



Gila Forest Permittee's
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Jan 25 2003

Dear Members,

I hope your Holidays were great. I have to admit that it seems as if life just stops during the Christmas and New Years time period. It seems to me that I just sit around waiting for something productive to do and everyone else is just gone.

In any case, we are back to work now. Several things are on the burner that you should know about. First we need some permittee volunteers for a pilot program range-monitoring project to help the USFS to comply with NEPA on our allotments. If you think you can work with the Forest Service, NMDA and learn how to gather your own Data let me know we need several people.

For those of you who feel like the center of a big black bulls eye and that is nearly all of us. Wayne Hage has just won another round in Federal takings court. The Judge determined that Hage did not in fact need a Forest Service Permit in order to access his valid existing

water and forage rights on his forest allotment. While this plays out in court, I wouldn't recommend ripping up your permits just yet but it looks as if we are one step closer to forcing the FS to comply with US code on this matter.

On the same issue Mr. Hage and his entourage of Lawyers will be in Alamogordo for your educational pleasure on the 8th of February. Details below.

The Paragon Foundation Presents

**Securing Your Property with
Wayne Hage and Helen Chenoweth-
Hage**

Saturday, February 8, 2003

Alamogordo, NM

Civic Center

(1st Street & Florida Ave.)

Sign-in at 8:30 a.m.

Seminar: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Lunch provided by the *Otero*

***CowBelles* Donuts & coffee provided**

by *People for Otero County*

Additional sponsors to be announced

**Pre-registration is required due to
lunch and seminar materials**

Pre-registration

By February 1: \$15 per person

**Register after February 1: \$30
per person**

**Briefing Book (optional): \$40 per
copy (available at the seminar)**

For more information or to register,

call or mail to: Paragon Foundation,

1200 N. White Sands, #110,

Alamogordo, NM 88310; phone

(505) 434-8998, fax (505) 434-

8992, or Toll-free (877) 847-3443.

MasterCard & Visa accepted with phone number.

Seminar Topics Include:

Property Law & the Courts, Jurisdiction on Federal Land, Definitions (What do "vested", "public lands", "title", "fee", etc., really mean to property owners.), Review of the Preliminary Decision of Hage v. U.S. and the January 29, 2002 Final Decision, Is Your Ranch "Public Land", County & Federal Taxation of Grazing Allotments, The Impact on Property Asset Values Reached Through Use of "Highest-and-Best-Use" valuation, State & County Government Obligations for Law Enforcement & Protection of Private Grazing Allotments, Searching your title --The Key to protecting your property. Reserve your place at this seminar today.

Back to Business, I cannot go to this as much as I would like to. I have to participate in a wolf symposium in Las Cruces the same day and am obligated to fulfill that commitment. Matt will be taking my place at the Hage seminar. Please attend if you can, If you simply cannot, we will have Angus McIntosh in Sierra, Grant, and Catron counties this spring for several discussions on this issue. We will be looking at all options as soon as the Hage ruling is final.

Also on the 8th of February, conflicting with the Hage Seminar is the Mexican Wolf Forum. Here are the details, if you can make this it would be nice since I fully expect to face a hostile audience, as the majority of ranchers will understandably prefer to be at the Hage Seminar. The 8th is the day that the ranching end of this mess will be aired.

EL LOBO:

FORUM FOCUSES ON MEXICAN GRAY WOLF

On February 7-8, 2003, historians, wolf-experts, ranchers, and environmentalists will discuss the history and future of the Mexican gray wolf at a public forum in Las Cruces, New Mexico. "El Lobo" will open on February 7 with a keynote session at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. The session will feature Susan Flader, the historian, biographer of Aldo Leopold, and author of *Thinking Like a Mountain*; L. David Mech, the country's foremost wolf biologist and author of *The Wolf: The Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species*; and Caren Cowan, executive director of the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association. On February 8, a day-long symposium at the Corbett Center auditorium, New Mexico State University, will include talks and a round-table discussion with leading environmental historians, biologists, policy-makers, environmental activists, and ranchers on both sides of the issue. Hank Fischer, Special Projects

Coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation, will be the featured speaker at dinner. The event will be free and open to the public, although there is a charge for lunch and dinner. Seating will be limited, and advanced registration is required by January 24, 2003. For registration information, contact Vanessa Stewart at wolfconf@nmsu.edu or visit the conference website at www.nmsu.edu/~histdept/wolf.html. The Department of History at New Mexico State University has organized the forum, which is co-sponsored by the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum and the NMSU College of Agriculture.

The forum will address the history of wolf eradication to favor deer and elk hunters and ranchers, the historical role of large predators in the southwestern ecosystem, and the current battle over wolf reintroduction. In addition to the keynote and dinner speakers, participants include historians Thomas Dunlap (author of *Saving America's Wildlife*), Dan Flores (author of *Horizontal Yellow*), Louis Warren (author of *The Hunters' Game*), and Diana Hadley; Craig Miller of the Defenders of Wildlife; Michael Robinson of the Center for Biological Diversity; ranchers Hugh McKeen, Laura Schneberger, Darcy Ely, Jan and Will Holder, and Jim Winder; ecologists Michael Phillips and David E. Brown (author of *The Wolf in the Southwest*); Brian Kelly of the Fish and Wildlife Service; and a number of other policy-

makers and scientists, including representatives from the Apache reservations.

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On top of all that, the wolf suit will be filed as soon as we come up with the first ten thousand dollars and that is cheap. The Budd Falen law office is so excited about it that they are helping us out in the financial department. However I do have funding requests out to various other organizations. Obviously, hybrid wolves running around AZ and NM aren't furthering the recovery of the species.

Meanwhile, there are about 60 wolves in AZ and NM, only 6-10 supposed to be in NM. The AZ wolves have been instrumental in driving the San Carlos apaches out of the cow business as well as the 4 drag ranch. Even the FS in AZ want the things out.

I'll be putting together a plan for our next meeting after all the February meetings are over and I'll send out the meeting notice as soon as I get it together. As always, if you have anything you want to see on the agenda or anything you want to visit with me about, call me 505-772-5753.

Thanks,
Laura