

Heather Lenk

What is your gender?

Female

Age?

25

County (or Counties) of Primary Residence?

Maricopa County

Residential setting:

Suburban

Do you identify yourself as any of the following?

Environmentalist

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 hunting

Translocation

Habitat connectivity

Information and education

Research

Goals objectives strategies and tasks

Please list other topics here. The next page provides space for general comments on the scope of the plan.

Wolf genetics; Humane non-lethal alternatives to hunting/culling for wolf management.

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

Dear Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the conservation of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) in Washington.

Recent genetic studies have found that the gray wolves in Washington are not a homogeneous population. Gray wolves in the eastern part of the state are from the Rocky Mountain forest ecotype and are a western extension of the Northern Rocky Mountain population. Gray wolves in the western part of the state are an admixed population of the Rocky Mountain forest ecotype and the coastal ecotype. The coastal ecotype is phenotypically, genetically, and ecologically distinct from the Rocky Mountain forest ecotype, and the admixed population in western Washington may fulfill the ecological niche of the coastal ecotype. In addition, the coastal ecotype is potentially threatened, and as such the admixed population in western Washington would serve as an important genetic reservoir for the coastal ecotype. For these two reasons, the admixed population in western Washington is of high conservation value (Hendricks et al. 2018a; Hendricks et al. 2018b).

Therefore, as you development a post-recovery management plan for the species, I ask that you please be considerate of the fact that there are two different ecotypes of gray wolves inhabiting Washington. Specifically, I request that you please manage the admixed population in western Washington to conserve the coastal genes and to not sacrifice them just to achieve statewide delisting goals quicker. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Heather Lenk

References:

Hendricks, S., R. Schweizer, R. J. Harrigan, & J. P. Pollinger. 2018a. Natural re-colonization and admixture of wolves (*Canis lupus*) in the US Pacific Northwest: challenges for the protection and management of rare and endangered taxa. *Heredity*: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41437-018-0094-x>.

Hendricks, S., R. Schweizer, & R. K. Wayne. 2018b. Conservation genomics illuminates the adaptive uniqueness of North American gray wolves. *Conservation Genetics*: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10592-018-1118-z>.