

Special Meeting

1.

Catron County Commission

April 3, 2025

Present: Buster Green, Chairman

Audrey McQueen, Commissioner

Haydn Forward, Commissioner

Adren Nance, County Attorney

Deborah Mahler, Interim County Manager/CLLA

Sherry Perez, County Clerk

Helen Wood, Chief Deputy Clerk

Meeting called to order at 10:00 AM by Chairman Green.

Opening Prayer by Commissioner Forward.

Pledge of Allegiance by Commissioner McQueen.

Motion by Commissioner Forward to approve the agenda with Action Item A and B Reversed. Seconded by Commissioner McQueen. Motion carried. All voted aye.

Public Hearing:

- A. Emergency Ordinance 01-2025 Requiring Persons Initiating Open Burns in Catron County to Notify the County Manager 12 Hours in Advance.

Fire Chief Charles Pollina Representing all the Fire Chiefs said that they can get a warning that someone was planning to burn and if it's a bad day they can discourage people from doing so.

Action Items:

Consideration of Emergency Ordinance 01-2025 -Requiring Persons Initiating open burns in Catron County to Notify the County Manager 12 hours in Advance.

Motion by Commissioner Forward to pass the Ordinance. Seconded by Commissioner McQueen. Motion carried All voted aye.

Roll call: District I-Commissioner Green-Aye, District II -Commissioner McQueen-Aye, District III-Commissioner Forward-Aye.

Public Comments Concerning Resolution 56-2025 -Declaring an Emergency in the County of Catron Due to extreme and continual injury and damage caused by Mexican Grey Wolves.

Randall Major, Datil NM. The People who think this wolf is so great have never had cows and pets killed and maimed.

Robert Till, Vernon AZ. The wolf foundation has lost control of the wolves and they're killing and killing. The Government can't compensate for the cattle, livestock and pets. They need to be gotten rid of completely.

Laura Schneberger, Arizona and New Mexico border. In 1999 the wolves came onto our Ranch. We have never been the same. We decided to put 45 thousand into running Livestock Dogs. Thanks to fish and wildlife the wolves are well fed on our cows.

Carolyn Nelson, Glenwood New Mexico. The wolves are affecting the nation's food supply. This makes it a national problem.

Tom Klumpker, Alma New México. Thirty-Nine Year Rancher and Outfitter. The wilderness is covered with wolves. It has affected the Elk herds.

Elena Far, Horse Springs, New Mexico. Cattle grower. Tired of seeing government mismanagement, Timber, Spotted owl, Minnows and now the wolves.

Bryan Schilleman, Reserve New Mexico. Lost a 10-year-old Horse. The government gave me 4 thousand. He was worth so much more. Plus, he was our pet.

Tom McNabb, Dry Blue Arizona /New Mexico. Moved here from the northern states. We used to get rid of wolves that killed the cattle. Not in New Mexico. Here they Protect the wolves that kill our cattle. It is Economically Devastating to the people, county and the state and it will affect the Federal Government in the end. This is not about protecting a species, it's about politics.

Wayne Salvador, Quemado, New México. The wolves are ruining this country's economy. I want to continue but they're making it hard. Even the elk and deer are gone. I used to see them around the house but not anymore.

Roy Farr, Rancher from Horse Springs New Mexico. We don't get the right to even protect ourselves. Environmental groups are getting Big Dollars for protecting the wolves.

Dusty Armstrong, Quemado, New Mexico. Rancher and on the soil and water board. They are smart predators. They watch and as soon as we turn our back they take a calf. The

Game and Fish say they're helping us, so we depend on them to give us accurate information, and then we lose another cow to uncollared wolves. A lot of the calves aren't left to find any parts, so we don't get paid for them.

Brandon Gaudelli, Cruzville, New México. Outfitter Since 1990. The Animals are 10% of what it used to be. I was told by the last game warden that they brought the wolves here to kill the elk, but wolves found an easier prey, cattle. But they are trying to get the people off the land. They take our livelihood, and we have to move.

Barbara Marxon, Arizona state line. We have had several packs on us for 27 straight years. We lost 50 head last year. Wolves and Grizzly bears don't play fairly. These protect the animal groups are getting rich off the wolves and our hardship.

Buster Green, Fencelake, New México. The County gets no money from the wolf program. It affects all our lives. Government was meant to represent the people. They forced this wolf program on us back in 1998. We had elk and deer and had a good life. America the Free.... Are we truly free! This Wolf program is about power... and controlling people.

Carry Ann Garcia, Ranch manager. I have a 3-year-old baby, and the wolves are in my front door, and they killed not far from our house, 637 yards. We can tell where the collard wolves are, but the un-collared ones are the ones who frighten me. They feed them in this big tub. So, if we are feeding them then put them in a sanctuary. We can feed them there. We are in the cage. I can't ride alone and if we have to shoot one we are the ones who go to jail.

Holden McPhaul, Rancher, Pie Town, New Mexico. Can't ride alone on our ranch. My dad has to carry a gun, and he never had to before.

Breely Green, Fencelake, New México, I have grown up riding on our ranch. I had a run in with a wolf about 2 months ago and I was riding a young horse, and it scared us both. It kept following me. I didn't know if I would make it. I tried to call dad on the cell phone, but I had no internet. It finally left. But I'm afraid it will get my animals and me. I don't know why wolves' lives are more important than mine.

Melinda Walraven, School bus driver in Datil New Mexico. We put our kids in cages to protect them from the wolves. It should be the other way around; we should be putting the wolves in a cage. They feed them horse meat and then they wonder why they attack our horses. There not wild. They are domesticated wolves.

Barney Spurgeon, Reserve New Mexico. On March 14th my dog started barking so I let him out. The dog came right back scared, and I looked and about 25 feet from me was a wolf.

He wasn't scared of me. Then on April 2, I was working on my fence, and I had the tractor running and the dog got scared and was barking and I looked and there was that same wolf. It was right where my 2-year-old grandson was playing the day before.

Andy Carrejo, Aragon, New Mexico. There has been Four generations of us Carrejo's living here and we don't have as many elk and deer as we used to. I let out our little yorkie dog on the porch and I went back to get her in, and I went looking and a wolf took her, there was tracks all over my yard.

Brock Powell, Aragon, New Mexico. We had a horse attacked. Then we had the wolves take my dog right on my porch and I chased it and got it away, but it was a \$500.00 veterinary bill. We have a toddler, and we can't let the baby play outside at all.

Kelly Schilleman, Reserve New Mexico. I moved here 11 years ago. My husband is a horse trainer. We got a onery 2-year-old horse. My husband was training him for me. He was great even our grand babies could ride him. The wolves got in the pasture where we kept our three horses, and they killed my horse and the other two are so afraid. They have bite marks and scares all over them.

Misty Werkman, Aragon, New Mexico. We had 54 Confirmed kills this last five years. We had 65 disappear. We had \$50,000.00 loss last year. We spend many nights riding with the cows.

Louis Sanders, I had confirmed kills on January 15,17,28th. Game and fish told me they were watching the wolves on those days and that didn't stop them from killing our cows. They said it was un-collared wolves. We always had a sense of pride because we were helping to feed America, but the wolves are taking that away.

Anita Hand, American Indian Rancher. I had one confirmed wolf kill. The wolves are taking away our livelihood. Game and fish are not obligated to tell us where the wolves are and there are a lot of un-collard wolves out there. The wolves are evil in the eyes of her people.

Nelson Shirley, Rancher in Catron and Apache County. The most outrageous thing I've heard is that we are making it all up. It's a fairy tale. I wish it was. The Truth is that the Federal Government wants cattle off the Gila Forest. From 1995-2005 there were 32 confirmed wolf kills on people in the US. We should be able to shoot a wolf that's on our property. Last 5 years there has been 1 wolf killed because of him killing stock, He had killed over 70 head of cattle. He was an old wolf that was too old to breed so they allowed him to be killed. We should be able to protect our property and family.

Jon Grant, (ZOOM) Wildlife Services-State director. We have hired a full time Investigator for Catron County.

Mike Salon, (ZOOM) Game and Fish. (Will answer questions)

Green: How many wolves are there in Catron County?

Salon: There are 162 wolves in Catron County? We have 3 full time people Working on trying to collar them and haze them and feed them.

Forward: Who makes the final decision on the number of cross-fosters that come to Catron County?

Salon: We get the pups from zoos, and we put them where we can.

Green: If the Governor signs the declaration. Will you support it?

Salon: Can't say

Brady McGee, (ZOOM) Game and Fish Coordinator. We need more ranch riders. We hope there will be more money for ranchers to pay for riders. We only issue kill permits after exhausting every possible way.

Shawn Mengas, Reserve New Mexico. Two years after Jess Carrie and 30 years in Law enforcement. Catron County Citizens have gone through a lot. We investigate the scene of the kills and try to read the story. Some are a brutal mess, and some are just dead and you have to skin them to see what the story is. Then there are tracks and no kill sight only the missing animal. If you don't have a carcass, you don't get the full value of an animal. For the last year wolves have been coming into the city limits. Fish and wildlife know they're in town. We have been having sightings in Luna, Pie town, Datil, Quemado and now Reserve. The cost isn't just cost. It's the time you have put into each cow. And the heartbreak when You put so much into the animals and your ranch, and it's all gone.

Deborah Mahler, Interim Manager, The cost to fully staff a year of Conflict Avoidance Program with 10 people working to confirm wolf kills would be \$907,000. Problem is Money is going down and wolf kills are going up.

Tom Patterson, President of the Cattle Growers. I grew up helping my dad, Alex Paterson, run cattle on the Centerfire Allotment north of Luna. Sixty years later, I now live on the Spurs, northeast of luna along the Centerfire Creek. I run cattle from the east side of Luna to the state line, along the state line in Arizona and west of Alma. As a kid I spent much of my time in the mountains around my house. As a youth I rarely saw a dead cow, now they're

everywhere. The difference is we have Mexican Grey Wolves. Now we can't let our children play outside without parents being there. My dad passed away in 2018. I'm glad he didn't have to see how wolves are now terrorizing our communities and ravaging our cattle. My dad wouldn't have hesitated he would have started shooting. We have written letters and worked with all the different programs, but has it done us any good. No not a bit. For my part ,however, I've worked hard individually and through the New Mexico Cattle Grower association to educate our state legislators, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and our congressmen, their personal staff, congressional committee staff, the USFS, the Fish and Wildlife Services, the Farm Services Administration and the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior about the Impact of the Mexican Grey wolf recovery on us individually and on our livestock operations and our communities. Through the NM Department of Agriculture, we eliminated the Mexican Wolf/Livestock Coexistence Council. We now have the County Livestock Loss Authority. We hired Deborah Mahler as Administrator. We transferred the fiscal agent for the CLLA to Catron County so it can start writing checks for the depredations on a timely basis. We're about to start paying for conflict avoidance. Later this spring, we'll start paying damages toward indirect damages. Last year, Cattle Growers and the CLLA lobbied for and received \$1.5 MM from the State Legislature to pay toward those damages. We have had to beat back investigations from the State Ethics Commission to have ranchers who know something about wolves to serve on board. But even that one bright spot has made no difference in terms of the wolves on the ground and the terror they cause us. Unlike people who live elsewhere in the country, for us, wolves are not some romanticized concept. For us, we don't just see wolves on tv dogfood commercials. for those of us on the ground, they're a very real, daily threat. On my private land and my grazing allotment, I routinely find cattle and wildlife they've killed. The dead cattle I find are probably less than 20 percent of the livestock they kill but that I don't find and therefore I am not qualified to get paid for. I'm trying to figure out if I bring my cattle back in May to feed the wolves or just sell them. My dog, Sadie, goes to many meetings with me because I can't leave her alone at the ranch for fear the wolves will kill her. I can't let her run beside my ATV when I'm putting salt and protein out for the cattle because we might encounter wolves. When a wolf was caught in a coyote trap on my private property last month, an FWS employee threatened me with jail and a fine if I didn't allow them to come get it. They did and then they released it somewhere close to Luna. My experience isn't unique. A week ago, I met Shawn Megas on the road. He'd been investigating a wolf kill for Pattie and Dennis Swapp down the valley from us. He confirmed it was a wolf. Cindy Cook told me recently that, as she stepped out of her house one day this winter, she saw a wolf 10 feet away with one of her chickens in its mouth. Taylor McQueen lost her barrel horse

Pickles to wolves. We heard reports last week that the autopsy report came back on an 82-year-old lady in Colorado who died late last year. Cause of death: Wolves. These wolves have no natural predators. We can't shoot them unless they're in the act of attacking us or we risk jail and fines. As a result they've become habituated to humans, which is why they're roaming in our backyards. It's why earlier this week one trotted right up alongside an SUV that had pulled off the road on 180 at Saliz Pass on the way to Alma. The situation is not tolerable, and it's getting worse. What can we do? We have been compiling a list of what can be done for several years. Maybe the Federal Government should re-direct some of the \$5MM a year it spends to recover these wolves to counties so we can deal with the disaster they've created.

What are Catron County's Requests of the State of New Mexico and the US Federal Government?

1. Either Manage the Wolves with Lethal Control or Issue Kill Permits to Catron County Residents.
2. Give Catron County Residents Access to Wolf Location Information, so we can Protect our Livestock and Pets.
3. Remove Wolf Packs that Move into Towns of Catron County.

Immediate Action to Take Concerning the Mexican Wolf

1. FWS and NMDGF immediately stop introducing or re-introducing wolves into Catron.
2. FWS provides WS depredation officers with the number of wolves in each pack.
3. FWS provides depredation officers with cluster information so they may track Depredations efficiently
4. FWS assigns responsibility to WS to make depredation assignments, not the NM DGF.
5. FWS/NMDGF collar every wolf. Get an accurate estimate of actual numbers.
6. Until further notice, FWS authorizes lethal removals by wildlife services and issues permits to ranchers to kill Mexican Wolves on private property and public lands.
7. Make immediate personnel changes required to put recovery on track and provide a measure of protection for Catron County citizens, pets and livestock.

Administrative Actions to Take Concerning the Mexican Wolf

1. De-list Mexican Wolf
2. De-fund Mexican Wolf

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3. De-link downlisting Mexican Wolf status in US with recovery in New Mexico.
4. Revoke SOP 11.1; return to SOP 11.0 depredation evidence standards or use Idaho standards
5. Revoke SOP 26.1; provide location information to ranchers so they may range ride and find depredations.
6. Provide in the Department of the Interior's budget or the Farm Bill adequate funding
For prompt payment of confirmed and probable depredations and for Indirect damages.
7. Provide affected counties with manpower, equipment and materials to protect their citizens and livestock from the wolves.
 - A. personnel
 - B. Equipment: 1. Trucks, 2. side by side, 3. Trailers for side by side, 4. Horses
5. horse trailers 6.gps/investigation equipment
 - C. Materials: 1. Fuel 2.hay and grain 3. \$10.00 per head per day 3. Veterinary bills
8. To the extent payments for livestock depredations are made through Livestock
The Indemnity Program as administered by the Farm Services Administration,
requires that livestock values reflect current livestock valuations in the affected
area for the livestock being killed or injured.

Haydn Forward, Glenwood New Mexico. I have been studying the History of the wolves in Yellowstone National Park and have found a lot of similarities in that wolf program and the Gila National Forest wolf Program. The difference is that they had mostly Elk and we have cattle. The wolf kills the easiest prey.

Gail Armstrong, State Representative for Catron, and Rancher. I will do what I can to help the counties. I will take the Resolution up to ask the Governor to Sign.

Paul Geasland, Landowner in Catron. Declare the county a Republic and you be in charge.

Keith Hughs, County Sheriff, I feel the tide is turning. I will not let any wolf go onto the school property. No child will be harmed because of the wolves.

Action Items:

Consideration of Resolution 56-2025-Declairing an Emergency in Catron County Due to Extreme and Continual Injury and Damages Caused by the Mexican Grey Wolf.

Motion by Commissioner McQueen to sign the Resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Forward Motion Carried. All voted aye. Roll call: District I, Chairman Green, Aye., District II, Commissioner McQueen, Aye., District III, Commissioner Forward, Aye.

Next commission Meeting will be April 16,2025.

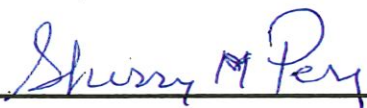
Commissioner Green: This Meeting is Adjourned. Time being 12:57 PM

Approval of April 3, 2025, Minutes



Chairman Green

ATTEST:



Sherry Perez, Catron County Clerk

Helen Wood, Chief Deputy Clerk

