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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
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The Honorable Tom Tidwell
Chief
United States Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Tidwell:

I am writing today to express serious concerns about the U.S. Forest Service's stewardship of wildlife resources on lands under the Committee's jurisdiction. Last December, a group called "Idaho for Wildlife" organized a two-day Coyote and Wolf Derby, with separate prize money for the largest wolf killed. Despite the fact that much of the hunting was to occur within the National Forest System (NFS), the Forest Service determined that the contest was not a commercial event occurring on NFS land, and, therefore, no special use permit was required. This determination was questionable at the time, and I ask that you revisit it in light of recent events.

Specifically, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently revoked a special use permit it had issued to Idaho for Wildlife to conduct the killing Derby on BLM land because the agency's Environmental Assessment (EA) of the permit was inadequate. BLM's experience shows not only that such an activity require a permit, but also that it warrants development of a thorough environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to assist in evaluating the permit application.

I urge the Forest Service to require the organizers of the aforementioned killing contest to apply for a special use permit or other permit before considering whether the contest should take place on NFS land, as the BLM has required for the same activity on land it manages. I also urge the Forest Service to prohibit the event from taking place on NFS land this year, to ensure there is time to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement of the event and permit application.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have questions, please contact Matt Strickler on the House Natural Resources Committee Democratic Staff at (202) 225-6065. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources