Marianne Edain

We have watched the work of Conservation Northwest in promoting co-existence between wolves and public lands ranchers in Washington. They've been doing a great job and have had significant success. Any plan for wolf "management" must meet with the approval of Conservation Northwest. We need to hear that they have been consulted and approve of the final product. Any plan must give precedence to the needs of wolves. Its their habitat. The ranchers and their activities have been imposed on the wolves' habitat and it is for the ranchers to change their behavior rather than to evict/exterminate the wolves. Luckily, we have Conservation Northwest and their programs to help those ranchers change their behavior. 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) 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; (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. (4) Consult with and accept the advice/recommendations of Conservation Northwest and the Center for Biological Diversity. Thank you for considering my comments.