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Greens Angry With Moratorium on Listing Of New Endangered Species

Tuesday, June 12, 2001

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FOX NEWS

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LOS ANGELES — Anthropologist Jane Goodall and some of the environmental lobby's biggest guns are taking aim at Pres. Bush.

Greens are angry with a moratorium on the listing of new endangered species and the president's proposed restrictions on so-called

citizen lawsuits.

What many forget — or fail to say — is that the listing moratorium was first proposed under former Pres. Clinton, not current Pres. Bush.

"The Endangered Species Act has an excellent goal I think most Americans share: to make sure species don't become extinct," said Interior Secretary Gale Norton.

But right now, Norton says she's having a tough time doing even that. Her agency is being suffocated — papered to death — by an avalanche of citizen lawsuits filed not by citizens, but by the two radical environmental groups Earth Justice and The Center for Biological Diversity.

Activists argue that if weren't for the lawsuits, very few animals or plants would make it onto the endangered species list.

"In the last decade 92% of all species listed as endangered in the state of California are because citizens sued the government," said The Center for Biological Diversity's Kieran Suckling.

For five years, the center filed a 'citizen' lawsuit every 32 days, according to records. Not to save species — say critics — but to reshape society, stop growth, and promote its anti-human agenda.

"We have gone too far, too extreme on environmental things, too extreme on the Endangered Species Act," said House Natural Resources Chairman Rep. Jim Hansen, R-Utah.

The act was created 29 years ago to protect grey whales and grizzly bears. But today, 80 percent of the species under its protection are plants. The fact that most of these species are still disappearing has armed critics with the ammunition they need to argue that the act is a failure.

Recovery efforts can cost upwards of \$50 million per species, not counting the legal bills. Environmental lawyers can cost taxpayers up to

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In one case, Sierra Club attorneys demanded \$5 million for representing a blind salamander in Texas. They settled for \$3.5 million.

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