

Representative Mary Dye

As a Washington state Representative serving a constituency which includes numerous farmers and ranchers, it is vital that WDFW contract with a third party when it comes to any depredation investigation involving wolves. An example of a third party would be the USDA Wildlife Service. In addition, at least two wolves in each pack ought to be collared with the highest quality technical device available. The collar data ought to be made available in real time to producers, range riders and ranch/farm workers. Further, interstate data sharing (ID and OR) is necessary.

It is important to utilize hazing methods to manage wolf pack activities. Range riders are necessary to protect, guard, remove and move livestock away from wolves--but tools must be used to deter wolves from coming near the livestock in the first place. It is imperative that wolves receive a negative stimulus in order to revise wolf pack behavior and prevent habituation. All efforts must be made to control known depredating wolves within 2 days (48 hours) after discovery of livestock death--after a second confirmed depredation in 12 months.

My thought is that wolf populations must be kept at a level where they can be properly managed by the department. It must be a priority of the department to maintain healthy and robust ungulate populations so that livestock producers are not negatively impacted by the wolves who remain on the land. WDFW ought to use an integrated predator/prey management policy with the final goal being the achievement of robust prey populations for wolves and hunters. That said, hunting of wolves ought to be authorized as a tool to control these populations, as part of a multi-species management approach that maintains viable populations of all wildlife species.

In addition, better education of the public at large is necessary. Our citizens--statewide--must be made aware of the management practices necessary to achieve a sustainable wolf population. Information ought to be extrapolated in a way that the public understands the impact on products they enjoy and/or the costs incurred when adequate management is not provided. And I believe that compensation is necessary when losses are experienced--whether these losses are direct or indirect.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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