Anushka Drescher

I think human society needs to rethink its relationship with wilderness. We have a debt to wilderness. We have eliminated and all but eliminated so many species on this earth. We have replaced so much beautiful, diverse nature with industrial monoculture and highly polluting animal agriculture. We have filled the air, earth, sea and waterways with toxic pesticides, fumes from chemical plants and fossil fuel production, cleaning products, and many other noxious substances. We have destroyed so much for our supposed benefit and comfort. Yet humans are emotionally and physically sicker than ever (if you closed all pharmacies, a huge fraction of the population would die within a few weeks or months, since so many people only survive on medications). I believe it's time for us humans to pull back, to clean up our act, to 'take' less, and to make more space for other creatures. We will feel better as a society. Imagine human population declining to levels that existed 100 or 200 years ago. There will be more space for everyone, less traffic jams, and more resources for all. Imagine kids everywhere having wild spaces to play in and explore again. Imagine the mystery, magic, and yes, danger, of having wild animals again. We need the future generations to respect nature. That also means respecting that there is a place for predators other than ourselves. Let us be humble, let us TAKE and CONTROL LESS, and we will end up having richer, healthier lives. Let us feel a part of nature again, not a species that simply dominates. I believe society as a whole will benefit. 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.