



August 2, 2016

Laura M. Nirenberg, Esq.
Laura@centerforwildlifeethics.org
219.379.4401

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LOCAL NON-PROFIT ARGUES STATE EMPLOYEES LIABLE
FOR THE GRUESOME DEATH OF A DOG
Lethal Wildlife Traps Hidden in Versailles State Park Unauthorized**

La Porte, IN – The Center for Wildlife Ethics (CWE) filed a motion on July 31st seeking interlocutory appeal of the Superior Court of Marion County’s ruling that Indiana state employees are immune from all liability generated by hiding lethal traps on state park property negligently and without warning the public. CWE’s appeal also challenges the court’s ruling that the award for the loss of the Plaintiff’s beloved pet cannot exceed the mere value of a “replacement” dog. The Superior Court had granted summary judgment for the Defendant Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) on both issues.

An unsuspecting park patron and her rescued dog, Copper, suffered the tragic and foreseeable result of this recklessness in Versailles State Park. While walking in the park, the leashed dog was crushed in one of the dozens of traps hidden throughout the park and slowly suffocated to death while her traumatized owner struggled unsuccessfully to remove the lethal device from her dying dog’s windpipe.

This tragedy resulted from IDNR’s Emergency Rule-making scheme that permitted “authorized” trappers to set lethal devices throughout state park and reservoir properties. For eight years, under the guise of “nuisance” control, these “temporary” rules were enacted – without public notice, input or comment. According to an internal IDNR memoranda, the agency did not want its secret trapping program to become “a public media issue.”

According to Laura Nirenberg, CWE’s chief counsel and executive director, “It is undisputed that Versailles State Park’s Property Manager failed to satisfy the simple terms of the Emergency

Rule to legitimize any lethal trapping activities at Versailles. The state cannot now rely on the very same Rule they ignored as a policy to shield themselves from liability for the foreseeable (and inevitable) consequences of their actions.”

CWE’s attorneys argue that IDNR personnel were grossly negligent and the agency’s failure to caution park patrons about the presence or location of these lethal devices exhibited a reckless disregard for both public safety and sound public policy. The attorneys also argue that the use of a so-called “emergency” rule was improper and was calculated to benefit the trappers who sold the animal pelts for profit. The court will schedule a hearing or rule on CWE’s motion by August 30.

Founded in 1998, The Center for Wildlife Ethics is a 501c3 organization dedicated to exposing and combating human-inflicted or state-sanctioned violence against wildlife. 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 the pending civil lawsuit arising from the negligent placement of lethal traps on state park lands can be obtained by sending a detailed request to info@c4we.org.

###