

## FG and EG Voltz

As former, long-time residents of Washington state, we find the current 'management' approach of killing and relocating wolves absurd. Just as people do not wish to be forcibly relocated, neither does wildlife. For the state's ranchers to absolve themselves of any responsibility toward protecting their livestock speaks volumes as to what they unreasonably expect from the state and its taxpayers. Where are the ranchers' best efforts to coexist with wildlife? Mass slaughter of any wildlife species only triggers a new reproduction cycle to fill the vacuum with immature juveniles who behave much as human juvenile delinquents do when they are missing a family structure. We will end up with MORE not fewer wolves. 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.