



Media Contact:

Tina M. Martinez

tmartinez@MorrisAnimalFoundation.org

@morris_animal

303.708.3418

New Research Looks at Genetics of North American Wolves

Morris Animal Foundation Funds Study Through Special Betty White Fund

May 15, 2014/Denver — New research funded by [Morris Animal Foundation](#), a global leader in advancing veterinary science, will further understanding of the [genetic relatedness of wolves](#).

The gray wolf plays a fundamental role in temperate and Arctic ecosystems. It was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1975. Subsequent recovery plans helped reestablish populations in the Great Lakes states and the western United States. A proposed federal rule change, however, would remove the gray wolf and all of its subspecies, except the Mexican gray wolf, from protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Historically, delisting of a species has been based on numbers of animals, whereas this proposed delisting is based on scientific classification of species. In an effort to fill the knowledge gap on wolf genetics, Robert K. Wayne, PhD, professor at the [University of California–Los Angeles](#), will generate the first-ever complete genome sequences of Eastern and gray wolves. His team will compare genetic material from these wolf species to those of other wild canids to determine if they are genetically related. These genetic data will help guide decisions on the wolves' endangered status.

“Since 1967, Morris Animal Foundation—funded research has advanced the health of wildlife around the world—and, in some cases, has ensured the very survival of a species,” said Diane Brown, DVM, PhD, DACVP, chief scientific officer for Morris Animal Foundation. “This study continues that tradition.”

The new study is supported through the Foundation's Betty White Wildlife Rapid Response Fund, which was established in 2010 to give wildlife researchers timely monetary aid to respond to unexpected events, such as natural disasters and emerging diseases and issues for animal health research.

To date, the Foundation's Wildlife Rapid Response Fund has supported research on the long-term effects of the oil spill on [dolphins](#) in the Gulf of Mexico, die-offs of the [rare saiga antelope](#) in Kazakhstan and for study of more than 1,200 [sea lions](#) in southern California.

If you are interested in supporting the [Betty White Wildlife Rapid Response Fund](#) for either the wolf genome-mapping study or with future studies, please contact Scott Koskoski, director of major & planned giving for Morris Animal Foundation at skoskoski@morrisanimalfoundation.org or 303.708.3411. To learn more about how Morris Animal Foundation is helping all animals, visit www.MorrisAnimalFoundation.org.