

For Immediate Release: July 15, 2024

Advocates launch legal action to prevent grizzly bear deaths at bait stations

BOISE, IDAHO—Conservation organizations [sent a notice of intent to sue](#) the State of Idaho today for violations of the Endangered Species Act over state hunting authorizations that put grizzly bears at risk. In June, a grizzly was killed by a hunter at a black bear bait-station after being misidentified by Idaho Department of Game and Fish, demonstrating the urgent need to reform the practice now that grizzly bears are beginning to return to Idaho on their journey to recovery.

“Idaho is violating the Endangered Species Act when it issues licenses to black bear hunters to use bait sites in grizzly bear habitat,” said Greg LeDonne, Idaho Director of Western Watersheds Project. “It puts grizzly bears at risk not just of being killed accidentally when they are mistaken for black bears, but of becoming habituated to human food sources and being killed when they display nuisance behavior.”

“Bear baiting takes the lives of grizzly bears in the Northern Rockies and robs the wild of these remarkable animals,” said Lizzy Pennock, carnivore coexistence attorney at WildEarth Guardians. “The State of Idaho is putting grizzly bears in unacceptable peril, compromising their prospects of recovery and leading to tragic, preventable, illegal, and all too predictable deaths, like the incident we witnessed last month in Saint Maries.”

"After decades of persecution, grizzly bears are making their way home across Idaho," said Dana Johnson, attorney and policy director with Wilderness Watch. "Rather than celebrating their return and doing everything possible to ensure their safe passage and existence, Idaho continues to sanction the luring and killing of black bears in areas where grizzly bears live and travel. The recent killing of a grizzly bear by a black bear hunter was tragic and completely preventable. We're submitting this notice of intent to sue to make sure it doesn't happen again."

"Allowing a pile of food or other messy attractants to be spread out on public land sends a message counter to the 'leave no trace' ethic," said Jeff Juel of Friends of the Clearwater. "Bear baiting also strains the notion of what is ethically 'fair chase' in hunting," he added.

Today's [Notice of Intent to Sue](#) provides the state 60 days in which to remedy the situation before the groups file a lawsuit. Western Environmental Law Center sent the letter on behalf of WildEarth Guardians, Western Watersheds Project, Wilderness Watch, and Friends of the Clearwater.

CONTACTS:

Greg LeDonne, Western Watersheds Project, (208) 779-2079, greg@westernwatersheds.org
Lizzy Pennock, WildEarth Guardians, (406) 830-8924, lpennock@wildearthguardians.org
Dana Johnson, Wilderness Watch, (208) 310-7003, danajohnson@wildernesswatch.org
Jeff Juel, Friends of the Clearwater, (509) 688-5956 jeffjuel@wildrockies.org