

## Michael Helmeste

Although I have many criticisms of WDFW's handling of wolves to date -- murdering them at the behest of ranchers who lose a small handful of livestock -- those criticisms will likely be echoed many times over through citizen comments and it would be unnecessary and ineffective to repeat them.

Instead I will just ask as a citizen, tax payer, and rural land owner in Washington state that going forward, the lives of wolves should be fully respected as befits their intelligence, family oriented social structure, and natural place in the ecosystem. This constitutes, to the extent that it is within the purview of WDFW:

- \* Rule making against hunting or otherwise killing wolves
- \* Rule making against any data collection or retention on wolf packs that could be used to locate wolves for the purpose of killing them or which could be made discoverable for the purposes of doing so through Freedom of Information requests
- \* The removal from consideration or debate any notion of wolves having status as a game animal
- \* WDFW's backing of (and enforcement of any subsequent) legislation to enforce significant financial and criminal penalties, including jail time and felony record, for anyone who kills or assaults a wolf, with an exception only in the case of self-defense to the same standard required in any affirmative defense against murder, manslaughter, or assault

I recognize that this is a substantially different position than the WDFW holds today, however I would encourage consideration of that fact along with the amazingly harsh, substantial outcry against the WDFW's recent wolf "management" policies when considering how drastically the WDFW is going to have to change its outlook on this issue.