

James Loran

WDFW Director Susewind, WDFW Commission, and Governor Jay Inslee: No recovery plan for wolves in Washington State can reasonably include the killing of wolves because of cattle depredation. The cattle that are on 'Cattle Grazing Allotments' do not have the priority of existence over the wolves. Yes, the federal government has legal reasons for making the claim the cattle do have the priority, but a reasonable person understands that legal stance to be inconsistent with our ecosystem realities. The cattle are an invasive species and are harmful to the local environments, and to the global ecosystem. The support industry of destructive agriculture to provide feed for cattle is having dire and alarming consequences globally. Cattle ranching is beginning its economic death throes now because of its destructiveness and its inefficiencies in providing viable nutrition to a hungry global populace. Next week is the premiere of the movie *Game Changers*. I highly recommend you watch it and take to heart its message. It is your purview to be responsible stewards of our State's environments, wildlife, economy, and climate crisis agendas. Wolves are an apex factor in all of this, not just an apex predator. They are the guardians of the wilderness and are the guardians of our ecological consciences. To disregard the preeminence of wolves as a major and critical influence in the paradigm of ecological responsibility is folly. It may be currently politically expedient for you to demonize and kill wolves, to callously disregard them as the essential element in our biological diversity, but to do so is to further the demise of our State's place in the global ecological crisis. signed: James V. Loran

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.