

It's time to restore protection for wolves

“(T)oday, I’ve signed a memorandum that will help restore the scientific process to its rightful place at the heart of the Endangered Species Act, a process undermined by past administrations. ... For more than three decades, the Endangered Species Act has successfully protected our nation’s most threatened wildlife, and we should be looking for ways to improve it – not weaken it.”

– President Obama, March 3

I work with an organization that is among the 13 conservation groups that have taken this issue to court. In September, a federal judge indicated our case is likely to succeed on its merits, although a final ruling will not come until later this year.

As a former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I find it hard to understand why the Obama administration made this decision and why it justified it by relying on a legal opinion that has been criticized by a range of people, including academics and members of Congress. Worse, this decision affects more than the Northern Rockies wolf population. It also sets an alarming precedent for future listing and delisting decisions.

The Bush administration’s legal opinion overturned more than 30 years of interpretation of the Endangered Species Act. By this reasoning, protection of species can now be determined by political boundaries and manipulation, not biology. Adjusting popula-

tions in this unscientific way – carving out areas along state lines, as Salazar did in exempting Wyoming from the areas in which wolves were no longer to be considered endangered – makes the act subject to political manipulation. This legal sleight of hand is in direct contrast to Obama’s pledge to restore scientific integrity to decisions about endangered-species conservation.

Salazar should not have allowed the gray wolf to be delisted without first engaging in a clear and transparent public process and without exploring the ramifications of relying on this flawed legal opinion. Defenders of Wildlife reached out several times to work with the Interior Department to craft a plan that would ensure continued wolf recovery while returning management of wolves to state fish and wildlife agencies. Our efforts were ignored.

Because of my intimate involvement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s reintroduction of wolves to

Yellowstone, I was very much looking forward to the day when the wolf population would no longer need federal protections. But wolves and endangered-species conservation now face an uncertain future. If the president’s pledge to restore scientific integrity to the Endangered Species Act, and to improve the law, is to be fulfilled, action must be taken immediately. The interior secretary should withdraw the flawed legal opinion on which his delisting relied, restore federal protection to gray wolves in the Northern Rockies and engage all stakeholders in developing a plan to ensure that one of our nation’s greatest conservation successes, the restoration of gray wolves to Yellowstone and the Northern Rockies, will not be lost.

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decision has undermined the protection of the gray wolf and countless other threatened and endangered species.

This misguided action places wolves squarely in the cross hairs of their opponents across the Northern Rockies, allowing as many as 1,050 of Idaho and Montana’s estimated 1,350 wolves to be legally killed and jeopardizing the 30-year recovery effort to restore wild wolves to the region. As a result of Secretary Salazar’s action, wolves in the Northern Rockies are being hunted prematurely. Already, 210 have been killed, and there are still three months left in the Idaho hunting season.



Jamie Rappaport Clark

But this relief was short-lived.

Just three days after the president pledged to strengthen and restore scientific integrity to implementation of the Endangered Species Act, Secretary Salazar removed federal protection from gray wolves in the Northern Rockies. In making this decision, he adopted the plan developed by the Bush administration, relying on a flawed legal opinion crafted by that administration. His

WASHINGTON – I felt distinct relief upon hearing those words. I was at the Interior Department in March when President Obama made this promise to an audience of conservationists on the 160th anniversary of the agency’s founding. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar was by his side.

After eight years of conservation groups fighting tooth and nail to protect America’s imperiled wildlife against the plans and rulings of the Bush administration, it looked as though the Obama administration would renew our commitment to conserving endangered species and biodiversity for future generations.

Springsteen, Jay-Z, Urban telethon

NEW YORK (AP) — The music world's top stars are signing on for Friday's "Hope for Haiti" telethon.

Bruce Springsteen, Jay-Z, Taylor Swift, Justin Timberlake, Keith Urban and Alicia Keys are just a few of the performers who will be featured, according to MTV Networks, an integral partner in the two-hour event.

"Hope For Haiti Now: A Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief" will be an international event. Haitian native Wyclef Jean will anchor the show from New York, while George Clooney will do so from Los Angeles. CNN's Anderson Cooper will report from Haiti. The benefit will also be broadcast from London. It will be televised on all the major networks at 6 p.m. EST.

A week after Haiti quake, aid is elusive

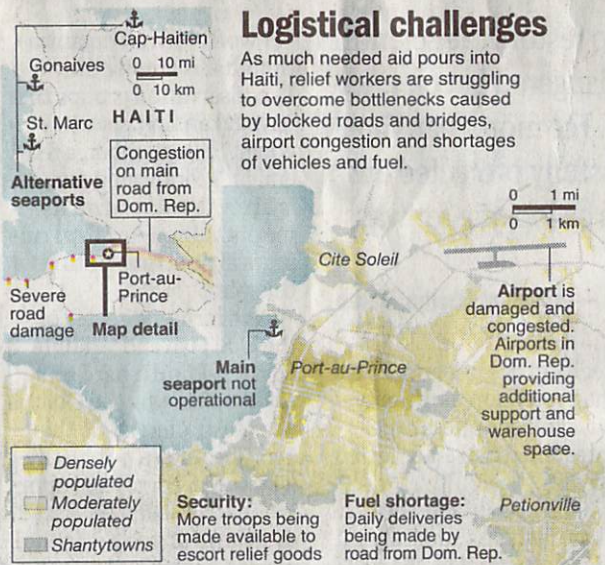
By Jonathan M. Katz
Associated Press writer

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — The world still can't get enough food and water to the hungry and thirsty one week after an earthquake shattered Haiti's capital. The airport remains a bottleneck, the port is a shambles. The Haitian government is invisible, nobody has taken firm charge, and the police have largely given up.

Even as U.S. troops landed in Seahawk helicopters Tuesday on the manicured lawn of the National Palace, the colossal efforts to help Haiti are proving inadequate because of the scale of the disaster and the limitations of the world's governments.

Expectations exceeded what money, will and military might have been able to achieve so far in the face of unimaginable calamity.

"God has abandoned us! The foreigners have abandoned us!" yelled Micheline



SOURCES: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; ESRI AP

Logistical challenges

As much needed aid pours into Haiti, relief workers are struggling to overcome bottlenecks caused by blocked roads and bridges, airport congestion and shortages of vehicles and fuel.

Ursulin, tearing at her hair as she rushed past a large pile of decaying bodies.

Three of her children died in the quake and her surviving daughter is in the hospital with broken limbs and a serious infection.

Rescue groups continue to work, even though time is running out for those buried by the quake. A Mexican

team created after that nation's 1985 earthquake rescued Ena Zizi, 69. She had survived a week buried in the ruins of the residence of Haiti's Roman Catholic archbishop, Monsignor Joseph Serge Miot, whose body was found Tuesday sitting in a chair in what appeared to be his office.

Doctors said Zizi was

dehydrated and had dislocated a hip and broken a leg.

"I'm all right, sort of," she said, lying on a foil thermal blanket outside the Cuban hospital, her gray hair covered in white dust.

An ardent Catholic, Zizi sang a hymn of praise and thanks to God in a strong but strained voice that resonated across the hospital garden filled with ailing quake victims on stretchers.

"This is a miracle," said one of her sons, bank clerk Joseph Josner.

Those who survived the quake from the beginning but had lost their homes and possessions were growing desperate as they camped out in the streets and in a plaza across from the National Palace.

"We need so much. Food, clothes. We need everything. I don't know whose responsibility it is, but they need to give us something soon," said Sophia Eltime, a 29-year-old mother of two who has been living under a bedsheet with seven mem-

bers of her extended family. She said she had not eaten yet Tuesday.

It is not just Haitians questioning why aid has been so slow for victims of one of the worst earthquakes in history: an estimated 200,000 dead, 250,000 injured and 1.5 million homeless. Officials in France and Brazil and aid groups such as Doctors Without Borders have complained of bottlenecks, skewed priorities and a crippling lack of leadership and coordination.

"TENS OF THOUSANDS OF EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS NEED EMERGENCY SURGICAL CARE NOW!!!!!" said a news release from Partners in Health, co-founded by Dr. Paul Farmer, the deputy U.N. envoy to Haiti.

"Our medical director has estimated that 20,000 people are dying each day who could be saved by surgery." No details were provided on how the figure was determined.