

County aims to take tough stand against the wolf

The Modoc County Board of Supervisors heard an impassioned plea from Big Valley ranchers Gary and Nancy Monchamp Tuesday, asking the County to help stop any thought of reintroduction of the gray wolf into Modoc.

The discussion was sparked by a gray wolf, OR7, that was in the Adin area May 21. He moved into Lassen County May 23 and continued into northern Plumas County May 30 and the Western Plumas June 1. On June 4, he was back in southwestern Lassen County, and still on the move.

OR7 is the only known gray wolf in California and came from Oregon on his zigzag trail across the northeast corner of California. The wolf has gained notoriety over the past few months as news media from across the nation picked up the story of the wandering wolf.

The Monchamps were adamant in their stance that Modoc should take action to stop any possible plan to establish a wolf population in the county, citing environmental organizations and federal and state agencies, who they believe are intent on reintroducing the wolf. Agencies deny that allegation.

At one point in the conversation, a suggestion was made that the County pass an ordinance prohibiting establishing a wolf population or even against any
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wolf being in the County. How that would jell with state and federal law is a major hurdle since the wolf is considered an endangered species.

The County suggested working with the its Land Use Committee, its Fish and Game Commission and other departments as part of the coordination effort. The Monchamps felt that a separate, single-issue committee would be a better vehicle to fight the issue.

In addition to the wolf being a major predator for wildlife and livestock, Nancy Monchamp said she was very concerned that wolves could be a carrier of highly infectious diseases, including rabies. She wanted to know that since the Department of Fish and Wildlife had put a radio neck collar on OR7, did they also test to see if it was infected? The County will seek an answer to that question.

There is little doubt that the Supervisors stand steadfastly against any wolf population in the County and will work to make sure that doesn't happen.

There is no coordinated effort by the Fish and Wildlife Service nor the DFG to introduce wolves into this area, but some people aren't buying that argument.

OR7, the wolf that started the issue, continues to roam around the north state, apparently seeking a mate. The wolf was still in western Lassen County as of June 12.