

## Wolf Reintroduction Role-Playing Debate

### The proposed plan:

The federal government has proposed a plan to reintroduce three male/female pairs of endangered Mexican wolves to the Santa Catalina Mountain district of the Coronado National Forest. Mexican wolves were historically present in this ecosystem and were hunted to local extinction one hundred years ago. The plan includes creating an “exclusion zone” around any den that the pair creates for raising pups. This zone is designed to insulate the sensitive wolves from people. Citizens in Tucson and surrounding communities are divided as to whether or not wolves in the Catalina Mountains are a good idea. Because of this, the government has decided to hold a public meeting where the issue can be discussed and both public support and concerns can be voiced.

### The players:

- Representatives of P.A.W.S (Preserving Arizona’s WolveS)
- Members of the Arizona Cattle Grower’s Association
- Members of the Arizona Hunting Association
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologists
- Representatives from the AZ Sonoran Desert Museum

(This is information about your character's role in the debate. This information should direct what your character says, how your character reacts and the way other groups perceive your character during the debate. Imagine yourself this person and what this person believes in. Please embellish these characters in a way consistent with the characters' core values—it will make the debate much more interesting.)

Representatives from P.A.W.S (Preservation of Arizona WolveS)

Although you were not born in Arizona and have only lived in Tucson a few years, you feel a deep spiritual connection with wildlife and the outdoors. You consider yourself a strong environmentalist and believe that government should make environmental issues a high priority. You believe that wolves, as top predators, are an essential part of the ecosystem. You have trouble understanding why people might be opposed to wolf reintroduction.

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#### U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologists

Wolf reintroduction in the Catalina Mountains was your idea. It is your job to protect federal wildlife resources and enforce endangered species protection laws. You believe that decisions about federal land should be made in the interest of all Americans, not just local people like hunters and ranchers. You have studied wolf biology and believe that the benefits of wolf reintroduction outweigh possible negative consequences. In the past, you have had disagreements with the Cattle Grower's Association over endangered owls—don't count on their support.

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Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum representatives

You represent both the interests of environmentalists and the Tucson tourism industry at this meeting. Your core value is that preserving biodiversity is the most important aspect of ecosystem management. Reintroducing wolves represents a major step forward for preserving biodiversity in the Sonoran Desert. You also believe that the tourism industry in Tucson would benefit from wolves in the area and create new jobs. You base this on the fact that the wolves at the Desert Museum are the most popular attraction. Finally, you believe that community support for any plan is critical and that for a reintroduction to succeed there must be compromise and cooperation between the different groups.

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#### Arizona Cattle Grower's Association

You come from a long line of Arizona ranchers. Your grandparents ranched in Arizona, and you remember stories about wolves killing livestock. The ranching industry in Arizona is struggling to survive and you believe that wolf reintroduction and the possibility of losing livestock could ruin your business and your way of life. You resent the federal government for managing the land you depend on, especially the way it handled endangered owl habitat on grazing lands in the past. Also, you feel threatened by newcomer environmentalists for challenging traditional management values of cattle and mining.

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#### Members of the Arizona Hunting Association

You represent a collection of concerned citizens who are involved in hunting and fishing in southern Arizona. You are opposed to wolf reintroduction because of the impact of wolves on game species such as deer and turkey. Wolves have dramatically reduced numbers of game animals where they've been reintroduced in Montana—you don't want to see the same thing happen in your favorite hunting areas of Arizona. You are also concerned about possible "exclusion zones" in areas populated by wolves. You feel that it is wrong to favor a predator like the wolf over people's access to their National Forests. While you generally distrust the federal scientists, you believe that the Desert Museum representatives understand local concerns. For this reason, you are more likely to trust the Museum representatives' opinions.