

Patrick Jennings

Creating a plan for recovery of wolves at this time is premature, as Washington is still far from meeting the goals set forth in the current plan. Instead of catering to 1 ranch every year, the WDFW must 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 our national forests (public land). And following up with documented proof of their actions. (2) Conducting public education on wolves. This is emphasized in the current plan but has not been done by the WDFW, despite the fact that all wolf experts say public education is the single most important action to take for successful wolf conservation. Some ranchers openly call for the elimination of all wolves, this is not coexistence! 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. There is no excuse for complete packs to be wiped out. (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 doesn't stop the open hostility by ranchers toward wolves. Wolves are ecologically important and worth conserving. Yellowstone has proven this fact! Thank you for considering my comments.