



Rio Arriba
Board of County Commissioners

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-063

COMMISSIONERS

Danny J. Garcia
Chairman
District III

Barney Trujillo
District I

Alex M. Naranjo
District II

COUNTY MANAGER
Tomas Campos, III

Resolution No. 2015-063

**OPPOSING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MEXICAN WOLF
INTO NORTHERN NEW MEXICO**

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WLS) has now issued a permit to itself in order to release Mexican wolves into the privately owned Vermejo Park in Northern New Mexico, which permit on its face violates the spirit and letter of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) by relying on a categorical exclusion, where one is not merited; and

WHEREAS, the Vermejo Park, located in Colfax County on the New Mexico – Colorado border, falls well outside the Mexican wolf’s current recovery area, identified as New Mexico, south of I-40, and this unauthorized expansion north of I-40 must be considered to be a “major federal action”, requiring a detailed analysis of potential impacts under NEPA; and

WHEREAS, the USF&WLS is acting outside the parameters of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by acting to release Mexican wolves outside its “wolf experimental population and recovery area”, numerous potential consequences and impacts from this administrative agency act will go unstudied and these include, among many other impacts, the following:

- A. What measures will the private property owner and the USF&WLS take in order to contain the Mexican wolf population within the Vermejo Park;
- B. How will the USF&WLS and the private property owner take responsibility for the losses caused by the predation of the wolf on domestic livestock as it expands into adjoining northern counties;
- C. How will ‘problem’ wolves be identified, controlled or limited as they begin to interact with surrounding ranching communities, negatively impacting quality of life issues, as they already have in their Gila introduction in southern New Mexico.

WHEREAS, the USF&WLS is attempting to short-circuit the NEPA, ESA and APA processes by its administrative decision to improperly expand the introduction of the Mexican wolf into Northern New Mexico,

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much of the information on the appropriateness of this decision may not see the light of day; including the following history of reintroduced species:

D. There is no documentation that the “Mexican” wolf, (*Canis lupis baileyi*), as a smaller sub-species of the northern gray wolf, ever existed in Northern New Mexico. There is documentation that the species of wolf that existed in this area was the northern gray wolf and that the last two wolves in Northern New Mexico, killed by Ernest Thompson Seton in 1893, were not the “Mexican” subspecies but the related larger northern gray wolf.

E. Ranching families throughout the mountain ranges of New Mexico have a long experience with the unmitigated consequences of the introduction of a non-native species into habitat where none previously existed, in this case, the introduction of the Rocky Mountain Elk in the late 1940s, early 1950s. While the introduction of elk has developed into the major hunting industry in New Mexico, generating significant recreational and guided hunting opportunities for both resident and non-resident hunters, it has come at a high cost to farmers and ranchers in the form of trampled, foraged and damaged orchards, gardens and pastures and destroyed fences. None of these losses from elk predation are routinely compensated.

F. Finally, studies of elk populations in Idaho and Oregon, establish that the gray wolf is responsible for a 20% decline in elk numbers since the wolf’s re- introduction in that region, as well as its documented wanton decimation of sheep, calves and poultry where the carcasses were not consumed by the marauding wolves. It is clear that the USF&WLS has not factored either of these eventualities into the decision to introduce the Mexican wolf into northern New Mexico.

NOW, THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSION, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE COUNTY OF RIO ARRIBA:

Section 1. That the County of Rio Arriba through its officials, administration, Planning and Zoning staff and other expertise available to it, immediately circulate this Resolution to the U.S. F&WLS, the New Mexico State Game Commission, our Congressional Delegation, the Governor of New Mexico, the State Legislature and the New Mexico Association of Counties; and

Section 2. That the County of Rio Arriba circulate this Resolution to the Northern New Mexico Stockman’s Association, the New Mexico Cattle Growers’ Association, and request that these organizations circulate the County’s position to other supportive interest groups and organizations in the region; and

Section 3. That appropriate action be taken, together with other organizations opposed to this unauthorized introduction, to launch a campaign against this introduction of the Mexican wolf into Vermejo Park, based on peer-reviewed science and an legal analysis of NEPA, ESA and APA and other federal regulations.

SIGNED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED THIS 4TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2015.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RIO ARRIBA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

**Danny J. Garcia, Chairman
Commissioner, District III**

**Barney Trujillo
Commissioner, District I**

**Alex M. Naranjo
Commissioner, District II**

ATTEST: _____
Moises A. Morales, Jr. Rio Arriba County Clerk