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Judge Upholds Ruling Limiting Wolf Trapping, Snaring in Idaho

Upon reconsideration, judge rejects Idaho's rare request to reverse decision

Boise, Idaho – Yesterday, federal Magistrate Judge Candy W. Dale [upheld her prior decision](#) to prohibit Idaho's authorization of recreational wolf trapping and snaring in grizzly bear habitat during the grizzly bear non-denning season. In a rare request, Idaho asked the judge to reconsider her March 2024 ruling, seeking a reconsideration of her determination that recreational wolf trapping and snaring threatens grizzly bears and subsequent remedial decision to curtail the wolf-trapping season. The judge agreed to review the decision but ultimately stuck with her initial ruling.

“Judge Dale’s initial decision was always the correct one to protect grizzly bears from state-authorized wolf trapping and snaring, and we also appreciate the time she took to get it right a second time,” said **Ben Scrimshaw, senior associate attorney for Earthjustice’s Northern Rockies Office**. “Grizzly bears forever belong in the West, and securing this decision is part of a bigger movement for true grizzly recovery.”

“I’m celebrating this win for Idaho’s grizzlies after the judge made the right call, again,” said **Collette Adkins, carnivore conservation program director at the Center for Biological Diversity**. “Grizzly bears already face so many threats to their survival and recovery. They shouldn’t have to risk getting hurt or killed by indiscriminate and cruel wolf traps.”

“The bait, traps, and snares set for wolves also attract and catch grizzlies. The court’s decision, therefore, was logical and understandable. We are really pleased she stood by it,” said **KC York, president and founder of Trap Free Montana**.

“This decision is a victory for life to exist in our natural world and acknowledges that predators (in this case – grizzly bears) are part of that natural process,” said **Clinton Nagel, president of Gallatin Wildlife Association**. “It also acknowledges that we as a society must be careful when our actions have unintended consequences. We have a responsibility to the greater good.”

“Being based in Idaho, we understand the importance of this ruling in securing much-needed protection for our struggling grizzly bears attempting to re-establish in our state. We appreciate the ruling today reflecting this valid concern,” said **Suzanne Asha Stone, director of the International Wildlife Coexistence Network**. “It also has the added benefit of safeguarding our dogs and even children from dangerous unmarked traps and snares while we are recreating on our public lands.”

“Grizzly bears face serious survival challenges – global warming, habitat destruction, loss of critical food sources, heightened recreation pressure and busy highways bisecting grizzly corridors. Idaho's year-round baited wolf snaring and trapping added unjustified, cruel mortality,” said **Connie Poten, Footloose Montana board chair**. “Grizzlies are an umbrella species that more than one hundred other species depend on. We are extremely grateful for Judge Dale's decision to uphold the purpose of the ESA and give grizzlies a fighting chance. It's a win for the planet.”

“This decision is good news for grizzlies and wolves and will help keep Idaho’s anti-carnivore agenda in check,” said **Greg LeDonne, Idaho director for Western Watershed Project**.

“There was never any doubt that the court’s ruling was right - cruel and indiscriminate traps and snares pose an unacceptable risk to grizzly bears,” said **Nicholas Arrivo, managing attorney for the Humane Society of the United States**. “We are pleased to see that ruling affirmed, keeping the lifesaving injunction in place.”

“Baiting over traps is a surefire way to draw grizzly bears in, and ultimately lead to getting caught and likely killed,” said **Nick Gevock, Sierra Club Northern Rockies campaign organizer**. “We commend the judge for standing up for wildlife, rejecting Idaho’s efforts that would jeopardize grizzlies, and allow grizzlies to move across the wildlands needed to achieve a durable, real recovery.”

“Judge Dale's careful reconsideration of this lawsuit reaffirms that Idaho's wolf trapping program presents an unlawful risk of death and harm to imperiled grizzly bears in the state,” said **Dana Johnson, attorney and policy director for Wilderness Watch**. “Much like wolves, grizzly bears belong in Idaho, and the Court's injunction is an important step in securing their right to exist and flourish free from persecution.”

Earthjustice represented the Center for Biological Diversity, Footloose Montana, Friends of the Clearwater, Gallatin Wildlife Association, Global Indigenous Council, the Humane Society of the United States, International Wildlife Coexistence Network, Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment, Sierra Club, Trap Free Montana, Western Watersheds Project, Wilderness Watch, and Wolves of the Rockies in the lawsuit.

Background: In July 2021, Idaho heightened the dangers of wolf trapping to grizzly bears by establishing a permanent recreational wolf-trapping season on private property across the state, eliminating limits on the number of wolves one person can kill, and increasing payments to recreational trappers for each wolf they kill. Idaho’s decision to continue authorizing wolf baiting with meat and scent ensured that grizzly bears will be attracted to wolf traps and snares at high rates. Judge Dale’s decision upheld her prior ban on state-authorized recreational wolf trapping and snaring during non-denning season for grizzly bears. The order prohibits wolf trapping and snaring in Idaho’s Panhandle, Clearwater, Salmon, and Upper Snake regions from March 1 to November 30.

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