

Expand wildlife conflict response



Washington
Department of
**FISH &
WILDLIFE**

2023-25 Funding Request

\$9.9 million



As Washington's population continues to grow, human-wildlife interactions and conflicts increase. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) seeks to build capacity by consolidating and expanding its response to wildlife conflicts. If approved, wildlife conflict specialists will be available daily to address crop damage and dangerous wildlife interactions, increase preventative education and outreach, and free enforcement officer time for other priority duties. Improved response will reduce agriculture and livestock producer frustrations, decrease costly claims for damage payments, and allow for a seamless response and follow-through to dangerous human-wildlife conflicts including black bear and cougar.

The Problem

The WDFW Enforcement Program expends a significant amount of time and resources in responding to and handling dangerous wildlife related calls, particularly responses to human-black bear and human-cougar conflicts. However, most of these conflicts do not require a certified law enforcement officer to handle the situation, so this model is not the most efficient use of Department resources.

The Solution

With the funding in this request, the Department can solve several existing human-wildlife conflict response issues at once. This proposal moves most dangerous wildlife conflict responses from Enforcement to the Wildlife Program for more effective use of resources and staff. This decision package helps ensure adequate response times and service coverage and adds seven-days-per-week response by Wildlife Conflict Specialists, when at full capacity.

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