



News Release

Public Affairs Office
PO Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103
505/248-6911
505/248-6915 (Fax)

Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas) www.fws.gov/southwest/

For Release: Nov. 17, 2014

Contacts: Sisto Hernandez: Chairman, Coexistence Council 928.338.1404, shernandez@wmat.us
Jeff Humphrey: US Fish and Wildlife Service 602.242.0210 x 222, jeff_humphrey@fws.gov
Lynda Lambert, Arizona Game and Fish Department 602.236.7203, llambert@azgfd.gov

Southwest Ranchers Receive First Mexican Wolf/Livestock “Pay for Presence” Payments

The Mexican Wolf/Livestock Coexistence Council issued its first Payments for Wolf Presence to 26 Arizona and New Mexico livestock operators who qualified for its coexistence plan's pilot year. The Coexistence Council developed the Mexican Wolf/Livestock Coexistence Plan that presents a new paradigm for addressing wolf-livestock conflicts – one of the most significant impediments to Mexican wolf recovery. Payments for presence of Mexican wolves, the key component of the plan, address the negative financial impacts on livestock producers that accompany Mexican wolf recovery.

“The recovery of the Mexican wolf must be accomplished on a working landscape,” said Benjamin Tuggle, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Southwest Regional Director. “The Coexistence Council plays a vital role in this recovery effort by supporting the Service’s commitment to achieving a balance of activities that both sustain economically viable ranching operations, and a self-sustaining wild wolf population.”

In appointing the 11-member volunteer council representing livestock producers, tribes, environmental groups, and counties, the Fish and Wildlife Service recognized the importance of having a local group of people affected by Mexican wolf recovery come to the table to develop a plan that works at the ground level. The innovative Coexistence Plan ([announced in March 2014](#)), is comprised of three core strategies: payments for wolf presence, funding for conflict avoidance measures, and continued funding for depredation compensation.

“We’re encouraged that so many livestock producers participated in this pilot year,” said Coexistence Council Chairman Sisto Hernandez. “These payments for presence of Mexican wolves recognize the increased costs to livestock producers that come with recovery of Mexican wolves. In the same manner that farmers receive payments through the US Department of Agriculture’s Conservation Reserve Program, we think this new concept will begin to help defray those costs.”

The 2013 Payments for Wolf Presence, totaling \$85,500, were calculated on a formula that considers a variety of factors, including whether the applicant’s land or grazing lease overlaps a wolf territory or core area (e.g., den or rendezvous area) and the number of wolf pups annually

surviving to December 31 in the territory (a bonus point for each pup), recognizing that survival of wolf pups is not dependent upon the livestock producer. The formula also considers the number of livestock exposed to wolves and the applicant's participation in proactive conflict avoidance measures. The payments this year are based on available funding, not a fully funded program, and do not fully offset the cost of presence of Mexican wolves incurred by livestock producers.

The Coexistence Council developed its plan in recognition of the real economic consequences to livestock producers coexisting with wolves in Arizona and New Mexico. In addition to losses from livestock depredations, livestock producers incur costs from undetected depredations and changes in livestock behavior in response to wolf presence, which can result in a reduction of livestock weight gain, reproductive rates, and meat quality, as well as increased costs tied to managing wolf/livestock interactions.

The Coexistence Plan, and specifically the Payments for Wolf Presence program, creates incentives for ranching in ways that promote self-sustaining Mexican wolf populations, viable ranching operations, and healthy western landscapes.

Seed funding for the Coexistence Plan comes from the Federal Livestock Demonstration Program, which in 2013 provided \$20,000 for depredation compensation and \$40,000 for preventative measures to Arizona Game and Fish Department, and \$20,000 for depredation compensation and \$50,000 for preventative measures to the New Mexico Department of Agriculture. These grant funds are matched by in-kind contributions through the Mexican Wolf Fund and Defenders of Wildlife providing financial assistance to livestock producers to implement proactive measures to reduce conflicts between Mexican wolves and livestock. Both States have been awarded a combined \$190,000 in demonstration program funds for 2014.

“The Arizona Game and Fish Department views the Coexistence Council as a step in the right direction relative to compensating rangeland livestock operators,” said Jim deVos, Game and Fish's assistant director for wildlife management. “It is important that those who live and work on the same landscape that wolves occupy are compensated for losses associated with Mexican wolf reintroduction.”

The Coexistence Council continues to seek additional private and public funding, in anticipation of increased rancher participation and potential wolf range expansions.

For more information, visit the Coexistence Council website: <http://www.coexistencecouncil.org/>

For more information on the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/RWLC.cfm>

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwsHQ, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsHQ>.

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest>