

## **Update: Cougars Hounded Again in Oregon**

House Bill 2971, opposed by Predator Defense, became law in June 2007.

**The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) can now deputize private hunters to hunt cougars with dogs and to hunt black bears with dogs or bait.**

In a final effort to block these affronts to Oregon cougars and bears, Predator Defense brought together key individuals to convince the Governor of the folly of this measure. Predator Defense Executive Director Brooks Fahy met with the Governor's top natural resource policy advisor, Michael Carrier; State Senator Floyd Prozanski, who facilitated the meeting; and Dr. Rick Hopkins, one of the country's foremost cougar researchers (and a Predator Defense Advisory Board member).

House Bill 2971 passed the Oregon legislature and was signed into law by Governor Kulongoski on June 27<sup>th</sup>--immediately following our meeting. The bill became law despite strong evidence presented on the perils of this legislation for cougars and bears. Also ignored was evidence that the bill would not reduce the extremely rare incidence of cougar confrontations with people.

### **Predator Defense Exposes Oregon's Shameful Cougar Plan**

At the June 27, 2007 meeting, Predator Defense also stressed the need to start from scratch to develop a new cougar management plan that emphasizes conservation and public education.

The current plan allows private sport hunters to kill hundreds of cougars annually. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife uses a model to estimate the number of cougars in the state. The assumptions in this model have been roundly criticized by a large majority of cougar experts who have reviewed the model. Also, the Plan is based on inaccurate assumptions regarding how cougars, deer, and elk populations interact. This killing is also carried out under the guise of preventing livestock losses. In fact, the vast majority of such incidents are never investigated by ODFW and very few are substantiated.

The Plan also establishes a target for the number of cougars killed annually in specific study areas. The establishment of these targets is part of an effort to learn whether higher numbers of cougars killed increases the number of deer and elk.

For more on Oregon's Cougar Management Plan and official comments on the Plan made by Predator Defense and wildlife ecologists Dr. Rick Hopkins and Dr. Barry Noons, see links on the previous webpage under "New Plan Calls for Slaughter of Cougars."