

H. Dale Hall, Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

December 22, 2008

By certified mail
Return receipt requested

Copy by facsimile: (202) 208-6817

Dear Mr. Hall,

In light of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's continued slaughter of gray wolves and the imminent third attempt by the Bush administration to strip endangered-species protections from wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains, the undersigned organizations request that you replace the picture of the "poster wolf" of the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction program, prominently displayed on your agency's website, <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/>, and in a oversized blowup poster at your Washington, D.C. headquarters, with a picture of her dead after the Fish and Wildlife Service killed her accidentally in 2005.

Displaying a more accurate photo would serve to remind your successor in the Obama administration of the critical reforms in wolf policy that the Bush administration has stalled and blocked.

Wolf number 511, also known as Brunhilda, one of the original eleven Mexican wolves released in March 1998 and the last to roam freely from among those eleven, died of capture myopathy on July 21, 2005, three and a half weeks after she was trapped and taken into captivity.

The Mexican wolf predator control program authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Service has so far killed 29 wolves and consigned dozens to captivity. These wolves lost to predator control account for the discrepancy between the over-one-hundred wolves called for in the *Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan* as a first step toward recovery, a number which the 1996 environmental impact statement on reintroduction projected would be achieved by the end of 2006, and the paltry 52 documented alive at the end of 2007.

In addition, the Fish and Wildlife Service has authorized the destruction of at least 2,882 northern gray wolves from 1996 through 2008 in the Rocky Mountain states of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming and the Midwest states of Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has demonstrated particularly appalling bad-faith in its management of the Mexican gray wolf. The agency has ignored the recommendations of the 2001 Paquet Report, which was the independent scientific panel commissioned by the Service for its Three-Year Review, and of the American Society of Mammalogists' 2007 recommendations.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has consistently disdained the popular support for Mexican wolf recovery in rural southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona (as evidenced

in opinion polls and in public hearings). The agency has snubbed New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson in his call for suspending the predator-control protocol known as SOP 13. And along with other agencies, the Service violated this protocol by shooting the alpha male of the San Mateo Pack, who had killed a calf in an area of the Gila National Forest that was seasonally closed to grazing, despite SOP 13's limitation on only removing wolves that had preyed three times on "lawfully present" livestock.

Last and not least, the Fish and Wildlife Service is engaged in tawdry and self-exculpating deception in claiming that four breeding pairs of Mexican wolves survived in 2007 through using a different definition of "breeding pair" than the one your own agency posted in the Federal Register in the official Mexican wolf reintroduction rule of Jan. 12, 1998; using that official definition, only three breeding pairs survived in 2007.

The out-of-date photo of a beautiful wolf stepping into freedom stands in stark contrast with this grim reality, particularly since the Fish and Wildlife Service releases far fewer wolves into the wild than it traps and shoots.

The government should be honest and show the true face of the wolf predator control program. The reality of this program is dead wolves, sometimes in the wild and sometimes in a cage, plus survivors who once roamed freely but now pace or limp behind wire mesh.

Brunhilda was one of (so far) 18 Mexican gray wolves killed inadvertently as a result of capture. The government has shot an additional 11 Mexican wolves, and 22 have been consigned to permanent captivity. Two wolves have had their feet or legs amputated as a result of trap injuries.

Brunhilda's wild-born mate in the Francisco Pack was one of the animals whose leg had to be amputated as a result of a trap injury. Their pups were captured also. Her previous litter of five wild-conceived pups died from stress from the noise of a construction project near their pen, in June 2003, as a result of an earlier bout in captivity.

Brunhilda was trapped from the wild three times for having left the arbitrary bounds of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, and once later for preying on cattle after first having scavenged on the carcasses of cattle she had not killed. Both reasons to trap her would have been prevented if the Fish and Wildlife Service had followed the Paquet Report's recommendations from June 2001 and reformed ill-conceived policies.

We look forward to your response to this request that you replace the hopeful photo of Brunhilda with one showing her after your agency took her life.

Sincerely endorsed by,

John Toppenberg
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
Anchorage, Alaska

D.J. Schubert
Animal Welfare Institute
Washington, D.C.

Brian Vincent
Big Wildlife
Eugene, Oregon

Rosemarie S. White
The Canada Goose Project
Valley Village, California

Michael J. Robinson
Center for Biological Diversity
Silver City, New Mexico

Anja Heister
Footloose Montana
Florence, Montana

Gill M Sorg
Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Brooks Fahy
Predator Defense
Eugene, Oregon

Camilla H. Fox
Project Coyote
Larkspur, California

Daniel R. Patterson
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility-Southwest
Tucson, Arizona

Elizabeth Walsh
Sierra Club, Wildlife and Endangered Species Committee
Washington, D.C.

Melanie Gasparich
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
Gila, New Mexico

Greta Anderson
Western Watersheds Project
Tucson, Arizona

Kirk Robinson
Western Wildlife Conservancy
Salt Lake City, Utah

Rob Edward
WildEarth Guardians
Louisville, Colorado

Gerald Black
WildlifeWatchers
Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Please respond to:

Michael J. Robinson
Center for Biological Diversity
P.O. Box 53158
Pinos Altos, NM 88053