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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Court Finds IDNR Negligent for Failing to  
Warn State Park Patrons of Deadly Wildlife Traps**

La Porte, IN: A favorable court ruling in *Liddle v. Clark, et al.* offers some long overdue justice following the tragic situation at Versailles State Park ("Park") where a [family's beloved dog was brutally suffocated to death by an unauthorized body-gripping wildlife trap](#). Last week, the Marion County Superior Court #2 [ruled that the State of Indiana was negligent](#) for failing to make any effort to warn park patrons that an employee was maintaining hidden, deadly animal traps throughout the Park.

Litigation was triggered in 2011 when Plaintiff Melodie Liddle's beloved dog, Copper was [violently killed](#) in a steel wildlife trap situated about 15 feet from the Park's asphalt-paved roadway. The deadly device was hidden inside a wooden box next to a shallow creek in a well-developed culvert area. Copper became entangled in the trap after getting a drink of water. Despite Ms. Liddle's heroic attempts to free her dog, Copper died in her arms.

This indefensible incident resulted from Indiana Department of Natural Resources' ("IDNR") [deliberate distortion of the temporary "Emergency Rule"](#) process **that enabled commercial fur trappers to access public lands for personal gain for more than eight (8) years without the public's knowledge or consent**. Dozens of these deadly devices were hidden throughout Versailles State Park by an IDNR employee who failed to obtain proper legal authorization.

The State of Indiana **repeatedly created dangerous conditions on public land** that would foreseeably cause extensive harm to victims, **then did everything in its power to conceal the presence of these death traps from the public**.

Despite this unimaginable tragedy and Ms. Liddle's sensible pleas for responsible stewardship, IDNR enabled more commercial fur trapping in state parks just a couple weeks after Ms. Liddle buried her dog.

According to Laura Nirenberg, chief counsel at the Center for Wildlife Ethics, “Our client, had the courage and determination to do what those tasked with protecting public safety and promoting sound public policy utterly refused to do: inform the public of the hazardous conditions IDNR deliberately created in state parks.”

CWE is working now on moving this litigation to the Appellate Court to appeal the flaws in the Court’s prior rulings.

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Founded in 1998, [The Center for Wildlife Ethics](#) is a 501c3 organization dedicated to protecting wildlife from exploitative agendas. CWE champions effective environmental activism by targeting systemic harm and uncovering the true agenda that sustains the violence and exploitation of animals and their habitats.

Additional information about this litigation can be obtained by sending a detailed request to [Laura@centerforwildlifeethics.org](mailto:Laura@centerforwildlifeethics.org).