

## **NEWS RELEASE - WYOMING WOLF COALITION**

January 29, 2010 – For Immediate Release

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### ***FIGHTING FOR THE WYOMING WOLF MANAGEMENT PLAN***

CHEYENNE, WY January 29, 2010- Oral argument took place today on the Wyoming wolf litigation. Attorneys for the State of Wyoming, Park County and the Wyoming Wolf Coalition upheld the validity and adequacy of the Wyoming Wolf Management Plan that was approved, and then rejected by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). A group of sportsmen and women marched to the capitol just before the hearing to demonstrate support for Wyoming's Wolf Management Plan. *(The introduction to the brief filed by the Wolf Coalition prior to the hearing can be found at the end of this release.)*

The Wyoming Wolf Coalition, an intervenor in the litigation, includes state and local sportsmen, outfitter and agricultural organizations, county governments and county predatory animal boards. The Coalition's attorney is Harriet Hageman of Hageman and Brighton Law Office in Cheyenne.

Members of the Coalition comment on federal government interference and their fight for the Wyoming Wolf Management Plan:

Ken Hamilton, Wyoming Farm Bureau- Executive Vice President

"While this hearing is about the legal status of wolves in Wyoming it is much more. It is about whether the federal government should be allowed to tell citizens one thing and then go back on their word and do something all together different. In an article in People Magazine from Sept 24 1990 Norm Bishop a Yellowstone Park employee told a county Farm Bureau the following: "The wolf population will not be allowed to expand beyond 150 over the next 30 years - excess wolves will be shot - and Bishop assures the farmers they have nothing to fear." "

B.J. Hill, Swift Creek Outfitters, Cora WY

"I'll never forget the first time I heard a wolf howl, it was September 26, 1998 at 8:26 in the morning. I had just bugled and in response came what I now know all too well...the howl of a wolf. Since then, to me wolves mean that one of our hunting camps has had to be abandoned, and another is running at twenty-five percent capacity. Our harvest on bull elk has gone from over eighty percent to less than fifty percent even with lower numbers of hunters. My neighbor outfitters aren't any different. I see them with fewer hunters and fewer weeks of hunting. One week we have elk in our country then the next week we don't. This has hit my family hard. We have counted on providing back country elk hunts to our guests for over 25 years now and are not sure where we're headed. I do know this- Wyoming will always have wolves and should be given the chance to manage them."

Jim Magagna, Wyoming Stock Growers Association- Executive Vice President

"Once again the federal government is intent on foisting a political mandate on our state. Wyoming has firmly committed to the Fish and Wildlife Service goals for a sustainable wolf population. Both science and an overwhelming number of independent scientists chosen by the Fish and Wildlife Service support the adequacy of the Wyoming Wolf Management Plan.

WSGA is confident that the federal judge will render his decision based on these facts and not allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to continue to hold Wyoming hostage."

Joe Tilden, Wyoming Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife- President

"Last year the Game & Fish took emergency action to implement a quota system for elk hunting in the Sunlight Basin area. Recent flights indicate that these actions may have been too late and it is questionable whether control can be sustained. It is truly a tragedy to think of wildlife resources that have been lost due to political correctness."

Bobbie Frank, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts- Executive Director

"Since the reintroduction of wolves, producers are facing increased time and expense associated with management changes-- doctoring injured cattle, lower calving rates, and general loss of production due to stress related factors. Consequently, they have fewer resources to invest in on-the-ground conservation measures that provide multiple resource values such as wildlife habitat improvement, enhancement of water quality and quantity, and maintaining open spaces. All of these natural resource values should not be compromised and lost to the state and its citizens, due to the Fish & Wildlife Service's inability to recognize the state has a solid plan in place that will protect appropriate levels of wolves, yet allow the state to manage at a level allowing for some semblance of balance."

Jim Allen, Diamond 4 Outfitters, Lander, WY

"If we don't have the right to protect ourselves and our property from wolves, then we have no rights. A government that outlaws the inherent right of self defense and the right to protect property is a government that has overreached its authority. The people of Wyoming must be granted permanent control of the wolf. The people of Wyoming own the indigenous wildlife resources but federally transplanted Canadian wolves are decimating this wildlife birthright at an alarming pace- especially elk. Wyoming's hunting, agriculture and tourist economies are in peril and our lives have been disrupted by wolves. Hunters and ranchers are being unfairly punished by wolves and they have borne a disproportionate burden of the wolf experiment. The time to stop the destruction caused by wolves is past and the federal government must return control of state resources back to Wyoming."

### **The introduction to the brief filed by the Wolf Coalition prior to today's hearing**

"Perhaps the most striking aspect of the 'Federal Respondents' Response Brief' is their blatant effort to redefine politics as 'science,' and public perception as 'biology.' The Federal Respondents have spent 43 pages attempting to justify the unjustifiable. Their Response Brief is nothing short of a gargantuan effort to rewrite history and, where that is not possible, an even more concerted effort to simply ignore it.

The Federal Respondents have also finally conceded that the vast majority of the representations they have made to date related to the Canadian gray wolf population (including, among others, management and control assurances, geographic restrictions, biological needs, stated recovery goals, the importance and purpose of the peer reviews, travel corridors, genetic connectivity, a promise to 'delist,' and a commitment to turn over management to Wyoming) were made for one purpose only - to say and do whatever necessary to force Wyoming and its citizens to protect wolves (and provide the necessary

prey base) throughout the entire State regardless of whether 'recovery' (however defined) is assured and secured in a smaller geographic area.

The Federal Respondents are now arguing that protecting the wolf population at 50 percent above the USFWS unilaterally-defined recovery goals should be considered as a 'bare minimum,' while encouraging this Court to conclude that such a "bare minimum" is not good enough. Their objective in that regard is exposed by their most recent demand that Wyoming be required to provide a cushion upon a cushion, thereby admitting their ultimate goal is to increase, and then increase again, the number of wolves that must be protected regardless of whether they are 'recovered' from a biological standpoint. In doing so they have confirmed that wolf numbers mean nothing, recovery goals are irrelevant and subject to change, and public perception and politics are the new 'scientific' gold standard by which listing and delisting decisions are made under the Endangered Species Act.

The Federal Respondents are arguing that Wyoming -and this Court - should ignore their Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan, their previous Final Environmental Impact Statement, their previous Final Rules, their previous findings, the testimony of their own wolf 'experts,' and the overwhelming body of biological and scientific evidence that confirms that the Wyoming Wolf Management Plan and statutory scheme are designed, and will be implemented, to protect and preserve a recovered wolf population.

The Federal Respondents make it clear that they would have liked Wyoming to take a different approach to protecting its share of the recovered Canadian gray wolf population. Wolf recovery, however, is not a popularity contest, and 'likability' is not the criterion by which Wyoming's Plan should - or can - be judged.

The Federal Respondents have nattered on about various tangential matters, none of which have any bearing on the only significant issue before this Court - whether Wyoming's Plan passes biological/scientific muster by providing the necessary regulatory framework for protecting this particular non-essential experimental wolf population at or above recovery levels. Wyoming's Plan clearly does and, importantly, the Federal Respondents have utterly failed to support their arguments otherwise. Their efforts are clearly focused on confusion and deflection rather than on addressing the question at hand."

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# Wyoming Farm Bureau

## Wolf Litigation Statement

January 29, 2010

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation welcomes this hearing against the Fish & Wildlife Service regarding state management of wolves.

While this hearing is about the legal status of wolves in Wyoming it is much more. It is about whether the federal government should be allowed to tell citizens one thing and then go back on their word and do something all together different.

In an article in People Magazine from Sept 24 1990 Norm Bishop a Yellowstone Park employee told a county Farm Bureau the following: "The wolf population will not be allowed to expand beyond 150 over the next 30 years – excess wolves will be shot – and Bishop assures the farmers they have nothing to fear."

The impacts wolves are having on our members are real and they are costly. Mary Thoman a sheep and cattle producer from western Wyoming said the following about wolves:

"My Dad testified in the original wolf hearing and everything he said would happen as a result of wolf introduction has come true and the government hasn't followed through with their promises. The wolves are out of control now. They promised the wolves would stay in the park area, but they're not, they are all over. The wolves move too fast and there are delays in time when the trappers come out so the impact is large since we can't manage the wolves.

This summer (2009) a pack of wolves moved through us. They scattered what sheep they didn't kill. The carcasses then drew in the bears and we were plagued with 15-20 bears in a 10 square mile area on those three allotments. That is way out of control; the wolves move faster and create more damage.

Definitely the years we have had depredation, the lambs have averaged five pounds lighter. Add that to the death loss from wolf predation and it is a large hit when you take a whole herd of sheep."

Farm Bureau members in many parts of the state fear they will be impacted by wolves similar to those that are in northwest Wyoming. They are frustrated that the federal government and special interest groups want to try and drive them out of business.

When wolves were being proposed for Northwest Wyoming, most of those who were concerned about this proposal said that very likely the program would not end when they were recovered. Now we find just how prophetic those words were. The end result however, should be that the Federal Government should be held to the same standards that all the rest of us are held to – we cannot say we will do something and then ignore it. This is in essence what has happened. We hope the judge will hold the Federal Government to the original agreement that was used to garner public support and help keep producers like Mary on the land.

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**WYOMING ASSOCIATION OF  
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***Land management detrimentally impacted by unmanaged wolves***

Cheyenne--Conservation Districts in Wyoming are statutorily charged with the protection of natural resources, including wildlife and wildlife habitat while protecting the farming and ranching industry and providing for a stable tax base. Unfortunately, the continued proliferation of wolves and the damage they are causing jeopardizes the district's ability to work with the agriculture producers to meet these goals.

Producers who are facing increased time and expense associated with management changes, doctoring injured cattle, lower calving rates, and general loss of production due to stress related factors have considerably less resources to invest in on-the-ground conservation measures that provide multiple resource values such as wildlife habitat improvement, enhancement of water quality and quantity, and maintaining open spaces.

"All of these natural resource values should not be compromised and lost to the state and its citizens, due to the Fish & Wildlife's Services inability to recognize that the state has a solid plan in place that will protect appropriate levels of wolves, yet allow the state to manage at a level allowing for some semblance of balance," said Bobbie Frank, Executive Director of WACD.

"They don't just kill the cattle, they wound many of the animals- leaving me as producer with the added expense and time of doctoring wounded livestock," said Pete Jachowski, Rancher and Cody Conservation District board member. "Wolves also run livestock off the forest allotments causing increased time and expense in management, as well as interfering with our grazing management plans. Often times the livestock won't return to the area due to fear and stress," he added.

"My crew and I spent a month gathering cows because wolves, in the course of chasing the elk, caused the livestock to tear down fences and come off our forest allotment. The time moving cattle back to the allotment is time that should have been spent haying and irrigating," said Reg Phillips, Ranch manager and Dubois Crowheart Conservation District board member. "In the summer of '08 we finally left 30 percent of our cows home because we couldn't afford the time gathering cows. This last year was moderately better but our ability to manage our private and the forest ground is severely impacted by our inability to manage the wolves."

Phillips notes that the ranch also posts a cowboy with their cattle all summer long, but the wolves continue the destruction. "If the cowboy plugs one hole another hole starts leaking," said Phillips.

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