

Dear Supervisors,

We are a progressive county and it is time we take a progressive approach to wildlife management. I, like many other taxpayers in our county have, in the past, un-knowingly supported the destruction of wildlife when non-lethal exclusion programs could have been used to resolve wildlife/human conflict.

There are circumstances under which a non-lethal exclusion program will euthanize a wild animal:

1. A rabid animal poses a health threat
2. When a human life is at stake
3. When all appropriate non-lethal methods to protect property have been tried and failed.

Under the reorganization of the County's Animal Care Services (ACS) Department, Animal Control formerly under the Sheriff's Dept. will be transferred to ACS. Animal Control officers are trained to use lethal methods to euthanize rabid animals, and they can also be trained to euthanize wild animals under situations 2 & 3 above, so there is no need for the County to employ Wildlife Services or an independent trapper for this purpose.

If the County were to employ a full time trapper, their only function would be to kill wild animals considered a threat to livestock by ranchers. Paying the salary of a full time trapper would constitute an undue subsidy to private business interests by the taxpayers of Mendocino County and is an inappropriate expenditure of scarce County funds. Ranchers will have the same access to the ACS fee-for-service non-lethal exclusion program as all other County residence, so they are not being discriminated against.

"Wildlife Services' indiscriminate killing of millions of animals annually has many damaging impacts on the environment. Peer-reviewed research shows that such reckless slaughter of animals — particularly predators — results in broad ecological destruction and loss of biodiversity. The program's controversial and indiscriminate killing methods are employed largely at the behest of ranchers to protect livestock and have come under increased scrutiny from scientists, the public and government officials. In addition the agency has been responsible for the countless deaths of threatened and endangered species, as well as family pets." (Camilla Fox, founder and executive director of Marin-based Project Coyote.)

It is time to end our contract with Wildlife Services and create an educational non-lethal wildlife management program under our excellent ACS Department.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important matter.

Respectfully,

Carol R Lillis