



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/R06/ARD/ES

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Post Office Box 25486
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

STREET LOCATION:
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-1807

July 29, 2022

Honorable Edward Velarde, President
Jicarilla Apache Nation
P.O. Box 507
Dulce, NM 87528

Dear Honorable President Velarde;

The State of Colorado is working to reintroduce gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) into the state as the result of a statewide voter-led initiative passed in November 2020. As reintroduced wolves have the potential to migrate outside of Colorado, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is reaching out to your Tribe as a party that may be potentially impacted by this action. To assist the State of Colorado in their reintroduction of gray wolves into the state, the Service is initiating the process to develop an experimental population rule to provide the authority and flexibility needed to manage the reintroduced wolves under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The gray wolf is currently listed as endangered in Colorado under the ESA.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is responsible for reintroducing the gray wolf in a portion of the species' historical range in Colorado no later than December 31, 2023. CPW has requested the designation of an experimental population under section 10(j) of the ESA to provide increased management flexibility.

While evaluating the state's request to provide for management of reintroduced wolves as an experimental population under the ESA, the Service must complete an environmental review of the potential impacts under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) through the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We are reaching out to determine your interest in participating in Tribal consultation for developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to establish an experimental population of gray wolves in Colorado. Additional information on this project can be found in the attached newsletter, which also provides the dates of upcoming public engagement meetings.

The Service recognizes that Tribes may have a deep spiritual, historical, and cultural connection to species such as the gray wolf and believe that Traditional Ecological Knowledge is important information to incorporate while evaluating the impacts of this proposed rulemaking process. The purpose of this consultation is to collect information, traditional knowledge, and comments from affected Tribes.

If you are interested in participating in Tribal consultation, please respond in the affirmative by August 26, 2022, at the following email address: Nicole_Alt@fws.gov. A letter can also be sent to the following physical address, if preferred:

Colorado Ecological Services Field Office
134 Union Blvd, Suite 670
Lakewood, Colorado 80228

Your comments are very important to us, and to the successful completion of this project. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to review this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Nicole Alt", written over the typed name "Regional Director".

Regional Director