

[New Study Says Washington's Wolf Plan Doesn't Add Up](#) **Local News**

Posted by: David Haviland

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SEATTLE - Scientists who have reviewed the draft of Washington's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan have a disagreement over the numbers. According to the scientists, the population recommendations in the draft plan aren't biologically defensible and will not ensure the reestablishment of a self-sustaining population of gray wolves in Washington.

David Graves, Northwest field representative for the *National Parks Conservation Association*, says his organization does not expect to please everyone who's interested in the issue.

"At least a science-based plan will have goals that are clear and based on some fact, rather than just opinion or compromise, or political dealings. It's something that is objective."

The plan sets a goal of 15 breeding pairs, while the scientists say between 300 and 600 wolves would be needed to ensure a healthy population. Some ranchers expressed concerns at recent public meetings that more wolves will endanger their livestock. Graves says the plan calls for compensation of any losses suffered by livestock producers.

"There are definitely strong feelings across the spectrum. Some people I encountered at those meetings feel any wolf is a bad wolf, and that they're a menace to society and should not be allowed back in the state."

Graves says there is still room for debate about the exact number with such a difference between the scientific opinion and the state plan.

"Now, we're not saying that Washington definitely needs 500 wolves, but 15 breeding pairs could result in as few as 97 wolves - and that obviously is not enough to maintain a viable population."

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife released the the scientific review of the plan, which is available at [www.wdfw.wa.gov/wildlife/manag ... wolf deis peer review.pdf](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/wildlife/manag..._wolf_deis_peer_review.pdf).