



El Paso Group
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August 19, 2018

Mr. Carter Smith
Executive Director
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744

Re: Return the Wolf to Texas and the "We Will Not Be Tamed Campaign"

Dear Director Smith,

With this letter we are sending you 10,372 letters in 6 boxes plus a list of 4,628 names from our change.org petition representing 15,000 people of all ages urging Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to support a plan to return the wolf to the wilds of Texas. We believe that it is critical to the future of our ecosystem and the citizens of our state to preserve and protect all parts of the ecosystem. We were happy to learn of the new Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation *We Will Not Be Tamed* campaign. Bringing the wolf back to Texas will clearly demonstrate TPWD's commitment to this important conservation initiative encouraging all Texans to get involved in conserving the wild things and wild places of our state.

We realize that there is a TPWD code 63.102 states that "No person may possess, transport, receive, or release a live wolf in this state" but believe that the intent of the code is to prevent private citizens from releasing wolves into the state of Texas on their own. If TPWD is truly committed to manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas, the code could be changed to support the return of wolves to the ecosystem.

We urge you and your department to launch an effort to bring back the wolf to the wilds of Texas and to develop and implement a scientifically reviewed plan of action.

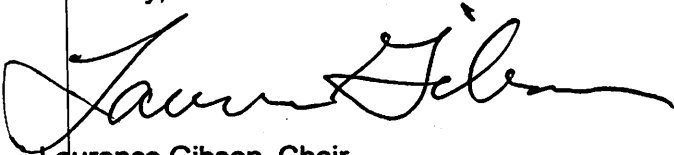
Ecological and economic benefits of this proposal are as follows:

1. The return of wolves to the Texas wild will help to maintain the current growth of our state's dynamic travel and tourism industry and its important contributions to the state economy. Texas is a premier destination for domestic and international travelers where travel totaled an estimated \$70.5 billion in 2014 and supported 630,000 jobs across the state. Reintroduction of Mexican wolves to Texas provides an opportunity for the state to promote ecotourism while also educating visitors on the importance of environmental conservation.
2. Wolves will provide important ecological services in helping to control prey species as well as ensuring biodiversity within Texas and the surrounding region.
3. Reintroduction of Mexican wolves to Texas will provide an opportunity for the state to promote ecotourism while also educating visitors on the importance of environmental conservation.
4. Wolves need wilderness areas to survive. Making sure we have wolves in Texas will help to ensure that we have wilderness. The wilderness that remains in Texas is part of our "great Texas backyard."

Wilderness is a haven from the pressures of our fast-paced society. It provides us with places where we can seek relief from the noise, haste and crowds that too often confine us. It is a place for us to enjoy with friends and families, strengthening our relationships and building lasting memories.

5. Wolves will help to maintain the ecological integrity of one of the greatest gifts Texas has given the nation - Big Bend National Park. Unlike other large national parks that were established from lands already owned by the federal government, Big Bend was privately owned by 100s of land owners before it became a national park. As you know, Texans came together during the 1930s and 40s and raised the money to buy the land that was then deeded to the federal government to become the State's first national park and one of the crown jewels of the National Park Service.
6. The preservation of our natural heritage in Texas is a sacred trust mandated by federal and state law. Texans from all walks of life support efforts to conserve our natural heritage, including endangered species that historically lived in the state.
7. Restoring wolves to Texas will help to bring back the balance of the ecosystem.
8. By chasing and hunting their prey wolves help to re-vegetate habitats impacted by herbivores. These restored plant habitats will benefit other species like birds.
9. There is growing evidence that some predators, such as wolves, may benefit public health by killing sick wildlife that spread infectious diseases from wild animals to humans and domestic livestock.
10. As dominant predators, wolves will help to keep other predators like coyotes, foxes and mountain lions in check.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Laurence Gibson".

Laurence Gibson, Chair
El Paso Group
Rio Grande Chapter
Sierra Club