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January 6, 2010

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Teresa A. Eturaspe
SEPA Responsible Official
SEPA Desk
600 Capitol Way N
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

RECEIVED
JAN 07 2010
HABITAT PROGRAM

Re: Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Washington

Dear Ms. Eturaspe,

We the undersigned support efforts to restore a healthy and vibrant wolf population to Washington State. Less than 100 years ago, wolves were an important part of Washington. As elected officials and community leaders, we support the return of the wolf because of its positive impact on our economy and environment.

Recently, wild wolves returned to Washington having crossed state lines from Idaho and British Columbia. At least one breeding pair has produced 2 litters of pups. These are Washington's first documented wolf pups in decades.

The wolves' return to Washington State parallels the animals' recovery in the Rocky Mountain States. In these states the wolves' return is an important component of the regional economy. For example, John Duffield of the University of Montana recently estimated that Yellowstone wolves generate \$35 million in economic benefits every year for local communities. This money comes from tourist spending directly related to wolves, including wolf tours and related services, such as lodging and meals. It is possible that Washington may be able to experience similar results.

Viable wolf populations play a key role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. A recent study out of Olympic National Park found that many river bank environments are overgrazed by overabundant elk populations. Altered river bank environments can have impacts upon river temperatures, which in turn impact fish such as salmon. Researchers point to the removal of the wolves as contributing to the unnatural growth of elk populations. Returning wolves to these environments, many believe, should return it to a more natural balance. The greater Yellowstone ecosystem has seen significant rebound of river ecosystems since the reintroduction of the wolf in 1994.

In order to develop a sustainable population and maximize the economic and environmental benefits of the wolves' return, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife should set a population goal based on science and the proven benefits that wolves would have on Washington. We also support help for local communities to adapt to the presence of these animals during the early stages of the recovery program, including the compensation program for livestock producers included in the current version of the plan.

We urge the Washington Department of Wildlife to adopt a final plan that includes scientifically based numbers and calls for distribution throughout the state including the Olympic Peninsula and Mt. St. Helens.

Sincerely,

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JH

Tracey Eide, Majority Leader
WA State Senator
30th District

Ken Jacobsen
WA State Senator
46th District

Jeanne Kohl-Welles
WA State Senator
36th District

Ed Murray, Majority Caucus Chair
WA State Senator
43rd District

Kevin Ranker
WA State Senator
40th District

Sherry Appleton
WA State Representative
23rd District

Reuven Carlyle, Assit. Maj. Whip
WA State Representative
36th District

Eileen Cody
WA State Representative
34th District

Mary Lou Dickerson
WA State Representative
36th District

Hans Dunshee
WA State Representative
44th District

Tami Green, Assit. Maj. Leader
WA State Representative
28th District

Sam Hunt
WA State Representative
22nd District

Ross Hunter
WA State Representative
48th District

John McCoy
WA State Representative
38th District

Jim Moeller, Dep. Speaker Pro T.
WA State Representative
49th District

Jamie Pedersen
WA State Representative
43rd District

Mary Helen Roberts
WA State Representative
21st District

Christine Rolfes
WA State Representative
23rd District

Mike Sells
WA State Representative
38th District

Dave Upthegrove
WA State Representative
33rd District

Laurie Caskey-Schreiber
Councilmember, District 2
Whatcom County Council

Sharon D. Dillon
Skagit County Commission
Mount Vernon, WA

Larry Phillips
Metropolitan King County Council
District 4

Carl Weimer
Councilmember, District 3
Whatcom County Council

John Bishop
Associate Professor of Biology
(title for identification only)

John S. Edwards
Professor of Biology Emeritus
University of Washington

Burke Garrett
Chairman
Upper Nisqually Citizen's Comm.

Ed Glenn
The Trek PAS, LLC
Kent, WA

Paula L. Houston, M.H.A.
Executive Director
Mathews East Madison YMCA

Peter Jackson
Henry M. Jackson Foundation
Seattle, WA

Bob Kelly
Policy Director
Nooksack Indian Tribe

Michael J. Robinson-Dorn
UW Associate Professor of Law
(title for identification only)

Doug Walker
WRQ Founder and Former CEO
Seattle, WA



From: Winters, Vickie
To: SEPADesk2 (DFW);
Subject: comment wolf management plan
Date: Monday, December 07, 2009 5:30:14 PM
Attachments: 2464_001.pdf

Hello,

The attachment holds a letter from Senator Hatfield, Representative Blake and Representative Takko – the 19th District delegation.

Will you please let me know if you would like the original hard copy?

Thank you ~

*Vickie Winters, Legislative Assistant
for Senator Hatfield, 19th District
360.786.7636*



Washington State Legislature

December 7, 2009

Phil Anderson, Director
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

Dear Director Anderson:

This letter expresses our concerns about the *Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Washington* (wolf plan) under development by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

The WDFW, along with a 17- member Wolf Working Group, has developed the *Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Washington* in response to an increased dispersal of wolves into Washington, and the federal delisting of wolves in a portion of the state. The wolf plan is now subject to public review. For several reasons, Washington State's 19th District legislative delegation has serious concerns about the proliferation of wolves in Washington, as well as the wolf plan.

We are concerned about the potential impacts of wolves on Washington State's ungulate populations, including deer, elk, moose, and mountain goats. Ungulate species provide valuable cultural, aesthetic, and recreational benefits to the state. In turn, these species provide much needed economic revenue to businesses and local governments, including those in the 19th legislative district. As the wolf plan states, ungulates are the primary food of wolves throughout their geographic range. Numerous studies of wolf impacts in other states indicate that wolf predation can reduce ungulate populations. Additionally, wolf predation has the potential to threaten some small populations of prey, which in Washington could include mountain caribou and certain herds of bighorn sheep.

The re-establishment of wolves in Washington may also affect livestock producers, either through wolf- related depredation or necessary modifications in livestock management practices. According to WDFW's own statistics, there have been over 2,100 sheep and 1,100 cattle killed by wolves in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming since approximately 1995. While we are concerned about the overall impact wolves might have on the livestock industry, we are particularly sensitive to individual producers who may be more acutely affected due to wolf pack density, terrain, and the availability of other prey in particular areas.

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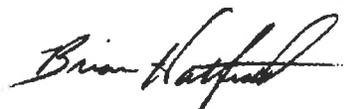
The wolf plan recognizes translocation as a tool to establish wolf populations in areas that they have not yet reached, and specifically mentions the Olympic Peninsula and Willapa Hills as likely candidates for wolf translocation. So far, the wolves entering Washington have dispersed here from neighboring states and Canada. Managing wolves that have naturally moved to a location is one thing, but intentionally moving them to a new location is quite another. We are concerned that translocation could expedite the potential ungulate and livestock impacts discussed above, and have heard from many residents of Southwest Washington who feel the same way.

Finally, the estimated cost of wolf plan implementation is also a serious issue, including funding necessary for activities such as wolf monitoring, research, providing public information, and compensating for livestock losses. For example, the wolf plan calls for development of a wolf compensation program to pay affected livestock owners. The stated purpose of the recommendation is to generate public support, promote equity, and to meet the concerns of livestock producers. In light of the difficult budget climate facing the state, the availability of additional state resources for wolf management, including compensation, is unlikely in the foreseeable future. Moving forward with the wolf plan before long-term funding is secured raises the question whether WDFW will be able to deliver on the promises contained in the wolf plan.

Because wolves have already arrived in Washington from neighboring states and Canada, we understand that action must be taken to manage the state's wolves. However, we have serious concerns about the potential proliferation of wolves in the state, and about the management plan. As WDFW moves forward with wolf management planning, we ask that you work to address the concerns raised above, as well as the many concerns raised by other Southwest Washington residents.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Senator Brian Hatfield



Representative Brian Blake



Representative Dean Takko

Washington State ~ Nineteenth Legislative District