

Dixie Dringman

We need to realise times are changing and the days when cattle barons were allowed to run livestock unhindered and kill any "varmint" they considered a threat to livestock is gone or coming to an end. Also sportsmen that claim wolves kill off the wildlife need to explain how for thousands of years wolves and wildlife lived and thrived together. More wildlife are killed by poachers, vehicle collisions and pets, feral or unsupervised dogs that pack up and run free while their owners are at work or asleep at night than by wolves.

Today the Wild West is a tourist destination, and livestock and hunting are taking a back seat to tourism in economic growth. Tourists come from literally all over the earth, with plenty of money to spend and the wolves can be part of that attraction. Instead of delisting wolves, promote them and use the wolf packs, as tourist attractions. Live wolves will bring a lot more money to local economies than dead ones.

As much as some hunters and ranchers wish we were all still living in the 1800's the fact is it is 2019 and they are now fighting against overwhelming public approval for wolves.

For livestock growers a choice needs to be given, continue to graze their privately owned livestock on public lands for a mere penance and accept the fact they might lose a few animals to wolves every year or relinquish all grazing right to public lands. Relinquished grazing leases could be given to more progressive and informed ranchers that realize their world will not end if wolves exist in it.

Hunters need to realize that they too are becoming a thing of the past. Hiking, birding, mountain bikes, skiing, and other recreational sports that do not require killing either prey or predators is fast becoming the main recreational past time.

Wolves are part of the natural landscape and they could become part of the billion dollar tourist industry for Washington state. Instead of continually capitulating to the old and outdated demands of livestock growers and hunters it is time for the leaders of Washington state to step into the 21st Century and protect wolves and the tourist dollars that come with them.

Respectfully,
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