

**9:45AM -- GAME
COMMISSION TO HEAR
WOLF DEBATE**

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Today's meeting in Las Cruces to be "listening session" for pros and cons of recovery program.

A debate over the pros and cons of the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction project will be the ninth of 22 items on the agenda for the New Mexico Game Commission which is meeting from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. today at the Best Western Mesilla Valley Inn in Las Cruces, the [Silver City Sun-News](#) reported.

New Mexico Game Commissioner M.H. "Dutch" Salmon told the Sun-News that the commission has no direct role in the controversial project but today's hearing could help provide input to the state Game and Fish Department.

"This will be a listening session to hear the pros and cons about the program from people in the recovery area," Salmon told the paper. "Hopefully, we can find some middle ground in all this. I do know from experience that it is possible for people and wolves to co-exist."

Salmon told the Sun-News he believes there are a few habituated wolves in the Gila National Forest that don't show fear of humans and that those wolves may be the cause of widespread fear and of the growing debate in the area.

"It is somewhat of a mystery to me," Salmon said of the debate. "I lived in northern Minnesota in the 1970s where we had many more wolves than we have down here and there was not nearly as much fuss about it."

The Grant County Commission voted unanimously last week to call for a federally funded compensation program for those who have been damaged "physically, emotionally or financially" by wolf attacks, the Sun-News said.

And the Catron County Commission recently voted unanimously to conduct its own wolf-management program that could allow a county-designated officer to kill wolves, if only as a last resort, [we reported last week](#).

Supporters of the recovery program held a telephone news conference on Tuesday to talk about "bureaucratic" obstacles to the program's success, the Sun-News reported.

And in an op-ed piece in today's [Albuquerque Journal](#), program supporter **Michael J. Robinson of the Center for Biological Diversity**, sharply criticized Catron County's action, saying its "threat to kill wolves on its own is an attempt to ratchet up the killing by either federal or private parties, or both."

Robinson wrote that the goal of anti-wolf activists is "more ambitious" than simply extermination.

"Livestock owners seek to ensure that they alone, and not the American public through their elected members of Congress, will determine what animals roam the public lands and how those lands are managed," **wrote Robinson**, who also blasted the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Justice Department for failing "to stand up for the wolves, the rule of law, and the American public."