



May 24th, 2013

After 17 months of intense negotiations, our organizations, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Governor John Kitzhaber, and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association have reached a landmark settlement agreement on wolf conservation and management in Oregon. Though not perfect, the agreement advances wildlife conservation, wolf recovery and improves livestock stewardship.

In recent years, ambiguity in the state's wolf plan, coupled with intense political pressure to kill wolves and weaken wildlife protections, created unnecessary confusion and conflict. While we remain confident in the merits of our case, we believe this settlement agreement is the best path forward for all parties to ensure the recovery of endangered gray wolves in Oregon.

The agreement:

- Requires livestock operators to implement and demonstrate the use of basic non-lethal measures to prevent conflict prior to requesting the state to kill wolves.
- Requires the state to assist livestock operators in implementing non-lethal measures, document their use, and increase public transparency before killing wolves.
- Allows plans to be tailored to the specific areas and operations where wolves and livestock occur.
- Defines "chronic depredation" more appropriately and puts reasonable parameters on kill orders so they are limited to wolves that have caused recent recurring losses to livestock operators. The previous definition could apply to wolves that had not yet been born when depredations occurred.
- Codifies provisions from the 2005 Oregon Wolf Plan allowing livestock operators to kill wolves without a permit if they are caught in the act of attacking their livestock. To prevent abuse, the agreement requires a thorough investigation of any such kills. Such actions will be quite rare if the agreement is followed.

The settlement agreement requires the passage of legislation and a rule outlining what steps must be taken before the state may kill wolves. The agreement will be captured by a version of HB3452 and a temporary rule to be adopted by the ODFW Commission. Given that the agreements incorporate significant concessions from all sides arrived at after months of negotiations, it is important that both pieces be passed intact.

Oregonians value native wildlife and want to see wolf recovery stay on track. They are counting on all sides to abide by the letter and spirit of the agreement. We expect ODFW to be more transparent, prioritize conservation, ensure that killing wolves is an option of last resort, and use discretion to ensure science-based management of wolves leads to a meaningful and sustainable long-term recovery for the native species. We expect the livestock industry will continue to work in good faith to reduce conflict with wolves and other native wildlife. For our part, we will continue to support full funding for the agency, educate the public about wolves, and work to support efforts that help the industry and others readjust to living with wolves on the landscape.

Taken together with Oregon's existing compensation program and support for non-lethal measures, this plan sets a national standard for balancing the public's interest in wildlife conservation with demands from the livestock industry. We expect that through more work, experience, communication, and trust between parties, Oregon can continue to ensure wolf recovery stays on track, that unnecessary conflict around wildlife continues to decrease, and Oregon lives up to its highest public values – including the conservation of native wildlife.

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