

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2010

Conservationists Submit Clemency Appeal for Endangered Gray Wolves in Northeast Oregon

Contacts:

- Greg Dyson, Hells Canyon Preservation Council: 541-963-3950 x22, greg@hellscanyon.org
 - Josh Laughlin, Cascadia Wildlands: 541-434-1463, jlaughlin@cascwild.org
-

La Grande, OR, June, 16, 2010—Hells Canyon Preservation Council and Cascadia Wildlands today submitted a clemency appeal to Governor Kulongoski asking that he spare the lives of two endangered gray wolves.

On May 30th, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) authorized federal “animal damage control” agents to kill two members of Oregon’s only confirmed wolf pack in response to recent livestock depredations that have occurred in Wallowa County. ODFW has since extended the kill permit’s expiration to June 18th and expanded the geographic scope—allowing federal agents to hunt these wolves down and kill them anywhere within a more than 40-square mile area in Wallowa County.

The clemency appeal asks Governor Kulongoski to rescind the kill permits for the two wolves, effective immediately.

“Killing wolves should be a last resort, only after all other non-lethal measures have been tried and shown not to work. We don’t feel that there’s been a genuine effort on the part of ODFW or Wallowa County livestock producers to use all the non-lethal measures at their disposal before resorting to shooting two wolves,” said Greg Dyson, of the La Grande-based Hells Canyon Preservation Council.

The clemency appeal states that the two wolves should not be shot because:

- ODFW has not identified which members of this wolf pack are responsible for these recent livestock depredations and now aims to arbitrarily kill 2 members.
- Livestock growers in Northeast Oregon are responsible for attracting the wolves to the area.
- The non-lethal measures that have been used have not been widespread and consistent enough to be effective.
- There are non-lethal measures that have not yet been tried, including non-lethal measures that could injure the wolves.
- Killing two wild animals for acting within their nature will not work to deter future livestock loss.

- A compensation program is key to gaining the broader acceptance of wolves in Oregon, yet ironically enough, the conservation community has supported such a program while the Cattlemen's Association has blocked it.

Josh Laughlin of Eugene-based Cascadia Wildlands stated that "Oregonians have worked for over a decade to bring wolves back to our state, and the issuance of these kill permits is a huge step backward. These two wolves need an immediate act of clemency by our governor as they sit on death row."

After a nearly 65-year absence of wolves in Oregon, the 10-member Imnaha pack is the first breeding pack to re-establish in the state since the Oregon Wolf Plan was adopted in 2005. The kill permit issued by ODFW targets 20% of the Imnaha pack, and are in addition to seven permits issued by ODFW that would allow livestock growers to shoot wolves caught in the act of attacking their livestock.

The groups have presented their clemency appeal to Governor Kulongoski and will continue to pressure the Governor and ODFW to revoke the wolf kill permits.