

Returning the wolf to the wilds of Texas: Ecological and Economic Benefits

Wolf advocates in Texas urge the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to develop and implement a scientifically reviewed plan to return the Mexican wolf to the wilds of Texas as part of the overall recovery and repopulation effort of this critically endangered species.

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.

1. Wolves provided important ecological services in helping to control prey species as well as ensuring biodiversity within Texas and the surrounding region.
2. 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.
3. Wolves need wilderness areas to survive and making sure we have wolves in Texas will help to insure 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. 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 in check** like coyotes, foxes and mountain lions.