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Federal Agencies Urged to Halt Coyote-Hunting Contest in Oregon's Lake County

Contest Risks Killing Endangered Wolves, Breaking Wildlife Laws

PORTLAND, Ore.— Six wildlife conservation organizations representing nearly 212,000 Oregonians are calling on the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management [to stop a coyote-hunting contest](#) planned for Nov. 19-20. The groups are concerned that in addition to being cruel and wasteful, the “Lake County Coyote Calling Derby” could result in killing of endangered gray wolves, in violation of the Endangered Species Act.

“This contest is unethical, cruel and risks violating federal law,” said Amaroq Weiss, West Coast wolf organizer with the Center for Biological Diversity. “Wolves are fully federally protected throughout the entirety of Lake County, so federal wildlife and land management officials have a duty to do everything in their power to protect them.”

The hunting contest, which awards prizes for the most coyotes killed, is being sponsored by the Lake County chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association and by Robinson Heating and Cooling. The contest will take place on both Forest Service and BLM land, which cover large portions of Lake County. Despite this the contest organizers have not sought a required “special use permit.” Such a permit would trigger a review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because of the risk of killing federally protected wolves, which have been confirmed in Lake County by federal and state officials and are easily mistaken for coyotes.

“Coyote killing contests are nothing more than the indiscriminate, wanton slaughter of wildlife,” said Brooks Fahy, Executive Director of Eugene-based Predator Defense. “Contest organizers often purport that killing coyotes will protect livestock and enhance prey populations like deer and elk. Ironically, science is telling us just the opposite. When coyotes are killed, those that survive reproduce at higher levels.”

The conservation groups requested that both the Forest Service and BLM suspend the contest until permits are issued, the Fish and Wildlife Service has the opportunity to ensure no wolves will be harmed, and the public has the opportunity to comment.

“It is completely irresponsible for these federal agencies to allow a killing contest for an animal that closely resembles the endangered gray wolf in this region,” said Nick Cady, legal director of Cascadia Wildlands. “Wolves are just beginning to establish a foothold in southwestern Oregon, and it would be tragic for that to be lost due to an overlooked coyote killing derby.”

Scott Beckstead, Oregon senior state director of The Humane Society of the United States said, “Killing contests are cruel, wasteful, and deeply at odds with the humane values of the vast majority of Oregonians. The event promotes a “shoot anything that moves” mentality and is bound to result in the killing of non target wildlife. We urge the USFS and BLM to deny permission for this event, and we urge the people of Oregon to demand that our state wildlife managers finally put an end to these festivals of cruelty.”

“Not only do these killing contest endanger a protected species,” said Wally Sykes, co-founder of Northeast Oregon Ecosystems, “but they are a symptom of a general disrespect for wildlife and a poor understanding of the complex relationships of prey and predator.”

The request was sent by Predator Defense, the Center for Biological Diversity, Cascadia Wildlands, The Humane Society of the United States, Northeast Oregon Ecosystems and Oregon Wild.

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The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with 1.1 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

<http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/>

Predator Defense is a national nonprofit advocacy organization with over 15,000 supporters. We have been working since 1990 to protect native predators and end America’s war on wildlife. Our efforts take us into the field, onto America’s public lands, to Congress, and into courtrooms. <http://www.predatordefense.org>

Cascadia Wildlands defends and restores Cascadia’s wild ecosystems in the forests, in the courts, and in the streets. We envision vast old-growth forests, rivers full of salmon, wolves howling in the backcountry, and vibrant communities sustained by the unique landscapes of the Cascadia bioregion. [Join our movement today.](#)

The Humane Society of the United States is the nation’s largest and most effective animal protection organization. We and our affiliates provide hands-on care and services to more than 100,000 animals each year, and we professionalize the field through education and training for local organizations. We are the leading animal advocacy organization, seeking a humane world for people and animals alike. We are driving transformational change in the U.S. and around the world by combating large-scale cruelties such as puppy mills, animal fighting, factory farming, seal slaughter, horse cruelty, captive hunts and the wildlife trade.

<http://www.humanesociety.org>

Oregon Wild: Protecting Oregon’s wildlands, wildlife, and waters for future generations.

<http://www.oregonwild.org>

Northeast Oregon Ecosystems works to protect and expand Oregon’s wildlife and wildlife habitat.