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News Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rabies ORV Program Begins July 21

The Coconino County Health Department (CCHD), the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Wildlife Services (USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services Program) and partner organizations will begin the Oral Rabies Vaccination (ORV) bait distribution in areas in and around Flagstaff, Arizona on Tuesday, July 21. Distribution may continue through Thursday, July 23.

The ORV Program is part of the Rabies Quarantine which was approved by the Coconino County Board of Supervisors on July 7. The goal of the Flagstaff ORV Program is to provide a rabies-free buffer around the area where rabies has been documented and to slow down the spread of rabies among gray foxes. The ORV baits will be distributed in an area extending out 15 miles from locations where fox rabies cases have been reported. The 15-mile zone is a guideline based on previous ORV work done by the USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services Program with gray foxes in Texas.

The ORV Program will utilize an oral rabies vaccine encased in a bait coating. Extensive research has shown the vaccine to be safe for humans, pets and wildlife. The vaccine/bait units will be distributed by air in rural and forested areas and dispensed by hand in populated areas within the expanded Rabies Quarantine area. Hand-baiting will be used to reach urban areas where there may be concerns associated with distributing baits by air and to reduce the possibility of people and domestic animals coming into contact with the baits.

The Rabies Quarantine also includes a Trap, Vaccinate and Release (TVR) Program, similar to the TVR Program used in 2001, to vaccinate skunks in areas where there has been an increase of rabies in skunk populations. The TVR Program will begin in early August and will include two large areas located in east Flagstaff. A map of the TVR Program area is available at www.coconino.az.gov/health.

The Rabies Quarantine places certain mandatory restrictions on residents within the Quarantine area. The Quarantine includes the following requirements and restrictions:

- All cats and dogs must be confined within an enclosure or secured on the owner's property; or when not on the owner's property, pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet. Cats or dogs found at-large in the area will be impounded.

- All persons within the expanded Quarantine Area who own or control domesticated dogs and cats must make sure that their pets are vaccinated and that vaccinations are up to date. Vaccinations are available from your local veterinarian or at periodically scheduled CCHD Rabies clinics. **To help citizens meet this requirement, the CCHD and the Second Chance Center for Animals will sponsor a low-cost Rabies Vaccination Clinic on Wednesday, July 22 and Wednesday, July 29 from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The clinic will be held at Second Chance Center for Animals, 11665 N. US Highway 89, Flagstaff.** Rabies vaccinations will be \$6.00, (dogs and cats). Fees for other vaccinations will vary. Cash and checks will be accepted. CCHD Animal Management will be offering the opportunity to license your canine companion - \$15.00 altered; \$25.00 unaltered. Spay/neuter vouchers (\$30.00 value) will also be available for canine owners current with rabies vaccinations and licensing.

- During the Quarantine period, a team of staff and volunteers from partner agencies will be distributing vaccine bait in selected parts of the expanded Quarantine Area and continuing public education. The Quarantine allows the Health Department and participating agencies to enter private property to place vaccine bait packets. **The vaccine bait packets are not harmful to humans or animals; however the CCHD recommends that you avoid touching the packets.** Additional information about the bait packets is available at www.coconino.az.gov/health. People are prohibited from interfering with the bait packets in any way. This will help to ensure that enough wild animals become vaccinated by eating the bait.

- Feeding wild animals is forbidden as a part of the Quarantine. This will help to minimize the opportunity for exposure to pets and humans by keeping wild animals away from homes, pets and people.

- In addition, pet owners must not leave pet food outside after sundown, and compost bins and piles must be completely enclosed.

- Although many wild animals are nocturnal, it is possible for animals to be out during the day searching for food. If a wild animal is behaving in a strange manner, such as acting aggressive, staggering, or will not back away, call CCHD Rabies Information Line at 928-679-7350.

- Wild animals may not be trapped within the expanded Quarantine area limits or transported outside the area without prior written approval from the Coconino County Health Department. Do not approach a wild animal. Call the Health Department for assistance.

A copy of the revised Quarantine Declaration and a map of the expanded Quarantine area are available at www.coconino.az.gov/health. Please contact the Coconino County Health Department Rabies Information Line at 928-679-7350 for additional information or visit www.coconino.az.gov/health.