

Joanne Vinton

I was living in Eugene, Oregon, when the first Idaho wolves traveled into the state. I now live in California, where Oregon wolves now live. It is thrilling. I feel as though these wolves belong to me, no matter where they travel. I welcome them back, am on the Oregon and California email lists that report on the wolves' activities, and am a vegetarian. So I firmly believe that 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. 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. You must educate yourselves about the importance of top predators, and then use every opportunity to educate the public. We're only a month away from 2020. Stop thinking like people who lived in the 1820s!