Openly discuss agency roles/mandates

Why?

- Service is the lead agency in implementing ESA – as a part of that we are tasked with biologically recovering the Mexican gray wolf.
- Current rule has an interim (pending completion of a Recovery Plan with actual goals) of 300-325 wolves
- Because today's wild population came from a handful of wolves in captivity – there is a need to manage the population w/ acute attention to genetic health of the population
- Wolves are territorial. The former release and recovery areas are near saturated and successful releases are now more difficult as territories tend full. Releasing wolves on top of wolves is less successful than releasing wolves in vacant habitat
- (captive population is ~ 248 wolves in 55 facilities (37 in the US/18 in Mexico)

So Release Sites

What are release sites?

- Several sites scattered across the landscape w/in the expanded recovery area that may someday be actually used to have a pen temporarily holding a family group of wolves (that are genetically valuable) for eventual release. So:
    - each individual site may or may not be used (ever)
    - but have a host of sites available to select from for specific management purposes
    - As soon as next year?
    - From past experience – about 1 release/year
    - Selection criteria – criterion are evaluated towards scenarios that increase success of release – success = wolves do well = minimize conflict with people – good for people is good for wolves.
    - Can't release wolves anywhere – where the potential for conflict doesn't exist. Our job is to
        - Reduce the chance of conflict (what we are doing here today) – Front side
        - Manage conflict when it does happen – Back side
            - Rough Cut (map)
                - > 5 mi from town
                - > 3 mi from year round occupied dwelling
                - > 3 mi from boundary of zone 1 (as restricted by phase 1 management guidelines)
                - > 3 mi from tribal unless tribal agreement
                - On Federal land (unless release agreement w/ private or tribal)
            - Detailed selection – This is served best with local knowledge – local input!!!

- Adequate prey densities – both important for wolves directly, but may also be an important factor relating to reduction in livestock damage (livestock may be less at risk in abundant game areas)
- Presence of other wolves
- Presence of Livestock
  - Livestock use within five miles shall be evaluated
  - Distance from active livestock calving pastures (with allowance for seasonality)
- Recreational use
- Access to area and security
- habitat and topography
- Water accessibility

Living with wolves – what can I realistically expect?

- Grazing within a wolf typical wolf pack home range. A lot of variation but:
  - With an average pack (~5 wolves) most livestock producers may experience 0 – 6 loss/year with the average being about 1
- Management side – Actively manage to prevent, reduce, and/or stop damage
  - Try to prevent damage - Non-lethal techniques
    - Range riders
    - Fladry, etc
    - Diversionary feeding
    - Online recent collared location map
  - Reaction to damage – to prevent further damage
    - Non-lethal techniques
    - Control actions
      - Capture/collar
      - Removals (attempt to remove offending individuals, reduce the number of wolves (and nutritional demands), sometimes, in chronic situations, full pack removal.
        - Capture remove to captivity
        - Lethal removal
      - Permits (producers and agents of) to assist with removal
- Compensation
  - Mexican Wolf Livestock Council
  - 2014 Farm Bill Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) to provide benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators. Normal mortality rates for purposes of the

LIP Program are defined as 1.5% for adult cattle and 3.0% for calves (with a 90% calving rate).

Other stuff

Wolves long distance travelers – this area will likely be occupied in some fashion whether wolves themselves – or management. Management option is most important for genetic considerations

Moving together towards recovery. Sooner is better. Once recovered management of the species becomes easier with less rules and more options – like other wildlife.