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Cc: Niva, Liisa M; Zerrenner, Adam; Anders, Angela D
Subject: Notice of Availability: final Environmental Impact Statement and draft Record of Decision
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Today, September 15, 2023, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is announcing a final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and draft Record of Decision (ROD) to establish an experimental population of gray wolves in Colorado. These documents will publish in the Federal Register on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, and are available for public inspection today. The FEIS and draft ROD will be available on Regulations.gov under Docket No. FWS-R6-ES-2022-0100 and on our website at <http://www.fws.gov/coloradowolf>.

Following the November 2020 passage of a statewide ballot initiative to reintroduce wolves in Colorado, the Service is moving forward at the request of Colorado Parks and Wildlife to establish an experimental population of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) in Colorado under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service's action is limited to the designation of the experimental population and associated management flexibilities under the proposed rule – the introduction of gray wolves is an action being undertaken by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW).

The proposed designation of a nonessential experimental population allows reintroduced wolves to be managed by hazing, removal, or relocation by CPW, Tribes, or designated agent(s) for domestic animal depredations.

The state of Colorado is in active discussion with surrounding states about their plan to handle gray wolves that leave the state. The Service supports these efforts and anticipates continued close coordination with Colorado and the surrounding states. This support from the Service includes additional authorities to capture and relocate gray wolves that leave Colorado under a pending 10(a)(1)(A) permit. In the coming days we anticipate publishing a notice of receipt of an application for this permit.

With the draft ROD and FEIS complete, the next step is for the Service to issue a 10(j) experimental population designation. This action will include publishing the Final ROD and the 10(j) rule itself no sooner than 30 days after this announcement (to meet a 30-day notice

requirement). The Service intends to publish the Final ROD and 10(j) rule to be effective by December 15, 2023.

More information, including FAQs, can be found on our website at <https://www.fws.gov/coloradowolf>.

Thank you,
Maggie

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