

October 26, 2017

Dear Governor Ducey,

We, the undersigned Panther Creek dispersing pups, are writing today to support the appointment of our mother, Esperanza del Arroyo Pantera, as a member of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. We are uniquely qualified to comment on her qualifications for the position, having known her from the day we were born in mid-April 2016.

As soon as our eyes opened and we were able to hear, our mother began home schooling us in preparation for later, paws-on hunter education. We learned that wolves must cooperate in order to bring down prey much larger than ourselves, using our only weapons: our swift feet, keen senses, and sharp teeth. Our schooling included physical fitness training in the form of wrestling matches, playing tag, and games of keep-away with bones and feathers. We also learned to follow rules, including remaining behind in a rendezvous site while we were still too small to accompany older pack members on hunting trips.

Once we were old enough, our hunter education began in earnest. Like our young human counterparts in Arizona Game and Fish Department's hunter education classes, we learned how to track elk and deer through the pine forest and steep canyons in our home range. We learned how to pick out old, weak, malnourished, or arthritic prey animals from the herd, in order to make a successful hunt more likely. Esperanza's fellow Commissioners should appreciate the fact that we lobos are rarely in direct competition with human hunters for the healthiest and strongest prey. In fact, when we remove weaker animals from the gene pool, we actually strengthen the herds.

By the time we pups were a year old this past spring, we were participating in hunts with our parents. Esperanza has taught us well. As we approach our second year, all three of us have begun to disperse, traveling far from home, hunting for our own food, and looking for mates of our own. It would make us proud if our mother, Esperanza del Arroyo Pantera (AF1339) joined the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and helped further its important work of educating the next generation of young hunters in the skills and ethics of big game hunting.

Sincerely,

Rakesh, m1483

Current address: Burro Creek, Apache County, AZ

Centinela, f1484

Current address: Moonshine Park, Greenlee County, AZ

Da-Kari, m1486

Current address: Monica Canyon, Socorro County, NM