

## Pat Nordby

In my opinion, it is too early to create a “post-recovery” plan for wolves, as Washington is still far from meeting the goals set forth in the current plan. Instead of creating a post-delisting plan, WDFW should 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, despite the fact that all wolf experts say public education is the single most important action to take for successful wolf conservation. As a resident of the Methow Valley, where Eastern Washington’s first pack established itself, only to fall prey to cruel poaching, I can assure you there is a great need for more education. The people who want to be able to kill wolves still think of them as wanton, out of control, mindless killers. 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.