

Dale Wells

**What is your gender?**

Male

**Age?**

42

**County (or Counties) of Primary Residence?**

Spokane

**Residential setting:**

Suburban

**Do you identify yourself as any of the following?**

Hunter

Outdoor Recreationist

**WDFW has identified a list of impact topics to include in the Plan/EIS. Impact topics are a means of organizing the discussion of issues and analysis of impacts. Impact topics can be thought of as chapter or section headings in the Plan/EIS.**

**Please review this list and add other topics, or items that fit under these headings.**

**Please check the topics you view as most important.**

Wolf conservation and monitoring

Wolf classification/status

Wolf management areas

Wolf-livestock conflicts

Wolf-ungulate interactions

Wolf interactions with other species

Wolf-human interactions

Wolf hunting

Translocation

Land management

Habitat connectivity

Goals objectives strategies and tasks

**Do you have general comments about the scope of Washington's updated wolf conservation and management plan?**

I have been a Washington resident for all of my life. I love spending time in the outdoors hiking, hunting, fishing or watching nature. I believe that wolves have a place in the current environment, but they must be managed like any other animal. WDFW has the task of mainlining a healthy balance between all of the species in the state. I watched as wolves were introduced into Idaho and the state was not allowed to manage wolves due to federal lawsuits even though the minimum thresholds had been met. The elk herd of the St. Joe/Clearwater area went from 17,000 to only 1,000. Idaho recently stated how happy there were to double the herd in that area to 2,000. The economic and quality of life effect for those who enjoy hunting in the area has been enormous.

Wolves are expanding at about 30% each year in Washington and the deer, elk and moose numbers are lowering. I understand that wolves are not the only predator and cougars also have an impact on numbers. However, wolves are the only animal where hunters in Washington cannot be used as a management tool. The eastern 2/3 of the state have met the minimum number of wolves for federal delisting, but there is still no hunting season. I understand some people have an emotional connection to wolves and believe they should receive special status in which they are always protected. I think they are majestic creatures, but the reproduction rates are high and they kill at very high rates. If left unmanaged, wolves decimate the animal populations around them. Wolves don't understand the required reproductive levels required to maintain healthy number of other animals. They eat until the prey number dwindle to unsustainable levels and then move to the next area.

If Washington States continues to give special status to the wolf

instead of managing it, we will suffer the same fate as Idaho and Montana. Eastern Washington is already heading down the same path. Those of us who spend time in the outdoors know there are many more wolves than what the state is reporting in the “confirmed” packs and breeding pairs. If Washington instituted a wolf hunting season, the wolf population would still continue to increase and spread west until the state is full. Maybe then the people in the urban Puget Sound area will understand the devastation which an unmanaged wolf pack leaves in its wake. If a hunting season were created, the state would actually make money off of special drawings instead of having to spend millions trying to put Band-Aids on the struggling and necessary cattle industry. A hunting season would also remove WDFW from being the center of continued frivolous lawsuits from environmental groups who believe a blanket protection to wolves is healthy, but fails to consider all of the other animals in the ecosystem.

In closing, wolf are here to stay and I’m okay with that. However, they must be managed if there is to be healthy balance of all animals. Idaho aggressively hunts and traps wolves and the wolf populations have stayed strong. If Washington chooses to give unnecessary protection to the wolf, it will be at the expense of other animal who also deserve a good habitat to survive. Our elk and deer herds will be decimated like those in Idaho and that would be a shame. We live in a great state and everything must be balanced.

D. Wells