

Mark Hodges

I think there is a real conflict of interest in placing wolf "restoration" over or equal to cattle and sheep grazing as the USFS land was set aside clearly and primarily for resource use and access for local families. Wolf conflict was not a problem until the federal government planted wolves in Yellowstone and Idaho in 1995. We have a case where government has actually planted wolves among our sheep and made them a priority. We cannot run our cows on any national park land or on many wilderness areas which consist of tens of thousands of acres. But the feds backed by the state are fulfilling the pledge of local and urban environmental coalitions of getting rid of the cows off of land set aside for them. Pinchot and Roosevelt were clear that USFS land was set aside for local control and resource access. Pinchot said it was not to be controlled by outside interest groups like the powerful environmental coalitions, but was for the little man, his words. I talked to the old timers who grew here and trapped and grazed before, during and after the depression, and there were very few wolves here. This planting and forming and protecting wolf habitat on land needed by local rancher's (and wolves are preying on cows and sheep on private range too) is an attack on local families and on the very purpose the federal land was set aside for. The economic damage and stress has been huge and the federal government should not be allowed to escape financial accountability for having planted wolves in states where ranching is a known and cherished livelihood. Use national parks not USFS land or open your parks for cattle and sheep, legalize the leghold and allow ranchers to defend the existence. This is not good governance. It's hostility to the very people the land was set aside for. Thank you, Mark Hodges