

For Immediate Release, March 11, 2020

Contacts:

Talasi Brooks, Western Watersheds Project, (208) 336-9077,
tbrooks@westernwatersheds.org

Andrea Santarsiere, Center for Biological Diversity, (303) 854-7748,
asantarsiere@biologicaldiversity.org

Gary Macfarlane, Friends of the Clearwater, (208) 882-9755,
gary@friendsoftheclearwater.org

Lindsay Larris, WildEarth Guardians, (310) 923-1465, llarris@wildearthguardians.org

Brooks Fahy, Predator Defense, (541) 937-4261, brooks@predatordefense.org

Laurie Rule, Advocates for the West, (503) 914-6388, lrule@advocateswest.org

Theresa Mansfield, M-44 victim's mother, (208) 406-9462

Idaho Court Restricts Wolf-killing, Bans Use of M-44 Cyanide Bombs

Legal Victory Will Protect Idaho's Wildlife, Pets

BOISE, *Idaho*— In a key victory for wildlife, conservation groups finalized an agreement today that sets strict limits on how and where a federal agency can kill wolves in Idaho, bans the use of M-44 “cyanide bombs” statewide, and prohibits the use of snares to kill wolves on public lands.

The new restrictions on wolf snares and the M-44 ban will remain in place until the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services completes a detailed analysis on the environmental impacts of killing wolves.

“Wildlife Services won't be able to keep ignoring the science that shows that killing predators does not reduce livestock losses,” said Talasi Brooks, a staff attorney with Western Watersheds Project. “Meanwhile, we're delighted to have delivered a reprieve from Wildlife Services' wolf-killing in the Sawtooth Valley and Wood River corridor, and a statewide ban on M-44 ‘cyanide bombs’ on the three-year anniversary of the Canyon Mansfield tragedy.”

Mansfield was 14 years old at the time an M-44 device near his home exploded, killing his dog and injuring the teen. The device was set illegally and without proper signage on public lands within a quarter mile of Mansfield's neighborhood in Pocatello, Idaho.

M-44 traps are commonly used to kill coyotes at the behest of the livestock industry.

“Cyanide bombs and traps are vicious and indiscriminate, and too often lead to the suffering of nontarget wildlife and pets” said Andrea Santarsiere, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. “This victory is a step forward in reducing the suffering of animals at the hands of our federal government.”

“This news is very uplifting because it shows progress in our fight for justice for Kasey and everyone else who has suffered from these cyanide bombs,” said Canyon Mansfield. “I believe this shows that we are fighting a battle with a victory in sight.”

Today’s settlement also blocks Wildlife Services from engaging in lethal activities targeting wolves in wilderness areas throughout Idaho, including the Boulder-White Cloud Complex, Big Jacks Creek, Little Jacks Creek, Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers, Craters of the Moon, Frank Church-River of No Return, Gospel-Hump, Hells Canyon, North Fork Owyhee, Owyhee River, Pole Creek, Sawtooth and Selway-Bitterroot.

The Sawtooth and Hells Canyon national recreation areas and specified public lands in the Sawtooth Valley and Wood River Valley are also off-limits.

“The federal government won’t be aerially gunning wolves in the upper Clearwater, the Lolo Zone, based upon a false narrative that elk declines are due to predation,” said Gary McFarlane, executive director of Friends of the Clearwater. “Further, the federal government will no longer violate the wildernesses in Idaho by killing wolves, a native predator that epitomizes untrammled wilderness.”

The settlement requires strict limitations on the use of snares and traps, banning the use of snares targeting wolves, and requiring offset jaws and pan tensions that cannot be triggered by smaller animals.

“It’s a shame that it took the poisoning of a child and the killing of a beloved family dog to get Wildlife Services to put the brakes on M-44 deployment in Idaho,” said Brooks Fahy, executive director of Predator Defense. “Under this settlement, the tentative moratorium on M-44s in Idaho is locked in, at least until the agency completes a full EIS. We need to ban these indiscriminate poison landmines nationwide before there are more victims.”

“For far too long, Wildlife Services has pursued a program of indiscriminate wolf killing, in Idaho and elsewhere, even before there had actually been any confirmed wolf-livestock conflict,” said Lindsay Larris, wildlife program director with WildEarth Guardians. “Instead of killing wolves as a first resort, Wildlife Services should stop using our taxpayer dollars to kill native wildlife and instead focus its efforts on nonlethal methods, which evidence demonstrates work better to reduce livestock losses.”

This settlement comes after the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court ruling that dismissed a lawsuit challenging Wildlife Services’ statewide wolf-killing program in Idaho.

“The forthcoming analysis will need to take a detailed look at the science surrounding the agency’s predator-killing activities to inform a new program,” said Laurie Rule, an attorney with Advocates for the West. “We’ll be watching carefully to make sure the analysis complies with all laws and fully examines the impacts and effectiveness of predator damage management in Idaho.”

The plaintiffs bringing the case were Western Watersheds Project, the Center for Biological Diversity, Friends of the Clearwater, WildEarth Guardians and Predator Defense. They were represented by attorneys from Advocates for the West and Western Watersheds Project.

Advocates for the West protects and defends our public lands, wildlife, watersheds and air through litigation and negotiation. www.advocateswest.org

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.7 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

Friends of the Clearwater is an Idaho-based nonprofit conservation organization that works to protect the wildness and biodiversity of the public wildlands, wildlife, and waters of Idaho's Clearwater Basin.

Predator Defense is a national nonprofit conservation organization that has been fighting for wildlife since 1990.

Western Watersheds Project is a nonprofit conservation group founded in 1993 with 1,400 members whose mission is to protect and restore western watersheds and wildlife through education, public policy initiatives and litigation.

WildEarth Guardians is a nonprofit conservation organization working to protect and restore the wildlife, wild places, wild rivers and health of the American West.