



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF EIS**

Name of Proposal: DS/Scoping 19-044: WOLF POST-RECOVERY PLAN
DEVELOPMENT

Description of Proposal: Historically, gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) were common throughout much of Washington, but due to high mortality from government-sponsored predator eradication programs, wolves were extirpated from Washington by the 1930s. Confirmed reports of dispersing wolves in northern Washington from growing populations in Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia, Canada began to increase after 1990, but the first resident pack in the state since the 1930s was not documented until 2008 in Okanogan County in north-central Washington. Since that time, wolves have continued to naturally recolonize the state by dispersing from resident Washington packs and neighboring states and provinces.

In 2007, anticipating dispersal of wolves into Washington from surrounding states and provinces and the likely formation of resident packs, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) initiated development of a state Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Washington (available at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/00001/>). Assisted by an 18-member working group comprised of stakeholders, the plan was adopted in December 2011 by the state Fish and Wildlife Commission and has been the guiding document for wolf management in the state to date.

Since 2008, Washington's wolf population has grown by an average of 28 percent per year. As of December 31, 2018, wolf numbers in Washington have increased to a minimum of 126 individuals, 27 packs, and 15 successful breeding pairs, marking a population increase for the 10th consecutive year and the highest counts to date. Not only is Washington's wolf population growing, but its distribution is also expanding westward in the state. In 2018, Department biologists confirmed the state's first wolf pack west of the Cascade crest in the modern era, and the number of packs in the North Cascades recovery region increased from three to five and the number of successful breeding pairs from one to three. The Department is confident that Washington's wolf population is on a path leading to successful recovery.

In addition, on March 15, 2019, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a proposal to federally delist gray wolves in the lower 48 states. Under the proposal, wolves in Washington statewide would be federally delisted and management authority would be returned to the state, except for tribal reservations and national parks.

Given the pace of wolf recovery and in light of potential listing status changes, WDFW proposes to develop a post-recovery conservation and management plan for wolves to guide long-term wolf conservation and management under state authority once wolves are considered recovered in Washington and are no longer designated as state or federally endangered.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Contact: Julia B. Smith
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Olympia, WA 98504
(360) 902-2477
Julia.Smith@dfw.wa.gov

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Statewide

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

EIS to be Prepared: WDFW has determined that this proposal may have a significant impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

Scoping: WDFW is seeking public input throughout the EIS process. More information regarding the proposal can be found at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/at-risk/species-recovery/gray-wolf/post-recovery-planning>. We are conducting a survey designed to help identify major topics and issues the plan should address. You may participate in the survey online at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/at-risk/species-recovery/gray-wolf/post-recovery-planning/public-input/survey>. The survey allows you to input additional questions or comments as well. General information about wolves in Washington is available at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/at-risk/species-recovery/gray-wolf>.

Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. We must receive your comments within 92 days of the date of this letter. The comment period and survey will close at **5:00 pm on November 1, 2019**.

Method of Comment:

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal. *Please provide the title of this proposal and your name in the subject area of your comment.*

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Online at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/at-risk/species-recovery/gray-wolf/post-recovery-planning/public-input/survey>
- Submit a written comment in person at one of the public open houses listed below.
- Mail a written comment to the address below.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Habitat Program, Protection Division

Address: P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200

Comments must be received by **5:00 pm on November 1, 2019**.

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal.

If you have questions about this DS/Scoping or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2260.

DATE OF ISSUE: August 1, 2019

SIGNATURE:



SEPA Log Number: 19-044.ds/scoping

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has scheduled public scoping open houses across the state Sept. 3 – Oct. 30 and will take comment on wolf planning through 5:00 pm on November 1, 2019.

The public scoping open houses will be held at the following locations and times:

Spokane – Sept. 3 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Spokane Community College (SCC), The Lair Student Center, Building #6, Sasquatch and Bigfoot Room 124 & 124C, 1810 Green St., Spokane, WA 99217

Colville – Sept. 4 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Agriculture & Trade Center, 215 S. Oak St., Colville, WA 99114

Clarkston – Sept. 5 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Quality Inn and Suites, Half Mahogany Room, 700 Port Drive, Clarkston, WA 99403

Chelan – Sept. 11 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Chelan Fire Station, 232 E. Wapato Ave, Chelan, WA 98816

Pasco – Sept. 25 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Franklin PUD auditorium, 1411 W. Clark St, Pasco, WA 99301

Selah – Sept. 26 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Selah Civic Center, 216 S. 1st St., Selah, WA 98942

Mt. Vernon – Oct. 7 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

Issaquah – Oct. 8 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Eagle Room, City Hall, 130 E. Sunset Way, Issaquah, WA 98027

Kelso/Longview – Oct. 9 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Red Lion Hotel and Conference Center, 510 Kelso Drive, Kelso, WA 98626

Morton – Oct. 10 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Lyle Community Center, 700 Main Street, Morton, WA 98356

Olympia – Oct. 15 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Natural Resources Building (Room 172), 1111 Washington SE, Olympia, WA 98504

Goldendale – To Be Announced – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Goldendale High School cafeteria, 525 Simcoe Drive, Goldendale, WA 98620

Port Angeles – Oct. 29 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Peninsula College, House of Learning (Longhouse), 1502 E. Lauridsen Blvd., Port Angeles, WA 98362

Montesano – Oct. 30 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Montesano City Hall, 112 N. Main St., Montesano, WA 98563