

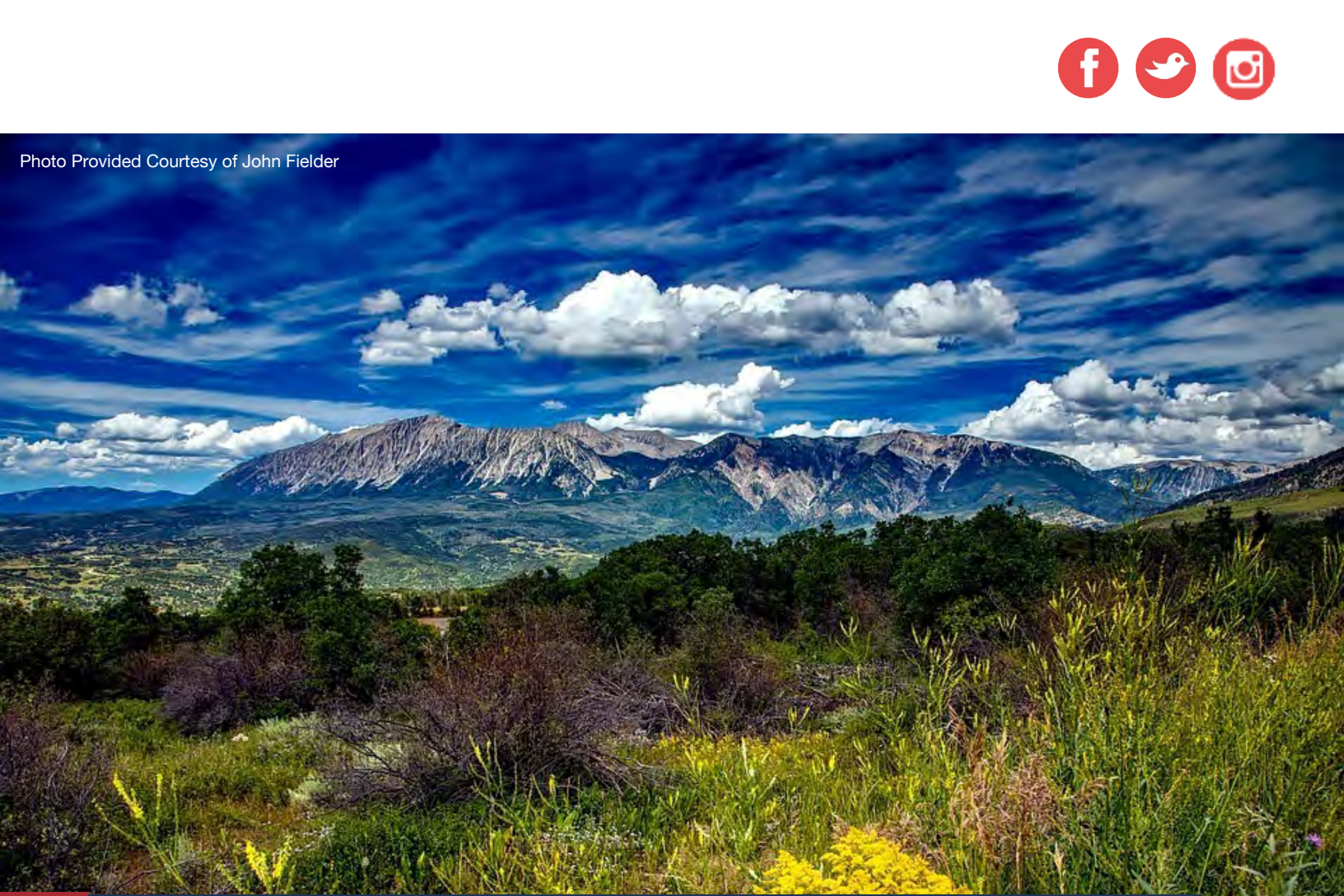


RESTORING WOLVES IN COLORADO

A GRAND OPPORTUNITY

- ROCKY MOUNTAIN WOLF PROJECT -

Photo Provided Courtesy of John Fielder



Wolves once roamed the snow-capped peaks and rim rock canyons of the West, but their howl has been missing from Western Colorado for 75 years. Despite successful reintroduction efforts in Yellowstone and elsewhere in the west,
Wolves remain absent throughout Colorado.

When we succeed in safely reintroducing wolves to their home in Western Colorado, we will have restored their historical range from the High Arctic to Mexico. In this E-Book, Chapter Two of our series, we'll discuss the opportunity we have to bring wolves home to their native habitats in Colorado!

BRINGING THE GRAY WOLF HOME TO COLORADO

LET'S SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

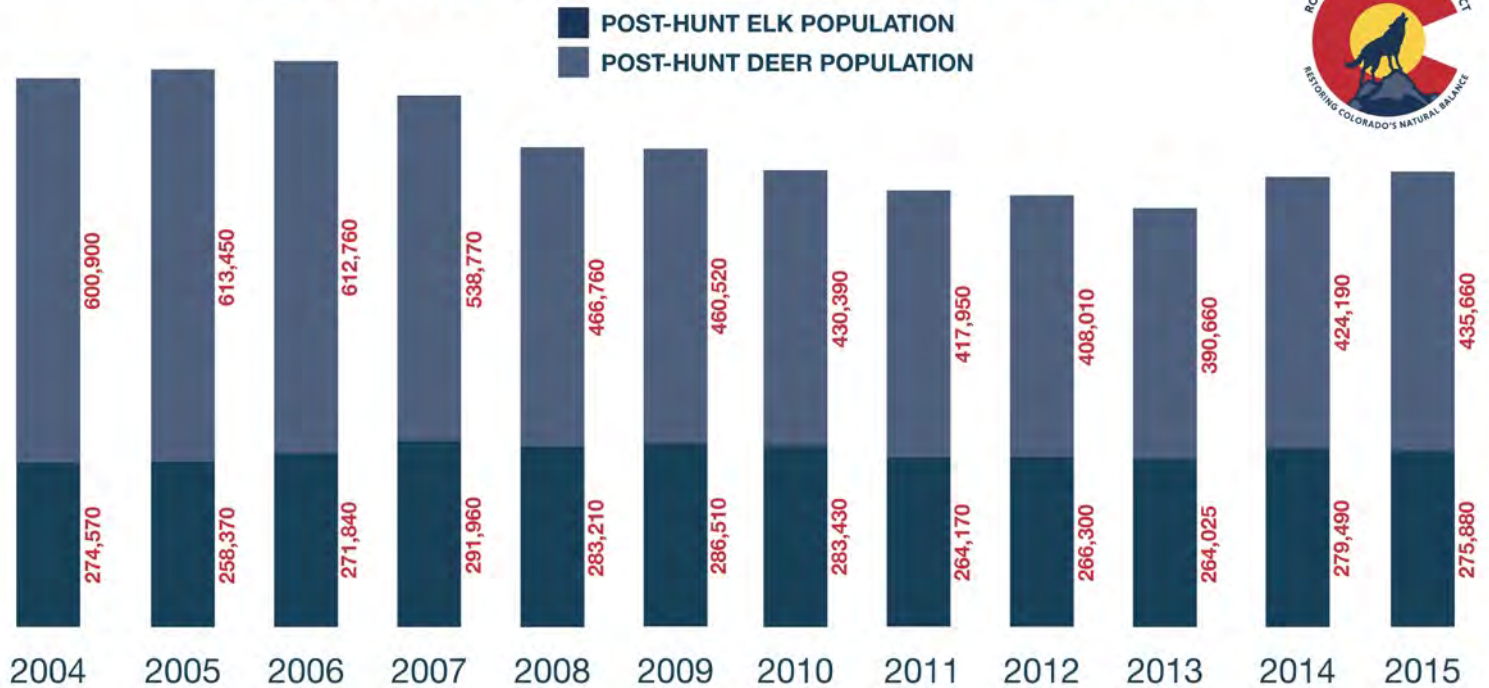
Wolf restoration in Colorado is supported by state and federal endangered species laws, reliable conservation science, and the presence of extensive and highly suitable habitat and prey populations. **Western Colorado sits at the heart of the Southern Rockies Ecoregion, which stretches from north-central Wyoming into north-central New Mexico. The vast majority of the Ecoregion is found in western Colorado, an area that contains more public land – approximately 18 million acres—than anywhere else in the continental U.S.**



Although wolves sometimes occur outside core protected areas of public land, it is clear that the beachheads of security offered by public land is essential for their long-term survival. By the late 1950s when wolves had been exterminated throughout most of the continental United States, only several hundred survived in the public land of the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota. **Since then, all wolf recovery projects have been centered on public lands like the wild national forests of Western Colorado.**

Prey populations are more than sufficient for wolves across the vast public land in western Colorado. From 2004 through 2015, Colorado's combined, post-hunt population of elk and deer (after recreational hunters killed a combined number of elk and deer that averaged 85,279 animals annually) averaged 758,314 animals. **This represents the largest population of prey for wolves anywhere in the world.**

DEER AND ELK POST-HUNT POPULATION



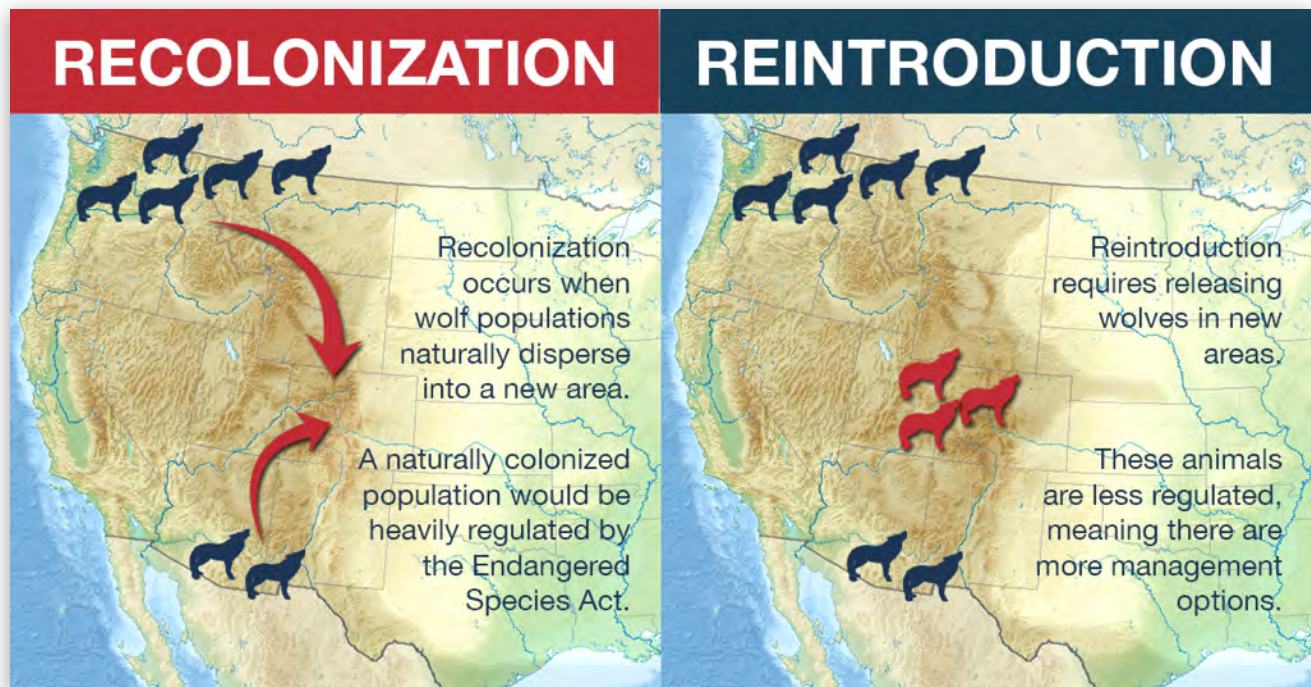
The elk and deer population in western Colorado is noteworthy since prey abundance is the best predictor of habitat quality for wolves in areas where human-caused mortality of wolves is low.

A 1994 congressionally mandated study conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concluded that Colorado could easily support a viable wolf population. Three additional studies, using increasingly reliable techniques, affirmed that Colorado could easily support a self-sustaining population of wolves.

GRAY WOLVES RESTORE BALANCE

REINTRODUCTION IS THE BEST METHOD

Although western Colorado is ideally suited for the gray wolf, the area is a considerable distance from wolf populations elsewhere and it's highly unlikely that a viable population will come to inhabit the area through **natural recolonization**. It is simply too far and there are too many mortality hazards along the way for a sufficient number of wolves from the Northern Rockies or the Great Lakes states to wander to Colorado, find one another, and survive long enough to give birth to the countless litters of pups required to give rise to a viable population.



When considering natural recolonization versus reintroductions as the mode of restoration, naturally recolonizing wolves (and any offspring) in Colorado would be fully protected as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Such protection significantly restricts management options. In contrast, **reintroduced wolves (and any offspring) could be managed in a more accommodating manner to address the needs and concerns of Coloradans.**



Wolf restoration in western Colorado is especially significant when considered on a continental scale. Because western Colorado is nearly equidistant from wolf populations in the Northern Rockies and southwestern New Mexico/southeastern Arizona, a population there, through the movement of wolves dispersing north and south, would serve as the missing link for a meta-population (a population of populations) of wolves from the High Arctic to Mexico.

There is no other region in the world where one can restore a large carnivore species across such a sweeping continental landscape.

Photo Provided Courtesy of Grizzly Creek Films

“Restoration to the Southern Rockies could connect the entire North American wolf population from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan through Canada and Alaska, down the Rocky Mountains and into Mexico. It would be difficult to overestimate the biological and conservation value of this achievement.”

-Dr. L. D. Mech,
Senior research scientist
U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior

**READY TO GET INVOLVED?
TAKE THE NEXT STEP NOW.**

**ADD YOUR
NAME**