



Washington for Wildlife

Dedicated to Conserving Washington's Wildlife & Sporting Heritage

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News Release

August 4, 2011 - Washington Wolf Plan Recommendations

Washington for Wildlife (WFW) has reviewed the Draft Wolf Plan, the availability of habitat and prey species, and Washington law to understand what constitutes a **self-sustaining and genetically viable** wolf population in Washington.

WFW would like to remind the Washington Wildlife Commission that the most important components of maintaining a **long term well managed** wolf population is the maintenance of prey species and the availability of suitable habitat.

First, what does Washington Administrative Code require for delisting?

WAC 232-12-297 essentially requires that any native species that is vulnerable or declining and likely to become endangered or threatened in a significant portion of its range within the state shall be listed to protect the species from those threats.

We know that Washington's wolves have been DNA tested and proven to be descendents of the Coastal British Columbia, Inland Canada, and Northern Rocky Mountain wolf populations. Research in Idaho has shown that wolves are moving back and forth between Idaho and all the surrounding states and provinces.

Ladies and gentlemen we are talking about a **self-sustaining, genetically viable, and growing** wolf population that extends from Alaska to Oregon and into eastern Canada and the Midwestern states. This wolf population numbers in the tens of thousands and is traversing back and forth between all of these states and provinces with genetic interchange occurring between thousands of wolves.

- Washington's wolves and the number of documented wolf packs have more than doubled during the last year alone.
- Washington wolves are quickly expanding into Washington territories which they have not occupied for many decades.
- Washington's wolves have been delisted by the USFWS and Judge Donald Malloy recently upheld the delisting of wolves in the eastern 1/3 of Washington.
- Washington wolves by *definition of the law, congressional action, and judicial action, are not Endangered, Threatened, or Sensitive.
- The world has witnessed the results of wolf overpopulation in the Yellowstone, the Bitterroot, and the Lolo regions. There's no need to elaborate on that.
- By scientific design and proven impacts on livestock, pets, and prey populations, the Rocky Mountain States are managing for at least 15 breeding pairs or 150 wolves in each state.

- Washington has less than half the big game herds and more than twice the human population, therefore Washington cannot support as many wolves as Idaho, Montana, or Wyoming.
- WFW believes that Washington should have no more than 8 breeding pairs or 80 wolves or the impacts of too many wolves will likely mirror what has occurred in other states.

After much review of Washington law and Washington's limited resources, Washington for Wildlife has two management recommendations that will continue to support the already self-sustaining and growing wolf population in Washington.

OPTION #1 (the preferred option)

- Elimination of the 3 year requirement.
- Pets or Livestock may be protected against wolves in the act of attacking and wolves shall be removed that are confirmed to have attacked pets or livestock.
- The management objective shall be three wolf zones as recommended by WDFW with two breeding pairs in each zone and two additional packs anywhere in Washington to fully delist the entire state.
- Any one zone shall be fully delisted and wolf control should begin when a zone exceeds 4 breeding pairs or 40 wolves. However, if that zone drops below 2 breeding pairs or 20 wolves, that zone shall be relisted until the entire state is delisted or until the zone again exceeds 4 breeding pairs or 40 wolves.

OPTION #2 (the most liberal acceptable option)

- The Wolf Working Group Minority Position of 10 BP's for 1 year.

Washington for Wildlife: <http://washingtonforwildlife.org>

WFW represents a diverse group of Washington hunters, fishers, and outdoor enthusiasts. WFW works closely with the Hunting-Washington.com forum, which has 8,000+ members and an even greater number of online guests resulting in approximately 20,000 unique visitors per month.

WFW Mission Statement: "To protect Washington's hunting, fishing, and outdoor heritage; to foster local programs enhancing habitat, wildlife, and outdoor activities in Washington State; to hold regulating agencies accountable as the stewards of our wildlife; to ensure that science used in wildlife management is both valid and reliable; to work with other organizations in the furtherance of stated goals; and to fight legal and legislative efforts to take our rights and freedoms provided under the Washington State Constitution and the United States Constitution.

Important Considerations

- DNA evidence and studies in Idaho and elsewhere prove Washington wolves are a part of a much larger **self sustaining, genetically viable, and growing** wolf population that extends across many states through Canada to Alaska and numbers in the tens of thousands.
- The wolf plan sets Washington up for wolf overpopulation, an unknown number of additional breeding pairs will likely result during this 3 year waiting period which defeats the intent of establishing the wolf plan. Eliminate the 3 year requirement.
- People need the ability to protect their pets, their livestock, and themselves.
- Ranchers and pet owners should be reimbursed for confirmed wolf attacks.
- The wolf plan should detail how Washington is paying for wolf management.
- Dollars from hunters should not be used for wolf management; that would effectively have hunters pay for the possible demise of their sport.
- You have written the wolf plan as if there have been no negative effects in Idaho Montana, Wyoming, Yellowstone, or Canada.
- 62% and 63% of Idaho and Montana wolves respectively have been found by WSU to be infected with wolf tapeworms and recently two residents of Idaho have been diagnosed as being infected by wolf tapeworms, the wolf plan should detail methods to prevent the spread of E. Granulosus tapeworms and to prevent infections in wildlife, livestock, pets, and humans.
- There are thousands of gray wolves in the lower 48 states, why are endangered woodland caribou only briefly mentioned, there should be specific language detailing the removal of wolves to protect the last 40 woodland caribou in the entire lower 48 states.
- WDFW cannot adequately monitor and manage our bear and cougar numbers to minimize impacts, the wolf plan should detail how WDFW will monitor and control wolf numbers to protect the prey base, livestock, pets, and humans.
- The wolf plan should offer more specific language on preserving the prey base that is necessary for the long term success of wolves and wildlife management in Washington.

***Definitions:**

WAC 232-12-297 (Endangered, threatened, and sensitive wildlife species classification)

2.4 "Endangered" means any wildlife species native to the state of Washington that is seriously threatened with extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the state.

2.5 "Threatened" means any wildlife species native to the state of Washington that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout a significant portion of its range within the state without cooperative management or removal of threats.

2.6 "Sensitive" means any wildlife species native to the state of Washington that is vulnerable or declining and is likely to become endangered or threatened in a significant portion of its range within the state without cooperative management or removal of threats.