

## Andrew Herman

Creating a “post-recovery” plan for wolves at this time is premature, as Washington is far from meeting the goals set forth in the current plan. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife MUST focus its attention on current wolf-management needs. Instead of racing to create a post-delisting plan. 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; (2) Removing cattle from prime wolf habitat; and (3) Conducting extensive public education on wolves. While emphasized in the current plan this has not been done by WDFW, 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 and any future wolf plan, management guidance, policies, and protocols — and especially those that 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; (3) Remove cattle from prime wolf habitat; and (4) 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.