

**SIERRA COUNTY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
August 13, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER: 10:00 am

The Sierra County Board of County Commissioners met in Special Session at 10:00 A.M. on Wednesday August 13, 2025, at the Sierra County Commission Chambers, 1712 N Date, Truth or Consequences, New Mexico.

ROLL CALL:

**Commissioner Travis Day, Chairman
Commissioner James Paxon, Vice-Chair
Commissioner Hank Hopkins, Member**

Clerk of Board: Amy Whitehead

County Attorney: Dave Pato- Absent

County Manager: Amber Vaughn

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

NEW MEXICO STATE FLAG PLEDGE:

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Ryan Williams, Patrice Love, Monica Zepeda, Sentinel, Rebecca Bartoo (Rep for Gail Armstrong), Tim Kuzdrowski, Dustin Long, Jennie Bierner, Heather Alberta ??, Willard Hall, Jennafer Daugherty,

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Hank Hopkins MOVED to approve the agenda as presented. Commission Vice Chair Paxon SECONDED the motion. Motion carried with Commissioners District 1-2-3 voting yes.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

III. PUBLIC COMMENT-LIMITED TO 3 MINUTES

Willard Hall with SSWCD stated that Sierra Soil and Water Conservation District stands in support of the Resolution 2025-65 Objecting to the Release of Mexican Wolves on the Ladder

Ranch in Sierra County. He stated that Catron County has already spent over a Million dollars (Cost of Wolf Kills).

Jennafer Daugherty- Rancher in Sierra County
Spoke in Support of the Resolution and stated that they have lost a lot of cattle and calves due to wolves and it has put a heavy financial AND emotional burden on them. She stated that their allotment is one of the most difficult in the state and it is very difficult to access and they cannot keep a close eye on their cattle as easily as other ranchers. She stated that the elk population has dropped significantly which also affects their Guiding business. She asked the Commissioners for an EMERGENCY Declaration right now to restore balance and protect the Ranchers.

Laura Schneberger- Rancher in Sierra County and a member of the NM Federal Lands Counsel
Took a trip to Washington DC in June which proved to be pretty favorable but action still needs to take place as Ranchers are facing considerable hardships due to the flooding and the wolves. The recent release of the Wolf and her babies has the potential to be catastrophic as there are already several wolves in the area and trying to manage the newly released and the ones that are already here is nearly impossible. The Western part of Sierra County is heavily impacted and she stands in support of the Resolution and also asks for an Emergency Declaration.

Rebecca Bartoo as representative for Gail Armstrong
See Attached:

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. OLD BUSINESS

IX. Contracts-Agreements-Procuremen

X. Resolutions-Ordinances-Proclamations

A: Resolution No. 2025-65 Objecting to the Release of Mexican Wolves on the Ladder Ranch in Sierra County NM.

Commission Vice Chair Paxon MOVED to approve Resolution 2025-65 as presented. Commissioner Hopkins SECONDED the motion. Motion carried with Commissioners District 1-2-3 voting yes.

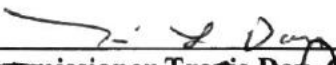
Commissioner Hopkins MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Commission Vice-Chair Paxon SECONDED the motion.

ADJOURNMENT: AM

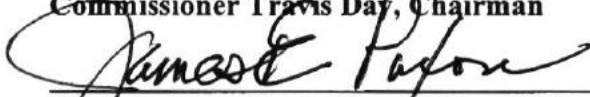
There being no further business to come before the Board, Commission Chair Day adjourned the meeting.

Dated this 13 day of August, 2025.

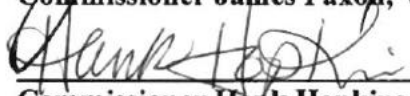
SIERRA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Commissioner Travis Day, Chairman


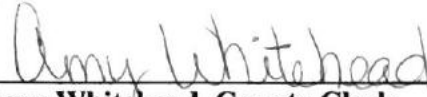


Commissioner James Paxon, Vice-Chairman



Commissioner Hank Hopkins, Member

ATTEST:

Amy Whitehead, County Clerk

Rebecca Bartoo presented on behalf of Representative Gail Armstrong:

Catron, Socorro, Sierra, Cibola, and Alamo Navajo – 5 vast areas in our state -have declared emergency proclamations regarding record number wolf kills and their safety, the US Fish and Wildlife Service decide to release of the wolf Asha and her pack at the Ladder Ranch. This wolf, Asha, has a history of traveling hundreds of miles and been tracked and recovered past Interstate 40. The statement from FWS, “they are “aware” of and are “working” to address the concerns about “potential negative impacts,” on ranchers from growing wolf populations.” The release to the Ladder Ranch which borders many other ranching allotments in the Gila National Forest is just another example of how ranchers’ cries all fall on deaf ears.... their plea for help... unanswered.

Here is the data to support the facts and frustrations of impact on ranchers:

286 + wolves roam NM and AZ- many more are uncollared and untracked

1,166 Livestock kills in NM and AZ- confirmed kills are in these totals which means there are actually more- due to unconfirmed, or cattle found dead too late to investigate

80% of wolves are in Catron County – don’t say if already said

There are multiple states in the US in which wolf populations were not managed correctly and the consequences of those negative impacts on wildlife populations, ecosystems, ranchers and hunters led to depredation hunts. A typical pack consumes 128 to 220 elk annually. That’s 16-22 elk per wolf. These numbers can increase or decrease due to pack size according to Yellowstone pack monitoring. Other states like NM are California and Colorado seeing large increases in kills and coming into more populated areas and killing domestic animals such as Sierra County California where FWS witnessed a kill when they were investigating another kill in June this year. According to news sources they counted 27 kills alone in the month of March. Other states have already suffered due to the pack increase of populations and now resort to seasons of depredation hunts and trapping.

States that allow depredation hunts due to mismanagement of wolves are Idaho, Wyoming, Montana. In Wyoming there is a long-standing policy of paying hunters if hounds get killed or injured during hunts. In Idaho you get reimbursed 500-1000 per wolf depending on the unit, time of year and method for the kill. There is also a wolf hunting and trapping event called the Wolfer Summit in Harrison, Idaho, how to trap and hunt wolves. In Wyoming there are zones where there are no bag limits for hunts for wolves. Is this what the future of NM is and how can our ecosystems with much smaller herd populations, cattle industry, and communities sustain this? These states examples **are all consequences of federal and state agencies making decisions** in the name of conservation, protection of species, and range management. Is this what the future of NM looks like, does this sound like effective scientific practice, habitat protection, conservation, and range management? Surely not.

How long will US FWS continue to ignore the pleas of the ranchers and reservations and turn a blind eye to the **mistakes** of other states **suffering** due to direct impact of wolves **horribly mismanaged**. These states are now allowing depredation hunts due to wolves increasing in population immensely over time and wiping out hundreds of thousands of elk, deer, and other wildlife species. Why would we repeat the same mistakes when we have an opportunity to be proactive and not let NM lands, species, and livestock ranches

April 22 Sierra County passed the same Resolution, April 24 Cibola County passed the same resolution, and May 13 Socorro County issued its own resolution as well. It is an ongoing regional emergency that demands intergovernmental action the declarations urge agencies including NM Homeland Security and Emergency management, Department of Game and Fish and Wildlife service, to take decisive steps to mitigate further harm and imbalance. Don't say if already said!

After hearing about this crisis, establishing emergency proclamations, listening to cries for help from ranchers to manage their herds properly, knowing the data- knowing herds are dramatically decreasing in the state, knowing wolf kills are increasing overall, communities and families are communicating they are afraid, and considering **all** these negative impacts on the 4 counties and a reservationThe answer from the US FWS is to release a well-traveled wolf and her pack into Sierra County into a ranch that borders many other ranch allotments..... We have heard their answer loud and clear -----The last question I'll ask today, I'll let you figure out for yourselves.....who are the wolves among us?