 all these ranchettes and subdivisions, what is going to
6 happen? So I don't think any wolf recovery program has had
7 to deal with the urban interface of wolves and people on a
8 serious note in the magnitude of what you see in the
9 Sun Belt. Thank you.

10 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

11 MR. MILLER: My name is Craig Miller, C-R-A-I-G,
12 M-I-L-L-E-R. I have worked on natural resource management
13 issues in the Southwest as the Southwest Representative for
14 Defenders of Wildlife for the past 20 years.

15 And many people this evening have touched on the new
16 proposals, changes to take allowances. One important part of
17 that issue that I don't believe has been adequately addressed
18 is the need for a contingency plan. If you don't embrace
19 Alternative C and insist on relaxing take provisions, I think
20 it's really important to include provisions that ensure
21 against a catastrophe, something that could be devastating to
22 the population, similar to the provisions that are proposed
23 that would protect against unacceptable impacts on elk
24 populations. I think it's important to have similar
25 provisions to protect against unacceptable impacts on the

1 wolf population.

2 The second point I'd like to make concerns
3 management zones. Previous comments dealt with the issues of
4 Interstate 40 and following interstate transportation borders
5 instead of ecological characteristics. One problem I see,
6 just on a quick glance of the map, is that you are
7 eliminating the Argosy complex in the Buenos Aires Wildlife
8 Refuge relegated into Zone 3. That area in the late '80s,
9 early '90s was proposed by Arizona Game and Fish as one of
10 the four potential reintroduction sites, and it's an area
11 where I was involved in the wolf surveys under the guidance
12 of Fish and Wildlife Service and Game and Fish, because the
13 habitat there was, at the time, considered to be among the
14 best remaining in the region, and the area had the highest
15 probability of hosting remaining wild wolves prior to
16 reintroduction, so I would encourage you to take a closer
17 look at your zone management scheme, and if possible, get
18 away from using interstates to define the zones and follow
19 ecological characteristics more closely. Thank you.

20 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

21 MR. MORRIS: Terry Morris, T-E-R-R-Y, M-O-R-R-I-S.
22 I'm a fourth generation Arizonan, and in my own mind, I
23 represent every American that fully supports the Endangered
24 Species Act, as written, and I also support Alternative 3. I
25 believe it's the best possible alternative, although I

1 believe it still leaves a lot of room for the actual
2 possibility of delisting.

3 I think the wild wolves that have been released
4 since 1998 have suffered through all the arguing and
5 political turmoil and noncooperation and whining, and I
6 believe that they deserve better protection for their chance
7 of survival.

8 I think that the many, many, many, many people whose
9 livelihoods are directly related to this recovery program, I
10 think it's a tragedy that after 30 years I actually commented
11 on the original draft plan, and I think it was in '82, and
12 30 years is way too long to be operating under that -- that
13 type of plan. I think all the people that have worked long
14 and hard over the last 30-plus years on this recovery effort
15 deserve better. Thank you.

16 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker, please.

17 MS. INMAN: I'm Dorothy Reed-Inman, I-N-M-A-N --

18 MS. TRAVERS: Speak up.

19 MS. INMAN: I'm Dorothy Reed-Inman, also known as
20 Doty, and I have lived here 27 years in the White Mountains,
21 42 years in the Rocky Mountains, and I'm a grandma with seven
22 grandchildren, and I love them very much. I'm here to speak
23 for them and other users of this land.

24 In my 42 years here, I have been a backpacker, a
25 hiker, birder, kayaker, river rafter, and that's where I come

1 from is the use of this land. I have also seen in this time
2 here that some of the landscapes have been out of balance. I
3 lived right above Yellowstone. I lived in the Rocky
4 Mountains.

5 I believe that wolves will bring that balance back,
6 and I support a recovery alternative that modifies
7 Alternative 3 and expands the areas where the wolves can be
8 released.

9 I oppose any loopholes for killing and capturing
10 wolves. I don't want to see any arbitrary boundaries. I
11 believe the Mexican wolf needs to move around to improve its
12 genetic health and its recovery. I'd like to see them in
13 Northern Mexico, Southern Colorado, and the Grand Canyon. I
14 have seen those landscapes to be pretty beat up and can
15 benefit from the wolves' nature.

16 I see wolves being essential. I believe that
17 ranchers can and should take steps to protect their livestock
18 from depredation through nonlethal means. I'd just like to
19 thank --

20 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

21 I'm going to call 10 more names while the next
22 speaker gets ready. Casey Murph, Emily Renn, Carol Sletten,
23 Maria Brueckner, Cindy Tuell, Sam Phalon, John Tate, Jeff
24 Menges, Diane Gallegos, and Lynn Andrade. Thank you.

25 MS. ANDERSON: Hello. My name is Greta Anderson,

1 G-R-E-T-A, A-N-D-E-R-S-O-N. I'm the Deputy Director of
2 Western Watersheds Project, and I moved with my daughter into
3 wolf country, and I was not afraid. I'm more afraid of
4 raising her in a world without wolves and with an unhealthy
5 ecosystem.

6 I am very glad to see that the MWEPA is being
7 expanded, but I'm disappointed that the Service continues to
8 impose arbitrary boundaries where wolves are left to roam. I
9 think you need to consider full recovery and allow wolves to
10 go to suitable habitats including the areas north of I-40.

11 I support the primacy of native species on our
12 public lands, and I believe that the human extractive
13 industries that use public lands should be secondary to the
14 needs of native wildlife and healthy functioning ecosystems.
15 And, as such, the Fish and Wildlife Service needs to stop
16 cowtowing to the cowboys.

17 The proposed rules and provisions of take are far
18 too deferential to the people who are already degrading on
19 our public trust ecosystems with their cows and sheep and
20 profiting at our expense. Any management of wolves should
21 require full compliance with animal operating instructions,
22 deterrents, and carcass treatment. Why would you reward bad
23 livestock management with wolf removal?

24 Exempting Wildlife Services for take provisions
25 preemptively is offensive. For an agency with a history of

1 quote, unquote, "mistaken identity," like a certain wildlife
2 specialist, the Fish and Wildlife Service should retain
3 discretion to prosecute violations of the Endangered Species
4 Act to the fullest. Wildlife Services does not have a
5 mandate to conserve native predators and essentially with
6 your proposed rule, you have written these hired killers for
7 the livestock industry a blank check.

8 Furthermore, if we are talking about unacceptable
9 impacts of native ungulates, I would like you to consider the
10 fact that each cow alone is worth 2 elk, 7 mule deer, and
11 11 pronghorn, so --

12 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Thank you. Next speaker.
13 Please hold your applause. Thank you, sir.

14 MR. MURPH: Yes. My name is Casey Murph, C-A-S-E-Y,
15 M-U-R-P-H. Okay. I feel a little funny. These folks have
16 made up their mind. I'm going to talk to you guys.

17 MS. TRAVERS: I'd appreciate it if you would talk to
18 me, since I'm recording. Thank you.

19 MR. MURPH: My family is about fifth generation
20 Arizonian. My greatgrandmother was Louise Ellen Ulysess.
21 When she was 10 years old, she was attacked by wolves at her
22 family ranch in Zenith, got away into the house, barricaded
23 herself in there until her father got home, and saved her
24 life.

25 Now, when I was in my 20s in the 1990s, I went to

1 New Mexico, got a job on a ranch over there just in time to
2 see wolves introduced into the Gila, and we went to a bunch
3 of meetings a lot like this one. I went to one in Reserve,
4 and there were a lot of people there telling us that the
5 impact on the ranching industry was going to be minimal.
6 There wasn't any threat to anybody, all this kind of stuff.
7 And there were a lot of people who were standing up with
8 concerns. Those people were all basically told that they
9 were inbred rednecks, and they didn't know what they were
10 talking about. And here we are all these years later finding
11 out that everything that we were worried about came to pass,
12 and it's all true.

13 Now, there are a lot of you folks who might have
14 some property between here and I-40. There is a lot of
15 subdivided land out there. You are going to find out what we
16 found out. Your dogs are going to die. Your livestock is
17 going to die. Your kids are going to be threatened, and this
18 is going to be a great big old mess. You guys have a chance
19 to do something about it now. You ain't going to, but at
20 least I said something to you about it. That's enough for
21 me. Thank you.

22 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir. Next speaker.

23 MS. BRUECKNER: My name is Maria Brueckner. I'm a
24 cardiologist. It's B-R-U-, umlaut, -C-K-N-E-R. I'm half
25 German. I'm also half Spanish. The person who gave me

1 reverence for wildlife was my mother, who was Spanish.

2 MS. TRAVERS: Speak a little louder, please.

3 MS. BRUECKNER: My mother was Spanish. She was a
4 rancher. She loved all nature, all wildlife, including the
5 wolves, but she grew up in Colorado on a ranch, and in her
6 name I will say that I recognize no human authority to tell
7 any animal where they can roam free. All animals should be
8 allowed to roam wherever.

9 But, then, you know, there was my father. He was
10 German, German-American, but he fought against the Nazis, who
11 came up with ideas like "essential" and "nonessential." And
12 whether the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service chooses to evolve
13 with the rest of us, I think that those concepts are
14 outdated. They were outdated when we realized that the Jews
15 were nonessential, that the Native Americans were
16 nonessential, the Africans were nonessential, and any animal
17 on this earth as nonessential. Thank you.

18 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

19 MS. SLETTEN: Hello. My name is Carol Sletten. The
20 last name is spelled S-L-E-T-T-E-N.

21 I want to thank the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
22 for holding this hearing and the White Mountain Apache Tribe
23 for hosting the event. I'm a writer and illustrator who is
24 lucky enough to live in Pinetop. Since I write about
25 historical subjects, I spend a lot of time thinking about the

1 past and wishing that our ancestors had not done so many
2 selfish things to disrupt or eliminate species from our
3 environment.

4 And yet, if I look at what they did in the context
5 of their times, I can excuse them for some of their mistakes.
6 Many of those old timers didn't have the knowledge to foresee
7 the consequences of what they were doing, but today we can't
8 use the lack of good scientific knowledge as an excuse. We
9 need to do everything that we can to protect and increase the
10 number of wolves as well as those of other species that are
11 near the edge of extinction.

12 The 16th century poet, John Donne said, "Any man's
13 death diminishes me." The 20th Century poet, Adrienne Rich,
14 said, "Any woman's death diminishes me." Today in the 21st
15 Century, we need to remind ourselves that any species' death
16 not only diminishes us, but it also diminishes the world for
17 future generations. Thank you.

18 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

19 MS. MENGES: My name is Jeff Menges, M-E-N-G-E-S.
20 I'm a fourth generation rancher from Graham and Southern
21 Greenlee County. This wolf expansion proposal makes me feel
22 like everything that my family and I have worked for is
23 starting to slip away. There is a couple of reasons for
24 that.

25 One, we are down out of the elk area where they say

1 80 percent of the wolf's diet is elk. So I can tell you that
2 there is not enough deer, turkey, and javelina in our area to
3 support the predators that we have, so when the wolves get
4 down in our area, they are going to eat livestock.

5 Second is the loss of value, loss of livestock value
6 that has been articulated, loss of value to our -- to our
7 ranches. On the signing and finalization of this plan, our
8 ranches will lose 25 to 50 percent of their value, and when
9 the wolves move in, they will lose the rest.

10 So you don't fix a program with this many problems
11 by expanding it, so my preference would be to stay with the
12 existing program, the no-action alternative, since there is
13 not a no-wolf alternative, which I would have supported.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

16 MR. ANDRADE: Good evening. My name is Lynn
17 Andrade, A-N-D-R-A-D-E. I'm a third-generation Arizonan. My
18 parents were born, all four of them, in the 1800s. My
19 grandfather was born in Arizona when it wasn't Arizona. I
20 come from a military background. I have 15 years' experience
21 firsthand handling wolves, and not to beat dead horses here,
22 because so many things have been said, if children are
23 afraid, I have one word for you: Parents. I have two
24 children. I understand that.

25 I am for the wolf reintroduction. I believe very

1 strongly that we should have biodiversity. There is a very
2 brief video on You Tube called How Wolves Change Rivers.
3 People need to look at that. It's basically a documentary on
4 what happened in Yellowstone with the reintroduction, what
5 changed with the biology of the area, and so on.

6 Also, diversity, I think we owe it to be good
7 stewards to the world that we inherited from our Maker,
8 whoever you think your Maker is. I think we owe it to be
9 good stewards, and that's the way I look at it.

10 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

11 MR. TATE: My name is John Tate, T-A-T-E. I'm an
12 information officer for the CMLUA, Citizens for Multiple Land
13 Use and Access. I have lived in Arizona all my life. I have
14 watched the game particularly, came from a logging family. I
15 would like to actually answer this lady right here.

16 Elk was shot out years ago, over 100 years ago.
17 They were planted. The wolves were thinned out, and the elk
18 are in large numbers today. We have already seen what the
19 wolves can do in Idaho and Montana. I had a visitor the
20 other day from Idaho telling me stories about what they seen.
21 We all basically know that our game can't survive this.

22 This whole wolf program, as far as I'm concerned, is
23 just a racquet. Nothing more than that. It's an
24 environmental romantic idea to listen to a wolf. See, this
25 is the unique thing about you guys. You are willing to wipe

1 out about three or four different species of animals to save
2 one that is basically worthless.

3 We have no shortage of wolves, and you all know it.
4 We have more than enough predators right now for the game we
5 have. We can't stand any more. So, basically, what it comes
6 down to -- is we had a range war in this country in 1882 that
7 lasted 10 years over something far less and that was just
8 sheep. Now all these years later they are trying to pour
9 wolves, the worst predator on earth, on these people's
10 doorsteps. It ruins the economies. It ruins rural living,
11 and I think that's exactly what it's about -- rural living.
12 Thank you.

13 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

14 MS. GALLEGOS: Good evening. My name is Diane
15 Gallegos, G-A-L-L-E-G-O-S, Director of Wolf Haven
16 International. Thank you for this opportunity to give
17 testimony. Wolf Haven has participated in the Mexican Wolf
18 Species Survival Plan Program for almost two decades
19 including the Hawks Nest and Cienega packs that were released
20 into the wild. Wolf Haven is one of three pre-release
21 facilities for Mexican wolves, and we currently provide a
22 haven and care for 11 Mexican wolves in our sanctuary.

23 As you know, we don't receive any government funding
24 to help with daily care or to cover travel expenses. Our
25 staff volunteers and supporters are honored to supply the

1 funds and effort needed to ensure that every individual wolf
2 is as strong and healthy as possible while in our care. We
3 take our responsibility for each of these animals very
4 seriously, and we continue to be dependable and conscientious
5 partners with you in the recovery of this species.

6 It is our expectation that you will demonstrate the
7 leadership needed to ensure their recovery. It is clear that
8 Alternatives 2 and 4 will not lead to a biologically
9 self-sustaining population.

10 Your efforts, the taxpayer funds already invested in
11 this program, along with significant resources provided by
12 52 captive breeding facilities and supporters over the last
13 two decades would be for nothing. It would make it very
14 difficult for me, in good conscience, to encourage donors to
15 continue this important program, and it would erode the
16 great partnerships that you have developed over the years.

17 Extended analysis and population modeling shows that
18 in order for the Mexican gray wolf to be safe from extinction
19 in the wild that at least three or four populations are
20 needed with dispersal in these populations. It is critical
21 that new breeding pairs are released into the wild to address
22 genetic limitation.

23 Alternatives 2 and 4 can prevent dispersal of wolves
24 into existing excellent suitable habitat and the opportunity
25 to create more populations.

1 In conclusion, Alternatives 2 and 4 will delay
2 recovery of Mexican wolves. We owe it to future generations
3 to do all we can now to make sure the remaining ecosystems
4 are as complete as possible.

5 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

6 MS. GALLEGOS: Thank you.

7 MS. TRAVERS: I'm going to read some more names.
8 Linda Dieringer, Eva Sargent, John Koleszar, Kim Crumbo,
9 Dennis Duvall, John Emory, Roxane George, Arron Rodrick -- a
10 name I cannot read, but their e-mail address is "dale," "G,"
11 "O," "55," maybe? Close? I cannot read the name -- and
12 Sandy Bahr.

13 MS. RENN: My name is Emily Renn, E-M-I-L-Y, Renn,
14 R-E-N-N, and I'm the director of Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery
15 Project, which is a nonprofit organization based in
16 Flagstaff, Arizona. We were founded in 2005 based on the
17 knowledge of scientific research that supports the recovery
18 of Mexican wolves in the Grand Canyon region.

19 We have talented supporters in the Grand Canyon
20 region as well as over 100 volunteers every year that work to
21 help support the education and an outreach. Essentially, we
22 are working for you. We are working for the recovery of the
23 Mexican wolf, and we know that the Grand Canyon region is an
24 essential part of that recovery effort.

25 In 2012, with over 100 volunteers, we actually hiked

1 a trail of Paseo Del Rodo starting in Alpine, Arizona and
2 ending at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. In doing so, I
3 got to experience Northern Arizona and its dispersal corridor
4 along the Mogollon Rim in a new way that I have never seen in
5 this area right on the border of Coconino National Forest.

6 In doing that, pretty much all we saw in hiking this
7 400 mile trail was elk. We rarely ever saw another human.
8 So I encourage the Fish and Wildlife Service to reconsider
9 this proposal, because knowing that we were founded in 2005,
10 and it's now 2014, and we still do not have that opportunity
11 to have the wolves dispersed in the Grand Canyon region.
12 It's just absurd to me to think that it has taken this long
13 and could take 5, 10 years longer to get them in the Grand
14 Canyon region.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

17 MR. PHALON: Good evening, my name is Sam Phalon,
18 P-H-A-L-O-N. I'd like to talk about what I support and do
19 not support as it pertains to management strategies for the
20 Mexican gray wolf.

21 First thing I would like to say I support a viable
22 carnivore population in the Southwest. Apex predators lead
23 to a healthy ecosystem. They create what is called a trophic
24 cascade. Apex predators, such as wolves, would lead to a
25 decreased loaded-up population which would then prevent

1 overgrazing on native grasses on willows and aspens across
2 Arizona.

3 Therefore, I support an increased release area that
4 is proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. An
5 increased release area utilizes resources available to wolves
6 without presenting crowding to other packs.

7 However, I do not support arbitrary boundaries, such
8 as the I-40. I-40 is a political boundary, not a natural
9 obstacle. Wolves can't read maps, and furthermore, there is
10 no science to support this being a useful boundary. If the
11 need for a boundary exists at all, I would support the
12 boundary being moved to I-70.

13 I also do not support the liberalized take, which
14 has been introduced by the alternative. Any take limits the
15 pack's ability to exist in the wild. No take limit has been
16 established, and an increase -- and it increases the risk of
17 genetic diversity loss. Therefore, I would like to say that
18 State and federal agencies are stewards of the land, and they
19 cannot pick and choose which processes to protect and which
20 to ignore in the natural processes of Arizona.

21 And, as individuals, as patriots who love our home,
22 we need to respect all the natural processes in these lands.
23 Wolf recovery and economic well-being are not mutually
24 exclusive. It just takes a commitment to both.

25 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

1 MS. TUELL: Hi. My name is Cynthia Tuell,
2 T-U-E-L-L. I drove up here from Tucson with my five-year-old
3 son to speak on his behalf as well as mine, and anyone who
4 knows about traveling 10 hours round-trip with a
5 five-year-old knows that we were very dedicated and committed
6 to coming to this meeting.

7 My son Jack and I have been camping in the Apache,
8 the Sitgreaves, and Gila National Forest since he was a small
9 baby, actually before he was born. I camped alone before he
10 was born in all those forests. We hoped when we camped
11 there, we hoped to hear them or to see Mexican gray wolves.
12 Wolves belong. They deserve room to roam, and the boundaries
13 for the Mexican wolf EPA should be based on science not
14 politics. The extractive industries, including ranching,
15 should be secondary to the science-based recovery plan and
16 decisions for this species.

17 Management of the Mexican gray wolves should require
18 grazing permits to fully comply with their terms and removal
19 of cow carcasses. The wolves have no choice about where they
20 go. The people have choices. Fish and Wildlife Service
21 should ensure that people make choices to support wolf
22 recovery and not hinder it.

23 When my son and I camped in the Blue Range, we were
24 there because of the possibility of seeing or hearing wolves.
25 I ask the Fish and Wildlife Service to please fully consider

1 the economic impact of tourist dollars generated by wolf
2 populations that are in the wild.

3 I also ask the Fish and Wildlife Service to fully
4 consider the impacts of the militarized border zone and how
5 that will affect border migration on wolves from both
6 directions. Thank you.

7 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

8 MS. DIERINGER: My name is Linda Dieringer --

9 MS. TRAVERS: Speak up a little, please.

10 MS. DIERINGER: My name is Linda Dieringer. My
11 husband Scott and I were ranching on the Mallot & 6K6
12 ranches. Unlike the pro-wolf people, we have lived in the
13 middle of the wolf recovery program. They released three
14 packs of wolves within seven miles of our headquarters. Our
15 first experience with them was when they came into our yard
16 and attacked one of our dogs. Scott tried to chase them
17 away, but they would not leave. They repeatedly came into
18 our yard at night to attack our dogs. We would wake up and
19 try to chase them away, but they would slip into the cover of
20 the brush, and as soon as we went back to bed, they returned.

21 Our grandkids, who previously loved the ranch life,
22 were afraid to go outside and play. Wolves are not only a
23 threat to livestock and wildlife, but are a threat to people,
24 especially children and their pets. There are a lot of
25 people who live in rural Arizona who have children, small

1 livestock, horses, and pets. They would be in constant fear
2 for the safety of their children and the animals they love if
3 wolves are released.

4 A pack of wolves can take down an animal as big as a
5 horse by hamstringing it, and while it's struggling to get
6 away, they proceed to eat it alive. None of the pro-wolf
7 people live with and try to make a living with wolves
8 terrorizing them.

9 I suggest you read the book "Wolves in Russia;
10 Anxiety Through the Ages," a scientific study of the problems
11 that wolves cause people.

12 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

13 MR. KOLESZAR: My name is John Koleszar,
14 K-O-L-E-S-Z-A-R. What we have here is urban liberal
15 environmentalists who are now in charge of determining rural
16 America's future. The list of cooperating agencies that you
17 showed on that map is a sham, because you have not paid any
18 attention at all to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission nor
19 the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

20 Those people have worked side by side with you, and
21 you have rejected all of the advice, all of the suggestions
22 that came from the cattle ranchers, the rural communities
23 that are involved, the governmental agencies, and the true
24 conservationist groups who are involved in helping with that
25 proposal.

1 In 1994, the DEIS submitted by the United States
2 Fish and Wildlife Service stated specifically that no more
3 than -- no less than 5 percent nor more than 30 percent of
4 the Yellowstone elk would be taken as predation by wolves.
5 At that time, there were close to 20,000 elk living in the
6 Yellowstone greater area. Today there are less than 4,000.
7 You can't tell any logical person that 80 percent of those
8 elk were weak or sick.

9 What you have done is you have destroyed a
10 population of elk, and you are asking us to believe that you
11 know what you are doing now. That's wrong. Thank you.

12 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

13 MS. GEORGE: Good evening. My name is Roxane
14 George, G-E-O-R-G-E, and I live in Flagstaff, Arizona. I
15 would like to thank the White Mountain Apache Tribe for
16 hosting us and for being willing to share their land with
17 Mexican gray wolves. I'm a long-time resident of Arizona,
18 and I hike and camp in the Southwest public lands, including
19 those in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area.

20 I'm strongly supportive of increasing the area where
21 wolves can be released. This change is long overdue, and I
22 urge the Service to follow through by expediting the release
23 of many more wolves from the captive population.

24 I do not see a full range of alternatives in the
25 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The conservation or

1 recovery alternative is conspicuously absent. I am appalled
2 that the expansion of the 10(j) area is proposed rather than
3 removal of politically-based boundaries and designation of
4 these native wolves as essential.

5 The Service's claim that should the expanded
6 allowances for killing and removing these critically
7 endangered wolves who have up to five generations of
8 experience in the wild actually wipeout this population and
9 you can simply start over from the captive population is
10 appallingly cavalier and ignores both science and common
11 sense.

12 The wild population of wolves is essential
13 ecologically, economically, and in every legal sense of the
14 word. The Service has acknowledged the proposed changes to
15 the rule will not achieve recovery of the Mexican gray wolf,
16 and you are well aware that you have included provisions
17 which directly contradict the recommendations of the
18 scientists on the Recovery Planning Team and the best
19 available science on what is necessary for recovery.

20 It's time that you demonstrate real leadership for
21 the recovery of the Mexican gray wolves instead of playing
22 politics with these important animals' future.

23 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

24 MS. GEORGE: Thank you.

25 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

1 MS. SARGENT: I'm Eva Sargent. That's E-V-A,
2 S-A-R-G-E-N-T. I'm the Director -- Southwest Director of
3 Defenders of Wildlife. I'm here on behalf of the Defenders'
4 27,000 supporters in Arizona and New Mexico.

5 What I want to talk about today is these expanded
6 take provisions. When the best science and then, of course,
7 the science of the Service's own recovery team says that
8 human-caused mortality has to decrease in order for Mexican
9 wolves to recover, it doesn't make any sense to actually
10 provide provisions that would increase take.

11 At the recent meeting at the Society of Conservation
12 Biology in Montana, at which Turner Ashton with some candor
13 said that species recovery is all politics, not science, and
14 that we all have to get used to less wildlife -- at the same
15 meeting, he left telling us increased take of the wolves does
16 not lead to increased tolerance. I'd like to see that
17 analyzed and talked about and discussed in the final EIS.

18 There is some really strange language in the draft.
19 It says that these increased take provisions won't actually
20 increase take, and therefore, there will be no analysis, and
21 this will be the last time that it's mentioned in the draft.
22 I hope that that will be corrected.

23 The Service is responsible for analyzing every
24 change to the rule, and when I say, "analyzed," I mean,
25 really thinking about it, thinking about legal take, thinking

1 about opportunities for illegal take that might be brought on
2 by some of these provisions.

3 That all needs to be analyzed. You can't simply
4 say, "Allowing more take won't really result in any more
5 takes, so we are not going to analyze it." That's not going
6 to stand up to any kind of scrutiny.

7 Finally, you know, the Service, of course, is
8 responsible to steward for these endangered species,
9 experimental wildlife. We would advocate that before there
10 is any increased provisions for take, the population has to
11 go to 10 percent per year. That's the rate that the Service
12 expects from the changes. Thank you.

13 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

14 MR. CRUMBO: Good morning. My name is Kim Crumbo.
15 That's K-I-M, C-R-U-M-B-O. I'm a native Utahan, but I have
16 spent time in Northern Arizona for 30 years, father of two
17 and a grandfather. I'm the Conservation Director for the
18 Grand Canyon Wildlands Council, a tree hugger organization.
19 I'm also -- I'm also a Vietnam veteran who served as a Navy
20 Seal in two combat deployments.

21 I'd like to make a case that Utah provides an
22 essential habitat for Mexican wolf recovery. The alternative
23 to the proposed rule north of that science available
24 regarding recovery of the Mexican wolf, while I agree with
25 the statement presented in the proposed rule for a larger

1 population of wolves distributed over a larger area has a
2 higher probability for persistence than a small population in
3 a small area.

4 None of the alternatives presented incorporates the
5 Mexican Wolf Recovery Team Science and Planning Subgroups'
6 recommendations basically calling for three population --
7 three subpopulations, connected populations, of Mexican
8 wolves recovering in three separate, but connected, areas,
9 which included the current Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area,
10 which also includes the Southern Grand Canyon ecoregions,
11 essentially Southern Utah and Southern Colorado.

12 So I think those recommendations should be
13 incorporated in the proposal. They constitute the best
14 available science and need to be considered.

15 I don't have time for anything else, but those
16 comments, so thank you for the opportunity. I really
17 appreciate the opportunity to comment.

18 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

19 MR. RODRICK: My name is Arron Rodrick,
20 R-O-D-R-I-C-K. I moved here from Oklahoma to Arizona to be
21 closer to the wolves and to roam free with them. I believe
22 my spiritual connection, my passion for wolves, is so very
23 strong that I went to such lengths as to change my last name
24 to "Wolf."

25 Regarding the 33-year-old plan, I cannot fathom how

1 this benefits the essential population of wolves, including
2 the Mexican wolves, which are already on the brink of
3 extinction, not to mention a rare subspecies. Of the
4 provision, I believe it does not benefit these endangered
5 wolves that need to repopulate and have more reintroduced
6 into the wild. To restrict and place boundaries on their
7 natural habitat, wolves can't read maps.

8 From reported cases of wolf attacks, I do believe it
9 is not substantial and sufficient to have documented wolf
10 attacks on livestock deaths and attacks on humans, yet they
11 get an unjust bad rep for the majority of such claims that
12 holds them accountable when there are more reported cases of
13 deaths from lack of food source, such as overgrazing, living
14 conditions, and diseases. I'd rather die on a cause than
15 live on feed. Thank you.

16 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

17 MR. TASA: My name is Dale Tasa, T-A-S-A.

18 MS. TRAVERS: Dale? Is it "Dale"?

19 MR. TASA: Yes, ma'am. "Dale."

20 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

21 MR. TASA: I didn't think it was that bad.

22 I'm strongly against the wolf of any kind that is
23 going on. Between Arizona and New Mexico, we only -- there
24 has been a study that came out, an analysis, more or less,
25 that we supply two and a half percent of the nations' feed

1 supply. And that's not including what we could get at full
2 capacity, because of other environmental issues we have to
3 deal with on a daily basis between Forest Service and all the
4 different other studies and everything else that's going on.

5 But if you put into our area a high -- just like a
6 high-kill predator like a wolf does, they don't just kill for
7 meat. Regardless of what your studies say or what you do,
8 there have been countless documentations that they just kill
9 just to kill, just to do it, because that's what they enjoy.
10 They are good at it. They are designed to do that. That's
11 their design in nature.

12 Once humans hit this earth and start changing
13 landscape, you can't go back to nature like it was. And now
14 that we have the elk coming in, and they have again shot elk
15 and the breed brought in is a different kind than what was
16 here -- the cabin crews, stock ponds, dirt tanks, whatever
17 you want to call it, develops springs, created more water,
18 loggers clear trees, more grasses will be growing that way
19 through that system. Now the logging system has been shut
20 down, so everything is getting overgrown again.

21 There is less feed, but we still have an increase of
22 animals, and then there is -- also, you got your hunters that
23 you got to think about, your recreational deals -- you can't
24 tell somebody that this is a right they have had so many
25 years, and you say, "Oh, no more. You can't do that. There

1 is a wolf out there, and that's what they need to live on."

2 That's not right when you are putting an animal over
3 people. That's just backwards and wrong. If we weren't
4 supposed to be in charge, we wouldn't have opposable thumbs
5 and a free-thinking mind. It just wouldn't work that way.

6 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

7 MS. BAHR: Thank you. My name is Sandy Bahr,
8 S-A-N-D-Y, B-A-H-R, and I'm the chapter director for the
9 Sierra Club, Grand Canyon Chapter. On behalf of our 35,000
10 members and supporters in Arizona, I ask the Fish and
11 Wildlife Service to modify Alternative 3 to make it a true
12 recovery alternative for Mexican Wolves.

13 Please eliminate the arbitrary lines on the map and
14 allow these highly endangered animals to roam north and into
15 the greater Grand Canyon area and beyond. Redesignate these
16 wolves to provide them the full protection of the Endangered
17 Species Act. Nonessential status is inaccurate and does not
18 promote their recovery as the law mandates. Do not expand
19 the provisions that allow wolves to be removed or killed.

20 Despite the best available science, the Service
21 continues to provide boundaries that restrain the wolves and
22 keep them from moving northward and now east into parts of
23 Texas. That is unacceptable and scientifically indefensible.

24 Please help ensure the genetic health of these
25 animals by allowing for establishment and movement among

1 additional populations of Mexican wolves. The wolves should
2 be treated as the endangered animals they are and have the
3 full protections of the Endangered Species Act.

4 Sierra Club has advocated for that from the
5 beginning of this effort, and it becomes clearer each year
6 that it is the right thing to do morally, scientifically, and
7 legally. At a minimum, these wild wolves should be
8 designated as essential.

9 Perhaps the most disturbing about the Service
10 proposal are the expanded provisions for killing, trapping,
11 and removing Mexican wolves. How can you justify that? How
12 does this in any way further the recovery of these endangered
13 animals?

14 The Service itself has acknowledged that killing and
15 permanent removal of wolves for so-called conflicts will not
16 contribute to their recovery. You know it's wrong. Thank
17 you.

18 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker. I'm going to read some
19 more names. George Foley, Michael Robinson, Daniel Bell, Tom
20 McNab, Gaylene Soper, Mary Newby, David Troy.

21 MR. DUVALL: Thank you. Dennis Duvall, D-U-V-A-L-L.
22 Thank you for the opportunity to speak out for the Mexican
23 wolf. After surviving extermination, our wolves deserve our
24 respect and our help to live again in their historic range
25 and to regain their natural place in the ecosystem.

1 I support expanding the recovery area and eliminate
2 boundaries to the wolves' movement, and I ask you to end the
3 practice of capturing and relocating wolves.

4 I especially ask you to accept the reality that
5 recovery will never happen if you keep allowing fear and
6 politics to be the reasons for killing, trapping, and
7 removing wolves, making it easier to shoot wolves suspected
8 of attacking livestock or domestic animals or in competition
9 with hunters for game animals defeats the objective of
10 reintroduction. We need to take the conflict of interest of
11 the Arizona Game and Fish out of the equation.

12 Finally, I agree with the editors of the Arizona
13 Republic that if achieving a healthy population of wolves
14 proves inconvenient for public-land ranchers, then it might
15 be time to rethink those grazing leases.

16 And, finally --

17 MS. TRAVERS: I'm sorry. When you clap, I can't
18 hear, and neither can the reporter, so I appreciate respect.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. DUVALL: Shall I repeat that?

21 MS. TRAVERS: No. It's okay. I got that one.

22 MR. DUVALL: Reintroduction of our Mexican wolf is a
23 national value, not a willful political issue. Thank you
24 very much.

25 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

1 MS. NEWBY: My name is Mary Newby, M-A-R-Y,
2 N-E-W-B-Y. I want to first thank the folks at Fish and
3 Wildlife Service for the opportunity to speak tonight. I am
4 a long-standing supporter of the Mexican Wolf Recovery
5 Program. I have lived in the home territory of the Blue Stem
6 Pack for the last 13 years. Let me assure people, the elk,
7 deer, antelope, turkey, and Big Horn Sheep are still there.
8 No shortage, if you know where to look.

9 The wild fire has opened up a vast expanse of new
10 grazing areas for all ungulates, wild and domestic. I would
11 like to see the following changes made in the draft proposal,
12 which I believe are necessary according to science to benefit
13 the Mexican gray wolf in their ongoing recovery in their
14 traditional range.

15 Direct releases throughout the Mexican gray wolf's
16 traditional range, expanding areas currently in Arizona and
17 New Mexico that would provide good habitat for the wolves. I
18 would like to see the states of Utah and Colorado included as
19 part of this traditional range.

20 Designate the Mexican gray wolf as experimental and
21 essential. They are part of the balance providing sportsmen
22 with healthy herds of elk. Again, science has suggested that
23 the current population of Mexican gray wolves needs to grow
24 to numbers over 100 to ensure genetic diversity and pack
25 health.

1 Do not allow any taking, intentional harrassment, or
2 killing of any Mexican gray wolf on state or federal lands.
3 I ask respectfully for livestock interests to exercise the
4 practice of shepherding to minimize the cattle/wolf conflicts
5 we so often see.

6 Much information about a herd's health is determined
7 by eyes and hands-on interaction, not just the occasional
8 moving of cattle from pasture to pasture. I have been
9 putting stays in fencing for my neighbor who has 100 head of
10 cattle, and he appreciates my visual reports.

11 I ask campers and day-use folks --

12 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Thank you. Next
13 speaker.

14 MR. TROY: My name is David Troy, T-R-O-Y. I don't
15 represent anything other than myself. So it appears these
16 days that our rights are under attack an awful lot -- our
17 right to privacy, our right to bear arms. Free speech is
18 also in danger. So now we are considering even more laws,
19 more regulations that are going to tell us what we can do on
20 our own land or the land we lease, so why should we entertain
21 this or entertain any further expansions.

22 Well, the sad truth is that unless we show some
23 moderation and restraint, at the rate we are going, it will
24 continue to take over our lands and continue to drive the
25 species out of existence.

1 So that having being said, if some of the
2 testimonies here tonight from the ranchers and from the
3 County and from the State are to be believed, and I do
4 believe them, it would appear that the Fish and Wildlife is
5 not listening to the State, and no one is listening to the
6 County, and no one is listening to the ranchers. They have
7 already told you the response to predation has been
8 miserable, and they have no choice, but to work with this.
9 It's a law.

10 So we have a choice. The law is on our side. I say
11 "we." I'm a conservationist, but I also respect the rights
12 of people whose animals have been killed. With all due
13 respect, conservation groups, who I'm very supportive of, it
14 seems you are not listening to the ranchers, either.

15 So I would say that until we have proper cooperation
16 from Fish and Wildlife through the local level, because it is
17 on the individuals who are going to have to sign this in the
18 end, the person who is going to pull the trigger on the wolf
19 is going to be someone locally, so until we get a trust
20 relationship developed with the Fish and Wildlife through the
21 local and state levels to the ranchers, I don't see that we
22 should be making any changes to the current
23 situation until --

24 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

25 MR. TROY: Appreciate it.

1 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker. Next speaker.

2 MR. BELL: Hello. My name is Dan Bell. I'm
3 president of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association. I just
4 want to start off by saying it's a really sad state of
5 affairs that we have to gather here because of a broken
6 Endangered Species Act, an act that should be looking at
7 science-based information with regards to the wolf, the
8 jaguar, whatever the species is, but we are here because of a
9 litigation effort that has forced us to be here tonight, and
10 that's not why we should be here. We should be here because
11 of science.

12 First of all, you are failing to show the purpose
13 and need for the expansion. Another point I'd like to bring
14 out is that all of the different alternatives, new
15 alternatives that are being presented in the draft EIS,
16 encompass every county in the State of Arizona, yet we have
17 only one public hearing to address the entire State of
18 Arizona and in a location that's hard for many to get to at a
19 time that is hard for many to get to. As a result of that, I
20 believe that you should extend the comment period and you
21 should allow the counties that are involved to participate.

22 We have submitted comments of scientific nature that
23 were ignored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They
24 have been cooperative -- a cooperative group that submitted
25 an alternative that was ignored. Counties were wanting to

1 participate and were ignored, so we ask that you extend the
2 time period and allow them the opportunity.

3 We are approaching -- we have 83 wolves in the wild
4 right now. We are approaching the goal of the 1982 recovery
5 plan, which is the overarching document in all of this. So
6 you need to focus on Mexico and also you need to stop forcing
7 more bad policy on the folks in rural Arizona. You need to
8 focus on rebuilding the businesses that you have damaged
9 with --

10 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

11 MR. BELL: -- this program.

12 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

13 MS. SOPER: My name is Gaylene Soper, S-O-P-E-R. I
14 come from a western background here in Arizona.

15 I was a 4H leader. I was a member of the American
16 Quarter Horse Association, and I had a company called Feather
17 Tree Livestock. That said, I encourage the U.S. Wildlife
18 Service to rely on the scientific data that encourages us to
19 take a migratory path north of I-40 for the Mexican gray
20 wolf, tighten restrictions on the taking of the Mexican gray
21 wolf, and be more vigilant in protecting them by designating
22 them as an essential animal to the balance of nature.

23 There is an opportunity here to learn, learn about
24 our natural resources and learn how the Mexican gray wolf can
25 affect those natural resources and improve those natural

1 resources. Fish and Wildlife have the opportunity here to be
2 a brave person -- a brave entity and look to the future.
3 Let's learn how to live in a more balanced environment, not
4 by managing wildlife, but by monitoring, preserving, and
5 learning from wildlife.

6 Please do not continue to delay designating the
7 Mexican gray wolf as an essential animal to our natural
8 landscape and natural resources. Thank you.

9 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

10 MR. ROBINSON: Michael Robinson, M-I-C-H-A-E-L,
11 R-O-B-I-N-S-O-N. I represent the Center for Biological
12 Diversity and our more than three-quarter million members and
13 supporters throughout the United States. I live at the edge
14 of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery area in rural Grant County,
15 New Mexico.

16 I am the author of the 2004 Petition for Rule Making
17 that led after, unfortunately, to the necessity of two
18 lawsuits to compel you to look at the petition and respond to
19 it leading to the current rule making process. And in that
20 petition, I and the Center for Biological Diversity requested
21 that wolves be allowed to be released directly into the Gila
22 National Forest as scientists in the American Society --
23 Society Of Mammologists have recommended, that wolves be
24 allowed to roam freely outside of the arbitrary political
25 boundaries that have restricted them and that livestock

1 owners be required to take some responsibility for cleaning
2 up or rendering inedible as, for example, through the use of
3 lime, the carcasses of non-wolf killed stock that have been
4 closely associated with wolves changing their predatory
5 behavior from natural prey to livestock after they scavenged
6 on these. We should be protecting the wolves and preventing
7 these conflicts rather than scapegoating the wolves
8 afterwards.

9 We support Alternative 3 with modifications. We
10 believe that the wolves should be allowed to roam outside of
11 the boundary of the I-40 and not get to the recovery
12 ecosystems identified including those on the recovery team.

13 We believe that wolves from Mexico should be given
14 full protection when they enter the United States as a fully
15 endangered species. As indeed this population needs now to
16 be designated fully essential to the opportunity of survival
17 and recovery of this species as the science indicates.

18 And livestock -- livestock should be cleaned up, and
19 dead livestock from non-wolf killed causes should be cleaned
20 up to prevent depredation, and telemetry receivers that are
21 associated with the illegal shooting of wolves should be
22 retrieved from private hands. Thank you very much.

23 MS. TRAVERS: Next speaker.

24 MR. MACNAB: My name is Tom Macnab, T-O-M,
25 M-A-C-N-A-B. I live on the Blue.

1 I'm going to read something, start out by reading
2 something from the Wild Earth Magazine, the publication of
3 the Wildlands Project, Spring 2000.

4 "So why should conservationists listen to
5 economists? Perhaps the most obvious reason is because
6 people matter. All too often ecologists and conservationists
7 have portrayed ecosystems as being devoid of humans," as the
8 wolf maps that you all put out, they kind of say that. "The
9 appropriate discipline should be called human ecology, the
10 study of the role of the human in the ecosystem. In this
11 approach, people matter, because we impact the ecosystems.

12 People also matter, because we all have legitimate
13 needs and aspirations. Economics is one of the tools we can
14 use to understand these means and aspirations as well as
15 consequences of our actions."

16 It seems back in 2000, you all were a bit more
17 compassionate. And, as for your expansion program, I mean,
18 it seems to me you don't even have a -- you don't even have
19 a -- you don't even have a number of wolves that you are
20 planning to put in there -- or nobody can seem to --

21 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you, sir.

22 MR. MACNAB: Okay.

23 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Next speaker.

24 MR. COLEE: My name is George Colee, C-O-L-E-E, and
25 I'm a fourth generation rancher, current livestock owner in

1 the beautiful State of Arizona, and nowhere do I see on the
2 state or federal grazing permit that that land is going to be
3 free of predators. That is something that as ranchers we
4 have to learn to live with regardless of what federal law is
5 going to do to protect animals.

6 And, that being said, it's ridiculous that these
7 wolves have not been released on national parks and national
8 wildlife refuges and national monuments, which there are
9 plenty in this state for them to roam free in, and these are
10 lands that were set aside for animals like the Mexican gray
11 wolf, and I think it would just be a travesty if free hunting
12 of the wolves was allowed.

13 I spent a summer in Wyoming, and I got to see
14 firsthand what happens, and it was unfortunate that the
15 wolves were blamed for it such as they were. They are
16 definitely going to be missed, because in a lot of parts of
17 Wyoming, because they are shoot on sight now. Thank you very
18 much for your time.

19 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

20 I have time for a few more. James Goughnow? Mike
21 Sorum? Mike? James G-O-U-G-H-N-O-W? Yes? No? How about
22 Maggie Howell?

23 MR. SORUM: Good evening. My name is Mike Sorum.

24 I'm an equine veterinarian, and I own my own
25 practice as well as some cattle, horses, and dogs. I have

1 hunted, and I am an avid fly fisherman. I enjoy a good steak
2 every once in awhile.

3 I just spent the last three days and nights in the
4 Blue Range Recovery Area. A few years back, I became
5 increasingly interested in the Mexican wolf and its
6 reintroduction. I have attended and commented at several
7 Arizona Game and Fish meetings, Arizona legislature hearings,
8 a U.S. Fish and Wildlife meeting last fall, and I have sent
9 letters to the editor of the Arizona Republic all in favor of
10 the Mexican wolf reintroduction.

11 I am currently in my dissertation year of a master's
12 program looking at the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Program
13 and the factors required for a long-term self-sustaining
14 Mexican wolf population.

15 I feel I need to engage the political process to
16 undue the results of years of persecution, which resulted in
17 the near extinction of this species, so I expect my
18 government, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to
19 use current scientific knowledge and any available means to
20 fully recover this species.

21 This project has been a great scientific
22 achievement, but the scientific literature indicates that the
23 alternatives are insufficient to fully recover the species.
24 Hopefully, the new recovery plan will include the population
25 north of Interstate 40, which includes the Grand Canyon

1 ecosystem, to ensure full recovery.

2 In light of this, I support Alternative 3 with
3 modifications in that it allows for the greatest amount of
4 wolf habitat release areas with the least anthropogenic
5 effects. Thank you.

6 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you. Last speaker.

7 MS. HOWELL: Hi. My name is Maggie Howell. I'm
8 from New York. I'm the Director of the Wolf Conservation
9 Center and participate in the Mexican Wolf Species Survival
10 Plan.

11 I do want to thank you for this opportunity to
12 participate and also for including the expansion of the
13 recovery boundaries. However, for the most part, I feel like
14 this most recent draft proposal really -- it doesn't reflect
15 the level of commitment necessary to recover this critically
16 endangered species.

17 Last fall I saw a public presentation given by
18 members of the Mexican Wolf Science Planning Subgroup, and I
19 was very disappointed not to see these recommendations
20 reflected in the proposal nor even in the acknowledgment that
21 these recommendations exist.

22 Among the recommendations were an expanded recovery
23 area, actually north of I-40 all the way up to suitable
24 habitat in Southern Utah and Colorado, the establishment of
25 three naturally connected subpopulations of wolves with 200

1 wolves each with a metapopulation of 750, and also their
2 support of a redesignation from nonessential to essential.

3 Other problematic provisions within the current
4 proposal would include the preempted pardon given to Wildlife
5 Services for any take of a Mexican wolf. I thought that we
6 could hold that to the same standard as a member of the
7 public, if not higher, and also really not having to mandate
8 to require more responsible livestock husbandry to prevent
9 predators from preying on livestock in the first place.

10 You know, it was June of last year when U.S. Fish
11 and Wildlife announced its nationwide delisting proposal.
12 One of the justifications for removing endangered species
13 protections from nearly all gray wolves in the lower 48,
14 would be to refocus their attention and efforts on the
15 Mexican wolf. I think that's what it's time to do. Thank
16 you.

17 MS. TRAVERS: Thank you.

18 It is now 9:02. On behalf of the U.S. Fish and
19 Wildlife Service, we appreciate your time and effort you took
20 this evening to present your comments. You have been very
21 informative and will be fully considered in our decision.

22 Again, as a reminder, written comments may be
23 submitted to the staff at the registration table, or they may
24 be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by
25 September 23, 2014.

1 The hearing is closed. I show the time to be 9:02.

2 I want to thank you again for your participation.

3 (The hearing concluded at 9:02 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF ARIZONA)
2 COUNTY OF MARICOPA) SS
3)
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5)

6 BE IT KNOWN that the foregoing hearing was
7 transcribed by me, VICKI L. O'CEALLAIGH CHAMPION,
8 CR No. 50534, a Certified Reporter for the State of Arizona;
9 that the proceedings thereto were recorded and taken down by
10 me and thereafter reduced to computerized transcription under
11 my direction and supervision; that the foregoing is a true
12 and correct transcript of all proceedings had upon the taking
13 of said hearing, all done to the best of my skill and
14 ability.

15 I further certify that I am in no way related to any
16 party to said action nor in any way interested in the outcome
17 thereof.

18 DATED at Phoenix, Arizona, this 22nd day of
19 September, 2014.

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VICKI L. O'CEALLAIGH CHAMPION
CR No. 50534