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Wolf Country USA Owner Sentenced in Palmer Court

(PALMER, Alaska) – The owner of Wolf Country was sentenced in Palmer Court today after pleading guilty to one charge of owning and selling wolf hybrids. A Palmer judge ordered Werner Schuster, 81, of Palmer, to pay a \$3,000 fine and sentenced him to 90 days in jail with all 90 days suspended. Schuster was also placed on probation for five years and ordered not to own or sell wolf hybrids without a license. In exchange for the guilty plea, charges against his wife, Gail Schuster, 69, and their business, Wolf Country USA Inc., were dismissed. All three were originally charged with three counts apiece in association with possessing wolf hybrids and selling wolf hybrids to other individuals. Two of the three counts Werner Schuster faced were also dismissed in accordance with a plea agreement.

On June 16, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, with the assistance of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, executed a search warrant at the residence of Werner and Gail Schuster and Wolf Country USA located north of Palmer on the Glenn Highway. Troopers took DNA samples from all but one of the 30 adult suspected wolf hybrids and 10 puppies. Laboratory test results performed on the samples confirmed that all but three had maternal wolf ancestry. Lab experts confirmed that all animals tested had wolf ancestry. Troopers also found business records for the sale of numerous wolf hybrids.

In 2002, Alaska Department of Fish and Game regulation 5 AAC92.030 made it unlawful to possess or sell a wolf hybrid without a permit issued by the State of Alaska. The registration also required the owner to spade or neuter and microchip the wolf hybrid. Schuster admitted to changing the UKC registration paperwork to reflect the animals were Alaska huskies and not wolf hybrids to avoid this permit requirement in order to continue selling the wolf hybrids.

As a result of the case, Schuster agreed to release the animals involved to be transferred to facilities in Colorado and California that are legally permitted to possess the wolf hybrids.

Contact Andrew Peterson with the Office of Special Prosecutions at (907)269-7948 for more information.