

## Bryan Wyberg

All I read about Washington wolves is that the state wildlife agency has killed another one. This is horrible, a perverse method of wolf management, and it illustrates exactly why work still needs to be done on the RECOVERY of wolves in Washington. It is not the time to claim victory and start planning for post-recovery, as there are still very few wolves in the state, and there are continual occurrences particularly in northeast Washington of lethal means being used against the few wolf packs that have taken up residence in the state. I believe that there is still a shoot first mentality in the state wildlife agency. Some recalcitrant ranchers have ideological opposition to wolves and ignore the benefits of non-lethal management of wolf/cattle conflict, such as range riders.

Unfortunately the Washington wildlife agency kowtows to these individuals, rather than adhering to recovery plans and saying no to lethal actions. This means recovery is not sustainable. Therefore, creating a “post-recovery” plan for wolves at this time is premature, as Washington is still far from meeting the goals set forth in the current plan for recovery of the wolf. I ask that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife focus your attention on meeting the current wolf-management needs. This must be done to stabilize the situation for wolves in Washington and the maintenance of sustainable populations for all times in all of the historical range of wolves. Therefore, I ask that the Department of Fish and Wildlife complete the following actions first, before contemplation of post-recovery planning. (1) There are demonstrated successful non-lethal methods of resolving conflicts between livestock and wolves. The Department must institute the use of non-lethal means in all areas, particularly in the problem areas in northeastern Washington, which is a region with some of the state's best habitat for wolves. (2) Finish the plan you are operating under now, such as public education on wolves. This is emphasized in the current plan but has not been done. Public education is critical for achieving successful wolf recovery and population stabilization across its entire range. (3) Develop a wolf management structure that is focused on achieving non-lethal means of control. This can and must be developed based upon the analysis of peer-reviewed scientific study. The management plan should be implemented using the public rule-making process that is transparent and rational. Therefore I urge you to: (1) Answer the global call by scientists to protect and conserve your apex predators, wolves and grizzlies. (2) Stop your current management focus that prioritizes livestock over wolves. Wolves are important to the balance of the natural systems, not the bad guys. (3) Let scientific analysis guide all management decision making, and reject the historical biases of those who will never see fit to try to reside peacefully with wolves, but who instead use their political influence to call for unnecessary and destructive killing of wolves.