



WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

White Mountain Apache Tribe Releases Wolves on the Reservation

[Whiteriver, Arizona]—The White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT) is pleased to announce the first official Mexican Gray Wolf Release on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. The release is scheduled to take place by the end of June 2003. An Alpha pack and this year's pups will be set free in the Southeastern region of the reservation. The hope is that the pups will cause the pack to localize and set up a permanent territory. The release site has been chosen to minimize conflict with human impact, livestock, and other tribal land use.

The White Mountain Apache Tribe is one of only two tribes in the southwest to officially cooperate in the recovery of the Mexican gray wolves. They are the second Native American tribe to develop a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and to create a successful management plan for wolf reintroduction. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated the Mexican wolf reintroduction program in 1998, and the tribe followed soon after. In 2000 the tribe adopted its own Mexican Wolf Management plan, and hired a tribal wolf biologist in 2001. The tribe's goal is to return the wolf to its' traditional range on the reservation and to allow six packs to establish territories. The long-term goals include educational and tourism opportunities through the WMAT Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division program. Currently, the Reservation is home to the Bonito Creek Pair, one of the few naturally occurring, wild-bonded pair of wolves within the program.

For further information contact Krista Beazley, Tribal Wolf Biologist, Cynthia Dale, Tribal Sensitive Species Coordinator, or Alex Puglisi, Tribal Chief Biologist at (928) 338-4385.