



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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January 13, 2010

Mr. Christopher Burley
Director, Online Campaigns
Defenders of Wildlife
1130 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Burley:

Thank you for writing Governor Gregoire about wolves in Washington State. As Director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department), I have been asked by the Governor to respond to you on her behalf.

After a 70-year absence from our state's ecosystem, the gray wolf is re-establishing itself in Washington State. This is an exciting time and I am looking forward to being part of the process of meeting the challenges and opportunities that the re-emergence of this species back into our ecosystem will bring to the citizens of our state.

To prepare for the natural return of wolves and to meet the state's management responsibility when federal protection status is removed, the Department began developing a Washington Wolf Conservation and Management Plan in 2006. The Department established a citizen Wolf Working Group to provide input on key elements of the plan. The goals of the plan development are to ensure a self-sustaining population of gray wolves in the state and to address potential conflicts.

The draft plan underwent invited scientific peer review and is currently undergoing a blind scientific peer review. Public review of the draft EIS and plan was conducted from October 5, 2009 through January 8, 2010. The draft EIS/plan can be found on the Department website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildlife/management/gray_wolf. Over the course of the next six months we will be carefully considering all of the public comments we have received, including yours, as well as the results of the blind peer review. We will then meet again with the Wolf Working Group during the summer. Following those deliberations, we will complete a final EIS/plan, which we anticipate presenting to our Fish and Wildlife Commission at the end of this year. The final decision will be made by the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and we will continue to work closely with them on this very important issue.

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In the meantime, we are working aggressively to ensure protection of Washington's wolves as they begin to re-colonize throughout the state. Thus far, two breeding wolf packs have been confirmed in the state, one in north-central Washington and the other in northeastern Washington. We expect additional packs to return to other parts of the state over time.

Thank you, again, for taking the time to write Governor Gregoire with your thoughts on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Anderson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Phil Anderson
Director