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Federal judge rules in spite of science on wolf de-listing

*Statements by MUCC Deputy Executive Director Tony Hansen and
NWF Great Lakes Director Andy Buchsbaum*

LANSING, MICH A Washington D.C. Federal Judge shot down a science-based decision by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to remove the gray wolf population in the western Great Lakes region from the endangered species list on Monday, ignoring recommendations from renown biological experts, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and its Great Lakes affiliate organizations, including Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC).

MUCC Deputy Executive Director Tony Hansen issued the following statement:

"MUCC stands firmly in its belief of sound scientific management of our natural resources and wildlife. Michigan's Department of Natural Resources and biological researchers have effectively restored Michigan's gray wolf population, far exceeding the FWS recovery goal of 100 wolves in the upper Great Lakes region. The wolf's listing under the Endangered Species Act has minimized Michigan's ability to adequately manage the growing wolf population's size and distribution, which has led to significant depredation. Hunters, farmers and dog owners are concerned because they are witnessing this currently unmanageable wolf population's impact first hand.

Yesterday, a judge in Washington effectively took a procedural backdoor to remand the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's scientifically-rendered decision to de-list the gray wolf in the western Great Lakes Region. This ruling not only undermines science, but it is an out-of-touch intervention on Michigan's ability to properly conserve, restore, and protect our natural resources based on sound scientific management. Michigan should have the right to scientifically preserve and manage our natural resources without intervention from judicial opinions. All of the leading conservation organizations in Michigan, including MUCC, have signed-off on a well-vetted Wolf Management Plan that was adopted by the Michigan Natural Resources Commission in preparation for the de-listing of the gray wolf in our region. While we're confident this erratic decision from Washington will not stand indefinitely, MUCC will continue to fight with our partners for the preservation of scientific management on this issue."

NWF Great Lakes Natural Resource Center Director Andy Buchsbaum also stated the following:

"The recovery of gray wolves in the Great Lakes region has been highly successful and shows the value of the Endangered Species Act. This ruling complicates this accomplishment and creates a quagmire for future recovery efforts."

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About MUCC

MUCC has been Michigan's first voice for Michigan's out-of-doors since 1937. With over 45,000 members and 400 affiliated clubs throughout the state, MUCC's primary objective is *Uniting Citizens to Conserve, Protect, and Enhance Michigan's Natural Resources and Outdoor Heritage.*