

NEWS RELEASE
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Contacts: Listed at end

Settlement reached on wolf recovery in Idaho and Montana

Wolves to remain protected in Washington, Oregon, Wyoming and Utah

MISSOULA, Mont. – Ten conservation groups reached a legal settlement today with the U.S. Department of the Interior regarding wolf recovery and management in the Northern Rockies.

The settlement was filed for approval with a U.S. Federal District Court in Montana. If approved by the court, the agreement would remove Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in Idaho and Montana and return management authority to those states, while retaining full protection in Washington, Oregon, Wyoming and Utah. It will also require the Department of the Interior to withdraw a controversial policy memo used to justify not protecting imperiled species throughout their entire range.

The following is a joint statement from the 10 conservation groups:

“We hope today’s agreement will mark the beginning of a new era of wolf conservation in the Northern Rockies, as well as confirm the success of the Endangered Species Act and this country’s boldest wildlife reintroduction effort in history. The proposed settlement maintains protections in Oregon and Washington where wolves have not yet fully recovered, while allowing for responsible state management in Idaho and Montana.

“In return for allowing the states of Montana and Idaho to manage wolves according to approved conservation plans, the Department of the Interior agrees to conduct rigorous scientific monitoring of wolf populations across the region and an independent scientific review by an expert advisory board after three years. This is a critical safety net to ensure a sustainable wolf population in the region over the long run. The settlement offers a workable solution to the increasingly polarized debate over wolves.

“Wolves are a keystone species that allow many other plants and animals – from beaver and trout, to willows and migratory birds – to thrive in a way that will fascinate and benefit Americans for generations to come. Wolves have a place on the landscape, and continued conflict doesn't benefit anyone.”

(more)

The ten conservation groups that have agreed to the settlement are Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Hells Canyon Preservation Council, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, Natural Resources Defense Council, Oregon Wild, Sierra Club and Wildlands Network.

Links: Read the Department of the Interior's press release regarding the settlement:
<http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/Interior-Announces-Proposed-Settlement-of-Gray-Wolf-Lawsuit.cfm>

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The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to responsible land stewardship in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, to ensure that human resources are in harmony with the area's irreplaceable wildlife, scenic and other natural resources.