Mexican Wolf Recovery Program

March 2017

Mexican wolves

- Most unique subspecies of gray wolf in North America
- Smallest (50-80 lbs)
- Southern-most occurring
- Ecological generalist – Generally in forested areas with adequate prey

Anti-Predator Campaign (1890-1930)

Extirpated in SW United States by 1970s
Extirpated in México by mid 1980s

Listing Status of Mexican wolf

- 1976 – listed as endangered subspecies
- 1978 – subsumed into gray wolf listing
- 2015 – listed as endangered subspecies

- due to:
  - illegal killing
  - inbreeding
  - loss of heterozygosity
  - loss of adaptive potential
  - small population size

Recovery of Mexican Wolves

- 1977 – captured some of last remaining wolves in México

- Initiated Bi-National captive breeding program with 7 wolves

- 1982 – Finalized recovery plan
  - *-Maintain captive breeding program*

And

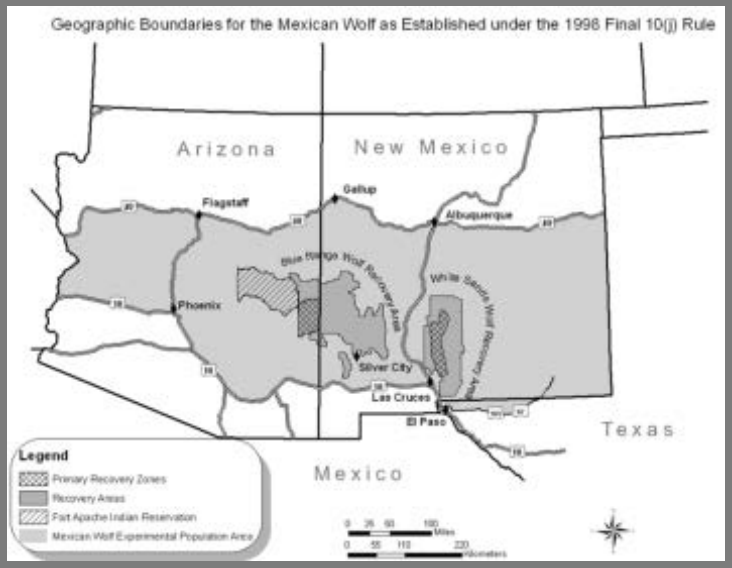
  - *Re-establish self-sustaining population of at least 100 Mexican wolves in the wild*

Captive Breeding Facilities

- 240-300 wolves in 55 captive breeding facilities in the US and Mexico
- All managed as one population under the Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan
- Breeding controlled to maintain genetic diversity

Mexican Wolf Wild Population

- 1998: designated an experimental population in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas
- 1998: U.S. first released Mexican wolves into wild
- 2011: México first released Mexican wolves into wild

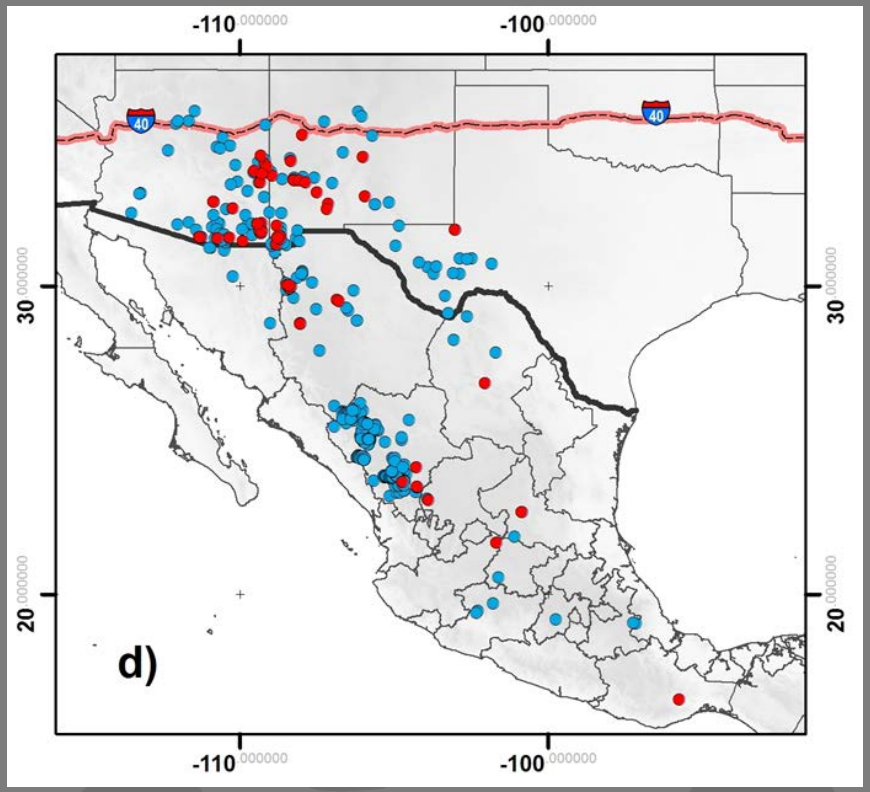


Current objectives

- Complete a revised recovery plan to determine how many wolves needed for recovery by November 2017
- Grow current population south of Interstate 40 in AZ/NM to 300-325 Mexican wolves
- Release wolves from captive population to increase genetic diversity of wild population
- Manage wild wolves to reduce conflicts with livestock

Recovery Planning

- Convened 6 workshops with AZ, NM, CO, and UT; Mexican Government (CONANP, SEMARNAT); Forest Service; and independent scientists to review scientific information for development of recovery plan
- Facilitated by IUCN Conservation Breeding Specialist Group

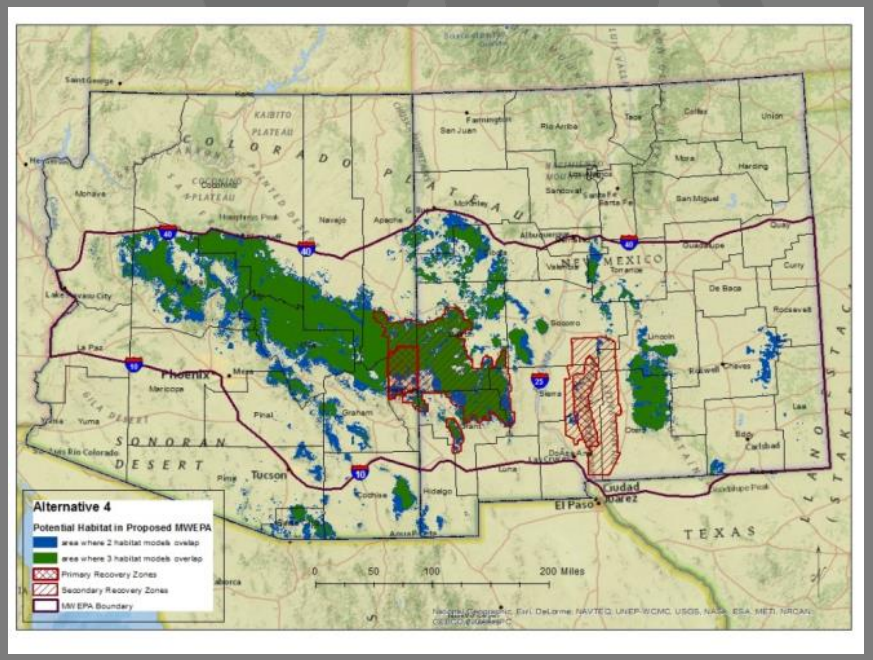


2015 Changes to Mexican wolf

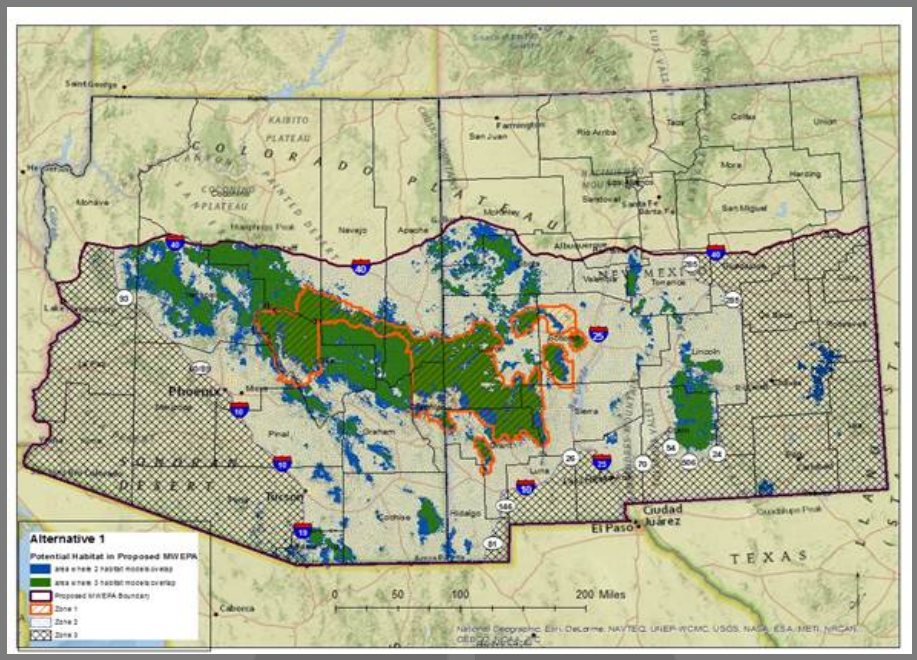
- Listed Mexican wolf as endangered subspecies throughout its range
- Revised the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Rule:
  - Increased area where wolves can be released from captivity to improve genetics
  - Provided population target: 300-325
  - Increased management flexibility

Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area

1998



2015



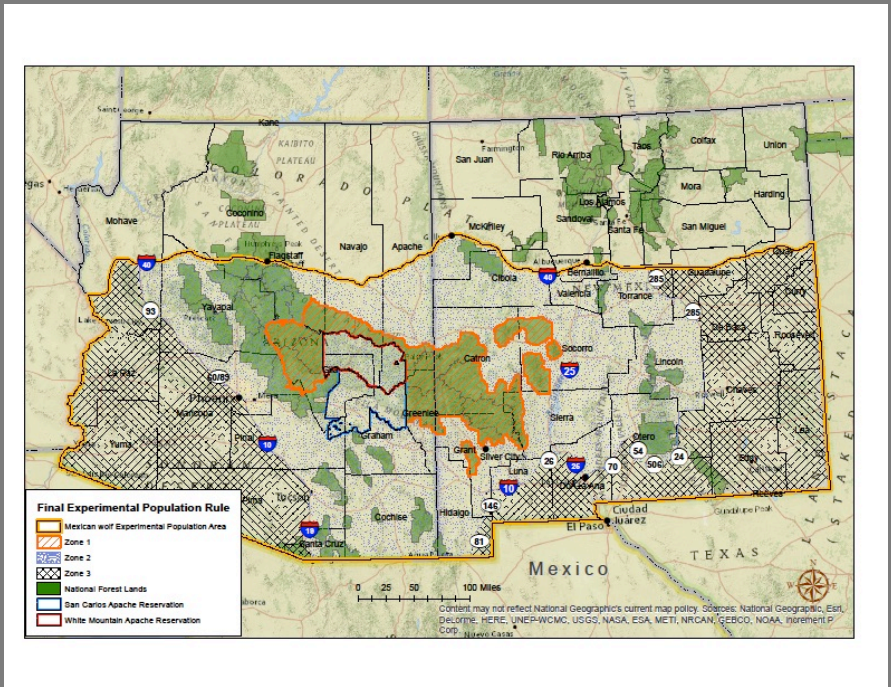
Expands the area from 7,212 mi^2 to over 153,853 mi^2 (including 31,363 $mi^2$of suitable habitat).

Expands release area from 1,153 mi^2 to 12,507 mi^2.

Experimental Population (Section 10j of ESA)

The Experimental Population status provides more management flexibility, including:

- Relaxes prohibitions on take (harassment, injury, killing)
- Allows release and translocation of wolves
- Allows removal of problem wolves

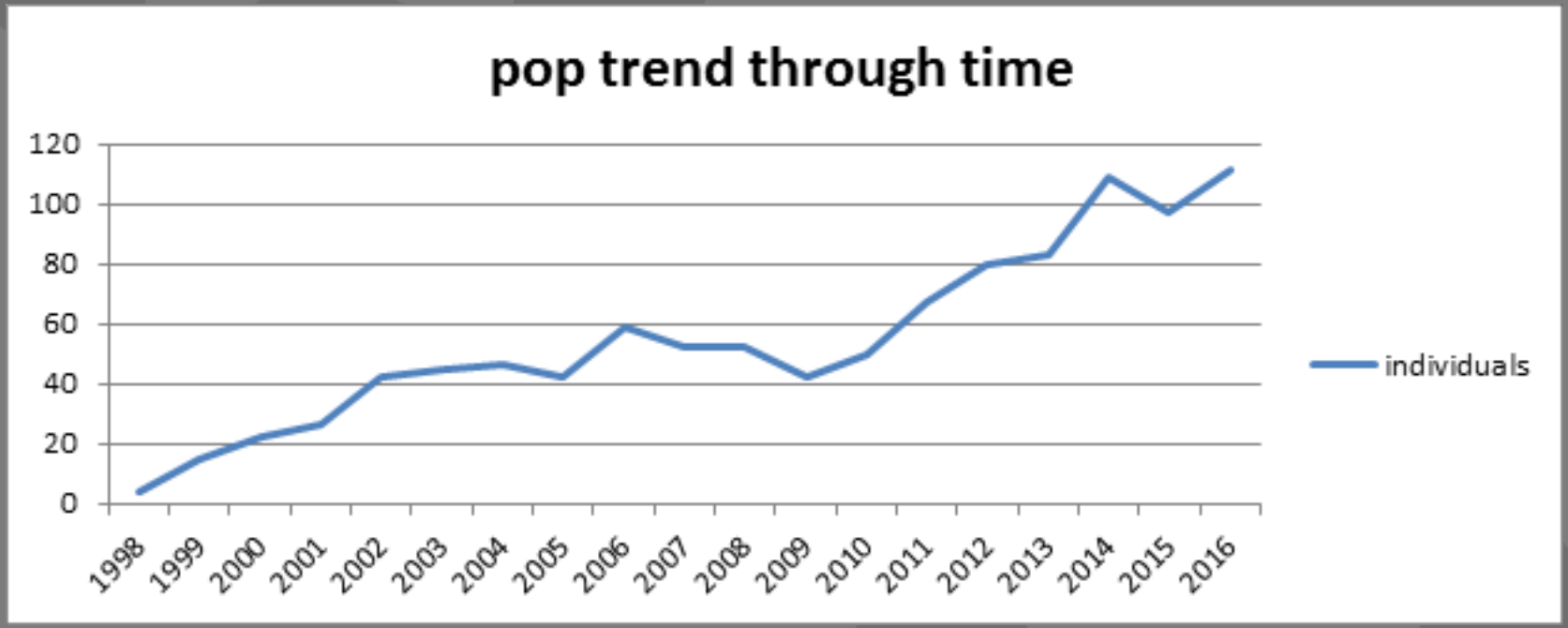


Partnerships

- Forest Service, Wildlife Services, Arizona G&F, White Mountain Apache Tribe, and Counties assist with management of Mexican wolves (through MOU)
- Captive Breeding Facilities in US and Mexico (through MOU and Species Survival Plan)
- UNM curates wolf parts and Univ of Idaho conducts DNA analyses
- Mexican Wolf/Livestock Council – strategic plan to offset economic effects to livestock producers
- Mexican Wolf Tribal Working Group (includes 12 tribes and pueblos with an interest in wolf recovery); Developed "Tribal Perspectives on Mexican Wolf Recovery"

2016 Wild Population in U.S.

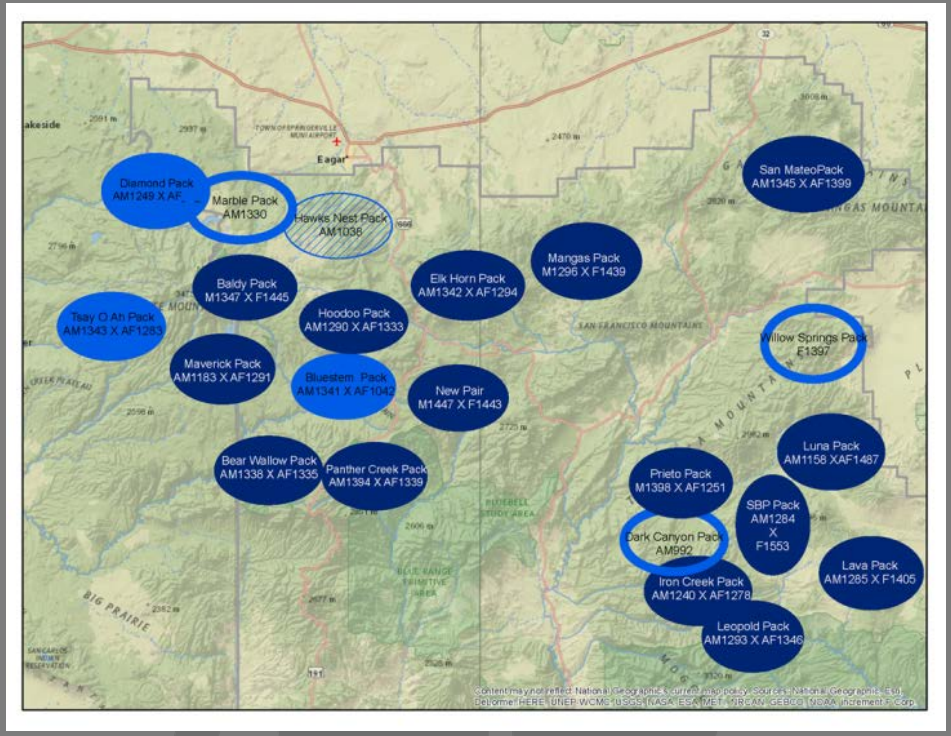
- Minimum of 113 Wolves
- 21 packs; 13 with at least 1 pup
- 50 pups survived to December of year of their birth



*Current as of December 31, 2016

Genetic Management

- Started with 7 wolves
- Captive population more genetically diverse
- Most breeding adults in wild from Bluestem Pack
- Need to release wolves from captivity to reduce relatedness of wild population



Dark blue – both Bluestem
Light blue – one Bluestem

Release of breeding pair with pups

- Also experimenting with releasing wolves that are artificially inseminated

Fostering Wolf Pups from Captive Population into Wild Litters

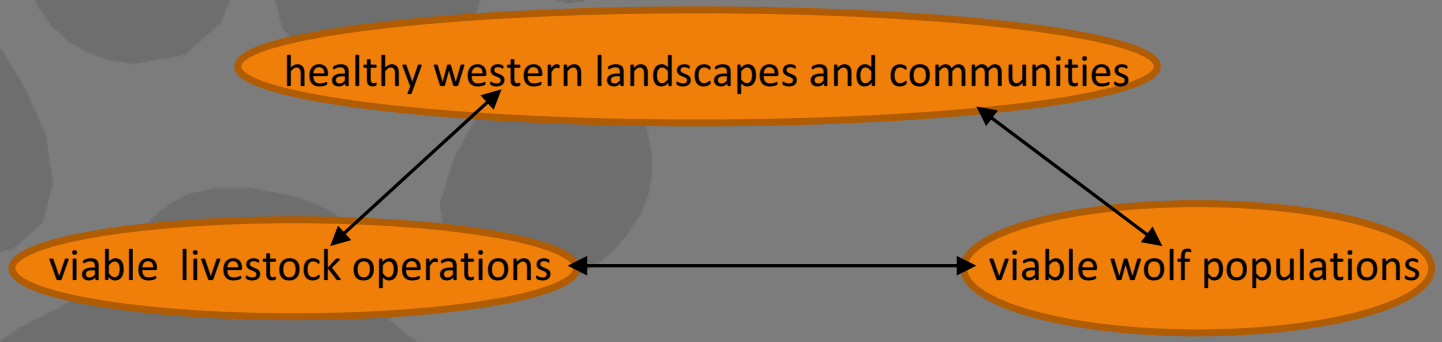
Depredation and Predation in U.S.

- 2015: 52 livestock confirmed killed by Mexican wolves

- State game agencies have not yet measured an impact on wildlife populations from Mexican wolves

Mexican Wolf/Livestock Council

Goal:



Maintain healthy western landscapes and communities while supporting viable ranching operations and viable wolf populations

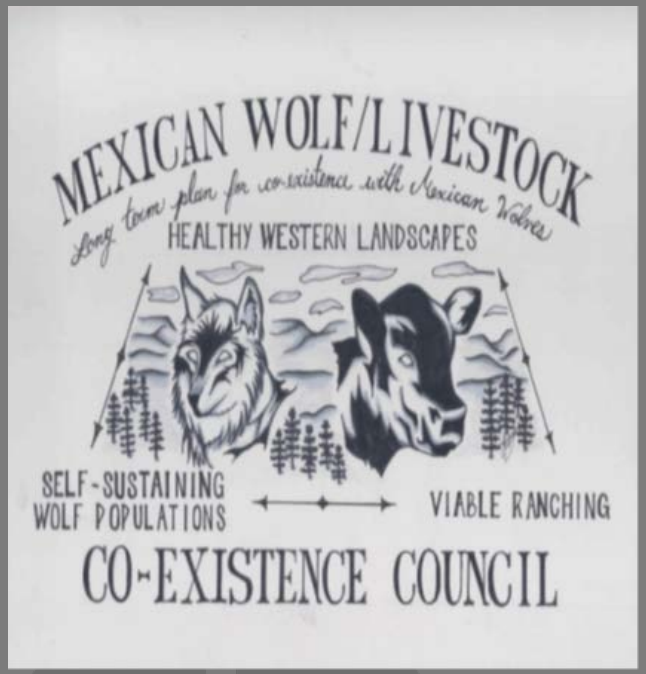
Payments for Presence are formula based

- wolf territories, core areas, pups
- no. of livestock exposed to wolves

Requires additional funding

Mexican Wolf/livestock Council

- 11 Ranchers, environmental groups, tribes, and county coalitions. In 2016:
- Paid $49,070 paid in depredation compensation ($20,781 pending)
- Paid $83,300 to 32 livestock producers for 2015 payments for presence of Mexican wolves
- Funding from Livestock Demonstration Grants to States and Tribes
- 1:1 match from Defenders of Wildlife and Mexican Wolf Fund –proactive conflict avoidance measures



Proactive Conflict avoidance

Provided by Defenders of Wildlife and Mexican Wolf Fund:

- Range riders
- Supplemental hay
- Development of water sources
- Alter grazing rotations away from wolf dens
- Fladry

Litigation

- We are responding to 4 lawsuits on the 2015 revisions to the 10j Rule, EIS, and nonessential designation
  - WildEarth Guardians
  - Defenders of Wildlife et al.
  - New Mexico Counties and cattlegrowers et al.
  - Safari Club International New Mexico
- We signed settlement agreement to complete draft and final recovery plan by November 2017
  - Defenders of Wildlife et al.
  - Arizona Game and Fish Department

Legislation

- Proposed legislation in Senate requiring we complete a recovery plan in 6 months that is acceptable to states, livestock producers, ranchers, managers or owners of natural resources or private lands, recreation interests, counties, and other interested state parties
  - If we don't comply management goes to states
  - Wolf will be automatically delisted when pop goal met and cannot be relisted

Summary

- From 7 founding wolves, developed binational captive breeding population of 240- 300 wolves for release into the wild
- First wolves released in U.S. in 1998 and in México in 2011
- In 2016, there were a minimum of 113 wolves in wild in U.S.; fewer than 30 in México
- Proposing 2017 release of Mexican wolves from captivity into wild to reduce relatedness
- Mexican Wolf/Livestock Council providing depredation compensation and payments for presence to address economic effects of Mexican wolves on livestock; funding for proactive conflict avoidance
- Final recovery plan due November 2017

Questions?