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Letters to the Editor

Agency on Wrong Side

IGNORING SCIENCE and public desires, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is going full speed ahead killing, maiming and terrorizing the most endangered mammal we pay them to protect—the Mexican gray wolf.

An alpha male has lost a leg from a steel jaw trap used to capture him. Why is all this happening? The answer is simple. Poor animal husbandry practices by the public lands ranching industry. They are not obliged or even expected to watch over their herds. ...

Why is it that public land ranchers—who only exist because of the welfare prices we charge them to use our lands—don't have to get insurance like any other business to cover such losses? Should it really be up to the taxpayers to make our public lands safe for their profits? They are even being paid for their losses, but that is not enough. They want every last wolf dead and at our expense. Shame on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for using public money to kill public wildlife for them.

MICHAEL SAUBER
Silver City

Put Up or Shut Up

I WISH THE Journal would stop accepting scientifically unsupported and unrealistic claims from groups who claim to be using and embracing science.

I'm referring specifically to the comment by Michael Robinson of the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity. He

said, "The solution is not scapegoating wolves once they learn to kill livestock, rather better husbandry of cattle so wolves don't get a taste for beef."

This is either openly ridiculous or astoundingly revolutionary! As such, it does not deserve publication without some supporting information. What is Robinson's plan? Show me some science that says wolves aren't born with a taste for cattle. Show me a realistic animal husbandry plan that has any effect at all on what off-reservation wolves eat. Otherwise, don't claim that others are using the wrong solution. ...

BILL HENSLEY
Albuquerque

Staying in Business

WE HAD THE privilege to have Gov. Bill Richardson in Reserve at an open forum meeting. There were many issues brought up that concern our community—health, roads, school funding, economics and, of course, the wolf.

The wolf was an emotional subject—from people who had seen the wolf on their main street to ranchers who had pictures of wolf kills and moms who are afraid to let their kids go out because the wolves are in their back yards.

One Catron County rancher did not attend the meeting. A wolf, which had three strikes against her as a cow killer, had been allowed to live because she had to feed pups. Now her pups are grown. Man isn't supplying elk meat for her and she's out killing cows again. And I as-

sume she is training her pups to do the same. The rancher was out on horseback—hoping to keep his business alive, literally, one more day.

CAROLYN NELSON
Glenwood

Beef Lovers Speak Up

THE ARTICLE, "Wolf Supporters Speak Out," (gives) significant exposure to a one-sided view by none other than Dave Foreman, a founder of an environmental extremist organization, Earth First! Why does anyone want, support or like the wolf species?

I am sure most of the so-called wolf lovers are aware that the wolves' favorite meal is the rear end of live animals. Wolves do not kill, they just start eating the back end of animals. ... Everyone needs to start standing up and supporting our ranchers from this all out attack by the radical greens (and their) efforts to remove the ranchers from the land. These extreme actions will affect you. I know I like to eat meat and I think most people do.

RACHEL THOMAS
Huachuca City, Ariz.

City Folk Unaffected

IT HARDLY SEEMS right that a bunch of people from cities across the country can be bused into a meeting regarding wolves and get wolves allowed in the country. It's the same with everything the greens do. They want wolves, mountain lions, jumping mice, prairie dogs

or other unwanted creatures because they're cute, noble, beautiful or endangered.

Yet, none of them ever have to put up with these supposedly endangered animals they think the United States needs to have. None of their pets or horses/cows/sheep are eaten by wolves or mountain lions. None of them ever have to walk or ride though an area full of prairie dog holes and fall into those holes and break their own or their horses' legs. None of them have to worry about some jumping mouse getting into their homes.

No, it's just the folks who happen to live in the country who have that problem. If and when you decide to let wolves, mountain lions, and bears to start living in cities, then and only then should they be allowed to make the decision of where wolves should be allowed.

DELLA CALLISON
Elgin, Ariz.

Wolves Just a Tool

WE HAVE HAD no verified wolf reintroduction in the Allegheny Highlands of Virginia and West Virginia, yet. But this rural agricultural region, mainly cattle and sheep grazing, has seen the number of sheep plummet during the past 10 years due to depredations of another predator, the coyote.

Officially, the coyote was not "introduced" here, but many of us suspect it was not a natural migration. For 200 years, sheep, cattle and timber have been the economic lifeblood. The sheep are almost gone. Next?

The last wolves in this area were killed in the 1880s. When the wolf comes again, it will hit the cattlemen. The wolf is simply another tool used by the eco-preservationists to drive people off their land, into the arms of the Nature Conservancy and other willing buyers actively courting the willing sellers. ...

If wolf supporters and others of their philosophical bent have their way, private property will be an anachronism and we will all be living on the globalist eco-

plantation. Everything we had or have in America has been or is being "outsourced" to Red China including the philosophy of those who rule.

L.M. SCHWARTZ
McDowell, Va.

Waste of Our Money

I WANT TO voice my opposition of the ridiculous waste of taxpayer money related to all wolf reintroduction efforts, especially the Mexican wolf.

The primary goal of this wasteful program is fostering and nurturing the Wildlands Project. This program is being aggressively pushed by the so-called environmental organizations that have become increasing extreme. If one does not share this extreme ideology, you are branded as anti-environmental.

The project's goal is to push the United States back in time to an era before 1850 when most of America was wilderness. The wolf programs are dependent on large tracts of land. This creates a de facto wilderness area for the project. Reintroduction of the Canadian lynx is another shade of the program.

The wolf is the species of choice to foster the expansion of wilderness and the Wildlands Project which is counter-productive to a healthy America that must clothe and feed itself as well as many other counties of the world.

The project is dependent on programs—such as the Mexican wolf reintroduction—that operate under the radar screen from the American public. This agenda is further shielded by the liberal media. It's time to expose the stupidity of these wasteful and extreme environmentalist dreams and put them to rest.

JIM ARBOGAST
Anaheim, Calif.

Both Mad and Sad

I AM SO ANGRY with the federal government for not protecting its own animals by coming up with some sort of answer other than death. I am angry

with myself for not keeping up the e-mails I've been sending in regards to wolf 511. I've called the Governor's Office, Rep. Heather Wilson's office and sent e-mails to the Mexican wolf recovery coordinator to spare her life.

When I found out that indeed she had been captured, along with her pups and was to be reunited with her mate—that was trapped and had to have a leg amputated—I let my guard down. I am appalled that the Mexican gray wolf problem has been so mishandled.

So the alpha male of the Ring Pack has just been shot, and I'm sitting here at my computer crying that I waited too long to send out more e-mails and make more calls. As I had mentioned during the wolf 511 debacle, if she could be shot with a bullet, why not a dart and tranquilizer gun. It's done all the time with wild animals.

The U.S. and state governments seem willing to answer to the demands of more than 90 ranchers, whose cattle graze on my land as well as every other American's. We are just the crazies who believe every living creature should have a chance. ... We are not humane. We are the killers of all that get in our way.

WANDA LANGLET
Sandia Park

Ranchers as Squatters

THE CONFLICT OVER the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction program in the Gila has a simple solution—reintroduce the Apache to the Gila.

For hundreds of years or longer, southwestern New Mexico, southeastern Arizona and northern Mexico were the domain of the Apache. The Apache co-existed with the wolves, grizzly bears, mountain lions, elk, deer and all the other wildlife that once populated the Gila.

The only conflicts the Apache had were with the Spanish, Mexican and United States governments, which were determined to destroy the Apache because the Apache had the effrontery to defend their homeland against foreign invaders.

It was not until the Apache succumbed to the overwhelming forces of the U.S. Army that the predecessors and forebears of the present Gila Livestock Growers Association had the temerity to swarm into the Gila and squat on what are now the headquarters of the various ranches in the Gila.

Once they infested the Gila, ranchers set out to eradicate the wolves, grizzly bears, mountain lions, elk, deer and all other wildlife which conflicted with livestock grazing. Based on their title to a few hundred acres of land each, livestock growers in the Gila still assert dominion over hundreds of thousands of acres of public land.

The Journal has printed a number of articles and opinion pieces which validate the argument that livestock grazing on public lands is not economically feasible. Such grazing continues only with government subsidies. When the mining of coal, copper, uranium and other minerals became no longer economically feasible, the mines and smelters shut down and the miners and other employees moved on to other things.

When diesels replaced steam locomotives on the railroads, the locomotive shops and roundhouses that employed thousands of workers in Albuquerque, Belen, Clovis, Las Vegas, Gallup and other towns shut down and the workers moved on to other things. Cannon Air Force Base employees in Clovis are facing a similar fate. Only ranching continues—this apparently due to the absurd notion that there is something sacred in the myth of the Old West. ...

There is legislation working its way through Congress which would buy out public land ranchers. Both sides of the Mexican gray wolf conflict should unite behind the passage of such legislation. If the closing of military bases can be justified on the grounds of economic savings, so should the closing of ranches.

RONALD GRENKO
Albuquerque

A Coddled Industry

THERE ARE RANCHERS with a predilection for exaggeration, making it difficult to separate fact from fiction. One recently remarked she thought there could be as many as 100 wolves in the wild. That defies common sense considering the number of alpha wolves that have been killed and the number of litters that did not survive due to stressed-out parents.

Others have accused wolves of "stalking." There is no evidence of malicious intent on the part of the wolves, like domestic canines they are intelligent and curious.

Cattle were designed for grasslands not for navigating rocky, mountainous environs. At least 96 percent of deaths are due to natural causes, not predators. Cattle die of inclement weather, lightning strikes, birthing complications, falls and toxic plants.

It is the wolves that are disadvantaged when ranchers leave carcasses to bait them so they can then cry "wolf!" It is difficult to remain tolerant and respectful of an industry that has been so coddled, that has enjoyed the privilege of grazing non-native animals on public land, often to its detriment. ...

SHARON MORGAN
Silver City

Vote Cows or Wolves

I HAVE AN IDEA for solving the Mexican gray wolf debate—let's give them an up or down vote. Some ranchers have asserted that they cannot coexist with the wolves. I propose putting the following question on the ballot for the next general election: "Would you rather have cows or wolves in your national forests and wilderness areas?" This would allow the American people to be heard loud and clear. Either you are for this idea or you hate democracy.

GREG VOGEL
Las Cruces

Trapped by Politics

THANKFULLY, 511, the first Mexican wolf to step away from extinction's precipice in 1998 and once again feel freedom beneath her paws, has a reprieve. She was trapped, not shot. She's been the best wolf she could in a briar patch of conflicted agendas.

These animals are not criminals. Leaving dead cows around trains the wolves to eat them. Fish and Wildlife's five-year program review noted 91 percent of wolves that scavenged on dead cows later attacked live ones.

Like us, wolf lives are driven by availability and energy conservation. But they can't pick up dinner in the meat department—they have to expend much time and energy finding it, chasing it and catching it. It fights back, sometimes fatally for our lobos. ... Why should wolves pay the ultimate price for just being wolves in a mine field of human politics? ...

JAN RAVENWOLF
Sandia Park