

The USFWS is proposing to modify the regulations established for the Mexican wolf reintroduction in the 1998 Final Rule and to implement a management plan for Mexican wolves for those areas of Arizona and New Mexico that are external to the MWEPA.



# Purpose:

The **purpose** of our proposed action is to establish a viable, self-sustaining experimental population of Mexican wolves within the MWEPA and to effectively manage Mexican wolves throughout Arizona and New Mexico.



# Need:

- Modification of the regulations established in our 1998 Final Rule **is needed** because under the current regulations we have not been able to achieve the necessary population growth that would ensure the resiliency and genetic health of the experimental population.
- Implementation of the Mexican Wolf Management Plan **is needed** because there is a potential for Mexican wolves to disperse into the United States from Mexico and inhabit areas in Arizona and New Mexico that are outside of the MWEPA.





# Our intent:

- To meet our purpose and need our Proposed Action is intended to:
  - More rapidly increase the total number of wolves in the experimental population.
  - Improve the gene diversity of the experimental population.
  - Improve the recruitment of captive-raised wolves.
  - Accommodate natural dispersal behavior
  - Effectively address wolf-livestock conflicts and the potential for wolf-human interaction within the MWEPA.
  - Effectively manage Mexican wolves in those areas of Arizona and New Mexico outside of the MWEPA



# NEPA and EIS Process Overview

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires Federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions.
- Goals:
  - To make better informed decisions.
  - Provide the public meaningful opportunity to participate in the process.
  - Work in partnership with State and local governments, concerned private and public organizations, and individuals.
  - Balance environmental concerns with social, economic and other requirements



# NEPA and EIS Process Overview

- Environmental impact assessment requires:
  - evaluation of reasonable alternatives to a proposed Federal action
  - solicitation of input from organizations and individuals that could potentially be affected
  - unbiased presentation of direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts
- Information presented in the assessment is used by a Federal official before a decision is made.





# NEPA and EIS Process Overview

- **While drafting the EIS agency prepares:**

- **Purpose and Need for Action (Chapter 1)**

- Describes the rationale for the proposed action.
- Basis for developing and evaluating reasonable alternatives.

- **Proposed Action and Alternatives (Chapter 2)**

- Presents a range of reasonable alternatives in sufficient detail for readers to compare their environmental effects.
- Describes alternatives considered but not brought forward for further consideration.
- No action alternative - describes what would happen if the agency chooses not to pursue the action.
- Identifies preferred alternative (if agency has selected one)



# NEPA and EIS Process Overview

- **Description of Affected Environment (Chapter 3)**
  - Describes those resources areas that may be affected within the project study area.
- **Environmental Consequences (Chapter 4)**
  - Analysis of direct, indirect, cumulative impacts (effects) for each alternative
  - Impacts can be beneficial or adverse
  - Short (temporary) and/or long term
  - Assessment of significance:
    - Context – how an impact relates to affected society, region, interests, locality
    - Intensity – refers to the severity of impact





## **EIS Development will focus on:**

- Land Use
- Biological Resources
- Socioeconomic
- Environmental Justice
- Human Health/Public Safety
- Cumulative Impacts

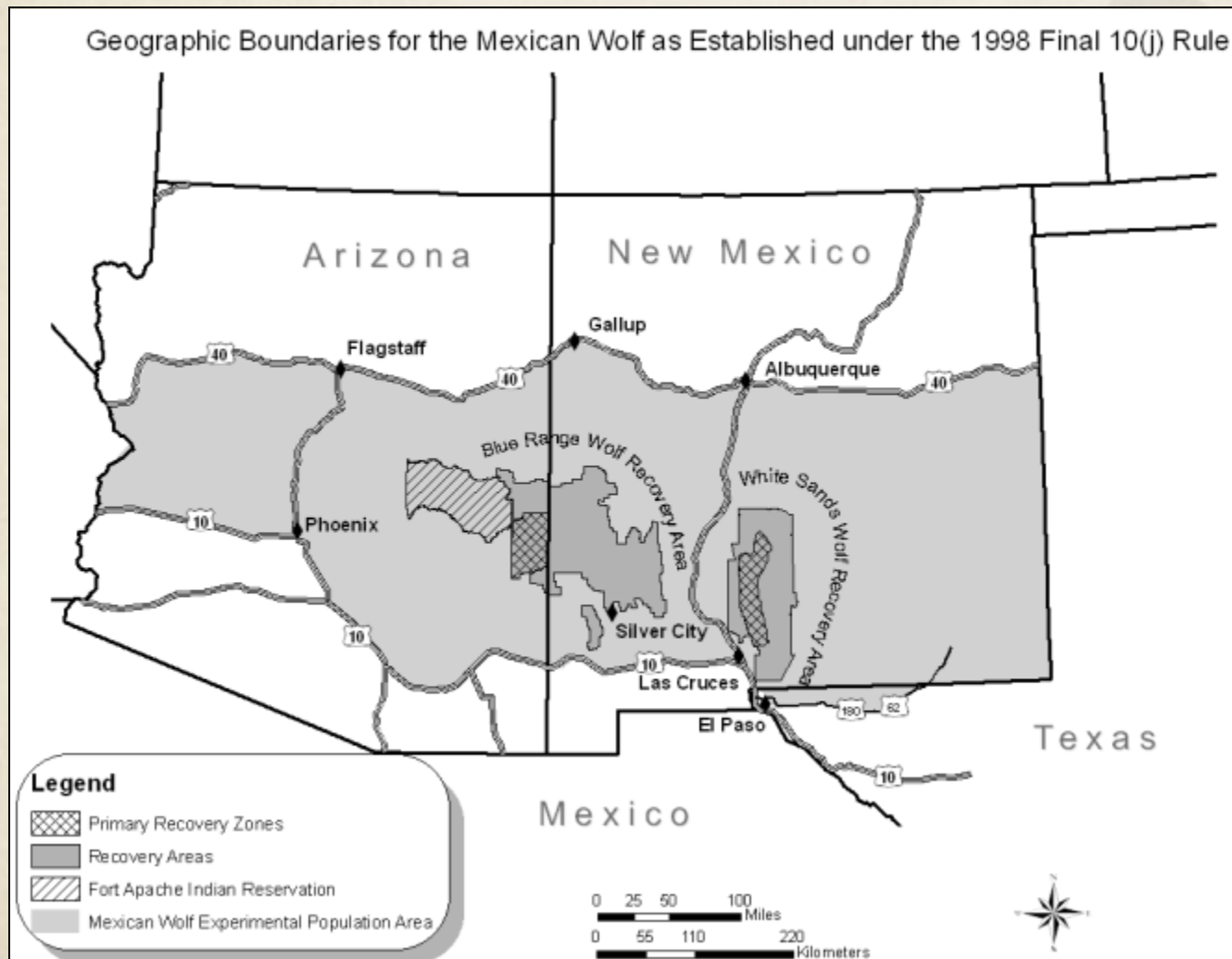


## Background

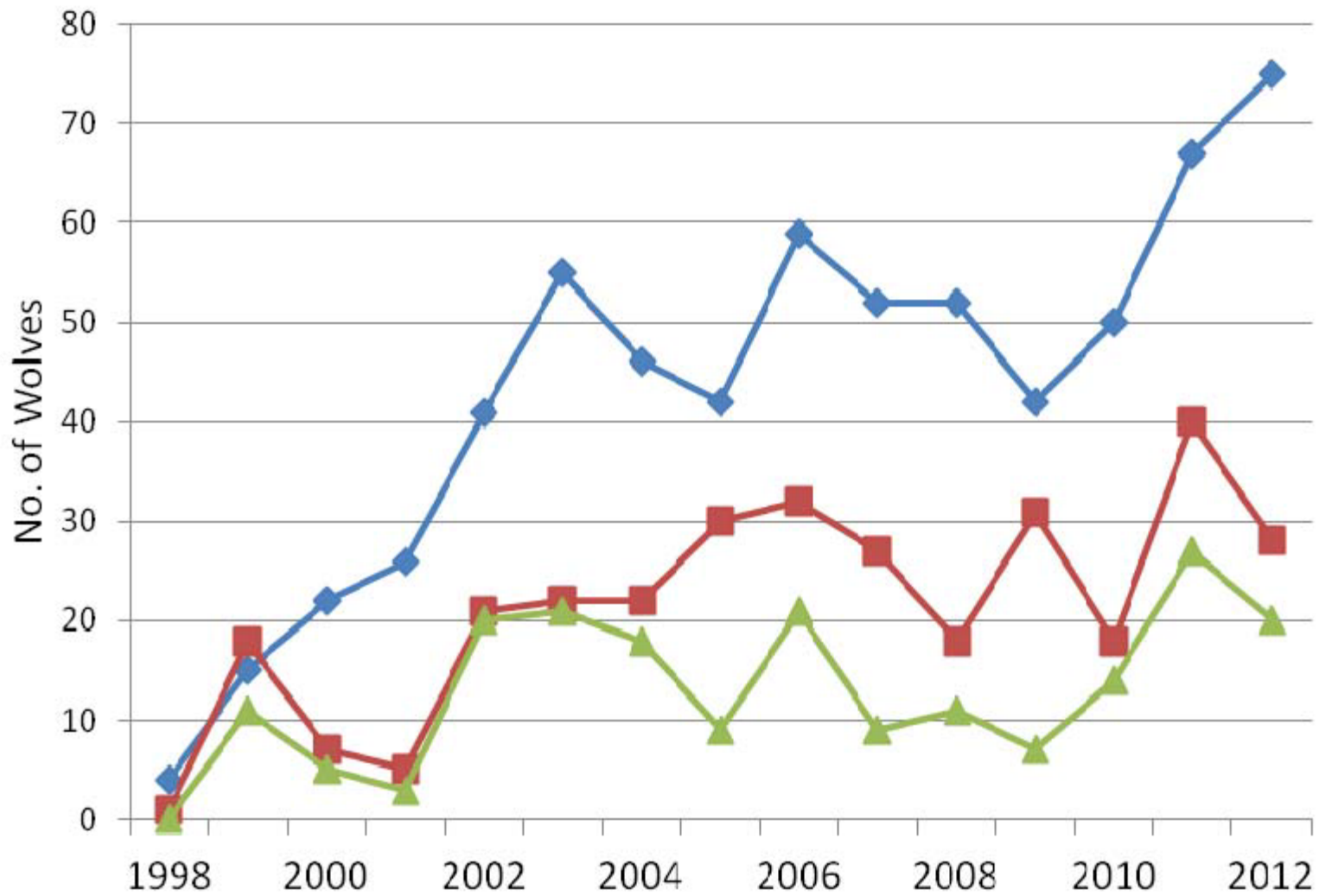
- In 1998 the Service designated a nonessential experimental population of Mexican wolves in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.
- Section 10(j) of the ESA allows for the designation of experimental populations.



# The Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) and the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA)

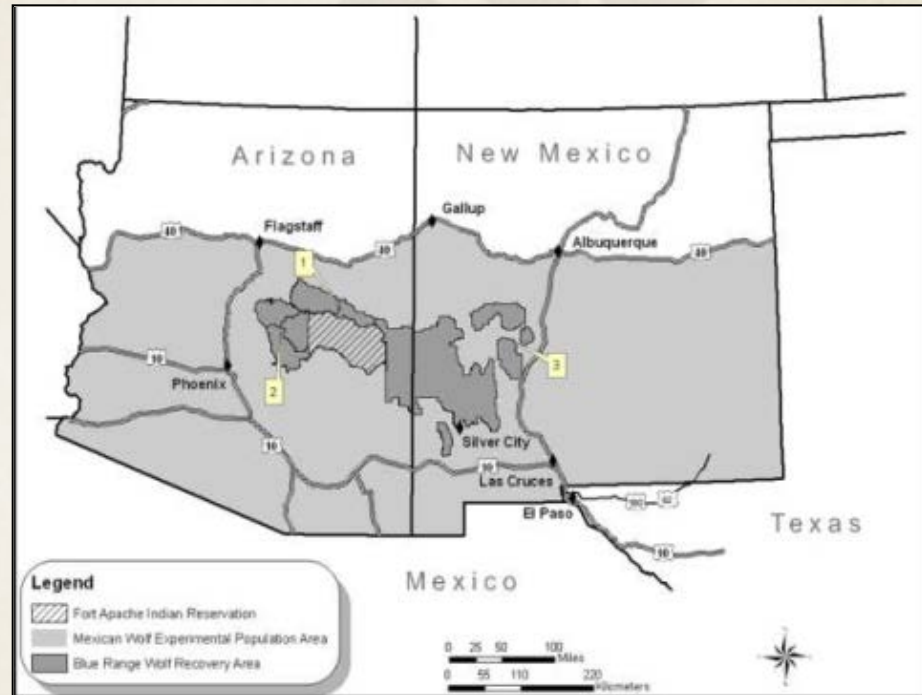
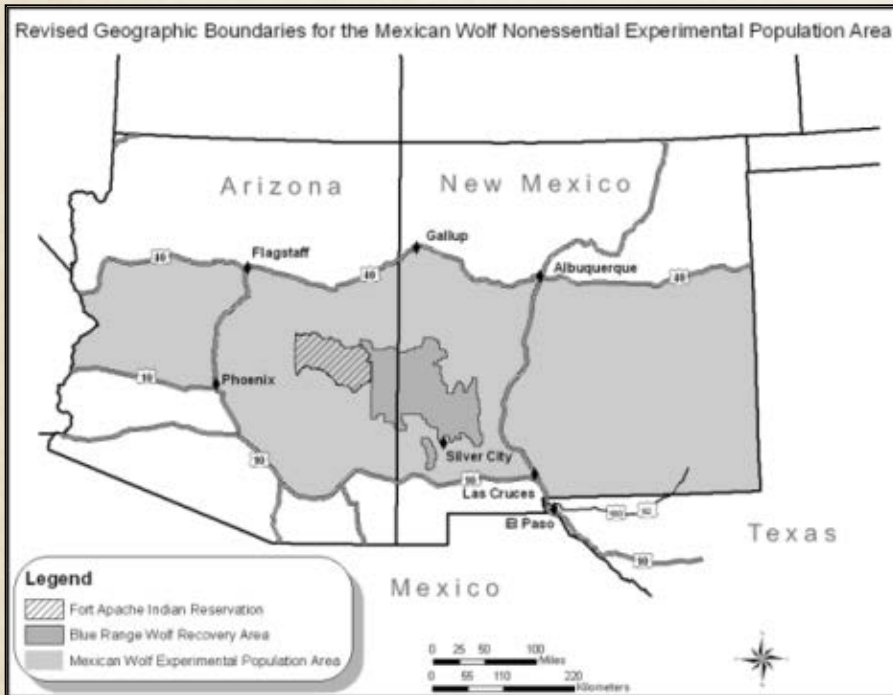






Population Estimate      Reproduction      Pup Recruitment

# Modifications “Proposed” and “Under Consideration”



# Geographic Changes to 1998 Final Rule

Proposed Rule	1998 Rule
Remove Texas from designation	Included small portion of Texas in MWEPA
Allow initial release in entire BRWRA; eliminate PRZ/SRZ	Initial release only in PRZ in BRWRA
Allow wolves to disperse outside of BRWRA (but not outside of MWEPA)	Wolves not allowed to disperse outside of BRWRA
Remove designation of White Sands Wolf Recovery Area	Included White Sands Wolf Recovery area as an option for initial release
Expand BRWRA to include more National Forest lands: Sitgreaves Tonto - Payson, Pleasant Valley, Tonto, Cibola - Magdalena	BRWRA = Gila and Apache NF
Move southern boundary of MWEPA down to international border in AZ and NM	Southern boundary of MWEPA is I-10 in AZ and NM



# Management Changes to the 1998 Final Rule

Proposed Rule	1998 Rule
Develop and implement voluntary management plans on private land	N/A; wolves were not on private land in MWEPA
Develop and implement voluntary management plans on tribal land	No change
Allowing permits for take of depredating wolves on public land by livestock owners/agents @ 100 wolves	6 breeding pairs
Define <i>due care</i> related to take from traps, snares, etc. (Not unintentional or unavoidable in occupied range.)	No due care definition
Allowing take of wolves on private or tribal land by pet owners when wolves are attacking pets	N/A
“Shoot on site” permits on private and tribal land to livestock owners/agents (conditions for issuance)	N/A

# Administrative Clarifications to the 1998 Final Rule

Proposed Rule	1998 Rule
Identifying Section 6 of the Act as authorizing language for take for state wildlife agencies (Prohibitions, authorized personnel=state wildlife agencies)	Implied Section 6 but did not expressly mention it.
“Individuals” can take wolves in specific circumstances (Prohibitions, authorized personnel)	“Personnel” authorized to take wolves in specific circumstances
Allowable take for Federal agencies and authorized personnel	Less clear
New requirement for 5-year review	Previous requirements for 3-year and 5-year reviews
State land considered “public land”	N/A
Definition of depredation incident	Definition of depredation

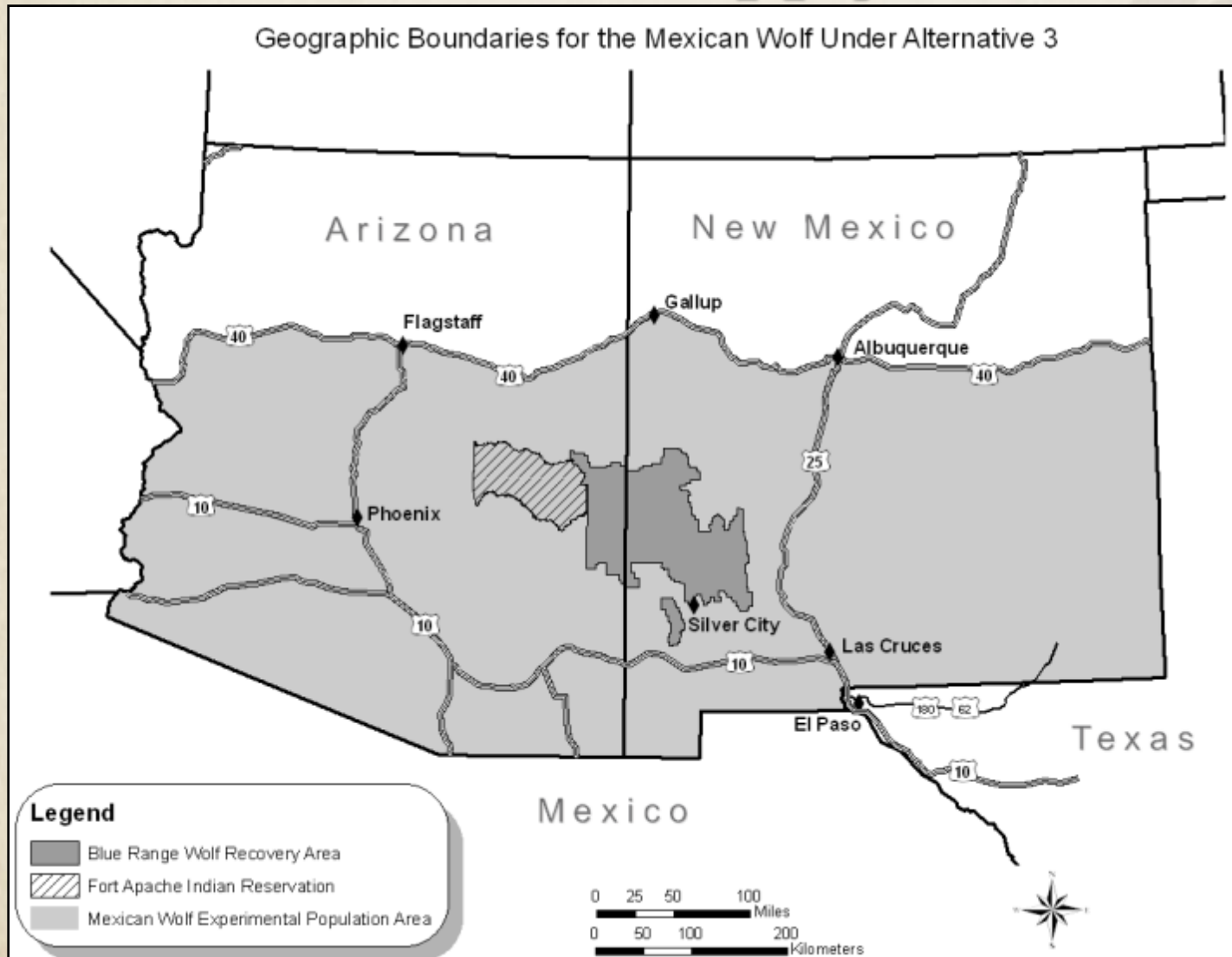
# Where Would the Management Plan Apply?

Revised Geographic Boundaries for the Mexican Wolf Nonessential Experimental Population Area





# Where Would the Management Plan Apply?



# What is in the management plan?

- Indicates methods allowed under a 10(a)(1)(A) permit
- Outlines the objectives relative to enhancing survival and propagation
  - Uniform management guidelines
  - Guide management decisions
  - Provide means to respond to Mexican wolf conflicts with humans (nuisance or cattle depredations)



# Specific Management Actions

- Two potential situations where wolves could occur outside of MWEPA
  - A Mexican wolf may disperse outside of MWEPA without our knowledge
  - Mexican wolves may disperse into the United States from Mexico
- We intend to capture and return wolves originating from the nonessential experimental population that disperse outside of the MWEPA
  - Outlined in Management Plan and Implemented through the 10(a)(1)(A) permit or Section 6





# Proposed Action and Alternatives

- The Service has developed a range of alternatives, including the Proposed Action and No Action alternative, to; our proposal to:
  - Modify the geographic boundaries established for the Mexican wolf reintroduction in the 1998 Final Rule;
  - Modify the management regulations established in the 1998 Final Rule which govern the release, translocation, natural dispersal, and take of Mexican wolves, and;
  - Implement a management plan for Mexican wolves for those areas of Arizona and New Mexico that are outside of the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA).



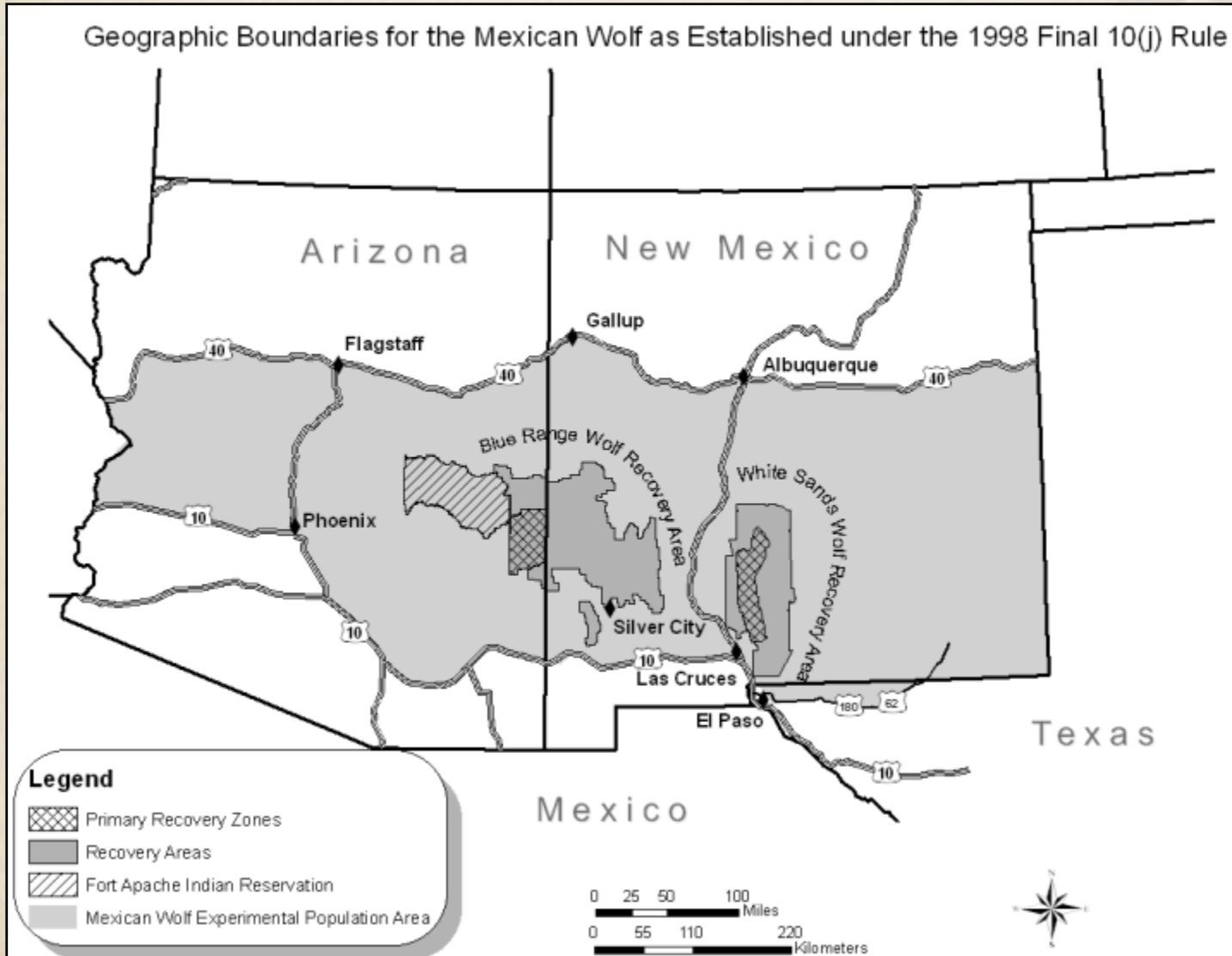


# Common elements between Alternatives

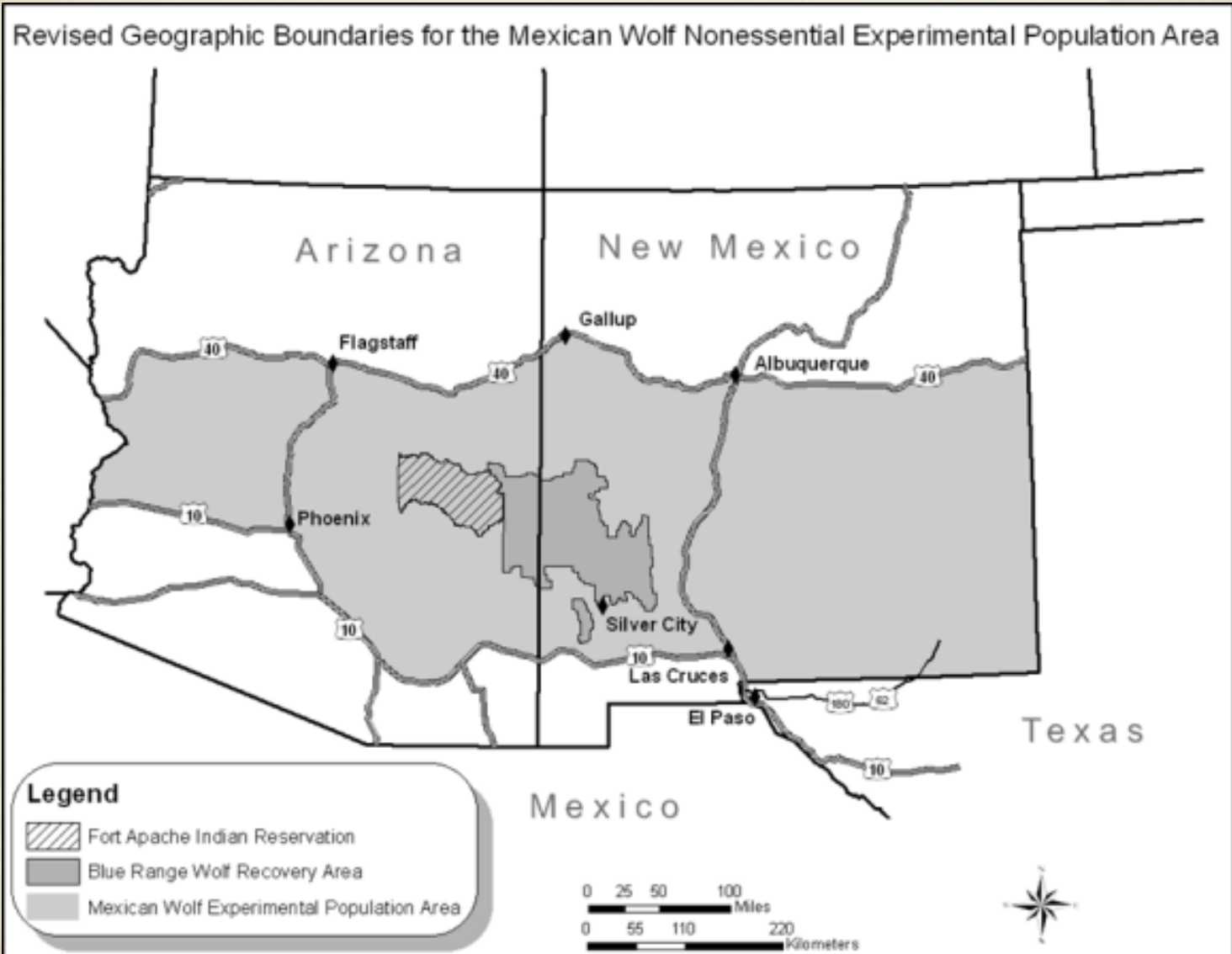
- Geographic Boundary changes:
  - Remove Texas from MWEPA;
  - Remove WSWRA designation;
- Management changes:
  - Expand area for initial release; eliminate PRZ/SRZ designations;
  - Allow dispersal out of BRWRA into MWEPA (but not outside of MWEPA);
  - Allow translocations within the MWEPA;
  - Identify section 6 as authorizing language for take for State wildlife agencies;
  - Clarify that an “individual” can take Mexican wolves under specific circumstances;
  - Clarify allowable take for Federal agencies and authorized personnel;
  - Revise conditions for take of Mexican wolves by livestock owners/agents with permit on public lands from 6 breeding pairs to 100 wolves;
  - Modify take prohibitions related to trapping (not unavoidable and unintentional unless due care exhibited).
- Develop and implement management actions on private land within the MWEPA;
- Develop and implement management actions on tribal land within the MWEPA;
- Implement a management plan for Mexican wolves outside of the MWEPA.



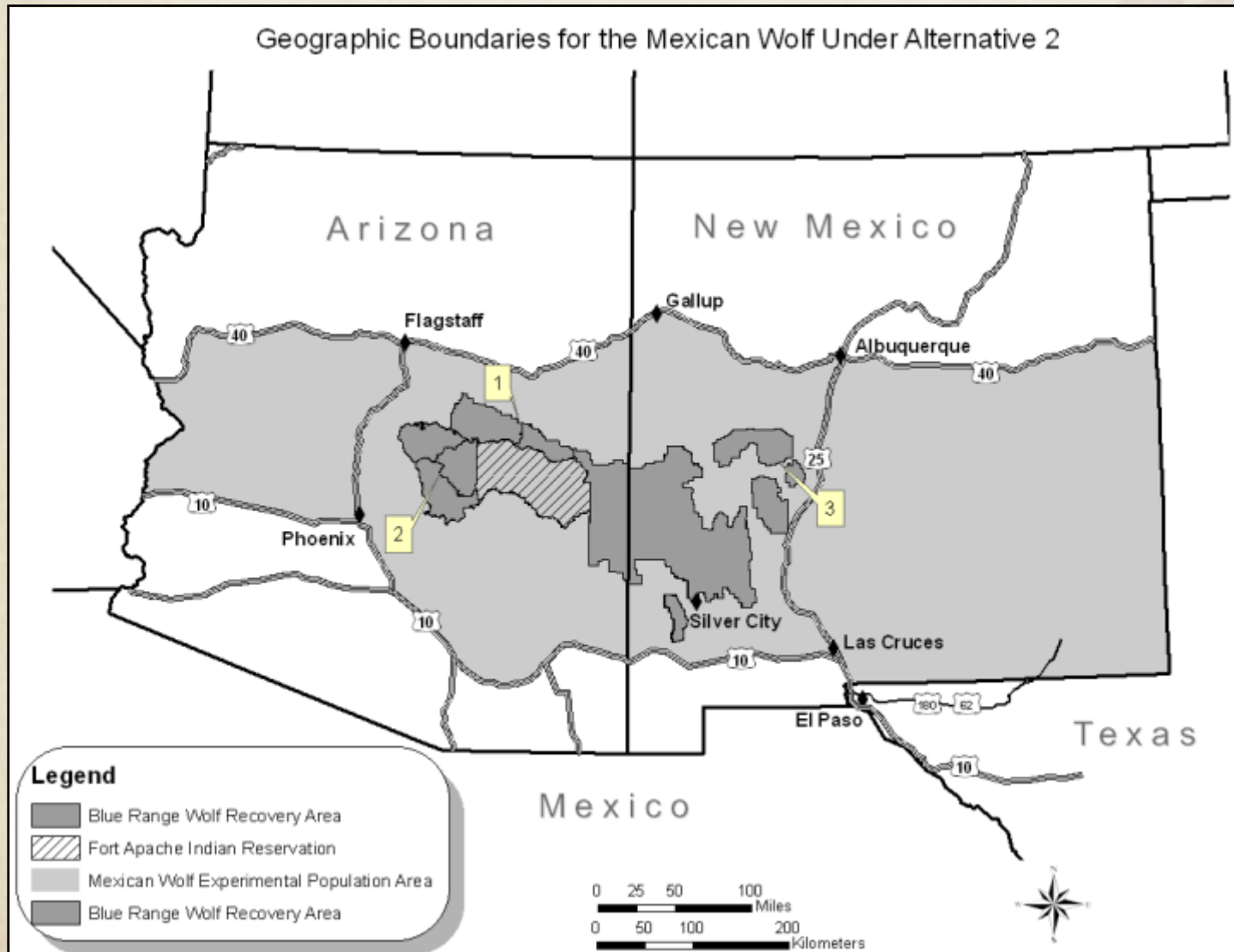
# Existing Situation (No Action)



# Alternative 1 (Proposed Action)



# Alternative 2 (Expanded BRWRA)

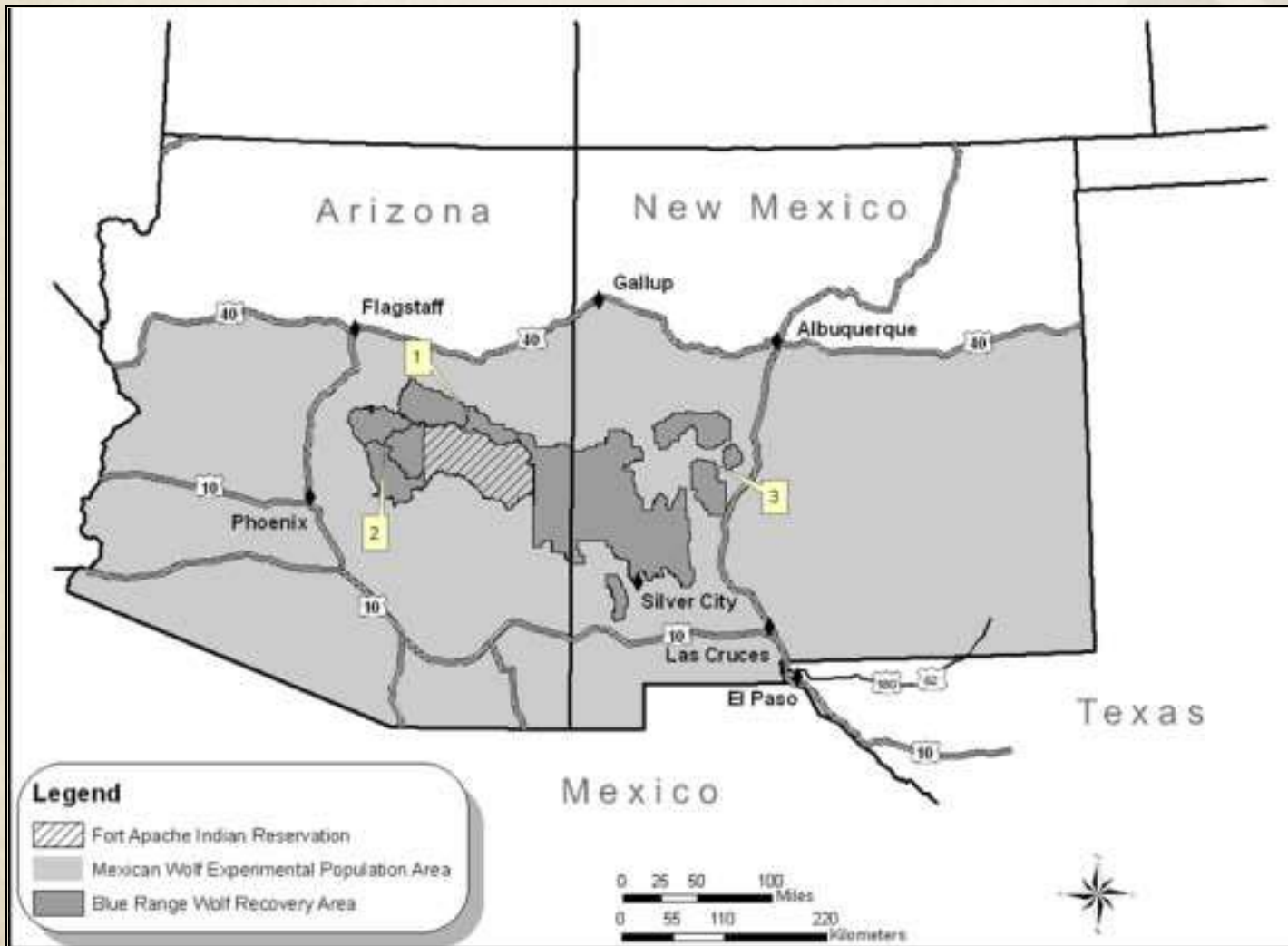




# Alternative 3 (MWEPA Expansion)



# Alternative 4 (Comprehensive)



# Project Timeline

10(j)  
proposed  
rule  
Jun13

NOI  
to prepare  
and EIS  
Aug 13

NOA  
Draft EIS  
Jan 14

NOA  
Final EIS  
Jul 14

Record of  
Decision  
Aug 14

Final 10(j)  
Rule  
Aug/Sep  
14



# Project Timeline and Milestones

- Scoping Phase (Aug 13 to Dec 13)
  - Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS (05 Aug 13)
    - Preliminary Draft Ch. 1&2, 45 day review period (19 Sep 13)
  - EIS Kick-off meeting with Cooperating Agencies (08-09 Aug 13)
  - Preliminary Draft EIS (early Nov 13)
    - Interdisciplinary Project Team (IPT) review (Nov/Dec)
- Draft EIS (late Jan 14)
  - NOA (late Jan 14/early Feb 14))
  - 45 day review for both public and IPT (mid-Mar 14)
  - Two public hearings (Phoenix and Albuquerque) (dates TBD)
- Final EIS (early Jul 14)
  - Preliminary draft Final EIS (early May)
  - IPT review (May/Jun)
  - NOA (early/mid-Jul 14)
  - 30 day public review
- Record of Decision (mid/late Aug 14)





# Focal Species for Analysis

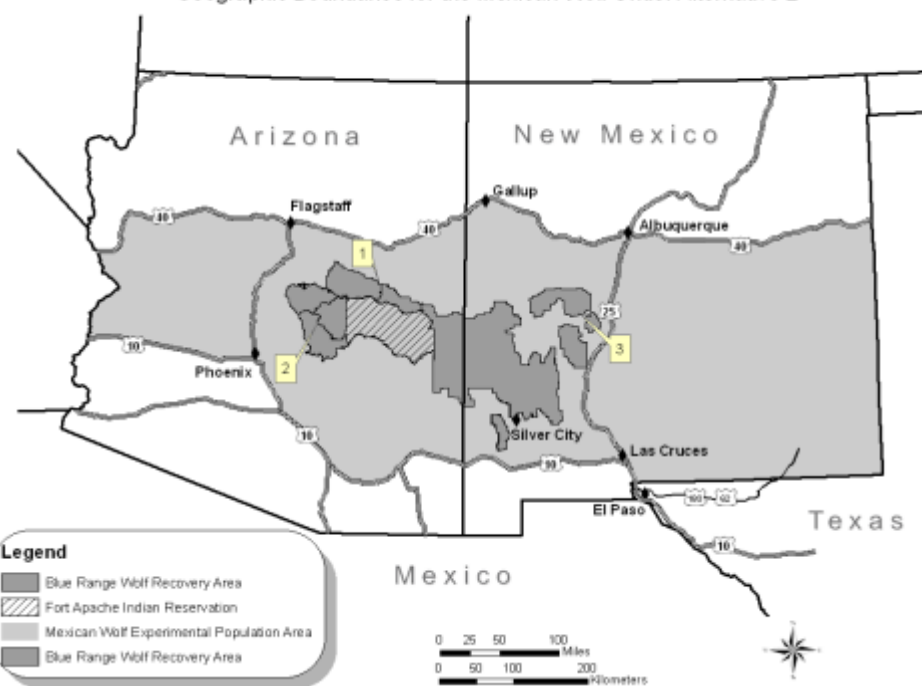
- Wild ungulates (elk, deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep)
- Other species:
  - other wolf prey (small mammals, birds)
  - competitors
  - scavengers
  - special status species including Threatened and Endangered
- Vegetation



Revised Geographic Boundaries for the Mexican Wolf Nonessential Experimental Population Area



Geographic Boundaries for the Mexican Wolf Under Alternative 2



Geographic Boundaries for the Mexican Wolf Under Alternative 3



- Questions?

