

## **MEXICAN WOLF BLUE RANGE REINTRODUCTION PROJECT<sup>1</sup>**

Management Decision Update: F1106

Final (Revised): May 14, 2009

### DECISION OF LEAD AGENCY DIRECTORS:

A decision by the Directors was not necessary because the Project's Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC) decision below assign a third or higher depredation incident.

### AMOC DECISION:

All six Lead Agency representatives to AMOC discussed the Interagency Field Team (IFT) recommendations below in a conference call on May 14, 2009. Representatives from Greenlee County AZ (GRECO), Navajo County AZ (NACO), and the San Carlos Apache Tribe (SCAT) also participated in the call.

After considering all available information, the Lead Agency representatives endorsed the following recommendations:

1. The available information is sufficient to assign the May 10, 2009 depredation incident in New Mexico to F1106: AGFD, NMDGF, USFS, and WMAT. Although they are not Lead Agencies and thus do not have vote in these kinds of decisions, GRECO and NACO concurred with this recommendation.
2. The available information is sufficient to assign the May 10, 2009 depredation incident in New Mexico to AM1114: no Lead Agency support for this recommendation. Although it is not a Signatory Cooperator and thus is not a formal participant in AMOC discussions, SCAT concurred with this recommendation.
3. The available information is sufficient to assign the May 10, 2009 depredation incident in New Mexico to AM1114 and to AF903: WS.
4. The available information is not sufficient to support assigning the May 10, 2009 depredation incident in New Mexico to a specific wolf or wolves: USFWS.

After considering the four recommendations above, the six Lead Agencies agreed to accept and support the majority recommendation. In addition, the IFT was advised to:

1. Reconsider the depredation incident assignment to F1106 if any additional information becomes available and to advise AMOC as appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup>The Reintroduction Project is a state- and tribally-led collaborative effort among six Lead Agencies and five Signatory Cooperators. Lead Agencies are: Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD); New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services (WS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT). Signatory Cooperators are: Graham, Greenlee, and Navajo counties, Arizona; New Mexico Department of Agriculture; and Sierra County, New Mexico.

2. Review Project data on Mexican wolf bite measurements and advise AMOC on the utility and limitations of such data for assigning depredation incidents to specific wolves.

IFT RECOMMENDATION:

1. AGFD, NMDGF, and USFS recommend assigning the depredation incident to F1106.
2. USFWS recommends assigning the depredation incident to AM1114.
3. WS recommends assigning the depredation incident to AF903 and AM1114.
4. WMAT makes no recommendation on this incident.

BACKGROUND

On May 13, 2009 the IFT provided information to AMOC on a May 10, 2009 Mexican wolf depredation incident in New Mexico. On May 14, 2009 the IFT provided additional information to AMOC regarding the WMAT IFT Leader's recommendation on the subject incident (see above). Additional information on the depredation history of one of the wolves (AM1114) was provided to AMOC from an October 27, 2008 Project Management Decision document. All of this background information is available in the Project files, in Alpine AZ.

Because it was unable to reach consensus agreement on assigning the depredation incident, the IFT referred the issue to AMOC for consideration, in accordance with the Project's draft SOP 13.0 Clarification Memo (May 2008).

According to the available information, the known (documented) wolves present in the May 10, 2009 depredation incident area had the following depredation histories during the past 365 days:

1. F1106: no depredation incidents.
2. AF903: one depredation incident.
3. AM1114 – three depredation incidents. The October 27, 2008 Management Decision on this wolf was as follows: “continue efforts to ground-trap or dart and translocate AM1114 for 14 days (October 28 through November 10). If subsequent depredations occur in New Mexico between October 27, 2008 and June 27, 2009 and are definitively assigned to AM1114, the USFWS Regional Director will recommend immediate issuance of a Removal Order (authorizing use of all available means), pending discussion with the NMDGF Director [Note: if a subsequent AM1114 depredation occurs in Arizona the USFWS Regional Director will discuss the Removal Order with the AGFD or WMAT Director, as appropriate to the incident location]. This decision reflects the fact that wolves continue to be lost to illegal killings, the most recent of which (October 13, 2008) was a pup born in the wild this year. The Project relies on pups-of-the-year to help achieve its population goals. We have endured a high number of cumulative removals (2003-2008), including five unlawful killings thus far in 2008. Also, AM1114 has not

depredated on livestock since translocation-trapping efforts began on September 12; no further depredation was the goal all along.”

In its May 14, 2009 conference call, AMOC also considered whether an uncollared wolf might have been involved in the May 10, 2009 depredation incident. An uncollared wolf was observed in that area during the Project’s 2008 end-of-year count field survey in January 2009. However, in the conference call the IFT affirmed that subsequent monitoring had not revealed an uncollared wolf in that area and there was no other information suggesting presence of such a wolf when the May 10, 2009 incident occurred.