

## Sharon Morris

Creating a “post-recovery” plan for wolves now is premature, as Washington is still far from meeting the goals set forth in the current plan. Instead of hurrying to create a post-delisting plan, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife must focus on current wolf-management needs. This activity includes the following components: (1) Resolving, through nonlethal means, conflicts between livestock and wolves which are occurring in some of the state's best habitat for wolves; (2) Conducting extensive public education on wolves. This action is emphasized in the current plan but you have not yet acted on it despite the fact that all wolf experts say public education is the single most important action 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 wolf-killing, must be developed through a science-based, public rule-making process that results in transparent, rational and enforceable strategies. To meet these requirements, you need to act as follows: (1) Stop cherry-picking science to justify wolf-killing; (2) Answer the global call by scientists to protect and conserve apex predators; (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. Thank you for your careful consideration of my comments.