WDFW Meetings Will Discuss Gray Wolf Recovery, Management

Local News

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OLYMPIA - The recovery and management of gray wolves in Washington and other western states will be the topic of three public meetings this month hosted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).A panel of experts will discuss ongoing efforts to recover Washington's gray wolf population, the latest information from population surveys in Washington and gray wolf management strategies used in other states."Wolves are a high-profile species that attract considerable public interest from people who often have opposing views," said Dave Ware, WDFW game manager. "This is a great opportunity for people interested in gray wolves to hear from experts about the recovery of the species throughout the West." Keynote speakers include Mike Jimenez, Rocky Mountain wolf coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in Wyoming; Carter Niemeyer, retired wolf specialist with the USFWS and the U.S Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services; and Donny Martorello, WDFW carnivore section manager.

Lorna Smith, executive director of Western Wildlife Outreach, an independent wild carnivore education organization based in the state of Washington, will moderate the meetings.Each meeting will include an opportunity for the public to submit questions to the presenters about wolf recovery and management.The public meetings are scheduled for:Jan. 16 - Center Place Regional Event Center, 2426 N. Discovery Place, Spokane Valley, 6-8 p.m.Jan. 17 - Office Building #2, at 14th Ave. and Jefferson St., Olympia, 2:30-5 p.m.Jan. 18 - Magnuson Park's Garden Room, 7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, 6-8 p.m.Virtually absent from Washington for more than 70 years, gray wolves have dispersed into the eastern portion of the state and the North Cascades from adjacent populations in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and British Columbia.WDFW has confirmed the presence of eight wolf packs in Washington. There is also evidence of unconfirmed packs near Kettle Falls in northeastern Washington, in the Blue Mountains of southeastern Washington and in the North Cascades, as well as transient wolves.Gray wolves are currently listed as endangered under state law throughout Washington, and under federal law in the western two-thirds of the state. Washington's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan establishes a goal of 15 breeding pairs of wolves distributed among three regions of the state for three years - or 18 pairs in one year - before the state can delist gray wolves as an endangered species.More information on wolves is available at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/ .