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Subject: Grand Junction Sentinel: Why citizens have to intervene to protect wild cats Julie Marshall
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[Why citizens have to intervene to protect wild cats](#)

From the [November 2024 Election Coverage](#) series

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By JULIE MARSHALL

Thank you, Grand Junction Sentinel Editorial Board, for stating our “Yes on Prop 127” campaign has proven its case based on science and ethics.

“Supporters of this measure have made a good argument that hunting cougars with dogs and trapping bobcats is cruel, inhumane and unnecessary from a wildlife management perspective,” the editorial stated.

We were sad to read the board won’t endorse, wanting to see wildlife commissioners (political appointees by sitting governors who set policy) instead make these changes.

That’s great, but the history of Prop 127 shows that in 32

years nothing has, or ever will, change without a "yes" on Prop 127.

In 1992, Coloradans asked wildlife commissioners to protect bears from baiting and hounding and protect cubs from orphaning. We had to pass a ballot measure when the system failed wildlife. In 1996, we passed a measure to stop the indiscriminate and cruel use of leghold traps for the same reason.

Six years ago, citizens concerned over baiting and unlimited killing of bobcats included southwestern Colorado veterinarian Dr. Christine Capaldo, who discovered a trapper had set bait in a metal cage, then strangled him using a pole that dog catchers use with the loop on the end. She tells us it took 3 minutes for the animal to die, suffering.

If this were her dog, that trapper would have been served with a felony for animal cruelty based on egregious pain and trauma.

She, along with 208,000 citizens sent a petition to Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commissioners to end bobcat trapping.

Citizens' concerns were dismissed as not important.

Today fur trappers still use cat food as bait and terrorize bobcats by dogs. Unlimited numbers are bludgeoned or strangled without a clue as to their populations. I mean bobcats, not trappers, who number 700 or a tiny 0.01% of the human population.

Methods are more brutal today. Some say shoot 'em in the eye, angled down into the throat to avoid blood splatter that ruins the Chinese market price for fur coats. Copper pipe with a brass elbow is popular to crack skulls open. Fur trapping violates the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation in every way. It's disgusting, torturing and selling native wildlife.

For mountain lions, Larimer County deer hunter Dave Ruane was just one of many hunters trying to get his wildlife agency to stop ruining ethical hunting in Colorado by what is essentially a canned hunt. Dog packs are the hunters, but dogs don't buy hunting licenses. Trophy hunter Derek Wolfe described how he spent at least one hour to even find the lion held terrorized in a tree just for him to point-blank shoot.

Citizens went to the Legislature.

Years ago, a bill in the Legislature would have protected mountain lions from trophy hunters, but just like every one of the 500 mountain lions treed by dog packs, and shot off tree limbs every year in Colorado, that bill dropped and died.

The facts are trophy hunting guides paid \$8,500 to send dog packs to contain a mountain lion in a tree. As advertised, these guides will "take you to your trophy," where the dogs have "treed your trophy." Guaranteed 100%. The client is driven into remote forest, as a phone app tracks the GPS signal bouncing off the dogs' collars. Some dogs get hurt, suffering broken backs and some have even been abandoned.

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This blatantly violates the NAM tenet of fair chase. The lion has no chance.

About 250 of the 500 lions killed for trophies are females, which means kittens die of starvation without mothers, says Dr. Rick Hopkins, PhD, lion researcher of four decades.

My point is, citizens have made a valiant effort to work within the political system.

Wildlife belongs to all citizens and majestic apex predators exist for the health and balance of nature.

Where lions are no longer hunted, predators exist with stability and among deer in natural balance. This is true in California, which has not hunted lions for a half-century and where an average 9 lions are killed yearly due to conflict.

Prop 127 provides exceptions for professionals to manage rare individual cats posing risk as best proven practices.

It's past time for smart citizens to exercise their democratic freedom and VOTE YES on prop 127 to protect native wild cats from state-sanctioned cruelty. And invest in ethical outdoor recreation, including hunting, for the true balance of nature for all of Colorado.

Colorado native Julie Marshall is a journalist, former public information officer for Colorado Division of wildlife and a volunteer for the Prop 127 campaign.

