

Saving Yellowstone's **Wolves**

Just outside the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park, the gray wolf is fighting for survival. The Bush Administration, acting with callous disregard for our core environmental laws and one of America's most treasured wildlife icons, moved first to permit a massive slaughter of wolves and then—when stopped in its tracks by NRDC litigation under the endangered species act—attempted to strip wolves of their protection under the landmark act.

Tragically, before the federal courts acted, the Bush Administration and its allies in several states allowed the first public hunt of wolves in seven decades. During this senseless hunt, more than 110 wolves were slaughtered by aerial gunning, trapping, and poisoning in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Even wolf pups were targeted.

The courts have become our last line of defense against state and federal officials that threatened to reverse the recovery of gray wolves in the Northern Rockies, one of our nation's greatest wildlife success stories. Our victories were a testament to NRDC's ability to engage—and win—critical fights for America's invaluable wildlife and wild places. The unmatched dedication of our lawyers, scientists, policy experts, members, and communications team helped to turn the tide in the fight for wolf protection.



As our legal team battled for wolf protections in the courtroom, a group of NRDC volunteers and interns helped spread the word about the wolf's plight from an information booth inside Yellowstone National Park. During the summer of 2008, they collected more than 7,000 signatures from concerned citizens who were eager to show their support for a long-term wolf recovery plan that should be pursued by the new administration. Visitors from around the country and the world viewed our display and were horrified to learn that, prior to the temporary injunction, the very wolves they had traveled hundreds or thousands of miles to see could be gunned down just outside the park.

Scientists say that the long-term survival of the wolves will be assured only when their population reaches 2,000 to 3,000 in at least three interconnected populations in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. But weak protections in these states, combined with the Bush Administration's efforts to remove their endangered species designation, threatened to wipe out 80 percent of the region's 1,500 wolves. Now, thanks to NRDC's victory, wolf populations will once again be able to flourish in the Rockies.

In the months to come, we will work with ranchers and other community leaders to develop innovative solutions that will continue to keep wolves safe. And we will continue to keep up the pressure on every front to ensure a healthy long-term future for wolves in the Northern Rockies.



"With 1,500 wolves on the landscape, we're close to what experts believe is true recovery: 2,000 wolves."

NRDC wolf protection expert **Louisa Willcox** (left) talks about saving Yellowstone's wolves in the NRDC film *Restore the Balance: The Case for Wolves in the Rockies*. Watch it online at youtube.com/itsyournature.



Sylvia Fallon, Ph.D., is an expert in wildlife and genetics working for NRDC's Endangered Species Project.



Adam Albright, NRDC trustee



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Heart of the Boreal Forest
July 14, 2008

After BioGems Defenders flooded Canadian officials with messages asking that they safeguard Canada's pristine boreal forest from destructive hydropower development, logging, and mining, the Ontario government agreed to work with Canadian First Nations to protect 225,000 square kilometers of intact boreal forestlands—an area twice the size of England.



Western Arctic Reserve
May 16, 2008

The Bush Administration announced it would postpone oil and gas leasing in most of the Teshekpuk Lake area of Alaska's Western Arctic Reserve for a decade. BioGems Defenders and other activists have sent tens of thousands of messages protesting the administration's push to allow destructive oil and gas drilling in this extraordinary stretch of Arctic wilderness.



Redrock Wilderness
May 12, 2008

Joining forces with our longtime partner, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, NRDC's legal team persuaded the courts to uphold protections for thousands of acres of stunning redrock country from oil and gas drilling.



Catskill Forest Preserve
January 4, 2008

Under pressure from BioGems Defenders in New York, who spoke out repeatedly against a proposal that would have brought two casinos to historic Catskill State Park, the Bush Administration rejected plans to develop the environmentally damaging casinos.