

Jane Lamborn

It is important to recognize the unique role that wolves play in our environment, and to commit to a plan that will preserve that role. Wolves, as apex predators, help preserve our forests and wild lands so that all species can live in balance. 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) Using planning to help prevent conflicts between livestock and wolves, recognizing the need to accommodate wolves in their habitat and compensating ranchers for livestock that is lost to wolves; (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 look at scientifically established facts on wolves and the role they play in nature, and to move with impartiality toward a compromise that will accommodate these ecologically important species. Thank you for considering my comments.