

Robin Fitch

I am a retired environmental scientist and I would dearly love to see wolves back on the Olympic peninsula. This part of Washington would be perfect for them, if they could get here. However, if they continue to be killed by the state over in the eastern reaches, we don't have a chance for seeing wolves here in my lifetime. It's a fact of life that we are overrun with deer in this part of the state. Having wolves back to fill that apex predator niche would be a smart way to address the issue- it would not only save human lives and property but would also enhance the ungulate population health. Please consider the following comments regarding the Dept's plan to delist wolves in Washington state. First and most importantly, don't do it! It is far, far too soon... since its required by law for wolves to be present in all three recovery regions, and they are not present in western Washington, why would the Dept be considering implementing a plan that is categorically against current law? Secondly, the Department needs to reform its current approach on managing wolf conflict. You've killed wolves rather than tried to implement non-lethal means of controlling wolf-livestock conflict. This absolutely needs to stop. Third, the Department needs to reform its philosophic approach to wolves in Washington state. This isn't the middle ages any more and the fears and myths associated with the Big Bad Wolf are far in our past. Our science has shown that predators such as wolves are critical components to ecosystem health. I believe the public knows this and the Department needs to demonstrate through its actions that it is acting in the interest of the entire state, and not just the livestock and game industries. Fourth, update your science in the Wolf Management Plan. It's been eight years, and to ignore what has been learned in those years is nothing less than incompetence. Fifth, implement a mandate that prohibits wolf killing on public land. For that matter, implement a mandate that prohibits the state of Washington to kill or trap wolves anywhere. Six, do not under any circumstance consider the wolf for designation as a game species! We need them to control the ungulates! This should be your mandate: (1) use a science-based, public rule-making process that results in transparent, rational and enforceable strategies, and (2) protect and conserve apex predators (they are needed). Thank you for considering my comments.