

## Marilyn Jasper

As an environmental and wildlife activist for many decades, when allies and I read about any public agency's rush to kill apex predators (in two or three states) when their populations' recoveries are not solid, it follows that any "post-recovery" plan for wolves at this time is not only borderline premature, it also suggests a rush to ensure they will never fully recover. Washington has not even met objectives in the current plan, which is where the focus should be--instead of "post-recovery. We urge the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to focus only on current wolf-management needs, such as: (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 implemented, 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. Additionally, we urge the WDFW to: (1) Stop cherry-picking science to justify wolf-killing, which demeans an otherwise respected agency; and (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 (which hopefully is not the agency's clandestine unspoken goal). Thank you for considering our views.