

Tracy Ouellette

I am concerned that the department is prematurely planning for delisting of the gray wolf before populations have recovered to a sustainable level. Please make sure that scientists are the primary input as to when populations have reached a sustainable level.

In addition, I have been concerned that management of wolves has been largely on the behalf of a few special interests in the state, in particular ranchers who have never supported return of wolves. However, the majority of the state has expressed motivation for wolf recovery, and wolves are existing primarily on public lands and should be managed for the interests of everybody. Ranchers using public lands for grazing should have to assume some of their own risk of loss rather than having subsidized risk by the public and against the interests of the rest of the state in maintaining healthy wolf numbers. Lethal management of wolves on public lands should not be part of the wolf management plan, especially when it is consistently on behalf of a very few interests in the state. Wolf recovery is certainly not without risk to people and livestock but the residents and administrators of the state of Washington have already decided that the benefit of wolves to our ecosystem, wildlife and wild lands exceeds that risk, and so they should be managed in a way that fully supports their recovery.