Richard Timmins

Although my career career as a veterinarian ranged from private practice to working for a corporation to teaching in a major university, my spiritual and physical renewal has always come from hiking, camping and canoeing in the wilderness. Listening to wolves howl and actually seeing a wolf in the wild gave me the greatest satisfaction. When I heard that wolves had returned to Washington, I was ecstatic, because not only was it important to me personally, but scientific studies have confirmed and defined the great importance of predators, specifically wolves, in enhancing and maintaining an ecological balance in nature. Now I am frustrated and outraged to learn that the WA Fish and Wildlife department is spending time and money envisioning the management of wolves in a future "post recovery" situation, instead of focusing on improving and implementing the earlier (2011) Plan. As pointed out by Governor Inslee in his letter to the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife "The status quo of annual lethal removal is simply unacceptable." I, and a great majority of Washington citizens, agree with Governor Inslee, and ask that the Department focus on improvement of strategies to support wolf recovery and resolve conflicts with nonlethal actions. 1) Using an updated scientific approach, identify and implement nonlethal means of resolving conflicts between livestock and wolves. 2) Improve, expand and implement an effective public outreach program. As stated in the 2011 plan, "Implementation of a public outreach and education program is a high priority in the wolf conservation and management plan." This has not been accomplished. I believe that an effective public outreach program would have reduced the potential for violence that caused you to cancel public sessions discussing the issue. 3) Formulate policies that recognize the wolf as an apex predator that has an essential role in maintenance of a healthy ecosystem. This means stop prioritizing livestock over wolf recovery. Thank you for considering my comments.