

Mexican Wolves on The Navajo Nation?



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Background

- Mexican Wolf (*Canis lupus bairdii*)
 - Subspecies of Gray Wolf formerly ranging throughout the interior southwest and Sierra Madre Region of Mexico
 - Hunted to extinction in the U.S. by the mid-1900's
 - Small population trapped and maintained in captivity
 - Reintroduced into NM and AZ in the 1990s

Current Status

- Currently fewer than 100 Mexican wolves live in NM and AZ
- Recovery plan developed in the 1990's has failed to reach management goals of an experimental population of 100 wolves
- In 2014 changes to the recovery plan have been developed and recently published, with alterations in management of wolves to better achieve recovery goals, and prevent conflict

Experimental Population

- Mexican Wolves in the southwest are designated as an experimental non-essential population.
- This designation allows for more flexible management of the species (including lethal removal) that would otherwise be illegal under the ESA

New Management

- Increase in the area Mexican Wolves will be allowed to naturally disperse (MWEPA)
- Increase in the area within MWEPA where wolves can be released
- Phased management and introductions west of highway 87 in AZ
 - Wolves can be gradually allowed to disperse to the west over a period of 12 years as needed to achieve population goals.
- Target population of 300-325 wolves in MWEPA
- Stricter management to the west and east

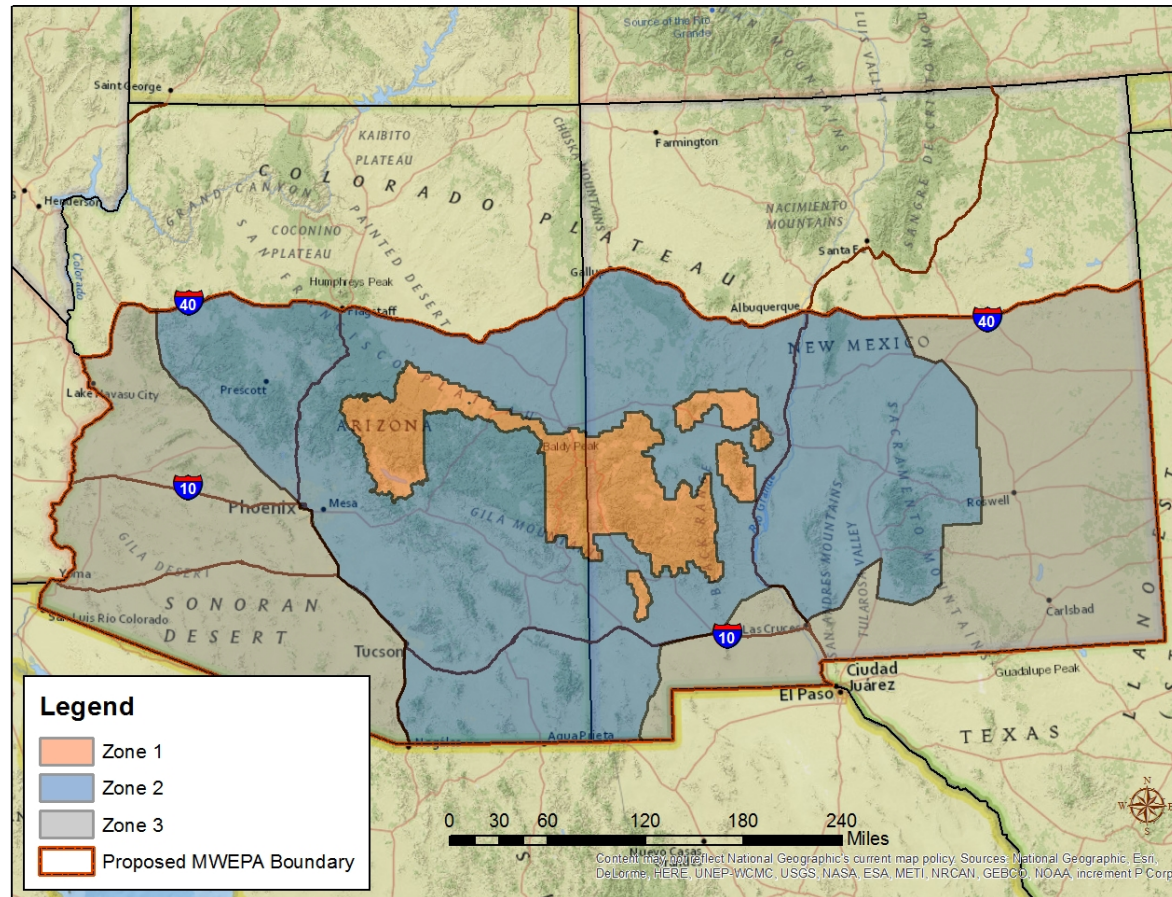
Management Zones

- Wolves can be introduced anywhere in zone 1
- Wolves can naturally disperse anywhere in zone 2
- Wolves can disperse elsewhere in the MWEPA (zone 3) but will be more strictly managed
- Wolves that disperse out of MWEPA will be trapped and relocated
- Wolves that disperse onto tribal lands will be removed at the tribes request.

Previous Management



New Management Rules



Management of problem wolves

- The USFWS will consider impacts to wild ungulate populations resulting in decreases of more than 15 percent or decreases below state management goals, unacceptable
 - Wolves may be relocated or lethally removed to prevent damage to ungulate populations
- USFWS has included rules protecting non-feral dogs as livestock

What new changes mean for Navajo

- Likely expansion of wolf population may increase likelihood of wolves moving onto Navajo Lands
- Potential small impacts to livestock and wild ungulates.
- Under New rules the service will voluntarily remove any wolf that moves north of I-40
- The service will also remove any wolf found on Navajo Lands south of I-40 at the tribe's request.

NNDFW response/management options

- Currently NNDFW is requesting that any wolves dispersing onto Navajo property be removed by the service
- NNDFW has no management plan for Mexican wolves as we are not voluntarily participating in Mexican Wolf recovery.
- NNDFW personnel currently have little legal ability to respond to Mexican wolves on the nation due to lack of a permit under ESA. Only the service can trap or lethally remove wolves

Legal Status of Mexican Wolves on Navajo Nation

- Currently The NNDFW lists the Mexican Wolf as Extirpated
 - Wolves have been confirmed making visits to tribal lands south of I-40
 - No confirmed damage to livestock or property has been reported
 - No confirmed sightings of wolves have been made on Navajo lands north of I-40
- Wolves found on lands north of I-40 are a legally endangered species with all the protections afforded by ESA
 - Killing wolves or capturing wolves (even accidentally) is illegal
 - Defense of human life or domestic livestock
 - Only USFWS is permitted to lethally control wolves outside MWEPA

Questions?

