

Dr. E. O'Halloran

I have been angry and dismayed that WA Fish and Wildlife have repeatedly killed wolves for a single rancher who has not moved his livestock away from wolf dens. This is a repeated failure on every level. Now WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife acts like wolf populations have "recovered" when this is false. Now more than ever we need healthy ecosystems and wolves have proven to return ecosystems to good health. Just see the studies that have come out of Yellowstone. 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. I am sick and tired of WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife siding with wolf hating extremists, ranchers who fail to manage their own stocks appropriately, and rabid representatives like Joel Kretz instead of sound science and public interest. Do your job already! Thank you.