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Director At Large: Tom Klumker Glenwood  
Director Black Range: Jack Diamond  
Director: Silver City: Alex Thal  
Director Luna District: Alvin Laney  
Director Glenwood District: Joe Nelson  
Director Reserve District: Charlie McCarty

Dear Members,

As usual I am late in getting this letter out. I apologize but life has been crazy around here. If it seems that this letter is a bit on the cranky side perhaps you are right, I am feeling a bit frustrated with our situation on may issues and would like to see more participation from our members.

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Game Commission and Wolves:

I feel badly for the folks from our industry who attended the Silver City NM Game Commission meeting last month. They were severely outnumbered and could have used a neighbor or two to back them up. I admit I didn't have time to go and now regret it.

The greens practically bussed people into this thing. Our side, myself included, sat on their behinds {that comment is figurative, I know you all have something better to do with your lives; however we had better consider the quality of life we will have if we don't put some effort into the issues that are destroying our neighbors. If we are going to give up on these *fruitless and continuous meetings*, I would at least hope that our people, and you all know who you are, would start assisting in the funding of the wolf lawsuit, and potential other lawsuits that will be necessary when this game commission gets it's hands on writing our management plan.

For those of you who wonder why I wasn't there, I did have the dubious obligation to go to the recovery team meeting in Albuquerque a few

days afterward. That particular party is where we allow Michael Robinson from the Center for Biological Diversity, and Craig Miller from Defenders of Wildlife and all the other green groups, including Mike Philips Turner endangered Species Fund, to dominate each and every topic. These are the same individuals who ask the USFWS to kick us out of every meeting because we are not pro wolf, they usually drown out any progress but their own wishes. My job is to try and create some equity for our industry and other affected property owners in the long-term recovery plan. We lost any equity we had gained last month with the state game commission decision. Thankfully, The damage does not show just yet but we certainly lost some hard won ground, when this governor was elected and began paying back the radical greens.

While the current Presidential Administration has been slow to help us there are some strong signs that they are working on it. This governor needs to see the rural industries in this state as something more than punching bags and the way to do that is to make an impression in November.

On that note, get out and vote, register people you know to vote and show up at the polls when the time comes.

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Current wolf status (as far as I know:)

The Black Range and Gila Wilderness wolves as of today (Monday, 5/17 have disappeared. John Oakleaf just sent me an email, here it is.

**Laura, I had problems with this email before, but here is a brief update. All wolves in and around your area are currently missing. We have no locations for 832 or any other wolves for several weeks. John**

However, I am unsure whether this means all wolves that can get here within a day or the wolves they didn't tell me were near us or simply all NM wolves that have collars. This is indicitave of our updates and about as detailed as we get these days. Of course there have been sightings but since the agency has stopped communicating with the locals preferring to investigate them for wolf shootings they aren't being offered any information. The Az Game and Fish updates that come out online are at least a month late and more likely 6 weeks. I will be attending the Wildlife committee meeting in ABQ. Tomorrow and that will be a

topic how to deal with the lack of real info ranchers are receiving from the agency.

There are several problem wolves out there at the moment and so far this spring, a handful of livestock depredations in NM, the most recent rumor I heard about, was by a pair of wolves in the San Mateo Mountains between TorC and Socorro the male is a collared animal and the female was not but she was heavily pregnant. No one knows exactly what she is and what those pups will be other than livestock killers. If anyone has any real information on this incident please let me know.

Please folks, if you have had wolf trouble, document everything and give it to us or the AZ NM Coalition of Counties for the wolf suit, we can't fly blind on this and need your information. The preliminary injunction should be heard soon but we can add information any time. Our injunction was filed last September over the lack of real data on livestock kills, the release of depredating wolves into NM, the lack of compliance on removing depredating and problem animals throughout the reintroduction area and the hybrid wolf issue. The injunction was stalled by the agencies refusal to turn over FOIA documents to the attorney's. Until a judge finally ordered them to turn over the documents we requested they were simply unwilling to do so and had no problem violating the law by refusing to hand over documents. This case will likely drag on indefinitely until the agency stops playing games or someone holds them accountable over the games they play.

We will need help to keep paying the bills, so if you have any ideas on fundraising, please feel free to give me a call. Remember the case is also about the tremendous loss of livestock to date and your death loss is extremely important to the case if not the USFWS. Keep track of your losses take photographs and get me the information. If you are aware of someone out of this area who is suffering losses please refer them to us so that they can join the lawsuit. If you see uncollared animals please carry a camera and take photographs it isn't hard they aren't very wild.

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Diamond Bar Update:

As most of you know, Kit Laney was arrested and charged with assaulting no less than 5 USFS Leo's. Short of the remote chance that he had PCP in his system, I find the story completely unbelievable. As unbelievable as it is, he is now facing a criminal trial and potential prison time. He is still under house arrest at the

Jones ranch in Otero County where he is alternately studying for his defense and helping the Jones's build fence.

Kit will go to trial June 15 in Albuquerque in Judge Conway's chambers, support at the trial is appreciated. The Paragon foundation is supporting the Laney's and will be in the argument for the long haul.

Sherry is gathering the rest of their cattle and dealing with the USFS new attempt to get Black Canyon away from them. While she did get her horses back after some intense pressure from Congressman Pearce, as well as several dozen civilians who made many phone calls, the USFS are now claiming the deeded land along the bottom of Black Canyon. In spite of the fact that every property owner up in these mountains has deeded land in the bottoms since that was where the homestead claims were made, primarily to secure the water and farmland. The USFS are now making a grab for the Laney's house, barn and bottomland pastures claiming that the Laney's land is along the steep hillside. Yes folks this is just like the Looney Tunes where Daffy duck runs around yelling "it's mine I tell Ya! all mine!" we should all be proud of where our tax dollars are going. If anyone has extra pasture out there, and would like to help please call me and I will put you in touch with Sherry.

\*\*\*\* **On the brighter side**

The Paragon Foundation is sponsoring a family friendly concert to raise money for the legal fund. **For 25.00 per adult and \$50.00 per family (of 3 or more), or \$15.00 per person (age 15 thru 20)** you may attend a concert/dance fundraiser in Truth or Consequences on May 22 at 8:30 pm. Tickets will be available at the door. The headline act will be none other than **Cowboy singer, Michael Martin Murphey** who has taken an interest in Kit and Sherry's case and is assisting in raising the tremendous amount of money it will take to defend Kit and go forward with his argument. The dance band is none other than the **NMCGA favorites the Delk band**, who will play after the concert until 1 PM. If you wish to purchase your entrance to the concert prior to May 22 you may call the Paragon foundation **Toll Free at 877-847-3443** when we run out of seating in the concert hall we will throw open the doors and set chairs up in the courtyard. Security will be provided by the private bodyguards and the TorC police department, members of the department have

made it known that they are involved in the fundraiser because they believe Kit is innocent until convicted, a novel and welcome attitude considering the situation. \*\*\*\*

KWNM "The Ranch", a radio station in Silver City has offered a deal with our association if our members will go by and pick up their promotional coupon books and help sell them, they will donate a percentage to the Legal fund, This station will also have Michael Martin Murphey on their Wednesday, May 19, Jeff St. John program at 7:45 am.

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So many people have done their best to assist the Laney's and deal with this terrible situation that it would be impossible to recognize them all, to begin with, The Paragon Foundation, their contribution is tremendous and obvious. The NM Cattlegrowers Association, who passed resolutions and wrote letters to the USFS over the bad attitude displayed by the agency and coordinated meetings with Washington based USFS leaders. One of which, I attended and gave a talk at. The NM Farm and livestock Bureau, Erik Ness assisted in introducing Michael Martin Murphey to the situation among other things, like spending time with Kit while he was in jail and producing an interview with Sherry for public information. NM Public Lands Council who also wrote letters made calls and attended nearly every meeting and court hearing. I haven't even touched on the smaller groups and more important, the individuals who raised money gave time and are still looking for ways to help this argument go forth and finally be won, but I hope you will all forgive me for lack of space.

Please consider joining your local organization and if possible one or all of these fine organizations. My personal favorite is the Gila Livestock Growers Association since we are at the forefront of many of the issues facing ranchers in this part of the state and our membership is declining due to livestock losses on the forest.

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Final Note: After the culmination of events leading up to the confiscation of the Laney cattle I wanted to acknowledge that certain people tried to do the right thing even though they really could have used the money offered by the agency to gather the cattle. I won't name names here but there were many people who simply threw the contract into the trash, there were

some who took it and chose to call Kit and after talking to him risked a lawsuit by the agency and backed out.

What I was so pleased at was that these people stood up for their neighbors. While there are times when we have all been aggravated at our neighbors and wanted to gripe about them to the USFS, it is really important to realize that we are the only people out here that rely on these lands for our living and if we turn on each other whether it be a large issue or a petty one we may well be attacking ourselves.

Forest Supervisor Marcia Andre, once asked me to let her know when I knew of a rancher who was overgrazing, I was flabbergasted. Not only do I not know anyone who "overgrazes" but such a request was contrary to everything I have learned about how to treat my neighbors. The next time the neighbor won't keep the fence up, offer to ride it for him. If they have cattle on you gather them and take them back. We should always be ashamed to call the forest service on a neighbor. This is our community and to allow these agencies and the people they are choosing to represent to play us against each other is shameful. We all need to remember that every time one of us loses the ability to graze, that is one more nail in our own coffin.

Sorry this update is late I will be putting another letter out in mid summer. Let's all pray for more rain.

Laura

**Membership Dues 2004**

Allotment/Ranch Name

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

County:

Telephone:

Email

address: \_\_\_\_\_

would you like email updates? yes no

Full membership dues: **Less than 200 head \$35.00 per year; more than 200 head \$50.00 per year**

*Full Membership, includes voting privileges for elections and meetings. According to the bylaws*

*you have to own and run livestock to be a full member. You do NOT have to have an allotment permit to be a full member but your ranch must be in the Gila Forest Vicinity or affected by forest issues.*

\*Associate member: \$15.00 per year

\*No voting privileges

Make check payable to: Gila Livestock Growers Assoc.

Secretary/Treasurer,

Loretta Rabenau

P.O. Box 123

Winston NM 87943

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The New Mexico Cattle Growers Association is holding a membership drive with some great prizes for the hardest working recruiters. The person who recruits the most members will win a Pearson Squeeze chute and for each 3 members one person recruits they will be entered into a drawing for a 16' Donahue stock trailer. The contest started December 15, 2003 and will go until November 15 2004. The winners will be announced during the 2004 Joint Stockman's convention.

New Members recruited cannot have been members for at least 5 years.

New Members must be full NMCGA members paying the 75.00 fee (see details below)

Cow/calf operator: cattle owned, .60 per head or a \$75.00 minimum

Dairy Producer: \$75.00

Seasonal Operator: cattle owned, .60 per head or 75.00 minimum

Feedlot Operator: one time capacity, .60 per head or \$75.00 minimum

Working cowhand: \$35.00 recommended by \_\_\_\_\_

must be recommended by a full NMCGA member.

Sign up your neighbors, the more of us involved the better our representation in this area. Send your membership dues to NMCGA P.O. Box 7517 Albuquerque, NM 87194. Be sure to list the member who recommended you so their name can go in the pot for the drawing once they have three registrations.