

Arizona Game & Fish Commission Candidates Justine McCune and Jim O'Haco

Justine McCune

Justine McCune is a hunter and employed as an environmental specialist with [Apache Generating Station](#), a coal-fired power plant near Cochise, Arizona. In her interview with the Arizona Game & Fish Commission Appointment Recommendation Board, she strongly denounced animal and environmental protection organizations, stating:

"I also have another paramount reason for wanting to serve on the Commission. I'm sincerely concerned that the sport I'm so deeply connected to is threatened by organizations and individuals who never experienced the intimacy with the outdoors or the relationship with wildlife that I have. If these groups proclaim hunting as an atrocious example of humanity, they defame our morality and infringe on our heritage. These groups are highly motivated fundraising machines and they're doing their dirty work in our state and the states surrounding ours, so that little by little the sport of hunting is being skimmed down and is in threat of vanishing. Fortunately, I'm familiar with the tactics of these organizations as I deal with them in my profession on a daily basis."

Source: AZ Game & Fish Commission Candidate Recommendation Board [interview](#) (11-9-21)

Jim O'Haco

Jim O'Haco is a rancher who owns a large cattle operation near Winslow, Arizona. He is the former president of the Arizona Cattle Growers and member of the Arizona Livestock Loss Board, which compensates ranchers for wolf depredation. He has commented and written articles opposing the reintroduction of endangered Mexican gray wolves in Arizona.

Op-ed by O'Haco in Sonoran News

"The Mexican Wolf is a top-of-the-food-chain predator that roams our state's eastern landscape where many of us manage public, private and State Trust for the benefit of rural communities and to supply food and fiber for all. Working with the Endangered Species Act is no walk in the park and does not have a very successful track record after 43 years. The Federal Government has spent over \$25 million dollars on the wolf program over 18 years and has only 97 wolves. You should all know that the wolf is no shrinking violet and is a natural born killer. This does not seem like much success to me and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has been in charge the entire time."

Source: "[Spotting the wolf amongst the herd](#)", Sonoran News (8/25/2016)

Progressive Farmer - Mexican Wolf Debate

"I don't know why they think they need them," O'Haco said. "The wolf was gotten rid of years ago for a purpose. Anyway, it's going to be a battle. I can see it coming."

The Arizona Cattlemen's Association spent \$100,000 to prepare comments about the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program, but O'Haco said the group's concerns were largely ignored as USFWS moved ahead with its new proposal. O'Haco said he expects the battle with USFWS will end up in litigation. If the federal government goes ahead with the wolf repopulation, it would hurt the value of ranch land in the state, O'Haco said.

"They turn them loose and they will kill your cattle," he said. "Then it will devalue your ranch because nobody wants to buy it. Nobody wants it if it is going to kill your source of income."

Source: [Progressive Farmer](#) (9/15/2014)

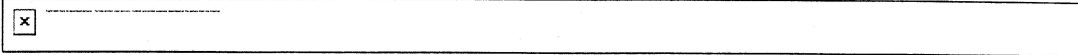
"Governor Ducey Did the Right Thing on Wolves"

"This is an experimental population of wolves that has gone on for long enough." (Read more in link below)

Source: *Email Correspondence below* (1/19/2016)

Andy Groseta

From: Patrick Bray <pbray@arizonabeef.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2016 5:13 PM
To: wdartranch@qwestoffice.net
Subject: Governor Ducey Did the Right Thing on Wolves



On Thursday, the radical environmental community rallied at the capitol in Phoenix to support the expansion of the Wolf Program and delivered 5,000 plus signatures to the Governor's office asking Governor Ducey to change his position on the wolf. Here is the [link to the story on azcentral](#).

Below you will see the response from President Jim O'Haco as well as Wildlife Committee Chairman Norman Brown. Also please see our link on [Facebook](#) to share with your network.

We encourage you to email Hunter Moore hmoore@az.gov to show your support for Governor Ducey and thank him for his position to keep the wolf program from expanding. We also encourage members to write letters to the editor much like Jim and Norman.

Governor Ducey Did the Right Thing on Wolves

By Jim O'Haco, President of the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association

Governor Doug Ducey is to be commended for his position on the Mexican Gray Wolf. His decision is based on solid scientific information provided by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and is not an emotional reaction to hear the howl of a wolf. His decision is one of caution and searching for clear answers and direction from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) about how this recovery program will work. The wolf was put in the Blue Range in 1998 and after 18 years we have a minimum of 110 known wolves on the ground at the tune of more than \$22 million dollars. We know the population is on track to continue to grow, however, the USFWS has failed to communicate with its partners (State of Arizona, Ranch Families, Sportsmen), to provide clear direction or even enforce their own rules in the last 18 years. This is an experimental population of wolves that has gone on for long enough. Nothing promised in the early 90's has even been delivered on. So, when the Federal Government fails to communicate, fails to deliver and leaves the state on the hook why would we give them more of Arizona to expand their broken experiment?

We are not the first state to deal with the reintroduction of top of the food chain predators, just look at the Northern Rocky Mountain and the Great Lakes wolf recovery programs. Even after a successful recovery of the wolf at a population one hundred times greater than the recovery plan the environmental litigators are still demanding the wolf be protected under the Endangered Species Act. The states in these areas had to seek the intervention of Congress just to have the recovery deemed complete and to have the wolf delisted and the federal government relinquish management responsibilities to those respective states. Governor Ducey understands the struggle these states face with this program and it is why he is holding the federal government's feet to the fire! Governor Ducey will not allow the federal

government to harm our private property rights or put the citizens of rural Arizona in danger. We encourage the Governor to continue to uncover the truth about this failed science experiment.

The population of wolves will continue to grow as Mother Nature intended, the question we should be asking is at what cost? On a daily basis the United State Fish and Wildlife Service is chasing these "wild" animals across the forest. Quite often these animals are being fed by government employees and regularly harassed to supposedly collect data. However the question remains, "where is this data and why does the public not know about it?" This truly is a science experiment and not the recovery of a wild species. We want Governor Doug Ducey and other state officials to uncover the truth and put an end to spending tax payer dollars on a failed science experiment. Arizona's ranch families and those of us that have to live with the consequences of this wolf program - thank Governor Ducey for pushing back on the federal government. The partners in this program deserve to know the truth.

Jim O'Haco lives in Winslow and his family has ranched in Northeastern Arizona since the early 1900's. His family pioneered raising livestock and managing lands on the family Ranch. He is the recipient of many conservation awards for his family's long lasting care of the animals and the lands.

Living with - Not Loving - the Mexican Gray Wolf

By Norman Brown

There's an old saying, "Where you stand depends on where you sit." On the wolf - it's more like where you live, work, invest and build your community....

For those of us in Northeastern Arizona the Mexican Gray Wolf is a symbol of federal over-reach, intrusion and "extra natural" efforts to create even more challenges for nature, wildlife, people and communities. It seems as though the federal government is not satisfied with catastrophic wildfire alone challenging our people, lands and communities - they need another "non-management" failure to encroach on our part of the state.

Our own eyes and experience with this program causes us to view the Wolf reintroduction program as a cruel government experiment. For us ranch families we know, nurture and understand how to raise animals and what we have witnessed in this program is anything but - nurturing. These wolves are harassed, captured, orphaned and constantly chased by government scientists. The government scientists have more tools to harass these wolves than anything a ranch family might ever deploy. These animals are supposed to be wild - yet they are constantly tracked, captured, weighed, vaccinated, masked, collared, and studied. All in a very non-transparent scenario and it is time to put the bright lights on the program.

Yes - there have been wolves in Arizona before and if we are going to try and mimic what that natural world looked like back then - let's let them be wild just like they were back then and provide our people with greater management tools. Let's gain a greater understanding that when they were here before there more sentinel animals than packs; there were less breeding pairs than the current "extra-natural" effort; and the dens and packs were much smaller and less prevalent. As designed - the current program is "unnatural."

Let's shine bright lights on this program and let the public really see what the wolf is experiencing - if earlier wolves could tell their story - they might just tell us that the current program does not let them live wild like they did before.