

## Judge Reverses Gray Wolf Downlisting

February 1, 2005

By Tom Banse

PORTLAND, OR A federal judge in Portland has ruled that the Fish and Wildlife Service was wrong to relax the protection for gray wolves in the Northwest.

In April 2003, the Fish and Wildlife Service downgraded the western gray wolf from endangered to threatened.

This year, the agency was prepared to remove the feared predator from the endangered species list entirely in light of the rebounding wolf population in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.

Nineteen environmental groups sued including Michael Robinson's The Center for Biological Diversity.

Michael Robinson: "The most significant aspect of this case is that the Fish and Wildlife Service was on a fast track to delisting. That is now is going to have to be rethought."

Robinson says the court order rescinds federal rules that would have allowed ranchers to shoot wolves on sight if they were attacking livestock.

A wolf specialist with the Fish and Wildlife Service says government officers can still kill problem wolves as necessary.

It's unclear at this hour whether Idaho - and eventually Oregon and Washington — can proceed with plans to assume oversight of wolves in their respective states.