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### **Groups seek to defend lynx against snowmobile lawsuit**

BOZEMAN, *Mont.* — Six conservation groups filed a motion in the Wyoming district court today to defend the designation of critical habitat for Canada lynx, a species threatened with extinction in the United States. In May, snowmobile advocacy groups in Washington and Wyoming filed suit seeking to nullify a February 2009 rule that identified and designated the critical habitat for lynx in Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota, and Maine. The designation allows the Service to protect lynx from harmful activities within areas that are crucial for the species' survival and recovery.

This rare wildcat population has been reduced by trapping and habitat loss and critical habitat designation is important to the survival and recovery of lynx. The designation requires that federal agencies ensure that their actions will not adversely modify or destroy the lynx's critical habitat. By engaging in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service can locate and design snowmobile trails so that they do not adversely modify or destroy lynx critical habitat.

"The reason we are asking to get involved in this lawsuit is simple. Lynx need habitat to survive," said attorney Tim Preso of Earthjustice, who is representing the conservation groups. "We want to ensure that legal protections are in place to protect the habitat that is critical for the conservation of this rare forest cat."

"We can protect critical habitat for the lynx and continue to provide ample opportunities for snowmobilers and other winter recreationists to enjoy the landscape," said David Gaillard of Defenders of Wildlife. "The Fish and Wildlife Service carefully considered any impacts to these folks before making its decision," he added.

"Wyoming is big enough to share with lynx and other wild creatures," said Louise Lasley of the Jackson Hole Alliance in Wyoming. "The Wyoming Range would be far a lonelier place if we capitulate to this special interest group and allow the lynx to disappear."

"Like many animals, Canada lynx need quiet places free of human disturbance from snowmobiles and other activities to survive," said Noah Greenwald, endangered species program director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "These unique cats need every acre of critical habitat designated and more if they are to avoid extinction in the United States."

The Wyoming district court judge presiding in the case will evaluate the request to intervene. Earthjustice submitted the legal intervention request on behalf of Defenders of Wildlife, Center for Biological Diversity, Conservation Northwest, Friends of the Wild Swan, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, and the Lands Council.

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*Earthjustice is a non-profit public interest law firm dedicated to protecting the magnificent places, natural resources, and wildlife of this earth, and to defending the right of all people to a healthy environment. For more information, visit [www.earthjustice.org](http://www.earthjustice.org).*

*Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities. With more than 1 million members and activists, Defenders of Wildlife is a leading advocate for innovative solutions to safeguard our wildlife heritage for generations to come. For more information, visit [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org).*

*The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance is dedicated to responsible land stewardship in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, to ensure that human activities are in harmony with the area's irreplaceable wildlife, scenic, and other natural resources.*

*The Center for Biological Diversity is a national nonprofit conservation organization with more than 220,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.*