

## Lynn Kelly

Wolves are important members of an ecosystem. Please look at what happened in Yellowstone. When wolves were reintroduced, they kept the deer, elk, etc., populations in check allowing vegetation to recover. Trees and other types of vegetation were able to grow without being browsed out, thereby stopping erosion into streams. The streams recovered and attracted other types of wildlife. The balance was restored making the ecosystem richer and more diverse. The goals of the current plan haven't been reached. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife should 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 the state's best habitat for wolves; and (2) Conducting extensive public education on wolves. Wolf experts say public education is the single most important action to take for successful wolf conservation. 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; (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 fails to explain that wolves are ecologically important and worth conserving. Thank you for considering my comments.