

Janet Bell

I care about wildlife, habitats, environment and ecosystem balance. They are precious and irreplaceable, and should be future generations' inheritance. If we lose them, there are no do-overs. It bears repeating: IF WE LOSE THEM, THERE ARE NO DO-OVERS. Throwing away their protections kowtows to instant gratification and corporate greed. Indiscriminate wildlife and habitats ravages are bioindicators that inform the health of the environment, and it's not looking good for them or any of us. Thank you for listening and caring about our precious resources that cannot defend themselves, and their importance in our heritage and future. We need leaders that protect them and don't throw them under the bus. 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.