

James Scarborough

Regarding DFW's absurdly premature discussion about a "post-recovery" plan for wolves in our state.... Management of wolves in Washington has left much to be desired, in large part because of DFW's reflexive subservience to livestock growers at the direct expense of the majority public's wildlife populations. As long as DFW continues to carry the cattlemen's water, any notion of reaching a "post-recovery" phase is laughable at best. Presently, wolves are being systematically slaughtered for the benefit of Eurasian bovines at a pace which is essentially preventing their continued population growth beyond the most meager numbers. We're a long, long way from post-recovery. Rather than wasting taxpayer dollars on this pie-in-the-sky exercise, DFW should study how it might finally decouple itself from the cattlemen's hip pocket. Certainly also, we will not attain post-recovery until a robust population of wolves inhabits the Olympic Peninsula. Obviously, we've not even begun in this regard, and DFW seems unwilling to lift so much as a finger nowadays toward this essential goal. And until wolves are allowed to thrive on public lands (their native and rightful habitat) without constantly being culled, and until they are given clear priority over livestock interests on public lands, we're just spinning our wheels. Great for career bureaucrats, terrible for wolves. Moreover, DFW continues to supplicate itself to the prevailing anti-wolf sentiment in certain pockets of the rural parts of our state. There seems to be great reluctance on the part of the agency to attempt public education in order to address the many entrenched myths and misinformation surrounding wolves. DFW could go a long way toward reestablishing its credibility by placing much greater emphasis on education. For now, though, I have no confidence to speak of in Director Susewind's ability or willingness to improve this situation. I would imagine DFW's morale to be especially low as it is continually asked to cater to a handful of scofflaw cowboys who claim our public lands as their own. Frankly, it's pitiful what's happened to DFW, and I say this as a state employee who is usually highly simpatico with my fellow working stiffs in government. If recent state funding levels for DFW are any indication, I'm apparently not alone in my disdain. Please rethink your mission for modern times, at minimum.