

# Charles Collier

Dear WDFW:

Wolves are crucial to the success of PNW ecosystems. Their presence and predation balances out the food web among native flora and fauna, preventing prey from over-grazing. The ecological benefits of true wolf recovery have been well documented in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Sadly, that is one localized example. Wolves are FAR from their historical range, and even now in Washington state cover a small fraction of their historical range. The focus needs to switch from treating wolves as enemies as pests to learning how to live with wolves as part of our natural PNW ecosystem... imperative not only to plants and animals, but ultimately all of the connected pieces of our environment. The scientific consensus is clear on the impacts of wolves. Yellowstone and Isle Royale, MI are both revealing case studies worth considering.

The reality is recent killings or culling of NE WA state's wolf packs is the clearly wrong course of action. Killing wolves will satisfy the ranchers (who by the way are grazing their livestock on federal/public land; not their own private land), but it will lead to more deaths, more controversy, and no solution. Killing wolves of a pack, especially adults, takes away the pack members responsible for teaching younger pack members how/where/what to hunt. Removing these pack members only perpetuates the problem. Instead, we should be implementing non-lethal methods of curbing wolf behavior away from livestock ...hazing, true ranching with more human involvement (which wolves naturally fear), etc. Another GREAT place to start would be removing the entitlement and government handout of allowing ranchers to graze on federal/public lands. If they don't appreciate that wolves are killing their livelihood, then maybe they should take responsibility for their choice to graze where wolves exist and are supposed to be protected. Learn to live with wildlife, or stay out of the wild areas. If wolves lived in my backyard, I wouldn't send my dog (let alone my livelihood) out alone into the woods - a little common sense goes a long way.

Furthermore, in terms of true recovery, until wolves are in healthy, sustainable numbers in the North Cascades and on the Olympic peninsula, we should not even be entertaining the question of whether or not they have recovered. Recovery will only become more and more difficult as human population increases steadily year after year, so setting up sustainable populations of wolves across the state with wildlife corridors connecting these protected areas (in order to prevent inbreeding and disease) is the only acceptable path forward for actual recovery of the species in WA state. And we, as human beings, will benefit from healthier ecosystems as a result - stable flora and fauna, more nutrient rich soil, cleaner air and water.

Please continue to protect wolves in WA state (and stop killing them!) until they are at least truly recovered.

Respectfully,  
Charles Collier