



PROTECTING THE FUTURE OF WILDLIFE IN MENDOCINO COUNTY

FOR DECADES, Mendocino County has contracted with USDA Wildlife Services (WS) to kill thousands of wild animals, largely at the behest of ranchers. Between 1997 and 2017, WS trappers killed 181 mountain lions, 261 black bears, 235 gray foxes, 112 bobcats and 4,119 coyotes in Mendocino County alone.

In 2014, a coalition of wildlife advocacy groups sued the County under the California Environmental Quality Act for failing to study the environmental impacts of their contract with WS. The plaintiffs argued that killing these wild animals can have devastating environmental impacts, and that non-lethal methods of predator control are more effective and humane. In a settlement agreement, the County agreed to produce an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to analyze the impacts of their lethal methods, and to consider non-lethal wildlife management alternatives.

In the draft EIR, released in June 2019, the County indicates an apparent preference not only for renewing their contract with WS, but also an interest in expanding the use of lethal methods of wildlife control to include neck wringing, cervical dislocation and the use of CO₂, all of which can cause extreme pain and suffering. Non-target animals, including companion dogs and cats as well as threatened and endangered species of wildlife, fall victim to WS's lethal approach to wildlife management. One WS trapper in Mendocino County boasts of killing more than 400 dogs.

The best available science shows that killing wild carnivores to reduce predation on livestock is rarely necessary or effective. In addition, the draft EIR clearly demonstrates that the proposed lethal program could have negative impacts on an already depleted mountain lion population.

An analysis of non-lethal program alternatives, also presented in the draft EIR, shows there are many cost-effective, non-lethal methods for addressing human/wildlife conflicts, including appropriate fencing, livestock guard animals, night corrals and Foxlights.

Project Coyote and the Mendocino Non-lethal Wildlife Alliance urge Mendocino County to terminate its lethal wildlife management contract with USDA Wildlife Services. Instead, the County should adopt a locally administered, humane, environmentally sound, non-lethal wildlife management program.

The Mendocino Board of Supervisors will be deciding this matter over the coming months. **Please call your Supervisor, write letters to the editors of local newspapers, and call in to local radio programs, urging the Board of Supervisors to end outdated, ineffective and inhumane lethal wildlife management practices in Mendocino County by adopting the non-lethal alternative program described in the draft EIR.**

Contact your Supervisor at this link:
mendocinocounty.org/government/board-of-supervisors

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