

Brady McGee, Ph.D.
Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

July 24, 2025

Via email: brady_mcgee@fws.gov

Dear Dr. McGee,

The undersigned 35 conservation organizations representing over two million members and supporters respectfully request that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refrain from removing from the wild the latest Mexican gray wolf to cross Interstate 40 from south to north.

In May, adult male wolf 3065 was trapped and removed from the area around Mount Taylor, west of Albuquerque. He was outfitted with a radio collar and released in the Gila National Forest south of the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. As shown in the Fish and Wildlife Service's periodically-updated online map, in recent weeks this wolf steadily made his way northward. As of Monday's updated map, he is again in the vicinity of Mt. Taylor. He walked over 150 miles to get back there.

We are calling this wolf *Taylor* after the iconic mountain to which he is drawn.

Please do not remove Taylor from the wild. Do not interfere with his decision on where to live.

Taylor is a mystery wolf whose precise provenance is yet unknown. Blood drawn from him upon his initial capture, when processed, will presumably reveal his natal pack. But we know that his namesake mountain has long supported others of his kind, because the western slope of Mt. Taylor is drained by Lobo Canyon.

Over the past eight years, four other Mexican wolves are known to have crossed the arbitrary, politically-derived wolf-boundary of I-40 and found themselves in the vicinity of Mt. Taylor. Strikingly, of the five (including Taylor), four of them occurred in the last three years, showing that as the population grew, such dispersal events to Mt. Taylor and environs have sped up:

- In 2017, an unnamed wolf (M1552) from the Prieto Pack traveled north from the Gila National Forest and then returned after a few days.
- In 2022, Stella (F2694) localized around Mt. Taylor for at least two months before moving back south of I-40 to the Bureau of Land Management arid grasslands and the pinon-juniper foothills between the Gila National Forest and the San Mateo Mountains. (On the latest updated map, Stella is located with Mr. Goodbar (M1888), himself a famously far-traveling wolf.)
- In 2023, Asha (AF2754), also renowned for her wandering, twice was captured from the same region. Distressingly, despite repeated public statements by the Service that Asha

would be re-released after she was to bear pups, because motherhood might keep her from roaming, she and her genetically-valuable, captive-born mate and pups have not yet been released.

- This year, Ella (F2996) was found dead near Mt. Taylor, reportedly killed by a mountain lion or black bear.

Mt. Taylor and the surrounding vicinity repeatedly draw wolves because of the sparse human population and the presence of prey animals such as elk. It is wolf habitat, artificial boundaries notwithstanding.

A 2014 interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed study determined that establishing a population of Mexican wolves in the Rocky Mountains of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado, as well as establishing a population in the Grand Canyon ecosystem of northern Arizona and southern Utah, was necessary for recovery.¹ Consulting more recent evidence, the world's top experts on Mexican gray wolf genetics along with experts in wolf recovery, concluded that the severe genetic depletion afflicting the Mexican wolf must be addressed through natural connectivity with northern gray wolves in Colorado to facilitate introgression of northern wolves' genes.²

The Fish and Wildlife Service's repeated removals of wolves for no other reason than that they have crossed I-40 actively hinders recovery of this endangered subspecies of gray wolf and – as seen in the example of Asha who is still in captivity today – harms individual lobos as well.

Please let Taylor stay where he is and allow him to move as he sees fit. And if the federal and state governments will refrain from capturing him and other wolves who surely will follow, including more females, a new population can be founded and recovery of the Mexican gray wolf significantly advanced.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely endorsed by:

Michael J. Robinson, Senior Conservation Advocate
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Silver City, New Mexico

Delia G. Malone, Founder and Board President
ColoradoWild
Redstone, Colorado

¹ Carroll, C., R.J. Fredrickson, and R.C. Lacy. 2014. Developing metapopulation connectivity criteria from genetic and habitat data to recover the endangered Mexican wolf. *Conservation Biology*, 28(1):76–86.

² Hedrick, P.W., M. Phillips, C. Carroll, R. Lacy, G. Anderson, R. Fredrickson, and D.W. Smith. 2025. Recovery and genetics of Mexican wolves: a comment on Clement et al. *Journal of Wildlife Management*, 89(3).

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