Health Risks and Legal Violations Plague Colorado Wolf Introduction Program

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo., Jan. 9, 2025 -- The Colorado Conservation Alliance, Inc. (CCA) today provided an update on mounting concerns surrounding Colorado's wolf introduction program, including confirmation that non-native gray wolves released into Colorado have tested positive for Echinococcus Granulosus, a dangerous tapeworm that causes Hydatid Disease. This pathogen was previously unknown in Colorado before the introduction of the wolf, raising serious public health concerns as the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) rushes to expand the controversial program.

See video for additional information - [**Wolves Bring Hydatid Disease To Grand County, Colorado - YouTube**](https://c212.net/c/link/?t=0&l=en&o=4337503-1&h=3381390182&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DNash8NZGRDg&a=Wolves+Bring+Hydatid+Disease+To+Grand+County%2C+Colorado+-+YouTube)

The health risk compounds a series of legal and procedural violations by state agencies, including violations of federal environmental laws, strong opposition from Native American tribes, disregard for voter-approved introduction zones, and a rush to import Canadian wolves despite mounting concerns.

**Environmental Review**

CCA has filed a lawsuit against CPW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for failing to complete required federal environmental reviews before releasing wolves. Specifically, the agencies failed to:

* Conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
* Submit updated Resource Management Plans (RMP) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for federal lands where wolves were released
* Honor their own commitment not to introduce wolves with a history of livestock predation

CCA seeks to suspend further wolf releases until CPW and USFWS complete the required NEPA process and submit proper Resource Management Plans to the BLM. These federal requirements are designed to protect the environment and affected communities.

**Strong Tribal Opposition**

The Southern Ute Tribe has repeatedly warned against the program's threats to their sovereign rights and resources. In a June 4, 2021, letter, the Tribe expressed "concern the restoration of the gray wolf would present an unacceptable risk to our hunting resources." A follow-up letter on February 21, 2023, detailed additional threats to:

* Their hunting rights across 3,700,000 acres (5,781 square miles) under the 1874 Brunot Agreement
* Livestock on Southern Ute Reservation lands
* The genetically distinct Mexican Wolf population in New Mexico

The Tribe's concerns led USFWS to grant them authority for lethal control of wolves impacting ungulate populations on tribal lands. Additionally, the Confederation Tribes of the Colville Reservation in Washington State withdrew their authorization to provide wolves after learning that CPW had failed to consult properly with the Southern Ute Tribe.

**Violation of Voter Intent**

Despite Colorado voters specifically approving wolf introduction "West of the Continental Divide" from New Mexico to Wyoming, CPW signed an agreement on December 23, 2024, prohibiting wolf releases across 5,806 square miles of Southwestern Colorado. This exclusion zone includes Southern Ute hunting grounds and territory within sixty miles of the Utah border, dramatically restricting the voter-approved introduction area.

Unable to source wolves domestically, CPW plans to import wolves from British Columbia in January 2025, despite formal opposition from CCA.

**Urgent Call to Action**

CPW will hold a hybrid public meeting on January 9, 2025, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at 6060 Broadway in Denver. CCA urges Colorado residents, particularly those from counties that voted against wolf introduction, to attend or submit comments demanding:

1. Immediate suspension of further non-native gray wolf releases until federal environmental requirements are met
2. Protection for counties that opposed introduction through MOU agreements similar to those granted to The Southern Utes to protect their Tribal hunting grounds and Utah to create a wolf exclusion zone between Colorado and Utah
3. Comprehensive health screening and monitoring protocols

The public can submit comments to **dnr\_cpwcommission@state.co.us** or through CPW's website.

**About Colorado Conservation Alliance**

CCA is a Colorado nonprofit corporation dedicated to protecting Colorado's outdoor heritage and wildlife habitats through responsible, science-based wildlife management. For more information or to support our legal action, visit [**www.cocoal.org**](https://c212.net/c/link/?t=0&l=en&o=4337503-1&h=2708799958&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cocoal.org%2F&a=www.cocoal.org).

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