

Okanogan County Farm Bureau

The Okanogan County Farm Bureau has noted that the wolf population is increasing in the northern counties of Okanogan, Stevens and Ferry. Due to this increase there is now significant evidence that wolves are increasing their predation on livestock. We would like to point out that both the National Forest policy and that of the state DNR have as their management practices a dedication to multiple use which includes grazing. While the interest of WDFW is to maintain the presence of wolves in the state of Washington this cannot be accomplished at the expense of your other management priorities such as grazing which support or livestock industry. The fact that wolves are increasing their predation on livestock shows that the wolf population has exceeded its sustainable relationship to its natural prey and must now be reduced in population by relocation or lethal means.

This means that any post recovery plan must identify the availability of natural prey and determine the number of wolves that can be sustainably supported without resorting to livestock predation. The plan must also recognize that some wolves may become habituated to human presence and feed on livestock. Ranchers and farmers must be given the support to eliminated such wolves once they are identified. This will maintain a certain fear level necessary to imprint on wolves to reduce habituation.