

RCW 77.12.395 Wolves—Conflict mitigation guidelines. The department shall implement conflict mitigation guidelines that distinguish between wolf recovery regions, identified in the 2011 wolf conservation and management plan, that are at or above the regional recovery objective and wolf recovery regions that are below the regional recovery objective. In developing conflict management [mitigation] guidelines, the department shall consider the provisions of its 2011 wolf recovery and management plan, and all regional plans must include proactive nonlethal deterrents regardless of listing status. [2019 c 450 s 2.]

Intent—Finding—2019 c 450: "(1) It is the legislature's intent to support full recovery of gray wolves in Washington state in accordance with the department of fish and wildlife's 2011 wolf recovery and management plan and state law. It is also the legislature's intent to support the livestock industry and rural lifestyles and ensure that state agencies and residents have the tools necessary to support coexistence with wolves.

(2) The wolf plan requires that the department of fish and wildlife conduct a review of the effectiveness of the plan's implementation every five years. The legislature finds that because the regional recovery goals have been exceeded in the eastern Washington recovery region, but not yet in other regions, it is timely for the department of fish and wildlife to conduct a periodic status review and recommend to the state fish and wildlife commission whether a change in status is warranted.

(3) Furthermore, the legislature recognizes that management of wolf-livestock conflict is key to both wolf recovery and public acceptance of wolves in rural areas and that as the wolf population grows, and even after it achieves recovery, stable and adequate funding for nonlethal wolf deterrence will be needed to support livestock producers and the livestock industry and minimize the need for lethal removal of wolves. As such, it is the intent of the legislature, regardless of the listing status of gray wolves, to continue to sufficiently fund nonlethal deterrents for minimizing depredation of livestock by wolves. Proactive deterrence and community collaboration, as set forth in RCW 16.76.020, are necessary to reduce conflict between wolves and livestock and will be important for maintaining the economic viability of the livestock industry, the state's wolf populations, and public acceptance of wolves in northeast Washington after wolves have recovered and have been delisted.

(4) Further, the legislature intends to expand funding and personnel resources in the department of fish and wildlife for similar nonlethal deterrent efforts to mitigate conflicts statewide, as wolves recover in the remainder of the state beyond northeast Washington." [2019 c 450 s 1.]