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Contact: Ron Aasheim, 406-444-4038, or visit the FWP website at fwp.mt.gov

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS APPEALS COURT RULING ON WOLVES

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks filed an appeal today with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to overturn the District Court ruling by Judge David Molloy that returned the region's recovered wolves to the federal endangered species list.

"Montanans look to us to manage a viable and connected wolf population while reducing wolf impacts on big game populations and livestock producers," said Joe Maurier, FWP director. "Today's appeal is one of the avenues FWP is pursuing to regain the management authority it needs to meet Montanan's expectations."

Bob Lane chief legal counsel for FWP said the Department will present legal arguments asserting that District Court Judge Molloy's decision should be overturned and the region's recovered wolves returned to a delisted status. It is unknown if the US Fish and Wildlife Service (the primary defendant in the case) will also appeal.

"It appears likely that the court will encourage the parties involved to first engage in a mediation process, though that is not a certainty," Lane said.

If mediation fails to occur or is not productive, the court will decide the appeal based on briefs and oral argument.

FWP joined in a federal lawsuit in defense of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2009 decision to delist wolves in Montana and Idaho, but not in Wyoming. U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy in Missoula, however, reinstated federal protections of wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains on Aug. 5

To learn more about Montana's wolf population, visit FWP online at fwp.mt.gov, Click Montana Wolves .