



GRAND COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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SHERIFF

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December 17, 2025

The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor of the State of Colorado
200 East Colfax
Denver, CO 80203-1715

Via Electronic Mail to GovernorPolis@state.co.us

RE: Wolf "2403" – A Direct Contradiction of the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan

Dear Governor Polis and other Designees:

As the elected Sheriff of Grand County, Colorado, this letter serves as my formal and strenuous opposition to the decision to re-release Gray Wolf 2403—a member of the problematic Copper Creek Pack—back into our jurisdiction. This action is a clear and direct violation of the foundational principles and specific directives within the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan (the Plan), particularly concerning the management of wolves responsible for chronic depredation.

The very premise of the Plan, which the CPW Commission is tasked with upholding, is to achieve wolf restoration *while concurrently working to minimize wolf-related conflicts with domestic animals/livestock, other wildlife, and people*. The documented history of the Copper Creek Pack, to which Wolf 2403 belongs, demonstrates a failure to meet this core objective.

Contradiction of the Wolf Management Plan (Chronic Depredation)

Wolf 2403 is a member of the Copper Creek Pack, which was previously removed from the wild due to repeated and confirmed livestock depredations in Grand County:

- The Copper Creek Pack was removed from the wild in the summer of 2024 after repeated livestock depredations in Grand County.
- After the pack's subsequent re-release in Pitkin County, multiple depredations were again linked to the pack, leading to the lethal removal of one member and an attempt to kill a second member linked to multiple depredations.

The CPW Plan defines "Chronic Depredation" (generally as three or more depredation events caused by the same wolf or wolves within a 30-day period). The pattern of behavior exhibited by the Copper Creek Pack, and its continued conflict following relocation, demonstrates that these are "depredating wolves" whose behavior is not aligning with the state's goals for minimizing conflict.

Reintroducing a member of a pack with a clear, chronic, and confirmed history of livestock depredation back into the same county from which it was removed due to those conflicts sends a deeply concerning message. It undermines the credibility of the entire management plan and compromises the necessary social tolerance for the program among our livestock producers and citizens. This action directly rewards unacceptable behavior and sets a precedent that depredation will not result in permanent removal from high-conflict areas.

Grave Public Safety Concerns for Grand County

My primary responsibility as Sheriff is the public safety of all Grand County residents and visitors. The decision to re-release Wolf 2403 back into our area introduces significant and unwarranted public safety risks, including but not limited to:

1. **Habituation and Reduced Fear of Humans:** Wolves involved in chronic depredation often exhibit an alarming level of comfort operating near human activity and infrastructure, particularly agricultural operations. The re-release of a known conflict wolf increases the risk of the animal becoming further habituated, potentially leading to bold, aggressive, or dangerous encounters with citizens, hikers, and pets.
2. **Encouragement of Unlawful Action:** When the public perceives that wildlife management agencies are failing to follow their own guidelines for managing conflict animals, it tragically increases the likelihood that frustrated citizens—particularly those who have suffered significant financial loss—will ultimately have no choice but to take potentially unlawful, but necessary action to protect their families, livestock and livelihoods. This presents a direct law enforcement challenge and a public safety hazard.

Conclusion

I urge the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission to immediately reverse the decision to re-release Wolf 2403 and to adhere to your own established criteria for managing chronic depredation as set forth in the Plan. The integrity of the entire wolf reintroduction program hinges on CPW's commitment to swiftly and decisively address wolves that demonstrate chronic conflict behavior.

Our Grand County Community and I stand ready to collaborate with CPW to develop a management solution that permanently removes conflict wolves from Grand County.

Respectfully,



Brett D. Schroetlin
Sheriff

CC:

Director Dan Gibbs, Colorado Department of Natural Resources

Acting Director Laura Clellan, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Director Brian Nesvik, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Congressman Joe Neguse

Senator Michael Bennet

Senator John Hickenlooper

Speaker Julie McCluskey

Senator Dylan Roberts

Colorado Wildlife Commission

Middle Park Stockgrowers

Grand County Board of County Commissioners