

David And Gay Santerre

It's quite frankly a joke that you are asking the public to weigh in on "post-recovery" wolf plans while you continue to gun them down. Your department really needs to focus on how to manage wolf populations without killing them. Having watched many a documentary on these incredible predators I've seen multiple effective ways at keeping predation on ranch livestock at a minimum and the ranchers in these documentaries have claimed them to be effective. So why do you grab your guns any time there is a conflict? It's lazy, short sighted, contrary to what the public wants and it completely ignores decades of science on how to manage this problem. The question I have is, who do you belong to? The majority of the voting and tax paying public that pays for your salaries and allows for your job? Or the interests of a few wealthy and politically connected individuals? In a true democracy you belong to me, Joe Public! 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. Instead of racing to create a post-delisting plan, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife must instead 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. This is emphasized in the current plan but has not been done by you, despite the fact that all 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.