

A Setback for Oregon's Cougars

Cougars lost vital protection in Oregon in 2006. Despite the total lack of science to support the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)'s plan, the Fish and Wildlife Commission unanimously approved the plan to snare, trap, and use hounds to kill *nearly half* of the state's cougar population. A majority of independent biologists--handpicked by ODFW to review their plan--found the information erroneous and ill conceived. Despite the lack of scientific support and strong public opposition, the killing of cougars started during summer of 2006 and continues.

Predator Defense lobbied hard to defeat approval of the ODFW plan. We solicited support from the Governor, ran newspaper ads, gave numerous media interviews, and convinced Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) to air a show on the cougar controversy. OPB agreed to explore the issue on its special series *Oregon Field Guide*. We supplied footage and contacts for the program as well as appearing in the show.

The ODFW continues to promote killing cougars despite objections from the majority of Oregonians as well as independent cougar experts. The only way to guarantee future protection of cougars is through a state ballot initiative modeled after California's successful 3-decade ban of killing cougars. A ban in Oregon is possible. Public dedication and resources are key. Predator Defense is working towards this goal.