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May 30, 2023

Gloria Tom and Buu Nygren
Navajo Nation
Post Office Box 1480
Window Rock, AZ 86515

RE: Consultation Request for Evaluation of Gray Wolf Reintroduction in Colorado

Dear Ms. Tom (Department of Fish and Wildlife Manager) and President Nygren,

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's request for tribal input on the state-led reintroduction of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) to Colorado. The purpose of this letter is to schedule consultation meetings between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Navajo Nation. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) is evaluating a range of alternatives to address a request from the State of Colorado for issuing a section 10(j) rule, consistent with section 10 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended (16 United States Code [USC] 1531 et seq.) to provide management flexibility to the state for the reintroduction and management of the gray wolf. The Service recognizes that Tribes may have a deep spiritual, historical, and cultural connection to this species, other species in the wolf reintroduction area, or concerns about potential impacts to tribal resources. The Service believes that Traditional Ecological Knowledge is important when we evaluate the impacts of this proposed rulemaking process. The purpose of this consultation is to collect information, traditional knowledge, and comments from affected Tribes. The Service also wants to hear and understand the Navajo Nation's concerns about wolves and discuss how the Service can help with wolf management, in light of the Navajo Nation's concerns.

The gray wolf is currently listed as endangered in Colorado under the ESA. On November 3, 2020, Colorado voters approved Proposition 114 (codified as Colorado State statute 33-2-1058), a citizen-initiated ballot measure requiring the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Commission to create a plan to reintroduce the gray wolf to a portion of the species' historical range in Colorado by the end of 2023. As part of the reintroduction process, CPW has requested the Service designate the reintroduced gray wolf population as experimental under section 10(j) of the ESA. Designating the population as experimental would allow the Service to tailor ESA protections for the population to provide management flexibility and better address stakeholder concerns, while still achieving conservation benefits for the species.

The Service's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) development partner (WSP) has contracted PaleoWest (now Chronicle Heritage), a cultural resource management firm with a history of working together with Indigenous communities in Colorado and the western United States, to help organize consultation meetings between the Service and Tribes that have expressed interest in consultation. We would like to schedule an introductory meeting with you and any additional representatives of the Navajo



Nation who you think would be able to help identify Tribal members who can provide insight into the impact of wolf reintroduction and represent Navajo Nation considerations and concerns regarding wolf reintroduction and the 10(j) rule. Please let us know if there is a time in June that works best for your community for this virtual (online) meeting. Chronicle Heritage employees may be at these meetings to assist in note taking, so that the Service and the representatives of your Tribe can focus on the consultation conversation. Copies of the notes will be shared with both the Service and your Tribal representatives.

Following the introductory meeting, follow-up consultation meetings may be held if needed.

Any notes and any map or geospatial data gathered during meetings with a Tribe will be shared with that Tribe and the Service. Chronicle Heritage will deliver copies of all interview materials contributed by the Tribe to the Tribe. We understand that there may be places or resources that Tribes may want help protecting but may not be able to share specific information about the use of those areas or resources. Any information that the Tribe and Tribal members can share is helpful and fits into the Service's goals to protect Tribal interests.

Your comments are very important to us, and to the successful completion of this project. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to review this request. Meeting times can be arranged via email, phone, or hard copy letter, using the contact information below:

Email: kdavis@paleowest.com

Phone: 724-961-3789

Mailing Address: PaleoWest, Attn: Kaitlyn Davis

2770 Dagny Way, Suite 110 (Mailbox #4)

Lafayette, CO 80026

If you have any questions or require any additional information, feel free to contact us.

Best regards,



Kaitlyn Davis | Chronicle Heritage Project Manager and Principal Investigator

Liisa Nival | US Fish and Wildlife Service

