

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-9

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MINERAL COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
REAFFIRMING MINERAL COUNTY’S OPPOSITION TO THE REINTRODUCTION OF
WOLVES GENERALLY, AND SPECIFICALLY ESTABLISHING MINERAL COUNTY AS A
WOLF REINTRODUCTION SANCTUARY COUNTY**

WHEREAS, in the November 3rd, 2020 Colorado election, Proposition 114, the ballot measure to require the *artificial* introduction of Canadian Gray Wolves into the State, the voters of Colorado narrowly approved the measure by a vote of 1,590,299 for and 1,533,313 against, while the voters of Mineral County overwhelmingly rejected the measure voting 537 against and 200 for (the total vote of 737 represents 92% of the registered voters in Mineral County); and

WHEREAS, Proposition 114 received an affirmative vote in only 5 Western Slope counties, including Pitkin, Summit, San Miguel, San Juan, and La Plata Counties; and

WHEREAS, the economy of Mineral County is boosted by the summer grazing of sheep and cattle and in the fall is reliant on big game hunting and outfitting and wildlife watching; and

WHEREAS, big game unit 76, which makes up the majority of Mineral County, is a restricted draw unit, creating a high demand on licenses and outfitters; and

WHEREAS, Mineral County is part of the South Central region as defined by Colorado Parks & Wildlife. According to *the 2017 Economic Contributions of Outdoor Recreation in Colorado*¹, the South Central region contributed \$4.7 million in spending attributed to outdoor recreation and, specifically, Mineral County contributes nearly a million dollars in total hunting/fishing/wildlife to the state’s economy; and

WHEREAS, wolf reintroductions in other states have caused significant reductions in big game herd numbers requiring reduced opportunities for hunters and other wildlife enthusiasts which would decimate Mineral County’s wildlife economy; and

WHEREAS, summer grazing takes place in high alpine meadows with limited protection from predators; and

WHEREAS, 95% of Mineral County is US Forest Service Land and nearly 1/3 of the land mass of Mineral County is under Wilderness protection; and

WHEREAS, gray wolves have naturally returned to the State over the last decade with confirmed sightings of both individuals and packs in Jackson, Routt, Rio Blanco and Moffat counties; and

WHEREAS, given the biology and social habits of wolf populations, it is reasonable to assume migration by Canadian gray wolves will continue into the northern portion of Colorado and Mexican gray wolves will continue into the southern portion of the state; and

WHEREAS, given the nature of wolf behavior, the presence of artificially introduced wolf populations will reduce or eliminate the recolonization by natural migration; and

WHEREAS, the ecological benefits of re-established wolf populations can be achieved by natural migration and reproduction; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of this Resolution is necessary and proper to provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity, and improve the order, comfort, welfare and convenience of the County and the inhabitants thereof:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mineral County Board of County Commissioners as follows:

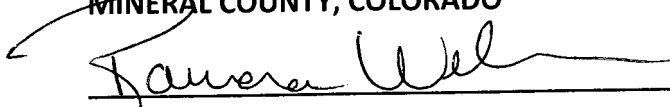
1. **Mineral County is declared to be a Wolf Reintroduction Sanctuary County**, allowing *only* for the natural migration and repopulation of Gray Wolves without the competition from artificially introduced wolves:
2. **“Designated Lands”** for the artificial reintroduction of wolves as defined in the ballot Proposition, must not include Mineral County or any other County in the State that adopts the Sanctuary County Designation.
3. This decision is predicated on the following;
 - a. A rapid artificial repopulation of wolves into Mineral County will cause significant economic harm to the County moving forward.
 - b. A slow, extensively monitored, and managed, natural restoration of wolves will facilitate a fuller understanding of regional and localized wolf behavior and of social impacts and will allow for increased temporal directed adaptive management.
 - c. Adaptive management strategies must include take as an appropriate tool as warranted.
 - d. Wolves should be artificially reintroduced only in those Colorado Counties that received an affirmative vote on Proposition 114 in the 2020 election. This will allow for comparative studies of impacts, both positive and negative, and of different reintroduction strategies. In other Counties, including Mineral County, wolves should be allowed to naturally repopulate through migration and reproduction only.
 - e. Individual wolves or packs that migrate from the original release counties must be removed from the Sanctuary County so as not to compete with or displace natural re-establishment.
 - f. Funding should be robust enough to closely monitor both naturally occurring and reintroduced wolves and the detailed effects on prey animals. Funding should

be limited to the State General Fund as to not effect already limited Game Cash Funds and not encumber Sportsmen's dollars to this effort.

- g. In that an extremely high percentage of land withing the County is Federally owned, planning and management of the wolves should be closely coordinated with the Forest Service.
- 4. The above listed approach, in large part, follows the recommendations of the Colorado Wolf Management Plan established by the working group in December 2004.

DULY MOVED BY COMMISSIONER Albright, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER Lamb AND PASSED ON A VOTE OF 3 FOR AND 0 AGAINST THIS 18 DAY OF MAY, 2021.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MINERAL COUNTY, COLORADO**



Ramona Weber, Chair

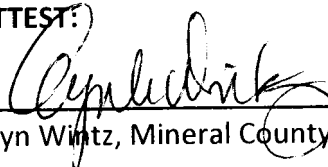


R. Scott Lamb, Commissioner



Jesse Albright, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Eryn Wintz, Mineral County Clerk & Recorder

