

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission
Resolution 2023:01 – Regarding Reintroduction of Gray Wolves

WHEREAS, on November 3, 2020, Colorado voters approved ballot proposition 114, now codified at § 33-2-105.8, CRS. The statute requires the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to develop a plan to restore and manage gray wolves in Colorado. § 105.8(2)(a).

WHEREAS, as of November 3, 2020, gray wolves in Colorado were listed as an endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), meaning the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) had primary management authority over the species.

WHEREAS, on January 4, 2021, the USFWS finalized a rule to delist gray wolves under the federal ESA due to recovery, meaning legal management authority over the species returned to Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

WHEREAS, on January 14, 2021, the Commission approved a blueprint for public involvement to inform the development of a wolf restoration and management plan. The [blueprint](#) recognized that there could be disputes regarding federal ESA listing decisions, that future management authority over gray wolves was uncertain, and that the “potential for the species to be re-listed in the future will inform consideration of the development and implementation of permits and tools to provide future regulatory assurances and management flexibility.”

WHEREAS, on February 10, 2022, a federal court vacated the USFWS’s rule to delist gray wolves under the ESA, resulting in gray wolves in Colorado once again being classified as endangered and protected under the federal ESA. Primary management authority over gray wolves returned to the USFWS as a result of the court order.

WHEREAS, the Commission received thousands of comments on its draft wolf plan and held statewide hearings to acquire information to be considered in developing the plan.

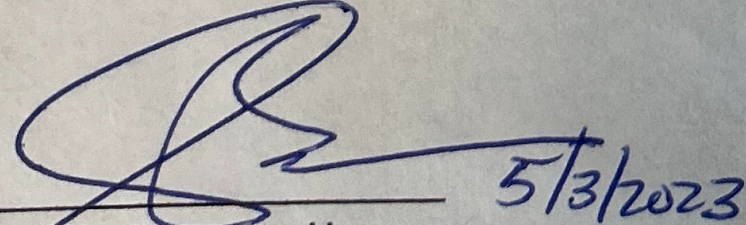
WHEREAS, on May 3, 2023, the Commission voted to approve the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan (Plan). The Plan recognizes the need for management flexibility and states:

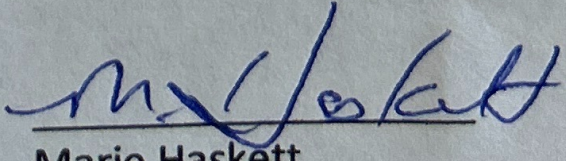
Concurrent with this planning process, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has embarked on a rulemaking process designed to provide management flexibility by designating Colorado’s wolves as an experimental population under section 10(j) of the federal ESA. CPW and USFWS anticipate that the resulting 10(j) rule will take effect prior to the reintroduction of wolves into the state, as was done when wolves were reintroduced into the northern Rocky Mountains in the mid-1990s. The 10(j) rule provides management flexibility that is a critical component to the success of this Plan and on which other components of the Plan depend.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission reaffirms its appreciation and support for the ongoing efforts of the USFWS to partner with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and to finalize the 10(j) rule as anticipated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission finds and determines that the successful implementation of proposition 114, now codified at § 33-2-105.8, CRS, relies on the implementation of best management practices to resolve conflicts with persons engaged in ranching and farming in this state.

Approved, May 3, 2023


Carrie Besnette Hauser
Chair, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission


Marie Haskett
Secretary, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission