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## Conserving California Cougars Through Successful Conflict Transformation: The Cougar Conservancy Steps Up

LOS ANGELES, *Calif.*— A new project launches just as cougars living in Southern and Central Coast California are granted candidate species status under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The Cougar Conservancy's mission is to reduce human-wildlife conflict and conserve cougar populations through science-based management and conservation. With the new CESA protections coming into play, it's even more important to identify conflicts in these small, isolated populations and address them in a way that saves the cougars and domestic animals.

The Cougar Conservancy's Conflict Task Force conducts work on-the-ground to prevent conflicts before they occur, directly intervene when a cougar's life is on the line, and empower local communities through training and education. The Conflict Task Force provides expert advice on the available conflict prevention measures as well as the efficacy of such tools, based on the property and specific geographic area. If a resident has unprotected pets or livestock they wish to protect, individuals may be eligible to receive a cougar-proof enclosure.

"We know what we need to do, and we have many tools at our disposal to prevent and mitigate human-cougar conflicts." says Korinna Domingo, Founder and Director of the Cougar Conservancy. "We are looking forward to working in collaboration with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, scientists, policy makers, and communities to help people coexist with cougars. In these small, isolated populations, every cougar counts."

"Korinna has proven herself to be such a dedicated force for saving our mountain lions, whether it be working with livestock owners to find solutions, educating the public about coexisting, or advocating for protections for our threatened populations. At the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), we take very seriously the responsibility to provide the tools needed for people to coexist safely with the wildlife we work to protect." says Beth Pratt, Regional Executive Director of NWF California. "I am excited about partnering with Korinna with her new organization as part of our #SaveLACougars campaign to assist with the needed outreach and education about living safely with mountain lions. Her new nonprofit, the Cougar Conservancy, is going to provide critical services to help ensure these magnificent animals have a future."

Recent <u>research</u> has shown that some cougar populations in Southern California could disappear in the coming decades. Conserving large predators such as cougars is possible, even in highly urbanized landscapes. Their conservation will require strategies to promote coexistence between people and cougars, protection of large swaths of habitat capable of sustaining large carnivores, as well as connectivity between those habitats.

Californians can coexist with cougars in this modern world.

The Cougar Conservancy is dedicated to reducing human-cougar conflicts and promoting education and learning of Puma concolor.