



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Southwest Region 5 • 5525 South 11th Street, Ridgefield, WA 98642
Telephone: (360) 696-6211 • Fax: (360) 906-6776

November 25, 2019

Sheriff Bob Songer
Klickitat County Sheriff's Office
205 South Columbus Ave. Rm. 108
Goldendale, WA 98620

Dear Sheriff Songer,

In August 2019, the Klickitat County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) issued its Dangerous Wildlife Policy and Procedures, stating the intent to "provide Public Safety protection and the protection of domestic animals, livestock, and private property within and throughout Klickitat County, Washington, from Black Bear, Cougar, Bobcat or Lynx." Since the enactment of the KCSO Dangerous Wildlife Policy and Procedures, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has continued our longstanding commitment to working in cooperation with you and your deputies in responding to and documenting reports of dangerous wildlife conflicts.

WDFW has significant experience responding to dangerous wildlife and we prioritize public safety. If animals are exhibiting behavior that is an imminent threat to public safety, we refer the caller to 911 to notify the nearest WDFW Enforcement Officer and/or Wildlife Conflict Specialist to respond as soon as possible. Reported depredations by cougar or bear on livestock or pets are also investigated by Enforcement Officers and/or Wildlife Conflict Specialists, both of whom may issue depredation permits or call out a hound hunter when appropriate. In situations involving animals on site with no imminent threat to public safety (bears in garbage, cougars in proximity to homes, etc.), Enforcement Officers and/or Wildlife Conflict Specialists respond and determine appropriate actions, including offering advice on how to avoid negative interactions. Animal sightings with no imminent threat to safety are referred to resources on living with wildlife.

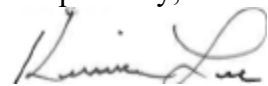
We want to emphasize our desire to work collaboratively on addressing public safety issues related to cougars in your county. WDFW recognizes both the important role and the broad authority that State, County, and local law enforcement agencies have when it comes to addressing public safety as provided by RCW 77.15.245(2)(a). As the state agency responsible for managing wildlife in Washington (77.04.012 and 77.12.047) and in order to fulfill our statutory obligation and mission, it is essential that other agencies work with us when they consider responding to wildlife-related public safety or property damage concerns. Through a collaborative effort, we can address both the public safety and the population management authorities assigned to our respective agencies by the state legislature and work to ensure that all

available resources are being utilized, including the KCSO Sheriff's Office, WDFW enforcement officers, and WDFW Wildlife Conflict Specialists.

We appreciate that the KCSO Policy includes a commitment to share information, notify WDFW, and turn over the remains of any dangerous animal that is euthanized by Sheriff's Office personnel. Not only is timely information sharing about responses and removals critical for our agency to follow-up with affected landowners, it is also important to fulfill our wildlife management obligations. We would be concerned if removal actions compromised our ability to achieve our mandate to manage wildlife. In addition, WDFW has been directed to publicly report dangerous wildlife incidents (RCW 77.12.885). Fulfilling this obligation relies on consistent information sharing and a partnership with your office. Reported dangerous wildlife incident information is available to all citizens through our dangerous wildlife website (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/dangerous-wildlife/reports>). We would like to have a conversation with your office to discuss how we can effectively and efficiently receive information related to your dangerous wildlife policy.

We are committed to continuing to be a resource for you, your deputies, and for Klickitat County residents in responding to situations involving dangerous wildlife. We appreciate the cooperative relationship between our departments and look forward to hearing from you soon. Please contact me at 360-906-6704 or kessina.lee@dfw.wa.gov so that we can arrange a time to meet and talk about our continued partnership on this important work.

Respectfully,



Kessina Lee
SW Regional Director

cc: Kelly Susewind
Amy Windrope