

RESOLUTION NO. 04-21-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DOLORES COUNTY, COLORADO, OPPOSING ANY CURRENT PLANS OR ACTIONS FOR REINTRODUCTION OF WOLVES WITHIN DOLORES COUNTY

WHEREAS, in the November 3rd, 2020 Colorado election, Proposition 114, the ballot measure to require the artificial introduction of Canadian Gray Wolves into the State, the voters of Colorado narrowly approved the measure by a vote of 1,590,299 for and 1,533,313 against, while the voters of Dolores County overwhelmingly rejected the measure; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 114 received an affirmative vote in only five western slope counties, including Pitkin, Summit, San Miguel, San Juan, and La Plata Counties; and

WHEREAS, Gray Wolves were extirpated from the County and the State nearly 80 years ago because of their predation on livestock; and

WHEREAS, the economy of Dolores County is highly dependent on agriculture, in the form of cattle and other livestock ranching; and

WHEREAS, Dolores County enjoys large elk and mule deer populations, drawing hunters from across the County; and

WHEREAS, wolf reintroductions in other states have caused significant reductions in big game herd numbers, reducing opportunities for hunters and other wildlife enthusiasts and diminishing the economic benefit to the states and local economies; and

WHEREAS, while wolf reintroductions in other states have included a provision for “fair compensation” for livestock losses due to wolf predation, in practical application, the process for reimbursement has often proven difficult or unattainable for affected livestock producers; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has classified the Gunnison Sage Grouse as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and has further found that Dolores County contains significant occupied and unoccupied critical habitat for the bird. Dolores County has taken extensive steps to promote and cooperate with recovery efforts. Unfortunately, a full recovery of bird populations faces a number of challenges, including predation. The introduction of wolves into Dolores County will likely increase the threat to the Gunnison Sage Grouse recovery efforts, and further threaten the long-term viability of the species; and

WHEREAS, Gray Wolves have naturally returned to the state over the last decade with confirmed sightings of both individuals and packs in Jackson, Routt, Rio Blanco, and Moffat counties; and

WHEREAS, given the biology and social habits of wolf populations, it is reasonable to assume migration by Canadian Gray Wolves will continue into the northern portion of Colorado and migration by Mexican Gray Wolves will continue into the southern portion of the state; and



WHEREAS, given the nature of wolf behavior, the presence of artificially introduced wolf populations will reduce or eliminate the recolonization by natural migration; and

WHEREAS, the ecological benefits of re-established wolf populations can be achieved by natural migration and reproduction; and

WHEREAS, Article VI, Section 7 of the Dolores County Development and Land Use Regulations (DCDLUR), as amended 2012, requires that state and federal agencies fully include Dolores County and the public in any decision-making that could impact use of public lands in the County. Specific notice, coordination, planning, and hearing requirements are set forth therein. The proposed wolf reintroduction triggers such DCDLUR requirements; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of this Resolution is necessary and proper to provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity, and improve the order, comfort, welfare, and convenience of the County and the inhabitants thereof;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Dolores County (BOCC) as follows:

1. Dolores County shall allow only for the natural migration and repopulation of wolves without the competition from artificially introduced wolves.
2. Any artificial reintroduction of wolves into Dolores County shall be considered a violation of this Resolution, as well as the DCDLUR, unless and until any such plan is jointly developed by the BOCC, presented to the community in a public hearing, and approved by the BOCC as in best interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Dolores County.
3. "Designated Lands", for artificial reintroduction of wolves as defined in the ballot Proposition, must not include Dolores County, or any other County in the State that adopts a similar restriction.
4. This decision is predicated on the following:
 - a) A rapid artificial repopulation of wolves into Dolores County will cause significant economic harm in a time in which County revenues are already depressed.
 - b) A slow, extensively monitored and managed, natural restoration of wolves will facilitate a fuller understanding of regional and localized wolf behavior and of social impacts and will allow for increased temporal directed adaptive management.
 - c) Adaptive management strategies must include take as an appropriate tool as warranted.
 - d) Funding should be robust enough to closely monitor both naturally occurring and reintroduced wolves and the detailed effects on prey animals. Funding should be limited to the State General Fund as to not impact other already limited funds.

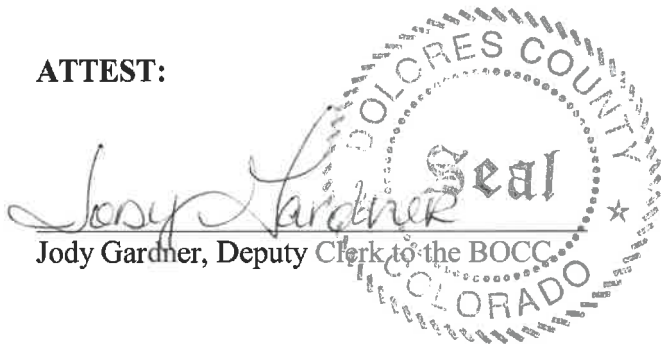
e) In that a high percentage of land within the County is Federally owned, planning and management of the wolves should be closely coordinated with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

f) No action should be allowed which in any way threatens the Gunnison Sage Grouse recovery effort in the County and across the State.

DULY MOVED, SECONDED, AND PASSED ON A VOTE OF 3 FOR AND 0 AGAINST THIS 5th DAY OF APRIL, 2021.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF DOLORES COUNTY, COLORADO**

ATTEST:



Floyd L. Cook
Floyd Cook, Chairman

Julie R. Kibel
Julie Kibel, Commissioner

Steve Garchar
Steve Garchar, Commissioner