

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Catron County Commissioners have the statutory duty “to provide for the safety, preserve the health, and promote the prosperity “of its inhabitants. It cannot indulge in fantasies and notions of the good old days when wolves ran through the forest unfettered by the presence of man. The Catron County Commission does not support the Mexican Grey wolf reintroduction program; it asserts that it is an unnecessary expense to the taxpayers of our nation and a danger to its citizens. To that end we respectfully submit the *Catron County, New Mexico Impacts from the Mexican Grey Wolf Non-Essential Reintroduction Program - A County in Crisis*. It is a compilation of professional documentation based on years of field investigations in cooperation with USDA Wildlife Services, licensed mental health professional assessments and university impact assessments regarding actual financial losses to Catron county government, schools and businesses due to the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Program.

Two reports by mental health professionals, Doctors Julia Martin and James Thal, document the psychological stress and symptoms of PTSD in children and parents who have witnessed predation by wolves: Julia Martin, M.D., *Inherent Potential for PTSD Among Children Living in the Mexican Gray Wolf Reintroduction Area*, June 12, 2007 and, James S. Thal, Ph. D., *Psychological Impact of Wolf Reintroduction: A Preliminary Study*, October 23, 2006. Captive bred wolves have demonstrated bold, fearless behavior and are inherently habituated to humans and human environs. Children have suffered psychological and physical stress, terrified after seeing their pets torn to pieces and killed in front of them by wolves. They must stand in shelters to wait for the school bus. For a period of several weeks sheriffs had to stand guard at the playground in Glenwood, NM because wolves were in the immediate vicinity of the school. Wolves have chased children and pets into their homes; urinated and defecated at homes and peered in the windows. The very real and greatest fear is that there may be a wolf attack on a human, especially on a young child. The fact that there are habituated wolves which seek out humans and human use areas is a serious concern. The County Commission is legally responsible for the health, safety and welfare of its citizens but all leaders have a responsibility to the citizens they serve.

Two reports by Western New Mexico University’s Dr. Alexander Thal, discuss the economic impacts of the wolf program: *Economic Impacts of the Mexican Grey Wolf Depredation on Family Cattle Ranching in Catron County, New Mexico-Final Report on the Results of the Wolf Depredation Study*. Calf crops on the ranches surveyed fell by 15 percent since wolves were introduced on the range. The annual cattle losses are 1,400 head of cattle resulting in more than \$600,000 losses to County government and schools, and a loss of \$10 million annually in livestock production.

Nick K. Ashcroft, Ph.D., et. al. peer reviewed report, *Reestablishment of the Mexican gray wolf: The Economics of Depredation* provides a socioeconomic basis for discussion and decision-making for family enterprises in the recovery area and explores the faulty reasoning that led to the reintroduction program. Despite the fact that there was a limited body of research concerning the reintroduction of carnivores that live and hunt in packs, litigation by environmental groups pushed the release of captive wolves forward. Current recovery documents reflect the belief that most wolves will not depredate even when livestock are present, and that ranch failures are not expected to occur. They contradict the historic evidence of depredation by wolves. Moreover, Ashcroft’s studies, and the historical evidence, demonstrate that family ranches disproportionately bear the economic impacts of wolf reintroduction and are likely to fail. Reestablishment of this subspecies has generated extensive emotional, political, biological, and socioeconomic debate. This debate has failed to yield consensus regarding the success or failure of the recovery program. The resulting polarity has diminished constructive dialogue and prevented mitigation of the issues

A field study by Jess Carey, Catron County Wildlife Investigator, *Comparability of Confirmed Wolf Depredations to Actual Losses Wolves Denning in Calf/Yearling Core Areas, Catron County, New Mexico*, compares cattle losses on 5 New Mexico ranches before and after the inception of the Mexican wolf re-introduction program. When wolves moved onto the ranges each ranch experienced a significant decrease

in the size of fall calf crops, and revenue. Two of the ranches went out of business, one remediated the situation by moving to other pastures and hiring a range rider and another sold off all livestock until 2010. Compensation programs have not alleviated the cost incurred from massive losses of cattle. During the period of this study, ranchers received \$8100 in compensation for over 600 losses that totaled more than \$380,000. It was determined that for every confirmed depredation by wolves, there were at least 8 more losses. This figure may prove to be drastically low.

A companion field study by Jess Carey, entitled *Mexican Wolf Recovery Collateral Damage Identification, Catron County, New Mexico*, portrays wolf depredation in graphic form. Although gruesome, the pictures show the extent of injuries and suffering that animals incur from wolf attacks and what livestock producers contend with. Jess Carey, Catron County Wildlife Investigator's *Catron County Wildlife Investigator Results of Investigations/Complaints Report, April 2006-April 2012* provides actual field investigation documentation regarding wolf/human encounters.

The Mexican wolf reintroduction program would benefit from further analyses. Questionable US Fish and Wildlife Service methodology and determinations have eroded trust and caused distress to citizens on public and private land. The polarization and feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that this program has generated required Catron County Commission to enact protective measures for our citizens, even with the threat of jail and prosecution.

It appears that the reintroduction of the Mexican Gray Wolf cannot be accomplished without destroying the rights and lives of others- they become collateral damage.