

THE SACRAMENTO BEE sacbee.com

Deal reached for tracking Sierra Nevada wildlife

The Associated Press

Published Monday, Jun. 04, 2012

SAN FRANCISCO -- The U.S. Forest Service and conservation groups have reached an agreement to strengthen monitoring of Sierra Nevada wildlife.

Under the settlement reached Friday, an independent panel of scientists will evaluate which plant and animal species the Forest Service uses to track the health of Sierra Nevada forests.

The agreement settles a federal lawsuit filed in response to the Bush administration's 2007 decision to reduce the number of species the agency monitored in California's largest mountain range.

That complaint was filed in 2008 by the legal group Earthjustice on behalf of Sierra Forest Legacy, Defenders of Wildlife, the Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club.

The Corvallis, Ore.-based Conservation Biology Institute will be charged with reviewing the Forest Service's monitoring plans for Sierra Nevada indicator species.