

## Tess Gallagher

Washington is still far from meeting the goals set forth in its current plan for wolf management in our state. We need to meet those goals BEFORE any further actions. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife must instead focus its attention on current wolf-management needs. Top of the list is educating farmers and the public at large about why wolves are important. Then: (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, a science-based, public rule-making process must be in place, one 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.