



July 9, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
Interior Building, Room 6156
1849 C St.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar,

This is to request an investigation into the deaths of three pups and the capture of two pups from the San Mateo Pack of endangered Mexican gray wolves in June of this year in the Mangas Mountains of New Mexico. The San Mateo Pack is one of a maximum of only three packs in New Mexico, and only eight packs counting those in Arizona as well, that may have reproduced this year.

We understand that the adult wolves of this pack left their established den and moved one pup to a new location, leaving five pups behind. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or other federal or state agency personnel moved one pup to the presence of its parents, where it was later found dead. Two other pups also died and two others were captured by the interagency field team and taken into captivity.

We also understand that in the days and weeks prior to the San Mateo adults vacating their den, there was extraordinary human activity in the den's vicinity, including the presence of federal, state and county employees and/or contractors.

Investigators should attempt to answer the following questions:

- Who among federal, state and county personnel were in proximity to the San Mateo Pack's den and/or wolves from that pack? When were they there, how close were they, and what were they doing?
- What other individuals were close to the San Mateo Pack's den and/or wolves from that pack, how close were they, when were they there, and what were they doing?
- Who decided, and for what reasons, to maintain a presence near the San Mateo Pack, given the potential for harassment of the wolves and pups?
- When and how did Catron County officials learn of the location of the den site?
- Were livestock owners in or near the San Mateo Pack's territory in possession of agency-issued telemetry equipment that may have enabled them to locate the San Mateo Pack and their den-site?

- What measures, if any, were taken to minimize disturbance around the den and when were such measures instituted?
- Should the Forest Service have placed a temporary closure of public access around the den-site to minimize disturbance to the wolves? Why did it not do so?
- Prior to moving their pup, were any San Mateo Pack wolves observed, heard or tracked as displaying any reactions to the human presence in their vicinity? What were those reactions?
- Is it possible that the human activity near the den led to the wolves leaving the den-site?
- Does the technical literature indicate that the moving of only one of six pups to a new den-site is normal or abnormal behavior for wolves?
- How much time elapsed between the adult wolf or wolves moving the first pup and agency personnel capturing another pup and moving it? How far were members of the interagency field team or other individuals from the den and the adult wolves' new location during this period?
- Might the human presence have deterred the adult wolves from moving the remainder of their pups?
- What were the particular details of how the pup initially captured from the den was reunited with its parents, and how might the method of release have influenced their reception of the pup?
- Was a radio-collar or an ear-tag placed on the pup who was moved, and could that have contributed to the pup's possible killing by its parents?
- What process was used in deciding, and who made the decision to move and remove the pups?
- What were the causes of death for the three pups who died?
- What policies and procedures may have contributed to the adult wolves' behaviors, the deaths of three pups and to the putatively necessary capture of two other pups? Conversely, what policies and procedures may have contributed to preventing the two captured pups from suffering the fate of their three dead litter-mates?

As we have previously notified the Department of the Interior, and as you may be aware, the Fish and Wildlife Service and its agency partners in Mexican wolf reintroduction have a history of inadvertent killing of Mexican wolves incidental to management. The Fish and Wildlife Service also has a troubling record of disregard for science in managing Mexican wolves, and of below-the-radar coordination with livestock industry opponents of the reintroduction program coupled with withholding of information from the general public. Furthermore, Catron County has undertaken to oppose the Mexican wolf reintroduction program administratively, politically and in the field within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area.

Under the present circumstances in which five rare and precious pups from the highly endangered Mexican gray wolf are now no longer in the wild, it is incumbent on the Department of the Interior to ensure the retention of all records of this incident, and to conduct an

investigation that is free from bias and results in a report that may help prevent such devastating losses in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Michael
Animal Defense League of Arizona
Phoenix, Arizona

Elisabeth A. Jennings
Animal Protection of New Mexico *and* Animal Protection Voters
Albuquerque, New Mexico

DJ Schubert
Animal Welfare Institute
Washington, DC

Jeff Williamson
Arizona Zoological Society
Phoenix, Arizona

Michael J. Robinson
Center for Biological Diversity
Silver City, New Mexico

Kim Crumbo
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council
Grand Canyon, Arizona

Emily Nelson
Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project
Flagstaff, Arizona

Stephen Capra
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Daniel R. Patterson
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
Tucson, Arizona

David R. Parsons
The Rewilding Institute
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Sandy Bahr
Sierra Club -- Grand Canyon Chapter
Phoenix, Arizona

John Buchser
Sierra Club -- Rio Grande Chapter
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Janice Przybyl
Sky Island Alliance
Tucson, Arizona

Melanie Gasparich
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
Gila, New Mexico

Greta Anderson
Western Watersheds Project
Tucson, Arizona

Rob Edward
WildEarth Guardians
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Please direct reply to:

Michael J. Robinson
Center for Biological Diversity
P.O. Box 53166
Pinos Altos, NM 88053
(575) 534-0360
michaelr@biologicaldiversity.org

