Kansas Sierra Club Position on the Use of Enhanced Technology to Hunt Coyotes (K.A.R. 115-5-1, Section d)

The Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes the recently approved use of enhanced technology, including night-vision and thermal imaging equipment and artificial lights, for the recreational hunting of coyotes and urges Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) to ban their use.

- KDWPT favored the special interests of predator hunters wanting to use high tech equipment for killing coyotes over the interests of all Kansans who enjoy the outdoors, including hunters who value sportsmanship.

KDWPT should put more emphasis on supporting outdoor activities by non-hunters, such as wildlife watchers, campers, hikers and equestrians, who do not pose threats to public safety or infringe upon the use of public or private lands. By giving disproportionate weight to the interests of one group, the agency becomes less relevant to society. The agency should not expand the limited conditions under which enhanced technology can be used.

- Hunting of coyotes with enhanced technology does not allow "sporting chance or fair chase."

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation establishes that wildlife should be killed only for a legitimate purpose and defines a sportsman as an individual who hunts primarily for the pursuit or chase, affords game a "sporting" chance (fair chase) and will not waste any game that is killed.

- Scientific studies do not support shooting coyotes as an effective means of controlling coyote populations or reducing predation on livestock or wildlife.

While it is the position of the Sierra Club that acceptable management approaches include both regulated periodic hunting and fishing, regulations should be based on sufficient scientifically valid biological data and implemented only when consistent with all other management purposes.

- Kansas Sierra Club asks KDWPT to reverse the decision which allows use of artificial lights, night-vision and thermal-imaging equipment for coyote hunting. If the regulation is not rescinded, then it must be enforced and monitored for adverse impacts on private landowners, public safety, law enforcement and/or other wildlife. If problems are identified, solutions should be implemented promptly.

Hunting of coyotes with enhanced technology is limited or banned in several states. Decision-makers entrusted with protection of wildlife for the benefit of all Kansans should weigh the broader biological, societal, cultural and economic considerations when making decisions.

Sierra Club supports wildlife and plant management, agricultural and other human practices that aim at discouraging human/wildlife/plant conflicts, with emphasis on nonlethal control of wildlife when feasible. Our mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; and to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources. Coyote hunting with enhanced technology is inconsistent with these goals and does not serve the interests of all Kansans.