

Ursula Cohrs

I believe that Washington is still far from meeting the goals set forth in the current plan, so creating a “post-recovery” plan for wolves at this time seems premature. 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 should include: (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. This is why I you to: (1) Please don't cherry-pick science to justify wolf-killing (2) Be responsive to the world-wide call by scientists to protect and conserve apex predators; and (3) Please use every opportunity to explain the value of top predators to keep nature healthy, and cease current messaging that prioritizes livestock over wolves. It is quite clear to me that the public will not see any reason to coexist with wolves if the department does not explain that wolves are ecologically important and worth conserving. All these points are important and your responsibility. Thanks for reading my letter. Thank you for considering my comments.