

## Sharon Adkins

It is appropriate and reasonable for humans to plan for how many wolves or other creatures are numerous enough to decide that we have "enough". There are several problems, however, with our plans: (1) They are, particularly in the case of wolves, a result of a highly political process with many economic interests at play; (2) these plans cannot take into account natural occurrences that may decimate wolf populations, such as contagious diseases creating massive die-offs; (3) Those who benefit from having a wolf-free environment will continually try to limit the number of wolves in Washington State in order to fulfill their economic objectives (4) wolves go where there is prey. Expecting wolves to exist in densely populated areas is highly unrealistic. There are other problems, however the truth is before us -- there are not now "enough" wolves, even by our own planning documents, to begin to have open hunting seasons or poisonings or other destructive measures. The management of wildlife is important as we have created depleted environments and habitat, however, I often wonder how many humans we declare are "enough", or house cats, or crows, for instance. 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.