

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

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,

Tracey Eide, Majority Leader WA State Senator 30 th District	Ken Jacobsen WA State Senator 46 th District	Jeanne Kohl-Welles WA State Senator 36 th District
Ed Murray, Majority Caucus Chair WA State Senator 43 rd District	Kevin Ranker WA State Senator 40 th District	Sherry Appleton WA State Representative 23 rd District
Reuven Carlyle, Assit. Maj. Whip WA State Representative 36 th District	Eileen Cody WA State Representative 34 th District	Mary Lou Dickerson WA State Representative 36 th District
Hans Dunshee WA State Representative 44 th District	Tami Green, Assit. Maj. Leader WA State Representative 28 th District	Sam Hunt WA State Representative 22 nd District
Ross Hunter WA State Representative 48 th District	John McCoy WA State Representative 38 th District	Jim Moeller, Dep. Speaker Pro T. WA State Representative 49 th District
Jamie Pedersen WA State Representative 43 rd District	Mary Helen Roberts WA State Representative 21 st District	Christine Rolfes WA State Representative 23 rd District
Mike Sells WA State Representative 38 th District	Dave Upthegrove WA State Representative 33 rd 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