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NEWS RELEASE

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The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter Welcomes Return of Endangered Species Protections to Great Lakes Wolves

Madison: On Friday, December 19 federal judge Beryl Howell returned Endangered Species protections to Great Lakes wolves. Since the gray wolf was removed from Endangered Species status in 2012, wolves have been aggressively hunted and trapped in every state where they had recovered. Although wolf depredations are addressed specifically and immediately by USDA Wildlife Services and state agencies, Departments of Natural Resources in Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin continued to lobby for the trophy hunting of wolves as "necessary" to "control livestock depredations." However, peer-reviewed research has found that non-lethal deterrents are more effective and less expensive in minimizing livestock losses.

In response to the decision, Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter’s Protecting Native Forests & Wildlife Subcommittee member Laura Menefee stated, “The Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter welcomes the return of federal protections to wolves until our state commits to implementing the best available science in ethical wolf management and monitoring.”

Although Wisconsin's wolf population appeared to be stabilizing at around 880 in 2011, the state lost 518 wolves to trophy hunting, trapping, and hounding in just three years. Wisconsin's Act 169, passed within hours of wolves being removed from the Endangered Species list, allowed for leg hold trapping, snaring, and hunting with bows, guns, and dogs. Just this year, rules allowing year round unregulated training of dogs on wolves - through breeding and denning seasons - were approved by the Natural Resources Board. Wisconsin was the only state to allow the use of dogs in wolf hunting.

WDNR's 2013 Human Dimensions Survey revealed the majority of Wisconsin residents approve of wolves "at or above" the population present at the time of the survey. The most recently published count prior to the survey was about 880. 83% of Wisconsin residents polled disapprove of the use of dogs on wolves. Nevertheless, the Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association, on record as pushing for a state wide limit on the wolf population at "350 or less," was in the process of petitioning for legislation allowing higher quotas and more tags issued. State law mandates \$2,500 depredations payments to hounds killed or injured by wolves; resulting in over \$500,000 in payouts since 1985.

The Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter has repeatedly asked the DNR to allow conservation and tribal interests to serve alongside the pro-wolf hunting interests that comprise the present Wolf Advisory Committee. Secretary Stepp dissolved the former Wolf Science Committee and barred university researchers from sitting on wildlife committees. Since then, aggressive quotas have reduced the state wolf population by at least 26% in just three years.

While anti-wolf sentiment among a minority special interest lobby remains high, we are confident that Wisconsin's proud history of conservation will support stringent enforcement of penalties for illegal kills, along

with education for effective, non-lethal depredations deterrents, to allow a thriving population of wolves and other native predators in our state for resilient and balanced ecosystem health.

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Founded in 1892 by John Muir, the Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club's mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is made up of 15,000 members and supporters from throughout Wisconsin working to promote clean energy and protect land and water resources.