

Michele Reese

Creating a “post-recovery” plan for wolves at this time is premature, as Washington is still far from meeting the goals set forth in the current plan. Instead of racing to create a post-delisting plan, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife must instead focus its attention on current wolf-management needs. This includes: (1) Resolving, through nonlethal means, conflicts between livestock and wolves, which are taking place in some of the state's best habitat for wolves; and (2) Conducting extensive public education on wolves. This is emphasized in the current plan but has not been done by you, despite the fact that all wolf experts say public education is the single most important action to take for successful wolf conservation. Additionally, under the current wolf plan and any future wolf plan, management guidance, policies and protocols — and especially those which could result in wolves being killed — must be developed through a science-based, public rule-making process that results in transparent, rational and enforceable strategies. Therefore I urge you to: (1) Stop cherry-picking science to justify wolf-killing; (2) Answer the global call by scientists to protect and conserve apex predators; and (3) Use every opportunity to extol the value of top predators in keeping nature healthy, and cease current messaging that prioritizes livestock over wolves. The public will fail to see any reason to coexist with wolves if the department fails to explain that wolves are ecologically important and worth conserving. As you can see, if you read this letter, my email is Onewolfphoto@gmail.com. That means I have an affinity for wolves. What gives you, or some rancher, the right to advocate for the elimination of an apex predator, whose only crime has been keeping the balance of an ecological system? The biggest predator of all is the human! By virtue of his superior brain some would say gives him the right to “manage” natural predators. Some would also argue that as the stewards of our world and her creatures are therefore obligated to protect ALL creatures. Since when do these two ideas clash? Since Big Money ranching and agriculture has become more important than humane practices! Why not just be more interested in a balanced ecosystem instead of raking in profits for your shareholders. That is the ethical and moral way to proceed, or have you forgotten that , too? Thank you for considering my comments.