

## Josh Cooper

Hello, I am an active hunter in this state and predominately hunt for Mule deer and black tail. I reside on the western part of the state and hunt the general mule deer season in the Okanogan Valley. My thoughts on wolves and what their purpose and impact on our game populations are nothing short of negative. My family has hunted the methow and okanogan valley for well over 100 years and never in their life time have they ever seen this kind of a negative impact on the mule deer population or game population ever. Wolves are the leading cause of this and I believe deep down WDFW knows this. My father was an employee for WDFW for 23 years and was an active hunter in the methow and okanogan valley. I recall him telling me what kind of a negative impact this will cause to the mule deer and overall game population once these wolves move more inland on our state. He couldn't have predicted the future any better. So, as far as management goes for "wolf recovery" I feel as a hunter and outdoors man that there needs to be at the least a general season opened very soon for these animals. Going into specific units and taking care of the "problem wolves" is not making this situation any better at all. I also have to ask WDFW, do you or any of your biologists have an actual singular count of how many wolves we have in this state? I have not heard or read a definitive number at all. Are your biologists actually going out in the forest with boots on the ground documenting how many wolves we have? What is the number of wolves WDFW seeks before these wolves are "Delisted"? I hope that your plan to "manage" the wolf population is constructed and acted upon quickly. WDFW is discouraging so many hunters (including myself) to continue to hunt in this great state. Unfortunately if nothing happens soon you will lose a very large amount of hunters to out of state hunting. All of those tags and licenses will not be purchased here in our great state of Washington. So I ask again, please act upon this issue before it is too late. Please act upon this before our Deer (Mule Deer, Black tail and White tail) and Elk population is so decimated that there is no way to hunt and harvest these animals in the wild. I clearly understand that WDFW's goal is conservation of all animal species native to this state but it seems a blind eye has been turned on our deer and elk populations. Many hunters and outdoors man continually are scratching our heads as to why? Why over populate our state with apex predators that serve no logical purpose in our forests? Why over populate our forests with a wolf species that was not native to this state 100 years ago? Washington State is structured so uniquely for hunting with its diverse ecosystems. I have never understood why our state isn't a true staple for hunting that should attract more out state popularity. No one from Idaho or Montana wants to come and hunt game in our state and I believe Wolves most definitely won't help that goal as far as game hunting goes. I hope my comment helps with efforts to manage this predator. Thank you for your time.